'It was the money that burned the house':

Ethnography, moral economies and agricultural interventions in Northern Mozambique

Lancaster University

Katharine Howell

Thesis submitted to Lancaster University in fulfilment of the requirements of the

degree of Doctor of Philosophy

July 2019

Lancaster Environment Centre

The thesis is the work of the author, except where otherwise stated, and has not been submitted for the award of a higher degree at any other institution.

All personal names, except for that of my research assistant Tifa Virgílio, and those mentioned in the Acknowledgements, have been changed.

Word count, excluding Bibliography: 86406

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Abstract

This research is based on 16 months of ethnographic fieldwork conducted in northern Mozambique in 2015-16. It draws particularly on the 12 months I spent living with a peasant family in a rural neighbourhood, 'Bairro'. My research focuses on the activities and members of a smallholder producers' association who, during this period, regularly received the representatives and interventions of six different agricultural commercialisation projects, including a pilot project for the controversial ProSAVANA programme.

The thesis explores the contours of everyday life as a smallholder farmer in Bairro, and the ways in which development projects interacted with this everyday landscape, focusing on the key themes of moral economy, food security and land. It considers the workings of power and agency in these interactions and the ways in which they were embodied. It also draws on postcolonial, feminist and critical race scholarship to analyse the research project itself as an auto-ethnographic insight into these dynamics. These readings of everyday life in Bairro draw attention to the complexity and ambivalence of local people's relationship with development and commercialisation, their agency and vulnerability in constructing livelihoods within a deeply unequal and unpredictable context, and the potential (and actual) complicity of research in reinscribing colonial power relations and subjectivities, with material consequences.

Acknowledgements

A project like this involves the work and support of many people, and those to whom I am most indebted are the anonymous people of Bairro from whom I learned so much and with whom I had such a wonderful time, notwithstanding the problems I caused them. *Koxukorela, todos.* I also remember the women known in this thesis as Márcia and Bárbara, who passed away in 2017, and Florêncio, who died in 2019.

Setting up the research project was made much easier and more enjoyable with the help of António Mutoua, António Lagres, Bernardo Somar, Emília, Dona Fátima and the rest of the team, Calisto Ribeiro, Marlene Julane and Sidónia. Many thanks to Luis Artur and Hélsio Azevedo at Universidade Eduardo Mondlane for help with visas, and thank you to Wanda Uaene and the students at ESHT-Inhambane for their stimulating discussions around gender and intersectionality.

My greatest *agradecimento* to the authorities who granted me permission to do research and supported me throughout, particularly Engenheiros Armênio and Adamugy, the Director Provincial de Agricultura, the Director Distrital de SDAE, and the *Chefe de Poste*.

Thank you to the nuns: to Irmãs Hélia, Fátima, Elisabete, Judite and Odelta, for their boundless hospitality in welcoming me to their sisterhood. Thank you to Laura Stovel, Bente Topso, Mónica Correira, Jiel Xialuwe, Cristiana Morais, Sanito, Nuhi, Jens Hougaard, Rita, Judy Chisinsky and Sarah Anderson for companionship, language practice and insight. Thank you to fellow researchers Serena Stein, Rune-Christoffer Bechs-Dragsdal, Edward Rooke, Lindsey Wagner, Barbara Iganaki, Gediminas Lesutis for all the advice, commiseration and stimulating conversation.

Thank you to my supervisors James Fraser and Ben Neimark for giving me this opportunity in the first place, for all your generosity, support and kindness throughout the PhD, and your open-mindedness to my angry critique in these final stages. Thank you to all the people who helped the development of this thesis through conferences and correspondence, especially Emma Mawdsley, Katia Taela, Lídia Cabral, Sonja Boon, Jennifer Dyer, Marlene Power, Anthonia Onyeahialam, Lorna Kirkby, Natasha Watts, Carla Gomes, Marianne Kuusipalo. Thanks also the wonderful community of academics and students at Lancaster who have talked over so much of this thesis with me, pointed me in the direction of so many interesting ideas and readings, and made the university a welcoming place to work: Saskia Vermeylen,

Contents

List of illustrations

Chapter 1
Introduction

Introduction: Perspectives on ProSAVANA

> Tifa started asking, 'Which project, when it arrives, makes you feel happy?'
>
> Before she finished the question, Márcia answered,
>
> 'ProSAVANA! Because they bring bread, and they offer you things.'
>
> Márcia said that she also liked ProSAVANA because they produced onions last year, which turned out well; and they brought the water pump. Tifa named some other projects working in the area, but Márcia said she did not know what they were. She had heard the names – they talked about them at the association – but they were not in her head. The project in her head, her heart, was ProSAVANA. [Interview, November 2016] [1]

ProSAVANA, the favourite project of Márcia, an elderly widow and peasant farmer in northern Mozambique, is a controversial agricultural development project first proposed in 2009 as a joint programme between the governments of Brazil, Japan and Mozambique. ProSAVANA is situated in the wider policy context of the so-called 'African Green Revolution' (AGR), which is promoting agricultural modernisation and commercialisation as the key to food security and development in Africa (Ejeta 2010). It promised to recreate Brazil's 'cerrado miracle' (Cerraq 2010), the transformation of Brazil's northern grassland region into a landscape of large-scale soybean production, in the savannahs of northern Mozambique (Cabral and Leite 2015). Fearing that the project would encourage large-scale land acquisitions, resulting in the large-scale dispossession of Mozambican peasants (Chichava et al. 2013), civil society organisations from the three partner countries and beyond came together in a Não ao ProSAVANA [No to ProSAVANA] campaign. This campaign significantly affected the development of ProSAVANA, leading to the release of a revised Master Plan in 2015 (ProSAVANA 2015) and the launch of a civil society-monitored accountability mechanism in 2016 (Cabral and Norfolk 2016).

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[1] Throughout this thesis, the use of **inset text** indicates that the material is adapted or taken directly from my field journal.

The vulnerability and voices of '*camponeses*' [peasants] featured prominently in debates around ProSAVANA. While ProSAVANA's Master Plan talks about helping small-scale farmers, especially 'vulnerable' groups like women and young farmers (ProSAVANA, 2015), Não ao ProSAVANA is positioned as defending the rights of peasants from dispossession. To its supporters, Não ao ProSAVANA represents a successful act of solidarity and resistance against a state that, from socialism to neoliberalism, has fundamentally undermined peasant farmers (Monjane and Bruna, 2018). Meanwhile, in one of the communities where ProSAVANA's pilot projects are happening, peasant farmers like Márcia have enthusiastically expressed their approval of ProSAVANA, especially in comparison to other agricultural commercialisation projects working in the same community, though often for quite different reasons from those promoted by the project itself. The emergence and effects of these conflicting narratives raise critical questions about what projects like ProSAVANA mean to different social groups. The central question of this thesis is how the intended beneficiaries of projects like ProSAVANA, which push agricultural modernisation and commercialisation, interact with such projects, and what this means for their food security, livelihoods, and daily lives. In the context of debates such as those around ProSAVANA, this is a politically charged question that raises further questions, also considered in this thesis, about whose voices and experiences count in these debates, what it means to be a 'peasant', and the politics of these interactions.[2]

In this chapter, I set out the background and rationale for the research, starting with the context of development policy based on the concept of the 'African Green Revolution' and its articulation in Mozambique through the ProSAVANA project. I look at the research questions that emerged from this context and those that evolved during the course of my research. I then sketch out the theoretical framework used to investigate these questions and outline the structure of the thesis, highlighting the key contributions of the thesis and the main interweaving themes between the chapters.

Context

The 'African Green Revolution'

This research was carried out in the context of the so-called 'African Green Revolution', an idea that has been extremely popular in international development, philanthropic and policy

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[2] In this thesis, I use the term 'peasant' rather than 'smallholder' or 'smallscale farmer' to reflect the fact that *camponês/camponesa* is the term used by my interlocutors to identify themselves. Like the English word 'peasant', *camponês* bears both negative, feudal connotations, and more positive associations through its reclaiming by movements like la Via Campesina (Van der Ploeg 2010). The term also encapsulates the sense that being a peasant is about a positionality and way of life that go beyond a mode and scale of production (Van der Ploeg 2013).

circles in recent years (Moseley et al. 2015). The 'African Green Revolution' invokes the spirit of the 'Green Revolution' of the 1950s and 60s, which is characterised in policy imaginaries by major increases in agricultural production and productivity. These were achieved through technology transfer promoting mechanised agriculture, the use of mineral fertilisers and wide-spectrum herbicides and pesticides, and high-yielding hybrid crop varieties (Griffin 1979). This 'transfer' was largely funded by the US government and by US philanthropic organisations, and carried out in India, Mexico and Philippines (amongst other countries, including several in Africa) as part of Cold War 'containment' policy (Patel 2013). Although the Green Revolution has come under considerable critique (e.g. Shiva 2016), and some of its social, economic and environmental impacts were decidedly negative (Griffin 1979), the ubiquity of the term in policy circles reflects its continued celebration by dominant institutions for having helped to feed the world (Patel 2013). Recently, in the face of a growing world population, dwindling resources, and climate change, policy-makers paint the image of a Malthusian 'perfect storm' (Tomlinson 2013), leading to food insecurity, famine and environmental catastrophe, which only a new Green Revolution – featuring cutting edge technologies, most controversially biotechnology – can avert (Beddington 2010).

These narratives tend to focus on Africa in particular (Patel 2013). Hunger, especially the starvation of African bodies, has long been fetishised (Boltanski 1999) and 'radically endogenised' by popular and policy narratives which frame hunger in Africa as inevitable (Nally 2016, 569). Hunger in Africa is often presented as 'one particularly visible part of a crisis facing the continent as a whole' (Vaughan 1987, 6), and the idea of feeding Africa[3] has been a central concern in international development and food security policy for decades, alongside plenty of 'solutions' (Ferguson 1990, Nally 2016). These policy narratives have tended to overlook the political and economic impacts of (neo)colonialism, and focus instead on the supposed fragility of drought-ridden African environments (Mortimore and Adams 1999), high birth rates in much of the continent (Williams 1995), and the low productivity of African agriculture (Denning et al. 2009), or all three (Cleaver and Schreiber 1994). This provides the groundwork for the perfect solution to the perfect storm: the adoption by African farmers of 'improved' agricultural technologies and strategies. Access to these technologies is to be facilitated by the integration of these farmers in commercial markets, and the reorientation of farmers towards entrepreneurial subjectivities (Nally and Taylor 2015) despite decades of evidence that increased market integration can exacerbate rather than 'solve' poverty and

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[3] Africa, or sub-Saharan Africa, is often referred to as a homogenous whole in these narratives. (cf. Wainaina 2005)

food insecurity (Bezner Kerr 2012). Even more explicitly than the twentieth century Green Revolution, this idealised transformation is market-driven both in aims and delivery (Patel 2013). The most recent wave of high profile AGR programmes like the G8 New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition and the Gates Foundation's Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa, are characterised by financing from philanthropic institutions and implementation via public-private partnerships between governments and multinational agribusinesses as well as NGOs (Patel et al. 2014).

Agricultural commercialisation

The promotion of smallholder commodity production by Western actors in Africa has a long history. It stretches from the involuntary commercialisation of peasant farmers, following the imposition of colonial 'hut' taxes (Watts 1983), through colonial and postcolonial outgrower and contract farming schemes (Moseley and Gray 2008), to current trends such as microfinance (Pretty, Toulmin and Williams 2011). Throughout this history, agricultural commercialisation and technical modernisation have been promoted as part of the same vision of development, which continues in the AGR. AGR policies promote the facilitation of mechanisation via machinery hire or purchase on credit[4] and improving access to and the uptake of commercial agricultural inputs, especially seeds (Ejeta 2010). Malawi has been lauded in the AGR literature for its increases in maize production, driven by a government fertiliser subsidy programme (Sanchez, Denning and Nziguheba 2009, Denning et al. 2009).

This has been accompanied by a major policy trend for creating 'developing corridors' in sub-Saharan Africa (Laurance et al. 2015), focusing infrastructure improvements and agricultural interventions in strategic locations. These development corridors, which often retrace the geographies of colonial-era extraction corridors, are ostensibly intended (amongst other development priorities) to improve farmers' access to inputs and markets (Kuhlmann, Sechler and Guinan 2011). One such development corridor attracting these kinds of intervention – including, of course, the high-profile ProSAVANA project – is the Nacala Corridor in northern Mozambique, a country that has also recently been attracting international attention for its high rates of economic growth and mineral resources (Cunguara and Hanlon 2012). This attention has also highlighted Mozambique's agricultural potential, drawing on wider

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[4] Although this is also alongside a current agricultural development trend for encouraging 'no-till' and conservation agriculture and the use of lower tech machinery such as *matracas.* See, for example, Cabral, L. (2016) Brazil's Tropical Solutions for Africa: Tractors, Matracas and the Politics of 'Appropriate Technology'. *The European Journal of Development Research,* 28**,** 414-430.

narratives about the productivity potential of savannas (Morris, Binswanger-Mkhize and Byerlee 2009).

Gender, commercialisation and land

In debates around the AGR and agricultural commercialisation, gender equality has featured, both as a potential contributor to productivity increases (Sanchez et al. 2009) and as something that may be negatively affected by the AGR (Arndt, Benfica and Thurlow 2011, Bezner Kerr 2012). Calls for the recognition and integration of gender in AGR policy (Negin et al. 2009, Mosley 2002) echo decades of critiques of development that have drawn attention to the importance of considering gender. The development trends which followed these calls – known as Women in Development, Women and Development, and latterly Gender and Development (Rathgeber 1990) – led to the 'mainstreaming' of gender in development policy (Moser 2005, Kabeer 2003) and the popularisation of particular understandings of female empowerment in development interventions (Cornwall, Harrison and Whitehead 2007). Mainstream narratives positioning Third World women as 'victims' have been partly replaced by a discourse framing women as 'sustainability saviours' (Leach 2015, 4), and their emancipation as the key to improving economic development (WorldBank and ONE 2014), environmental sustainability (Leach 2015) and food security (De Schutter 2013). In the context of agricultural commercialisation and the AGR, 'gender sensitive' projects (Plan 2015) continue these trends. Policies include encouraging women to participate in markets and become (economically) empowered through entrepreneurship (Mayoux 1999), and to use 'improved' agricultural techniques to cultivate vegetable gardens as a means of increasing their families' nutritional intake and earning additional income (Keatinge et al. 2012). These policies and projects continue to reify particular Eurocentric ideas about gender, equality and empowerment, despite plenty of evidence that gender dynamics are often more complex and less binary than projects assume (Carney and Watts 1990, Schroeder 1999). Another key set of policies around gender empowerment in relation to agricultural production has involved pushing for the legal recognition of women's land rights (Wanyeki 2003), part of a wider trend promoting individual market-based rights to resources as central both to female empowerment and successful commercialisation (O'Laughlin 2007).

Mozambique is an especially interesting context for considering the relationship of agricultural commercialisation to gender, since it is often hailed for its progressiveness with regard to gender equality. Commentators point to Mozambique's acknowledgement of women's rights to land in law, its history of female participation in liberation movements and

politics, and the matrilineal social structures of ethno-linguistic groups in northern Mozambique (Arnfred 2011).

South-South Development Co-operation

Another feature of the policy landscape of the African Green Revolution is the presence of non-Western development actors. Southern development actors have long been involved in development co-operation in the world's poorest countries, including technical assistance as a form of anticolonial and Cold War solidarity (Mawdsley 2013). However, in recent years these kinds of interaction have come under closer attention from OECD donors, with particular attention given to the involvement of so-called 'rising powers', especially China, in development co-operation (Mawdsley 2013), though less attention has been given to non-elite accounts of these interactions (Mohan and Power 2008).[5]

A key 'new' actor in agricultural development is Brazil, many of whose development interventions in agriculture have been manifested as technical assistance from Embrapa (Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation), promoting mechanisation, and disseminating hybrid seed varieties (such as soybean) developed by Embrapa for tropical conditions (Cabral 2016). Although tractors 'caught the imagination of [the] African governments' with whom Embrapa was working (Cabral 2016, 422), 'it was the perceived transformation of family farmers into commercial farmers that was of interest in Brazil's agricultural development history' to recipient governments (Cabral 2016, 423), a vision of transformation which we will see echoing through the thesis.

ProSAVANA

These dynamics are brought together in the case of ProSAVANA, a trilateral agricultural development project seeking to promote agribusiness and increase agricultural productivity and production in a development corridor in northern Mozambique.

In 2009, the governments of Brazil, Japan and Mozambique began discussions about the potential for a trilateral agricultural development project. This project, called ProSAVANA (Programme to Develop the Savannahs of Mozambique), would replicate Brazil's so-called 'cerrado miracle', in which its northeastern grasslands were transformed into a large-scale soybean monoculture, with Japanese technical and financial assistance (Clements and Fernandes 2013). The implications of this for the cerrado farmers, communities and ecology were catastrophic (Fearnside 2002, Gudynas 2008), but helped Brazil to become one of the

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[5] Given the diversity of the actors engaging with the AGR, it is also worth noting that their policies and discourses are likewise not homogeneous: I refer here only to dominant trends.

world's biggest soybean producers in the space of 30 years and fuelled its burgeoning beef industry (Oliveira and Schneider 2015). In 2009, Lula da Silva's government was also looking to cement Brazil's position as a rising power on the world stage by engaging in development co-operation (Shankland and Gonçalves 2016, Chichava et al. 2013).

ProSAVANA seemed a perfect opportunity: Mozambique and Brazil share histories of Portuguese colonialism, and the Portuguese language, allowing Brazil to buy into narratives of solidarity and South-South co-operation (Mawdsley 2013, Cabral et al. 2013), with an emphasis on technical assistance rather than commercial benefits (Chichava et al. 2013). Even more fortuitously, the proposals claimed, the *cerrado* shares similar climatic and soil conditions with parts of northern Mozambique (Shankland and Gonçalves 2016). For the government of Mozambique, reducing reliance on imports and achieving food self-sufficiency is a primary agricultural goal (PNISA 2014), and the Ministry of Agriculture was an enthusiastic partner in the project (Monjane and Bruna 2018). The area chosen for this programme was the Nacala Development Corridor[6], a large swathe of northern Mozambique situated along a colonial transport corridor that links coal mines in Malawi with the port of Nacala (Figure 1).

Early proposals indicated that 14 million hectares of land would be transformed (Chichava et al. 2013), based on the problematic assumption – and one that resonates distinctly with colonial narratives about the abundance of land in Africa – that much of the Nacala Corridor's land is currently unused (Shankland and Gonçalves 2016). ProSAVANA would involve the promotion of commercial soybean production, using specially developed soybean varieties. ProSAVANA would comprise three stages: a research component in conjunction with IIAM (Agricultural Research Institute of Mozambique); an agricultural extension component featuring pilot projects with small and commercial-scale farmers; and a more ambitious and comprehensive 'Master Plan' looking at the regional development of markets and infrastructure as well as increasing agricultural productivity and production (Chichava et al. 2013). The parallel launch of the Nacala Fund in 2012 aimed to attract Brazilian and Japanese investment in the area, supporting consortiums of large-scale Brazilian farmers, offering promises for trickle-down benefits for local smallholders through outgrowing schemes (Chichava et al. 2013).

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[6] The establishment of a development corridor here has been under discussion since at least 1997, when the first Nacala Development Corridor Conference was held and the Nacala Development Corridor Company established, with strong connections to elite Frelimo party members. See Söderbaum, F. & I. Taylor. 2008. Competing Region-building in the Maputo Development Corridor. In *Afro-Regions: The Dynamics of Cross-Border Regionalism in Africa,* eds. F. Söderbaum & I. Taylor, 35-52. Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute.

When proposals for ProSAVANA began to be made public in 2012, they were met by outcry from civil society and peasants' organisations in Mozambique and beyond (e.g. UNAC 2012, JA! 2013). Critics pointed out the lack of transparency in the planning and development of ProSAVANA (Cabral and Leite 2015), its focus on large-scale commercial agriculture, apparently mostly ignoring the needs of Mozambican smallholders, and its potential to cause a 'wave of landlessness' by encouraging large-scale acquisitions of 'unoccupied' land actually farmed by smallholders (Chichava et al. 2013, 105). These anxieties appeared to be realised as agribusinesses took over three former state farms in Nampula and Zambézia provinces, running them as commercial plantations and displacing local farmers who were cultivating land within the old boundaries (Joala et al. 2016, Gomes 2017, Mandamule 2016).

The leak of a draft 'Master Plan' in 2013 prompted civil society organisations to mobilise an international Não ao ProSAVANA [No to ProSAVANA] campaign, bringing together diverse groups that included civil society in Brazil and Japan, putting pressure on their own governments to withdraw support for the project (Cabral and Leite 2015). In response to this pressure, ProSAVANA scaled back its proposals, releasing a revised Master Plan in 2015 which made a greater rhetorical commitment to 'vulnerable groups' such as women and youth (ProSAVANA 2015), and entering into dialogue with civil society organisations. In 2016, Nampula-based civil society organisations launched a platform to work with ProSAVANA for more peasant-friendly outcomes, the Mecanismo *de Coordenação da Sociedade Civil para o Desenvolvimento do Corredor de Nacala* [Mechanism for the Co-ordination of Civil Society for the Development of the Nacala Corridor] (Cabral and Norfolk 2016). This was met with forthright condemnation by some (mostly Maputo-based) actors from the Não ao ProSAVANA campaign, who felt that the northern civil society organisations had been co-opted by ProSAVANA (ADECRU 2016).

Although ProSAVANA is not the only project of its kind working in Mozambique – and many are doing so under much less scrutiny – the campaign and the debates around it have been influential in broader discussions about South-South Development Co-operation and the AGR (Cabral et al. 2016). For example, the controversy around ProSAVANA has attracted a great deal of academic interest (e.g. Cabral and Leite 2015, Chichava et al. 2013, Shankland and Gonçalves 2016), and provided the original rationale for this research project. My initial research question – what will ProSAVANA mean for smallholder farmers? – evolved as these developments unfolded, but one of the key reasons for choosing my research site (explained in greater detail in Chapter 2) was the fact that one of ProSAVANA's pilot community-based projects – along with several other commercialisation projects – was operating there.
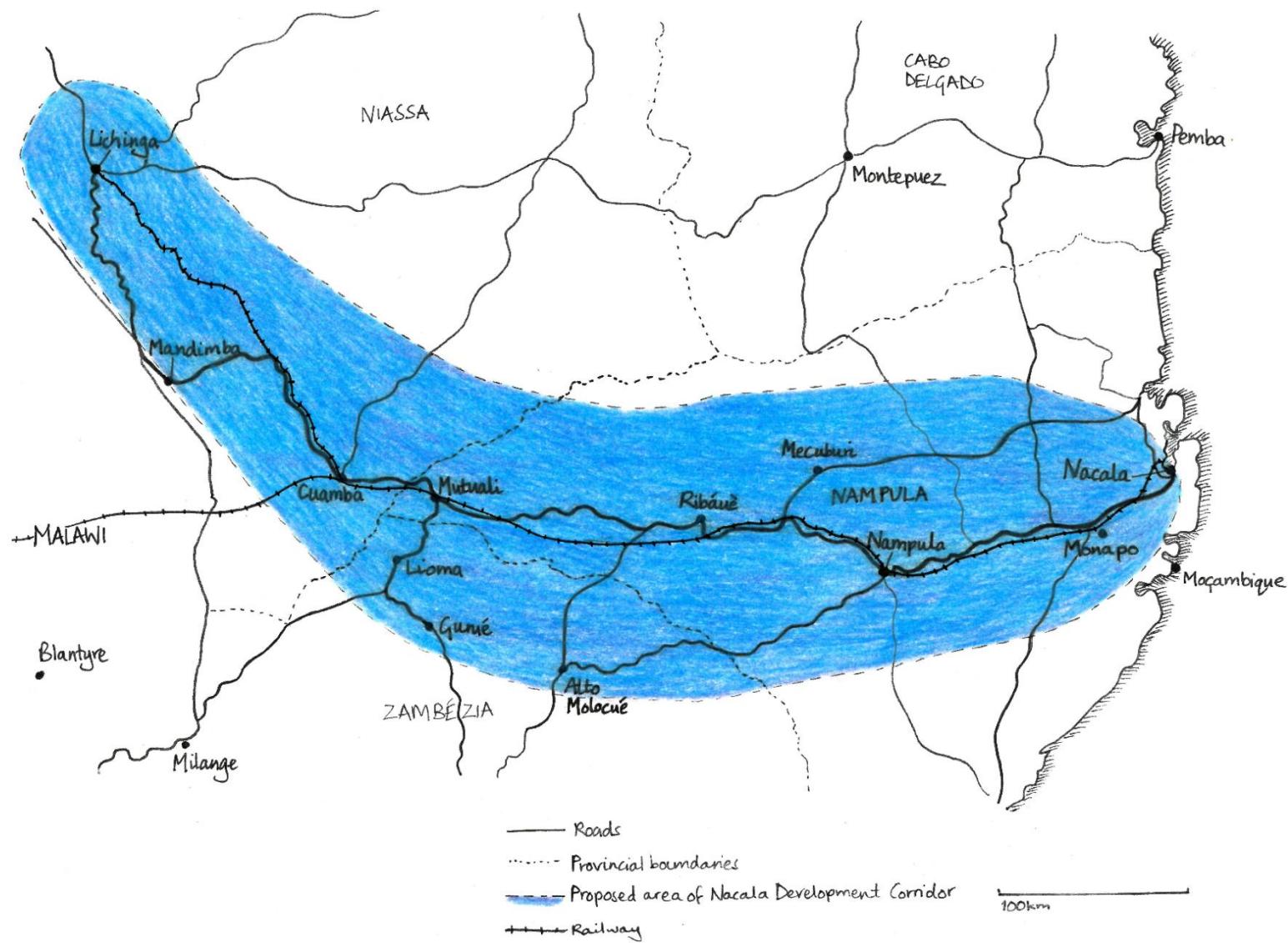
Figure 1: Part of northern Mozambique (based on maps from Open Street Map) with the approximate proposed area of the Nacala Development Corridor, from Chichava et al. (2013, 3)

Rationale

There is nothing new about offering a critique of agricultural modernisation or development projects. At policy and discourse level, the African Green Revolution has already been the subject of much incisive and insightful critique (Patel et al. 2014, Nally 2016, Thompson 2012, Holt-Giménez and Altieri 2013, Moseley, Schnurr and Bezner Kerr 2015). However, as with many conversations about development, the experiences of the intended non-elite 'beneficiaries' are often missing from these debates. Empirical evidence of peasant farmers' experiences of African Green Revolution interventions in general and ProSAVANA in particular remains scarce, particularly accounts concentrating on commercialisation rather than land acquisitions (but see Dawson, Martin and Sikor 2016, Mandamule 2016). The quotation that opens this chapter demonstrates how peasants' opinions of projects can differ from both AGR narratives and counter-narratives, and hence illustrates the importance of taking these opinions and the experiences that inform them into account in debates around the AGR.

This thesis initially set out to explore peasant farmers' experiences and opinions of ProSAVANA and other commercialisation projects in a particular place: Bairro, a rural neighbourhood in northern Mozambique (see Chapter 3). My contention is that their relationship with agricultural development projects was more complicated than often suggested in debates such as those surrounding ProSAVANA, and that rather than perceiving projects as inherently good or bad, peasant farmers tended to approach projects with ambivalence and agency, both of which are also mediated by power, identity and experience. Following ethnographies of development which focus on the everyday practices of and interactions between projects and beneficiaries (Mosse 2005, Long 2001) I adopt an ethnographic approach to consider in depth the social, political and material context in which projects intervene. Specifically, I look at the relationship of projects with the lived historical and contemporary context of moral and political economies, food security, and land politics in Bairro. I give particular attention to everyday lived experiences and the phenomenology and affect associated with these experiences, and to intracommunity inequalities and differences in these experiences, especially along gendered lines. By engaging with everyday experiences of these much-debated topics, this thesis contributes nuanced, empirically grounded insights to policy debates about ProSAVANA and the AGR, and to academic conversations about the meanings of food security, moral economy and land.

I began this work as a fairly typical development studies project, looking at the consequences of agricultural commercialisation. However, ethical dilemmas in the very process of researching these issues made me realise that – like the projects I was critiquing – I was entering into an arena of complex meanings, expectations and unequal power dynamics, and claiming to speak for peasants.

These experiences have led me to reflect at length on my own positionality in the process of carrying out this kind of research with the rationale of elevating 'peasant's voices', and the institutional and structural conditions which enabled and encouraged me in conducting ethically problematic research. Consequently, this thesis also contributes to literatures and debates around failure, research ethics and coloniality in geographical fieldwork, and work on decolonising the academy.

This thesis therefore has a greater focus on methods and ethics than is standard in this field. In Chapter 2, I set out the methodology for the research project, highlighting some of the conditions and decisions that contributed to ethical dilemmas. In Chapter 3, I describe the local context in which the research was carried out, focusing on the Bairro farmers' association and the different projects with which it was working. In Chapters 4, 5 and 6 I consider three themes from my ethnographic data around the interactions of AGR projects with local people: commercialisation, food security, and land. In Chapter 7, I use auto-ethnographic data to analyse the politics of my own interactions with people in this context, and how they led to ethically problematic outcomes, ultimately asking whether I should have been there conducting this research at all.

Research questions and theoretical framework

The starting point for this research was a research question that was ideologically informed by activism against ProSAVANA. My academic training, first in Marxist geography and political ecology, and then in the technological optimism of agricultural science, had given me a critical perspective on ProSAVANA. Theoretically, my research question was informed by peasant studies and critical agrarian studies, and their critiques of the long history in agricultural science and orthodox economics of blaming peasants for food insecurity and rural poverty (Handy 2009). This perspective encouraged me to conceptualise ProSAVANA in terms of peasant livelihood struggles:

- What does the ProSAVANA's push for commercialisation
  mean for peasants in northern Mozambique?

I knew from my readings of development studies and feminist political ecology that the 'peasants' affected by ProSAVANA would not be a homogenous group, and that axes of power along lines such as wealth and gender were likely to play an important role in shaping their experiences (O'Laughlin 2007, Deere 1995). Additionally, I was inspired by work on Makhuwa matriliny that presented matrilineal systems and practices as empowering for women (Arnfred 2011) and scholarship on African feminisms (Nnaemeka 2005, Mikell 1997), to consider the possibility that the peasant livelihood struggle I imagined I was going to investigate could also be the site of an 'indigenous feminist' struggle (Green 2007). My secondary research questions considered what the impact of

ProSAVANA would be on gender dynamics, and how local conceptualisations of gender and gendered justice were informing resistance to these impacts.

While I was conducting research in Mozambique, my focus began to shift. My initial research question was heavily informed by conventional understandings of development, which, though often critical, attribute a high degree of hegemony to development policy, the implication being that policy more or less dictates development practice and outcomes (Mosse 2005). Instead, as I attended project meetings with Bairro farmers, it quickly became apparent that this was not the case. For one thing, ProSAVANA was just one of many development projects visiting and working with the association (see Chapter 3). For another, these projects were just one part of a much wider and longer-term landscape of commercialisation (see Chapter 4). The implementation of projects was enacted through various and sometimes competing or conflicting actors and mediated through the politics of the farmers' association and the wider community. Furthermore, projects' impacts varied considerably, as they interacted with a dynamic moral economy and an uneven landscape of power both between projects and local farmers and within the local community itself. As a result, my research questions shifted to take a broader look at the context in which projects sought to intervene, as well as the dynamics and practices of interactions between projects and this context.

With this new lens, and in light of experiences, observations and conversations in Mozambique – not least the apparently reductive and essentialist interpretations of gender that were commonplace in interactions with activists and development practitioners, the complexity of matriliny in practice, and the gender segregation of many everyday activities in Bairro – my secondary research questions also shifted. Gender dynamics remained at the heart of my research, but again as part of a wider landscape of uneven power and dynamic meaning. At the same time, I was engaging more with postcolonial and antiracist feminist literatures (Mohanty 2003, Ware 2015), and becoming increasingly cautious about framing practices, statements and interactions as 'feminist' or otherwise. Instead, I adopted a more contextual understanding of gender, which I explore in more detail below.

How do peasants interact with/navigate/manage projects? How are these interactions mediated by the social landscape (moral economy, gender, power, land) in which people make their livelihoods?

- How do peasants navigate their position between commercial and non-market production and exchange?
- How is food insecurity experienced, navigated and prevented by peasant farmers?
- How do projects interact with the politics of land in the Nacala Corridor?

These questions continue to draw on some key ideas from peasant studies. They are influenced by Chayanovian scholarship on the agency and rationality of peasant farmers (Van der Ploeg 2013), and Marxian analysis from critical agrarian studies of the ways in which farmers' practices and behaviours are shaped and constrained by power structures (Bernstein 2010). This framing also encourages a focus on the ways in which cultural and social dynamics, and above all the circulation of power, produce and reproduce unequal patterns of resource access through time and space (Berry 1993).

One concept from peasant studies that I find particularly useful in analysing and understanding Bairro's politics and social dynamics is that of moral economy. Moral economy, as I discuss in Chapter 4, has been most influentially mobilised in peasant studies to describe the 'subsistence ethic' of some societies — essentially, the centrality of the ability to feed oneself, as opposed to the centrality of profit under capitalism. This has been characterised through analyses of peasant resistance to the encroachment of capitalism (Scott 1976) and the norms of reciprocity and patronage in peasant societies that are eroded by capitalism (Watts 1983). However, my use of the term draws on more recent work that takes a broader understanding of moral economy as a set of values, norms and practices that underpin formal and informal institutions for the control and distribution of resources (de Sardan, 2013 Wolford 2005, Palomera and Vetta 2016). I use the idea of moral economy throughout the thesis, particularly in Chapter 4 to explore Bairro people's relationship to money, markets and commercialisation, in Chapter 6 to look at competing ideas about land governance, and in Chapter 7 to understand conflicts over my own distribution of money in Bairro.

Moral economy has been critiqued for its tendency to portray peasant societies as homogenous and static, and its reification of binaries between capitalist and peasant societies (Palomera and Vetta 2016, Götz 2015). My use of its broadest interpretation is strengthened by an attention to practices and to intra-community and –household politics, which I derive respectively from ethnographies of development and feminist political ecology.

Although my choice of an ethnographic methodology was made before I encountered literatures on ethnographies of development (see Chapter 2), I have found this literature extremely insightful in analysis, and particularly in helping me to look beyond the discourses and policy narratives of ProSAVANA and the AGR (and their critics) to lived practices and experiences of development. Ethnography characteristically pays particular attention to the banal and the 'everyday': to practices, experiences, and micropolitics over time (O'Reilly 2011). In the context of development, ethnography draws attention to practices and experiences: 'it does not ask whether, but rather *how* development works' (Mosse 2005: 2), and by doing so can avoid a 'discursive determinism' (Moore 2000: 657) which obscures the ways in which development policy narratives and practical outcomes are socially

produced.[7] Likewise, in the context of commercialisation, an attention to the actors involved as well as the overarching structures allows researchers to explore how actors and structures — peasants, project staff and their political, economic and social context — are 'reciprocally constituted' (Long 2001, 4), and how farmers can actively engage in their own exploitation rather than just passively submit to it (Long 2001). These perspectives have prompted me to look beyond the polarised, contradictory debates around agricultural commercialisation and the African Green Revolution. They provide a basis for complicating the binaries of peasant studies and agricultural science (such as the moral and political economies considered in Chapter 4), bringing insights from everyday practices into development theory (for example, enriching the entitlements framework by considering the role of time and embodiment in people's experiences of food security), and thinking through how power and agency operate in interactions between projects, state and local actors (in the context of land disputes). Insights from postcolonial development studies (Baaz 2005, Kapoor 2008) have helped me to locate these question within the broader context of colonialism, and to connect project dynamics with my own experiences (see below).

Feminist political ecology (FPE) emerged from critiques of political ecology and similar disciplines for their lack of consideration of the role that gender plays in struggles over power and resources (Rocheleau, Thomas-Slayter and Wangari 1996). FPE informed the development of my research project from its earliest stages onwards, encouraging me to ask questions about gender dynamics and their relationship both to the impacts of the AGR and to resistance against it. As the research progressed, and I engaged more with recent FPE and the poststructuralist and postcolonial feminisms it draws from, so my interpretation of gender as an analytical category changed. Amongst other important ideas, work by Black and postcolonial feminists has shown how gender intersects with other axes of oppression such as race and class (Crenshaw 2008), and demonstrated the coloniality of dominant gender categories and norms and understandings of sexuality (Lugones 2008), including in an African context (Oyewùmí 2002, Oyewùmí 1997, Amadiume 2015). This work has also challenged me to think beyond conventional gender analyses that tend to focus on women, to think as well about articulations of masculinity (Ouzgane and Morrell 2005).

In light of these readings, I recognise that interpretations of gender, are contextual, and that gender is often interpreted and acted on as a binary, cisnormative, heteronormative category (Butler 1993). While for me, gender empowerment or emancipation are also relational, contextual and non-linear (Cornwall and Edwards 2014), they may not be perceived, measured or enacted as such. In this thesis, while using gender as an analytical category and observing its impact on practices and experiences in

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[7] This also provides a rationale for ethnography with peasants beyond a fetishization of their 'voices'…

Bairro, I have also tried to keep a sense of its contingency and contextuality as a category. My point of departure for gender analysis in this thesis is this: 'While women do experience changes/disasters differently it is not because they are women per se, but rather because of the structural inequalities they endure' (Harcourt and Nelson 2015).

FPE also has a methodological and ideological commitment to situated empirical practice in research, which recognises the partiality and subjectivity of knowledge: '[a]ll knowledge comes from somewhere, but we should not assume that we can see all that is to be known from within that somewhere' (Nelson 2015). Nelson suggests that there is a need for conversation between multiple positionalities, and for researchers to 'stay with the troubles' (Haraway 2016) and the contradictions which arise between different knowledges, to 'help generate richer, more complex theories and understandings' (Nelson 2015). Central to this process is reflexivity and engagement with the politics of research itself (Harcourt and Nelson 2015), which forms the central impetus of Chapters 2 and 6. A further radical reflexive imperative comes from postcolonial and decolonial feminist work (Tuck and Yang 2012, Mohanty 2003) which challenges us to think about the role of race and coloniality in our research practice (see Chapter 7).

As I gave more attention to the politics of interactions between development projects and practitioners and local people in historical and geographical context, engaged with postcolonial literature and decolonial activism, and as my own relationships with people and projects brought both insight and tension, further questions arose about the research process itself, and the politics of conducting such research in this context:

- What are the ethical implications of a researcher, given their particular positionality, entering and working in this context?
- Given the ongoing legacies of colonialism and unequal power dynamics, are there circumstances in which it would be more ethical for a researcher *not* to conduct research in a particular setting?

In combination, this provides a theoretical framework which is particularly interested in the relationship between peasant farmers and structures of power, including patriarchy and colonialism, and which explores how these are enacted and embodied through everyday practices and encounters. It is also a framework that is more interested in practice and the empirical than in contributing to theory. An ethnographic methodology tends towards the inductive and the iterative, so that rather than testing a particular theory or hypothesis, an ethnographic approach brings observations of the everyday into conversation with a range of theories to help contextualise and explain observed phenomena (Van Maanen 2011). In each of the ethnographic chapters, I draw out

key themes from my observations using a variety of concepts and theories to understand what they tell us about my central research questions, constructing what I think of as a theoretical patchwork or bricolage. The thesis is structured as a patchwork of six interlinking chapters:

Chapter 2: Methods

Here, I set out the methods used in this research and explain why they were chosen. I describe some of the key practical and ethical considerations in carrying out these methods, particularly language, consent and the role of my research assistant, Tifa. This chapter also establishes the context for exploring the ethical dimensions and implications of the research project, which I discuss in Chapter 6.

Chapter 3: 'Not just waiting for the government'

This chapter provides the context for the ethnography: sketching out the history of Mozambique, describing the neighbourhood where fieldwork took place, and looking at the story of the farmers' association who were working with ProSAVANA. It looks at the array of projects working with the association in 2015-16, and the specific aims, articulations and people's experiences of each.

In the next three chapters, I consider each of my sub-questions, considering in turn Bairro people's relationship with commercial agriculture, food security, and land, and the interaction of agricultural and other development interventions with these relationships.

Chapter 4: 'It was the money that burned the house'

- How do peasants navigate their position between commercial and non-market production and exchange? How do projects interact with these dynamics?

In this chapter, I look at people's relationship with commercial agriculture in Bairro, and the ways in which people balanced subsistence and commercial production, using the example of *makhaka* [dried cassava], which simultaneously represented commodity, famine crop and means of non-market exchange. Reflecting on an incident when an association member's house was destroyed by fire along with the women's savings group's safe, I use the concept of **moral economy** (Thompson 1971, Scott 1976, Watts 1983) to explore norms of reciprocity in Bairro, and people's everyday experiences of navigating the distinct but overlapping spheres of subsistence and commercial production and consumption. I look at how Bairro people and project staff expressed and practised particular values and norms around money and exchange. This provides insights into the ambivalence in Bairro people's relationship with commercialisation, the ways in which people deployed forms of agency, including reciprocity, witchcraft and relationships with projects, to navigate this ambivalence.

Chapter 5: The *matapa* problem

- How is food insecurity experienced, navigated and prevented in Bairro? How do projects interact with this?

This chapter draws on people in Bairro's everyday experiences of hunger and food provisioning to sketch out a **phenomenology** of food security (Watts and Bohle 1993), considering the ways in which practices of food provisioning, cooking and eating are physically and affectively embodied. I use the local concept of the *problema de caril* [the sauce problem] to explore how people achieve everyday food security through a **productive bricolage** (Batterbury 2001) of practices and exchanges, and hence to critique the dominant productivist discourses about **food security** (drawing on critiques by Nally 2016 and others) that inform agricultural and nutritional interventions in Bairro. I do this by extending a key counter-argument to these productivist narratives, Amarya Sen's **entitlements** framework (Sen 1981), providing a more contextually grounded account of food security that recognises the dynamism and contingency of food security in Bairro. I highlight the importance of cultural specificity, gender dynamics and temporality, particularly the seasonality of integration in both commercial and non-market economies, and how these relate to wider power structures and the impacts of development interventions.

Chapter 6: 'The foreigners confused it all'

- How do projects interact with the politics of land in the Nacala Corridor?

This chapter looks at land disputes in Bairro and what they reveal about different meanings of land, as well as the selective, conflicting and ambiguous sovereignties at play in Bairro, particularly in relation land governance. I look at a dispute over two areas of land, between the association, a particular family, and individual farmers in the community, and the roles played by local and district government and ProSAVANA project staff in mediating a resolution. I use Wolford's (2005) framing of **agrarian moral economies** to look at the entanglement of meanings, values and practices at play in these debates. I also draw on Tania Murray Li's work on land governance and inscription as an **assemblage** (Li 2014), I situate this dispute within the historical, legal and cultural context of land in Bairro. I then ask what this tells us about how people in Bairro frame and relate to different forms of power and authority, drawing on Donald Moore's concept of **selective sovereignties** (Moore 2005) to understand how people exercise agency in conflicts over land.

These three chapters give an insight into the complexity and dynamism of the context of everyday life and livelihoods in Bairro, including the politics surrounding money and ideas of fairness, the ambivalent relationship between different local people and external projects, and subjectivities informed by race, gender, and experiences of colonialism, war and development. In the fourth

ethnographic chapter, I examine my own interactions with these dynamics as an outsider and researcher, and the ethical implications of this.

Chapter 7: 'When you leave, they will kill me'

In this chapter, I draw on auto-ethnographic data to reflect on the dynamics of power, positionality, bias and agency in the research encounters on which this thesis is based, and how they contributed to serious ethical dilemmas and unethical outcomes. I use the lens of **whiteness** (Frankenberg 1993) to explore how the situation, and my own assumptions and biases, were structurally produced and enabled. Finally, I draw on the concept of **refusal** (Tuck and Yang 2014) to suggest how geography and anthropology might engage with a kinder and more radically decolonial research ethics.

Key themes and the contributions of the thesis

This thesis makes an empirical contribution to debates about the AGR and ProSAVANA, providing evidence about how they are manifested through project activities, and about how these are experienced and negotiated by supposed beneficiaries. This contribution, and the main argument of each chapter revolves around complexity and ambivalence: neither commercialisation, nor food security, nor land politics, were as straightforward as they are often portrayed in dominant discourses or counter-narratives. This is partly because the context in which interventions and disputes occur is already complex, with a long and mixed history of interaction with development projects, commercial and modern agriculture and modes of power. As a result, there is no straightforward answer to my initial research question, what does the push for commercialisation, through projects like ProSAVANA, mean for peasants in northern Mozambique? Projects were neither necessarily good nor bad for peasants, and peasant farmers approached these projects with ambivalence and with agency.

The theoretical contribution of this thesis builds on the concept of moral economy, particularly work that interprets the concept in broad terms. I combine this with an attention to the phenomenological, revealing how norms, values and behaviours around resources interrelate with everyday practices in interactions between commercialisation projects and a complex, partially subsumed context. This perspective brings into focus some of the nuances of livelihood struggles, such as the informed ambivalence of peasants – towards projects, colonialism, and commercialisation – and their agency and resistance, making use of the slippages, gaps and liminal spaces between subsistence and commercial production and exchange, and between 'traditional', colonial and postcolonial articulations of authority. Throughout the thesis, this approach also highlights the importance of interrogating gender, race and other power dynamics as a way of recognising intracommunity inequality and diversity, some of the intersecting axes along which these are structured, and the different ways in which interventions recognise and relate to these politics. We also repeatedly see

the ongoing legacies of colonialism and other exploitative and traumatic enactments of power in Bairro and Mozambique, from their inscriptions in the Bairro landscape to the dynamics of race and power in encounters with projects, government and other outsiders.

These dynamics also raise questions about the research process itself, and what it means to be asking these research questions or speaking for peasants in this way. In Chapter 8, this thesis makes an ethical contribution, or perhaps a provocation, interrogating the assumptions and power dynamics within the research project itself. While I make an academic case against simplistic framings of ProSAVANA and other projects that seem to obscure peasants' voices, as observed at the start of this chapter, it is also clear that my own account is also subject to the same workings of bias, power, subjectivity and agency. Márcia telling me that she loved ProSAVANA still only tells part of the story, perhaps a strand of the story which serves power rather than the marginalised. Who am I to be observing it, theorising it and writing it? I ask the reader to hold in mind these ironies and tensions – to stay with the troubles – as they proceed to read this thesis.

Chapter 2 Methods

Ethnography, ethics and coloniality

Introduction

'When you leave, they will kill me,' Odeta told me.

We were sitting on the veranda of her house. Odeta had an ache that had started in her neck, and moved through her shoulders and her temples to her back – the unmistakable symptoms of an illness caused by witchcraft.

I had been living with Odeta and her children for over ten months, and working with the peasants' association of which she was a member. When I arrived, I asked the association if I could stay and conduct research with them. I explained that I would like to stay in the household of one of their members to experience their everyday life. The members of the association nominated Odeta to host me, explaining that as a widow, and one of the poorest members of the association, she would benefit most from my contributions to rent and food. I leapt at this apparent chance to help someone.

Soon, however, there were problems. The leaders of the farmers' association started making financial demands of Odeta, and others spread vicious gossip about her family. Now Odeta was expressing fear for her life. Some members of the community, she said, consumed with envy for the money and prestige that my place in her household had brought her, would use sorcery to attempt to murder her. I was horrified. I was under few illusions that my research would actively benefit local people, but had little idea that I could cause so much harm.

What was I doing there? Given my lack of experience of research and of working in Mozambique, my limited grasp of the local languages, and all the cultural, social and political baggage of interacting with people in this context, who in their right mind would send me to do this research, and why would I agree?

Deeply unsettled by my experiences, I discussed them with my colleagues and at conferences. Often, people rushed to minimise my concerns. I was making too little of the agency of local people, too much of my own guilt. Increasingly, I wondered how much *was* about me – my naivety, the research methods I chose, my misguided wish to help. I started questioning how much was in fact about my institution – the limitations of its ethics procedures, its entitled attitude towards overseas fieldwork, and the bureaucratic and financial barriers to recruiting research students from more diverse backgrounds? And how much was a wider issue, about how research can re-inscribe colonial legacies and actively (re)produce colonial relationships?

According to both my discipline's and my own ethical standards, the research project on which this thesis is based was problematic and unethical, exacerbating tensions around inequality in the community where I conducted research, and reifying colonial relationships. In writing about my research methods and ethics, I draw on geographical literatures of failure, which position failure as 'more than simply research plans going awry, but [..] also inherently political' (Harrowell, Davies and Disney 2018, 232). A framing of failure provides a framework for honest and reflexive engagement with what went wrong with the research, the harm and damage caused, and the unethical practices involved. Failure enables an interrogation not only of personal responsibility but also the structural conditions for such a research project (in a sense, research which could not have gone ethically 'right') and its potential to cause harm. Halberstam (2011, 88) notes that 'failure recognizes that alternatives are embedded already in the dominant and that power is never total or consistent'. As such, brought into conversation with ethics, failure offers a way of reinvigorating reflexivity to recognise the role of dominant power structures and hierarchies, but also the agency and subjectivity of researchers, gatekeepers and interlocutors.

In this chapter and in Chapter 7, I attempt an honest and reflexive engagement with my research project. This chapter sets out the methods used in this research. First, I look at the methodological framing of ethnography, the context for choosing this and the way in which the project was developed. I explore the social landscape in which the research was carried out, reflecting on issues of language and consent, and the roles played by gatekeepers, particularly my translator and research assistant Tifa. I then look at the different methods used within the ethnography, evaluating them according to their usefulness in terms of data collection, but also in terms of their ethical implications. Throughout the chapter, I consider the ways in which the design of the research project and my choice of methods contributed to a situation which had potentially life or death consequences for participants. This discussion sets up the context for Chapter 6, in which I develop these themes through a critical analysis of auto-ethnographic material. From this analysis, I explore in greater depth the role of positionality in the research, interrogate how research that reinforces colonial power dynamics can be enabled by the whiteness of the academy, and question whether a student like me should have been conducting research in that context at all.

What is ethical research?

Ethics are a part of both geography's ontological and epistemological projects (Proctor, 1998). It is a widely accepted requirement of academic research that it be 'ethical', but what is considered ethical or not is a deeply subjective question (Simpson 2011). A cornerstone of contemporary geographical research is the Hippocratic principle of 'do no harm', although in the disciplines of development

geography and political ecology from which this research emerges, there is often an implicit moral imperative to 'do good' too (Madge 1997)[8].

The assumptions underpinning what it means to do 'harm' or 'good' and what constitutes 'ethical' or 'unethical' research have, of course, been critiqued, often in light of ethically problematic research, and particularly by feminist, post-modernist and postcolonial scholars (notable examples include Smith 1999, McDowell 1992b). These scholars ask critical questions about *whose* meanings, ethics and moral frameworks matter in research encounters (Domosh 2003). The very terms 'the field' and 'fieldwork', fundamental to the history of ethnography and anthropology, have themselves been troubled for their implication in colonial epistemologies that position the knowable world as 'out there' not just in a positivist, realist sense but also as an Other space to be known by the metropolitan anthropologist (Gupta and Ferguson 1997, Samuels 1997, Ntarangwi 2010). These critiques have been accompanied by an increasing anxiety around the positionality of researchers and power inequalities in research interactions. As Vanner (2015, 2) asks: 'Should Western feminists like myself do research in postcolonial contexts? And if so, how?'

Answers to these questions push students and researchers to engage reflexively with their positionality and the power dynamics of research settings (England 1994). Researchers are also encouraged to make their research more participatory and responsive to the needs of research subjects, aiming for a 'mindful reciprocity' that extends beyond a vague promise of possible policy implications (Pearson and Paige 2012, 73).

However, research projects are also products of their disciplines and institutions, and the moral frameworks in which these are embedded. Universities' systems of ethical procedural review tend to be constructed around Kantian understandings of ethics as absolute principles (Denzin 1997). These procedures centre around the seeking and giving of informed consent; the protection of data, usually including the anonymity of research participants; the safeguarding of vulnerable participants; and the impartiality of the research project (Silverman 2013). In practice, researchers have to take into account not only the ethical codes of the institutions and funding bodies with which they are affiliated, but also the social ethics of the research context, participants' ethics, and the researcher's own ethical code (Gune and Manuel 2007).

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[8] As we will explore later, this moral imperative is often tied up with the project of international development – even where the research is critiquing specific development projects – in complex, colonial ways.

My own ethical position tends towards situational ethics, taking into account the context of a particular act rather than following absolute rules (Vanner 2015), and has also increasingly been informed by decolonial and antiracist readings. In the process of carrying out this research, I have come to realise that, for me, the ethics of research should not be secondary to the research itself, and I do not believe (in most situations!) that the researcher's 'prerogative to know' (Coddington 2017, 316) is inherently justified. Consequently, I devote a larger part of the thesis to research methods and ethics than is usual in my discipline, since in my research, the politics of data collection were deeply entangled – in terms of actual content, capacity for methodological rigour, and ethical implications – with the politics I was studying. Chapters 4, 5 and 6, which consider different aspects of the dynamics of Bairro people's relationships with each other and with outsiders, are both enriched and unsettled by a consideration of these politics.

In this chapter, I attend to the details of the conception, recruitment, administration and funding of my PhD because these issues – what research happens? Who does the research? What are the institutional and material conditions which enable or restrict this? – are relevant to the ethical dilemmas that are inherently bound up in conducting research in post-colonial contexts.[9]

Like most ethnographers, my fieldnotes include a good deal of personal reflection, including notes on my affective experiences and emotional state, and thoughts on my positionality, biases and relationships with research participants. It would be difficult and misleading to separate out my subjectivity and influence from my data (England 1994). As ethical challenges around money unfolded, I increasingly perceived myself as part of the same landscape of development interventions in Bairro that I was studying, in terms of my intentions and behaviours, the way people perceived and interacted with me, and the effects our interactions were having on the moral and political economy of the community (cf Mosse 2005). Drawing on work on auto-ethnography, particularly Muncey (2010) and Ellis (2004), and without wishing to render my writing too egocentric, I have analysed these reflections and experiences as data. I see auto-ethnography as a tool to bring the same critical analysis to the politics and ethics of my encounters with people in Bairro as to the interactions I was ostensibly there to study. It also provides an insight into the affective and phenomenological aspects of these encounters.

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[9] I use the phrase 'post-colonial contexts' to talk about research in places which have experiences of colonisation, recognising that these are diverse, and that wherever and with whomever research takes place, we are always entangled in the postcolonial.

Context of the project

This thesis is based on data collected during 16 months of fieldwork in Mozambique, from July to December 2015 and February to December 2016. Eleven of those months (October to December 2015 and March to December 2016) were spent living, and doing ethnographic research, in the rural neighbourhood of Bairro.

The idea for my PhD, inspired by a 2014 *Guardian* article about ProSAVANA, was put forward by my supervisors as a call for applications. This is fairly unusual for qualitative research projects, but standard for the natural science-dominated department in which we are based. I had never been to Mozambique and knew little about it. I was 21, in good physical and mental health, with no dependents or financial obligations[10], and was excited at the prospect of spending a prolonged period in Mozambique. I was interviewed, and selected to do the PhD on the basis of my excellent academic record and experience of (short-term) fieldwork in Liberia and Nepal. I was awarded funding from the university's Faculty of Science and Technology to cover my tuition fees, provide me with an annual fund of £900 for travel and training expenses, and pay me a generous stipend for three and a half years to study the PhD full-time.[11]

Why ethnography?

Ethnography, my method of choice, emerged as the key methodological apparatus of the colonial anthropological project (Asad 1991). The archetype (G.W. Stocking 1992) is that of Malinowski's fieldwork: a long-term study by a white Western researcher of a society o/Other than his (or sometimes her) own, often involving the ethnographer living in one village for a year or more and participating in and observing local life. Ethnography combines the phenomenological and the discursive: its hallmarks are participant observation and the use of oral testimony and life histories (O'Reilly 2011). The coloniality of this way of conducting ethnography has been the subject of many critiques, including pointing out the othering effects of the white gaze and the epistemic violence of this process, as well as the ways in which these knowledges have been used as a means of knowing, categorising, and controlling colonised peoples (G.W. Stocking 1992). However, ethnographic methods themselves have endured, taking on new forms which partially address these critiques,

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[10] I mention these factors as particularly pertinent to enabling me to do this kind of research, but also recognise that other aspects of my identity – cisgender, heterosexual, middle class, British and above all white, facilitated my recruitment, access to the field, and safety during fieldwork. Privilege is discussed further in Chapter 6.
[11] This type of funding – and hence this project – is only available to UK/EU students; non-EEA students are required to pay much higher tuition fees.

particularly the concept of the 'insider' ethnography, in which the ethnographer is a member of the society under study (Simpson 2011).[12]

In my PhD project, studying the impacts of a major agricultural development project on local populations, there was no question in my mind that I would use ethnographic methods. I wanted to understand the everyday lives of Mozambican smallholder farmers under ProSAVANA: their experiences, as well as their views. I hoped to see the programme from their perspectives, to take their realities and their worldview as a point of departure for observing the effects of ProSAVANA. I thought that, by using ethnography, I would somehow be able to bring some of these peasants' 'voices' and experiences into debates about ProSAVANA.

Despite the way in which this project was conceptualised, and my lack of skills or experience in conducting ethnographic or participatory research, I was committed to the idea that my PhD fieldwork would not recreate the problems of top-down development models or colonial research projects. In my research design, I planned to use 'participatory methods' such as participatory mapping, farm walks and focus groups (e.g. Feldstein and Jiggins 1994, Chambers 1983). The research would be inductive and iterative, evolving to better represent the concerns and priorities of research participants. However, it did not take long for me to realise that conducting this kind of research in a complex and unfamiliar context raised a number of practical and ethical problems.

Contacts in Mozambique

The way in which the project was conceived, and I was recruited, meant that there was no prior link with institutions, activists, researchers or communities in Mozambique, and these had to be established from nothing. In the July before I started my PhD, one of my supervisors made a month-long trip to Mozambique to make contacts with academics and activists. These included a professor at Mozambique's Eduardo Mondlane University, who agreed to write me a letter of invitation to secure a visa.[13] Another key set of contacts made during the trip was with activists from a Nampula-based

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[12] Although I have set out the academic rationale for this research project in Chapter 1, my personal motivation for the project strongly influenced my choice of methods. I came to the PhD project straight from an MSc, in which my dissertation project involved a field trial of water-saving irrigation technologies for rice production in Nepal. Ultimately, it emerged through participant observation that local farmers did not want to use the water-saving irrigation technique, even though it worked, because they already had strategies in place for coping with water shortages. The development of my technique was based on assumptions about how people access and use water that did not apply in this context. See Howell, K. R., P. Shrestha & I. C. Dodd (2015) Alternate wetting and drying irrigation maintained rice yields despite half the irrigation volume, but is currently unlikely to be adopted by smallholder lowland rice farmers in Nepal. Food and Energy Security, 4, 144-157.

[13] The visa itself was easily obtained, and much could be said of the disparity between the ease with which I was able to live for 16 months in Mozambique and do research, while non-EAA students struggle to get the

NGO, who provided me with a base and substantial support at the start of my first visit to Mozambique. However, it quickly became clear that my research project was not sufficiently closely aligned with their interests to make a joint project feasible.[14]

Ethical procedures

I applied for, and was granted, ethical approval by the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC). The process was simultaneously framed by my advisors and colleagues as a pointlessly bureaucratic hoop-jumping exercise, mostly irrelevant to qualitative research in general and ethnography in particular, and something that I was under great pressure to obtain. Fitting the ethical demands of ethnography into the review framework – especially the issue of continued informed consent – was challenging (Simpson 2011). However, my simultaneously dismissive and anxious attitude meant that, instead of engaging in dialogue with the UREC about these difficulties, I presented my research to them as interviews rather than ethnography, believing that my reflexivity and sensitivity would be enough to guide me through any ethical challenges, with or without formal approval[15]. I committed to obtaining the prior informed (oral) consent of research participants, keeping their data anonymous, and acting sensitively around 'vulnerable' participants. The fact that I could get approval so straightforwardly, and proceeded to obtain local research permissions without any questions about ethics being raised at all, reflects my considerable racial, national and institutional privilege, and is an issue we will return to in Chapter 6.

'Choosing' a community

Although I had an overarching methodology in mind, the location for my fieldwork and the practicalities of interviews and other methods were decided and developed after I moved to Mozambique.

In August 2015, I made three 'scoping' trips with staff from the NGO and another PhD student (from the USA) around part of the Nacala Corridor, visiting key sites where communities had been affected

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necessary visas to study at UK institutions, while paying for the privilege. For my second fieldwork period, my supervisors reached out to a contact at Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, Professor Hélsio Azevedo, to help me obtain a one-year student visa. He invited me to his department, the Advanced School of Hospitality and Tourism in Inhambane (ESHTI). During my stay there, as part of our reciprocal agreement (but needless to say of additional benefit to me), I ran two undergraduate seminars about gender and intersectionality with Hélsio's colleague Dra. Wanda Uaene.

[14] In retrospect, this should have been a warning sign: without the direct support of this NGO, could I really carry out a research project alone or establish sufficient links with another NGO to work with them?

[15] Since this time, the Lancaster University's ethical review procedures have undergone some changes, and I have engaged in productive discussion with the new Faculty Research Ethics Officer about both my research and ways of accommodating ethnography in formal ethical procedures.

by land acquisitions.[16] Many of the communities we visited have already been the subject of research projects (e.g. Smart and Hanlon 2014).

Throughout both trips, I took notes in interviews and took photos, with oral consent. The trips provided an opportunity to see more of the Nacala Corridor, which given my lack of experience and knowledge of the region was extremely important. I gained some familiarity with the Corridor's landscapes and infrastructures, and the crops which smallholders and agribusinesses were growing. It gave me a sense of some of the key conflicts and concerns around agricultural development in the Nacala Corridor and the narratives surrounding them. The trips also provided a crucial insight into the practice of doing research with producers' associations, but also raised some concerns about positionality and ethics in doing this.

Some of the meetings we had during the scoping trips felt like case studies in everything graduate seminars about 'good' research tell students not to do. I was particularly critical of Filipe, the NGO staff member who accompanied me: his conspicuous display of wealth, as well as the way he talked over people, pushed his video camera in the faces of interviewees, and often gave an impromptu lecture about agronomic practices at the end of a discussion. Only with my prompting would he ask for people's consent to participate. Some of the questions he asked about gender seemed reductionist and I was very uncomfortable with them. The experience of asking these generic questions in a group context consolidated my motivation to do an ethnography and find out what lived realities were like behind the impassive faces and monosyllabic answers of these brief visits and group meetings.

In retrospect, Filipe's and my own positionality, and performance of our positionality, were of course more complicated than I realised. As I was to discover during my ethnography, choosing to wear a *capulana* and sitting on the floor did little to disrupt the colonial associations of my white female body occupying that space and performing the role of researcher. Neither was my relationship with Filipe free from gender, racial and colonial politics, although I did not apply the same reflexivity to these dynamics as I felt I did to those with the communities we visited.[17]

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[16] My supervisor provided funding for the trip from an early career grant, which I used to pay for the hire of a car and driver, and fuel. The NGO staff were not paid for their time or assistance. The NGO staff produced letters of introduction for me to present and have stamped at the district agricultural office in each of the districts we visited.

[17] This delineation of what – ethically at least – constitutes the 'field' is something that has been critiqued, by Katz, C. (1994) Playing the Field: Questions of Fieldwork in Geography. *The Professional Geographer,* 46**,** 67-72. amongst others, suggesting that 'we are always already in the field' (p.67), already entangled in power relationships and positionality.

Given my limited experience of Mozambique and shortage of contacts, I decided to choose a place to conduct my ethnography from one of the communities we had visited on the scoping trips. In dialogue with my supervisors and the NGO staff, I decided[18] that the most suitable place for me to conduct an ethnography of peasant experiences of ProSAVANA was with a farmers' association which we had visited twice.

This choice was determined partly by my research questions: this producers' association was one of two in Nampula which had received and worked with ProSAVANA pilot projects. It also interacts with many development projects, representing a main attraction on what Smart and Hanlon (2014, 57) describe as the 'development tourist trail', which spoke to my interests in development projects and their assumptions about gender and food security. The decision was also a question of logistics, given my limited networks and experiences in Mozambique, and of my own preference, both of which reflect some of the reasons why the association had become so popular with visiting NGOs and government officials. The community was situated nearer to the regional capital, Nampula, than many of the others we had visited. The lively tour some women had given us during our preliminary visit made me feel that this was a hospitable and friendly place where I would like to live and work. The association's relationship with NGOs and government meant that it was more straightforward as an outsider to gain access to the community. This method of selection seemed the most practical, but undeniably gave my work an emphasis towards particular themes and interests which would have been different had my choice of research location been selected more systematically, randomly, or with more guidance from the NGO. It also brought me into a community with a history of much greater engagement with development interventions and other outsiders than many neighbouring communities, which proved important in the ethical implications of our interactions[19].

The NGO staff informed me that it was now imperative that I get official permission for my research project, starting at the provincial level. I applied for an official letter of permission from the provincial department of agriculture, which entailed submitting a letter from my supporting NGO and an interview with the Provincial Secretary of Nampula, and which I received six weeks later.

Clutching my official letter for fear of rejection at such a crucial stage of my research, in early October 2015 I travelled to the district town. I received assistance from a local branch of the NGO Association for Rural Mutual Aid (ORAM) and was hosted very generously by an order of Catholic nuns based in the town. I took the letter to the district agricultural office (SDAE), and after stamping my letter they

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[18] Again, see Katz on the arrogant language of 'choosing' where to do research.
[19] That said, it is not easy to speculate how my presence and behaviour might have interacted with local dynamics in a different context.

accompanied me to Vila, the administrative post.[20] Here, I had an interview with the *Chefe de Poste* and received his stamp of approval. Finally, the SDAE officer took me to the Bairro producers' association, explaining to them what I wanted to do and showing them the letter to demonstrate that the project had official sanction. The president of the association was away that day and most of our conversation was with one of the other male members, which seemed to me at the time to be setting a problematic precedecent, given that I wanted to study gender and particularly to work with women. As we left, he approached the car and asked me to contribute some money for 'communications'. Unsure what to do and in the pressure of the moment, I handed him 200Mt. We visited again the next day to talk to the president. When I asked if I could stay with them for two months and do research about food security with them, the president turned and asked the members present, mostly women, and they mumbled assent. The last people to give consent were those whom the project would affect most. The Bairro farmers' association agreed to host me for seven weeks, and arranged for me to stay with one of their members, Odeta.

Social landscape of the research

The nature of an in-situ ethnography like this means that data collection represents both a study, and a product, of the social context of the ethnography. My experiences in Bairro were strongly shaped by the social landscape, and by the individuals and social groups with whom I interacted. Although the ethnographic and auto-ethnographic chapters will explore some of the contours of this landscape in more detail, here I briefly describe the organisations and individuals who played the most significant roles in the practice of doing research in Bairro. These include the characters who feature most often in the ethnographic chapters: Odeta (whose food securing practices form the basis of Chapter 5), Florêncio (whose authority over land is considered in Chapter 6), Mário and Cláudio (Chapter 7), and members of the association including Flávia (Chapter 4) and Márcia (who we have already seen in Chapter 1).

My initial point of contact in Bairro, and my official host throughout, was the producers' association based in Bairro. When I first visited Bairro in 2015, the association had an active membership of about 40 local men and women. As will be explained in Chapter 3, it had been operating in one form or another for nearly 20 years, primarily as a means to access and distribute agricultural inputs and receive development projects and government support. The association was a member of a forum, also based in Bairro, which brought together farmers' associations from along the arterial road to the

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[20] The only request for reciprocity from these institutions came at the end of my 2015 stay in Mozambique, when the then Director of the district SDAE asked me to send him a summary of what I had learned during my seven weeks in Bairro.

next province. Neither the association nor the forum were formally affiliated to a political party, but in practice their leaders and members tended to be members of, or closely aligned with, FRELIMO, the ruling political party. Some of the association's founding members remained extremely influential elders in the wider community, and other members of the association made sure I paid appropriate attention and respect to these people, further cementing my relationship with these dominant networks. However, I was also enthusiastically befriended, much to Odeta's initial mistrust, by a neighbour, Serena, whose family were members of RENAMO.

The crucial gatekeepers for me to live and do research in Bairro were Mário and Cláudio, presidents of the association and the forum respectively. Mário was my main practical gatekeeper – I ran all decisions about data collection, participants and involvement with the association past him – and he took on the greatest share of responsibility for my safety and wellbeing during my residence in Bairro. He had held several positions of responsibility in the community, such as President of the school, and received a military pension for his service in the air force during the war. Cláudio was also the pastor of the Bairro Baptist church, and although I saw him much less frequently than Mário, he was responsible for introducing me to local leaders, the *Chefe de poste*, and accounting for my safety and activities to the local authorities. At Odeta's insistence, I informed Cláudio before embarking on any trips outside of Bairro.

Most of my everyday contact was with my host Odeta and her family, and with Mário's wife, Hélia. When Mário first introduced me to Odeta as my host, he explained that the association had chosen her to host me because she was a poor widow – someone who might benefit materially from hosting me, and as a single woman an appropriate person to host another single woman. Odeta was about 40 years old. She was originally from another district in Nampula province, and had moved to Bairro with her second husband, who was from Bairro. He died several years before my arrival, and although it would have been customary for Odeta to return to her own land after she was widowed, her late husband's family encouraged her to stay so that they could help support her children. At the time I lived with her, Odeta was living with her two youngest daughters (Elisabete, 12, and Isabella, 8) and an adopted nephew (Eduardo, 13), while two older children lived with relatives elsewhere in northern Mozambique, and her eldest daughter, Marlene, had married and lived nearby with her husband and four children. I stayed in one of the three rooms in Odeta's house, and Odeta and the children cooked

food for me once or twice a day, did my laundry, brought me water to drink and to bathe with, and cleaned my room[21]. I paid Odeta money for rent and food, which I discuss in Chapter 7.

Our relationship became closer over the eleven months for which I lived with Odeta and her family, but although we shared laughter and affection, Odeta throughout demonstrated her awareness of the unequal power dynamic between us, referring to me occasionally as *filha* [daughter] or *mwanaka* [my child] but mostly using the more respectful terms *titia* [auntie] or *mamã* [mother/madam].

Hélia, Mário's wife of ten years, was originally from the neighbourhood adjoining Bairro, though she had lived for some years in Cuamba with a previous husband. She was about 50 years old, and much-respected *conselheira de mwali* [advisor at female initiation ceremonies]. Hélia provided one of my meals each day, and spent time most days socialising and sharing her cooking and medicinal knowledge with me. I enjoyed spending time with Hélia and Mário, although I did not feel the same connection and loyalty to them as to Odeta, which was partly a result of and partly contributed to the tensions around money detailed in Chapter 7.

During my stay in Bairro I received visits from some of my own family members, which had a significant impact on the ways in which people in Bairro perceived and related to me. My visitors' insights influenced the way I saw certain aspects of life in Bairro, and the practicalities of having people to stay also played a part in politics around money and material goods.

Language

In many anthropological texts, there is little mention of translators: the ethnographer appears to learn the local language with ease, quickly becoming fluent enough to participate in local social life and ask research questions, although the nuances of meaning remain matters of deep consideration (Borchgrevink 2003, Gibb and Iglesias 2017). In anticipation of my fieldwork, I studied Portuguese for nine months, but it became clear on my arrival in Mozambique that my language skills were inadequate for daily life in Nampula, let alone research. During my first months in Mozambique, my Portuguese skills improved enough to have straightforward conversations. In Bairro, however, the main language of everyday interactions was not Portuguese but Makhuwa. Most people understood and spoke some Portuguese, but there were anxieties around the use of Portuguese, and fluency was

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[21] The ethics of this, again, are difficult, and I remain discomfited by my passive exploitation of child labour, even while acknowledging its role and its importance as a coping strategy in such a marginal context. The children were very shy around me at first but gradually became more confident, asking me for pens, photos and medicines, and sometimes accompanying Tifa and me on research visits.

strongly related to education, and hence divided along age, wealth and gender lines. In some ways it was useful to have limited Portuguese language skills: it meant that the form of the language I learned was attuned to Bairro articulations of grammar, pronunciation and meaning. However, using Portuguese rather than Makhuwa helped re-inscribe colonial power dynamics, and throughout my fieldwork I was affected by anxiety and uncertainty about whether I had understood conversations, particularly important conversations about money (see Chapter 6).

Meanwhile, I tried to learn Makhuwa, but struggled to progress beyond greetings and small talk. Being 'less-than-fluent', I felt like 'a part-time ethnographer who had failed to earn her stripes by mastering the intricacies of [the local language's] syntax' (Harrowell et al. 2018, 233). It became clear that to engage more than superficially with local people, especially older women, I would need the assistance of a translator.

Research assistance: Tifa

I approached Mário in March 2016 and explained that I would need someone to help me with my research, particularly to accompany me to different parts of the *bairro* and to act as translator between Portuguese and Makhuwa. We agreed that a young woman, about my age, would be the most appropriate person to work with me, in terms of our working relationship (it might be unseemly for me to be spending so much time with a man), the spaces we would be able to access (it might make it easier for me to talk to women), and our positionality (with equivalence of gender and age), particularly given the gender segregation of many activities and spaces in Bairro. We agreed that this research assistant would work for me while we carried out interviews with the 38 association members, and then we would review the situation.

Later that week, Mário told me that he had arranged for a prospective research assistant to attend our church that Sunday. After the service, he introduced me to Tifa Virgílio. At the time, Tifa was 21 years old, a devout Baptist, and engaged to a nurse in Pemba. She had completed secondary school, the first in her family to do so, but had not been able to get a job or a place at university. Her father was one of the wealthier smallholders in the area, as well as Frelimo secretary for his neighbourhood. Tifa's parents were from Bairro, but lived just outside it.

Tifa was shy at first, but quickly developed confidence and flair in her role as translator, facilitator and co-investigator. By June, when we began interviewing non-members of the association and young people, she was critiquing and honing my interview questions with me. By December, she had started taking the initiative by adding her own questions, recording speeches at an agricultural exposition and taking photos and videos on her newly purchased smartphone. At Tifa's suggestion, following several

interviews with young people where Tifa felt the participants were not taking matters seriously enough, the two of us got uniforms (matching skirts) for our field work.

As well as her skills, insight and local knowledge, Tifa brought her own positionality and biases to the research, which informed the ways in which she interpreted and translated the meanings of questions and responses, as well as her behaviour (Temple and Edwards 2002, Borchgrevink 2003). Her positionality was complex, dynamic and ambivalent, relating to her gender, age, kinship, reputation and (light) skin colour. Tifa's kin relationships with some members of the community brought with it a whole set of micropolitics of feuds and allegiances. Although Tifa was not well-known to many people in Bairro, she was already linked to many of them: she was at school with their children or siblings, they went to school with her mother, they knew her grandparents. She was younger than nearly everyone we interviewed, but educated to a much higher degree. Her status as unmarried and childless meant less prestige in some circles, but was compensated (in some ways) by the prestige she had from her father's position of power and from working for and with me. People were also relating her in relation to me and my own positionality (cf Caretta 2015).

Figure 2: Tifa

Likewise, Tifa's beliefs and attitudes, at least as they pertained to our research, were complex and dynamic. Her upbringing in a patriarchal family and attendance of state-run schools and a conservative Baptist church seemed to have firmly influenced her ideas about gender norms and

roles, as well as the nature of learning and research. She expressed clear-cut Baptist notions of right and wrong, true and untrue, but also held contradictory views, perhaps influenced by Latin American telenovelas and the experience of living in Nampula city. Like me, Tifa found the research experience transformative and some of her strong opinions changed during the time we worked together, partly from the conversations we shared, the stories we heard in our data collection, and the experience of having a regular job and income and becoming a major breadwinner in her household.

Tifa has great reflexive abilities, and demonstrated great sensitivity around her positionality and the way others perceived and positioned her. My own relationship with Tifa is also deeply entangled in the power hierarchies and the politics of research in this context. Tifa quickly became my best friend and confidante in Bairro, and I do not think I am presuming too much to say that I am her friend too. We call each other *mana* (sister) and it is meant genuinely and with affection on both sides, but our relationship is also defined by vast material and power inequalities and by the exchange of money and labour. I have tried to navigate these with sensitivity and self-awareness. Throughout the thesis, where I use the first person plural to refer to interviews and research activities, this is intended to acknowledge Tifa's key role in the co-production of data, recognising that 'we research with interpreters and not through them' (Harrowell et al. 2018, 233), without wishing to obscure the inequality in our relationship (cf Sanjek 1993).

Consent

The unequal power dynamics between my participants, Tifa, and me had particularly significant implications for obtaining consent. Mainstream consent models, including ethical procedural review, derive from European philosophy via legal understandings of the term and from its use in medical research (Vermeylen and Clark 2016). They emphasise the need for consent to be free, prior, and informed[22] and tend to be framed in the binary terms of consent freely given or refused (Miller and Wertheimer 2010). They have been critiqued for their individualism and for their simplistic representation of oppression as something that can be switched on or off by the giving or withdrawing of consent (Martin 1989). Additionally, based on Eurocentric moral frameworks, they tend not to consider what consent and autonomy may mean in different cultural contexts, including how people's experiences and subjectivities affect how they perceive the research process, and the invasiveness and trustworthiness of the researcher (Barata et al. 2006). While the neoliberal

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[22] From my ethical procedural review questionnaire:
"Will you take all necessary steps to obtain the voluntary and informed consent of the prospective participant(s) or, in the case of individual(s) not capable of giving informed consent, the permission of a legally authorised representative in accordance with applicable law?"

university is increasingly obsessed with accountability and transparency, the system by which it monitors this fails to accommodate the complexity and relationality of consent (Simpson 2011).

Obtaining this kind of consent is particularly problematic in a long-term ethnography, in which the data collection is through a protracted series of encounters rather than a discrete event, troubling notions of prior and informed consent. As the researcher develops closer relationships with subjects, the boundaries of what is data and how it will be used become increasingly blurred. Methods like participant observation complicate this still further. As research students we are taught to work hard to put participants at ease – essentially encouraging participants to forget that they are under a form of surveillance (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007), and blurring the boundaries between participants volunteering information and the researcher eliciting that information. As researchers, do we try to put people at their ease so that they can give consent, or so that they will talk to us, and how are those things similar and different? By way of alternative, Fluehr-Lobban (1996, 240) discusses the vaguer but perhaps more pragmatic 'spirit of informed consent' which is based on honesty, openness and two-way communication with research participants (Fluehr-Lobban 1994). This is difficult to achieve, however, in a cross-cultural, cross-linguistic context like Bairro, where there is a long history of short-term quantitative data collection, in which consent is often not sought, while people have little experience of long-term fieldwork or the seeking and giving or refusing of formal consent.

The question of whether consent can be 'free' is also challenging, and relates to power dynamics between researcher and potential participants.[23] As Marling (2017) notes, 'consent is a function of power. You have to have a modicum of power to give it'. You also have to believe that you have the power to refuse consent. The giving of consent may be laden with hopes about what a particular response will mean, and fears about the consequences of a particular response – especially in a case like this, where meetings with *akhunya* [outsiders] carry specific associations and expectations. In this research project, there were also issues in that consent for the ethnography (as opposed to the individual interviews) was given collectively by the association, whose leaders in turn will have been influenced by the fact that I arrived bearing letters of permission from government. This raises difficult questions about who may give consent for whom (Simpson 2011), and what it would mean to create a culture of consent in a context of such power and material inequality. It also offers an insight into why peasant associations might accept a project like ProSAVANA, even if it might not serve the interests of the community, or at least all the members of the community.

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[23] A particularly powerful critique of mainstream models of consent has emerged from feminist activism around sexual assault, which I draw on in examining consent in my research. Although there are many differences between research activities and sexual assault, there are also some pertinent parallels, not least of which is the navigation of consent within a landscape of deeply unequal power relations between subjects.

Mozambique and Bairro's histories meant that local social dynamics were tied up with legacies of colonialism, war, and violence, all within living memory, as well as ongoing poverty and exploitation, and personal experiences of sexual and domestic violence, and the trauma associated with all of these. Although it is difficult to predict how these might have affected people's subjectivities, they were likely to have influenced their responses to others, particularly to people in positions of authority, and to the kinds of interaction – like being asked questions – that might be associated with these previous interactions (Cronin-Furman and Lake 2018). Although I was asked during ethical procedural review about the vulnerability of my research participants,[24] at no point in the review or during my application for research permissions was I required to explain how I would manage this sensitivity. Although I worked with children and adults who might be considered vulnerable according to several definitions, there were no protocols in place – a criminal records bureau check, for example – to ensure that I would not abuse their vulnerability or my position of power (cf Cronin-Furman and Lake 2018).[25]

In this context, where refusing consent for an interview may not always have seemed possible, participants retained – and may have exercised – a degree of agency over what they chose to reveal and obscure in their responses. Occasionally this was explicit: conversations about women's rituals, subject to a set of strongly enforced taboos, were followed by cries of 'Don't write that down!' and I was told who I could share this information with (not my male supervisors, and not my mother). When participants were vague or brief in their responses, or provided responses that contradicted their behaviour or responses they had already given[26] they may have been using silence and obfuscation as a means of exercising agency (Gatwiri and Mumbi 2016). The non-participatory nature

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[24] From the ethical review questionnaire (emphasis mine):
'If the research uses human participants, are any of the following relevant?

- The involvement of vulnerable participants or groups, such as children, people with a learning disability or cognitive impairment, or persons in a dependent relationship.
- The sensitivity of the research topic, e.g. the participants' sexual, political or legal behaviour, or their **experience of violence, abuse, or exploitation**.
- The gender, ethnicity, language or cultural status of the participants.'

[25] This is even more tragically pertinent following the exposure of sexual abuse of local people by Oxfam staff in Haiti, which reveals how exploitative people manipulate the aid system, and how the system itself normalises unequal power relations and the abuses they enable. See Hirsch, A. 2018. Oxfam abuse scandal is built on the aid industry's white saviour mentality. In *The Guardian*.

[26] I am wary of talking about this navigation of consent in terms of 'truth' and withholding information, because that implies an objectivity and a clarity of self-knowledge which participants might not have felt; see also discussions of the 'languages of power' in Chapters 4 and 6.

of my data collection, analysis and writing has meant that people in Bairro were also denied agency over the ways in which their responses have been interpreted and used.[27]

Communicating research

Aware that effective communication of research is fundamental to informed consent, at the start of each of my visits, I gave the farmers' association, local leaders and the Baptist church congregation a short summary of my research. Limited by my language skills, with Cláudio translating into Makhuwa for me, I said that I wanted to learn about everyday life as a farmer in Bairro, and that I was most interested in gender and in food security. Although Bairro had received countless one-off research visits, with NGO extension workers sitting with the farmers' association and asking questions, or strolling around the neighbourhood with clipboards, and it had hosted some Mozambican agricultural students on placement, there did not seem to be a precedent for this kind of research. Some people had relatives with degrees or professional qualifications, but no clear concept of what a PhD involved. As a result, many people were confused by my ongoing presence, and rumours spread about what I was doing there. Many people told me they thought I was in Bairro to learn Makhuwa, which added to their confusion and frustration at my very slow progress learning the language. Again, Tifa performed a crucial role in dispelling these rumours where appropriate, and communicating more about my specific research questions to those who were interested. However, I do not think that the research was communicated well enough with local people for properly 'informed' consent to have been achieved, or that, given my limited skills and the context, I could have achieved this. Although as discussed above, my obtaining consent in Bairro would always have been affected by unequal power dynamics, using a research method with which they might have had more familiarity (such as a focus group-style interview with the whole membership of the association) might have helped create a situation in which respondents had a greater degree of control over navigating consent.

Data collection

Given the combination of my (still) poor language skills and lack of confidence with this complex and hierarchical social context (within the association, as well as my own relationship with its members), and my observations of how disengaged most people seemed in group meetings, I decided not to attempt the use of participatory methods at this stage. Instead I chose to focus on getting to know

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[27] This is something I feel deeply uncomfortable about, but given the tensions around my presence and activities in Bairro, the time pressures of the UK PhD model, and the need to shore up my mental health, it was not possible for me to retrofit participatory methods into the project or to return to Bairro before submitting the thesis.

people and develop relationships to the point where people might feel comfortable expressing their priorities, around which I could then shape further research questions.[28]

Ethnography

In October 2015, I began the main ethnographic phase of my fieldwork. During this first stay in Bairro, my participant observation was mostly restricted to accompanying Odeta on her everyday routines, and so it was limited to her social networks, *machambas* and activities. When I returned to Bairro for my second fieldwork period in March-December 2016, I engaged in participant observation with a wider group of people to try to get a more balanced view of everyday life in Bairro. This involved engaging with wider and different social networks, through socialising at drinking spots on Sunday afternoons and attending church and female initiation ceremonies. This was also intended to help me gain people's confidence, and although as we have seen the issue of consent was problematic, at any rate it increased people's familiarity with my presence and research activities. Since my gatekeepers were unwilling to let me move alone around Bairro, and many social interactions were limited because of my lack of Makhuwa, working with Tifa and carrying out a series of farm visits greatly increased the range of people with whom I could spend time, and so the range of perspectives and experiences I encountered. I participated in activities with the association, attending 13 meetings with projects and 6 'field days', and participating in the association's onion harvest. I also attended sessions organised as part of a community-based nutrition project, for which Odeta was a volunteer, some political meetings, and a week-long training in entrepreneurship for young people. Participant observation was a useful method because it meant that I was able to learn a lot about life in Bairro despite the language barriers, and it shaped my research in terms of focusing on practices and phenomenology. However, as already noted, it created problems for consent and communicating research. As I consider more deeply in Chapter 7, I was always positioned to some extent as an outsider, and sometimes my participation in everyday activities – often characterised by a complete lack of competence – served to highlight, rather than overcome, difference and unequal power dynamics.

Throughout the research period, I kept a detailed field diary, took photos and videos, and kept a record of the food eaten in our household.

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[28] Again, I use the language of 'choice', which in this case I think is problematic in a different way: because it implies a deliberate decision, when in fact I suspect I was taking the 'path of least resistance' in a field situation I found challenging from the outset.

Farm visits and interviews

Tifa and I began our research together by conducting a series of farm visits and interviews with the 38 registered members (27 women, 11 men) of the farmers' association. We subsequently carried out interviews with 43 non-members (23 women, 20 men), known locally as '*particulares*' [referring to the fact that they were not affiliated to an organisation]. Knowing his good social connections in Bairro, and also needing his approval for the interview series, I asked Mário to compile a list of *particulares* to approach for interview, aiming for a gender balance. Odeta suggested additions, mostly people important in her social networks, whom it was therefore politic to visit, and occasionally Tifa and I visited households for interviews by request of the interviewees themselves. Interviewees were usually approached the day before – initially by Fábio or Mário as representatives of the association, and later, as we got to know the people and geography of Bairro better, by Tifa or myself.[29]

Usually, Tifa and I would ask the interviewee to take us along to the *machamba* they were planning to work that day, and we would join in with hoeing, weeding or harvesting. Tifa would then ask the interviewee to choose a suitable location for the interview, usually their house. We preceded each interview with an introduction about what the research was about, how the data would be stored and used, the fact that the person would be kept anonymous and what they said was in confidence, and that they could choose to speak in Portuguese or Makhuwa, before asking if they were happy to proceed. I took handwritten notes throughout the interviews, in a mixture of English, Portuguese and Makhuwa. They were not audio-recorded, for reasons of practicality in terms of powering a recorder and ensuring the security of audio recordings. On several occasions we arrived to be greeted instead of or additionally by the spouse of the person we had approached.

Since my approach was partly inductive, the first interviews were unstructured, relating mostly to the activities we undertook on the *machamba* and the crops we worked with. As the interview series continued, Tifa and I built up an interview schedule iteratively, which we codified as a set list of questions, to be asked in any order as was appropriate to the flow of conversation, before starting the series of *particulares* interviews. Towards the end of the research period, we re-visited our first interviewees to make sure that our structured dataset included these households, and to ask additional questions about how the year had been for them. The main questions focused on the household's landholdings and land tenure, the crops they were growing and what proportion they thought would be sold or eaten at home. We also asked about their family structure, life history,

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[29] One of Odeta's children or grandchildren would often accompany us to more remote interview locations, to show us the route.

education and their experiences with projects and, where relevant, the association. (For full interview schedule see Appendix 3.)

Interviews with young people

I became aware that the farm visits, while extremely useful, tended to be restricted to established farming households. From July 2016, Tifa and I conducted a series of interviews with 25 single people (14 women, 11 men), aged between 14 and 27, living in Bairro. Interviewees were mostly people living in our part of Bairro, with whom we interacted regularly, but comprised a diverse group: some were at school, some working, some had children, some were divorced, some had their own *machambas*. I developed a structured interview schedule with considerable input from Tifa. We asked questions about the young people's education, income-generating and spending activities, relationships and aspirations. Talking to this younger generation of people, who had grown up in the postwar neoliberal era, provided a set of insights into the role of age in affecting people's experiences, responsibilities, priorities and ambitions. However, these interviews were often marked by reticence and apparent shyness or discomfort on the part of respondents, resulting in frequent prompting by Tifa, and reflecting the roles of age and education in our respective positionalities — and perhaps the fact that, unlike adults, these young people had little experience of research interactions like interviews and focus groups. (For full interview schedule see Appendix 3.)

Interviews with active members of the association

Following the association onion harvest, Tifa and I conducted a second round of interviews with the 13 members of the association, all women, who had been actively involved in the onion project, and whom we had therefore been working throughout the year. I devised an interview schedule to which Tifa made changes and additions. These interviews, near the end of the fieldwork period, were undoubtedly some of the best both in terms of research material, but also the ease and enjoyment demonstrated by the interviewees compared to earlier farm visits and interviews. Drawing on everything that Tifa and I had already learned in interviews, we were able to ask more detailed questions about the women's experiences of the projects working with the association, how the year's agricultural *campanhas* [campaigns] had gone, and how they felt about the upcoming lean season and new agricultural year. Now much more familiar with Tifa and me, the women were much more conversational than they had been in initial interviews, so we added questions about life histories and family planning, and adopted more of a semi-structured format, reflecting the confidence the women now demonstrated in raising and elaborating on different topics. However, this also highlighted the problems with data collected in earlier interviews, particularly the lack of space provided for respondents' priorities within the context of a structured interview, and a major power imbalance unmediated by familiarity and friendship.

Soil surveys

As the land disputes considered in Chapter 6 unfolded, I wanted to understand better how the biophysical nature of land affected people's experiences of food security. In November 2016, with Odeta's permission, Tifa and I carried out field analyses of soil texture on each of Odeta's *machambas* (see Young 1976, Rowell 1994) and used these to interpret local soil categories discussed in interviews (based on workability and fertility) in relation to the landscape.

Focus group

Before the end of my stay, I was keen to learn more about the history of Bairro, which was often referred to in passing in interviews but never fully explained, or was explained in contradictory ways. I asked Mário for advice on which elders could tell me more, and he assembled a focus group for me, composed of elderly and well-respected members of the community and people with official responsibilities, such as the neighbourhood *Cabo da Terra* [Head of Land]. There was undeniably a bias towards Mário's allies and Frelimo members, but the discussion provided me with a consensus account of Bairro's history to bring together (and against which to compare) the many histories I had heard in the interviews. The focus group participants also had the necessary authority to accompany me on a visit to one of the cemeteries.

Sewing group

I began doing small sewing tasks and repairs for Odeta and Hélia during my first visit to Bairro, and soon several people asked me to hem *capulanas* for them. Many of the women I knew had learned to sew – mostly with nuns – but lacked materials, confidence and in some cases the eyesight, to do much beyond simple repairs[30]. To get a *capulana* hemmed or clothes made or adjusted, they would take them to a tailor. Flávia, who several times had expressed a desire to learn something useful from me while I was in Bairro, and was herself a skilled craftswoman who knitted baby garments to sell, asked me to teach her how to make clothes. I bought fabric and tools and started teaching Flávia and her friend Catarina how to make simple trousers and skirts for their children. Word soon spread that we were making clothes for children, although Tifa strictly enforced the policy that we would only make clothes for children whose relatives (in practice, mothers and sisters) actively participated in sewing them. Watching us, one local craftsman asked me to teach him backstitch and began hemming his wife's *capulanas*, but he was the only man to get involved. As my departure approached,

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[30] See Sheldon, K. (1998) "I Studied With the Nuns, Learning to Make Blouses": Gender Ideology and Colonial Education in Mozambique *The International Journal of African Historical Studies,* 31**,** 595-625.

I wrote and drew out instructions on pattern cutting for Flávia and after I left she designed and made an entire dress for her daughter.

Although there were positive aspects of these sewing activities, they were also affected by problems over a perceived unjust distribution of time and resources. I undertook these activities for several reasons – mostly in response to Flávia's request, partly from a desire to 'give something back', and increasingly from an (auto-) ethnographic interest in observing the dynamics of participation and interaction the sewing group created. Additionally, the notes of children's measurements in my notebooks offer unsystematic but stark evidence of the malnutrition and illness experienced by many young children in Bairro: adjustments to patterns were necessary to accommodate children's bloated stomachs.

Fieldnotes

In the interests of practicality, I recorded fieldnotes and interviews by hand in small notebooks. My tiny illegible handwriting, mostly in English, meant that they were inaccessible to anyone for whom the data might be relevant, and so offered an effective – if not formally approved – way of protecting data. I took detailed notes of the events of each day, writing brief 'headnotes' and filling the information in later if there was not time to write. This method of recording data meant that a large amount of my time in Bairro was spent sitting writing notes. This also became a means of communicating the practice of research to local people: I struggled throughout with the notion of informed consent for the participant observation I was conducting, so I made a point of writing notes in my notebook in public, trying to make it clear that I was writing everything down. This was not a completely effective plan: assessing the the appearance of my little black notebook and spidery handwriting, many people asked me if it was a Bible. Additionally, my reliance on such a literacy-heavy means of recording and researching emphasised many of my participants' lack of literacy, which in turn reinforced colonial and racialised ideas and dynamics around the nature and production of knowledge.

Photos

I took many photographs during my first visit to Bairro. People seemed to derive a lot of pleasure and hilarity from seeing the images on the camera screen, and so on my return I brought print copies to distribute to the subjects, which were extremely popular. Subsequently, at the end of each farm visit, Tifa and I asked if we could take a photograph of the participants, which they usually posed for with their extended family. On trips to Nampula, I printed these photos and we distributed them to participants. Soon we got requests to take photos, for example when people were dressed up to *passear* on a Sunday and could pose with their friends, or when family members were visiting from

elsewhere. At times I also lent my camera to children and young people to experiment with taking their own photos.

Analysis

Throughout the fieldwork period, I included in my diary reflections and emerging themes as well as fieldnotes, running tentative theories past Tifa, Odeta and Mário, or incorporating these ideas into interview questions to test or further explore them. On returning to the UK, I word-processed my copious fieldnotes, using this as a period of open coding, identifying key narratives and themes in addition to those I had already identified. I followed this with more focused coding using atlas.ti. The process of writing has been a continuation of this analysis, attempting to create a thematic narrative in dialogue with theory and with the fieldnotes (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw 2011, 170). I have presented some of my data as hand-drawn maps and diagrams, partly as a more effective means of communicating quantitative data, and partly as tools to communicate my research beyond academic circles, a small act of resistance against the heavy reliance of my discipline – and this thesis – on the written word.

I have often felt, along with Smith (2016, 135) that 'one of the key challenges of research is to carry the intimacy and context of the field onto the written page. Confidences shared between women chatting in a sunny winter kitchen evoke intimacy and friendship; the abstract violence of research production seems out of place'. After much deliberation, because I feel that using the ethnographic present can help to convey the intimacy and immediacy of field encounters, I have kept my fieldnote excerpts in the past tense in which they were originally written, to emphasise that these 'everyday' events were nonetheless located in a particular moment in time and history (Van Maanen 2011).

There are additional ethical dilemmas in the theorisation of people's activities and concerns, particularly given the power dynamics and problems with communication and consent in this research project. The irony is not lost on me that I continue to use Bairro people's lives and stories as data even in my analysis of the ethics of the research. I have felt throughout writing this thesis a tension between the academic imperative to theorise ethnographic data, presenting a coherent argument from fragmented accounts and experiences (c.f. Motzafi-Haller 2002), and the epistemic violence (Rudolph, Sriprakash and Gerrard 2018) of analysing people's words and actions in ways that do not necessarily reflect their truths, meanings or beliefs, speaking with and to theory that has emerged from white and Eurocentric, if not colonial, scholarship. Although it does not overcome these problems, I try throughout the thesis to maintain an honest reflexivity about the production and analysis of knowledge, to avoid speaking 'for' as far as I can within the limitations of the project.

Setting the stage for ethical dilemmas

Adopting an ethnographic methodology to research my initial questions was in many ways a good methodological choice. In conducting a long-term, *in situ* ethnography, I formed relationships and gained access to insights – such as people's life histories – that, *given my positionality* and skillset, I probably would not have done with the use of shorter-term research strategies. The material for Chapter 5, in particular, which looks at practices of food provisioning, would have been very difficult for me to think of researching, let alone access, without having experienced and observed these practices every day and over time.

However, *given my positionality*, this approach to research also proved to be deeply problematic, around questions of consent and money. Staying for a long time in the community, as a guest of Odeta and of the association, in order to do this research, brought me into interactions with Bairro's political and moral economies (see Chapter 4) in ways that had serious consequences for several people. Although for me this is secondary to ethics, these issues also had major implications for the quality of the data collected, and this context of the ethnography should be borne in mind as the reader moves through the ethnographic chapters that follow.

This chapter has set out the context and execution of this research project, which enabled the collection of the material that follows in the next three chapters, but also laid foundations for the serious ethical dilemmas alluded to at the start of this chapter, and which I will engage with in more depth in Chapter 7. In particular, I would like to highlight the institutional factors that led to me being hired, despite my lack of experience and skills in conducting qualitative research in any context, let alone a sensitive one. This was exacerbated by my linguistic incompetence, the absence of a strong institutional or personal network in Mozambique, and the inductive (or should that be trial and error?), 'lone worker' model still favoured for anthropological research projects. Ironically motivated by anticolonial and feminist politics, I attempted to incorporate participatory and feminist theory and methods into this colonial research model. It is thanks to the major role played by Tifa, my research assistant, and other gatekeepers, that the material that follows could be studied, and make an attempt to focus on the priorities and concerns of local people. However, as we will see, this specific – but not uncommon – set of factors set the stage for ethical dilemmas around race, gender, money and resources.

Chapter 3
'Not just waiting for the government'

Introduction

Both the research and the projects happened in a particular place and time: the rural Nampula neighbourhood of Bairro in 2015-16. An exploration of the interactions between local moral economies and agricultural interventions in a particular context necessitates a consideration of the specific histories and characteristics of that context, as well as the characteristics of the specific interventions as they were implemented and experienced in practice, since these strongly shape the interactions between projects and local people and practices (Mosse 2005). This chapter provides context for the ethnographic chapters that follow. I start by sketching out the history of Mozambique, before zooming in on the Nacala Corridor and then on Bairro itself, drawing attention to the role of agricultural interventions in this history. I present some of the features of Makhuwa culture, especially matriliny, that are most pertinent to this research, before turning to the present-day political economy of Bairro, including the role of matriliny within it, describing key social groups in the community and the history and role of the farmers' association. Finally, I briefly discuss each of the major projects carrying out interventions related to agriculture or food security in Bairro during my periods of fieldwork in 2015 and 2016, considering the main activities of each project and how they were received, perceived and experienced by local people.

Mozambique

Mozambique is located in south-eastern Africa (Figure 3) and is home to around 30 million people across 800,000km². Its capital city, Maputo, is located in the extreme south of the country, near the border with South Africa. The majority of Mozambique's population is descended from Bantu-speaking people who settled in the region between the 1st and 5th centuries CE (Newitt 1994). For the last thousand years, ports along Mozambique's coast and major rivers have also been well integrated in Indian Ocean trade and travel networks, bringing the influence of Swahili-based languages and culture, and Islam (LaViolette 2008). These ports traded in goods including gold and ivory from the inland kingdoms of Zimbabwe and Mwenemutapa. They were of great interest to the Portuguese navigators who arrived along the coast in the early 1500s and – through a combination of violence and trade – took control of these ports (Newitt 1994). This began nearly five hundred years of Portuguese colonisation in south-eastern Africa, marked by different periods and modes of control

and exploitation, including the establishment of a vast trade in enslaved Mozambican people across the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean (Campbell 1988, Machado 2003) and continued resistance to colonial rule by local people (Allina 2012). Christianity also made an increasing impact in Mozambique through the extending reach of the Roman Catholic church as well as Protestant missionaries (Newitt 1994).

Portuguese control was largely indirect, often exercised through quasi-autonomous individual officials, and by the 20th century, large areas of Mozambique were under the administration of large private companies (Vail 1976), which established a growing economy around mineral extraction, settler-owned farms, agricultural businesses, plantations, and factories (Allina 2012). Using the forced or coerced labour of local people (O'Laughlin 2002) (again not without local resistance (Bowen 2000)), and supplemented by outgrowing schemes, plantations produced export commodities including tobacco, cotton, cashews, sugar, rice, and tea (Allina 2012). Major political change in

Figure 3: Map of Mozambique, showing location in SE Africa, provinces and major cities. Based on maps from Open Street Map.

Portugal – the overthrowing of the monarchy and its replacement with the fascist *Estado Novo* – brought Mozambique under the direct control (and martial law) of the Portuguese state. The new regime encouraged a wave of migration from the metropole to the newly recategorised 'overseas territory' of Mozambique (Castelo 2013) and oversaw the expansion of coerced commodity production in Mozambique (Isaacman et al. 1980, Pitcher 1991).

This tightening of colonial control, at a time when many other colonised nations were gaining independence, helped prompt the rise of a co-ordinated anticolonial movement in Mozambique. FRELIMO, the Mozambican Liberation Front, was founded in 1962. With support from newly independent African nations, particularly Tanzania, and communist and socialist countries, FRELIMO

waged a lengthy guerrilla war against the Portuguese armed forces.[31] The Portuguese state drew increasing criticism from the international community and dissent within the armed forces as the war continued, eventually escalating the overthrow of the *Estado Novo* in 1974. Following the coup, Portuguese armed forces ceased activities in the 'overseas provinces' and Mozambique became officially independent in June 1975, with FRELIMO assuming power and its leader, Samora Machel, becoming president of Mozambique. Portuguese settlers were given the opportunity to take Mozambican citizenship and remain in the country, but the majority returned to Portugal (Newitt 1994).

Machel's new government adopted and began rolling out socialist policies, including investing in health and education infrastructure, nationalising industries, factories and plantations, and attempts to collectivise and modernise agriculture, which were often met with non-co-operation from peasants (Bowen 2000). FRELIMO's central vision for Mozambique, the creation of the 'New Man', drawing on communist as well anticolonial ideology (Arnfred 2011), was also used as justification for the suppression of 'traditional' and customary practices (Meneses 2009) and more violent forms governance including the creation of repressive and brutal 're-education centres' (Igreja 2010).

In 1977, an armed rebel group, RENAMO (Mozambican National Resistance) began a violent campaign against the Mozambican state. RENAMO was initially recruited by Rhodesian armed forces to target Zimbabwean independence forces based in Mozambique, and continued to be supported by Rhodesia, South Africa and the USA, motivated by FRELIMO's socialist leanings and the threat that the independent Mozambican state posed to white minority rule in neighbouring countries (Geffray 1990a). RENAMO quickly gained control of large areas of rural Mozambique, where it forced local populations to provide food and child soldiers. Both RENAMO and FRELIMO used land mines extensively (Hall 2011). During this time, much of Mozambique experienced food insecurity, famine and economic collapse, and hundreds of thousands of people fled rural areas for cities or crossed the border into Malawi (Geffray 1990a). Eventually, facilitated by the fall of apartheid in South Africa and the end of the Cold War, FRELIMO and RENAMO signed a peace accord in 1992. Mozambique's first multi-party national elections were held in 1994. FRELIMO has won all subsequent national elections.

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[31]FRELIMO's campaign was notable for its involvement of women and invocation of gender equality; see Arnfred, S. 2011. *Sexuality and gender politics in Mozambique: Rethinking gender in Africa*. Oxford: James Currey.

At this time, Mozambique was in economic crisis, and, defaulting on its debts, entered into an IMF and World Bank-led structural adjustment programme. This included the privatisation of many of its industries and the embracing of more neoliberal policies, which have been linked to widening inequality (Marshall 1990). In the twenty subsequent years, Mozambique has seen rapid economic growth – particularly associated with the exploitation of oil and gas reserves off its northern coast – but continued poverty, especially in rural areas, and its agricultural production still largely comprises smallholder farming (Cunguara and Hanlon 2012). The country is dependent on imports for food security, particularly in staple goods and 'value-added' processed goods (Castel-Branco 2015). During the period in which the research for this thesis was carried out, revelations about secret debts accumulated by the previous government prompted an investigation by the IMF, the cutting off of bilateral funding by the G7, and the rapid decline of the metical (Hanlon 2017) (this is discussed further in Chapter 4). In the same period, RENAMO began another violent campaign, attacking civilians and infrastructure in central Mozambique, and several prominent FRELIMO and RENAMO officials were assassinated before a ceasefire was agreed in late 2016 (Bowker, Kamm and Sambo 2016, Eusébio and Magalhães 2018). In 2017 and 2018, there was also a series of violent attacks on villages and mosques in the far north of Mozambique, carried out by Islamist groups (Morier-Genoud 2018).

Bairro, Vila and the Nacala Corridor

The Nacala Development Corridor, as described in Chapter 1, is a swathe of land across northeast Mozambique between the Malawi border and the coast, transecting the provinces of Niassa, Zambézia and Nampula. The main ecosystem of this region is savanna, but ranges from the low coastal plain in Nampula up to the Lichinga plateau in Niassa and the mountainous region around Mount Namuli (2,419m) in Zambézia. The population of the region is largely made up by speakers of three related ethno-linguistic groups, Emakhuwa, Lomwe, and Yao. Emakhuwa is the most widely spoken first language in Mozambique, with 5.8 million speakers (Caldeira 2019). The cultures of these groups are dynamic, evolving and variable throughout the region, but have historically been strongly associated with matrilineal modes of social organisation, in contrast to the mostly patrilineal ethno-linguistic groups of southern Mozambique.

Historically, this region was an extraction corridor for the colonial capital of Ilha de Moçambique, and later for the deep-sea port of Nacala. The region is connected by railways running west from Nacala to Lichinga and to coal mines in Tete province. A sparse network of arterial roads links Nacala to the major city of Nampula and provincial hubs for agricultural produce like Alto Molocué, Malema, Gurué and Cuamba. Many of these routes are unpaved, making transport difficult during the rainy season.

Bairro, the rural neighbourhood where I carried out the majority of my fieldwork, is located in western Nampula province. It lies on the Tete-Nacala railway (1.5km-long trains carrying Vale coal passed through several times a day) and on an important but unpaved road linking Nampula and Zambézia provinces. Bairro is about 5km by road from the town of Vila, and is one of the neighbourhoods that forms part of Vila administrative post.

Vila administrative post is about 8km from the paved Nacala road. It comprises an area of 3000km² and in the 2007 census had a population of around 87,500 inhabitants, of whom 60% were women. At the time of my arrival in October 2015, local leaders estimated that Bairro's population was about 12,000, over an area of around 400 hectares. Unlike much of Nampula province, particularly the coastal region, where the majority of the population is Muslim, the Vila area has a long history of Catholic mission (and later Protestant evangelism). With the exception of a small mosque in Vila town, most of the local population practices Christianity, or (or in combination with) Makhuwa beliefs and spiritual practices. Bairro had several churches of different denominations, including a Catholic church and two Baptist churches, established by English missionaries in the 1940s. The post has three health centres, 68 primary schools and one secondary school. Bairro had a primary school, a mill, a telecommunications mast and several boreholes; the nearest health post, market, mains electricity and secondary school were located in Vila.

The area has an inland climate, warm and dry from April to October with hotter, wetter weather in the 'rainy season' of November to March. The climate is also influenced by the local topography, dominated by a large granitic inselberg, which attracts moist, cooler air throughout the year. The area's economy was almost entirely based on agricultural production.

In Vila, as well as Bairro specifically, commercial agriculture has a long history. From around the 1930s, encouraged by Salazar's migration policies (Newitt 1994), Portuguese and Indian settlers, following the Nacala railway corridor westwards into the interior, moved into the area around Vila and established a cluster of tobacco plantations. Vila's strategic position on the railway and the apex of arterial roads connecting Nampula, Niassa and Zambézia provinces helped it become a key hub for trade, particularly in agricultural produce (Chilundo 1994). Vila's colonial settlers employed local men on their plantations – apparently compulsorily – while families were granted small plots of land on which women could cultivate enough food to supplement their diet. Local people also grew cotton and tobacco for contract[32].

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[32] According to an older man, Vicente, each family was 'obliged' to grow 50m² of cotton on their own *machambas* for the Portuguese.

In Bairro, people's memories of the post-independence period included socialist solidarity in the form of East German scholarships and Cuban technical assistance for the promotion of contract tobacco production (Nzibo 1983). Many wealthier households grew tobacco for contract until low prices and farmers' use of contract fertilisers for other crops, such as increasingly popular onions, led to a breakdown in their relationship with the tobacco company. During the war, Vila and its surrounding neighbourhoods suffered years of violence, particularly in the 1980s (Geffray and Pedersen 1988). This period also saw the revival of colonial 'villagisation' policies, first as a socialist-inspired means of agricultural 'rationalization' and later on a greater scale as an attempt to protect populations and infrastructure (Geffray and Pedersen 1988, Lorgen 2000). 'Communal villages' were constructed in Bairro and neighbouring areas, but the communal village in Bairro was abandoned during the war. Although the area was less affected by the use of landmines than other parts of Mozambique (Unruh, Heynen and Hossler 2003), this long period of trauma and neglect changed the area dramatically, and Vila and its rural neighbourhoods have not seen the postwar recovery experienced by some larger towns.

Political Economy of Bairro

Since the political economy of Bairro forms the basis of the ethnographic chapters about moral economy and is therefore examined in more detail in subsequent chapters, here I sketch just briefly the major features of resources and livelihoods in Bairro, before describing some of the key social groups to which people belonged.

Resources and Livelihoods

Every household in Bairro relied on agriculture for part or all of its livelihood. All households had access, either through ownership, borrowing or rent, to upland *machambas* [farms], where they cultivated cassava, maize, sorghum, peanut, cowpea and jugo bean, using hand hoes and saved or locally purchased seed and generally with no fertilisers, pesticides or irrigation. Most households also had some lowland *machambas*, which were partially flooded during the rainy season and could be irrigated during the dry season, making them suitable for the cultivation of crops including rice in the rainy season and maize, tobacco, cabbage, tomatoes and onions during the dry season.

Crops could be eaten by the household or sold — the balance between the two varying over time and between households. This balance is discussed at length in Chapters 4 and 5. The major commercial crops were onions, maize and dried cassava, but many households also sold portions of their other crops. The major crops attracted traders from outside the area; otherwise, produce was mostly sold to neighbours or taken to Vila for sale to traders in the market.

Most households had chickens, and wealthier families had pigs, goats or both. Goats were a frequent subject of gossip: they were valuable, and there was a spate of goat thefts during my stay in Bairro. Everyone knew the person who had stolen them (he had a large flock of goats), but he donated a goat to the police, who dropped the charges. There were also incidents of acrimony over people letting their goats graze on other people's *machambas*, ruining their crops. People said that there used to be more animals, but there had been so much theft that people were reluctant to replace their animals. A project working with the association a few years previously had introduced bullocks, but they had all become sick and died.

Other livelihood opportunities in the Bairro included working as a local leader, carpenter, *curandeiro* [traditional healer] or tailor. Many people worked at some points of the year as casual labourers, doing what was known as *ganho-ganho* — working on neighbours' *machambas* or performing construction work such as making bricks or building houses. Women earned money by collecting and selling firewood or thatch from the uncultivated parts of Bairro, the *mato* [bush], and some senior women earned money as *conselheiras de mwali*, advisors for female initiation ceremonies. Some households also made money by brewing and selling alcohol, including sugarcane spirits and maize-based *cabanca.* Teachers at the primary school and workers at the mill commuted there from outside Bairro. Many people in Bairro, particularly men, had previously migrated to Malawi and other parts of northern Mozambique for employment, including as agricultural labourers, drivers, construction workers, traders and agricultural extension workers, before returning to the area, and most had relatives who were working elsewhere in Mozambique. There was a commercial farm on the site of a colonial tobacco plantation just outside Bairro, owned by a businessman from southern Mozambique. This farm employed one local man as overseer, but the owner sourced most of the labour from the next province; his reasoning for this, as he explained to me, was that the local people were lazy, and people tend to work harder when they are working away from home.

People spoke and understood varying degrees of Portuguese, depending on their access to education and where they had lived — for example, elderly people who had had regular contact with Portuguese plantation owners tended to speak Portuguese fluently, and so did people who had lived in non-Makhuwa-speaking areas of Mozambique. Generally, but by no means universally, men were more confident speakers of Portuguese. School attendance during the colonial era was effectively capped at the 4th grade, and although in the post-independence period, some of the current residents of Bairro had reached 10th grade and one woman's son had completed a bachelor's degree, school attendance remained patchy. In the 2016 school year, 61 out of 533 women and 46 out of 759 men studying at the Vila Secondary School (8th, 9th and 10th grades) had dropped out before the second term (data from the school register). The headteacher said this was mostly due to marriages, as much

for men as for women. 71.8% of students passed their end of year exams, meaning they qualified to proceed to the next grade. This percentage was slightly but not significantly higher for men than for women. I was unable to get reliable statistics for lower school years, but from responses to questions about education in my survey, the drop out rate was likely to be higher. The majority of young people that Tifa and I interviewed in Bairro had left school in 7th or 8th grade. Many of the women in the association, mostly in their 30s and 40s, had dropped out after 2nd or 3rd grade or even before, although several had subsequently attended adult education classes. Many Bairro residents sent children to live with wealthier relatives in bigger towns and cities in order to study.

Bairro came under the jurisdiction of the centrally-appointed Chefe de Poste in Vila. Bairro was in theory governed by a government-appointed *régulo* and a 'traditional' leader or *mwene*, who work together with a network of Frelimo party secretaries, land chiefs and local elders. In practice, during most of my time in Bairro, there was no *régulo* and the *mwene* was serving a prison sentence for the attempted trafficking of one of his sister's children. This vacuum was to some extent filled by local leaders, including Frelimo and Renamo secretaries in different parts of the neighbourhood and a 'land chief' who arbitrated small-scale disputes over land. *Régulos* and local leaders could be male or female, but in Bairro all the local leaders were men.

Key social groups in Bairro

In the previous chapter, I sketched out the key figures in the immediate social landscape of conducting my research. Here I look at the wider picture: the main social groups not just in relation to me but to the moral economies of Bairro. I briefly describe the loosely defined social groups, members of all of which Tifa and I interviewed during our series of farm visits, and their connection to each other and to wider power structures.

At the centre of my interactions with people in Bairro were single women. Odeta's closest neighbours, and those with whom she socialised the most, were all single women: Adriana, who had divorced while pregnant and who now lived in Bairro with her baby, while her ex-husband in Lalaua kept custody of their son; Ruane, an older divorced woman who lived sometimes alone, sometimes with grandchildren; and Ruane's younger sister Anabela, whose husband was a trader from the coast who visited rarely, and who had three children by different fathers. Several members of the association were also single women — either widowed, divorced, in several cases abandoned by their husbands, or with husbands working away some or all of the time. These included two elderly widows, sisters, Maria and Márcia, who both lived alone. Apart from Odeta, these women were all from Bairro originally, and they all had access to land from their families, although to a varying degree. They lacked the labour of a second adult in the household, and several bemoaned their lack of a man to

carry out commercial transactions and provide an income. All of these female-headed households were connected by marriage or family relationships to other families in Bairro. They were a diverse group, however, ranging from Anabela whose children's fathers were men she had relationships with to "procure soap" (to make ends meet), to Octávia, a widow whose late husband's career as an important pastor still afforded her a good deal of respect, as well as a life in the improved house he had built.

However, most of Bairro's households consisted of families made up of married couples and their children. Families usually lived in clusters of houses, providing space for other members of the extended household, including adult children, grandchildren and elderly relatives. Very few of the people that Tifa and I spoke to had all their children living in Bairro and Vila; most had children who had emigrated elsewhere for education, employment or the support of wealthier relatives. Almost all families had lost one or more children to illness.

Within these households there was considerable variation in wealth and status. I did not attempt to quantify the wealth of different households in my survey, since wealth could be gauged in different ways: resources, labour, land-holdings, financial and food security. Households could have a low money income but be comfortably self-sufficient in food or vice versa; some households displayed their wealth through the conspicuous consumption of fired bricks, bicycles and new clothes, but other, sometimes more financially secure, households did not. When I discuss wealth in this thesis, what I refer to as poorer households tend to be those with fewer resources, land or labour, and lower financial and food security.

Some families were talked about and treated with respect by others; these were often people with a degree of authority in mainstream institutions, such as church elders or people with positions on the association committee. Others were talked about with less respect by others, either because of alleged poor behaviour towards other members of the community, or because of their involvement in witchcraft or opposition political parties. In particular, two extended families who were active political members of Renamo were treated with suspicion and open dislike, especially by upstanding members of Frelimo — although two women in these households were simultaneously treated with great respect and fear as *conselheiras de mwali*.

Wealth and status often went together: there were also several wealthy men with big families and plenty of land who held positions of more significant authority, such as the Frelimo secretaries and the 'land chief'. Cláudio was in a position of particular authority, as both pastor and President of the Forum. Florêncio, as is explored further in Chapter 6, also commanded a lot of respect that was linked to his substantial landholdings and his historical connection with colonial plantation owners.

However, this was not always the case. There were also respected families, such as the church *ancião* [elder], who were fairly resource- and land-poor, while Frederico, one of the Renamo leaders, was financially successful, producing and selling spirits and lucrative common bean.

Makhuwa culture, matriliny and gender

People in Bairro predominantly spoke Emakhuwa, with some influences from Lomwe, and referred to themselves as Makhuwa. In this section, I sketch out some of the key features of Makhuwa culture in Bairro as they were presented to me and as they relate to agriculture and food security: matriliny and matrilineal land tenure, family and marriage patterns, and gender norms in everyday life. A theme running throughout this introduction to Makhuwa culture is how it differed in practice from idealised anthropological accounts, and even the accounts I was given by local people. Manifestations of matriliny in particular were marked by dynamism, flexibility and change, reflecting the disruptions to land tenure, settlement and farming caused by colonialism, war and social and economic change.

Matriliny

Before arriving in Bairro, one of my main interests in Makhuwa culture was matriliny, and how this might play into the politics of land, labour and food provisioning. During my scoping trips, I asked the people we interviewed about matriliny. I usually received similar versions of the same answer: matriliny means women have a right to land and can inherit land; "women have land and power", one district extension worker told me. However, this simple response was often then complicated by further responses. For example, I was told that although women own land, they are represented in land disputes by their husbands; I read in a document granting a community the right to land (a DUAT; see Chapter 6) that land passed from a man to his brothers, cousins and nephews. At the time, I did not understand the equivocal, evasive and contradictory answers I received to my questions about how matriliny was practised — it was only after I moved to Bairro and started observing and asking people about land tenure that it became clear that the practising of matrilineal land tenure depended considerably on a family's particular circumstances.

In studies of Makhuwa culture, anthropologists such as dead (Geffray,1990b, Martinez 2008, Arnfred 2011) define matriliny as the centrality of maternal kin (including ancestors) to social life. This has historically been manifested through the passing of land between maternal kin, the practice of uxorilocal marriage (in which a new husband comes to live with his wife and her kin), and the high status of senior women in the community, especially over matters pertaining to food and spirituality (Arnfred 2007). Matriliny is not the same as matriarchy, and customary Makhuwa leaders include both men and women: a senior man, known as the *mwene* (usually translated as 'king') and his sister or other female relative, the *apwiyamwene*, governed Makhuwa communities (Zeballos 2008).

In Bairro, elements of matriliny were present in terms of land tenure and family structure, but there were also elements of patrilineal land tenure and family structure. Both men and women owned and managed land, sometimes jointly and sometimes separately. In some cases, especially families who had been long established in Bairro, people had inherited the land from members of their matriclan.

> Bruno said the land was his uncle's, his mother's brother's, and he explained that here they have a system of matrilineal inheritance, from uncle to nephew.
> [Interview, July 2016]

However, many people also farmed land originally belonging to their father's family, or (as is explored in much more detail in Chapter 6) land that had been alienated by colonisation. Households also cultivated land from both sides of the family: for example, Paulo and Fátima cultivated *machambas* that were Paulo's father's, and an *horta* [lowland farm] that belonged to Fátima's grandparents.

One of the more visible aspects of Makhuwa culture was the practise of holding male and female initiation ceremonies, which were ideally held when children reached puberty but tended to happen slightly later, during the later teenage years, due to the expense and organisation involved in such events. Male initiation involved circumcision (now usually performed by a trained nurse), followed by a period of recuperation, during which time initiates stayed in an isolated house or shelter and were visited by older male advisors who instructed them about their responsibilities as Makhuwa men. Female initiation ceremonies elsewhere in northern Mozambique consist of a similar month-long period of isolation and advise, but in Bairro the giving of advice – including how to tie cloths during menstruation, but also about how to behave as a Makhuwa woman – was condensed into a single night of dancing and singing.[33]

Family structures and marriage

Family structures in Bairro were mixed, but again reflected elements of matriliny. Uxorilocality was practised, but by no means universally; there were many cases of women having moved to Bairro to live with their husbands' family as well as husbands living with the families of their wives[34]. Many families had moved several times, within the neighbourhood or beyond — fleeing the war, migrating for work, or moving in response to marriages, divorces, family disputes or the deaths of partners or relatives. Several householders talked about having lived near the husband's family and near the

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[33] There is much more that could be said here, including other Makhuwa practices, but people in Bairro asked me to keep them secret, particularly from men. For a fuller description, see Arnfred (2011).
[34] While wishing to avoid a Eurocentric heteronormativity in my discussion of family structures, all the couples I encountered were heterosexual in that they consisted of a man and a women. Homosexuality was not talked about except in church, where it was condemned, and when I asked people about it after the service answers were (understandably) vague.

wife's family at different times. In any case, people tended to live with extended family, building new houses in the same compound or nearby. The customary practice of 'bride service', in which a prospective husband works his in-laws' *machambas* for up to a year before he can marry their daughter (Arnfred 2011), was not commonplace in Bairro, but new husbands and brides would generally be expected to perform farm labour for their in-laws. There were at least two different polygamous families, both consisting of a husband and two wives; in both cases, the co-wives lived separately and their husband divided his time between them according to a regular schedule.

Marriages varied in terms of formality. Members of families of some seniority in the Baptist church generally went through the formal courtship and marriage prescribed by conservative Christianity: an engagement, no sexual activity before marriage, and a church wedding. The marriage would be expected to be for life and older people who had only ever had one spouse spoke of this fact with great pride. Wealthier families might combine a church wedding with a registry office marriage, but these 'official' marriages were very rare in Bairro, partly because the more formal the ceremony, the more people one would be expected to invite to the celebrations, and the more it cost. More commonly, marriage was 'de facto', and simply entailed the man and woman moving in together — usually following some introductions and scoping out on the part of their respective families. They might (but might not) sign a marriage agreement, witnessed by senior family members and the neighbourhood secretary. Because of this relative informality, one or both partners might be under the legal minimum age for marriage.

People in Bairro told me that matriliny meant that if a couple divorced or died, the children usually stayed with their mother or her family, unlike in the patrilineal south of Mozambique, where children would stay with their father's family. Divorce was extremely common — many people in Bairro had been divorced at least once. It could be instigated by either or both partners, but the children almost always remained with their mother. Remarriage was also common. There were many single women with children — recently divorced, fed up of marriage after several divorces, widowed — but single older men were virtually unheard of. A frequent topic of gossip and concern was whether, upon remarriage, a new husband would "accept raising another man's children".

Domestic violence was prevalent, often in connection to alcoholism. It was often openly talked about and verbally condemned, but in practice survivors' options were limited: if it was within marriage, they could divorce the perpetrator, or ask the neighbourhood secretary or the perpetrator's family to intervene. People had only seen police involvement in cases where the victim was severely injured.

Since almost all land in Bairro was not formally registered and titled, and very few marriages were registered, there was a considerable degree of flexibility in how land was managed and distributed

and how divorce proceedings happened. The role of community leaders, elders and family members was key in determining the outcomes of intra- and inter-family disputes. This is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6.

Gender patterns

The third main element of Makhuwa matrilineal culture — the high status of older women over matters of food and spirituality — was likewise both partly in evidence and partly contradicted in practice. As is explored in more depth in Chapters 4 and 5, women played a key role in the production of crops, especially those used for subsistence, and the management of food supplies. In most of the two-headed households included in my survey, agricultural production was loosely divided by gender, with husbands responsible for producing commercial crops and for carrying out commercial exchanges, while women were responsible for subsistence crops and everyday food provisioning. However, there was considerable variation between households in terms of the extent to which married partners helped each other with farming tasks and whether decision-making around food stores was collaborative or divided between commerce and subsistence according to gender. In households where men made decisions, this could be seen as either an entitlement or as an obligation to the household, as reflected in a debate during a youth training event:

> Xavier said he was the leader of his household, because when things happened it was him who came up with solutions. Helena and Adelina challenged him: "If marriage is like an association, I'm not here just to produce children, am I? We'll fight together for the same goal - for example, if we don't have plates, my husband will see that we don't have plates, and we will invest money in plates; the plates are not his alone — they're everyone's."
> [Field notes, OYE training, August 2016]

Both perspectives reflect the expectation, prevalent in everyday discourse in Bairro, that men should provide for their families, in terms of money and household goods. In Makhuwa female initiation ceremonies, women were taught how to please their husbands sexually, but they were also taught to expect gifts (such as money, or a new *capulana* [wax print cloth]) from their husbands or lovers after sex.[35] Drawing on fieldwork elsewhere in northern Mozambique, Arnfred [citation: 2011:249] suggests that "control of the granary – a stronghold of female power – is losing importance" as food is increasingly accessed through the market economy, but the Bairro experience did not seem to reflect his. As I discuss in Chapters 4 and 5, staple food stores are still crucial to subsistence in Bairro, but the

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[35] This expectation extended to teenage relationships, where a boy might give his girlfriend pens, a school exercise book or money for snacks. Several research participants thought that this trend was one of the reasons girls enter into sexual relationships with older men — because they would be able to offer them more in terms of gifts than a teenage boyfriend could.

role of old women as controllers of granaries was not mentioned in discussions about matriliny or about how life had changed in Bairro over recent generations. The domain in which older women did exercise a certain amount of power, albeit over other, younger women, was as *conselheiras* [advisors] in female initiation ceremonies. In this role they taught young women about appropriate behaviour as adult women in Makhuwa society, such as respect for elders and the custom of not directly addressing their mother-in-law until they had borne her a grandchild.

A final key point to make about gender in Bairro as it relates to the subject and process of my research is that many activities and spaces were formally or informally segregated by gender. Sometimes this was the result of a clear rule: in the Baptist church, men sat on the left, women on the right; men knew to keep well away from a house where a female initiation ceremony was taking place. At other times it reflected the division of labour: women went to the river to wash clothes, pound sorghum, and socialise; men sold produce in Vila and gathered in the town's bars to celebrate and socialise. Sometimes the gender segregation seemed the result of unspoken rules, or perhaps preference: both men and women attended association meetings, but the women often sat to one side in a closely-packed group; on Sundays, men and women often sat separately at drinking spots, the men drinking spirits and the women drinking *cabanca,* only occasionally mingling to dance suggestively.

The association and projects

History of the association

Early in Mozambique's post-conflict period, the imposition of IMF 'structural adjustment' conditions set the economic and political tone for the subsequent two decades, including the privatisation of Mozambique's national industries. Mozambique was 'flooded with development assistance' (Chichava et al. 2013, 101), which coincided with the rise of a post-Washington Consensus development model focused around ideals of democratisation, participation and good governance (Craig and Porter 2006). It was in this context that Bairro's producers' association was established. The first incarnation of the association was a small group of relatively wealthy local smallholders who were introduced to the idea of 'associating' by a leader from a neighbouring area, who explained it as a means of accessing agricultural inputs. Members used the association as a platform for receiving inputs and training from projects. They received project visits in a meeting hut on land provided by Florêncio, one of the founding members, whose authority over much of Bairro's land is discussed at length in Chapter 6. Passing between the leadership of each of these entrepreneurial men, the association grew in size and influence, its peak arriving perhaps in 2014 when it was visited by a government delegation including the then President of Mozambique.

During the time I spent in Bairro, in 2015-16, the association was working with five agricultural commercialisation projects (see next section), and received visits from numerous other NGOs, researchers and government delegations. At the time of my arrival in October 2015, it had 40 members, with an elected executive including a President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer.

The history of the association depended on who was telling it. Several senior men claimed to have started it, and the reminiscences of long-standing members of the association suggested that all these men had played a role in starting and expanding the association and then the forum. What follows is the most in-depth account of the association's history that I heard, from a man called Maurício who was of some standing in the community but no longer played a regular role in the association. The histories told me by Cristóvão, Vicente and Florêncio were similar, but usually featured the speaker as the protagonist.

> Maurício said that an association is an organisation with one aim. He said their aim was to create employment, not just waiting for the government, although the government gives a hand, such as the dam they helped build in 2004. He decided to start the association in the first place because one day he went to his friend's house in Visinho, and saw big sacks of sunflower seed on the veranda.
> "Did you produce this?" he asked his friend.
> "No."
> "How can I get some?" Maurício asked.
> "Go back home," his friend said, "and make a group called an association."
>
> Formerly, in the colonial era, people produced sunflower seed, and sold it to an oil and soap factory in Monapo. So Maurício went home and called Cristóvão, Vicente and Florêncio and explained, we can grow sunflower seed. They divided the seed between them, and grew it, and got the sacks together after harvest, organised a car and sold it. The sunflower seed did well in this soil, but they had to stop because there were no decent *padrões* (buyers) — they were all unreliable and untrustworthy. Maurício said that there were always both men and women in the association, but they never did collective agriculture until ProSAVANA; it used to be each person on their own *machamba*. After sunflower seed, the association moved to irrigated crops like onions.
> [Interview, August 2016]

The association was also a member of a forum of twelve producers' associations in the vicinity of Vila. The president of the forum was Cláudio, local resident and pastor of Bairro, and project visits to the Forum were often held in the association's meeting hut, meaning that it was not always clear whether projects were working with the association or the whole Forum. Significant past projects — those that

were still talked about by members and non-members alike — included the construction of a dam and irrigation system, the creation of fish tanks (apparently intended to breed fish to supply to other tanks in the area) and extension work that taught people to plant their crops in straight lines.

Pedro

The association sometimes communicated and negotiated with project directly, but often these interactions were mediated by Pedro, the appointed agricultural extension worker (*técnico*) for the area. Pedro had a small office in Vila but was usually visiting rural neighbourhoods on his motorbike. He played a key role as go-between for the district agricultural office, the *Chefe de poste* and rural communities and associations. Pedro was a trained agronomist, but in my observations of association activities he was more often called upon as a translator between Makhuwa and Portuguese.

Figure 4: Members of the association lay out pipes to irrigate their communal onion plot, June 2016.

Experiencing projects

> Flavia said she likes all the projects because they all
> enter with good intentions. But some help more. [Interview, November 2016]

> When the Save the Children researcher had gone, Hélia said to Tifa, 'Those people take
> advantage of us, without giving us anything!' [Field notes, November 2016]

Interactions with the projects working with the association or forum usually took the form of meetings. The arrival of project staff for a meeting was often unexpected or unreliable. Sometimes projects would contact Cláudio or Mário by phone to give them a date and time for a meeting, and they would then go round and inform the members; sometimes a *técnico*, usually Pedro, came through Bairro on his motorbike a few days beforehand to inform the members. On numerous occasions, the first the members knew of a project visit was when a car pulled up at the association meeting hut, prompting Bárbara, who lived nearby, to run and tell other members.

Frequently, the visitors would not arrive on time, leaving the members waiting for several hours in the meeting hut without much in the way of food or water, interfering with tasks like farming or cooking lunch. Depending on the season, people would go in search of mangoes, oranges or sugarcane to snack on while they waited. At least twice during my stay in Bairro, Cláudio received a call after several hours of waiting to cancel the meeting. Visitors from the big projects usually arrived in white Hiluxes emblazoned with the project's or funder's logo. The meetings, which could last for an hour or so, were generally held in Portuguese, but Pedro was often present, acting as facilitator and translator. Sometimes snacks such as bread rolls and canned fizzy drinks would be distributed, but usually this wasn't the case.[36] Other interactions with projects included 'field days' [*dias de campo*], at which visiting *técnicos* would give demonstrations or be given a tour of the association's plots and fish tanks, and events like seed fairs and training courses held elsewhere, transport or travel money for which would be provided.

When Tifa and I interviewed members of the association in November 2016 about the projects working with the association, all the members said that ProSAVANA was their favourite. For several women it was the only project they could remember the name of. The reasons they gave for preferring ProSAVANA included its provision of inputs, its help growing onions specifically, and because the project provided snacks for members of the association. Several women had stories of projects that had not proved helpful: one project had promised peanut seed, but brought it too late to be planted; another sold the association's produce at a very low price and they felt they could have sold it for more themselves in Vila. Their descriptions of ProSAVANA contrasted with this: they felt the project to be reliable and supportive. One member, Angélica, put it thus:

> But ProSAVANA does what they say, what they promise. Other businesses [projects]
> only want *ganhar* [to win or earn], but farming is *ganhar, perder* [win, lose] and

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[36] When they were provided, people would often save the snacks to take home to their families; some would collect empty plastic drinks bottles to sell in Vila.

ProSAVANA understands this, they know you have to work harder the next season. [Interview, November 2016]

Several of the projects sought to increase women's participation in commercial production. This was partly in response to donor imperatives: a member of staff on the OYE project requested that the group find more women members, saying that this was because "government and donors are always asking to see more women", but that the female recruits should "only be women who are willing". Projects' approach to gender in relation to food security is considered in Chapter 5.

In this next section, I describe the main projects working in Bairro during my fieldwork, from October 2015 to December 2016 (they are also summarised in Table 3). These were the projects which visited multiple times during my stay, and made some kind of physical or visible impression on Bairro, such as holding events which local people attended, establishing a demonstration plot or helping the farmers' association grow a particular crop. There were several other projects and organisations that visited the association for one-off meetings, which I have not included here.

Table 3: Summary of projects working on food or agriculture-related themes in Bairro, 2015-16

Project name	Aims/activities	Funding source	Implementing/local partners
Inovagro	Connecting farmers to commercial inputs suppliers: seed fairs, demonstration plots, field days	Swiss Co-operation	DAI/COWI
OYE (Opportunities for Youth Employment)	Training for young people in the principles and practice of entrepreneurship; setting up a project whereby young people grow improved mango varieties to supply Shoprite	SNV	Ministry of Youth and Sport
PROMER (Programme for the Promotion of Rural Markets)	Set up women's micro-credit group; training in seed production for local markets; support with commercial pigeon pea production	IFAD	Ministry of Agriculture, UATAF (Technical Assistance for Functional Literacy Collective)
ProSAVANA (Programme for the Development of the Savannahs of Mozambique)	Supporting commercial onion production, providing credit, a motorised water pump, fertilisers, training and improved seeds	JICA (and initially ABC)	JICA, Ministry of Agriculture

Programa-ODM-1c (Millennium Development Goal 1c)	Training in seed production to sell locally; electronic voucher scheme to facilitate access to improved seeds and fertiliser	EU, FAO	FAO
Conservation agriculture for pest management	Demonstration plots	World Bank	IIAM (Mozambique Agrarian Research Institute)
Community-based nutrition project	Distribution of nutritional supplements and deworming medicine; training local volunteers in nutrition education; monitoring infants' height and weight	Save the Children/ Ministry of Health	Save the Children/ Ministry of Health

InovAgro

InovAgro was funded by Swiss Co-operation/Helvetas and implemented by development agencies DAI and COWI. It was working with the association as well as other associations in the forum. The programme, as explained to members of the association by a *técnico* from Maputo (wearing a t-shirt advertising Pannar seed), was intended to connect farmers with commercial input suppliers. InovAgro had helped the association to set up maize and sesame demonstration plots on the association's land, and during a project visit in March 2016, the Maputo *técnico*, along with a female *técnica,* gave association members a tour of the different Pannar varieties being grown. The project also ran a 'field day' in April 2016 for the forum, at which representatives from seed companies such as K2, Agro Dalton, Oruwera and Phoenix plied their wares, using the demonstration plots to show how well the seeds had grown locally. In November 2016, InovAgro held a seed fair in Vila, at which many of the same companies were present. They provided transport for the associations in more distant neighbourhoods and laid on musical entertainment at the seed fair. At both events, local people who were not members of associations or the forum also attended.

Figure 5: InovAgro 'Field day', April 2016. Members of the Forum listen to a talk from a representative of K2, with translation provided by the usual técnico, Pedro.

PROMER (Programme for the Promotion of Rural Markets)

PROMER was funded by IFAD and delivered via the Ministry of Agriculture and the UATAF (Technical Assistance for Functional Literacy Collective). It consisted of several components, reflecting the different priorities of its implementing partners but also demonstrating the different components within the idea of a virtuous entrepreneurial farmer (this is explored

more later in the thesis). PROMER had helped establish a women's micro-credit group, which provided training in account keeping as well as resources such as pass books and a calculator. The previous year PROMER had supported an adult literacy programme, which had folded following a breakdown in communication between the teacher (a member of the farmers' association) and other members of the association. In late 2015, PROMER supported some members of the association in cultivating an area of pigeon pea and selling the harvest. In 2016 it provided some members of the association with training in how to produce seed for local markets, and in late 2016 project staff were proposing a new project, producing pigeon pea seed to supply neighbouring associations. The different components were represented by different staff: the micro-credit group were supported by a *técnica* whom I never met, but who was well-liked by the women. The commercial agriculture aspects were supported by the usual agricultural *técnico*, Pedro, and on occasion a smartly-dressed representative from Nampula.

ProSAVANA (Programme for the Development of the Savannahs of Mozambique)

Projects were notoriously late, and members of the association would frequently spend several hours waiting for a visit that never arrived, but ProSAVANA was different. Association members said that they liked ProSAVANA because visitors usually arrived when they said they would, and they often provided food (ranging from a snack of bread and soda to whole feasts of fish, chicken and *xima*.

In 2015-16, the association received about seven visits from ProSAVANA. Frequently these were just the *técnico* on his motorbike, but there were also delegations of Mozambican and Japanese staff from JICA and the Ministry of Agriculture, who were jointly implementing the project by this point (the Brazilian development co-operation organisation ABC having pulled out in 2014). On one occasion the association received a visit from a JICA-funded researcher who was evaluating impacts and experiences of stage 1 of the project. The first phase, in 2014-15, was based around commercial onion production. ProSAVANA provided the Bairro farmers' association, and an association in a neighbourhood nearby, with a motorised water pump (on credit), and the use of a tractor, fertilisers and improved seeds (all also on credit). Members of the association were given training, and the *técnico* visited regularly throughout the onion campaign. Profits from the campaign were used to pay back the cost of inputs, with the remainder divided between members of the association – a controversial use of the money, which led to a mass exodus from the association in early 2016. In 2015-16, the remaining members of the association, in discussion with ProSAVANA, decided to expand the association's commercial onion production over a larger area, although the project had to be

modified following disputes over the land the association was using (see Chapter 6). In late 2016, ProSAVANA and the association agreed that the next agricultural campaign would be based on pigeon pea rather than onions, with ProSAVANA again providing inputs.

Members of the association said that the ProSAVANA project was the first time that they'd farmed a plot of land together. Some preferred having their own individual plots, but others liked the new system. Ruane said that ProSAVANA had "showed them the way", by teaching them to have understanding between members. Communal farming was better for people without much *força* [strength and labour power] — they could produce more that way.

There were several versions of the story of how ProSAVANA had come to work in Bairro; in one telling, the association rejected their initial proposal, and only accepted the project when they came back with a better offer. Several times, I heard from women in the association that many other associations (perhaps with wider civil society backing) had rejected ProSAVANA, but that now that they saw what a good project it was, they regretted their earlier decision.

Figure 6: Members of the association at a meeting with JICA/ProSAVANA, November 2016

Programa-ODM-1c (Millennium Development Goal 1c)

This catchily-titled project, funded by the EU and the FAO and implemented by the FAO, was being carried out at a wider scale than most of the other projects, and did not feature any direct interactions with the association in the way that other projects did. The project invited several women members of the association to the district capital for training in seed saving and seed production to sell locally. In late 2016 FAO also launched an electronic voucher scheme at a big festival with dancing, singing and speeches from representatives of the EU, UN and national government. Members of the associations in the forum were invited. The "voucher electrónico" essentially provided subsidies for people to buy improved seeds and

fertiliser from local outlets. A farmer would load their own money onto the card, and this would be topped up by the system; the card could then be used to buy agricultural inputs in particular shops. Participating farmers were sub-divided into categories of 'commercial' and 'subsistence'. 'Commercial' farmers received significantly more financial support than 'subsistence' ones: 'subsistence' farmers contributed 500Mt which was augmented by 1500Mt from FAO, whereas 'commercial' farmers contributed 3000Mt and received an additional 4000Mt. 'Subsistence' farmers could only use their card to purchase seed, whilst 'commercial' farmers could also purchase fertiliser — although I overhead one man complaining that he had to buy seed as well as fertiliser, supposedly to prevent him selling on the fertiliser, suggesting that although the project promoted entrepreneurship, people were not always commercially-minded in project-sanctioned ways.

Figure 7: Crowds watch performances of Makhuwa dances and listen to speeches at a launch event for the FAO Electronic Voucher at an agricultural supplies shop 8km from Bairro.

IIAM/World Bank conservation agriculture/integrated pest management project

The least talked-about project, this concerned a conservation agriculture demonstration plot created on the association's land in late 2015. Representatives from the World Bank, along with implementing partners from Zambia, Malawi and IIAM (Mozambique Agrarian Research Institute), visited in May 2016 as part of an evaluation of the international project. It was a very hot day. An immense line of about ten four wheel drives pulled up at the side of the association's plot and a big group of visitors got out as the members of the forum sang for them. The visitors greeted everyone in turn in a mixture of English, Portuguese, Makhuwa and

Chichewa. The visitors seemed very interested in the plots, taking photos of the *striga* (witchweed) growing around the sorghum, and asked the association members about the plots. However, when I asked Odeta and some other members what the plot was for, they said they didn't know, it was something that Cláudio had agreed to. The crops in the demonstration plot were noticeably smaller and less healthy-looking than the improved, fertiliser-fed Pannar varieties in the neighbouring demonstration plots.

Figure 8: IIAM staff, World Bank delegates and members of the association visiting an integrated pest management demonstration plot, April 2016.

OYE (Opportunities for Youth Employment)

Unlike the projects previously discussed, OYE arrived in Bairro seeking to work not with the farmers' association but with the youth association. Although there was no such youth association active in Bairro, two men (one of whom was the party secretary's younger brother, and one of whom was a member of an influential family and a former secretary of the farmers' association) had been registering the presence of a youth association with the government each year and listing their names as president and secretary. These men recruited enough young people for the first meeting to give the impression of an association. OYE was funded by SNV and implemented by the Ministry of Youth and Sport, who made contact with the 'youth association' through Adalberto the party secretary rather than Claudio or Mário. The project was represented in initial meetings by a *técnico*, a teacher from Vila,

and the district level administrator for Youth and Sport[37]. They explained the aim of the project, which was to establish a project where young people would grow improved mango varieties to supply to Shoprite, a South Africa-based supermarket chain. The project included a week-long training for members of the association in the principles and practice of entrepreneurship, during which time one of the members (perhaps not coincidentally the party secretary's younger brother) was taken to Nampula for a month-long training. The training was carried out by Rosa, an energetic young woman from eastern Nampula province who was fluent in Makhuwa and had worked in agricultural extension for several years. Members were encouraged to go to their field (a hastily arranged plot, referred to in more detail in Chapter 6) in the mornings before attending the training.

The training was delivered as a mixture of lecture-style teaching (Rosa talking and writing notes on a flipchart, everyone copying as fast as their limited literacy allowed) and group work (Rosa writing questions on the flipchart, everyone copying them down, getting into groups to discuss and write down answers, and then writing these up on the flipchart for the rest of the class to write down). Topics covered included what it means to be entrepreneurial, how to write a business plan, personal hygiene, contraception and safe sex, and marketing. Students were encouraged to think up their own business ideas, such as small shops or chicken raising schemes. After the training, there was little contact from the project until December 2016, when several male *técnicos* arrived to help the members plant mango saplings on their plot of land.

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[37] The latter was a young man who showed an (inappropriate) interest in Tifa, asking where she lived and saying he could offer her a job; when she mentioned this to the training facilitator, Rosa, Tifa was warned that he had a reputation for offering young people jobs in exchange for money or sex, with the jobs never materialising. I suggested reporting this to the provincial Ministry of Youth and Sport, but Rosa thought they wouldn't do anything about it.

Figure 9: Participants in the OYE training copy notes off a flipchart; the facilitator leading a game, August 2016.

Community-based nutrition

This project, jointly funded and implemented by Save the Children and the Ministry of Health, also operated outside the farmers' association. It was based on monthly weigh-ins, held at several locations within the neighbourhood, where parents would bring infants under the age of 2 to have their height and weight monitored. Deworming pills and packets of nutritional supplements were distributed for children, as well as iron tablets for adolescent girls and pregnant women. These events were run by Odeta's sister-in-law Aurélia, who was important in the local branch of OMM (Mozambican Women's Organisation, a branch of Frelimo) and the wife of a district-level Frelimo official. Aurélia co-ordinated, ran training for, and was supported by, a team of local volunteers, including Odeta herself. The volunteers' responsibilities included rounding up mothers and babies before a weigh-in, and running nutrition education sessions (although to my knowledge none of the volunteers ran one of these during my stay in Bairro). Volunteers were paid a small *per diem* for this work, and given items such as hats and t-shirts, which they wore as uniforms. Contact with the wider project included regular visits from the district-level *técnico* on his motorbike, two evaluation visits from Save the Children officials from Maputo in four by fours, and a meeting at the end of the year when all the volunteers in the administrative post were called to Vila hospital to be given *capulanas*. During the year, Aurélia and the district *técnico* ran a training for local volunteers in how to make enriched pap for undernourished infants, which was followed by an event when the volunteers cooked more enriched pap for local leaders and mothers. Several of these activities are referred to in Chapter 5.

Attendance at the weigh-ins fluctuated, depending to some extent on whether the volunteers had spread the word about the event beforehand. Some mothers complained to the Save the Children evaluators that their attendance at the community weigh-ins, recorded on their children's health card, had led medical staff to refuse to weigh their children at the health centre.

Having sketched out the socio-economic context of Bairro and the main projects operating there, in the next three chapters I at three key aspects of the interactions between them: money and commercialisation, food security and provisioning practices, and land.

Figure 10: A Save the Children community volunteer weighs an infant at a monthly weighing, October 2016.

Chapter 4
'It was the money that burned the house'

Moral economy, commercialisation and the micropolitics of money

I was sitting with members of the association at a meeting with a Mozambican NGO. Cláudio, the president of the producers' forum, was ranting in Portuguese at the visitors, about how their project served the executives of the NGO but not peasant farmers like him and the members he represented. Next to me, Angélica was playing with a baby and my research assistant Tifa was on the edge of sleep.

Suddenly, movement along the road caught our attention: the sounds of shouting voices, the darkness of smoke and the shimmer of heat against the sky. Fortunata came running down the hill, carrying her baby grandson. She handed him to his mother, Isaura, and sprinted off again, breathlessly shouting as she left:

'Flávia's house is on fire!'

[Fieldnotes, October 2016]

Introduction

What does commercialisation mean in a context like Bairro? According to the vision of the AGR, 'commercialisation' implies a linear trajectory of increasing involvement in markets, and an increasing orientation of production towards markets, particularly commodity production (e.g. Collier and Dercon 2014). Historically, development narratives have positioned peasant agriculture as the antithesis of capitalist, commercial agriculture, oriented towards subsistence and resistant to commoditisation (Friedmann 1980, Wolpe 1972). However, as we have already seen in Chapter 3, sub-Saharan Africa, Mozambique, and indeed Bairro have a long history of commercial agriculture. In contemporary Bairro, peasants produce crops both to sell and for subsistence.

This chapter explores this context of combined commercial and subsistence production – 'incomplete' commercialisation in the parlance of the AGR – and what happens when projects promoting commercial agriculture intervene in this context. The burning of Flávia's house, a moment of crisis in Bairro, brought into sharp focus for me the ways in which binaries of subsistence and commercial agriculture, tradition and modernity fail to explain the pressures

and politics of everyday life in Bairro. The destruction by fire of all your material possessions is a terrible and debilitating thing, whomever it happens to, and my first response to Flávia's misfortune was horror and sadness. However, in the days and weeks that followed the day of the fire, people's responses gave me a new appreciation of the ambiguous and complex pathways and politics of social and economic exchange, particularly those around money, in Bairro.

In this chapter I use the concept of moral economy to look at how peasants in Bairro were positioned (or position themselves) between commercial and subsistence agriculture, and the politics of this positioning. I use the concept of moral economy to draw out three key strands of the unfolding story of Flávia's fire, examining what each tells us about Bairro's moral and political economies and their relationship with development interventions and wider economic change. Throughout, I look at the politics of money: I understand monetary forms of exchange as distinct from commercialisation, since they are present in many kinds of economy, but recognise that they are nonetheless central to the relationships and politics of commercialisation (Parry and Bloch 1989).

The first strand of the story, understanding moral economy as 'subsistence ethic', looks at the impact of the blaze and the immediate responses to it by members of the local community, both emotional and practical, providing insights into some of the networks of communitarianism and reciprocity in Bairro. The incident reveals how different responses were shaped by Bairro's social dynamics: gender roles, people's positions of authority, and networks and institutions such as those of church, association, kinship, friendship and neighbourhood. The kinds of response offered by these networks also emphasises the importance of *makhaka* [dried cassava] as central to subsistence and survival.

In the second part of this chapter, using moral economy as a lens onto subsumption, I take a step back from Flávia's story to focus on Bairro's economies of *makhaka*, and the role of *makhaka* not only as central to subsistence but also as a commercial crop. Flávia's fire raised concerns about other community members' access to the *ganho-ganho* system in which labour was exchanged with neighbours for *makhaka*, money, or other goods. This highlights how peasants used *ganho-ganho* as a buffer against the uncertainties of the wider political economy, particularly in the context of Mozambique's 2016 debt crisis and a crash in pigeon pea prices in 2017. This also reveals how axes of social differentiation, particularly gender, wealth and access to land, affect Bairro people's agency in navigating the liminal space between subsistence and commercial production.

In the third strand of the story, in which the money belonging to the women's savings group was found to have been destroyed in the fire, I take a broader interpretation of moral economy as a way of analysing the norms and values shaping economic behaviour in a particular context, to explore the micropolitics and discourses around money in Bairro. I look at the local concept of *nrima* [envy], the gendered and racialized discourses surrounding it, and how it was enacted through gossip and *okwiri* [witchcraft] as a mechanism for maintaining local understandings of justice and mediating questions of trust around jointly owned money. I also consider the response of development projects to these dynamics, including the perceived injustice of the response of the savings group project to the fire, and the moral economies invoked by projects themselves in their conversations with local people about money and development.

Finally, I draw these strands together, reflecting what moral economy tells us about the simultaneous agency and vulnerability of Bairro households within moral and political economies at local, national and global scales. Reflecting on a crisis in pigeon pea markets in 2016-2017, I argue that interventions promoting commercialisation in this context can limit peasants' agency and their ability to weather economic turbulence. Just as I wish to avoid romanticising the moral economy as an alternative to capitalism in which no-one goes hungry, I also want to avoid demonising it as a set of backward, 'traditional' norms in which change is impossible. Rather, I want to suggest that the specific nature of Makhuwa moral economy in Bairro both limited and enabled particular kinds of change, and this contributed to frictions in the context of agricultural (and other) development interventions. Underpinning all this was a deeply unequal and constraining political economy, and entering it were the complicating interventions of development projects.

Moral economy

The term 'moral economy' has been interpreted in several ways, but its use is generally traced back to the work of E.P. Thompson (1971), who used moral economy to explain the role of social contract in determining class behaviour in 19th century England and preventing peasant riots in times of food scarcity. Moral economy became a popular idea in anthropology and peasant studies after James Scott (1976) adopted the term to explore how the breakdown of patron-client relationships in Vietnam created the social conditions for peasant resistance against capitalist domination[38]. Michael Watts (1983) also famously used the term in a slightly

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[38] Scott has been critiqued for analysing peasant resistance through an ahistorical, Eurocentric lens, interpreting the subsistence ethic as a social right when 'society' is in fact a product of the

different way: to describe non-capitalist systems in northern Nigeria – characterised by reciprocity and risk aversion – whose erosion by colonialism and the incursion of market capitalism contributed to such resistance.

In this chapter I draw on three understandings of moral economy. First, I draw on Watts's understanding of moral economy as a system informed by rationalities beyond those enshrined in neoclassical economic logic, notably the importance of food sufficiency exemplified by the 'subsistence ethic' that Watts sees as informing systems of governance and food distribution and exchange in nineteenth century Hausaland (Watts 1983, 105). Hyden (1983, 2008) has described this system, albeit in more universalist and teleological terms that he applies to "the African peasant" in general, as the "economy of affection", encompassing a range of activities from mutual aid in times of famine, to loan arrangements and informal networks for the exchange of labour, advice or sexual services. This kind of understanding of moral economy has also been linked to Marcel Mauss's (1990 [1950]) concept of the gift economy, in which goods and services are exchanged without an explicitly agreed expectation of return. The gift economy might also be understood within the context of norms of reciprocity and communitarianism, which have been conceptualised in southern African contexts using the Nguni philosophy of *Ubuntu* (Swanson 2007)*. Ubuntu* has been defined in a diverse set of ways, and popularised as a way of communicating belonging and togetherness in post-apartheid South Africa (Gade 2012). It is most frequently interpreted in academic literature as 'the philosophy that community strength comes of community support, and that dignity and identity are achieved through mutualism, empathy, generosity and community commitment' (Swanson 2007, 55-56). While not a term used in Bairro, *Ubuntu* informs my first understanding of moral economy as a culture of reciprocity in exploring norms of reciprocity and subsistence in Bairro.

However, these readings of moral economy have also come under critique themselves for reinforcing teleological narratives of development (Palomera and Vetta 2016). This is most evident in the tendency of moral economy scholarship to dichotomise between (either romanticised or demonised) pre-capitalist peasant modes of exchange and socio-economic organisation and the individualist rationalism of capitalist political economy (Götz 2015). These narratives are constructed from a set of frequently elided binaries: subsistence and commercial agriculture, gift and commodity economies, tradition and modernity (Parry and Bloch 1989). In these imaginaries, money is conceptualised as the antithesis of moral

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Enlightenment. Moyn, S. 2018. *Not Enough: Human Rights in an Unequal World*. Cambridge, MA and London: Belknap Press.

economy. Amoral at best, immoral at worst, it is an 'intrinsically revolutionary power which inexorably subverts the moral economy of 'traditional' societies' (Parry and Bloch 1989, 12). Recent work on moral economy has attempted to move beyond the binaries of subsistence and commercial production and exchange, recognising the 'entanglement of values' which characterise most economies (Palomera and Vetta 2016, 415), particularly in the context of the everyday (Wilson 2013). In these readings, there may be nothing inherently 'moral' about moral economy, which might be served as well by theft as by reciprocity (Neumann 2002) or corruption (de Sardan 1999).

My second use of moral economy continues to draw on Scott and Watts. Scholars such as de Sardan (1999, 2013) have mobilised the concept as a way of looking beyond the binaries of moral economy and markets. This perspective looks at moral economy as produced and reproduced through everyday practices, without losing sight of the embeddedness of these practices within a context of structural inequality (de Sardan 2013). Instead, this perspective looks at the historically contingent, geographically situated relationships between the kinds of non-market economy described above, and capitalist political economies. Since peasants may have (some) leverage over land, resources and labour, they are often only partially subsumed to capital (compared, for example, to wage labourers). As a result, 'moral' and political economies may co-exist in complex and contradictory ways, potentially creating scope for agency within the structural limitations of political economy (Carton and Andersson 2018). From a more pro-capitalist perspective, Hyden (2008) sees "this ability of the African peasant to stand with one foot in the economy of affection and the other in the wider national economy" as a hindrance to modernist macroeconomic development, which lends itself to corruption, nepotism and "tribalism" (p.17).

A third understanding of moral economy takes the collapsing of the moral/political economy binary a step further. Scholarship on post-capitalist and diverse economies has expanded the concept to recognise the co-existence of capitalist and non-capitalist economies and forms of exchange, even within neoliberal societies (Gibson, Cahill and McKay 2010, Gibson-Graham 1996). This perspective prompts us to interrogate the ways in which norms and values shape economies and economic behaviour within all systems of exchange, to ask: what are economic activities *for*? (Sayer 2015). Moral economy, in this sense, is the ethical framework that underpins perceptions of injustice in contexts of capitalist domination and commoditisation, but it may also be the ethical framework informing the *imposition* of capitalist systems (Sayer 2000). In a study of a 'social impact investing' project in Tanzania, Watts (2018) points out how the project, informed by ideas of 'ethical capitalism',

nonetheless commits 'perceived violations of moral economic norms' in its debt collection practices (p.286). This understanding of moral economy as the set of values and norms that inform economic behaviour in a particular context allows us to explore the ambiguity of economic behaviour in Bairro, especially in the contexts of partial subsumption and of interactions between local people and projects.

Moral economy as gift economy and subsistence ethic: support in a time of crisis

> Tifa and I headed to Flávia's. Dozens of people were sitting along the edge of the kitchen building, the eaves and bamboos of which were badly charred. Mário arrived and went straight to help Guilherme and Faustino, who were taking buckets off the people bringing them and, entering the house, throwing water on the fire. Fortunata and Bárbara took the buckets from new arrivals, transferring water from canisters into buckets and handing buckets to the empty-handed. Mário diverted some of the water carriers to the back of the house.
>
> Some of the other witnesses told us that the fire started when Flávia's young children (who were unharmed) were cooking dried peanuts in some dried grass stacked behind the house. Ernesto, their father, was in the *horta* [lowland farm] at the time, and Flávia was away in Nampula. Tifa and I joined the group of people, mostly women and children, bringing buckets of water from the river.
>
> By now, the flames were lower and the men started dragging things out of the house. Pedro retrieved a shrivelled rucksack, and spread the sodden papers inside it out to dry. They pulled out blackened but still intact enamel plates and cups, aluminium pans that had collapsed like burst balloons, and Ernesto's solar panel, the flex charred and twisted.
> [Field notes, October 2016]

In the immediate aftermath of the fire, we see some of Bairro's networks of support spring into action. Here, the gift economy is represented by labour rather than by material goods: dozens of people pitched in to spread the word, get help, put out the fire and salvage what was left. These were mostly neighbours, those who were physically close to Flávia's house at the time, but also friends, relatives and colleagues who heard about it and came running. In the time and space of crisis, the ways in which assistance was given reflected everyday social relations, particularly the gendered division of labour. Men assumed frontline positions — those of leadership and danger — throwing water onto the house, while women, children and

young men provided crucial supportive labour, bringing the water. Certain people's authority carried into this space too: leading the firefighting were Mário, the president of the association, and Faustino, the local land chief.

The materiality of the fire also reveals how Flávia's household was positioned between moral and political economies, between 'modern' and 'traditional' items: the flammability of a dried grass roof, the melting of imported plastic, the salvaging of a solar panel – and, as we see in the next part of the story, the phenomenal heat capacity of makhaka.

> Next morning, Tifa and I went to Flávia's. The children were in the yard, playing with the burnt out bikes. The store of *makhaka* in the house was still smouldering. Flávia was sitting draped in a *capulana* [wax-print sarong], her head bowed, a posture I had only previously seen adopted by the recently bereaved or people who were very ill. 'I am lost,' she kept repeating. 'I do not know what I am going to do.' She lamented that she had lost six new *capulanas* in the fire, but hurried to express her gratitude to the people who had helped, like Cristóvão, who brought clothes for Ernesto. Flávia said that people had been encouraging her, telling her not to think too much about the fire or to kill herself. Late last night, Ricardo and Bárbara came and talked to her, telling her to think of her children. [Field notes, October 2016]

If the first response to the fire was mostly practical, it was quickly followed by emotional support — in the form of counselling and a gift of clothes. Again, there is significance to who did this, reflecting elements of patronage within Bairro's economies of reciprocity, with Flávia and Ernesto positioned both as beneficiaries of patrons and receiving help in return for past patronage. Cristóvão was the Bairro party leader and Ricardo a church elder as well as a neighbour. Bárbara was Flávia's neighbour, a resource-poor single woman whom Flávia had helped a lot in the past with gifts of food and seeds.

> A few days after this – the fire had finally burned itself out – I was working in a field near Flávia's house. The farmers I was with suddenly stopped and straightened up to watch a procession of women carrying basins of *makhaka* along the road and up the path to Flávia's house. At the head of the procession was the mother of Flávia's son-in-law, who lived in the next neighbourhood. The women with her were members of her church. Another day, the women from the association also took basins of *makhaka* to Flávia. [Field notes, October 2016]

> [Later in the week] the men and women of Flávia's own church gathered early in the morning carrying their hoes, to help Flávia and Ernesto to harvest the cassava they still had in their fields. They had originally intended to leave this in the ground for another year to increase in size, but now they had no option. Without *makhaka*, how would they eat come February? Without *makhaka*, what would they sell to raise the cash to pay their children's school fees, or to buy cooking oil, or to begin rebuilding their house?
> [Field notes, October 2016]

In the days after the fire, different systems and mechanisms of support became visible. The help provided reflects Ernesto and Flávia's status as respected members of the local Baptist church, and Flávia's as vice-president of the association. The support from their daughter's mother-in-law and her own church community also demonstrates the role played by kinship and connections through marriage. This combination of status, a widely recognised history of giving help to others in times of need, and strong local social connections, both institutional and familial, put Ernesto and Flávia in a strong position to receive support. More resource-poor members of the community or those with fewer kinship connections might have received less widespread support. Tifa pointed out to me that Márcia and Maria, elderly widows with few surviving children living locally, were always making rounds of their neighbours with small gifts of produce: "they have to *passear* [make rounds of the village], they don't receive visits". These women had to constantly maintain their networks of obligation, their insurance policy against harder times, which seems to reflect a moral economy of explicit reciprocity rather than Ubuntu.

It is also notable that in the case of Flávia's fire, much of the help provided by the community to ensure their subsistence and survival centred around *makhaka*. In the fire, Flávia and her family lost not only their possessions and their store of harvested food, but also seeds saved for the next season and their means of raising money to buy more food and inputs. In particular, they lost the dried cassava that was supposed to see them through the 'difficult time' between the start of the growing season and the first harvests. I now turn to look in more detail at the moral economy of *makhaka* in Bairro, exploring its crucial role as subsistence and commercial crop, famine food and payment in kind.

Cassava was first domesticated in Brazil and introduced to what is now Angola in the 1600s, initially in the fields of Portuguese settlers. By the late 1700s, it was replacing millet and maize as the staple crop in the disintegrating Kongo kingdom, preventing famine during a period of uncertainty and political volatility thanks to its resilience and long harvesting period (Vansina

1966). It was probably brought to southern Africa from Angola by Ovimbundu traders, and was being grown in northern Rhodesia by the end of the nineteenth century (*ibid.*).

In Bairro in 2016, a bride's bottom drawer was a cassava crop. One woman talked about the ideal marriage: the couple get betrothed, with the consent of the families on both sides, and they plant a field of cassava. That way, once they are married they will have something to get them started: something to eat, something to sell.

Figure 11: Neighbours watch and bring water as Flávia's house burns

Every household in Bairro grew cassava. Most cultivated a mixture of varieties to provide sweet cassava for immediate consumption and bitter cassava for peeling, drying and storing. This *makhaka* could then be broken up, pounded into flour, sieved and used to make a kind of porridge, called *karakhata*. This food was the dietary staple from September onwards, increasingly important as stores of maize and sorghum ran out (which we will explore further in Chapter 5). By February, some families were just eating *karakhata* and green leaves (often cassava leaves, *ntikwa*). Because of its history, and its role in this 'hungry season', policy makers and development workers frequently consider cassava a famine crop, important in terms of preventing absolute food scarcity.

The resilience and flexibility in harvesting period which made cassava so popular in eighteenth century Angola have remained important in Mozambique's modern economy, allowing people to move elsewhere to seek employment or education opportunities but maintain a food

source in their home neighbourhood. This was especially relevant for those who temporarily migrated to Nampula city or the coast, where cassava was much more expensive. Cassava also helped secure people's survival during the internal conflict, when Bairro families had to flee their homes and *machambas* without warning. These considerations still held pertinence in 2016, as violent unrest broke out between FRELIMO and RENAMO, and the government issued statements telling people not to flee their *machambas* (Bowker et al. 2016).

Makhaka was, then, important to the food security of individual households. However, it was also part of a reciprocal system of exchanging labour, food and money within the community that both overcame and reinforced differences between the poorest and the more financially secure members of the community. This reflects Watts' understanding of a 'subsistence ethic' as achieved by a hierarchy that maintains inequality but also ensures the survival of the poorest.

> As the weeks went by, Flávia and Eduardo started to come to terms with the disaster and find ways to survive the growing season, but some of the implications of the fire were beginning to be felt elsewhere. The family reliably produced large amounts of dried cassava and, compared to some local families, sold only a small proportion of it, allowing them to hold plenty back in reserve for the lean season. This meant that if other households were struggling to get enough food, they could do a deal with Flávia and Eduardo, exchanging a day's farm labour for a basin of *makhaka*. The poorer households in the community regularly relied on this system to ensure their food security. But if Flávia's *makhaka* store had gone up in smoke, what would that mean for them?
> [Field notes, October 2016]

Flávia and Ernesto's household was relatively wealthy and food secure, and it was located within Bairro's informal network of mutual assistance between households of different levels of wealth and food security, based around the exchange of *ganho-ganho* labour for *makhaka*. As the lean season of January and February approached, households known to have a large supply of *makhaka* were likely to be approached by others asking to do *ganho-ganho* work on their *machambas* in return for an agreed quantity of *makhaka.* Doing or employing *ganho-ganho* not only affected people's income, but also placed them within a network of obligation and a hierarchy of wealth and security, a local articulation of the kinds of systems of reciprocity and patronage that Watts (1983) conceptualises as moral economy. The wealthiest households, as well as the elderly or infirm, employed *ganho-ganho* workers regularly, while young people and the poorest relied on *ganho-ganho* throughout the year to supplement

their food supply or income. Most households occupied a middle ground: participating in *ganho-ganho* in the lean season, to help neighbours during bottleneck periods, or opportunistically – to save up to buy something special, or to take advantage of someone offering meat or alcohol in exchange for labour.

These relationships were laden with values and power differentials. Offering *ganho-ganho* to others, especially during the lean season, increased a household's status, whilst requesting to do *ganho-ganho* for someone increased dependence on and obligation towards wealthier households. For more financially and food-secure families, doing (rather than employing) *ganho-ganho* was associated with failure, and hence with shame; some spoke with pride of never having had to seek *ganho-ganho*, with the implication that their management of household food resources was superior to others (see Chapter 5 for more on food management). People frequently spoke of needing to avoid this eventuality, and hence the importance of not selling all their *makhaka* — of keeping enough back to last them through until March. Again, blame was implicitly directed towards those who had to do *ganho-ganho* (an idea that was reinforced by government and project narratives about the laziness of the hungry, as will be discussed in Chapter 5. However, it was a system that many households relied on to supplement their subsistence and commercial production.

Flávia and Ernesto were known for producing a lot of *makhaka* and storing most of it, so that they usually had some available in the rainy season to offer others for *ganho-ganho*. It was therefore of concern to other families that Flávia and Ernesto's *makhaka* supply had been lost. Flávia and Ernesto had, in the space of an afternoon, moved from patrons to clients.

> Last year Flávia offered *makhaka* for work, but this year it was the opposite. But, she said, she wouldn't be ashamed: *pobreza não sente vegonha* [poverty feels no shame]. Who will help you if you don't help others? [Fieldnotes, October 2016]

Flávia's statement here appears to summarise neatly the idea of a peasant subsistence ethic and of the strong norms and hierarchical but dynamic mechanisms of reciprocity and community support at work in Bairro. However, this moral economy was not playing out in isolation from the wider political economy, and as we will see, through the example of economies of *makhaka*, there was no neat distinction between commercial and moral economies in Bairro.

Moral economy as lens on subsumption: subsistence and commercial economies of *makhaka*

> Without *makhaka*, what would they sell to raise the cash to pay their children's school fees, or to buy cooking oil, or to begin rebuilding their house?

Patterns of *makhaka* production and use in Bairro illustrate some of the ways in which Bairro's local economy was neither completely formally subsumed in capitalist relations, nor completely separate from them. We have already seen how processes of agricultural commercialisation in sub-Saharan Africa have been historically and geographically uneven, including the pace of change, and the terms and extent of peasants' participation in commercial economies. While this has often been framed by policymakers in the teleological terms of 'incomplete' commercialisation (e.g. WorldBank 2017), in this section I use moral economy as a lens onto partial subsumption, to explore how patterns of commercialisation can be dynamic and non-linear, and how peasants maintain non-commercial activities as a buffer against the vagaries of wider markets.

Households' occupation of the dual spheres of subsistence and commercial production in Bairro were historically produced, and had long had gendered dimensions. When Portuguese settlers established tobacco plantations in Bairro and neighbouring areas, they employed local men but allocated households small plots of land, which women cultivated to produce food for subsistence. Bonate (2003) suggests that this reflects culturally defined gendered responsibilities – for example older Makhuwa women's control of granaries and hence subsistence (Arnfred 2007) – as much as colonial policy. After the imposition of 'hut' taxes by the Portuguese administration in the mid-nineteenth century, male migration from inland sections of Nacala Corridor to then Nyasaland and to the coast for wage labour and trade became significant (Chilundo 1994). The development of transportation links along the Nacala Corridor in the early twentieth century brought more people under this tax regime, and also provided more opportunities for local trade and employment, and engagement in these economies, especially for women. Chilundo (1994, 33) argues that 'the coming of railways and improved road transport deepened the exploitation of women. But at the same time it broadened the range of coping opportunities.' These themes – the exploitative structures of political economy and the spaces of agency carved within them – are reflected in Bairro's contemporary economies of *makhaka.*

As well as a crucial subsistence crop and bargaining chip in the local *ganho-ganho* economy, *makhaka* was a cash crop, linking Bairro farmers to local and regional markets. In September

and October each year, *comerciantes* [traders] arrived, both in the neighbourhood itself and in the nearby towns and crossroads, looking for *makhaka* to buy.[39] *Makhaka* could be commercial exchanged in a number of ways. Some *comerciantes* (who were almost exclusively men) were local entrepreneurs, buying from their communities before selling on to traders from the big demand markets in Nampula city and the Nampula coast[40], while others travelled from these areas, with some even setting up home for the season and establishing relationships with local women. Some paid with cash, and some with sacks of *nkusi*, a dried fish which was a popular accompaniment for *karakhata*. Others might use a local contact to co-ordinate the details of the trade. In 2016, Mário was approached by a district-level government official who provided him with a large quantity of *nkusi* to exchange for *makhaka* with local farmers. Mário used this exchange to gather a huge quantity of *makhaka* by a certain date, when the official arrived to collect the *makhaka* in his vehicle. This system allowed Mário, as middle agent, to take a cut of the *nkusi* for his own household. Smaller quantities of *makhaka,* such as small basinsful, could also be exchanged with neighbours or small-scale entrepreneurs in Vila for important foodstuffs like oil and *nkusi* and cheap household goods such as plastic basins (Figure 12).

In Bairro, cash from *makhaka* was an important income source for most households, but its relative importance varied considerably between households. Across sub-Saharan Africa, participation in commercial production, and its contribution to households, are directly related to access to resources like land, labour and agricultural inputs (Berry 1993), and this was very much the case in Bairro. Makhaka was crucial for those, mostly female-headed households, which lacked the resources – particularly suitable irrigated land, but also labour (see Chapter 5) – to produce other major commercial crops like onions, maize and pigeon pea. Selling or exchanging *makhaka* also increased in importance in years like 2016, when the prices for these other commodities were low.

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[39] Elsewhere in Nampula province, fresh cassava also had market value as the raw ingredient for Impala beer. See Smart, T. & J. Hanlon. 2014. *Chickens and Beer: A recipe for agricultural growth in Mozambique.* Maputo: Kapicua..
[40] Some producers allowed their *makhaka* to be darkened by the first showers of the rainy season, knowing that black *makhaka* was more in demand in coastal areas and would get a better price.

Figure 12: Local traders operating an exchange of nkusi *[dried fish] for* makhaka

Makhaka was also unique among crops grown in Bairro, in that while it could be sold commercially, its production was essentially independent from the commercial agricultural economy. In cassava production, it is the woody stems, rather than an edible part (such as seeds, grains, grafted leaves or tubers), which are replanted. In Bairro, unlike maize or onions, cassava was grown without inputs or irrigation. Although agricultural research institutions have developed and promoted new cassava varieties in sub-Saharan Africa (Manyong et al. 2000), the majority of farmers in Bairro shared different varieties through their social networks rather than buying them. Seeds for cereals, legumes and vegetables were also shared in this way, but could also be eaten or sold (a set of decisions which we will return to in Chapter 5). More significantly, the marketing of 'improved', treated and certified seeds was a key feature of agricultural commercialisation projects in Bairro, but a trend not seen with cassava. This independence from commercial means of production meant that by cultivating cassava, and balancing commercial and subsistence uses of *makhaka*, people were able to exercise a limited degree of control over the extent to which they were subsumed in commercial markets. Unlike most other commercial crops, *makhaka* could be grown by all households, regardless of the quality of their landholdings; it gave them the flexibility to harvest over several years, and the next year's production was relatively independent of the previous year's production quantity and commodity price. With *makhaka*, peasants could

95

choose to engage to a greater or lesser extent in commercial exchange, according to their plans and needs for subsistence, money, farm labour and engagement in Bairro's networks of reciprocity.

However, despite this scope for agency, peasants in Bairro were also heavily constrained by their partial subsumption in wider political economies. Watts's (1983, xxiii) classic account of how 'the tissues of the moral economy were stripped away' from peasant livelihoods in nineteenth century Hausaland shows how the subsumption of peasants into capitalism through the imposition of hut taxes, and the subsequent erosion of institutions and reciprocal social bonds based on a 'subsistence ethic' (Watts 1983, 105) left them vulnerable to famines. In Bairro in 2015-16, the motivations underlying the need to engage in market exchange were more complex, but just as powerfully imperative, and as strongly related to food security.

Money was crucial to subsistence in Bairro. Although most households reported that they were self-sufficient in terms of staple carbohydrates, their access to additional foods – as will be discussed in Chapter 5, where I also consider intra-household dynamics – was less certain and was strongly mediated by economic access. Households needed small but significant amounts of money in order to pay school fees, prescriptions, and membership of organisations such as churches, producers' associations or political parties, which in turn represented spaces of mutual or reciprocal support, and hence social security. People needed cash (or sometimes *makhaka*) to obtain cooking oil, salt, soap, clothes, school uniforms, notebooks, pencils, farming implements and inputs. These commodities linked Bairro peasants to local markets, not – as is conventionally the focus of studies like this – as producers, but as consumers. There was a prestige associated with being able to buy imported goods, but also cynicism about the quality of these goods, especially those imported from India and China. Odeta referred to the flimsy plastic buckets in the market as *fantasias* [illusions] because they broke so quickly. Nonetheless, people aspired to buy these things — to be a person who *could* buy them – and so needed to engage in the wider political economy.

Consequently, peasant households in Bairro operated in, and between, the two spheres of subsistence and commercial exchange, particularly in the ambivalent space represented by *makhaka* – and laden with difficult choices (a theme discussed in Chapter 5). The maintenance of a kind of subsistence ethic, while also engaging where possible in the market economy, is suggestive of what Chayanov frames as the dynamic balances between labour and consumption, drudgery and utility that are central to the art of farming (Van der Ploeg

2013). It represents a form of risk averse behaviour adapted to a context of deeply unreliable political economy. The navigation of this space was important in ensuring survival in times of wider economic crisis, such as Mozambique's national debt crisis in 2016.

> Maria said that last year she sold some *makhaka*, and this year if she produced enough she would sell some, but the prices were bad. Tifa explained to her how money had ended up in Guebuza's pocket, that there was now a huge national debt, 'and it's us who must pay'. [Farm visit, June 2016]

Maria was one of the elderly widows who were particularly dependent on *makhaka* for cash income and subsistence. Unable to perform *ganho-ganho* on other's *machambas* because of her increasingly depleted strength and stamina, maintaining the integrity of her own *makhaka* store was crucial to her food security. However, in this interview, she explained how her decision-making about selling or storing *makhaka* was being influenced by changes in the wider political economy. In March 2016, the IMF began investigating secret debts amounting to over 2.2 billion USD that were accumulated by the government of Mozambique under the previous president, Armando Guebuza. The IMF, along with G8 donors, suspended direct aid, and the Mozambique government came close to defaulting on the debt (Hanlon 2017). As the debt scandal unfurled, parts of southern and coastal northern Mozambique were also recovering from a drought that had led to severe food insecurity in some areas (UNICEF 2016). In Bairro, the consequences were felt particularly in moments of contact with outside markets at regional, national and international scales, both in selling produce and buying goods.

The first expressions of consternation came in May and June, as the price of (mostly imported) cooking oil started to grow steeply in Vila market. By July, it had doubled. Small-scale roadside retailers who had been dividing up 5L bottles of oil and selling them on in smaller quantities disappeared, no longer able to afford the initial outlay of buying the 5L bottles. Now only those with the time or transport to go regularly to Vila were able to purchase and cook with oil. The prices of everything – sugar, dried fish, flour, petrol – increased too, but it was oil that really bit at people's sense of food security. Their sense of injustice came out as they complained about the months they would spend eating green leaves and *xima* [starchy porridge] made with *makhaka*. Worse, these would not even be prepared with oil, 'just with water and salt'.

The second shock came as the main commercial harvests of *makhaka* and onions were gathered in August and September, for sale in northern Mozambican markets. Commodity

prices were lower than usual, particularly for onions, which farmers attributed to the higher number of farmers growing onions that year, flooding the limited regional market. One farmer, Amáncio, described how the selling price of onions oscillated because of a fluctuating supply. The previous year, fewer farmers grew onions, and so got a good price for their produce, motivating more households to grow onions the following year and causing the price to drop. The decision to grow onions was also conditional on access to and ability to buy fertiliser in a given year, which also affected this variable supply and price regime.

In 2017, many households' financial situation worsened unexpectedly again, this time in the context of international markets and national production. Pigeon pea, seen as a key strategic crop for increasing agricultural production and food security, was enthusiastically promoted by the Mozambique government (Walker et al. 2015). In 2016, three separate projects approached the Bairro producers' association about growing pigeon pea for seed to sell locally. This, combined with a good market price for pigeon pea in 2016 (about 35Mt/kg) encouraged many more farmers than usual to plant pigeon pea at the start of the 2016-17 agricultural campaign. Although India introduced a ban on pigeon pea imports from southern Africa, Felipe Nyusi and Narendra Modi, the national leaders of Mozambique and India respectively, signed an MoU allowing pigeon pea exports from Mozambique to India up to a quota of 125,000 tonnes. In Bairro, farmers and extension workers told me that there was a guaranteed market even for a greatly increased supply of pigeon pea. But Indian dal producers did much better than expected in 2017, and supply from Mozambique far exceeded the 125,000 tonne quota (Zitamar 2017). By the second half of 2017, the pigeon pea price in Vila was down to 3Mt/kg. 'It's a joke, the price – it's nothing,' Serena told me. Her onions had not done well and she was increasingly worried about her financial situation. Let down by the vagaries of the global market, by international and national political economy, and by the misplaced optimism of development projects, she would be more reliant on *makhaka* than ever. Rather than being a point on a teleological timeline of subsumption, Serena's partial subsumption could be seen as a practice, an active strategy. People's continued engagement in the economy of *makhaka* reflects the adaptation of Bairro's moral economies to the uncertainties of the wider political economy.

Moral economy as norms and values governing economic behaviour: *nrima*, projects and the micropolitics of money

> When she met with the members of the *poupança* [women's savings group], Flávia told them: 'I would really like to pay you back, but how? I so regret taking the money, because it was the money that burned the house. I thought of burying

the safe in the yard, but termites would eat it, so I put it under the bed. If I'd had just the keys instead...'

The other women responded, 'Don't worry, we don't have anything in our hearts.'

[Field notes, October 2016]

It was the money that burned the house. The aftermath of the fire revealed different ideas and practices around money in Bairro, including the co-existence and co-practising of capitalist and non-capitalist forms of exchange. In this third part of the chapter, I look more deeply at how the underpinnings of these systems of exchange: the norms, values and practices surrounding economic behaviour. I ask what this meant for how people explained, responded to and felt about Flávia's crisis. In the following excerpts from fieldnotes, people start to make sense of the fire and allocate blame and responsibility. In the process, people both referred to aspects of moral economy – such as the role of witchcraft in causing the fire – and practised some of its mechanisms by engaging in gossip about others' behaviour around money and economic distribution.

> Tifa heard people saying that Flávia had care of the *poupança* safe, so all the money had been lost in the fire. When we spoke to her, Flávia confirmed this news. She tried to remember aloud how much money each person had saved. It was not fair that she had two jobs [president and guardian of the safe], that everything was stored in her house. Flávia had already been talking to the extension worker about getting a bank or MPesa account, but she had lost the will to do these things now. Other people always said no, they always left it to her... Flávia showed us the charred coins from the Social Fund, all that was left from the *poupança* savings, and we counted them.

The materiality of money matters here, not just to the economic outcome of the fire for the *poupança* (the coins did not burn, but the bulk of the money, stored as notes, did), but also in terms of trust and suspicion in Bairro's moral economy. Bank accounts were safe from this kind of material destruction, but the physical distance of the bank from Bairro (around 50km) made it impractical for the women in the *poupança,* and combined with the immateriality of a bank account (as we will see in Chapter 6) could also invite suspicion. In her comment about how money 'burned the house', Flávia made reference to another kind of politics at work in Bairro's moral economies: that of *okwiri*, the 'invisible realm' (West 2005) of sorcery, through which envy or suspicion about money being stored in Flávia's house could cause the house to

be destroyed. However, materiality was still a concern, as Flávia reflected on the simultaneous danger and vulnerability of the physical box of money.

> Ernesto and Flávia said that they held Cláudio responsible for the *poupança* disaster. Flávia did not want to look after the *poupança* money in the first place. She refused to keep the safe, but then Cláudio threw the safe out of his house, sent his wife to Flávia's with the safe, and she felt there was no choice. Ernesto refused to have it in the house, and Flávia had to plead with him.

> There had been disappearances of church money in Cláudio's care too. Ernesto was one of the key holders and lent Cláudio, who was also the church pastor, 200Mt from the church fund, which he never returned. Ernesto, who had barely spoken in my presence before, said, 'You can judge a man by his children, if they are thieves.'

> 'And his wife too,' added Flávia, 'she's not a good person.'

This conversation with Ernesto and Flávia demonstrates the unease expressed by many Bairro people around the care of communally owned money: a mistrust of those who took on this responsibility, but (or perhaps because of this) a reluctance to take on this responsibility. We see the role of gossip in condemning certain behaviours around money, which in this case Flávia and Ernesto link to Cláudio's poor character, reflected by the perceived moral failings of his wife and children.

Particularly significant in this part of the story is the way in which envy, gossip and mistrust had material implications: *it was the money that burned the house*. These narratives around the causes of the fire imply the involvement of witchcraft, *okwiri*. They also demonstrate the powerful concept of *nrima*, usually translated as 'envy' [*inveja*] and 'ambition' [*ambição*]. In the next section, I conceptualise *nrima* as a mechanism of Bairro's moral economy: a way of navigating the uncertainties and contradictions of the marginal spaces of partial commercial subsumption.

Nrima: envy and ambition

Much has been made of the relationship between witchcraft and modernity, particularly in African contexts, and of the role witchcraft might play in moderating and exacerbating the inequalities brought about by development and commercialisation. The terminology of witchcraft is associated with a set of colonial and gendered connotations and interpretations. Witchcraft is frequently positioned on the 'traditional' side of conventional dichotomies, along with the rural, the irrational, the feminine (Federici 2014), and in opposition to development

(Smith 2008). Even in critical anthropological scholarship, witchcraft is often analysed and represented in ways that Other and constrain the 'plural, fluid and ambiguous' ontologies of witchcraft, reinforcing colonial narratives (Murrey 2017). In this discussion I seek to avoid attempting to rationalise or explain witchcraft — or eliding it with the romanticisation or demonization of the moral economies of peasant societies. Following Geschiere (1997, 21), I try to 'take seriously the discourse on witchcraft – both the fear and the excitement it contains; this means not to try to reason it away by reducing it to other terms'. I focus on how people in Bairro talked about witchcraft, and the work that witchcraft and the narratives and behaviours around it did in producing and reproducing the values and practices of Bairro's moral economy. In particular, I look at its role as a means of navigating the contradictions and tensions of people's partial subsumption and responding to perceived injustice, either as a 'levelling force' or an 'accumulative force' (Geschiere 1997). I use throughout the Makhuwa terms *okwiri*, usually translated as *feitiçaria* [witchcraft or fetish], and *nrima* [envy], noting the significance of their interchangeability in everyday Bairro discourse (cf. Ferguson 1991) and acknowledging the incompleteness and contingency of this translation as well as my understandings of the term.[41]

The kinds of *nrima* I heard about most were related to inequality: instances where someone had been successful, but then suffered misfortunes which were attributed to the envy of others.

> Tifa remembered going to her grandmother's house, in the centre of Bairro, as a little girl. They used to watch television there and there was lots of animation and movement, people selling alcohol, and there was a mill there. Serena said that Florêncio cursed it because of *ambição*: he did not want this place to develop. [Farm visit, August 2016]

> Victor explained that the motorised water pump failed at exactly the wrong time, just before it was time to apply the fertiliser. The onions didn't grow. Victor said that people in the neighbourhood used *okwiri* to bring him this misfortune: 'They're not happy to see me here, someone who is not from here, making a big machamba and doing well off it. They cursed me.' [Farm visit, August 2016]

In these examples, people represent *nrima* as a barrier to development, at least in the form of individual capital accumulation. They suggest that *nrima* was directed towards people who

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[41] In Bairro, *okwiri* was described as part of 'tradition' [*tradição*], which encompassed a whole range of beliefs, taboos and practices including much more positively-coded things like herbal remedies and male and female initiation ceremonies.

were seen to be doing materially better than others – like Victor, or Tifa's grandparents – bringing them misfortune which prevented them becoming wealthier, or in some cases made them poorer. In Victor's case, *nrima* can be understood as envy, and perhaps a means of removing an unwanted outsider from the neighbourhood. However, it was less clear why Florêncio would 'not want Bairro to develop'.[42] This use of *nrima* is suggestive of what Geschiere (1997, 5) describes as 'a levelling force, which opposes new inequalities and relations of domination'. It echoes Ferguson's (1991) observations in the Zambian copperbelt that it was more economically successful mineworkers who most feared witchcraft, feeling they might be seen to have ignored the moral imperative to help poorer neighbours and relatives in order to accumulate wealth. As such, witchcraft can act as an enforcing mechanism for moral economic norms of obligation and reciprocity (Ferguson 1991).

While many of the examples people gave me were about individuals, others indicated the community-level impacts of *nrima*:

> Jacinta said, 'We are suffering this year in Bairro because of *invejosos* [envious people], no-one this year will manage to buy a bike or a motorbike, or even a *barraca* [small shop].' [Interview, November 2016]

Jacinta demonstrated a common frustration with the contradictory impacts of *nrima*. People often resented an individual becoming wealthier than everyone else, and so *nrima* would be directed at the person who opened the *barraca* or bought a motorbike. In this sense, *nrima* was a means of maintaining a just distribution of wealth in the community. However, they also acknowledged that having access to transport or being able to buy goods like oil, fish and batteries would have brought benefits to them and other members of the community. Comaroff and Comaroff (1993, xxix) suggest that these contradictions are central to witchcraft, which they frame as both a part of and a response to ambivalence towards development: 'Witches are modernity's prototypical malcontents [...] They embody all the contradictions of the experience of modernity itself, of its inescapable enticements, its self-consuming passions, its discriminatory tactics, its devastating social costs'. These contradictions reflect Bairro people's position between commercial and subsistence agriculture, and the role of local moral economy balancing of the push and pull of both spheres.

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[42] That said, Florêncio occupied a uniquely influential position in Bairro, due to his implicit authority over land, which is explored in detail in Chapter 6, and might be linked to both his behaviour and the way Serena perceived and gossiped about him.

Another aspect of these contradictions, evocative of modernity's 'self-consuming passions', was the way in which people also spoke of *okwiri* as something that people used for their own material gain and success, as an 'accumulative force' (Geschiere 1997, 5).

> Serena said that Florêncio had reached such an old age because of magic: each time he got sick, his sons dug up a recently buried youth, cut out his heart, and inserted it into Florêncio's body.
>
> 'Do you not remember, earlier in the year, how sick Florêncio was, how he was so sick we thought he was dying, and then suddenly he was better? And he does *okwiri* on his *machambas*, that's why his crops do so well. I came across him one time, stripped down to his underpants in his *machamba,* because he was doing *okwiri*.'
>
> [Farm visit, August 2016]

Another articulation of this connection between *okwiri* and financial gain was the linking of *nrima* to untrustworthy behaviour around money: people used the term *nrima* to describe corruption, from the petty corruption of a local party secretary all the way up to the $2 billion secret national debt. As we saw in the case of Flávia's fire, tensions around economic behaviour were particularly heightened when the money involved was collectively owned, an idea to which we return in Chapter 7.

What these narratives seemed to offer was a way in which people in Bairro could make sense of and navigate the marginal space they occupied in the national and global economy. One way *nrima* did this was by providing a means for people to locate responsibility for success and misfortune – sometimes with individuals like Florêncio, but often with less specifically articulated '*invejosos*'[43]. It is notable that Serena both blamed Florêncio for *nrima* against others' commercial success, and attributed his own commercial and agricultural success to *okwiri*. Geschiere (1997, 22) suggests that, by imbuing responsibility for misfortune and good fortune with human agency, discourses around witchcraft 'tend to personalize the universe […] These are, therefore, representations that heavily emphasize human action but that, at the same time, hide the actors and their acts from view'. As in the case of structurally constrained agency in navigating the dynamics of partial subsumption, *okwiri* offered

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[43] Again, though, this is complex: the politics of naming the source of *inveja* was closely tied to the politics of gossip. Naming a suspected perpetrator could open the victim to further attack. For example, although Victor blamed 'people in the neighbourhood' for cursing him, it later transpired that he actually suspected his own son-in-law's family.

simultaneously a means of exercising agency and a way of recognising a lack of it in the face of greater, often unseen, forces.

Okwiri had material consequences, like illness and crop failure. However, the very threat of *nrima*, and potentially *okwiri*, also had a powerful impact on people's behaviours. Although behaviours and narratives around *nrima* and *okwiri* could be framed as reflecting a reaction against distributive injustice, they were not in themselves redistributional. What did facilitate redistribution of wealth and benefits was the fear of *nrima*. This suggests that the moral economic value of reciprocity could be sustained and motivated as much by a sense of fear or obligation as by connection or communitarianism.

On an everyday level, gossip was the main mechanism for the fear of nrima, and for the policing of economic behaviour more generally. Being seen as invejoso or not positioned people within a moral framework that was produced, performed and mediated through gossip. Gossip both contains and is subject to moral evaluation: it can be a signifier of moral superiority (gossiping about others' greed, for example), or of moral corruption (gossiping about others demonstrates that you are invejoso, envious of them) (Besnier 2009). In Bairro, gossip could play an important role in reinforcing and undermining social relations and norms of reciprocity, often along gendered lines – particularly as women were usually the proponents and subjects of such gossip.

People were careful to ensure that they were not perceived as greedy *ambiciosos* or *invejosos.* The need to mediate public perception of wealth and generosity was also reflected in our interviews with men and women in Bairro, in their responses to our questions about how they make and spend money. When Tifa and I asked respondents about their income generating activities, 32% of respondents said they did so to obtain necessities like salt, soap and oil. Many (20% of respondents) also talked about earning money in order to provide for their family: buying children's clothes and school equipment such as notebooks or pens, paying school fees, or being able to support and nourish [*sustentar*] their families. Archambault (2016, 263) suggests, in the context of Inhambane in southern Mozambique, that 'the expression "money for bread" is commonly used to render certain transactions morally acceptable, socially sensitive, and to distance them from the crude logic of market principles'. Likewise, in Bairro, the reference to cheap and basic necessities like soap, salt or bread rather than more conspicuous consumption appeared to be a way of positioning a

transaction within a superior moral sphere. [44] This reinforced the importance in Bairro's moral economy of inconspicuous consumption, in response to the threat of *okwiri*'s 'levelling force'. Showing off one's wealth – being seen to *gingar* [literally 'to waddle'] – was, especially for women, a cause for *nrima*. Invoking this 'soap and salt' discourse acted as a form of protection against *nrima*, but it may also have reflected people's adaptability in engaging with other moral economies — specifically, their awareness of the ways in which different forms of expenditure and consumption were morally framed by development practitioners.

The moral economies of agricultural commercialisation projects

In their interactions with Bairro people, development projects in Bairro, particularly those looking to increase commercial production, were interacting with and having impacts on Bairro's political and moral economies — both in material terms and through shaping values and practices around economic behaviour. In this final section, I look at projects' own moral economies — the value systems they were promoting and the logics according to which they were operating. I also explore how aspects of these were sometimes in conflict with Bairro's moral economies, and how people in Bairro exercised agency in strategically deploying the discourses of different moral economies. These themes emerge again in Chapter 7, in the context of my own economic behaviour in Bairro.

In the context of few material possessions and opportunities for employment, the distribution of the opportunities and resources that projects brought – such as receiving a *per diem* for participating in a training day – were highly politicised. Again, gossip and *nrima* could be directed towards those chosen by the district government to participate in such training days. On other occasions, responsibility was located with the injustice of projects' activities, as well as with the moral failings of individuals.

Following Flávia's fire, the members of the *poupança* gathered for a visit from staff from PROMER, the project which had established the savings group two years previously. The *poupança* project epitomised the tone and focus of many of the development projects working in Bairro: it promoted income diversification, entrepreneurship and commercial agriculture. The *poupança* project also promoted particular ideals about economic behaviour, including individual long-term saving and accounting, and its focus on women in particular reflects the popularity of microfinance in international development as a panacea for women's empowerment (Kabeer 2005). It also adopted a quasi-'grassroots' development

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[44] In practice, many families who talked of soap and salt might also spend a significant part of their income on household goods like plates, bedding and buckets.

model in which beneficiaries were provided with facilitating materials but not finance, and were expected to take responsibility for the running and direction of the *poupança.*

> The visitors from the project spoke to Flávia and took some photographs while the members of the *poupança* waited on Flávia's veranda. Afterwards, Flávia and the members discussed whether to continue with the savings group. The members of the *poupança* made it clear that Flávia was absolved of blame, but decided to wait for a period before meeting again. One member, Ruane, said that she was angry that the visitors had come, asked questions, and taken photos without offering any money to the members of the *poupança*. Ruane did not expect Flávia to pay everyone back, but she had hoped to get something from the NGO. [Field notes, October 2016]

This encounter was marked by the lack of engagement by the visitors with the members of the *poupança*. Ruane expressed her sense of indignation at the project's inadequate response, and this sentiment was echoed by Flávia when Tifa and I spoke to her the next day. For Ruane and Flávia, the project staff had a responsibility towards the members, because of their relative power and access to resources, their relationship as initiators and supporters of the *poupança*, and through this relationship, their implication in Bairro's moral economy, especially the politics around the *poupança* safe. They had reneged on this relationship. The project's response differed greatly from that of Flávia's neighbours, relatives and other members of the community, which we saw in the first part of this chapter.

The tensions that arose over the distribution of the profits from the ProSAVANA onion harvest in late 2015 reflected a similar gap between projects' expectations and those of local people. Ironically, by encouraging communal farming – which in development imaginaries could be seen as imposing less of an individualistic, capitalist moral economy on local people – the project created ambiguity over how profits would be divided. Instead of each farmer taking a portion of the profits that reflected the amount of produce they had grown, the fair distribution of money had to be decided according to new criteria. There were debates over who had contributed more or less labour; several women who had been caring for sick relatives complained that as a result they had received nothing. The project also introduced the problem of how repaying the project for the communally owned equipment it had provided on credit, with many members convinced that the money set aside in the association's bank account for this purpose – and as observed earlier, therefore invisible – had been stolen by the association leaders.

Although all the projects operating in Bairro implicitly promoted certain kinds of economic behaviour, some project workers were more explicit about the economic values and behaviours that were acceptable and unacceptable in the kind of development they were promoting. Rosa, a facilitator delivering training for the Opportunities for Youth Employment (OYE) project, addressed the issue of fear and *nrima* directly:

> 'If you're proactive you're flexible, you take initiative, you have alternatives up your sleeve. It means not being reactive, "I was born like this so I'll stay like this," not believing that you can be someone, that you can be a boss. Is this a good philosophy? No! Thinking that everyone is a witch. We do not want reactive young people, young people who do not believe in change, who do not think they can become a boss.

> 'A young person should not be afraid,' Rosa said. 'An entrepreneur has to learn how to take risks! There is a risk right now that the roof could fall down or a snake could appear, but will we stop learning now because of that risk? No! An entrepreneur cannot look at the weaknesses and threats. There are people who hide their money, who hide their *capulanas* and never wear them. You cannot be afraid of sorcerers. Are there not sorcerers in the town too? Yet people develop anyway! If you are poor and afraid, you will stay poor. If you are rich in spirit, God will realise your prosperity. You have to live your life in faith, say I'm rich, and you will become rich – it's in the Bible.'
> [OYE training, August 2016]

In Rosa's speech, the realities of *okwiri* are not questioned, but *responding* to *okwiri* is placed in direct opposition to modernity and entrepreneurship, which are imbued with (moral) courage and Christian righteousness. This positioning of *okwiri* as backward and morally problematic – an excuse for laziness and being 'reactive' – is reminiscent of colonial and FRELIMO rhetoric condemning 'obscurantist practices' (Meneses 2009, 25). It reinforces the idea, expressed by Bairro people themselves, that *nrima* is an essential trait of black people, especially uneducated people, Makhuwa people, and peasants:

> Odeta explained that envy was a '*problema de nossa cor, nossa raça'* [a problem of our colour, our race]. She said that people would see someone else with money, or a lot of food, and go to the *curandeiro* to make that person get sick and die.
> [Field notes, November 2015]

> Aurélia explained that it is a trait of black people 'to want what the other has, to not want anyone to have more than them'. [Field notes, October 2015]

These narratives not only naturalise *nrima,* but also reinforce colonial and postcolonial development discourses about the backwardness of envious black peasants (Power 2006). Again, though, the work this did in Bairro's moral economies is ambivalent. The demonization of *nrima* by project staff could be seen as defusing *okwiri* as a levelling force, a potentially powerful critique of inequality. However, local people's adoption of the endogenisation of *okwiri* – which I initially saw as the internalising of harmful racist discourses — could also have represented a strategy that allowed them to continue to enforce economic parity as an important value in their moral economy: after all, that's just what black peasants do.

However, Bairro people also knew how to successfully engage with projects' moral economies. In an interaction with an interviewer investigating the impacts of the ProSAVANA pilot project, women members of the farmers' association constructed their use of money in way that, like 'soap and salt', positioned their use of money in a particular moral sphere:

> The interviewer asked, 'What did people do with the 1.000Mt they received from the onion project? I want to hear from the *senhoras*.' The women reeled out short, discrete answers, much more concise than the answers they usually contributed in meetings.
>
> Flávia: 'I bought peanut seed.'
>
> Gabriela: 'I bought notebooks for the children to go to school.'
>
> Odeta: 'I bought peanut seed too.'
>
> [Field notes, May 2016]

I knew from talking to Odeta that she had used her money for many different items. This suggests that the women were exercising strategy in telling the project researchers what they wanted to hear. The women were able to operate between moral economies: acting according to their own needs and values, while giving responses that spoke to projects' priorities. (We return to this strategic fluency in the different 'languages' of power in the context of land in Chapter 6.) People's strategic navigation of the contradictions between projects' and their own moral economies also reflects the ambivalence towards development, discussed above in relation to *okwiri*. In Bairro, people had experienced decades of development interventions, with little overall change in their wellbeing or way of life. Some projects, such as the pigeon pea schemes, could actually increase their vulnerability. Cláudio's

diatribe against the visiting development project in the meeting at the start of this chapter evoked his frustration with this dependence on projects:

> If your project isn't here to help us, *vai embora* [get lost]! We're tired, *amigos.*
> [Field notes, October 2016]

Bairro people were sceptical about what projects would actually deliver in the long term, but they were also pragmatic about the immediate material benefits a project might bring, and aware of their dependence on projects to maintain a supply of inputs, training and government interest. Although influential people like Cláudio were able to negotiate directly with some projects, less powerful people exercised the channels of agency open to them in the contradictory spaces of Bairro's moral economies, particularly gossip, *okwiri,* and adopting projects' discourses about appropriate uses of money.

Conclusion

The aftermath of Flávia's fire provides an illuminating insight into the dynamics of and norms around economic behaviour in Bairro: how moral economy in Bairro represented a way of exercising agency and mitigating vulnerability, and a basis for navigating inequality, scarcity and change. We have seen how the mechanisms of a 'moral economy', in Watts's understanding of the term as representing a non-capitalist 'subsistence ethic', supported Flávia and her family, protecting them from complete destitution. The wider social impacts of the loss of Flávia's *makhaka* crop also reflects the importance of Bairro's *ganho-ganho* relationships in ensuring subsistence for poorer members of the community and as a form of wealth distribution. However, we have seen that this moral economy is not (only) a romantic one of mutual support, but also involves a powerful enforcement of economic norms through gossip and *okwiri.*

A broader understanding of moral economy allows for an analysis of partial subsumption that moves beyond subsistence/commercialisation binaries and teleology, and that recognises the historical production and ongoing dynamism of values. It reveals how peasants in Bairro occupied a marginal space between subsistence and commercial production and exchange, in which they were vulnerable to economic, political and climatic fluctuations but also exercised agency. Peasants in Bairro had developed, and maintained, a moral economy of *makhaka* – with its independence from commercial inputs, and its flexibility to be used as cash crop, famine food, barter, *ganho-ganho* or gift – as a way of navigating their marginal position between subsistence and market production.

This mitigation of risk and vulnerability was important in people's ambivalent relationship with development and change, and particularly with projects. Here, taking a broader interpretation of moral economy offers a way of understanding how different, and sometimes conflicting, values and norms around economic behaviour were navigated within Bairro, as well as in interactions with projects. It also acknowledges the ways in which Bairro's moral economy reached beyond straightforward logics of subsistence or survival into a wider, often contradictory set of values, which included both avid consumerism and violent responses to unequal accumulation through *okwiri*.

This understanding of peasants' ambivalence, agency and dependency underpins the following chapters as they examine Bairro people's interactions with agricultural commercialisation projects. In Chapter 5, I analyse the political and temporal dynamics of partial subsumption, and explore how people maintained moral economies of *makhaka* and other crops to ensure their food security. We have already glimpsed how access to land affected people's positioning in Bairro's moral and political economies; in Chapter 6 I return to the idea of moral economy to look at how disputes over land were shaped by colonial legacies and the strategic engagement of different languages of power and modes of authority. In Chapter 7, we return to *nrima* [envy] and its role in navigating injustice and conflicting moral economies in the context of conducting this research project.

Chapter 5
The *problema de caril*

> Hélia said, 'It's just a problem of *caril*. There's rice, there's *xima*, there's no
> lack of *xima*! Just *caril*.' [Field notes, November 2015]

In talking about the *problema de caril*, Hélia was describing the challenge of obtaining
adequate tasty and nutritious food in Bairro. Crucially, the phrase only referred to one part of
a meal. In Mozambique, and across much of southern Africa (Onyango, 2003), the majority of
meals, eaten twice a day, comprise a large helping of a starchy carbohydrate base. In Bairro,
this was sometimes rice or pasta, but more usually a big portion of *xima,* a thick porridge
made with dried cassava, sorghum or maize flour. This was bland and (somewhat depending
on what it was made from) not particularly nutritious, and it tended to remain the same,
every day, for weeks at a time. So the exciting, ideally more variable, and more nutritious part
of the meal was the sauce – the *caril* – that accompanied it.[45]

Odeta liked to speak aloud the things that were on her mind before she went to sleep: the
things that needed doing in the coming days: which fields she was going to cultivate, the
people she would visit, the people to whom she owed money. Top of the list was, almost
always, a concern about what she would eat over the next few days: 'Where am I going to find
some *caril*?'

In Bairro, people spent most of their time engaged in agricultural or food preparation
activities. Dozens of projects ostensibly targeting 'food security' had been carried out in Bairro
over the last two decades, with an emphasis on increasing access to 'improved' agricultural
inputs and techniques, and education about 'correct' nutrition and food preparation. Many of
these inputs and techniques – planting in straight rows, for example, or mixing ground
peanuts into pap for children – had been adopted. However, there was still not enough to eat
in most households for at least some of the year, and even in wealthier houses the food
available was nutritionally inadequate. Why, after decades of food security interventions, was
Odeta still worried about what her family would eat tomorrow? What does this food

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[45]*Caril* translates literally into English as curry or sauce. In Bairro, *caril* was used interchangeably with
the Makhuwa word *matapa,* although elsewhere in Nampula province *matapa* refers to a specific type
of *caril*.

insecurity tell us about the wider dynamics of moral economy and partial subsumption in Bairro?

Hunger in Bairro

Hunger can be understood in many culturally, politically and historically contingent ways (Vernon, 2007). It is malnutrition: the biomedical lack of nutrients in a diet, and the physiological problems that result. It is affect: the feeling of hunger or nourishment, exhaustion, the perception of there not being enough to eat, or that what there is does not constitute proper food, the way nerves fray more easily when you are hungry. It is temporal: it is not having enough to eat now, or not knowing what you will eat tomorrow, or months or years of uncertainty. It is relative: it is not having as much to eat as other people, or as much as you used to, or as much as you want. It is social: it is who gets to eat and who does not, it is who gets served first and who eats less so others can eat, it is sharing or not. It is political: is it why there is not enough food, it is the control of food and farming, it is hunger for justice, a hungry crowd protesting against the price of bread (Thompson, 1971). Sometimes it is all of these things at once.

In Bairro, on all these levels, people were not getting enough to eat. While not wishing to reify the stereotypical image of starvation in Africa, I note this point because it was sometimes dismissed by government and NGO staff when I talked to them about food insecurity – in relative terms, hunger wasn't a problem in Bairro. At the Vila clinic, another researcher and I watched a health worker mark down a decline in the weight of an eighteen-month-old on the infant's health card. He said nothing about this to infant's mother, and when we asked him about it, he said that because the child's weight was above 50% of a healthy weight, he wouldn't normally say anything.

In terms of body mass index measurements, most children in Bairro were not severely malnourished; in terms of calorie intake, most adults in Bairro got enough to eat for most of the year. Instead, for many people in Bairro, as we will see in this chapter, lack of adequate food was chronic (and seasonal) rather than acute, but its effects could still be significant and long lasting. In Nampula province, USAID (2016) estimate that 55% of children under 5 are stunted[46]. Anaemia is prevalent among pregnant women, especially adolescent mothers, which contributes to a high rate of maternal mortality (UNICEF, 2015) as well as to stunting and developmental problems in infants. Lack of food is also linked to higher incidence of the

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[46] Stunting indicates a retardation of both physical and neurological development due to malnutrition.

side-effects of, and hence patients not taking, antiretroviral drugs for the treatment of HIV (Hardon *et al.*, 2007).

In talking about hunger in a context like Bairro, the implication is that hunger is a condition, a state of being: one is hungry or not hungry, food insecure or food secure. However, in Bairro, hunger permeated everyday activities and interactions: achieving food security was a continuous process, in which cultivating one's *machambas* played a crucial role. A socialist-era chant, often used by speakers at project launch events and field visits to engage the crowd, equated hunger with war and social misunderstanding, and cultivation with understanding:

> *Olima osulu, osulu aya! Etala vathi, vathi aya!*
> [Up with farming, up! Down with hunger, down!]

The chant neatly demonstrates how hunger and cultivation – deprivation and labour – were conceptualised as two sides of the same coin. Similarly, the most talked-about experience of food insecurity in Bairro was expressed as both problem and practice: the *problema de caril* [the sauce problem] and the art of *procurando caril* [searching for sauce].

This chapter takes the *problema de caril* as a point of departure in examining experiences of hunger and practices of food provisioning in Bairro. I explore this landscape using Sen's (1981) entitlements framework, a key critique of dominant food security narratives. I incorporate a phenomenological reading of food provisioning in Bairro into this analysis, expanding the entitlements framework to consider the politics and processes of actualising entitlements to food. This reading looks at the articulation and embodied labour of everyday practices of food production, provisioning, processing and consumption in Bairro, highlighting the ways in which the entitlements these practices actualise are shaped and constrained by time, affect and gender dynamics. I then consider these practices within the wider context, as explored in Chapter 3, of partial subsumption in commercial markets and of pressure from projects to increase the commercial orientation of agricultural production. Throughout, I reflect on the role of food security interventions in these dynamics, as part of, rather than an external solution to, the landscape of food provisioning and hunger. This understanding illuminates the specific ways in which people navigated and were constrained by the shifting structures of exchange entitlement mapping, and how food security interventions informed by more static interpretations of hunger tended to reinforce the dynamics that constrain this agency. I argue that ultimately, it was Bairro people's maintenance of subsistence and non-commercial food provisioning strategies that ensured their access to entitlements, and hence their food security.

Entitlements

The projects operating in Bairro were part of a global genealogy of interventions and policy based on the idea that food insecurity, hunger, and ultimately famine result from a shortage of food relative to the population. Although this idea is persistent, and underpins much of the policy rationale for the AGR, it has been repeatedly and effectively critiqued, most influentially by Amartya Sen (1981). Sen uses historical case studies to demonstrate that famines can occur in contexts where there is no overall food availability decline, as a result of a breakdown of people's *entitlements* to food. Entitlements can derive directly from people's *endowments* – for example, access to land and labour allows people to produce their own food. They can also be exchanged through political and economic systems, such as people exchanging labour for wages and using these to buy food, or the *ganho-ganho* system described in Chapter 3. If direct entitlements collapse, for example in the case of a severe drought, or there is an unfavourable shift in exchange entitlement mapping – such as a drop in wages concurrent with a rise in food prices – this creates the conditions for food insecurity, and potentially famine. Comparing the examples of China and India, Drèze and Sen (1989) argue that the best guard against famine (though not chronic malnourishment) is democracy, ensuring that governments intervene before food insecurity escalates to food crisis.

The entitlements framework, and the literature on capabilities which also emerged from it (e.g. Nussbaum, 2000), provide a powerful critique of Malthusian analyses of food insecurity, and an indispensable contribution to debates on the causes of and solutions to hunger. They have been usefully applied in contexts similar to Bairro. For example, Bezner Kerr (2005) mobilises the framework to engage in an effective analysis of the relationship between gender and food security in Malawi. However, the entitlements framework also has limitations, due in particular to its individualism, its generality and its privileging of economic analysis over the social and political (Devereux, 2001).

Critics have called for a more political understanding of how famines occur. Rangasami (1985: 1749) makes a case for a structural analysis of hunger that conceptualises famine as a process of subjugation by economic, political and social forces, arguing that poverty is therefore part of a set of long-term preconditions for famine. Looking at the politics of famine also draws attention to the scope for action and agency in resisting the process of famishment by potential 'victims' of hunger. Considering hunger in terms of chronic malnourishment as well as famine, and reflecting on the co-existence of the two in Africa (Vaughan, 1987), deepens this political analysis, enabling an understanding of hunger as a product of national and

international social, economic and political systems rather than the result of their breakdown (Nally, 2016).

Critics have also pointed out the need for a more specific, historical and contextualised understanding of entitlements. Watts (1991: 16) calls for a longer-term and less generic perspective on famine, considering the ways in which entitlements are subject to change, uncertainty and agency, and to 'the locally specific social processes which give famines a particular rhythm, motion and timbre'.

In Bairro, people's everyday experiences of and worries about hunger raise further questions about the political and context-specific dimensions of entitlements. How can different endowments and entitlements be strategically deployed? How does access to and the actualisation of entitlements vary within as well as between households and social groups? How do they change across time and space? These experiences also draw attention to ongoing, irregular and seasonal patterns of hunger and the limitations of the entitlements framework in explaining chronic food insecurity. While poverty and power inequality clearly play a key role in shaping these experiences, the specific articulations and navigation of hunger in Bairro deserve closer examination, demonstrating the intracommunity and intrahousehold politics around access to entitlements, and the ways in which access to entitlements is not static but must be constantly maintained, particularly through labour.

In order to explore these questions, I combine the perspectives brought by critiques of entitlements – particularly the need to address the structural and political dimensions of entitlements mapping – with a phenomenological lens, which grounds the categories of entitlements and endowments in lived, embodied experiences and activities. I draw on Lupton's (1996, 1) framing of food and eating as 'central to our subjectivity, or sense of self, and our experience of embodiment, or the ways that we live in and through our bodies'. In this chapter, I extend this lens to the whole landscape of everyday food provisioning in Bairro, including food, hunger and eating, but also farming, market and non-market exchange and the construction and maintenance of livelihoods.

Gender and hunger

Recent development policy (e.g. World Bank and ONE, 2014) has highlighted the potential of women as key to 'solving' poverty, reframing African women as 'saviours' rather than the conventional trope that they are victims (Leach, 2015). In food security policy, this has involved the popularisation of the idea that 'if you empower the woman, you feed the family' (UN Myanmar, 2015), often with an underlying assumption that men inevitably spend

household income on consumer products or alcohol instead of nutritious foodstuffs. Although this assumption is supported in some contexts by empirical evidence (Bezner Kerr 2005, Stevano 2014), as O'Laughlin (2007) argues, it provides a problematic basis for intervention. 'The idea that those who have caring roles in households (usually women) use their resources to assure better care for their children than those who do not (usually men) is common-sensical but also slippery; one would hardly want to link arguments for greater equality to maintaining the exclusive right to the caretaker role' (O'Laughlin 2007, 23).

In light of these narratives, I use a feminist political ecological approach to explore how both phenomenology and politics of food provisioning are gendered, with a particular attention to who performs the labour of provisioning, who has access to and the ability to actualise which entitlements, and the implications of this, particular in Bairro's matrilineal context. I argue that this critical, feminist phenomenology of foodways provides the basis for a richer understanding of both hunger and food security as intersectional, dynamic, contingent and contextual, a 'productive *bricolage'* (Batterbury, 2001) of time, labour, skill, knowledge, and resources. I start by looking at different understandings of hunger and food security, and how they are understood in Bairro as both problem and practice through the local concept of the *problema de caril*.

The problema de caril

In the semi-commercial rural households of Bairro, what people used as *caril* was highly seasonal, but typically *caril* consisted of greens or vegetables, legumes, fish, meat or eggs. These might be cooked with oil or peanuts, onions and tomatoes, additional seasonings like chilli, or simply with water and salt. In the weeks before the first rains, many people gathered green mangoes, halved them and left them to dry on their roofs, ready to be used as seasoning or even *caril* in the lean season. An elderly widow, Octávia, described a kind of *caril*, made from water, salt and *piri-piri* [bird's eye chilli], which desperate people ate in the lean season – 'but I've never reached that point', she said.

Caril provided crucial proteins, fats, vitamins and minerals in people's diets, but also taste, enjoyment, satisfaction, and perceived wealth. In Bairro, people experienced the *problema de caril* in several different ways. For some, especially the better-off families, it described what it meant to '*comer mal'* [eat badly] and the sense of shame implicit in this: lack of meat in their diets, reliance on legumes and greens, and the embarrassment felt in serving this food to guests. For middle-income households, the *problema de caril* was about dietary diversity and food preferences: the boredom and nutritional monotony of seasonal eating.

116

> Eliza came by, on her way to pick *punyu* [wild leaves] – she had a
> *problema de caril*, and her family had been eating pigeon pea three days
> running.
> [Field notes, July 2016]

Eliza also demonstrates the way in which all but the wealthiest households supplemented their diet throughout the year with foods gathered in the *mato* [fallow farmland and wild bush].

For the poorest households, such as Odeta's, a lack of *caril* could mean hunger and malnutrition. There was uncertainty about what to cook for *caril* several times a week, throughout the year – in the face of this uncertainty, Odeta would sometimes to sacrifice a chicken, a precious resource, for the sake of supper. Another strategy for these kinds of intermittent '*crises de caril*' would be to actualise exchange entitlements: as mentioned in Chapter 4, to request *ganho-ganho* work from a neighbour in exchange for *caril* directly, or money for *caril*. For the majority of households, however, the *problema de caril* was a seasonal issue, one that affected them during the lean season, the 'hungry time':

> Filipa said there would be a *problema de caril* this year. Sometimes they
> have slept without eating, not due to a lack of food, but a lack of *caril*. All
> they had to eat was *ntikwa* [cassava leaves] with *karakhata* [*xima* made
> with dried cassava].
> [Interview, November 2016]

People's access to *caril*, as we will explore later in this chapter, was related to their household production and purchasing power, but it was articulated through a series of everyday decisions and practices, including interactions with external markets:

> Walking home at sunset, I passed Marlene who said she was '*mal com
> caril*'. She had sent Arieta [a teenage neighbour] to town with money for
> dried fish, but Arieta had not yet returned. The pigeon pea had been used
> up, and the money from selling pigeon pea had gone: they spent the last
> of it on frozen fish to eat yesterday. [Field notes, August 2016]

This conversation reveals Marlene's household's vulnerable position in relation to the market, but also her choices about how to spend money, seizing an opportunity to '*comer bem*' by spending money on expensive frozen fish. It also reflects the importance of the geography of physical markets and of time: if Arieta took too long to walk the 8km back from the market in town, Marlene's family would go hungry that night.

In these moments, we encounter people in the act of *procurando caril*, searching for *caril* foods. In contrast to dominant narratives about food security in development policy (e.g. Conway, 2012), food security was framed in terms of having adequate, sufficient and varied *caril*, rather than simply a function of calorific intake. We see how entitlements were articulated, constituted and restricted in locally specific ways, through everyday practices, social interactions, and decision-making. They varied between and within households, and over time. These everyday activities – hoeing, harvesting, saving seed, planning, selling, training, sharing, swapping, cooking, preparing, feeding, eating, buying, and abstaining – are often seen as coping strategies, ways of responding to food shortages (Corbett, 1988). What does it mean to be deploying such coping strategies on a regular basis?

Figure 13: Olima osulu! *Odeta working the machamba near her house, October 2015*

Embodying the search for *caril*

Procuring *caril*, and indeed the *xima* it accompanied, was something that needed to be achieved on a twice-daily basis, but it also represented the outcome of decisions and actions carried out over a much longer timescale, a *bricolage* of time, labour, skill, knowledge and resources. A given meal was the outcome – in Bairro, but also in many contexts (e.g. McIntyre, Thille and Rondeau 2009) – of a set of decisions and processes, which in turn influenced the decisions and processes determining future food security. The meal itself consisted of ingredients that had to be accessed by the household – whether grown, bought, gifted or exchanged. These had to be stored and prepared. They probably had to be cooked – using firewood that had to be gathered, and lit with bought matches or a hot ember requested from a neighbour. The meal had to be divided between members of the household, and eaten. These processes involved labour, which was allocated along social lines, notably

118

gender. They were also embodied: throughout the day, hunger and food provisioning were experienced and enacted through the body. The physical embodiment of a provisioning skill extended to most aspects of achieving food security in Bairro: hoeing, pounding and carrying things on one's head were activities which, practised from infancy, required strength, stamina and balance.

It would be inaccurate to say that any day in Bairro was typical, but there were patterns that permeated most days, and they give insight into the dimensions of food provisioning as a process, particularly its temporality, its politics and its relationship with markets.

Everyday practices of food provisioning

Odeta got up first, before sunrise. During most of the year that I lived with her, she went to the *machamba* or to the farmers' association, and hoed, watered or harvested as appropriate. Like most people in Bairro, her *machambas* were extremely low-input and labour-intensive: cultivated with a short-handled hoe, without fertilisers or irrigation, and planted with a mixture of local and commercial seed varieties. In the winter, June and July, she would light a fire with sorghum stems near the house to keep warm while she caught up with her neighbours and friends, before going to the *machamba*. Most days she woke the children and gave them chores, which the children divided according to a rota organised between them: fetching water from the borehole, sweeping the yard clean, washing the dishes, accompanying her to the fields. After this, on most weekdays, they tidied themselves up and headed off to school at 7am. In the rainy season the children hunted for, gathered and ate mangoes before they went, but for most of the year they did not eat anything until they got back from school around 11am.[47] Whoever got home first – Odeta or the children – had the job of going to *pedir fogo* (ask for an ember, or lighting a bunch of straw) from a neighbour and cooking something for breakfast. Depending on the season, they might have sweet potatoes, sweet cassava or maize roasted directly on the fire, eat last night's leftover *caril* with a fresh batch of *xima*, or cook thin *papinhas* (pap) made with sorghum or maize flour or rice, and served – if there was any – with sugar. They also often went without a morning meal.

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[47] Sometimes they snacked on *merrenta* [leftover *xima*], which was deeply frowned upon by adults, since it was said to give you diarrhoea.

Figure 14: Ruane preparing ntikwa *[cassava leaves], which were then pounded and cooked. To her left, Odeta was making a* mthikila *[a sauce to temper* ntikwa *in the absence of oil*] *to go with the* ntikwa*, by pouring water through a mixture of burned wild leaves in a broken* peneira *[winnowing basket]. November 2015.*

Odeta got back from the fields and started preparing lunch, which she often brought from the machamba or picked up along the way: there were beans to be podded, or peanuts to be shelled and then pounded with pestle and mortar, or *ntikwa* [cassava leaves] to be picked over and a *mthikila* [a sauce used to temper *ntikwa* in the absence of oil] made to go with them (Figure 14). If the family were going to eat dried beans for supper, the pot had to be put on a fire about now or the beans would not be done in time. Odeta checked on the amount of flour left in the lidded plastic bucket in the house; maybe it was time to make some more. That meant shucking and pounding maize (Figure 15), or hitting a big pile of sorghum stems with a stick to make the grains fall off, and then taking the sorghum down to the river for a long early-morning session of pounding, washing and pounding again (Figure 16).

If *karakhata* was on the menu, and sometimes thirteen-year-old Eduardo made it for himself even if the others were eating maize or sorghum, because he liked it so much, then it was just a question of breaking up pieces of *makhaka* and pounding them in the mortar. Then the flour had to be taken to the mill and milled (often on credit, because one of the workers at the mill, Andre, considered Odeta like a mother and looked out for her), brought back and dried in the sun. Finally it was ready to be made into *xima,* or stored for up to a week before it became peppered with weevils and tasted stale. If there was rice, that had to be pounded too, to remove the husks. Sometimes the children took some of it and pounded it into dust to eat as

a snack. The afternoon's food preparation was often social: Odeta's neighbours brought over a basket of beans to pod while they chatted. At some times of year, Odeta went back to the *machamba* in the late afternoon, and she and the children fetched more water for bathing and drinking.

Figure 15: Odeta, her children and grandchildren shuck the first of the season's maize by hand for a week's worth of xima *flour, March 2016.*

Figure 16: Othitha*: women pound sorghum at one of the most popular othitha locations, between two fish ponds, which were used to wash the sorghum between rounds of pounding. November 2015.*

Once it was dark, Odeta mixed up a pan of *xima*, and put out spoonfuls on a plate, dipping the spoon in water each time to make sure the 'balls' of *xima* were smooth and neat. Making *xima* was a skilled activity, one normally done by adult women. It required the experience and judgement to know how much flour to use, how much water, when the thin *papinhas* were ready for the rest of the flour to be added, and when the *xima* was ready to come off the fire. It required dexterity and skill: keeping the fire at the right temperature, vigorously stirring the

hot, thick *xima* in a figure-of-eight direction, scooping out neat round balls of *xima* and patting them smooth.

The children laid out a rush mat and brought out the plate of *xima* and the cooking pot of *caril* from the kitchen. Odeta and the children sat around the pots and dipped handfuls of *xima* in the *caril.* If Odeta's son-in-law was eating with them, Odeta dished up his food on a separate plate, which he shared with his sons, and visitors were offered separate plates and a dish of water to wash their hands in before and after eating. Often, Odeta's neighbour Adriana brought her baby and her dinner over, and they exchanged some of the *caril.* Afterwards, Odeta reached for her pot of chewing tobacco. The children lay on the mat farting competitively, or when it was a full moon, they ran off, playing hide and seek around the neighbourhood. Sometimes Odeta toasted *maçaroca* [fresh maize] or *makhaka* on the embers of the fire, and she and the children brought it to bed with them. In the lean season, sometimes they went to bed with their stomachs churning from the *karakhata*-heavy diet, or rumbling empty.

Within the arena of these routine practices, each day featured a series of decisions about current and future food provisioning: what to harvest, prepare and cook; whether to sell, store or eat produce; how much to consume and how much to save. The range of possibility for these decisions varied considerably according to a household's endowments and exchange entitlements, particularly its access to money, labour and land. However, I want to draw out four major threads that also structured and shaped this range of possibility and experiences of food provisioning and hunger. Firstly, the social and affective nature of food: how preferences, habits, and cultural meanings influence diets in ways that may not be economically efficient or nutritionally optimal. Secondly, time: the way that some things like cooking have to happen every day; the shifting seasonality of food availability through the year. Thirdly, gender: how exchange entitlement mapping varies between but also within households, how food provisioning practices entail but are not limited to labour, and how food provisioning is shaped by but also informs social identities. Finally, I consider how these practices of food provisioning were enacted in Bairro in the marginal spaces between market and non-market economies, as people constructed a *bricolage* of bought, grown and exchanged food, securing their food supply against vulnerability to environmental and economic change.

Local, cultural and affective specificity

Food and hunger are about much more than nutrition: they are also about meanings, social interaction, and affect (Crowther, 2013). Huhn (2013) points out that foodways are 'felt as much as [they are] thought and intimately integrated within the moral imagination. This is especially noteworthy in a location where poverty and veritable culinary simplicity can give an impression that foodways are dictated by material conditions alone' (p.186). The affective dimensions of nourishment played a far larger role in Bairro people's conversations about food and hunger than the basic biophysical requirements of nutrition considered in either mainstream food security narratives or Sen's entitlements framework.

People talked about their diets in terms of whether they would *comer bem* [eat well] or *comer mal* [eat badly]. To eat well was to eat meat, and to eat *caril* cooked with fat, such as oil or peanuts. Eating just *ntikwa* and *karakhata* would leave a person feeling unsatisfied, whereas richer food could have extraordinarily nourishing properties:

> Tiago used a phrase to describe bean soup that I had heard several times
> in Bairro, usually with reference to *batchiya* [bean fritters]: 'Eat some of
> this and you won't need to eat until night, or even the next day'.

To *comer bem* was also associated with having the leisure and disposable income to eat a breakfast of bread with tea (usually made just with sugar and hot water, but ideally with condensed milk too). By contrast, to *comer mal* was, as discussed in Chapter 4, to eat less prestigious foods like greens and beans, especially when these were cooked without oil, just with water and salt. Three-year-old Alexandra, visiting relatives in the town of Malema, boasted to her siblings on the phone that she was eating fish and bread every day: 'I'll never eat leaves again!' Wild leaves and fruits, while commonly consumed, tended to have negative associations. Along with *karakhata*, they were characterised as 'hard' [*duro*] foods, which caused digestive problems if eaten too frequently, and should be avoided by those not accustomed to eating them.

The way in which *comendo mal* or *bem* were embodied was a frequent topic of discussion in Bairro. Someone who *come mal* would *magrecer* [become thin], they would *perder seu corpo* [literally, lose their body]. Being seen as *magrinho/a* [thin] or *gordo/a* [fat] was associated as much with the appearance of vitality as with body size and weight. This also connoted the embodiment of the physical labour of food production, particularly the exhaustion and emaciation of the bodies of single elderly women who continued to work their own *machambas,* despite complaining of arthritis and muscle pain.

A sense of sufficiency was closely bound up with the taste and associations of particular foods. The inclusion of oil, for example, was associated with satiation.[48] Tastes like these were culturally mediated, but they were also variable and personal: while Hélia said she got used to eating food cooked with oil as a child, and now could not bear to eat anything prepared without it, her *caril* of beans cooked with peanuts and oil was deemed too rich by Odeta. Odeta, for her part, insisted on ending each meal by chewing tobacco, explaining that food '*não osiva sem sona*' [lacks flavour without tobacco]. Indeed, Odeta's efforts to *procurar caril* were nearly matched by the lengths she went to to procure tobacco from neighbours and relatives.

The ways in which foods were prepared and eaten were also socially mediated, subject to a set of taboos in Makhuwa culture. For example, sorghum flour, and some cooking implements, such as the *erawe* [mortar], had sacred connotations (Arnfred, 2007). Once a girl reached puberty she should not add salt directly to the pot of *caril.* Instead, women measured out an appropriate quantity of salt into a small bowl and then called a child to add it to the *caril.* Another taboo was interpreted more flexibly, depending on the resources available to the household: people should not eat chickens that had died of an illness. However, when Odeta's chickens all fell sick in October 2016 (attributed to the heat, but possibly linked to Newcastle's disease), she made sure that Eduardo killed them[49] before they died so that her family could still consume them (but Tifa refused to eat this *caril*).

Food was also meant to be shared, and not to do so was shameful. If someone received a visitor at their house, they could not start preparing food without offering some to the guest, so if they lacked adequate *caril* they would not start cooking until the guest had departed. Eating *xima* with someone could cement a relationship, but it was also ripe with danger – your host could use it as a vehicle for witchcraft against you. Maria, who lived alone, spoke of the affective importance of sharing food, when she offered us some of her cooked pigeon pea: '*Comer sozinha não é nada*!' [To eat alone, it's nothing! Field notes, November 2016].

Attention to these preferences and the social context in which people provisioned, prepared and ate food contributes to an understanding of Bairro people's reluctance to adopt practices promoted by projects such as the Save the Children community-based nutrition programme. An event run by this project, teaching mothers how to prepare nourishing food for

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[48] This also has a biophysical dimension: studies have shown higher nutritional benefits derived from green, leafy vegetables when they are eaten with fat (Tayki, 1999).

[49] Killing animals to eat was considered a man's job, so 13-year-old Eduardo was given this responsibility in Odeta's female-headed household.

underweight children, took the widely practised feeding of cereal pap to children as its point of departure. Volunteers demonstrated two recipes for 'enriched' pap, one with egg yolk and moringa, the other with peanuts and sugar. Although some mothers expressed concerns about where they would source these ingredients throughout most of the year, the most commonly expressed objection was on grounds of taste. Odeta and some of the children attending went so far as to refuse to eat any pap beyond the first spoonful. By contrast, at an InovAgro field demonstration day, a sales representative from one of the seed companies present made a point of emphasising the delicious flavour of the maize he was promoting. He also drew attention to the fact that the packet the seed came in could be repurposed as a mirror, demonstrating his awareness of how every aspect of buying a packet of seed – including the material and social life of the very packet – had to be justified in the marginal *bricolage* of Bairro food provisioning. This certainly increased interest in buying the seed, but people remain sceptical, reflecting the combination, as we have already seen in Chapter 4, of mixed experiences of development interventions and the risk-averse imperatives of their subsistence ethic: did the seeds really work?

Temporality and time-sensitivity

Time is also fundamental to an understanding of the phenomenology of hunger and food security in Bairro. Hunger is inherently time-sensitive: we rely on the regular, daily intake of food to survive, and this intake has to be sustained throughout the weeks, months, and years of our lives, regardless of season or context (Crowther, 2013).

In experiences of hunger and practices of food securing in Bairro, three particular aspects of temporality are relevant. The first is scale: the ways in which hunger and food security, and the ways in which people access and actualise entitlements, play out differently across time scales, ranging from the everyday to lifespans, with a particular focus on annual cycles and seasonality. The second is the importance of *having* time, time almost as an entitlement in its own right: the time it takes to cook something, for example, or time availability, which relates to labour availability, and the compromises of time *spent* in one activity or another. The third aspect, entwined with the second, is the importance and sensitivity of timings: labour bottlenecks, sensitive harvest periods, the timings of these relative to fluctuations in consumer demand and market prices, and how these are more or less important depending on a household's endowments. In this section, I consider each of these aspects and ask what they reveal about the dynamism and embodiment of food security in Bairro.

The timescales of food (in)security

As Richards (1989:40) points out, farming happens 'in time'. Decisions and strategies are made and developed in response to changing conditions, such as weather patterns and labour availability. The legacies of particular decisions and practices can extend over weeks, months and years. The everyday food provisioning activities recounted above were contingent upon, and in turn influenced, overlapping longer-term cycles and processes, including the variability of weather, changing seasons, and market fluctuations. Bairro understandings of food security were often framed in terms of an annual cycle, in which the lean season and the onion harvest were dominant features, extremes of scarcity and abundance. Fields were prepared, seeds sown, weeds weeded; perhaps irrigation, pesticides and fertilisers were applied; crops were harvested, dried, stored, sold or eaten, and seeds were saved, exchanged, bought or borrowed until the cycle began again. Figures 18 and 19 show how the annual cycles of different food crops in Bairro interacted and overlapped, and the distinct seasonality this produced. The diagrams highlight three key moments in the year: the main growing period, the main harvest season of crops associated with subsistence and local markets, and the main commercial harvest.

The majority of crops were planted around the start of the annual rains in November, and harvested between April and June. Cassava for drying was harvested later, in August and September. Households with *horta* land tended to intercrop maize (October – March) with irrigated onions and cabbages (April – September). Although food security is frequently framed in terms of final harvest, people also harvested many crops earlier in their growing period to eat, including leaves from cassava, sweet potato and cowpea, and immature 'green' sorghum, cowpea, pigeon pea, onions and maize. Depending on a household's production quantity and other sources of income, a household might have sufficient entitlements to secure food throughout the year. However, for most households in Bairro, the initial growing period, particularly in January and February, was the lean season, referred to by local people as *o tempo difícil* [the difficult time] or *o tempo de fome* [the hungry time]. It was strongly linked to vulnerability to illness (Sanford and Ahmed, 2016).

Figure 17, which compares the food eaten by Odeta and her family over a week in mid-June 2016 and a week in early December 2016, demonstrates how these agricultural cycles related to diets[50]. Some of the differences are immediately apparent. In June, Odeta's household ate

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[50] Odeta's household consumption, skewed by the money I was paying as rent, is more representative of two-headed households or households with an additional income source in Bairro than of single-headed households.

a greater range of foods including protein-rich chicken and eggs, and a range of different legumes (cowpea, pigeon pea, fine beans and peanuts), whereas by December *caril* consisted of a repetitive cycle of green leaves, fish and common bean. Although *ntikwa* made some appearances in June, it was a staple part of the diet by December – even though before the rains really began it was bitter and unpleasant to eat. In December, Odeta's household was no longer cooking with any oil or sugar, and ate breakfast less often[51]. In June, by contrast, meals were more likely to consist of quickly cooked foods like sweet potato and jugo beans, which could be prepared on the *machamba* itself, to maximise the time that could be spent in the *hortas* at this crucial stage in the onion production cycle. *Xima* featured as a significant part of diets through the year, but it shifted from maize and sorghum in June to mostly *karakhata* in December, once the sorghum had run out. In Odeta's household, one of the most difficult points in the year were the few weeks between reaching the end of her carefully managed *makhaka* store and the maturing of maize in March.

The main sources of food also changed through the year, reflecting shifting patterns of entitlement mapping from direct to exchange entitlements, although this was much more significant for *caril* foods than for *xima*. In June, Odeta and her family ate more food fresh from the *machamba*, and gifts and local markets made up a bigger proportion of food sources. In June, a time of relative plenty, people were generous with their produce: Odeta's son-in-law Tiago brought gifts of pigeon pea, cabbages and fresh fish from his tank. Odeta had a standing agreement with her brother-in-law Paulo, who allowed her children to take onions and tomatoes from his *horta*. Other gifts were spontaneous or reciprocal offerings from neighbours and friends. By December, there were fewer gifts, and all the protein sources (except for insects, caught by the children in the *mato*) came from outside the household. In December, there was a greater reliance on wild foods, which represented a crucial source of nutrition beyond both markets and subsistence production. Along with firewood, fodder, and medicines, they were procured from the communal or contested spaces of fallow farmland, *mato,* and verges.[52] As we will see, these patterns were also subject to flux and change over longer timescales.

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[51] Papaya for breakfast was something Tifa, from a wealthier household, strongly disapproved of, explaining euphemistically its effects on the bowels: '*comer papaya só provoca consequências'* [eating just payapa provokes consequences].

[52] These also represented a wealth of botanical knowledge that encompassed 'traditional' as well as colonial plant species. Odeta and Hélia taught me cures for various ailments which included lemon and eucalyptus leaves as well as native species.

Figure 17: Meals eaten in Odeta's household for a week in mid-June 2016 and a week in early December 2016. See Figure 18 for key.
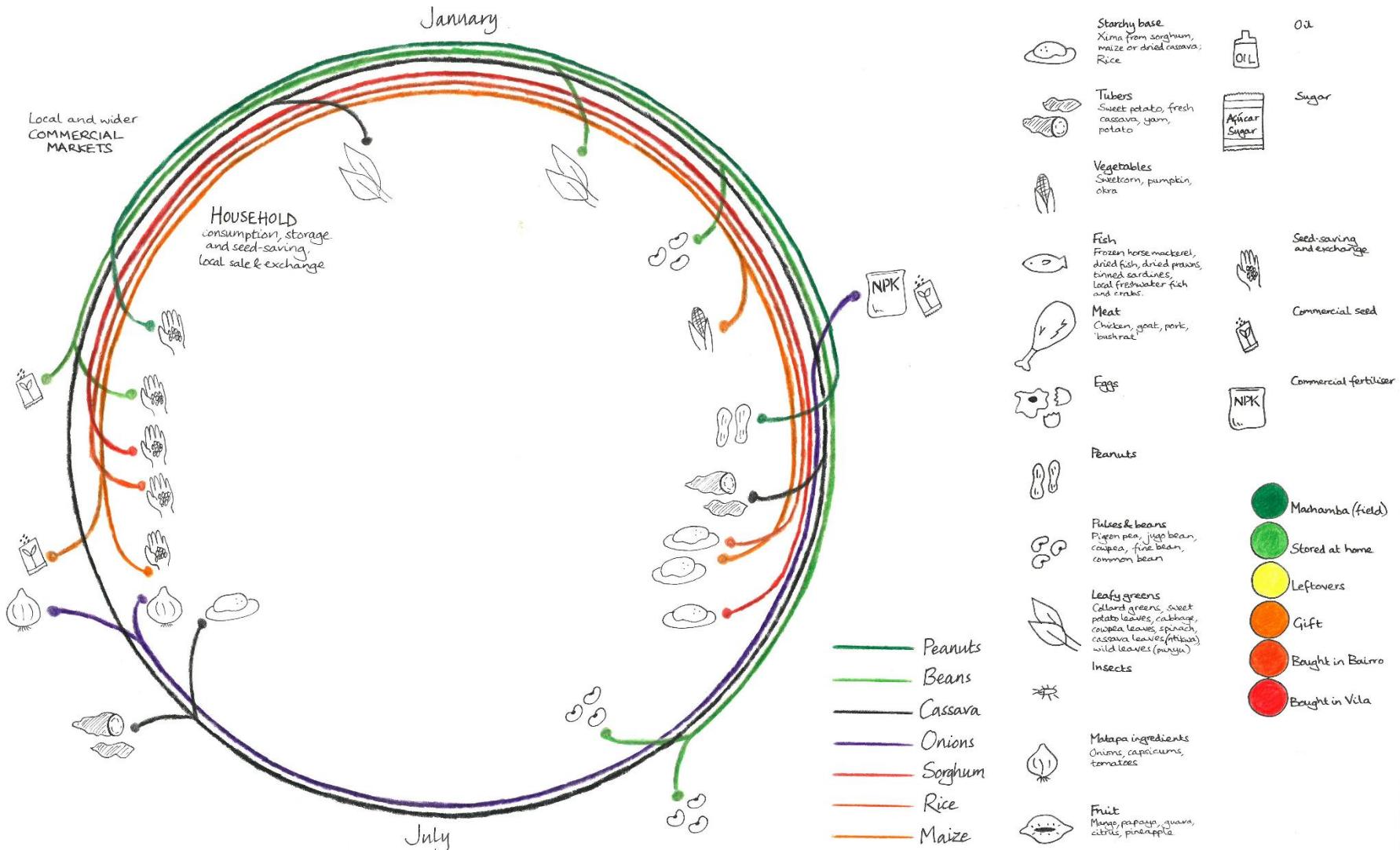
Figure 18: Idealised representation of the annual cycle of planting, tending, harvesting and consumption/sale of major food crops in Bairro, based on observations in 2015 and 2016

129

These changing dynamics reflect several factors. For low-production households like Odeta's, by December much of that year's harvest might already have been sold and consumed. Meanwhile, she still had her store of *makhaka*, which, as we saw in Chapter 4, she could sell parts of at intervals to raise the money to buy *caril.* This meant that there was a seasonal shift in the overall orientation of the household towards market or subsistence, with greater self-sufficiency (at household and community level) in June, and greater dependence on wider markets in December. It was not without complexity and contradiction, however: June 2016 was, relatively speaking, a time of optimism and enjoyment when Odeta and other single women like Ruane and Anabela spent some of their money on luxuries like sugar. By October and November, they had a clearer sense of the quantities harvested (plenty of cassava, not many onions), that year's market prices for commodities (low), and correspondingly managed resources more conservatively – Odeta eked out her sorghum flour as long as she could by alternating it with *karakhata.* In wealthier, higher-production households like Flávia's and Angelina's, the dynamics were slightly different: with high enough production to meet household subsistence needs, decision-making was about how best to use the surplus, and the relative advantages of selling it commercially, locally, or giving parts of it away as gifts. For these higher-production households, harvest was also the time to select the best seed to save for the next season or swap with neighbours with desirable crop varieties, whereas poorer households were more likely to end up eating their seed supply during the lean season and having to borrow seed from these wealthier households.

People simultaneously constructed *bricolages* of food security at daily, seasonal, annual and multiannual timescales. They juggled different aspects of each *bricolage* against the other, both as a routine practice and sometimes as conscious strategy. For example, sharing food now strengthened a tie of reciprocity, which might be advantageous in the lean season, although the act might be as much of friendship and generosity as duty or deliberation. For the poorest households, like Adriana's or Maria's, sharing a small amount of cooked *caril*, or buying a few stalks of sugarcane to offer neighbours provided the cheapest way of offering gifts, and maintaining a degree of reciprocity, without compromising household food security.

Depending on their endowments and production, households sold produce according to need and opportunity. Choosing to sell *makhaka* in small amounts rather than all at once meant that household heads could monitor whether there was enough to eat, and balance this against pressing needs for money. This was the case even for wealthier households: Música, who owned a lot of good land inherited from her mother, had a good peanut harvest and sold the peanuts in Bairro and Vila in small

portions (a bucketful at a time), according to when she wanted to raise money to spend on oil, *caril* from the market or *ganho-ganho* to help with onion cultivation.

Central to these *bricolages* – the patchworks of livelihood-securing practices which people were constantly producing and maintaining – was the decision-making around what to do with harvested crops: sell them, store them, eat them, or save them for seed?

Time-sensitivity and -variability were not always compatible with the kinds of dietary diversity recommended or expected by nutritional interventions, as a local mother observed:

> One of the Save the Children staff crouched down to chat to Bia and asked to look at her child's yellow health record. Looking at it, she called a Makhuwa-speaking official over to translate for her. They asked Bia questions about what she fed her child, showing her on the graph that her child's weight had dropped since she stopped breastfeeding. The first woman told Bia, 'Make sure your child eats fruit at least twice a week,' and then walked away. Bia turned to Tifa, and exclaimed, laughing, 'Where does she think I'm going to get fruit from?'

Although Bia probably had access to mangoes, papaya, bananas and oranges in different seasons, from her own trees, gifts and exchange, there were also times of year when fruit was not available to purchase from the market in Vila, even if Bia had available cash. Studies elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa have linked fluctuating child and maternal nutritional deficiencies, such as iron, vitamin A and zinc, to the seasonality of diets (Onyango, 2003). The issue was not – as project staff sometimes stated — ignorance, so much as access.

At longer timescales, too, there was nothing static about the conditions for food provisioning in Bairro, and Bairro's history shaped the material context of food provisioning – such as the global array of crops cultivated in Bairro *machambas*. The food provisioning strategies of previous eras informed current practices, including the current gendered division of labour. Within the livespans of many people in Bairro, diets had changed for better and worse. The war, particularly the 'tempo quente' of the late 1980s, was associated with the worst times, but the post-war period was for some a time of relative plenty. For Odeta and her family, the years before her husband died were a time of eating well: tea, milk and bread for breakfast every day! Similarly, the colonial period was associated with relative stability in terms of food production and the relative affordability of goods like sugar. Within the year I spent in Bairro, times got harder for many. Although most crops did well – it was a reliable year meteorologically – the prices for crops were low and the prices of imported foods in the market were high, and the cost of milling grain increased. This unfavourable shift in people's exchange entitlements meant that people's market-based access to *caril* and *xima* became more limited, with

implications for their diets, decision-making about storing and selling food, and labour, as more women decided to mill their own flour by hand.

Time as a constraining factor

Working to achieve food security, particularly the fresh preparation of meals every day, takes time (Huhn 2013). Ounpuu (1988) estimates that women in a rural community in Malawi spend 32-50 minutes engaged in food processing and 45-70 minutes in food production each day, with an additional six hours a week needed for pounding cereals. In total, they spend about 25% of their waking hours in food preparation. In Bairro, the time spend doing these tasks could vary considerably, depending on the household's responsibilities and labour endowments. People doing *ganho-ganho*, as well as members of the association, might perform this additional labour as a double shift, getting up early to work their own *machambas* by moonlight, then going to the *machamba do dono* at sunrise. People employing *ganho-ganho* mostly continued to exploit their own labour too, to increase production, rather than to give themselves more leisure time, although this was not always the case. There was an interesting contrast between two elderly neighbours, Liliana and Márcia. Liliana was matriarch of a large, wealthy family, and because of pains in her legs no longer cultivated her *machambas* – her husband and sons worked the land for her, and employed *ganho-ganho* when necessary. Márcia, however, a widow with one daughter and few resources, had no option but to continue to work her own *machambas*, constantly complaining of the pain in *her* legs.

There was temporal variation in these patterns, with people spending several hours in food production during periods of planting, weeding or harvesting, and some very time-consuming tasks such as pounding sorghum or milling flour by hand were done once a week or less. Estimating the time spent on these tasks is further complicated by the fact that food provisioning was not separate from other activities: for example, people combined a trip to the river to pound sorghum with bathing, doing their laundry and socialising. With the exception of Sundays, when few people went to their *machambas* and instead went to church or went drinking and socialising, or both, women in Bairro spent nearer to 50%-75% of their waking hours in food provisioning. Men spent less time in processing activities, but tended to spend more time in the *machambas* or going to Vila, which might be partly for social reasons (e.g. to go drinking) but also to sell produce and procure *caril.*

Also pertinent – especially in terms of combining food provisioning with other activities such as income generation, wage work and participation in development projects – was how this time was distributed throughout the day, as well as the total time spent on food provisioning. Waiting for something to cook could occupy time that could otherwise be spent in income-generating activities, on the *machamba,* or at school, but women could also use this waiting time to stay at home and

socialise with neighbours. In June, a key bottleneck period in the *hortas*, many families ate meals that could be cooked quickly and without firewood, on the *machamba* if necessary, or prepared in advance – sweet potatoes, toasted peanuts, *makhaka* or boiled jugo beans.

The nature of different crops also meant that some – for example, cassava leaves – could be harvested over the course of months, and some – makhaka – could be harvested over the course of several years. For others, timing was crucial. Some crops – legumes for example – could spoil if left in the field, or might be stolen. The profit gained on a harvest of onions, the key commercial crop in Bairro, could rise or fall based on its timing relative to everyone else's harvest. Hit the market too late, and the harvest's value could be substantially lower.

The extent to which these time sensitivities affected people's practices of food provisioning was strongly related to their household endowments, particularly their access to storage and transport infrastructure, which partly determine timescales of perishability. People adapted their buying and eating habits to the limitations of perishability. Odeta could make a purchase of frozen horse mackerel last two days, cooking it all at once and reheating half of it in the morning. Hélia had the money to buy a larger quantity of mackerel, which she smoked in the roof above her cooking fire. Dried fish or pulses, on the other hand, lasted much longer and this was often what people ate when there was not much fresh food available from the *machambas*.

Aside from intra-household dynamics, which we will come to later, household heads had some but not complete control over the management and storage of food in their households. In some households, for example, the children snacked on some of the stored food to make up for a lack of breakfast before school. 'The children are like rats!' joked Frederico. In another household it was actual mice which compromised the family's food supply:

> Jacinta said her sorghum turned out well, but mice ate most of it. When they cleared the house, they caught 54 mice and a lot more babies, which they did not count – enough to fill a big plastic basin!

Although households wealthier than Jacinta's often had better storage facilities (Figures 20 and 21), improving the longevity of their food supplies, they were still not completely proofed from insects, rain, pests or theft. Infrastructure at wider scales affected the amount of time spent procuring food, relating to wealth as well as health, age and (dis)ability. Buying food normally meant a trip into town, about 5km along the steep path running beside the mountain, or 8km along the road. For selling crops, access to transport was even more important, and likewise often time-sensitive: some commercial crops, like cabbages and tomatoes, were highly perishable; others, like onions, could earn

much higher prices if sold to the right person at the right time. Again, the limited transport available – much sought-after motorbikes, more common push bikes, or even walking the mountain road with 30kg of pigeon pea on your head – was heavily reliant either on wealth or on physical ability and the exploitation of one's own labour.

The variability and time sensitivity of food provisioning practices reflect the dynamism of entitlement mapping in Bairro, and the patterns of embodied labour that maintain food security in this variable and often uncertain context. We have also seen how these patterns relate to people's endowments, particularly a household's resources. In the next section, I explore the intra-household dynamics of food provisioning, particularly the role of gender.

Figure 19: Luan, Odeta's grandson, stores pairs of maize cobs in a mango tree next to Odeta's house, to protect them from mice, insects and rot, May 2016.

Figure 20: Victor stands beside a traditional maize granary. The heat and light of the sun on the maize cobs kills off pests. Only a few households in Bairro had the resources and the quantity of maize production to have one of these granaries.

Gender

A crucial aspect of the social embeddedness of food security and security in Bairro was the way in which these practices and processes interacted with gender dynamics. In Bairro's manifestation of matrilineal Makhuwa culture, there were well-defined gender norms and expectations about the division of labour in food production, provisioning and preparation, and power in decision-making about these, but in practice there was also scope for flexibility.

As well as contributing significantly to food production activities, women and children performed the majority of preparation activities, such as processing cereals, firewood and water collection, and cooking. This division of labour was physically embodied and experienced too. Because these tasks were performed by both male and female children, everyone learned the requisite skills, but as they shifted to more gender-defined activities at puberty, might not acquire the same level of dexterity, experience or hardened skin. These diverging expectations and experiences were reflected in an occasion when Tiago, whose wife Marlene normally cooked for him, offered to make me a bean soup:

> The soup was nearly done, simmering away. Tiago tried to lift the lid to check on it, but it was too hot and he dropped it, fingers burned. He instructed Marlene to lift it off and she did. When it was done he spooned the soup onto plates. Marlene told me proudly that she hadn't done anything to help, he had cooked it all himself.
> [Field notes, July 2016]

Here, it's certainly possible that Marlene, used to cooking, didn't feel the heat as much as Tiago; it's also possible that he thought that as a woman, she'd be more used to it; or that as a woman, he expected her to do it even if it was painful. Marlene's pride – despite the fact that she'd done many of the tasks involved, such as preparing the ingredients – seems to reflect a gendered assumption that it was impressive for Tiago even to know how to cook a dish like this, let alone play a part in cooking it, even though Marlene did most of the (invisible) labour of preparing of the ingredients.

Several men told me that they knew how to do many household chores such as fetching water, pounding cereals and cooking, though they rarely performed them – mostly only when their wives or mothers were unwell, and even then other female relatives might step into the breach. When later in the year, Marlene divorced Tiago, their eldest daughter Flora (aged about 10) was obliged to take on most of her mother's responsibilities like fetching water, cooking, and co-ordinating her siblings' contribution to chores.

This female undertaking of food provisioning and processing represented work – physical and mental labour – but also entailed care (DeVault, 1991). Women took pride in performing these roles and

responsibilities properly. Hélia told me on several occasions about times when she had impressed important friends of her husband or fed crowds thanks to her cooking skill. Cooking and feeding activities were productive of gender and cultural identities (cf. Van Houweling, 2016; Williams-Forson, 2010): they were imbricated in understandings of what it meant to be a Makhuwa woman and a good wife, perhaps themselves rooted in matriarchal social structures in which older women historically controlled their clans' granaries (Arnfred, 2007). For example, women spoke with pride of their ability to manage food stores effectively and spoke critically about others whom they deemed to be wasteful.

When it came to eating, gender – intersecting with age and status – again played a key role. Women and children usually shared the same plates, while older male members of the household and important or male visitors would be served first, on separate plates, and if the *caril* was meat or fish the hostess would make sure they got the best cuts. The micropolitics of sharing could cumulatively have significant and long-lasting effect on women and children's nutrition. Although parents or siblings might make sure the smallest child got a decent portion of food, for older children some might miss out as many hands competed to get a decent chunk of *caril*. When there were crises of *caril*, women would have to balance their own hunger against the needs of their children, since they were eating from the same pot.

The division of labour and decision-making around food production was complex and varied considerably between houses. Everyday decision-making around what to grow, sell, eat and store was often strongly gendered. In many households, women tended to have more responsibility for subsistence-oriented production – upland *machambas*, crops like rice and sorghum – and men for commercial production – *hortas*, onions and maize. Men and women would usually work together during bottleneck periods like planting and harvest. Echoing plantation-era patterns where men worked on the tobacco plantation while women tended home gardens, in contemporary dual-headed households, men were more likely to take responsibility for commercial exchanges such as the sale of higher value products like onions, maize and *makhaka*, and for major purchases like building materials, furniture and bicycles. In female-headed households like Odeta's, male children were sometimes entrusted with carrying out monetary transactions. Small-scale and local sales and exchanges, often entailing crops more strongly associated with subsistence, were more likely to involve women. Several women said during interviews that husbands were expected to provide *caril*, to bring home meat and fish, even though in practice this was not regularly the case.

> Adriana used to do *ganho-ganho* to get money for soap and *caril*. She would go to people's houses and request a small amount of land to help cultivate, in exchange for

> about 20Mt or so. Since she married she hadn't done this, she said, as it was now her husband's responsibility to organise those things. [Farm visit, June 2016]

This point also hints at how gender affected the kinds of *ganho-ganho* people would do: several married women said they would be ashamed to do *ganho-ganho* for money, because it was their husband's responsibility, although they would do it for soap, or, together with their husband, for *makhaka*.

When it came to major decisions about the next agricultural campaign or how to spend money, the majority of adult farmers Tifa and I interviewed said that they made decisions in conversation with their spouse. However, some of Bairro's wealthiest households represented a striking exception to this norm of co-operation. Gabriela and Angelina, wives of wealthy farmers, both complained to Tifa and me about their husbands' lack of interest in and help with the subsistence *machambas* and how they did not consult their wives about financial decisions and big purchases.

> Angelina said that Victor doesn't tell her or consult her about money matters – she just sees things appear when he's already bought them. He gives her a 'minimum fraction' to buy things for herself, but otherwise he buys everything. For example, he bought plates for the home without her knowing; she only knew he had bought a new bike when she saw it. [Interview, July 2016]

Before starting my fieldwork in Bairro, I encountered many variations on a narrative — from academics, NGO workers, Peace Corps volunteers, NGO policy — that if Mozambican men had control of household income, they would spend it on alcohol instead of food or other items deemed morally more worthy, such as school fees or clothes for children (compare with the discussion of morally acceptable uses of money in Chapter 4). In Bairro, there was some evidence for this pattern, but the picture was more complex in practice. Although some (mostly Baptist) families did not touch alcohol, many men and women drank on Sundays, and several men in the neighbourhood appeared to struggle with alcoholism. Odeta linked this to their lack of caring responsibilities: she liked to drink herself, but had to drink "with respect", with moderation, because "I have to cook xima for my children's dinner, I have no mother to cook for them." [Field notes, November 2015] Note the implication here of the caring responsibilities of an elderly grandmother. Only one interviewee spoke about the link between alcohol consumption and household expenditure explicitly; Tifa and I spoke to Eduarda and her husband Adriano together, but Eduarda remained silent throughout until we asked how they decided about how to spend money.

> Eduarda said that Adriano uses all the money for *vinho* [spirits] without telling her that he even has the money, and not leaving even 5Mt for her. Adriano denied this, saying "*é abuso*!" ["That's abuse!"] but she insisted that it was true. [Interview, August 2016]

Projects brought their own gender norms to interactions about food and agriculture, implicit in project design or made explicit through the behaviour and words of project staff. This included the reinforcement of the idea of men as untrustworthy with money, and explicitly or by implication, women as responsible managers of money who would spend it on essentials. Rosa, the OYE youth training facilitator, spelt this out to the participants:

> "It's women who are gestores, who keep an eye on the money, they know what's needed, they know the priorities. A man who goes to town with the money can return with nothing!" These statements met with murmured agreement from the class. [OYE training, August 2016]

Similarly, in a focus group with a visiting female, southern Mozambican researcher from an NGO, the researcher's questions revealed some of the assumptions that project staff sometimes made about gender and resources — particularly the idea that there was no complementarity, communication, or partnership between men and women (Stevano 2014). The researcher's leading questions ("Who decides what the money is used for, the man or the woman? Can the woman use it to buy capulanas and make herself beautiful? If you had a wad of notes, would you know if the man came and took some money from the middle?") were stymied by the women's equivocal answers ("It depends"). These questions reinforced narratives about the untrustworthiness of men without making space for women to speak about their own experiences; they ignored the micropolitics of trust and negotiation as well as the flexibility and agency people demonstrated in allocating money, labour and skills where they were most needed. O'Laughlin (2007) suggests that these framings of gender are popular precisely because they are politically expedient, blaming poverty and hunger on a supposedly endogenous problem, unequal resource allocation in African households, rather than dealing with structural inequality.

Some projects reinforced Bairro's gendered division of labour. The community-based nutrition project worked with women by default, as primary caregivers, giving women the additional burden of procuring highly nutritious food for their children. The one male volunteer in Bairro, Maurício, said "the project is very oriented towards mothers, because they feed children, but a husband can also teach his wife if the food she prepares isn't good" [Interview, August 2016]. This comment hints at an impression of women's ignorance about the proper way to do things, which was reinforced at times both by project staff and local people, and directed at groups ranging from peasants in general to

uneducated women in particular. A lack of interest in the nutrition project was attributed by one volunteer to the mothers "not wanting to listen" — partly, she thought, because of their own ignorance, but also because they didn't think that she, a local woman like them, would teach them anything worth listening to. However, other projects increased women's confidence, and the women involved seemed to perceive them as empowering. For example, several women expressed their pride and enjoyment in learning to use the motorised water pump on the ProSAVANA project, allowing them to work without the help of male members of the association. The OYE project explicitly featured ideas about women's empowerment. Rosa, the facilitator, exhorted the women in the group to speak up in training, use family planning, and start their own businesses:

> "We're all about gender emancipation here, so everyone should speak up! A woman should be active, creative, she shouldn't just wait for her husband to bring things and each national holiday ask him for a *capulana.* We have to help our husbands. We have to be proactive, have our own businesses." [Rosa, OYE training, August 2016].

Tifa was impressed by Rosa's words, developing her own plans to create her own chicken-rearing business. To her, it offered a preferable alternative to the practice of some women in Bairro, like Marlene and Anabela, of pursuing relationships with men in order to benefit from gifts of money, food and clothes. Rosa's idea of female entrepreneurship, although also informed by SNV's individualistic notions of female empowerment, was situated within Makhuwa gender norms of complementarity, the women as help to their husbands. However, this also reflects a paradox in the relationship between gender equality and commercialisation projects in Bairro. While promoting women's involvement in commercial production and entrepreneurship had the potential to increase single women's independence or married women's bargaining power in the household, it also represented a labour burden in addition to women's food provisioning and processing activities. Although the ProSAVANA project built up women's confidence in terms of using the water pump, some of the women complained of the extra labour they had to do and the time they had to spend on projects, going to their own fields before dawn and then to the association. By the end of the onion campaign the women still talked of needing a man to sell the onions on their behalf — although this could also reflect a use of gender norms to avoid taking responsibility for the low price the onions would inevitably sell for. Projects neither offered appropriate alternatives to people's lived and gendered practices of food provisioning, nor addressed the structural conditions for both food insecurity and gender inequality.

Structures and mechanisms

Examining food security through a lens of phenomenology and embodiment draws attention to the ways in which practices and experiences – what Watts and Bohle (1993: 124) describe as 'spaces of vulnerability' and 'actual conditions of hunger' – are shaped and constrained by the 'abstract processes' of political economy. The crucial questions of everyday processes of food provisioning in Bairro were what to do with produce — the juggling of whether to sell, store, eat or save for seed – and whose labour was mobilised and when.

People in Bairro exercised some agency in this decision-making, for example choosing what, when and how much to sell, or strategically deploying their labour on their own and others' *machambas* to gain access to food through production or payment in cash or kind. However, the dynamics of commercial markets considerably limited people's scope for planning for the future. George and Paige (1982:61) could be quoting Mozambican farmers when they imagine peasants summing up their predicament: 'we export agricultural products at prices we don't control in exchange for importing agricultural products at prices we don't control either'.

The balance between selling, storing, eating and saving produce and decisions around how to deploy labour were questions to which the agricultural interventions operating in Bairro proposed solutions. The interventions promoting commercialisation, such as ProSAVANA, PROMER, InovAgro and OYE, were underpinned by productivist logic. In comments made by project *técnicos* and speeches given at *dias de campo*, the need for commercialisation was often justified by Malthusian narratives, emphasising the growing number of mouths to feed, or invoking the need to work harder, with the underlying implication that peasants tend to be lazy and peasant agriculture is unproductive. This rationale was also tied to governmental anxiety about reliance on food imports and a desire to become nationally self-sufficient. Commercialisation was promoted as the way forward, partly to increase productivity by providing access to the means of modernist agricultural production, but also to transform farmers from peasants to entrepreneurs. At a launch event for the FAO-funded electronic voucher project, Mozambique's Minister for Agriculture made this position clear:

> 'Agriculture is not just food to kill hunger, agriculture is also a business.
> Does selling food not make money?' [Field notes, FAO voucher launch, October 2016]

Entrepreneurial farming was coded as virtuous, vis-à-vis the laziness and criminality of peasants – the implication being that these were people who were not present at the launch event:

> 'There are people who stay at home from morning to night, every day and do not go to the fields, so that at night, there is no food at home, and they go and steal food from

others' fields. They do not need to do this. We have a lot of land. We must all work, youths must work, the elderly: all of us have to work. So let us all work, no-one needs to steal from another's *machamba*, we have lots of land, we still have space, we will all work!' [Field notes, FAO voucher launch, October 2016]

The Minister's mention of the elderly needing to work underlines the need for the exploitation of peasants' own labour that is implicit in this approach to food security. The speech also invoked the kinds of ideas about the limitlessness and under-utilisation of Mozambican land that underwrote the early plans for ProSAVANA, and, as we will see in Chapter 6, are both persistent and problematic. Both ideas also serve to obscure the structural issues behind food security, including distracting from the government's role in creating Mozambique's 2016 economic crisis.

These policy-level productivist narratives seemed to be contradicted by another discourse about food insecurity, one more commonly expressed by project staff and local people, and more accurately reflecting people's everyday balance between subsistence and commercial production — that people were hungry because they sold all the food they grew. The solution, however, as demonstrated by Rosa, the facilitator of the OYE youth training, was again based on entrepreneurship and commercialisation:

> 'People have no oil because they sell all their sesame; they eat *papahe* without oil, they sell their chickens and buy *papahe*. We have not assimilated the idea of diversifying ingredients,' she said. 'We have fruits – papayas, oranges – but people sell them without eating any. We need to nourish our children, not let them remain with big bellies and small legs. So if the problem is money, we should come up with ideas for businesses to nourish our children.'
> [Field notes, OYE training, August 2016]

Rosa implied that people were buying the wrong sort of food, ignoring the material and social context in which this food would be bought, stored and prepared. The ideal outcome in this perspective, as Rosa expressed it, was that people would have sufficient cash income that they would not have to sell such a large proportion of their agricultural produce. The irony here, of course, was that the majority of business opportunities Rosa proposed involved the marketing of agricultural produce: in fact, the OYE project of which the training was a part promoted the production of commercial mango varieties for sale to supermarkets. This logic was also undermined by the fact that many highly prized *caril* foods like oil, fish and meat, as well as culturally desirable processed snacks and drinks, could mostly only be accessed through the market. Six-year-old Nanda already epitomised this approach: in Figure 21, she is using wild 'monkey' beans to make a cooked paste to sell to passersby, using her own

labour to generate enough money to buy processed corn snacks (Figure 21). On the other hand, some projects encouraged the consumption of commercially available goods, promoting the integration of peasants into markets as consumers as well as commodity producers. In the community-based nutrition project, the food demonstration events implicitly encouraged mothers to buy cooking oil; InovAgro explicitly encouraged farmers to buy 'improved' seeds and other inputs. OYE staff encouraged young participants to voice materialistic ambitions for the future: to own a motorbike, a car, a shop.

*Figure 21: Entrepreneurship for food security? Six-year-old Nanda preparing wild 'monkey' beans (*feijão macaco*) to cook and sell to customers at the mill along with her eight-year-old aunt Isabella, August 2016. They spent the money they earned on snacks from a local shop.*

Both the productivist narrative and pro-commercialisation logic are rooted in a colonial ideology, which locates the responsibility for hunger with peasant modes of production, with indigenous seeds (Eddens, 2018), and, ultimately, with the hungry themselves: as Mamdani (1982:73) notes, 'the liberal perspective […] has always seen the people as the problem'. In the context of food security, these narratives served to naturalise the inequalities in exchange entitlement mapping, and the structural limits to entitlements, which Bairro people have adapted to cope with. They also seemed to reinforce people's ideas about the ignorance of peasants, especially women. Several farmers told me that they had replaced their farming practices with "better" ones they had been taught by extension workers, such as planting in lines. Flávia blamed the inability of the women association members to save and

replant hybrid maize seed on their ignorance of good seed saving practices. We will explore in greater detail in the next chapter how such narratives informed people's subjectivities but were also rejected and renegotiated.

To understand the potential impact of commercial projects, it is illuminating to consider what happened to food provisioning in households where farmers were commercially successful. The wealthiest farmers in Bairro, such as Cláudio and Victor, demonstrated an inherent contradiction in the push to commercialisation. In both cases, not only were these farmers already at an advantage, whereby external income sources (such as government jobs, proximity to projects, or wealthy relatives) enabled them to employ *ganho-ganho* labour and rent large plots of high quality land, but their household food security was in both cases heavily supplemented by the labour of their wives and female relatives, producing subsistence crops on their own land. Even for these more commercially successful farmers, commercialisation did not entail a shift away from subsistence. Subsistence production saved money on expensive imports, which could be reinvested in commercial production; it gave them a degree of independence and resilience from market fluctuations; and meant that they could continue to eat the dishes for which they had a preference: sorghum, *karakhata*, or local rice varieties (cf Whyte and Kyaddondo, 2006). Intriguingly, commercial success had not shifted the market/non-market dynamic of these households' *bricolage*, but rather reduced their vulnerability to the challenges of both. This suggests that Rosa's point — that people should commercialise to reduce their need to sell nutritious food — might hold for Bairro. However, in both cases commercialisation had improved household food security at the cost of the unpaid labour of women and children. Both Cláudio's wife Gabriela, and Victor's wife Angelina, and their children, regularly assisted on their husbands' commercial *machambas*. Both wives complained in their interviews with Tifa and me of the lack of help they received from their husbands on the subsistence *machambas*, the lack of money or gifts they received from their husbands, and their exclusion from household financial decision-making.

The context of commercialisation in Bairro was not a case of market capitalism disrupting a subsistence-based peasant society and threatening its food security: as we saw in Chapter 3, Bairro agriculture had been partially commercialised in different ways for decades. However, these projects represented the most explicit aspects of neoliberal tendencies in agricultural development policy to encourage a more complete commercialisation, one that offers the seductive promise of greater food security, access to inputs that allow people to produce more food with less labour, and the ability to access 'better' foods like oil, meat and fish through the market.

However, most households in Bairro lacked entitlements to inputs and additional labour and land. For most households, government and NGO inducements to commercialise meant shifting the emphasis of their *bricolage* away from subsistence- and exchange-based mechanisms towards those of the market. This in turn increased their vulnerability to regional and international market fluctuations such as those experienced in 2016 and 2017 (see Chapter 4). This shift also limited the agency people already deployed in food provisioning, for example in choosing whether to save seed or to buy, and having the insurance of being able to save, exchange or borrow seed if, after the commercial harvest had been sold and debts had been paid, there was not enough money to buy seed. Consequently, the farmers' association in Bairro tended to approach these projects with scepticism, cautiously accepting new ideas and ventures, particularly where these were funded or provided material benefits or training. To some extent, projects seemed to have incorporated this in their practice — for example, InovAgro created demonstration plots before marketing seed. People in Bairro more broadly were also cautious about commercialisation, maintaining their non-commercial food provisioning strategies and safety nets, trying out techniques or small plots of new seed varieties, but only adopting things that worked and avoiding making significant changes to their core food provisioning practices.

Conclusion

This chapter has characterised food security as the outcome of entitlements that people have to constantly work to actualise, rather than its framing in dominant analyses and critiques as a binary state – food secure or insecure – dependent on annual production and income totals. Using a phenomenological perspective to extend Sen's entitlements framework to consider how entitlements are actualised has highlighted how food security in Bairro was a complex, productive *bricolage* of practices and decisions, constantly in the process of being maintained. This perspective has also shown how the actualisation of entitlements to food was temporally dynamic, and locally and culturally specific. These processes were inherently political, both in terms of their interaction with local power dynamics such as gender relations, and in their relation to the wider inequalities of Mozambique's political economy and integration in local, regional and global markets. This *bricolage* represented a set of long-term coping mechanisms for achieving food security within these structural limitations, but for many households – particularly those without the key endowments of land, labour and off-farm income – it was not enough: people were still not getting enough to eat. Projects and policy encouraging farmers to commercialise meant embracing the market-based aspects of *bricolage,* which left farmers more vulnerable to market fluctuations. In fact, it was people's dynamic maintenance of subsistence and non-market exchange alongside commercial production that ensured their food security.

In the next chapter, I consider in more detail one of these key endowments, land, and the politics surrounding it in the context of agricultural commercialisation.

Chapter 6
'The foreigners confused it all'
Land, authority and ambiguity in postcolonial Mozambique

Introduction

> 'After the foreign *donos* [owners] left, people re-occupied the land they had been
> expelled from. There has been confusion ever since – it continues now! People say things
> like: "This is my land, my great-grandfather farmed here, someone gave him the land
> seventy years ago…"' [Focus group, December 2016]

Land has featured prominently in the debates around ProSAVANA and agricultural development in the Nacala Corridor. Like much of the discussion about agricultural commercialisation in general and ProSAVANA in particular, these debates tended to be polarised. On the one hand, the Mozambican government and proponents of large-scale investments, such as the Nacala Corridor Development Company, have portrayed northern Mozambique as being land abundant, and its land as being under-utilised by local people, pointing out the low population densities of parts of the Corridor (Shankland and Gonçalves 2016). These narratives – invoking as they do colonial imaginaries of *terra nullius* ripe for exploration and exploitation (Turnbull 2000) – play a key role in attracting investors and agribusinesses to the region (Hanlon 2004). Much has also been made of the progressiveness of Mozambique's land legislation (Tanner 2010), begging the question: How is it that despite the relative abundance of land and a progressive land law, there can still be land conflict?

Critics and civil society organisations, on the other hand, point out that much of northern Mozambique's land is already used, if not farmed, by local communities, so that large-scale land acquisitions pose a threat of dispossession and landlessness to peasants and could exacerbate the existing context of micro- and macro-scale land conflicts (Mandamule 2016). These arguments raises further questions: How do different kinds and scales of conflict interrelate? How do commercialisation projects interact with these politics?

When I began my research, I was politically informed by the concept of 'land sovereignty' as representing 'the right of working peoples to have effective access to, use of, and control over land and the benefits of its use and occupation, where land is understood as resource, territory, and landscape' (Borras and Franco 2012, 1). However, in Bairro, as this chapter explores, land grabbing was something that happened *between* as well as *to* 'working peoples'; ProSAVANA played an exacerbating but also a mediating role rather than a directly antagonistic one. This chapter explores

the case of these land disputes in Bairro, searching for insights beyond the binaries of *terra nullius* and lazy peasants on the one hand, and greedy agribusiness and virtuous peasants on the other.

In order to do this, I return to the concept of moral economy, this time drawing particularly on Wolford's (2005) work on agrarian moral economies in relation to struggles over land. My analysis is also informed by ideas about the multiplicity and contingency of land developed by Li (2014) and Moore (2005). I set out this framing in the first part of the chapter. I then look at the context for different moral economies of land in Bairro, including some of its key legal and cultural framings.

In the main body of the chapter, I discuss the land disputes in question, drawing out what they reveal about contradictory, ambiguous and overlapping understandings of land and authority in Bairro. These discussions relate to themes raised in previous chapters: the partial subsumption of farmers in the commercial economy; the uneven distribution of entitlements and labour in Bairro; ambiguity and agency in interactions with projects and different modes of authority; and the enduring and complex legacies of colonialism in Bairro. I look at the roles played by different forms of authority, including government, customary leaders, colonial legacies and projects in these disputes, which centre around the story of a local man who 'inherited' his colonial employers' land when Mozambique became independent. I look at what this tells us about the agency and subjectivity of Bairro people in navigating different forms of governance, and how a push towards agricultural commercialisation – in this case manifested through ProSAVANA – affected this relationship. Finally, I relate these themes back to wider debates about land sovereignty in Mozambique, arguing for the importance of a consideration of historical and social context and micropolitics in these conversations.

Moral economies of land

How do we start to unpack what land means in the context of contestations and conflicts like those in the Nacala Corridor?

In her study of land struggles between neoliberal elites and landless peasant movements in Brazil, Wolford (2005) engages a moral economy framework to situate claims to land within wider worldviews. Wolford uses a broad understanding of moral economies, drawing on Sayer (2000) that incorporates both values themselves and the "relationships, processes, and events through which values are produced" (p.245). She uses this to demonstrate how "seemingly objective claims to resources" (p.244) are social constructed and historically situated, and to reveal how neoliberal government policy and the moral economy of agrarian elites operate as "mutual 'reinforcement mechanisms'" (p.257).

According to this understanding, struggles over resources are also struggles over ideology; the narratives and actions of elites are revealed to be as value-laden as those of subalterns and dissidents. However, Wolford uses the term in a context in which agrarian moral economies are constructed as binary — the incompatible and opposing worldviews of peasants and elites — much in the way that moral economy has previously been used to understand conflicts over market integration between peasants and capitalists. In Bairro, as we shall see, moral economies of land were less binary — informed by competing and sometimes overlapping ideologies about rights, responsibilities and relationships to land, including the logics of socialism, neoliberalism and Makhuwa custom.

To understand the ambivalent and non-binary context of Bairro, and how this might inform moral economies and everyday practices, I draw on work by Tania Murray Li and Donald Moore on conceptualisations of land and how they shape the values attributed to it. I draw on three main ideas from these scholars: the practices involved in making land a resource; the materiality and situatedness of land; and the contingency of power relations in inscription practices. Neither Li nor Moore uses the term moral economy, but I see Wolford's work as complementary to theirs, providing an overarching framework for their examination of the meanings and practices of land.

The first idea, the practice of making land a resource, recognises that land has many meanings besides a resource for agricultural production. As a result, making land into a resource – rendering it investible to capital, in particular – requires an assemblage of practices of inscription and exclusion that are laden with unequal power dynamics.[53] In her 2014 paper on land acquisitions in Indonesia, 'What is land?', Li explains: 'land is a strange object. Although it is often treated as a thing and sometimes as a commodity, it is not like a mat: you cannot roll it up and take it away. To turn it to productive use requires regimes of exclusion that distinguish legitimate from illegitimate uses and users, and the inscribing of boundaries' (Li 2014, 589). In his analysis of land struggles in Zimbabwe, Moore points to the importance of micropractices in these processes, the 'diverse ways land comes to be inhabited, labored on, idiomatically expressed, and suffered for in specific moments and milieus' (Moore 2005, 3).

Secondly, Li and Moore both frame land as inherently material and situated, and imbued with different meanings. Moore imagines these materialities and meanings as striations inscribed in the landscape, reflecting the histories and multiple meanings of a place: 'Place bears traces of historically

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[53] I note that these questions may not always be limited to land, but also to other resources and kinds of use and ownership of property. However, my focus on land reflects the dominance of land both in debates about the Nacala Corridor and in Bairro's own disputes. See, for example, Rocheleau, D. & D. Edmunds (1997) Women, men and trees: gender, power and property in forest and agrarian landscapes. *World Development,* 25, 1351-1371.

sedimented processes – the drying and hardening of soil – as well as situated struggles' (2). In the 'fractal' and 'entangled' landscape of eastern Zimbabwe, 'multiple spatialities mingle. Neither serial nor successive, they are copresent, sometimes as hauntings, other times as explicit invocations, shaping a plural terrain where no single space prevails' (22). Moore likens these spatialities to a tangle of threads — and shows how pulling a particular thread in these entangled meanings and practices can tighten knots.

Thirdly, Li points out that although assemblages of inscription are used as tools of dispossession and marginalisation, there are always fractures and contingencies within them, and hence scope for agency and for alternative outcomes (Li 2014). Likewise, Moore demonstrates the contingency of power relations and the 'non-sovereign agency' and 'selective sovereignties' deployed by local people who deploy their history of oppression – 'suffering for territory' – to stake a claim to land (Moore 2005, 3). People engage different temporalities to protect their interests, for example eliding aspects of colonial rule with precolonial structures to create a politically useful imaginary of 'traditional authority'. As a result, 'competing practices of spatial discipline, sovereignty, and subjection all [coexist] at the same time in a postcolonial place […]' (Moore 2005, 11).

These literatures – of moral economy, the meanings and multiplicities of land, and selective sovereignties — provide a framing for looking at land in Bairro that pays attention the values and ideologies that underpin behaviours around land, as well as to the practices and power dynamics of land governance. I look at how the moral economies of land in Bairro were historically and spatially situated, paying attention to their materiality as well as their politics. Looking at development projects as a 'thread' within Bairro's striated landscape of land and power, I look at what knots were tightened by the ProSAVANA project and its need for land. I look at the strategic ways in which people produced and navigated competing moral economies, demonstrating that some people were better placed than others to do so.

Legal, political and cultural meanings of land

In this section, I look at the context of land in northern Mozambique, and the moral economies surrounding it: 'traditional' Makhuwa meanings of land as inalienable and belonging to one's matriclan, the history of the legal status of land ownership in Mozambique, and the postcolonial politics of land governance which encompass both state and 'traditional' authority. All three frameworks for understanding the meaning and governance of land come into play in the story of the land dispute that follows.

Land as matrilineal territory

Northern Mozambique's ethnic groups are associated with matrilineal kinship and land tenure systems (Arnfred 2011). In idealised terms, land in these systems belongs to one's maternal kin, both living and dead (Martinez 2008, Geffray 1990b). This maternal clan is known as *nihimo,* and its associated territory *nttethe* (Martinez 2008). The concept of *ntthethe* indicates meanings of land beyond those taken for granted in received Western wisdom: individual private ownership, inheritance at death, and alienability. Land can pass between clan members, and be lent to non-family members, and new territory can be claimed by clearing *mato,* but it cannot be sold or otherwise alienated (Bonate 2003). In practice, the (usually male) main heir holds most decision-making power over usufruct rights (Bonate 2003).

In Bairro, as discussed in Chapter 3, people practised both matrilineal and patrilineal inheritance. People from outside Bairro, without *ntthethe*, cultivated their in-laws' land or borrowed land from sympathetic neighbours, making a good relationship with the landowner crucial to their livelihoods. Although there was virtually no unclaimed *mato* in Bairro from which to open new *machambas*, members of the families with the biggest landholdings had enough land to lend to neighbours. This system bore some resemblance to what Neumann (2002) sees as a 'subsistence ethic' of land in Mount Meru, Tanzania, where 'everyone has access to a cultivation plot, no matter how marginal' (p.86). In Meru, those without ancestral land — divorced and widowed women and newly established households — were allowed to cultivate less productive land or lent land on a seasonal basis. However, in Bairro as in Meru, this did not preclude disputes arising over land, from gradual encroachment onto another person's *machamba* to the larger-scale conflicts discussed in this chapter. Indeed, as we will see, the ambiguity between multiple meanings and forms of control over land – a history of colonial land alienation, state ownership and authority, 'traditional' authorities and Makhuwa understandings of ownership and alienability – both exacerbated the dispute and provided some scope for agency.

The changing legal status of land

The formal legal status of land ownership and use in Mozambique is itself an assemblage of customary, colonial, socialist and neoliberal meanings and practices (West and Raman 2009). Historically, law has been a key practice of inscription, making land legible to power. Under colonial rule, a 1901 law classified all Mozambicans as tenants or squatters on alienated or state-owned land and permitted the alienation of land even if it was already settled by local people. A 1909 law allowed for, as was apparently the case in Bairro, the relocation of local people from land that colonists wanted to cultivate, which also provided a nearby labour pool for settler plantations. Mozambicans

could now occupy any unalienated land but could not become landowners. In the 1920s and 30s, under the *Estado Novo*, land compensation was adjusted to reflect differences in soil quality ('squatters' were to be allocated 2ha on rich soil, 5ha on poor soil), and tenancy of alienated land was formalised, obliging 'squatters' to enter into the employment of their landlords (Direito 2013).

At the time of independence in 1975, all land was declared property of the state, and rural households were each allocated 1ha dryland and 0.5ha wetland (Bonate 2003). The nationalisation of land included the creation of state farms (often on the sites of colonial plantations) and the promotion of collectivised agriculture as part of FRELIMO's communal villages programme (Bowen 2000).

In 1997, during the post-war phase of neoliberal restructuring, the Mozambican government passed a new and 'radical' land law (Lunstrum 2008, 339), which was much-celebrated at the time for the democratic process which led up to it (Tanner 2010) as well as its content, which seemed to both enable outside investment and protect peasants' land rights (Hanlon 2004).[54] The 1997 *Lei de Terras* recognises the permanent 'automatic and overriding' rights of communities and individuals to land which they have 'traditionally' occupied, or occupied 'in good faith' for more than ten years (Hanlon 2004, 605). The law also makes provision for communities or individuals to apply for permanent legal recognition of these land rights, in the form of a DUAT [*Direito do Uso e Aproveitamento da Terra*, or Right to Use and Benefit from Land] (Bonate 2003). Obtaining a DUAT is at the discretion of the district cadastral authority, and applicants are required to pay an authorisation fee and an annual fee to maintain the DUAT. Other pertinent features of the law include allowance for the use of verbal evidence in disputes, and specific rights for women, including proscribing discrimination by sex in land inheritance (Hanlon 2004). Companies and investors, including foreigners, can also obtain a DUAT for a period of 50 years, with some provision made in the process for community consultation (Lunstrum 2008).

Following the passing of this law, there have been several phases of civil society support for community DUAT delimitations, particularly in areas perceived as vulnerable to land acquisitions by outside investors. The first major phase was in 1999-2001; in 2010 the Mozambican women's rights organisation Forum Mulher launched a 'one woman, one DUAT' campaign; and there was a more

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[54]Despite its problems, the celebrated progressiveness of Mozambique's land law also reflects the striking contrast between Mozambique and its neighbouring countries, where the concentration of land under white minority rule has led to ongoing and difficult debates about postcolonial and post-apartheid land reform. See, for example, Hanlon, J. (2004) Renewed land debate and the 'cargo cult' in Mozambique. *Journal of Southern African Studies,* 30, 603-626.

recent wave of delimitations from 2011 onwards, in response to the debates around ProSAVANA and other potential land acquisitions (Cabral and Norfolk 2016).

In implementation, the land law has not always been as progressive as it perhaps seemed in 1997 (Tanner 2010). Delimitation, and the mapping of land, is one way of rendering land technical. It has also contributed to contradictory perceptions about the abundance of 'unused' land in Mozambique, particularly for communities whose *de facto* land rights are not formally registered: 'the absence of local rights on [cadastral] maps seriously understates the extent of legal land use and occupation, and creates an impression of large 'empty areas' available for investment' (Tanner 2010, 112-113). Cabral and Norfolk (2016, 7) raise concerns about the potential for manipulation of the law to favour land acquisitions by foreign investors for capital accumulation at the cost of local land rights and livelihoods, particularly in the current political context where 'an increasingly hegemonic elite controls Mozambique's political system and resources'.

Dual governance

The dual structure of local governance in Mozambique also provides space for customary land governance. Although 'traditional' and customary authorities were repressed under FRELIMO's socialist state, they were reinstated by RENAMO in the areas it controlled during the war (Meneses 2009). Customary authorities and institutions were also encouraged in the postwar period, this time by development actors who framed them as a form of African civil society that would further neoliberal aims of decentralisation and good governance (West 2005). The embracing of customary land tenure has also been critiqued — for example, for the ways in which these institutions can reproduce gender inequalities in decision-making and governance (Whitehead and Tsikata 2003).

In practice, local decisions and conflicts over land may be resolved by state-appointed local leaders, such as the *régulo* (*bairro* level) or *Chefe de Poste* (administrative post level), by community elders or people of influence in political parties, especially Frelimo, and by the customary leader, the *mwene*, who in many cases is also the *régulo* (Bertelsen 2016). The relationship between these structures is sometimes contradictory, and often ambiguous and dynamic, particularly in matters pertaining to the spirit world, ancestry and sorcery (Obarrio 2014, West 2005). However, they may not be seen as contradictory by local people, who experience them as different parts of the same system (Logan 2009), and the idea of 'tradition' and the 'state' may be understood in heterogenous ways (Bertelsen 2016). In West's ethnography of Mueda in northern Mozambique, a local government-appointed leader explains how he navigates the two regimes, with the analogy of wearing the right clothes for the right job: 'You don't put on your Sunday clothes to go work in your *machamba* […] It's essential to find a balance between *scientific governance* and *local tradition*' (West 2005, xix). The balance

between the two systems of authority were often decided by scale: while DUATs were administered by the state, the smaller areas of land that were central to Bairro people's livelihoods – usually distributed, inherited and lent within and between families – tended to be adjudicated by local leaders.

At the time of my research, Bairro did not have an active *mwene.* The previous year, the *mwene* had been arrested and imprisoned for trying to traffic one of his sister's children. The *mwene* had not lost his position of power (his sister, mother of the stolen child, was the *apwiyamwene*, who had spiritual but not political authority) so his absence left a vacuum of state-recognised traditional authority in Bairro. There was also no *régulo*, as the previous one had died and a new *régulo* had not yet been appointed. These gaps made the role of the *Chefe de Poste* on the one hand, and local party representatives and community elders on the other, more significant, while removing some of the scope for agreed ways of negotiating between state and customary interpretations of land tenure.

Materiality

In Bairro, the situatedness and the striated materiality of land were crucial in shaping how disputes played out, from the claiming of land by clearing, preparing and planting it, to the characteristics of a particular plot of land. Access to inputs was extremely limited, so two key considerations for farmers were soil quality (including its water capacity as well as fertility) and access to water. Most farmers had five or more small *machambas* (usually 1ha or less) or fewer large *machambas* (see Figure 22). One household's *machambas* were usually non-contiguous, located in different areas around Bairro, sometimes 1km or more apart. Almost all households had *machambas* that encompassed a range of soil types.

Soil fertility varied considerably across Bairro, where the landscape was characterised by three main soil types (Figure 22). Upland *machambas*, especially those around rocky outcrops and inselbergs, were associated with highly weathered soils known as *kotchokwane* [red earth]. These areas of land were associated with crops like cassava, sorghum and cowpea. Downslope, in outwash areas, was a band of sandy clays with high infiltration rates. These soils were called *ntchipa* [black earth] or *etchaya* [sandy soil] depending on their ratio of sand to clay. Depending on this ratio, and on the land's proximity to water sources and flooding in the wet season, people grew cassava, maize, onions and rice on these soils. The third soil type formed a very narrow band around rivers, and was very fertile with a high organic content. The micro-topography of springs, rivers and slopes could significantly affect the agricultural potential of a plot of land. Although Bairro farmers actively managed soil fertility, in a context where access to inputs was extremely limited, the kind of *machambas* a household had access to related directly to their food security and wealth. It was no

coincidence that it was Florêncio's sons and nephews, some of the claimants in the land dispute, who cultivated some of the most productive land in the neighbourhood, the carbon-rich soil adjacent to the Nthiwa River.

Story of a land dispute

In 2016, two disputes developed around the question of what land the association would use for its ProSAVANA-supported onion campaign. In both cases, the land under dispute was part of a 200ha area which was a colonial tobacco plantation in the mid-twentieth century (Figures 23 and 24).55 On their departure during Mozambique's war of independence, the Portuguese plantation owners left the land in the care of their cook, Florêncio. In this section, I briefly sketch out this history, before discussing the subsequent status and management of the land leading up to the disputes and the impact this had on how the disputes were resolved.

History of land in Bairro

> In the colonial time, Vila was full of tobacco. The town was surrounded by tobacco plantations, marked by lines of kapok trees, and owned by different *donos*. When the *brancos* [whites] came to Bairro, they talked to the government, to the Ministry of Agriculture and asked for land. The plantation owners expelled the people from their land, but they were required by the government to allocate part of the land to local people. Some people got employment as guards, while others worked on the plantation. The *brancos* would not leave you to work your own land: after the age of 18 it was obligatory (mostly for men) to work on the plantation. If you refused, you would go to prison or be sentenced to forced labour. [Focus group, December 2016].

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55 This history of land in Bairro, and particularly the land under dispute and used by the association, was compiled from fieldnotes which I took during a focus group held with five older people, three men (Florêncio, the Cabo da Terra and the Bairro party secretary) and two women, in December 2016. I tried to write down the exact phrases used by the participants, but these are not direct quotes since it's not clear from my notes what was said by whom. I have also changed the chronology for clarity. Details about Florêncio's life and relationship with Portuguese plantation owners were recorded during interviews with Florêncio and his wife of 50 years, Liliana.

Figure 22: Aerial image of Bairro and surrounding area, August 2018. Source: Google Earth. Areas of red, white (sandy) and darker soil are clearly visible.

155

Figure 23: Map showing key roads, rivers, railway and mountains in Bairro and notable features on the landscape including the approximate sites of colonial plantations and areas of land under dispute in 2016, based on descriptions of locations given by Bairro elders in a focus group.

156

The tobacco plantation in Bairro was created when Florêncio was a kid, so probably in the mid-1950s. The plantation passed through a series of owners: Fonseca sold it to Esposto, who sold it to dos Santos, who sold it to da Silva. Da Silva had a brother, whom he called to come and work this plantation while he went and set up a new one in another district. All these owners were *particulares*, private individuals, neither working with the government nor companies. All these men were Florêncio's bosses: each new owner inherited all the same workers. Florêncio waited at the whites' table, learning to cook from their chef. When the former owners left and the da Silva family moved in, a married couple with a child and an elderly aunt, he became their cook. He cooked with a wood-fired oven, making soup, cakes, biscuits and bread. [Focus group, December 2016]

I would like to draw attention to two points here. The first is the variation in the status and experiences among local people in colonial Bairro. Men were employed in different capacities, some as forced plantation labourers, some as guards, and some, like Florêncio, in positions that brought them into closer contact with colonial settlers. In people's reminiscences about the plantation, it was clear that some felt a closer relationship with the plantation owners, and felt this gave them some respect and status. The second point, linked to this, is the tone of nostalgia and pride with which Florêncio (and some of the others) talked about his closeness with the Portuguese family, and his cooking skills. These different, and mixed, perceptions and experiences of colonialism are something we will return to later in the chapter, and both informed and were informed by people's postcolonial experiences, including in relation to land.

Florêncio and the postcolonial moment

When Independence came, almost all of the *donos* left. Da Silva left, thinking he would come back. He appointed Florêncio guard [*guarda costa*, usually translated as 'bodyguard'] over the plantation, telling him he could cultivate small *machambas* there. He told Florêncio, 'If you let people farm there, then when I come back you will have to remove them.' [Focus group, December 2016]

In the way the elders related this story, there was a decided contingency about this moment. In the confusion of the colonial war, there was considerable uncertainty about what was going to happen, which influenced how authority over land was framed. The land was still Da Silva's property, but he gave Florêncio responsibility for it with the implication that Florêncio now had the authority to grant temporary usufruct rights to the land.

The land that Florêncio and Liliana farmed now [in 2016] was not part of the plantation. It belonged to Florêncio's family, and they farmed it before the colonists arrived.

Florêncio saved the money he earned from the whites, because he wanted a house built from fired bricks. He built his house with the money he saved. His employers helped him purchase an asbestos roof; they helped with anything he needed. Because Florêncio cooked for the *brancos* and washed their clothes, they left him everything, including their land, 200ha, all the way to Epwiri Mountain. The people who farmed there now asked him for the land. [Interview with Florêncio, April 2016]

In other places, when people realised that the *donos* were not going to come back, they entered the land and started farming of their own accord, without authorisation. The plantation owners left trees and other infrastructure, which legally became the property of the Mozambican people. When there were land disputes, the leaders called elderly people to recount the ownership of the land, explaining *como surgiu aquela área* [how that land came to be]. Areas of land used to be associated with different tribes, but Florêncio said that the problem was the *brancos*: they confused it all. [Focus group, December 2016]

Again, Florêncio hints at his privileged status relative to his compatriots. In 2016, his fired-brick, rendered, asbestos-roofed house still stood out in Bairro, a physical reminder of how he materially benefited from his association with the Portuguese family. However, he chose to farm his own ancestral lands rather than those of the plantation. It is not clear when Florêncio realised that Da Silva would not return, but his role as guardian of the land, with the authority to distribute land, was taken seriously by other farmers, who 'asked for' the plantation land rather than cultivating it 'without authorisation'. Again, Florêncio's case stands out because this authority over land differs from postcolonial land redistribution in other parts of Bairro. Here we see a Bairro interpretation of postcolonial land policy: land and infrastructure became the property *do povo*, of the people. This is an interesting choice of words, 'of the people' rather than 'of the state', which were often elided in FRELIMO's socialist ideology, but can be interpreted rather differently in a context like this. Ideas about land rights simultaneously drew on precolonial ownership and yet could not do so, because decades of colonisation had disrupted local knowledge and land tenure, and 'memory' was open to manipulation (a kind of agency, as will be discussed later) in the postcolonial moment. That said, Florêncio's statement about the confusion of tribal land tenure by colonialism could also be strategic, erasing prior claims to the land and reinforcing his authority as heir to the Portuguese.

Uncertainty about land was further confused by the intervention of the state, and then by war:

After Independence, in about 1977, the government 'obliged' everyone to leave the *mato* and go and live in the *aldeia comunal* [communal village], the better to be governed

[*para melhor controlar*]. The site [now *machambas*] was chosen because it was convenient to bring electricity there from Vila, although this plan was never realised. No-one liked it. People abandoned the communal village in the war, fleeing and living in caves. If you stayed there, they would kill you for sure. [Focus group, December 2016]

For Florêncio and his family, who refused to move to the communal village, the threat of violence and theft during the war took on a more personal dimension, linked to envy of his colonial inheritance:

When the war came, the soldiers always came to Florêncio's house first, using their guns to break the windows. The Renamo troops burned all of Florêncio's stored crops (they produced a lot in those days), and destroyed the veranda roof. Florêncio and his family fled to Nampula. They returned after the war ended, and continued to farm as before, but produced less. There were no more problems with *invejosos*. [Interview with Liliana, April 2016]

Florêncio's account here also makes an interesting comparison with an interview Tifa and I had with another older resident of Bairro, whose family's land was very near the plantation owners' house. She described how Florêncio 'took everything – the plates, even' in critical tones, reflecting a counter-narrative in Bairro gossip that suggested that Florêncio had been greedy with his inheritance. Liliana's mention that after the war they 'produced less' suggests that this might have been an active strategy to prevent *nrima* directed at their family.[56]

There was little left now of the whites' house; it was taken apart and the bricks used to build the school here. Florêncio had heard that the Portuguese couple had died, but at one point since they left, their son had visited and given him money. According to Florêncio's sons, the Portuguese owner's brother gave Florêncio a *credencial* confirming that the land was now Florêncio's. [Interview with Florêncio, April 2016]

These mentions of the Portuguese family are an important reminder that although colonialism ended, its legacies – including relationships and the apparent sense of obligation seen in the Da Silva son giving Florêncio money – still continued. Although I never saw Florêncio's *credencial*, and am not sure what its legal status would be within Mozambique's land laws, it was clear from the focus group that it carried significant weight with the local elders and leaders who had authority to mediate land

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[56] Elsewhere in Mozambique, the postwar period saw a significant number of land disputes, particularly around the land rights of internally displaced people, but this issue was not mentioned by research participants in Bairro. See, for an insight into these dynamics, Gengenbach, H. (1998) 'I'll bury you in the border!': women's land struggles in post-war Facazisse (Magude district), Mozambique. *Journal of Southern African Studies,* 24**,** 7-36.

disputes in Bairro. As we will see in the next section, the same 200ha area also gained a different kind of recognition in 2008, when it was delimited and registered for a DUAT.

The association and the DUAT

The association, as described in Chapter 3, was founded by Florêncio and several other local men of a similar generation. In 2008, the association, which by now had a much greater membership of about forty, was approached by ORAM, a Mozambican NGO with a focus on land rights, with an offer of help to apply for a DUAT.

> In 2008, with ORAM's support, the association applied for a DUAT for the 200ha area of land, formerly the colonial plantation concession, which Florêncio had been left by the plantation owners. According to Cláudio, the DUAT was registered in the name of the association, but on behalf of the community as well as the association, because the area was mostly farmed by people from the community who were not members of the association. Florêncio, as a member of the association, allowed the association to use part of this area of land. [Field notes, June 2016][57]

This immediately raises questions: given the history of the plantation land, who was the DUAT for? Whose rights did it recognise and protect? Who was included in 'the community', and were everyone's rights equal within this? Since Florêncio still apparently had the authority to distribute access rights within the DUAT area, who was this state recognition and registration for? The DUAT delimitation happened at the instigation of an ORAM project, so what we are seeing here may be a compromise between ORAM's aims – community land rights – and the intentions of different actors in the community, notably Florêncio and the leaders of the association. Scale matters too: in Bairro, the state-recognised DUAT registered in the cadastre was 200ha, but most *machambas* in Bairro, both within and outside the DUAT area, were 2ha or less, and so came under the jurisdiction of local leaders and elders.

There were by now several competing sovereignties and their associated practices of inscription at play over this 200ha plot of land: Florêncio's (post)colonial inheritance, enshrined in the credential he received from the Portuguese family; the state's ownership of all land in Mozambique, and the enforcement of this by local administrators; the recognition of 'community' rights to land through the association's DUAT; the everyday patterns of use by the farmers working the hundreds of *machambas*

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[57] These quotes are compiled from fieldnotes recorded during a meeting between ProSAVANA, Pedro, members of the association and members of Florêncio's family, June 2016.

within this area; and, as we now explore, the association's expectation of a right to the land, reinforced by the projects working with the association.

In 2015, the association grew onions on part of the DUAT land as part of the ProSAVANA pilot project. The crop was successful, but controversy arose when the leaders of the association decided to put most of the proceeds towards the repayment of the motorised water pump, fertiliser and tractor hire that ProSAVANA had provided on credit. Other members of the association, including several of Florêncio's, claimed that the association leaders were embezzling the money and insisted that the profits be divided between the members. In late 2015 these members left the association in protest.

In 2016, the association planned to expand its onion cultivation with the support of ProSAVANA, by using a 15ha section of the 200ha DUAT area, which was irrigated by a gravity-fed canal system. However, some farmers, mostly non-members, had already prepared some of this land and planted seedbeds for their own private onion cultivation. Cláudio took the case to the *Chefe de Poste* to try to get these farmers removed, but the *Chefe de Poste* ruled in favour of the individual farmers. He said that because the association had not been paying its dues (9.000Mt per annum) for the maintenance of the DUAT, and because the farmers had already planted their seedlings, they would be allowed to use the land until the end of the onion campaign. After the harvest, the DUAT would be enforced on that land.

In this conflict and its resolution, the *Chefe de Poste,* as agent of the state, enforced the understanding that land in Mozambique is property of the state. In order to maintain its DUAT, the association had to pay the government a form of rent. It is salient that Cláudio took this matter to the relatively senior, government-appointed *Chefe de Poste* rather than to more local (and often community-elected) arbitrators. Also notable is the idea that preparing and planting land gives you a certain claim to an area of land, perhaps reflecting an alternative moral economy of land, linked to the Makhuwa understanding of land tenure in which people have the right to farm land that they clear in the *mato*.

During the 2015-16 rainy season, the association had been using a 3ha plot, located next to the road and the meeting hut, for demonstration plots cultivated with the support of several different projects. This land was Florêncio's, and he had been lending it to the association for several years. However, his sons and sons-in-law, who cultivated adjacent plots, started saying that they wanted to use the land themselves and that it was not for the association to use.

The association leaders, now unable to use the DUAT land they had planned, were hoping to use this 3ha plot for their onions. However, before the association had prepared the land for transplanting,

Florêncio's son-in-law and grandson planted half of this 3ha area with their own onion crop. Cláudio called ProSAVANA and asked them to come and help resolve the situation.

Here, again, the preparation and planting of land again gave people the right to farm it: by cultivating the land, Florêncio's relatives were also staking a claim to it. Again, Cláudio called in external mediators to help resolve the situation. This time he contacted ProSAVANA, who attended a meeting with members of the association and Florêncio's family. The meeting was facilitated by Pedro, the local agricultural extension worker. Tensions were high:

> Florêncio said nothing, but his male relatives spoke. His son Tiago, sitting behind him, became very agitated and started shouting repeatedly, 'They're walking all over my name!' until his brother Fábio took him away. One of the ProSAVANA delegates spoke about Tiago's change of behaviour: last year when she came, he was *gestor* [manager] of the association's onion production, but now she was disappointed that he seemed to be trying to sabotage the project. The ProSAVANA delegates expressed frustration that the association could not resolve this matter with Florêncio's family themselves.
> [Field notes, June 2016]

Tiago's agitated behaviour indicates the interpersonal complexity of this dispute. Although Florêncio's family – mostly his sons and grandsons, suggesting patriliny, and perhaps echoing Portuguese inheritance systems – had an interest in the land as family members and individuals, several of them were also, or had previously been, members of the association. Their conflicting loyalties or identities — simultaneously responsible *gestor* and dissident — seemed to aggravate the tension between the different actors, while also making a straightforward solution harder to achieve. Tiago had previously been in executive positions in the association but left after the profits-distribution dispute the previous year. The ProSAVANA delegate appeared to see Tiago's behaviour as a dramatic change in attitude from the professional, business-like conduct of the ideal modern farmer to that of an irrational, angry peasant. This allowed the delegates to characterise the land dispute as something rooted in personal grudges and potentially solved through a resolution between the individual antagonists, rather than part of a complex and contradictory struggle for power and resources in which ProSAVANA had become entangled.

After several hours of negotiation, Florêncio's family agreed that the association could use the remaining unplanted 1ha of Florêncio's 3ha plot for their onions. The whole plot would be returned to the use of the association from September, but they would have to pay a rent of 500Mt/ha to Florêncio. Pedro drew up a document for all the members of the association to sign. Pedro was also

an agent of the state, but in this case he enacted Florêncio's implicit authority over and right to the land, including the ability to charge rents.

> The 3ha plot was on a steep slope and its soil was sandy and well drained, so for dry season onion cultivation, irrigation was feasible only with a motorised pump. Mário said that Florêncio's family had been illicitly using the association's pump, which he said ProSAVANA had given to the association. Ruane [a female member of the association] said that they should have co-ordinated with Florêncio's family from the start, and could have shared or hired out the motor pump. The other female members of the association met this speech with murmurs of approval. [Field notes, June 2016]

The materiality of the land matters here: it was fairly unsuitable for onion cultivation, but unwilling to abandon their campaign, the association chose to rely on the motorised water pump provided on credit by ProSAVANA, again subject to debates about ownership. If ProSAVANA gave the pump to the association, did that make it the property of the members, including people who were members at the time, or did it belong to the institution of the association only? Ruane's intervention hints at a wider question: why had there *not* been more conversation and co-ordination between the association and Florêncio's family before this point?

Next day the association members started working Florêncio's land. Because of these complications, the onions were transplanted about a month later than intended. Except for Mário, all of the remaining men in the association dropped out of the onion project. By September, when the onions were maturing in the sandy soil, moisture was at a premium. The association's motor pump, run with expensive fuel, and operated by some of the women, malfunctioned. Mário borrowed Florêncio's own motor pump, but it was stolen. The onions withered and the soil compacted around the bulbs. When the women started harvesting in October, the soil was so hard that they had to hack at it with hoes, often damaging the onions in the process. Many of the onions were long and thin, their growth restricted by the dry soil. It was a terrible harvest, yielding only about three commercially marketable sacks from the whole area, compared to the fifteen or more sacks they had hoped for.

The change in land area for the onion project – from the initially proposed 15ha to 1ha – made the proposition of participating in the project less interesting for the men in the association, who all had their own *hortas* [irrigated plots suitable for onion production]. This left the project to the women, many of whom were single and had no *hortas*, giving them an additional burden of labour as they worked double shifts — their own *machambas* and then the association plot. The dispute also had material consequences for the association's harvest, causing a delay in planting which was exacerbated by the materiality of the land which the association ended up using – its topography, soil

characteristics and access to water. The poor harvest in turn affected the food security of the women in the association, who had worked the double shifts for no financial return. However, most of the women did not publicly blame either Florêncio's family or ProSAVANA for this outcome: when Tifa and I interviewed them about the onion harvest, they mostly said it was a shame and attributed the poor harvest to a lack of water.

In November, meetings turned to the question of plans for the next growing season. The association made plans assuming it would be able to use the 3ha area as agreed, but Florêncio's son-in-law had already prepared about 1ha for maize. Pedro explained the land situation to visiting *técnicos*: '*este campo é campo de problemas*' [this field is a field of problems]. As the next agricultural season rolled round, the problems continued: not just disputes over land in the DUAT area, and with Florêncio's family, but the fact that projects (even development projects, rather than agribusinesses!) needed land. In the case of the projects promoting pigeon pea production for seed, this was a particularly fraught issue, since the cultivated area had to be at a specified distance from other legume crops.

In the course of these disputes, different, competing moral economies of land were being enacted in Bairro, including different ideas about sovereignty over and the alienability of land. For some actors in the dispute, the land was the state's, while for others Florêncio had the authority to distribute land and charge rents. These contradictory understandings have emerged from Bairro's history of different modes of land governance – customary, colonial, socialist, neoliberal – and their overlapping and striated legacies. In Bairro's land disputes, the materiality of land mattered, in terms of the value of different areas of land, what it could be used for, and its legal status, since planted land came with *de facto* usufruct rights. People were navigating the conflict in different ways: agents of the state, external projects, and local people with their own understandings of land and dynamic interpersonal politics.

What do these dynamics reveal about the tangled threads of land and power in Bairro, and the ways in which projects interact with them?

'Tangled threads'

Law, governance and mediation

The Bairro land disputes provide an insight into what Mozambique's land law can mean in practice, in a specific setting, and the role of different agrarian moral economies in shaping this. In particular, there was contestation around understandings of who had rights and authority over land, which emerged in part from the uncertainty and contingency of the postcolonial moment and the decades of embattled governance that followed. If Mozambique's land is *do povo*, then who are 'the people'?

Is land the property of the state, the local community, or tribes with historical links to the land? Likewise, the DUAT was in the name of the association, but registered for the local community, contributing to conflict over the use of the land between leaders of the association and members of the local community. While some local people solicited state jurisdiction of land, and the *Chefe de poste*'s enactment of an understanding of land as belonging to the state, other people – including a state agent – deferred to Florêncio's authority over his inherited land, and recognised his rights to charge rent and distribute (or refuse access to) land.

These politics of land claims were enacted through practices of inscription that ranged from DUAT delimitation to arbitrations with elders about 'how that land came about'. Tornimbeni (2007, 497) describes community delimitation in central Mozambique as 'the implementation of colonial-style conceptions of territorial African communities to interact with the administrative divisions of the state', a way (to return to Li's analysis) of rendering technical. This simplification of local population dynamics and people's relationship to land can be seen as strategic, since 'the institutional 'static' cadastre of the government atlas is less flexible, and thus more powerful, than the '*cadastro vivo da memória*' [the living cadastre of memory]' (Tornimbeni 2007, 497). However, these are not mutually exclusive. In fact, these forms of inscription, and the kinds of governance and arbitration they informed, coexisted in complementary and contradictory ways in the dual governance structures of contemporary Mozambique, and people in Bairro engaged them both in resolving land disputes.

Cláudio apparently exercised agency in his choices of mediators, taking the first dispute to the government in the form of the *Chefe de Poste*, and the second dispute to ProSAVANA. He chose not to engage local-level land arbitrators such as the *Cabo da Terra*. Three people offered explanations as to why Cláudio sought the mediations of these external institutions. The first explanation was the risk of witchcraft, in a context in which Florêncio both claimed to be the victim of *nrima* [envy] and was accused of *okwiri* [sorcery]:

> Flávia said that the problems with Florêncio's family hadn't just started now — they'd been going on for 5 or 6 years. It was hard for anyone to do much here with land, because of *okwiri* — this was why Pedro and Mário were reluctant to do something about Florêncio's family encroaching on the association's land . [Field notes from conversation with Flávia, November 2016]

The use of sorcery, as well as accusations about it, might be seen, as discussed in Chapter 4, as a mechanism of moral economy: a form of agency, engaging another mode of power to influence the outcome of the dispute (c.f.West 2003). Another explanation for the use of external mediators, linked

to this threat of *nrima* and *okwiri* between neighbours, was the personal nature of the land disputes, entangled in kinship networks and exacerbated by the ambiguity of ownership and authority:

> Mário told me that he did not have a problem with Florêncio: 'He is our neighbour, our family! It was he who worked with the whites, earned the right to the land. The DUAT is in the name of the association but also the community. That's why we want the government to resolve the problem.' [Fieldnotes from conversation with Mário, October 2016]

In this statement, Mário affirms his respect for Florêncio, also abstracting the dispute so that it is almost not between individuals but a matter of definition (association or community?). This also hints at the elements of an 'economy of affection' (Hyden 2008) at work in Bairro's agrarian moral economy: relationships, as well as resources, were crucial to subsistence.

Tifa, however, had a more cynical explanation for Mário and Cláudio calling in ProSAVANA, rather than the government, to resolve the second dispute, suggesting the reason was the unsatisfactory outcome of the first dispute:

> Tifa thought Mário and Cláudio's reluctance to go to the government now was because last time the *Chefe de Poste* had humiliated them. [Fieldnotes, October 2016]

This last explanation hints at Cláudio's agency in navigating the 'mosaic' of governance institutions in the context of postcolonial, post-socialist, neoliberal Mozambique (Meneses 2009, 10), strategically engaging different actors to protect his interests. One of the most explicit articulations of the striated nature of authority in Bairro, and the navigation of 'tradition', came from Olívia, an older woman who was a Baptist church elder and a former *bairro* secretary of FRELIMO's women's organisation, the OMM, in a conversation about a *mwali* [female initation ceremony] that I had attended.

> 'You always learn more at *mwalis de particulares* [female initiation ceremonies not affiliated to a church] than at the *mwalis* of members of the Baptist church,' Olívia said. '*E serviço de Sátanas, mas é bom*. [It's Satan's work, but it's good.]'

> Olívia explained that the Baptist church prohibits many practices, including drawing the *enyipe*, a cosmological map, in sorghum flour. At her granddaughter's *mwali* they drew the *enyipe* in the dust instead. Olívia said she saw lots of *mwalis* when she was OMM secretary. FRELIMO forbade *mwalis* during the time of Samora Machel, but if people were holding a *mwali* they would give money to her, as the OMM secretary, and there wouldn't be a problem. [Fieldnotes, August 2016]

Olívia here was not just navigating the contradictory authority of state, church and 'tradition', she was also navigating her multiple identities, roles and wishes as a Baptist, a Makhuwa woman, a OMM secretary and hence agent of state and party, and a member of the community in which *mwalis* were happening. Likewise, in the land disputes, the roles and positionalities of the people involved were relevant, especially the fact that the land disputes were happening between neighbours, and in some cases people connected by marriage, friendship, party and church affiliations, community, and membership of the association. As Mário suggests above, his close relationship with Florêncio made it undesirable to settle the dispute without an external mediator, and any mediators from within Bairro would also be entangled in the moral economy of local politics, relationships, reciprocity and obligation.

Cláudio and Florêncio, the main figures in this dispute, both commanded considerable respect (as well as dislike and *nrima*) in the neighbourhood. The importance of retaining the allegiance of both may have contributed to the silence of women members of the association in the meeting, and Ruane's call for co-operation. The women of the association relied on Cláudio and Florêncio for patronage – lending them money, lending the association land, offering them *ganho-ganho* work — so loyalty was important to their subsistence. The men's status related to their public roles (pastor and forum president, and village elder and founder of the association respectively), as well as their age, gender, wealth, their family connections to important matrilineages, and their personalities and ways of engaging with others in the community. In both cases, though, authority was also linked to their connections with outsiders: in Cláudio's case, his contacts with the government (such as the *Chefe de Poste* and Pedro) and with projects (including ProSAVANA); and in Florêncio's, his history working for the Portuguese plantation owner.

Projects interacted with these dynamics both as indirect claimants to the land – it was because of the projects that the association needed land, and land with particular characteristics – and as external mediators in the second dispute. In mediating the conflict, project staff were faced with a dilemma: in this neoliberal, postcolonial context, whose authority should they respect? Additionally, projects carried some authority of their own, demonstrated by Cláudio calling on ProSAVANA to arbitrate the dispute. Tiago's outburst risked jeopardising the association's relationship with ProSAVANA, and the ProSAVANA staff were vocal in their disapproval. Given that he was the only one of Florêncio's sons to have stayed in the association, Fábio's intervention may have been strategic as well as practical.

However, the dispute also demonstrated ProSAVANA's *lack* of authority: for example, its delegates were unable to overrule or challenge the decision made by the *Chefe de Poste*. Ultimately, ProSAVANA staff were not able to resolve the conflict in a manner that was satisfactory for the

outcome of the project. The consternation and confusion expressed by the ProSAVANA delegate suggests a frustration with and lack of patience for local land politics, hinting at their own framing of land as less complex — a productive resource clearly delineated and administered by the state. This was echoed by other visiting projects whose understanding of DUATs did not stretch to intra-DUAT politics. At subsequent meetings, when the issue of the land was raised, visitors asked, surely, if the association had a DUAT, there should not be a problem?

Instead, it was Pedro, the agricultural extension worker, who was able to broker a compromise. This may have been made possible by his own plural, hybrid identities: he understood the different agrarian moral economies at play, and literally spoke the different languages (Portuguese and Makhuwa, DUAT and inheritance) associated with them. As a local to the district, someone of Makhuwa upbringing, and someone who regularly spent time with local farmers, he was aware of the importance of local moral economies of land, from microscale land disputes to the risk of *okwiri*. However, he was also a representative of the state, with a degree of the authority that brought — working at administrative post level, but representing the Department of Agriculture rather than state administration (i.e. the *Chefe de Poste*). He worked with almost all the projects visiting Bairro — as a demonstrator, translator and contact agent, the projects relied on him to carry out their work. Additionally, he was well known to all. These factors allowed him to stitch together a patchwork agreement from conflicting moral economies. That said, there might have been less scope for ambivalence and more assertion on the part of the *Chefe de Poste* and other senior state officials had this dispute been a question around a profitable agribusiness rather than a development project, as evidence from elsewhere in northern Mozambique suggests (Mandamule 2016, Gomes 2017).

Colonial legacies

Florêncio's story is dominated by the legacies of colonialism: not just the act of Da Silva granting him responsibility for land, but also the ways in which land, authority and colonialism were understood and informed contemporary behaviour. However, these legacies had been reworked over time and combined with other moral economies and their systems of land governance. Moore observes that in Zimbabwe, '[the] landscape of rule was not the result of a serial succession of new rationalities and administrative designations *occluding* previous power relations. Rather, previous sedimentations remained consequential even as they became reworked' (Moore 2005, 3). Similarly, in Bairro, colonial legacies continued to hold relevance, but they were reinforced by some newer understandings of land and land governance and subverted by others.

The 'confusion' of land tenure by colonialism was a pervasive idea in Bairro and beyond. Pertinently to the case of Florêncio's land, Tanner notes that the borders of many colonial properties in

Mozambique have been retained on cadastral maps, based on the assumption that they are 'already alienated' from the community (Tanner 2010, 115), and attracting interest from private investors, despite the fact that they have often been settled by local people. Indeed, several of the major land acquisitions by agribusinesses in the Nacala Corridor have been on areas of land which were alienated from local populations first as colonial plantations and then as state farms, before being reoccupied by local people (see, for example, Gomes 2017).

The idea of the land losing its tribal associations through colonial alienation was also invoked by Almira, a *conselheira* [advisor at female initation ceremonies, a role implying spiritual connection and power] whose family were members of Renamo, making them unpopular with many people in Bairro. The colonial alienation of land made it possible for her to find a place to live:

> Almira had lived in several different places. Her son Frederico took her to live with him up near the mountain, but she did not feel well there. Frederico lived on his wife's family's land, and his brother-in-law was the *mwene.* When Frederico arrived with his mother, there was confusion: the *mwene* said, 'I don't like your mum, she annoys me. You're only here thanks to me.' Almira moved to her son Amancio's instead, but still there were problems with the *mwene*, because Amancio's house was near the cemetery where the *mwene*'s ancestors were buried. So Amancio brought her here and since then there hadn't been any problems with the *mwene*, because the land here belonged to a *mkunya* [white person].

Certainly, Florêncio had a great deal of authority over the former plantation land: he distributed land, charged rents, and agents of the state recognised his rights to the land. The way in which local people reified this by submitting to his authority, and through a particular discourse about Florêncio's ownership and right to the land, could be framed as a kind of (post)colonial governmentality, in which local people in Bairro continued to enact their own dispossession. In conversations about the dispute, Florêncio was frequently referred to as *dono da terra* [owner of the land], the same term used to refer to the Portuguese plantation owners. It is notable that in the contingency of the postcolonial moment, and despite the anticolonial rhetoric and sentiment of FRELIMO at the time, the Portuguese landowner's authority, or at least the authority implicit in the narrative of Florêncio's inheritance – 'he earned the right to the land' – was sufficient to establish Florêncio's control over the land. This seems to have been reinforced by documentation – the *credencial* – again, derived from the Portuguese landowners rather than the Mozambican state or from the community. In a sense, despite the supposed inalienability of land in Mozambique from both legal and customary (matrilineal) perspectives, the land and the authority over it were both Florêncio's.

This ongoing authority from the Portuguese landowners is also indicative of Bairro people's ambivalent relationship with colonialism. David Scott uses the idea of tragedy to examine the ambiguity and ambivalence of colonial and postcolonial experiences, a concept which resonates with the ways people in Bairro talked to me about the colonial period:

> 'tragedy sets before us the image of a man or a woman obliged to act in a world in which values are unstable and ambiguous [...] the relations between past, present, and future is never a Romantic one in which history rides a triumphant and seamlessly progressive rhythm, but a broken series of paradoxes and reversals in which human action is ever open to unaccountable contingencies — and luck' (Scott 2004, 13).

The pride with which Florêncio talked about working with the Portuguese plantation owners can suggest a rosy view of the colonial period, but was also juxtaposed in conversation with speeches about the exploitation of Mozambique by 'the colonists'. His pride might, on the other hand, reflect his reclaiming of land *from* the Portuguese, or the status and authority the inheritance gave him among his peers – or a combination of these. Other people in Bairro also reminisced positively about the colonial period: Cláudio praised the mechanised, modern agriculture practised on the plantations, while others, such as a fairly resource-poor elderly widow, Maria, focused on matters of everyday food provisioning.

> We asked Maria about differences between now and the *tempo colonial*, and she said *vale a pena o tempo colonial* [comparatively, the colonial period was worth it], because they would eat fish, they would cut sorghum and take it to the shop to sell, and the shop would offer them soap, sugar, *capulanas*.

This portrait of a booming local economy suggests that, at least for those who benefited from it, the contrast between the colonial period and independence was framed less in terms of power, oppression and autonomy, but rather, reflected their experiences of changes in material circumstances over the subsequent decades. Some older people told stories about the violence and exploitation of local people by the Portuguese, but in their own lived experience, these were overshadowed by their post-independence experiences of violence.[58] For some in Bairro, perhaps, 'the anticolonial utopias have gradually withered into postcolonial nightmares' (Scott 2004, 2). I do not seek to explain these complex perspectives and how such experiences might shape people's 'plural, dynamic and hybrid' postcolonial subjectivities (Manuel 2012, 7), but want to highlight some

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[58] For an example of work on trauma associated with experiences of colonial violence in Mozambique, see West, H. G. (2003) Voices Twice Silenced: Betrayal and Mourning at Colonialism's End in Mozambique. *Anthropological Theory,* 3**,** 343-365.,

of the contradictions in the way people talked about and remembered colonialism, and suggest that this might inform ambivalent responses to colonial legacies in land governance in contemporary Bairro. Moore frames this as a 'contradictory consciousness' that is the outcome of a history of 'processes that fracture identities, interests, and political affinities' (Moore 2005, 11).

The historical distribution and uses of land in Bairro were also materially inscribed in the landscape, from the kapok trees marking the sites of colonial plantations to the long-term effects on soil of mechanised ploughing and fertiliser applications in the plantations. The disputes discussed here were over the temporary, season-long use of a plot of land, but questions of sovereignty were even more acute in discussions about longer-term land uses. The OYE agricultural commercialisation project in Bairro planned to support a group of young farmers in cultivating 'improved' mango varieties. Planting trees meant that the group's rights to access and use land needed to be secure on a scale of decades, and led to tensions around where they would carry out the project, again related to the DUAT. Tiago, a member and *de facto* leader of the group, arranged for them to plant the trees on a plot of his own land, with the permission of his father, Florêncio. However, Mário complained that the group could not use this land for such a long-term project since it was part of the community DUAT. This suggests that using land in this way would amount to a form of alienation. The dispute was resolved by the Bairro FRELIMO secretary, who found a plot of land in a different neighbourhood whose owner said (and note the lack of formal inscription here) that the group could use the land in perpetuity.

Discussion: questions about authority, sovereignty and subjectivity

The story of these two land disputes brings to light the many threads entangled in questions about land sovereignty in Bairro, as well as wider questions about power relations and authority in this context. In the way the disputes played out, we see examples of ambivalent relationships with power, multiple and competing moral economies of land, and the agency of different actors – but especially local people – in navigating these.

If the demand for large plots of land engendered by ProSAVANA's communal farming project pulled on these threads, then which were the knots that tightened? In some ways, unequal power dynamics were reinforced by these interactions. The meetings about and resolution to the dispute served in some ways to reinforce the idea of Florêncio as the rightful *dono da terra*, underlining his authority over the land to allow the association and other members of the community to use it, and to charge rents. Florêncio's inheritance from Mozambican independence – whether thanks to his own agency, skill, or as Scott might suggest, sheer luck – continued to benefit him and his descendants.

Looking at this tangle of threads also highlights where there are fractures and contingencies in land governance in Bairro, and the way people navigate different forms of authority and subvert dominant power relations. The apparently non-aggressive act of planting land was one way in which individual farmers could challenge the association, earning a claim to the land in the eyes of the state. Likewise, people involved called on different adjudicators to mediate land disputes, according to their experiences of particular institutions, the kind of authority they wanted to invoke (tribal associations, a DUAT, or colonial inheritance, for example), the kind of response they wanted, and their positionality and power relative to that of the mediator. This last point is important: those who already had power, authority and resources – like Florêncio and Cláudio – were in a better position to negotiate with different forms of authority. While more influential members of the association, like Cláudio, attempted to subvert Florêncio's control by engaging other forms of authority, it was the women in the association, among them some of the poorest and least influential members of the Bairro community, who lost out disproportionately but continued to support and reify Florêncio's ownership of the land. Ruane's comment about sharing the water pump to hire out perhaps hints at why these marginal women did not engage in Cláudio's subversion: staying neutral left open the possibility of allying themselves with Florêncio and his authority in the future. When I asked Odeta about the encroachment of neighbours onto her personal *horta*, she said that the loss of the land was preferable to confrontation with neighbours; a similar calculus may have been at work here.

In engaging with these shifting and competing forms of authority, and as we also saw in Chapter 3, people showed considerable skill and awareness of these politics. In an ethnography of local politics in Mueda, northern Mozambique, West (2005) frames this skill in navigating competing sovereignties in terms of people being 'conversant in multiple languages of power […] including the language of the slave trade, the language of Portuguese colonialism, the language of revolutionary nationalism, the language of scientific socialism, and, finally, the language of neoliberal democracy' (West 2005, 3). West interprets local discourses of sorcery as representing a local language of power, showing how these different languages co-exist, are spoken together and against each other, reflecting the idea suggested by Moore, that in postcolonial contexts, meanings and sovereignties are striated rather than sedimented. In contemporary Mozambique, as we have seen in these disputes, moral economies of land informed by colonial, socialist, and 'traditional' ideologies are both subconsciously and strategically deployed by different actors alongside the language of neoliberal democracy.

What does this complexity and ambiguity mean in the context of large-scale land acquisitions in the Nacala Corridor? The example of Bairro shows that the politics of land are complex and often ambiguous: it is not as simple as land being occupied or unoccupied, or as being under the

sovereignty of a community or not. Land 'grabbing' can take place at many scales, can be done by outsiders but also local people, the state as well as agribusinesses, and it can reinforce or subvert colonial legacies. Projects are entangled in these politics, since agricultural commercialisation is always implicated, in material terms at least, in land, and by entering into and intervening in the arena of local land politics, external projects reinforce or subvert certain moral economies of land. Although Mozambique's land law is progressive for its recognition of *de facto* community rights to land, in implementation its ambiguity is problematic, as we see in Bairro with different enactments of meanings of 'community'. The coexistence of competing moral economies of land also raises the question of what land justice should look like in the Nacala Corridor. While this ambiguity creates scope for agency, which was demonstrated by several people involved in the dispute, it can also reinforce the potential for the marginalisation and dispossession of the most vulnerable. People's ambivalent relationship with colonialism and colonial governmentality continued to shape inequalities in Bairro – and, as we will see in the next chapter – their relationships with outsiders.

Chapter 6
'When you leave, they will kill me'

Nrima, interactions with interventions, and the ethics of postcolonial research

Ultimately, to decolonise is to ask difficult questions of ourselves. The Antiguan author Jamaica Kincaid puts it thus: "And might not knowing why they are the way they are, why they do the things they do, why they live the way they live, why the things that happened to them happened, lead [...] people to a different relationship with the world, a more demanding relationship?"

Priyamvada Gopal[59]

Introduction

We have seen how moral and political economies interact in Bairro, and the role that money, *nrima* [envy] and *okwiri* [witchcraft] play in these interactions. We have also seen how these are informed by histories of colonialism, conflict, and ambivalent experiences of development. What happens when an outsider – in particular, an affluent, white researcher – enters this complex arena of entangled moral and political economies?

In this chapter, I bring some of the themes of the previous three chapters into conversation with auto-ethnographic reflections on my experience of living in Bairro[60]. I look in detail at my interactions with Bairro's moral and political economies, and the significant outcomes of these interactions for people and institutions in Bairro, including the moment described in Chapter 2 when Odeta told me her life was in danger. Considering my presence and actions in Bairro through the framings with which I have analysed other interventions in Bairro in this thesis, I explore how personal interactions and monetary exchange in the research were shaped by the landscape of power hierarchies and complex positionalities and subjectivities in which it was conducted.

Next, I depart from this (auto-)ethnographic analysis, engaging powerful concepts from decolonial theory to consider these dynamics, and particularly my role in them, from an ethical perspective. I use the lens of whiteness (Frankenberg 1993, Faria and Mollett 2016, Kobayashi and Peake 2000) to 'ask difficult questions' of myself, my institution and my discipline, exploring how the combination of

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[59] Gopal, P. 2017. Yes, we must decolonise: our teaching has to go beyond elite white men. In *The Guardian*.
[60] The process of writing auto-ethnographically is more personal and emotionally charged than writing ethnography, and although I have tried to be reflexive about my biases and assumptions, the text is still imbued with them, along with my affective responses to the material, particularly a sense of guilt, shame, and anger.

inequality and ignorance that enabled and exacerbated ethical problems in my research are structurally produced and maintained within and beyond the neoliberal academy. I also draw on the idea of refusal (Tuck and Yang 2014, Coddington 2017) to explore what 'a more demanding relationship with the world' might look like in the context of geographical research.

Nrima [envy] and Research

This section sets out auto-ethnographic data exploring the social and political impacts of my protracted research encounter with Bairro, and begins to draw out what this can tell us about external interventions in Bairro and their impacts on its moral and political economies, as well as the ethics of cross-cultural research. I look at nine moments, in chronological order, from my arrival in Bairro to my departure, which tell part of this story, and draw out from each the key insights they illustrate about my interactions with people in Bairro and its moral and political economies. In analysing these moments, I draw on the idea of positionality, which I understand as one's location (and hence the situatedness of knowledge) within intersectional axes of power and identity (Rose 1997). As such, positionality shaped how my interlocuters and I approached situations and how we perceived and received each other. I understand positionality as dynamic, subject to change and, to some extent, to our own agency in mediating how we perform identities and power relationships.

Running through these auto-ethnographic moments are key questions about how Bairro's entangled moral and political economies respond to external interventions and how interventions approach this context. My first question is about moral frameworks: how do different actors judge the distribution of money as just or unjust, and determine what it means to be trustworthy with money? This is closely linked to a second set of questions about power dynamics and the enactment of these moral frameworks, particularly the role of subjectivities in shaping the contested issue of who represents, speaks for, and receives money on behalf of the association. To whom did the money, which I agreed to give to 'the association', belong? [61] Did it belong to the association as an abstract entity governed by the president, or to the association's individual members? What scope was there for agency in negotiating and responding to the direction and impacts of interventions?

My third set of questions is about what we can learn from examining these dynamics. What do these experiences tell us about interventions and projects, like ProSAVANA, entering the same complex arena of politics and expectation as my research project? What do they tell us about the ethics of research?

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[61] This brings to mind some of the important critique of 'community' and 'participation', pointing out the pitfalls of treating a 'community' as an homogenous black box. See for example Cooke, B. & U. Kothari. 2001. Participation: the new tyranny? London: Zed Books.

Arriving in Bairro and initial decision-making

My first day in Bairro. Somehow, I had never really talked to anyone about money, about what would be an acceptable amount to pay as rent. As it was, I had worked out an amount that seemed reasonable based on the price of food and what I could afford, and taken out as much as I could from the one cash point in the district town to see me through the next seven weeks.

But I felt that money was important, so as soon as I had been welcomed by the President, Mário, and the members, and Mário had introduced me to Odeta, who would be my host, I asked:

'How much should I pay as rent, for food?'

'Later,' Mário said, 'we'll discuss it later.'

When we got to her house, I asked Odeta about rent, and again she told me, 'later'. In the afternoon, Mário showed me the path to his house, introduced me to his wife Hélia, and we sat on his veranda.

'How much were you thinking of paying?' he asked me.

'2000Mt a week,' I replied. 'Is that OK? Not too little?'

'Oh, no, it's good.'

'Not too much?'

'No, no, it's good – so you will pay 1000Mt to me and 1000Mt to Odeta.'

I was a bit confused, wondering why Odeta would not get all the money if she was hosting me, but I was also aware that Mário, as President of the association, was my main gatekeeper and I felt an obligation towards him – was that not worth what amounted to not much more than £10 a week? My concerns were alleviated as it became apparent that Mário and Hélia were providing one of my daily meals.

A key feature of these first interactions is my lack of awareness about the etiquette of conversations and behaviours – particularly privacy and secrecy – around money. We see Mário asserting control over the situation, with Odeta deferring to him. This is thrown into sharper relief by my ignorance and naivety, mentally converting amounts of money into GBP and lacking understanding of their contextual value.

A request for money

One evening, Paulo, Odeta's brother-in-law, came to visit me. He explained that his niece, who he had cared for since her parents died, and her daughter, were very ill – could I help at all?

Mário had told me not to give money to anyone who asked, so I said no, I'm sorry, I'm just a student.

A few days later Paulo's great-niece died on the way to hospital and the family went into mourning. I asked Mário if I could offer some money to help with the funeral, and he said yes; we agreed on 200Mt as an appropriate amount.

Although I learned that Paulo's great-niece's illness was probably AIDS, I couldn't help but wonder, as the children wailed at the loss of their playmate, if my money could have helped save a life. My contribution to funeral costs felt like too little, too late.

In this moment, my confused intentions around money are apparent: What is my money for? Is it about a just exchange for labour, food and houseroom? Is it supposed to 'do good' in this community? Why do I see it as my responsibility to save lives, and my fault if they cannot be saved? These questions reflect my sense of a need to 'do good' in my research which is in turn informed by an awareness of my economic privilege as well as a 'white saviour' mentality: that it is my responsibility to save lives, and that I have the capacity to solve people's problems with money. These dilemmas resonate with accounts of development professionals' mixed motivations and feelings about their roles and responsibilities within the skewed power relationships of international development (Warah 2008, Mosse 2005, Baaz 2005).

Again, Mário's role as gatekeeper of my money is evident, and he continues to encourage secrecy about my wealth. In this case, interpersonal politics were also at play: Mário and Paulo were cousins and did not get on. Paulo was Odeta's brother-in-law and her main protector in the community, so refusing his request could be seen as a snub to her.

Parting gifts

Once a week, Mário came to the house very early, and I gave him and Odeta their money in the storage room of the house. As the end of my seven-week stay approached, Mário came round and told Odeta and me that we needed to come up with a plan for paying them, since people would be watching the house as my departure neared, to see if I was giving Odeta and Mário money.

Another day, while I was eating lunch at his house, Mário asked me how I was going to 'thank' [*agradecer*] the people who had 'helped' me during my stay here: himself, Hélia, Odeta, Cláudio, and Roberto, who had frequently been checking on me to make sure that I was safe, well and happy. I suggested that I could give them each 500Mt, and give an additional 2000Mt to the association and 2000Mt to the church. Mário agreed enthusiastically.

One morning, Mário came and asked Odeta to give 1000Mt of what I had given her to Hélia, to thank her for cooking my food. I was confused: what was the money I had been paying Mário for, if not this? I increasingly perceived Mário as greedy and grasping, out for what he could get from me, and Odeta as unassuming and grateful. I gave Odeta another 1000Mt so that she could give this to Hélia without being out of pocket.

People seemed happy with their gifts, and supportive about the idea of me returning in a few months' time to stay for longer. Mário asked me to bring a solar panel back from the UK. I left just as the lean season began, and returned just after the secret national debt revelations that send the metical into freefall.

Again, the secrecy around money is paramount, and becomes acutely so at the time of my departure, apparently in response to people's expectations. This extends to the euphemistic language ('*agradecimento'*) around money.

Ironically, given my research focus, I made assumptions about the division of money in Hélia and Mário's household, and – although of course Mário's request may not reflect this – about what and whom the money was for. Because of these assumptions, and my bias towards Odeta, I assumed that Hélia and Mário were treating Odeta unfairly. As time went on, the politics between Hélia and Mário's household, and Odeta's, became more acute: neighbours said that Hélia and Mário were always gossiping about Odeta and saying that she got more from me than they did, because she was always asking me for money.

The wider economic changes are important too: during the time I was in Bairro, the value of the metical (including its value relative to GBP) dropped considerably. I found it hard to ignore the fact that people were struggling with higher market prices while my own purchasing power increased.

The return

I stayed in phone contact with Mário and Cláudio as I made my way back to Nampula, lugging a large solar panel for Mário. They were evasive about whether or not I could return to live with Odeta. This upset me: battling homesickness and anxiety about the approaching ten months in Mozambique, I would prefer to live with Odeta than Mário,

178

and I still saw my financial contributions to her household as 'better' than giving the money to Mário. I wrote a letter, ostensibly from my supervisors, explaining that it would be more useful for my research to live in a female-headed household, and hence that I should stay with Odeta.

When I arrived in Bairro again, I went straight to Odeta's house. Putting my things in the house, I was surprised to see that many things – the door, chair and mattress, for example – were no longer there. I later learned that Florêncio, Mário and Cláudio had lent Odeta these things for the duration of my first stay, and reclaimed them immediately after I left.

Fábio called me to a meeting with Mário, and the two of them proceeded to warn me about the dangers of living at Odeta's, referring to a recent incident in which Cláudio's house was robbed at night and the thieves cut him with a machete. Odeta and her relatives told me there was no risk, no great danger. Eventually, I went to Cláudio himself and asked what I should do, and he told me that I would be safe at Odeta's.

These interactions represent the point in my fieldwork at which I started to realise that things were going to be much more complicated than I had imagined. In navigating them, I was also entangled in the shifting interpersonal politics between Mário, Odeta, Cláudio, and others.

Later, Mário approached me with a new programme for dividing my money: I would pay Mário and Odeta 2000Mt each per month, and pay the additional 4000Mt per month to the association. Although Mário still encouraged me to pay the money in secret, he now insisted on keeping records of the money, signing for each month's instalment in my notebook. Cláudio accepted the money on behalf of the association, and after two months showed me a receipt from the association's bank, proving that he had deposited the 8000Mt there.

I paid for a lunch, which Mário organised, to thank the association for hosting me. I had brought various gifts for people in Bairro from the UK, and at the feast, I distributed jewellery to the women present. Some of the men complained vocally about being missed out, so I distributed what was left over between them.

These politics, as they related to me, were mediated by narratives of danger and trustworthiness. Mário and Fábio used the incident of Cláudio's robbery, together with the fact that Odeta's household had no man to defend it, to try to persuade me to move house. Meanwhile Odeta and her friends and relatives tried to convince me that this was without foundation, cultivating a discourse about Mário that positioned him as greedy and untrustworthy. This was also important in Mário's role as president

of the association, and he managed this to some extent with his balance of secrecy and transparency: money must be kept secret from members of the association and gossiping neighbours, for example, while amounts must be recorded in his and my notebooks.

Who was the notebook for? At the time, I assumed that the records were to prove his transparency, perhaps to me or to local government – but perhaps it also reflected the complexity of our power dynamic, and Mário's doubts about my trustworthiness – perhaps the notebook record was to make sure that *I* paid. This relates back to the concept, explored in Chapter 3, of multiple, competing and overlapping moral economies, and patterns in Bairro of people strategically engaging different languages and practices associated with these moral economies in interactions with outsiders.

As a gender scholar studying livelihoods, and after my experience with Mário 'not' sharing money with Hélia, I felt that I should have known better than to make the assumptions I did about the distribution of gifts. I soon learned that intrahousehold decision-making and sovereignty over money varied considerably between different households and over time. However, I continually struggled against an ingrained sense that the women were somehow more deserving of my gifts than the men, which was quickly exposed in the meeting with the association.

Doubts over the association money

A few months passed with the new payment system, and I was happy with the way things were, until one evening when Odeta asked me,

'That money you're paying Cláudio – is it for the association, or for him?'

It emerged that none of the other members of the association – not even Flávia, the vice-president – knew about the money I was paying. The other members started to complain about Cláudio and Mário's underhandedness – how did I know that the money in the bank was for the association, and not just for them to use themselves?

I became worried about paying large amounts of money into this ambiguous system – and I was struggling to withdraw and carry around the kinds of amounts of cash needed. To buy time, I told Cláudio and Mário that my supervisors were worried about my safety, having all this money with me, and they would be happier if I paid the association its dues at the end of my stay.

These questions about trust and transparency continued: what did the performance of transparency via the notebooks and receipts mean, and who was it for? It was clearly not for the members of the association. As we will see more clearly later, there was an implication in this behaviour that Mário and Cláudio did not trust the members to use the money responsibly, or in their (the leaders', the

association's, or the members'?) best interests. This raises further questions about who had the power to speak and make decisions for the association, and with whom exactly I was engaging (versus who I was trying to engage) in my research, payments and politics. I tried to manage my own biases in this situation by speaking to Flávia, who as vice-president was loyal to Mário.

Gifts and loans

On my return to Bairro, I asked Odeta and Tifa for advice about making gifts of money or loans, and they suggested that I did not need to follow Mário's no-giving policy to the letter – it was probably acceptable to give small amounts. From then on, if I had roughly the right denominations of cash, I gave small amounts of money – often as little as 30Mt – to anyone who asked, and loaned big and small amounts to people who approached me[62]. Usually these people were those who knew me well, such as Mário, Florêncio, Paulo, and Odeta's sons-in-law. Odeta often borrowed small amounts to tide us over in food until the next monthly payment, and was firm about repaying these loans. Local women, especially members of the association, took out small loans, often to travel to funerals and initiation ceremonies. If I refused to lend money – for example if I did not have enough money with me – the other main port of call was Cláudio.

I was myself the recipient of countless gifts. Tifa and I visited very few households for interviews or casual chats without leaving bearing generous gifts of farm produce, cooked food or *cabanca.*

This money lending played an important role in informing people's perceptions of my wealth. Despite Mário's advice – not to mention the methodological and ethical advice that encourages researchers to keep money out of research and to minimise the sense of inequality between researcher and researched – I was uncomfortable about pretending not to be wealthy and refusing requests for money[63]. I vacillated between the need to appreciate purchasing power parity, the contextual meanings of amounts of money, the major reverberations that might result, and the knowledge that the amounts requested – even the big requests – were so small and affordable to me.[64]

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[62] Interest free – it never occurred to me to charge interest, and this was not something any borrowers raised.
[63] Many times in Bairro, I was asked – usually by a man – how much my plane ticket from the UK to Mozambique cost. I did not know whether this question was a way of gauging how far away the UK is, how wealthy (or not) I was, how feasible the journey would be for the questioner, or something else, but the answer (and I could not lie about it) was always shocking.
[64] When the loan that someone considered for days, made a lengthy, evasive case for, and worked hard to repay – maybe it makes me a bad anthropologist, but when that amount equated to a cup of coffee at home,

These interactions raise questions about what it meant to lend, borrow, or gift money, and ways in which the boundaries between these could be blurred. They reflect the shortage of credit and borrowing sources in Bairro – hence the importance of the women's *poupança* – and the way in which gift-giving was not simply about reciprocity but also norms of hospitality and generosity. Power hierarchies and networks of obligation are evident here. Those who asked me for the largest loans were those to whom I had a strong social connection and obligation, and they were all men: Mário (my gatekeeper, my 'father' figure); Florêncio (village elder, closely related to the association); Paulo (my 'uncle', key to Odeta's social security in Bairro), and Tiago and Almiro (my 'brothers-in-law').

Effects on Odeta

The impacts of my money on Odeta's household were mostly, in the context of such a poor household, very noticeable – small but incremental. One of the first changes, in October 2015, was that she bought black plastic and her neighbours helped her to put it on her roof as waterproofing. In March, Odeta and her children had new clothes, mostly second-hand items I brought back from the UK as a gift. In June, when my partner visited and gave Odeta a gift of 2000Mt, she spent some of it on bedlinen, plastic cups and a jug. Odeta also bought a new bed and straw mats. By August 2016, the changes were more dramatic: Odeta had a new house built.[65]

These changes did not go unnoticed, and they were not all welcomed. One neighbour and fellow member of the association, Filipa, gossiped openly about Odeta (sometimes in front of Odeta's children), and picked a fight with Adriana for eating and being friendly with Odeta. Why? I asked.

> 'Filipa is angry because I'm not suffering any more,' Odeta said, 'she says when I was poor I would always be at the association, but now I'm always eating *carapau* [imported frozen fish].'

Sometimes Odeta was in tears as she recounted the things people had said about her. Her health deteriorated: she often had pain – a headache, a sore leg – which prevented her from going to the association, and in turn, 'not showing her face' meant that people at the association would gossip about her all the more. However, she would not go to a *curandeiro*, and it was with great reluctance that she was eventually persuaded (by Tifa and me) to go to the health centre.

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how could I refuse? Haunted by the deaths during my first stay, but also desperate to be liked, I wanted to be as generous as I could, and so I gave to anyone who asked. Not everyone asked, though, which was a problem.

[65] A house, in particular, signified wealth and status, as well as a permanence in the neighbourhood, which would be controversial in the case of someone like Odeta, with no (matrilineal) family connections in Bairro.

Odeta sometimes made concerted efforts to manage these responses, hiding some gifts and sharing out others, like bags of bread and boxes of juice sachets, among her neighbours and important women in the association and church. At the same time, she seemed to enjoy publicly wearing her new jewellery and headscarf, whatever the risk this behaviour might run. Almost every month, despite trying to plan, Odeta ran short of money by the end, and came to me for a loan to buy *caril*. Much of her expenditure involved gifts for her daughters, and investments she would otherwise not have made, like growing onions and building the new house. To begin with, we talked about these amounts in the language of lending – 'I know I have borrowed 100Mt already,' – but as time went on, I tended to present the money as gifts. After all, I reasoned to myself (again making assumptions about Bairro's past, present and future political and moral economies), it seemed unfair that Odeta should be receiving the same amount as Mário when she and her children contributed so much more labour in caring for me.

In October 2016, Odeta and I were sitting on the veranda of her new house, and she told me she had heard people saying they were waiting for me to leave so they could try to kill her. I said, maybe you should leave for a bit. Odeta said:

> 'No, I'll stay right here, I'll leave it with God. People here think that I don't have anyone, but I have family in Malema, and if they kill me or hurt me, my family will come and help me and hold people to account. You think they will manage to kill all these children? At least one child will remain to testify to my family what happened.'

Horrified, and taking Odeta's statements at face value, I offered to leave, to stay with Tifa or the nuns, to stop my fieldwork, but Odeta said there was no need.

As I prepared to leave Bairro, Odeta explored her options, eventually moving into her sister-in-law's house in Vila, but keeping her *machambas* in Bairro and her place in the association. This move brought advantages and disadvantages: a 5km walk each way to her *machambas* along the steep mountain road, but greater proximity to schools and the health centre – and, for better and worse, a new set of neighbours.

Not everything revolved solely around my effect on the household, of course, but my actions were constantly implicated and entangled in these politics. Filipa's gossip was mostly to do with the recent divorce between Marlene, Odeta's eldest daughter, and Tiago, Filipa's maternal uncle, but my money had facilitated even this. Marlene borrowed money from me to travel to see relatives in Malema, canvassing support for the divorce; she also told Tiago that money and gifts from her boyfriend were

from me. Filipa's main accusation was that Odeta had been boasting that her daughter was now married to a 'boss', a fish merchant rather than a poor peasant like Tiago.

Around the time that Odeta started telling me about the threat *nrima* posed to her wellbeing, her sister-in-law Aurélia came to visit and they had a long chat. Aurélia told me that the reason that Mário and the other members of the association chose Odeta to host me in the first place was because they did not know whether I was here *por bem ou por mal* [for good or ill]. As an outsider in Bairro, and a poor widow, hence without matriclan or husband, Odeta did not have anyone to protect her, and was not in a position to refuse. Aurélia said that it was only when Mário and the others realised that I was here *por bem* that they all wanted to host me.

For me, it was the moments where these ethical dilemmas appeared to affect Odeta that were the hardest to reconcile ethically. The person, and her family, for whom I felt the most affection, and whom I most wanted to help, were those to whom I potentially did the most damage.[66] These politics were not all of my own making: as Aurélia suggested, it may actually have been because of Odeta's existing social precarity and local hostility towards her that I was placed in her household. Certainly, her poverty at the outset meant that my contributions to her household were more visible than they might have been elsewhere, and probably influenced her decisions about spending and investment. This poverty also seems to have inspired a particular kind of *nrima* and associated *okwiri* at work, centred around unhappiness at Odeta doing well – as much in comparison with her previous condition as in relation to others' wealth. This was tied up with ideas about fairness – the (in)justice of my distribution of money – but also to allegiances of kinship and marriage, the perception of personal slights, perhaps support that people had provided to Odeta prior to my arrival, and a sense of knowing one's place in the community hierarchy. Odeta, for her part, had to weigh up the material benefits of my continued financial contributions to the household income against the risk of witchcraft to which this exposed her (or perhaps it was too late by the time these conversations took place). For her and the children, the outcomes were mixed and ambivalent.

Night-time meeting

> After dark on Sunday evening, Odeta called me to the veranda, to speak to Cláudio and Mário.

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[66] Odeta herself may have been exercising agency in the way she represented the problem. However, I continue to consider the threats at face value because I do not wish to downplay the potential harm caused.

I asked them, 'Do you want to talk about the money?' and Cláudio said,

'Yes, that, but also the problem of *desconhecidos* [strangers]. Is there somewhere more private we could talk?'

We took the bench into the part-built new house and sat there in the dark: Cláudio, Mário and me on the bench, Odeta perched on a brick. The conversation was all in Portuguese, with a few translated summaries in Makhuwa for Odeta. Cláudio spoke first, about the danger of *desconhecidos*. He said that since I had been here a while, people were starting to notice me, and to think that I had money. I said, 'If it's dangerous here, then I'll leave.'

'Oh no,' he and Mário said, 'you don't need to leave, it's just advice.' They suggested that if Paulo's house, currently empty, was habitable, Odeta and I could secretly sleep there. Cláudio and Mário also talked about all the *marginales* who apparently spent time near Tifa's house, saying that I shouldn't spend too much time there or *tocar dinheiro* [handle money] there.

Cláudio said that the bank account was there so that the Association could plan with its money, rather than members receiving money individually and wasting it. I said that I didn't yet know what I would do with the money at the end – I was thinking of splitting it between the bank account and members – but I said that I felt it was important that all the members knew what was happening.

Then Mário started speaking. 'Tifa spends a lot of time with Fábio,' he said, 'and she tells him things, he uses her for information, and then he drinks and tells everyone, the *marginales* exploit him for information. So it's better not to tell Tifa things. She cannot be your friend, she is just your employee. You've finished the contract, visited 40 people, it's better to leave her now.'

I said that I wanted to continue working with Tifa. Mário said that Tifa's father had been talking about him and Cláudio and how they wanted to control me, but Mário said that since I was here *em nome da associação* [in the name of the association], they were responsible for me. Cláudio said repeatedly that they did not want 'to end up in prison'. The SDAE and local government were always asking after me; Cláudio and Mário were responsible for me.

They took their leave and we ate supper and went to bed. When we got inside, Odeta poured scorn on what Mário said, particularly the idea of my work being finished and

leaving off working with Tifa. 'It's your professor who says when you're finished, not him,' she said. 'But Cláudio spoke well.'

Reflecting on this excerpt, it becomes obvious that I was behaving as if the money was still my own, although owed to the association, to divide as I (or my 'professors') saw fit, while for Cláudio and Mário the money was already the association's, its payment overdue according to the original agreement. Likewise, in struggling against what I felt was their oppressive assertion of authority over me – in one case forbidding me from going on a weekend visit to another town – I failed to recognise the position of risk, particularly vis-à-vis the government, which they had accepted by taking responsibility for my safety.

Mário and Cláudio's invocation of a discourse of danger and robbery is also interesting, playing as it did on racialized, gendered narratives about the safety of bodies and money in this space, but also relating to the concrete evidence of the previous attack on Cláudio and recent rumours about a threat to Fábio. Whatever their intention here – whether genuinely to warn me, or as a strategy to limit my interactions with Tifa – they chose to evoke my fear of *marginales* rather than directly advise me about how to behave. [67] Again, I think this reflects the complex power dynamic between us: they were responsible for me, had some authority over me, but were also dependent on me for money and the official approval for my research. Their status relative to mine that would normally accompany our respective age, gender and position in the community was complicated by race and nationality. As was typical in these interactions, Odeta did not play an active role in the discussion, and her commentary afterwards reflects her antagonistic relationship with Mário and the awe and respect in which she appeared to hold Cláudio.

Mário's comments about Tifa were symptomatic of ongoing animosity and manifestations of *nrima* towards Tifa from members of the community throughout the course of our research together, especially in response to her increasingly fashionable hairstyles and clothing, bought with her wages.[68] Many people told her gleefully towards the end of my stay, 'look at you showing off now,

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[67] I would also like to point out that throughout my fieldwork, I never felt in any personal danger, physically or through witchcraft, and neither was anything of mine damaged or stolen at any point. I am forever indebted to many people, but Odeta, Mário, Tifa, Cláudio and Victor in particular, for the care, consideration, protection and respect they gave me, throughout and despite these tensions. I also recognise the role of white, wealthy, Western privilege and government protection.

[68] I discussed Tifa's salary with Mário beforehand and Tifa agreed to it: 500Mt a week (100Mt a day). Later, as we started working longer days, she negotiated a pay rise, to 700Mt a week. This was well below minimum wage, and struck a difficult balance between paying an amount that was locally acceptable, not too extravagant, but was also just. I paid Tifa for her four weeks' holiday, and ensured that my visitors give her money gifts commensurate with the time she spent and the extra work she put in during their visits.

walking around with the *mkhunya*, but when she's gone you'll cry!'[69] Several members of the association questioned why their daughters, not living in Bairro but with similar levels of education, could not have worked with me instead. There was further gossip when Tifa ended her engagement in August, when it became clear that her fiancé, tired of waiting while she worked for me, had begun a relationship with someone else.[70] Like Odeta, Tifa had to gauge a balance between a desire for conspicuous consumption (both consumption of things that were inherently visible, and active showing off) and hiding her growing wealth to protect herself from *nrima* and *okwiri*.[71] This is also gendered: working and earning provided Tifa with a degree of independence from her family and her fiancé which the latter found unacceptable. Many interviewees asked Tifa why she was not yet married with children, attracting criticism in a way that a young man in a similar position of having a 'job' might not.

Despedidas

The pressures around the distribution of money intensified as my final departure loomed in December 2016. Mário arrived drunk one night at Tifa's house, and told her the following, as my interpreter, to write down and pass on to me.

'I spoke to the leaders of the association and the district and local agricultural extension workers and they told me to tell you [Tifa] first, since you are Katharine's interpreter and can better tell her how to proceed with the leaders, the association, the leaders who received her, cooks, and all who made the agreement with her coming to work with the association. First she stopped paying the association monthly because she wants to take the 40.000Mt which was for the association funds and give it to the members. But after all who is a member in relation to the association? Tell her that those who will pay the members are the leaders: we are the ones who should decide whether to pay the members.'

Mário asked Tifa, 'Have you seen that these days Cláudio doesn't really speak to Katharine? It's because of the money she stopped handing over to him, knowing all the while that it was he who gave permission for her to come here. [...] Tell her that she must know how it will be at the end with people here. At the very least, she has to pay 10.000Mt to Mário, 10.000 to

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[69] This hints at the long-term impacts of their interactions with me, which Tifa, Odeta, Mário and others were also likely considering and navigating.

[70] When I left Mozambique, Tifa moved to the northern coastal city of Pemba and enrolled on a degree in Hospitality and Tourism at the Universidade Cathólica de Moçambique, of which she is now in her second year. I pay her tuition fees and provide a stipend to cover living expenses for Tifa, one of her younger sisters, and her infant niece, who moved to Pemba with her. I see this as representing reparations for the disparity between Tifa's wages and a UK research assistant's salary. This remains secret from people in Bairro, at Tifa's request.

[71] My attempt to find an acceptable amount to pay Tifa likewise raises questions about this kind of balance: can there ever be an appropriate amount, or will it always be simultaneously too much and too little?

Cláudio, 10.000 to Odeta, 10.000 to Hélia, so it will total 40.000Mt, and another 40.000 for the association fund, and then we will be satisfied. If she gives the money to the members, the leaders will not like this, there will be problems and it will prejudice her departure and she will never be able to return to Mozambique because of this problem.'

Tifa and I discussed what to do and agreed that I should accede to Mário's demands. I went to the district town and stayed for several days so that I could withdraw 140.000Mt [about £1500] to take back to Bairro. When I got back to Bairro with my huge wad of metical notes, it quickly became clear that my obligations, and people's expectations, were even greater than I had accounted for. For example, although I had lent a significant sum to Paulo to help transport his onion harvest, and subsequently cancelled the debt, he complained to Odeta that I had not given him anything. The cancelled debt was a debt, not a gift – and if he asked directly for a gift, it would not be a gift.

When I made my final gift of 28.000Mt to the association, I did so at a public meeting at which most of the 'important' members [the senior men like Florêncio whom Odeta considered *grandes pessoas*] were present. I announced that it was for the members to decide between them what to do with the money, whether to divide it or use it for the next *campanha* [growing season]. Next day, Mário came to me with the growing plan they had all allegedly decided upon, allocating the money on fertiliser, seed and fuel for a motorised water pump. Shortly afterwards, I heard that some of the members were demanding that at least some of the money should be divided between the members, and threatening to leave the association over the issue. Mário talked about leaving the association too.

The day before I left, I threw a party for everyone in the neighbourhood and local leaders, including the Chefe de Poste. I bought a big goat, and large quantities of fish and beans, but there was not enough *caril* for everyone to eat their fill.

After the party, I went around to *agradecer* the people who helped with the cooking and killing the goat, and distributed small money gifts to people I passed on the way. Several young men asked me for money for *matrícula*, to go back to school. On my final morning, another young man came and asked me for *matrícula* but I only had my bus fare to Nampula left, and had to refuse him. As I left Bairro on the back of Victor's motorbike, it was with mixed feelings of regret, sadness at leaving people I loved, and relief not to carry this burden of need any longer.

The situation had now become aggravated to the extent that Mário was suggesting that I might not be able to return to Mozambique, which might be interpreted as threats or as his perception of the

probable outcome of continued miscommunication and misunderstanding about adequate *agradecimento*. Either interpretation illustrates the uneven power dynamic between us, as well as communication problems. Although Mário had been hinting indirectly at the need to *agradecer* the people mentioned here for several weeks, he communicated his specific requests to me through Tifa, while inebriated, suggesting a lack of confidence on his part about negotiating directly with me, as well as an awareness of the ongoing problem of language between us.

Although I conceded to these requests, the payment to the association exacerbated divisions within the association around the use of money. The amounts of money under discussion here were substantial, especially compared to the small quantities that had previously been the subject of animosity and gossip. The stakes were also high: several key members, mostly from Florêncio's family (Chapter 5) left the association the previous year after a dispute over the use of money raised from selling the onion harvest. There were different priorities and loyalties at work within the association, centring on debates over whom the money was for: for the association, or for the association's members? Impoverished single older women like Ruane may have had greater immediate economic pressures than more secure households like Mário's, meaning that investing in the next year's *campanha* was a lower priority for her than securing money to invest in her own seed and food for the lean season.

In this episode, I still evidently considered the complex situation of inequality and reciprocity a personal ('white man's'?) burden. To me, my attempts to 'do good' in Bairro seemed aptly summed up by a mental image from my farewell party of people handing round plates of rice with tiny helpings of *caril* on top, while the *grandes pessoas* feasted on meat at the high table. There was never enough to go round, those with power and money got the most, and between everyone else there was a bitter struggle for an equal share.

I draw out from these auto-ethnographic moments the key themes that emerge from both sides of this story, exploring how 'the everyday lives of the researched are doubly mediated by our [the researcher's] presence and their response to our presence' (England 1994, 85). I consider my own assumptions, biases and intentions, and the agency of local people in mediating these assumptions and my actions.

My assumptions

A key feature running through my initial interactions in Bairro is ignorance around the meanings and contextual value of money. This is especially problematic because I retained my own sense of value, performing mental currency conversions, and my own meanings, which were tied up with my intentions. I was motivated by a need to 'do good' (whose elements of white saviourism I discuss

later), as well as a sense of guilt about the material inequality of the situation (why should I have so much when these people did not have enough?) and hence a (half-formed) notion that there was distributive justice in responding to requests for money. I also wanted to be liked, both as a person who was living among other people, and for the sake of my research, for which I needed to gain the trust and friendship of local people in order to gain insights into their lives (something I consider in the context of consent below).

These motivations and assumptions were linked to my biases about particular people, behaviour, and uses for money, in turn informed by gendered, racist and colonial ideologies about poverty and who does and does not deserve money – my own moral economy. I had a soft spot for people who were unassuming, undemanding, seeming to like me not just for my purse, and those who were grateful or sought to repay their loans. I reacted badly to people – like Mário – who were upfront and persistent in their requests for money and resources, and who I deemed to be less deserving because they were better off than many. In my tendency to trust the women members of the association rather than Mário and Cláudio, I was subconsciously buying into racist, gendered narratives that positioned Odeta and the other women as victims, and Mário and Cláudio as grasping and corrupt. These biases also informed my collection and analysis of ethnographic data. As we have seen in previous chapters, staff working with development projects in Bairro likewise arrived with their own assumptions and biases, which are likely to have been informed, like mine, by racist and gendered narratives (Kothari 2006). However, they were also tasked with delivering an intervention imbued with the funding organisation's own assumptions, creating some scope for slippage or reinforcement in the process (Mosse 2005).

In enacting my own notions of distributive justice, deservingness and trustworthiness, I made problematic assumptions about the gendered division and control of money within households, and failed to understand the expectations and perceptions that different local people might have had of a fair distribution of my money. For me, the most 'deserving' tended to be people who had given me something – from interviewees receiving a photo, to people who spent a lot of time with me and cooked for me receiving bigger gifts – and people whom I liked. When I sought to behave ethically, I was thinking in terms of reciprocity, but usually at an individual scale. I did not think about wider politics, for example the way my behaviour reflected on Odeta, Mário and Hélia.[72]

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[72] If I neglected to properly thank someone, accidentally missed them out of a distribution of gifts, refused to eat *xima* in their house, or forgot to print their photo – it might be interpreted as a deliberate act, because (for example) Odeta did not like them and had been telling me not to give them anything.

Local dynamics and agency

We have already seen many aspects of the local context into which I came with my assumptions and biases in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, such as particular ways of talking about and behaving with money, negotiating the tension between a need for secrecy and a desire for conspicuous consumption. As we have already seen, dynamics around money and perceptions and expectations about what a just distribution of money looks like are as much about the moral economy and networks of obligation, reciprocity and generosity as about political economy. In particular, *nrima* can be partly understood as a response to perceived injustice, whether this means the uneven distribution of resources, someone doing better than others, or a previously poor person receiving a windfall. *Okwiri* – as threat, as practice seen as morally deviant, and as embodied outcome – was associated with *nrima* and the distribution of money in the community, but also worked to reinforce and guard particular social networks (such as those along party political lines) and to condone and condemn particular behaviours (such as gender norms). The threat of *okwiri* meant that for Odeta, these politics potentially represented a life or death situation enacted upon her body, while *nrima* eroded her fragile social networks, with subtler, longer-term material impacts on her food security and wellbeing.

All these interactions happened between certain key people, each with their own agency, experiences, motivations and characteristics. They were shaped by power hierarchies within the association and the wider community. Straightforward examples of this were Mário's authority as president of the association and Cláudio's as pastor and president of the forum. However, there were also more nuanced and less visible networks of allegiance, support and exclusion: those of kinship, family histories, political affiliation, wealth, personal grudges and gender dynamics, which left people like Odeta in a marginal position. The conflicts introduced by my distribution of money played into existing tensions, such as those about the division of money in the association, and the distrust felt towards community leaders, but also within households such as Hélia's and Mário's.

Ultimately, these issues were all about the interactions that occur between local dynamics and interventions from outside, whether a well-funded development project or an independent researcher. Interventions enter these dynamics in specific ways: they are shaped by them, respond to them, fail or succeed because of them, but also play a role in shaping and mediating these dynamics. Central to these interactions are the relationships between different actors. In my case, my relationships with key gatekeepers like Mário and Cláudio were characterised by uneven but also uncertain power dynamics. The privilege and position of relative power they experienced from their gender, age, and their skill and authority in local politics were troubled by my race and class privilege. Our relationship of mutual dependence was therefore ambivalent: they were responsible for my

safety, and as such manifested authority over me, and I was dependent on them as gatekeepers, but I also had some authority and they some dependence because of the exchange of money, and their responsibilities to the community. Similarly, my relationship with Odeta was ambiguous, transgressing Bairro's social norms: although I called her my mother, Odeta and I had a running joke that I was her husband, because I brought her money and material goods. It is telling that many people – especially women and young people – struggled to ask me for money, in some cases waiting until my moment of departure before making requests. There were also dynamics that had less to do with the actual amounts of money that I distributed, expectations that were more to do with the baggage that being a *mkhunya* entering this space carries, which I will discuss in relation to positionality below.

Postionality, power and failure

The impacts of my involvement with economic life in Bairro went far beyond the 'do no harm' principle. At the time, I saw the problems over money as primarily an issue of personalities: Mário as greedy, Hélia as judgemental and gossiping, Odeta as passive victim. In analysis, it became clear that their behaviour reflected not only the context of how people engaged with money in Bairro's moral and political economies, but also their positionality and subjectivity relative to outsiders. In this section, I explore the underlying power dynamics – these questions of agency, subjectivity and positionality – that shaped my interactions with Bairro politics and people, and their specific ethical articulations and implications. I attempt to unpack dichotomies of race, global North/South, self/Other and researcher/researched, but I recognise that in the process I might also reify these framings.

(Post)colonial meanings of race and outsiderness in Bairro

Although 'the conduct of fieldwork is always contextual, relational, embodied, and politicized' (Sultana 2007, 374), in the context of conducting fieldwork in Bairro, the power differentials were particularly significant, embodied and politicized. Factors like my role as a researcher and student, my gender, nationality, literacy and wealth intersected to influence how people related to me. My identity, background and character certainly shaped my own ethical framework, and hence how I related to others[73]. However, most visible and significant in this context are my race and my status as outsider – to Bairro, Nampula, Mozambique, Africa.

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[73]My own ethical framework is undoubtedly influenced by my upbringing in the traditions of the Anglican Church of England and the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, both of which have a tendency to locate moral responsibility with the individual, and in terms of personal remorse and improvement. My background also shapes my relationship with overseas fieldwork and coloniality: I come from a privileged white British family whose heritage and stories are implicated in Empire and Commonwealth and **invested in 'doing good'**

My appearance, as well as my behaviour and role as research student, interacted with past experience and cultural associations to inform how people saw and related to me, including in emotive ways (Faria and Mollett 2016). People often thought I was a Catholic nun, a Jehovah's Witness, or a US Peace Corps Volunteer. Although local people would certainly have come across nuns, missionaries, and maybe even PCVs, of colour, my presence as a white person in that space could only be explained in a limited number of ways, and certain associations and expectations accompanied my whiteness. My Britishness also had specific historico-geographical significance in Bairro. The UK was near Maputo in some local imaginaries, and Britain connoted the Spinning Jenny and the colonisation of Malawi. It also signified the English nun who helped local families during the civil war, and the English Baptist missionaries who taught local children Wesleyan hymns.

In everyday Makhuwa discourse, people articulated race in terms of power, positionality and being an outsider as well as skin colour. Outsiders were *akhunya* (singular *mkhunya*), which was often translated into Portuguese as *brancos* [whites] but carried different connotations. I was *mkhunya*, but so were the black Mozambican NGO workers who visited from Maputo, so was the Bangladeshi shopkeeper in town, and so was Jesus in *The Watchtower*. This understanding of race as outsiderness was also central to perspectives on colonialism. As briefly explored in Chapter 3, in everyday discourses in Bairro, whiteness was constructed against a concept of blackness that includes colonial dichotomies of racial identity: whiteness as productive, modern, literate and virtuous, as distinct from the uneducated, physically strong but envious and morally deviant black subject.

The term 'postcolonialism' has been critiqued, not least for its implicit suggestion of a rupture between colonialism and what follows (Loomba 1998). One of my Eurocentric assumptions arriving in Bairro was that participants' most pertinent experience of oppression and colonisation would be Portuguese rule. Portuguese colonialism was indeed significant in the memories of elderly members of the community. However, the subsequent 40 years of independence have also brought oppression. The defining moment of disempowerment, for many of the people I interviewed, seemed to have come at the height of the 1977-94 war, when almost everyone in the neighbourhood fled their homes to escape the violence. In contrast to this period, many memories of colonialism were rosy: a time of predictability and security, with good (if paternalistic) relationships between the Portuguese plantation owners and local people working on the plantations.

Experiences of development in Bairro were also mixed. The 1970s post-Independence period was characterised by technical assistance from Cuba, the USSR and the GDR. As a young man, Mário went

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overseas: my near ancestors include 'colonials' (in Canada) and missionaries (in India and Malawi), and my parents met volunteering for international development projects in Nepal.

to the USSR for military training, while Calisto studied a course in tobacco production and agricultural extension run by Cuban educators. People in Bairro had also interacted with a range of nationalities through Christian organisations. In the 1940s there were English missionaries and Portuguese nuns, but in 2016 there were now many Nigerian and Brazilian missionaries, and the Catholic mission was staffed by an Indian nun, several Mozambican nuns, and a Mexican priest. Individuals' subjectivities and positionalities were informed by these different experiences: Mário had a very different perception of and relationship to *brancos* from, for example, that of his mother.

In the postwar neoliberal era, development co-operation has increasingly been delivered by non-governmental organisations, sometimes in partnership with government departments, and often represented by Mozambican nationals. Bairro people's framing of Maputo-based Mozambicans as *akhunya* related to a wider narrative about southern Mozambique and central government, and their distance from and otherness to Makhuwa peasants (Hanlon 1991). Local responses to *akhunya* interventions, from Portuguese colonialism to neoliberal development projects, were overwhelmingly characterised by ambivalence.[74] As already noted in Chapter 2, Bairro people's experiences of violence and trauma also informed these dynamics.

This history of interactions and power relations meant that when I arrived to do research in Bairro, bearing official letters of permission, speaking Portuguese, taking notes, and especially when I started giving out money, I was entering an arena of meaning and expectation. As the most recent actor in a long history of ambivalent interactions and experiences, I was playing into and reinforcing dominant ideas about the relationship between *akhunya* and Makhuwa people. Whatever I might attempt to subvert – by building friendships with local people, for example – was secondary to this fundamental dynamic (c.f.Bleek 1979). My race undoubtedly gave me power and privilege in seeking the consent of gatekeepers and recruiting research participants.[75]

Agency

While the scope for agency around consent was limited, in my account of tensions around my money and presence in Bairro, there is evidence that everyone involved was in some way trying to exercise agency within a strange and unequal situation. All the people involved – Odeta, Mário, Hélia, Cláudio – were experienced in negotiating the interventions of outsiders, in which they had little say, in ways

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[74] The behaviours and positionalities of individual development workers and other *akhunya* – for example generosity or lack thereof, the English nun who brought people blankets and medicines during the war – will also have greatly informed the arena of expectation in which I was operating.

[75] This was thrown into stark relief in September and October 2016 when Ramiro, a student on placement from a local agricultural college, arrived to do research and outreach work and consistently struggled to get Mário's attention and support for his projects or association members' attendance at the meetings he organised.

that provided the greatest benefit or the least disadvantage to themselves. Mário and Cláudio in particular, with their experience as gatekeepers for projects and key contacts for government, were experts in this field, for example telling project staff how they sent ProSAVANA back to the drawing board. In my case they leveraged narratives about danger and transparency to play on my fears and sympathies, and elicit certain responses (but perhaps also to protect me). This is far less about greed or manipulation than it is about the intelligent deployment of agency in a very constrained context. The ways in which people demonstrated agency made sense in the context of Bairro's marginal political economies and its moral economies, but may not always be predictable or seem kind to an outsider with a different frame of reference.

These power dynamics, positionalities, subjectivities and articulations of agency meant that the context for fieldwork – in Bairro, but also elsewhere – was complex, dynamic, unpredictable, fragmented and above all unequal. They created a situation in which, with hindsight, I do not think there was a way for me to conduct my research ethically: it would have been unethical not to remunerate Odeta and Hélia, but doing so was also ethically challenging.[76] The deeply problematic ethical outcomes of my fieldwork would have been difficult to predict, but they were facilitated and enabled by the inequality of the context and of the research encounter, and by my own and institutional ignorance, to which I turn in the next section. Without avoiding my personal responsibility, I want to interrogate what the conditions were for a situation in which I could not behave ethically.

Reflexivity, Coloniality and Refusal: Trying to make sense of geography's systemic cognitive dissonance

Ahmed (2007, 165) suggests that to address problems of injustice in the academy and in research, rather than inventing 'new tricks', we need to show 'how we are stuck'. In this section, I attempt to identify some of the sticking places – in the research process and the academy more broadly – which enabled and exacerbated my unethical research practice. I focus on fieldwork, but recognise that the ethics of post-fieldwork research work, especially analysis, writing, theorization and dissemination raise crucial questions about power and coloniality (Raghuram and Madge 2006) which also relate to the underlying issues I discuss here.

Responses and questions

Much of my work in the eighteen months since returning to the UK has been to try to make sense of the effects my presence, actions and choices had on individual people and relationships in Bairro. I

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[76] Of course, ethical/unethical is not a dichotomy, and according to my situational understanding of ethics, no research encounter can be ethically 'pure' or free of dilemmas, but this situation was particularly difficult.

have attempted to locate personal thoughts and feelings – my guilt, my sympathetic bias towards Odeta, my mistrust of Mário and Cláudio – within the wider landscape of structural power and economic inequality. This process has been a steep learning curve. I started in a place of great discomfort with my individual mistakes and culpability in distributing money in problematic and insensitive ways. Although some scholars have published writing about ethical failures in geographical and anthropological fieldwork (e.g. Robson 2001, Pollard 2009, Vanderstaay 2005, the latter being the most extreme case I have encountered, Madge 1997), they seem to be an exception. It was only through talking with colleagues and at conferences, engaging more fully with decolonial literature, and writing about what had happened, that I began to appreciate how some of these problems had been exacerbated by structural pressures and inequalities.

Throughout this time of speaking, talking and writing about my experiences, I have been struck by how many people have admitted to experiencing the same kinds of difficulties – rarely to such an extreme extent – but also how many people work in contexts with extremely charged power dynamics and do *not* seem to face these kinds of challenges. I am also struck how, talking about my experiences, so many people are willing to share their experiences, explanations, and advice – yet how absent this conversation was when I was preparing for fieldwork.

In these discussions, I have repeatedly encountered two main ways in which people minimise or justify the harm to which I contributed.[77] The first is to suggest that my account, at best, magnifies my own agency at the expense of those with whom I interacted. At worst, my reflections are self-indulgent: 'you are taking too much guilt on your shoulders, ignoring the agency of local people – they manipulated you, too!' These comments have encouraged me to look more critically at my experiences, and I have attempted to address them in the first two sections of this chapter.

The second line of response is that any harm caused by my presence in the community is inherently justified by the research project: 'you collected all this great material'; 'your research is important, it will have helped as well as caused problems'; 'that's just what sometimes happens with this kind of research'. What intrigues me here is the way in which the research project is positioned, as both inevitable, and intrinsically justified. This is the essence of a cognitive dissonance at the ethical centre of disciplines like political ecology: studying anti-colonial struggles, revealing colonial power structures, or using decolonial theory, whilst perpetuating colonial power dynamics in the very act of researching and writing about these things (Brown and Rodriguez 2018, Esson et al. 2017).

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[77] Of course, not all reactions have been like this. Others, often younger or less senior academics, have expressed appreciation for my honesty, some have pointed me towards decolonial theory, and others started conversations about the need to talk about mistakes more generally in 'field' research.

In this section, I bring the experiences and questions of this chapter back into conversation with the issues raised in Chapter 2, to trace how the conditions for such problematic ethical outcomes were practically, institutionally and systemically produced. I relate this to the ongoing whiteness and coloniality of mainstream overseas research models, the cognitive dissonance of human geography, and the co-optation of the concepts of reflexivity and consent by the neoliberal university. I consider some of the ways, both practical and structural, in which researchers can move forward and prevent the re-occurrence of unethical research projects like mine.

Locating responsibility: who does research?

As explored in Chapter 2, on a practical level, I really struggled to carry out a sensitive ethnographic research project, and particularly to navigate questions around money in the field. Much of this was due to my lack of fluency in Portuguese, and complete absence of Makhuwa language skills; a lack of experience, confidence and skills in negotiation, facilitation, or navigating complex social settings; and a lack of understanding and awareness about moral and political economy in rural Mozambique. These issues were compounded by having few contacts, and lacking an academic support network, in northern Mozambique, and my language and confidence problems – as well as the time constraints of a 4-year UK PhD model – limited my ability to develop such a support network myself.

Some of these problems were caused, or at least enabled, by funding and hiring practices at UK universities: the PhD project was advertised to UK and EEA students only, and the admissions panel weighted my straight-A academic record above my youth, inexperience and lack of connection with Mozambique. These limitations were compounded by the UK 4-year PhD model, which for a project like this where fieldwork takes up a large part of the time available, provides very little scope for training and preparation.

Given all these limitations, I might have been better advised to pursue a different kind of fieldwork: one less time-intensive, and in a less sensitive context, with data collection focusing on 'elites' rather than vulnerable people. However, I was convinced that my research should focus on the 'voices' of smallholder farmers, and that in order to do this I needed to conduct a long-term ethnography incorporating participatory methods.[78] The combination of dismissing the importance of ethical procedural review and the limitations of the review meant that neither the review committee nor I

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[78] Using different methods, such as shorter-term ethnography, might have minimised if not completely precluded the ethical consequences of my research.

raised any potential problems with my approach.[79] Neither my supervisory team nor my departmental review panel discouraged me from this methodology, and I received limited training and guidance from the university, aimed more at natural science or humanities students than would-be anthropologists. My supervisors adopted a hands-off approach that enabled me to follow my own interests and make my own mistakes. This is characteristic of the well-established model of anthropological and geographical research in which a young, inexperienced student 'becomes' an ethnographer through and in the field, by trial and error: mistakes are expected.[80]

These combined factors encouraged a sense that I should just get on with my fieldwork and be able to deal with any problems myself, even though I was ill-equipped to conduct this kind of fieldwork, particularly in as sensitive a context as Bairro proved to be.[81] I also behaved foolishly and unkindly at times: I did not ask for advice or support where it was needed, I acted in prejudiced and racist ways, and I made many errors of judgement. Anyone can make mistakes, especially if they are young and inexperienced, and a PhD is widely considered to be a training for research, a setting in which students learn from their mistakes and thereby become better researchers. However, if PhD students are expected to make mistakes, where do they make them and who bears the consequences? What are the structural and institutional conditions that inform these dynamics?

Licence to do research

The idea that geographers and anthropologists can conduct research anywhere is rooted in the histories and dominant ideologies of these disciplines. Historically, researchers were also explorers, setting out for the far corners of the globe to know and describe the world (Driver 1992), producing and reproducing the idea that geographical knowledge is created and located by and in the metropole about the 'outside' world (Smith 1999). Katz (1994, 70) describes this entitlement to do fieldwork anywhere as the 'arrogance of research', which privileges the researcher's right to know over the potential impacts on the researched. 'I speak of choosing, deciding, wanting, traveling, reasoning, finding compelling, and being intrigued. My career in the balance, the object of my study was people's

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[79] The review panel did raise the question of my personal safety during fieldwork, which with the exception of a cursory risk assessment otherwise went unaddressed.

[80] 'Field work is a trial through battle in a war for which the novice has very little preparation […] Much like the rites of passage of many primitive societies, success in fieldwork is more a function of personal ability than of previous training […] Success in fieldwork proclaims manhood' Freilich 1970, cited in Robben, A. C. G. M. & J. A. Sluka. 2012. Ethnographic Fieldwork: An Anthropological Reader. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

[81] Or even for everyday life in Mozambique, where my poor Portuguese and serious lack of self-confidence meant that I struggled to leave my hostel or access sufficient food for my first few weeks in Nampula.

lives, lived in real time and space. But these lives, like "our" own, were not lived in circumstances of their subjects' choosing'. Information is extracted from research subjects and has the potential to become part of a body of authorised, socially validated knowledge about them through a process of writing, analysis and peer review in which they have little or no agency. This ideology enables and encourages the colonial geographies of research to persist in the 'post'colonial academy, where it is still the norm for white Western researchers and students to travel for fieldwork to former colonies in the global South (Sidaway 1992, Raghuram and Madge 2006). This is facilitated in practical terms by the linguistic legacies of colonialism, the colonial geographies of institutional and academic networks, and ongoing power and material inequalities (Madge 1993).

There is more than a little orientalism in this relationship, with the desire to know and experience the Other embedded in the 'institutional fantasy of the joys and benefits of setting off to study abroad' (Gardner and Krakill 2017). There are also elements of toxic masculinity (not to mention class privilege and ableism) in the implication that 'real' fieldwork is done in remote, even dangerous, places (McDowell 1992a, Hall, Healey and Harrison 2002, Staeheli and Lawson 1994, Abbott 2006).

There is a distinct and troubling overlap between this sense of entitlement to travel anywhere for fieldwork, and the use of doctoral fieldwork as training. On a practical level, poor and formerly colonised countries can offer attractive fieldwork sites to doctoral students in particular because of low living costs and cheap research assistance labour, and the lack of regulation around accessing vulnerable communities (Cronin-Furman and Lake 2018).[82] More broadly, tropical areas are seen by Western institutions as 'potential laboratories in the field where students can learn how to do research, not always taking into account the complex social, political and cultural dynamics happening within them' (Toomey et al. 2018, 11). [83]

Many researchers, especially those in my fields of development geography and (feminist) political ecology, seem to be drawn towards sensitive research topics (Madge 1997). This partly reflects disciplinary political leanings which encourage students to embrace 'politically partisan research' by focusing on the 'victims' of inequality and oppression (Robinson 1994, 198), in order to uncover or 'represent' the 'voices' of the most marginalised (McWilliam et al. 2009). This may come from an intention of social justice, but also reflects the potential which oppression and conflict offer for 'novel', publishable research (Sidaway 1992). It can also be seen as a fetishisation of the pain of the oppressed (Tuck and Yang 2014), particularly given the ways in which such studies are theorized

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[82] A privilege which is not always experienced by non-Western students doing fieldwork in the global North.
[83] For a commentary on colonialism and race in undergraduate fieldwork, see Abbott, D. (2006) Disrupting the 'whiteness' of fieldwork in geography. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography,* 27, 326-341.

according to northern academic trends and priorities (Raghuram and Madge 2006). This can lead to a tension between the moral imperative to study 'the marginalised' and bring attention to their voices and the ways in which structures of power work to oppress them, and the moral imperative to resist and avoid reinforcing such power structures in the process of conducting research. White western researchers feel 'simultaneously called to witness and report, yet forbidden on the basis of race and colonial legacy' (Rocheleau 2015). In other cases, the fact that the object of study is anticolonial struggle is used to justify the potential colonial dynamics of research practice (Robbins 2015). How do geographers move beyond this apparent impasse?

Whiteness, ignorance and inequality

Turning our critical gaze back on the coloniality of Western institutions and disciplines through the lens of whiteness offers a way of moving beyond this focus on the 'other' (Dyer 1997). I take Frankenberg's (1993) understanding of whiteness as a form of structural privilege, standpoint, and set of normalised cultural and social practices, which 'varies spatially and temporally [and] is also a relational category' (p. 236). In this perspective, both these mainstream approaches to fieldwork can be seen to reflect the whiteness of the discipline. On the one hand, white privilege grants the researcher the *right* to do fieldwork wherever they choose. On the other, the standpoint of white saviourism frames fieldwork with marginalised peoples as a *duty.*

In my research, my own whiteness, and that of my institution and discipline, have intersected with class privilege (Griffiths 2017) to inform the conceptualisation and development of the research project; recruiting, funding and hiring practices; my experiences of and attitudes towards bureaucratic procedures; and my relationships in Mozambique and Bairro. My youth and gender have also allowed me to deploy (both consciously and unconsciously) narratives of white innocence (Wekker 2016) and ignorance (Mills 2007) to deflect responsibility for unethical research practice.[84] Whiteness means something different in the context of Bairro from that of Lancaster, but both are problematic, and in both cases, whiteness is normalised and depoliticised (Kobayashi and Peake 2000). This is mutually reinforced by the academy and the kinds of knowledge it produces: '[t]he recursivity between the whiteness of the social world, as our object of study, and the whiteness of the discipline, as our medium of study, operates to make opaque the whitening process' (Kobayashi and Peake 2000, 393). These processes are particularly pertinent at a time where colonialism is being rehabilitated in academic spaces (Sultana 2018).

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[84] I think this is evident in my descriptions of my 'naivety', and heavily implied in responses to my conversations about ethics: 'they manipulated you, too!' reinforces notions of the vulnerability and innocence of white femininity.

Given this whiteness, is it therefore impossible to conduct research that is not implicated in racist power structures? Critiques of whiteness in geography have raised critical conservations which white and otherwise privileged researchers in particular need to engage with, if we are to resist these structures while still conducting research with subaltern groups. Kobayashi (1994: 76) points out that, since '[w]e cannot escape the unfortunate irony that political action meant to shift the social balance of power *begins* from a position of differential power', we should instead 'ask not whether our position of power and authority denies us the right to conduct research but, rather, how we use our privilege to social ends'. She argues that '[t]o analyse racism and sexism is not, in my opinion, sufficient justification for my salary or my right to participate in a plural society. I do not use other people's struggles as the basis for my research; I use my research as a basis for struggles of which I am a part.' (Kobayashi, 1994:78). This raises fundamental questions about who does research and who the research is for: who speaks, who speaks *with* whom, and *how* (Kobayashi 1994)? Critics such as Milagros Lopez (1992, cited in Katz 1994) and George (1974) point out how studying subaltern groups can at best simply describe what those people already know and at worst make their practices of resistance legible to oppressors. Instead, they encourage researchers 'to make the operations of capitalism and patriarchy more transparent to the oppressed groups' (Katz 1994, 70). Feminist and postcolonial geographers have long advocated for greater and deeper use of reflexivity, as a tool for researchers to analyse the ways in which their research is complicit in oppression and the role of structural privilege in data collection.

Individualisation and co-optation of critique/reflexivity/participation

However, despite decades of critique from feminist, anti-racist, anti-colonial and participatory scholarship, and excellent examples of research which takes these critiques into account, the mainstream research model remains dominant and persistent (Raghuram and Madge 2006). One way in which is this has been made possible, and which is reflected in my research experience, is through the co-optation and depoliticisation of the concepts of 'reflexivity' and 'participation'.

Human geographers are expected to research, think, and write 'reflexively', essentially reflecting on how their positionality influences and informs knowledge production (England 1994, Sidaway 2002). As a concept developed by feminist geographers, reflexivity is a means of thinking through the politics of research in order to address problems of inequality in the research process. However, in practice, reflexivity can be co-opted to focus disproportionately on the identities of researchers: 'the customary laying out of the "me" in the usual "race class and gender" mantra' (Puwar 2003: 27 in Raghuram and Madge 2006). This both locates the ethical responsibility for research with the individual, and draws attention away from power structures towards the micropolitics of research

encounters (Raghuram and Madge 2006). This is facilitated by ethical procedural review that also focuses on the individuals involved in discrete research encounters, and bureaucratises moral agency (Van den Hoonaard and Hamilton 2016), rather than considering the context for such encounters (Katz 1994). It also reflects the context for ethical accountability, where 'under the individualism of the neoliberal university, failure (as well as success) has become uniquely personalized' (Harrowell et al. 2018, 232). This narrow understanding of reflexivity enables the kind of cognitive dissonance discussed above. According to my interpretation of the training I received and the examples I saw enacted by other students and researchers, my research would be 'ethical' if I acted sensitively towards research participants, addressing them respectfully and sitting on the floor with them. Any qualms I had about the power and material disparities between us would be addressed by writing about positionality in my methods chapter.

Likewise, despite considerable critique, participatory research methods appeared to offer a fix for the whiteness of geographical research. Despite the very top-down way in which my research project was conceived, developed and carried out, it seemed plausible to me that I could retrofit participation into it by incorporating particular data collection methods. This exposes the way in which the original radical agenda of participatory research is ignored, and instead 'participation' is ironically introduced in ways which do not reflect the interests of so-called 'participants' at all. Vanner (2015, 9) asks: 'What if the participants do not want to be researchers? Just as a non-participatory process can be imposed on participants who desire to be involved, so too a participatory process can be imposed on participants who do not want to be'. A question I have frequently considered is whether, given the choice, anyone in Bairro would have wanted to participate more fully in my research. Indeed, if they had had more autonomy about the research projects happening in Bairro, would an ethnography have been their first choice, or would they have preferred a specialist from a different field, or a different kind of research interaction altogether?

The cognitive dissonance of geography means that many doctoral students and researchers are simultaneously under pressure to 'do good', whilst reinforcing and operating within power structures which undermine that possibility. Harrowell (Harrowell et al. 2018, 235) relates how 'Social change is a powerful imperative for us as geographers, but in my field it became an emotional burden, and my inability to achieve it felt like a serious failure'. 'Doing good' implies a confidence about what is possible in field sites and with participants which proscribes their potential for agency and unpredictability. Katz describes this as 'the suspect stance that my work has direct benefits for the participants', suggesting that 'such a posture would elide their subjectivity' (1994, 70). How can one

4-year PhD project across deep intersectional inequalities be both a training ground for a novice *and* do good – or at least do no harm?

Ways forward: refusal

When discussing these questions at conferences and with colleagues, I have often been asked, 'What would you do differently?' I find this question unhelpful, because it is impossible to say what would have happened had I conducted my research in different ways, and because so many different factors – many of them outside my personal control – contributed to the outcomes. Instead, I ask: what could *we* do differently?

In this section, I set out some ways forward – both pragmatic and more radical – for decolonising research. If we recognise that 'we are always already in the field – multiply positioned actors, aware of the partiality of all our stories and the artifice of the boundaries drawn in order to tell them' (Katz 1994, 67), the kind of cognitive dissonance described above becomes untenable. Taking this idea seriously means that we must engage ethics in every part of the research process, not just in the moment of interviewing Others in the global South.

At a practical level, if white Western doctoral students continue to conduct ethnographic fieldwork in the global South, experiences like mine could be prevented with the implementation of more robust ethical procedures in universities and research institutions. Ethics guidelines should extend beyond the individual researcher to the ethics around employing research assistants, including appropriate conduct, recruitment, contracts, fair pay, sexual relationships, and worker's rights. There should also be consideration of reciprocity and appropriate remuneration of gatekeepers, research subjects, and hosts – particularly in contexts of extreme poverty. The home university also has a responsibility to ensure that permissions have been given by relevant host country institutions, and where these are less comprehensive or stringent than the university's own standards, it should be the university ethics board's responsibility to ensure that the project meets these requirements too (Cronin-Furman and Lake 2018). All researchers working with 'vulnerable' participants, in whatever geographical context, should explain how they will navigate unequal power relations, and undergo a Criminal Records Bureau check. Ethics guidelines and review should be broadened to accommodate moments and spaces beyond those of formal data collection.[85] Ethics training should extend beyond how to complete the review, to what it might mean to be an ethical researcher. Introducing post-fieldwork

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[85] In the context of my academic department, this is especially salient for natural scientists who research non-human subjects, and so are not required to undergo EPR, but may be working in extremely sensitive social contexts and collaborating with local researchers or research assistants across significant power differentials.

ethical review could help researchers and ethics committees develop more meaningful processes for mutual learning, accountability, and honest engagement with failure (Vermeylen and Clark 2016).

Changes to hiring and funding practices – improving access for students from more diverse and experienced backgrounds – would also increase the possibility for genuinely participatory research and reduce the chances of students making mistakes that impact on vulnerable communities. Avoiding 'out of the blue' research like this project, and instead developing projects in collaboration with local partners, would provide a stronger basis for participatory research, as would hiring students with experience and networks in the region of study, and ensuring that students have at least one local supervisor. Given the current time constraints in the UK PhD model, either students should have appropriate levels of experience and skills for the project, or universities and supervisors should provide them with adequate levels of training, preparation and guidance. Moving beyond the Malinowskian 'lone anthropologist' model towards more collaborative fieldwork, such as pairing fieldworkers or setting up partnerships with local students, could help protect both students and their host communities. If the PhD is a training, it should not be enacted, potentially violently, on the bodies and societies of the marginalised.

However, and although I think that these pragmatic changes can help prevent some kinds of ethically problematic research, if we are serious about the politics of justice then ethical conversations have to be at the centre of the whole research process. This includes opening conversations about *whose* ethics count (Vermeylen and Clark 2016), and recognising that exercising a lack of reflexivity can be deliberate and political (Mills 2007). Tuck and Yang (2014) encourage us to think about the possibility of refusal – of *not* pursuing research where it might be complicit in colonialism – and so to confront the idea that we continue to justify unethical research because we do not want to relinquish the privilege of conducting research. My experience is further evidence that 'recognizing or even being sensitive to […] power relations does not remove them' (England 1994, 85). In some cases, a researcher's presence alone is problematic, or they may have biases and prejudices that attempts at reflexivity do not expose until it is too late. Two of Tuck and Yang (2014: 813)'s key axioms demonstrate what is meant by refusal. One is that 'there are some forms of knowledge that the academy doesn't deserve'. The other is that 'research may not be the intervention that is needed'. In other words: is the research important enough (and to whom?) to justify the possible negative consequences?

Often in conversations about these questions, a defence is: 'if you don't go, someone less sensitive will'. Not only does this not address the issues that 'sensitivity' may not be enough in the face of significant structural inequality, but again it individualises (un)ethical behaviour. Instead, I argue that

we need to reclaim and repoliticise reflexivity by extending it beyond individuals in practice and in scope. In practice, so that it takes the form of discussion and engagement in our research communities, rather than just private reflection and writing by individuals. In scope, so that we 'think though and acknowledge not just the identities we bring to the 'field' but also how these are linked to our investments in the broader geopolitical context of the neoliberal British academy' (Raghuram and Madge 2006, 271). This radical reflexivity encourages us to turn this critical gaze back onto the whiteness and coloniality of our institutions and disciplines, and engage in decolonising work there too (Tuck and Yang 2012), holding to account the institutions and the power structures that shape the ethical landscape of research and enact the oppressions we study. These include the UK banks who made secret loans to the Mozambican government, the UK Home Office whose 'hostile environment' makes it nearly impossible for universities to fund Mozambican researchers, and the discipline of geography, which continues to validate colonial research models and create an everyday hostile environment for geographers of colour (Tolia-Kelly 2017).

Embracing ethics as the bedrock of research and holding each other accountable makes it easier to admit to failure, call coloniality to account, and to countenance the refusal to pursue an unethical research project. This approach could help facilitate an academic environment in which 'marginalised' people themselves actually shape the research agenda. This is not to say that we can *never* do research – nor that research can ever be completely, unproblematically 'ethical', but that we should continue to interrogate the researcher's 'prerogative to know' (Coddington 2017, 316).

Chapter 8
Questions and conclusions

When I first came to write this concluding chapter, I was at a loss. Having questioned nearly everything about the research project, what conclusions could I possibly draw?

However, with some reflection, and some time and space away from the project and the guilt and anger that I felt about it, I have to some extent reconciled myself to the idea that these questions do not invalidate the ethnographic arguments of the earlier chapters. Without wishing in any way to justify or excuse the ethical failings of the project, or gloss over its methodological shortcomings, I suggest that, in fact, an honest and deeply reflexive engagement with these limitations has strengthened the thesis. In this final chapter, I reflect on the key arguments and observations of the thesis, and the role of ethical questions in both troubling them and making them more rigorous – by opening them to the possibility of contingency and ambiguity.

The central question of this thesis was about the interactions between peasants, agricultural development projects, and the social landscapes within which peasants construct and maintain their livelihoods. The question was framed within the context of the 'African Green Revolution' and the push towards agricultural modernisation and commercialisation by different actors across the continent, and particularly within debates around the proposed ProSAVANA project in Mozambique. As I discussed in Chapter 1, narratives and debates around the AGR and AGR projects tend to be polarised between the technological optimism and neoliberal ideals of AGR policy, and radical criticism from organisations representing peasants. I came into the research ideologically firmly positioned on the latter side of the equation, but my experiences of life in Bairro soon troubled the certainty of this positioning. I came to see projects as *part* of the social landscape within which people were constructing and maintaining their livelihoods. As I did so, I became less confident about evaluating whether projects were positive or negative for people's food security, and adopted an approach (more in line with work on ethnography of development) that was more concerned with the *role*s that they were playing in Bairro's social landscape, in its moral economies. Similarly, my approach to gender became less about determining whether or not projects or local social structures were feminist or not, and more about the role that gender played in these interactions.

In this thesis, I explored interactions between projects and local contexts by focusing on three key aspects of livelihoods in Bairro: the commercialisation, or to be more exact, partial subsumption of Bairro's economy; food security and food provisioning; and land. In each case, I found Bairro people's

everyday practices and experiences to be far more complex and dynamic than the debates about AGR generally provide space for.

The most persistent binary in AGR debates – that between subsistence and commercial agriculture, peasant and modern modes of production – was, as I show in Chapter 4, deconstructed by everyday agricultural and commercial practice in Bairro. Instead, livelihoods in Bairro were constructed – within a deeply unequal and uncertain context – through the balancing of both subsistence and commercial modes of production, consumption and exchange. The unique properties of *makhaka* [dried cassava] as both subsistence and commercial crop revealed Bairro's rich and complex moral economy, encompassing systems of reciprocity and patronage, but also farmers' ability to engage strategically and sometimes opportunistically with wider commercial markets, and desire for the trappings of commercial agricultural that were offered by projects and commercialisation. Witchcraft [*okwiri*] and discourses of witchcraft and envy [*nrima*] were also crucial features of Bairro's moral economy, as a way of navigating inequalities and enforcing certain norms around economic success and the distribution of wealth. However, the ability to engage in these mechanisms of agency and negotiation was not equally distributed in Bairro. Projects' own moral economies were sometimes at odds, or failed to engage, with Bairro's, increasing people's financial burden and risk, especially for those with the least room for manoeuvre between subsistence and commercial production.

In Chapter 5, I explored how people maintained food security in this partially subsumed context. The local concept of the '*problema de caril*', or 'sauce problem', highlights how food security, often presented as a state that reflects total annual household food production, is actually the outcome of ongoing practices of provisioning and decision-making. I used this concept to show how entitlements to food in Bairro are actualised in temporally dynamic, culturally specific and gendered ways. These included the seasonality not only of food security, but also of orientation towards subsistence or commercial exchange and consumption. On different timescales, people made decisions (the gender of the decision-maker(s) depending on the household and the type of decision they were making) about what to do with food that had been produced – whether to store, sell, eat or save it as seed – and how to balance money, food stores and labour in order to procure *caril*. Again, projects tended not to take account of this complexity and dynamism, encouraging an orientation towards markets – selling produce and buying inputs as well as consumables – that ignored the importance of subsistence and non-market practices in people's food security.

Chapter 6 turned to focus on land, one of the entitlements that was crucial to livelihoods in Bairro, and its politics. Again using the concept of moral economy, this chapter explored how the history of an area of land, and the way in which it was framed by different actors, contributed to disputes over

it. The land in question, which had been a colonial tobacco plantation and was left in the care of a local man during Mozambique's liberation war, was a space of overlapping meanings, demands and forms of authority. Different local actors showed agency in navigating the ambivalence created by these multiple sovereignties to meet their own needs and priorities. However – as before – the ability to do this was unevenly distributed, and for the women in the association, especially resource-poor single women, the land dispute meant that they had allocated their labour in ways that did not contribute to the food security or wellbeing of their households.

Interweaving themes

Throughout these three chapters, there were several recurring ideas and themes, which I will attempt to draw together here. The first is that of moral economy, which I first used as a way to think about the role of *makhaka* in Bairro, but which I have increasingly drawn upon to look at the institutions – the sets of norms, values and practices – that underpin not just livelihoods, but all aspects of social life in Bairro. This broader conceptualisation has also given me a different perspective on projects and their staff, and what norms and values they bring into Bairro and through what practices. In turn, this has provided a way of thinking through the complexity and contingency of Bairro's moral economies, as neither 'traditional' nor modern, neither peasant nor capitalist, and of recognising the contingency and slippages in the implementation of development projects. In Bairro's moral economies, as shown by the land disputes, the response to Flávia's fire, and the threat of *okwiri*, there is a strong ethic of subsistence and reciprocity. However, these norms coexist – and tensions arise – with competing values, desires and needs, such as wanting to consume commercial goods, or needing to convince a project of one's entrepreneurial spirit. In the case of land, moral economies were yet more complicated, with a more diverse set of values at play, partly reflecting the legacies of colonialism.

This brings me to the next key theme: the crucial importance of history in shaping the social context in which projects were intervening. Many of the lasting structural, material, social and psychological impacts of Portuguese colonialism on Mozambique and its political economy were evident in Bairro. These legacies included the range of crops that people cultivated, the limited literacy of older people who had been denied access to school, the need to speak the Portuguese language in encounters with projects and government, and the remains of colonial plantations inscribed on the physical and social landscape. Just days before I started my fieldwork, Mozambique had celebrated the 40th anniversary of its independence – colonialism was recent, and had shaped the lives of many people still alive in Bairro. However, Mozambique's subsequent history, of socialism, internal conflict and structural adjustment, had also left its marks on Bairro's landscape. This was particularly evident in the ambivalent status of land, but it was also clear in terms of people's relationships with commercial

agriculture. Far from being a new phenomenon, the partial subsumption of households in commercial markets had been a key feature of Bairro livelihoods for decade, from colonial-era forced cotton production, through the postcolonial contract farming of tobacco, to the postwar creation of producers' associations to grow sunflower seed. People had adapted in order to secure their livelihoods under several different political regimes, each with their own ideologies and apparatuses. ProSAVANA and other projects were another layer in this history, and Bairro people's responses to them were informed by their previous experiences. This long experience of receiving and negotiating with competing moral economies was evident in people's interactions with projects, including in people's engagement of different modes of authority in the land dispute (Chapter 6), women's ability to provide projects with selective information about the use of project money (Chapter 4), and the corruption and cognitive dissonance involved in Olívia's simultaneous celebration and condemnation of traditional knowledge (Chapter 6). It was also, as we have seen in Chapter 7, very much at play in people's interactions with me.

As well as the meanings involved in moral economies, practices and phenomenology have emerged as a key theme in understanding how people in Bairro constructed and maintained livelihoods, and how these interacted with projects. In particular, looking at the practices of making livelihoods in the space between subsistence and commercial production (Chapter 4) and maintaining food security (Chapter 5), revealed some of the micropolitics at work in Bairro's social landscape, especially the role of gender and the vulnerability of households headed by single women. It also revealed the dynamism and contingency of Bairro's moral economies, particularly around the shifting balance of relative orientation towards subsistence or commercial markets.

Looking at practices also helped to show how projects have become part of Bairro's social, economic and political landscape, variables that are factored into decision-making about food provisioning and the balancing of subsistence and commercial production and exchange. Because of this, the role of projects has ended up being more peripheral to the thesis than I originally anticipated. That said, while the practices and experiences of people in Bairro suggest that the hegemony of policy narratives and the impacts of projects themselves should not be overstated, it would also be misleading to underplay projects' potential impacts. The social fissures created or exacerbated by the debates over land and the profits from the first year of the ProSAVANA projects, and the impacts on farmers of projects' enthusiastic promotion of pigeon pea, are examples of the ways in which projects can undermine local moral economies and adaptations.

The projects themselves – at least as they were presented, implemented and experienced in Bairro – comprised a relatively wide array of activities and ideas within the broader theme of agricultural

commercialisation. However, a persistent theme – perhaps reflecting a common norm in the moral economies of project policy and design and of many project staff – was about the need for Bairro's peasant farmers to transform themselves into entrepreneurial, commercial farmers. This was reinforced through the idea, sometimes explicit, sometimes implicit, often vocalised by local people themselves, that peasants' behaviour and beliefs, and their agricultural knowledges and practices were ignorant and backward. Entrepreneurship – understood as the commercialisation of agricultural production and exchange, and a dedicated work ethic – was promoted as the ideal to which farmers should aspire. This was most explicitly presented through the OYE training (Chapters 4 and 5) and the speeches of the Minister for Agriculture (Chapter 5). It was also implicit in project design, from the favouring of 'commercial' farmers by the FAO electronic voucher scheme to the focus of InovAgro on providing access to commercial agricultural inputs. When Tifa and I asked them about their hopes for the future, some people expressed desires for the sort of lifestyles that project staff endorsed, like owning a shop or a car. Others were far more modest (or pragmatic) in the aspirations they were willing to share with us: several people told us that they wanted their children to study, so that they could look after them in old age; several young people told us they would like to go back to school.

These themes – moral economy, historical context, practices, and visions of commercialisation – paint a much more nuanced and ambiguous image of the AGR than the black and white one with which I began the research project. In light of the mixed and differential impacts of projects, Bairro people's practices of receiving and working with projects reflected the need to make the most of what projects had to offer, while minimising the risk of negative effects. Depending on their positionality and on the project in question, local people were strategic or vulnerable (or both) in their interactions with projects; likewise, project staff could be sensitive towards local needs, whilst implementing their project's, or indeed their own personal, agendas. Projects were sometimes helpful to local people, within a constrained context: facilitating access to commercial seed was unlikely to make a long-term difference to the livelihoods of people like Márcia, but it might provide a better harvest for the amount of labour she had to put in, or give her a little more surplus to exchange for *caril*. From a very short-term but pragmatic perspective, ProSAVANA turning up with snacks meant that she and the other members of the association ate breakfast that day.

However, none of the projects addressed the structural conditions for poverty and food insecurity in Bairro, and none of them engaged in the complexity of Bairro's moral economies. As a result, any benefits were mostly restricted to farmers like Cláudio and Victor, whose own households and moral economies were more aligned to those of projects, and who had the relative power and wealth to take full advantage of what projects were offering. Even these farmers, as addressed in Chapter 4,

were neither transformed into model commercial farmers, since they continued to maintain their subsistence production; nor had they been made sufficiently prosperous by commercialisation that their standard of living dramatically improved, or their families' labour was not still heavily exploited.

People in Bairro have lived through decades of structural inequality and violence, and this is unlikely to change much in the near future, especially in the face of ongoing political and economic instability and the increased probability of catastrophic droughts, floods and cyclones due to climate change. Based on the evidence in this thesis, it seems unlikely that the AGR, at least in the form of agricultural commercialisation projects, will radically change the lives of people in Bairro and the Nacala Corridor for the better or the worse. However, the renewed push to commercialisation that the AGR represents has the potential to undermine aspects of local moral economies that help to maintain food security. Rather than helping the most vulnerable people, as promised in the revise ProSAVANA Master Plan, these projects contributed to the erosion of institutions that supported the subsistence of poorer households, especially those headed by single and older women. That said, Márcia and the other women's positive comments about projects, especially ProSAVANA, reflected the fact that, compared to ensuring food and money for their households in the near future, preventing the long-term erosion of such institutions was not their first priority. The AGR will not solve poverty and food insecurity in Mozambique, but its projects might temporarily help to address questions of *problemas de caril*, paying a child's school fees or Márcia struggling to hoe her *machambas* by hand. Given the wider context of poverty, inequality and uncertainty, I can fully understand why Márcia said that ProSAVANA was her favourite project.

More questions

I still struggle with the ethics of this thesis. After everything that happened, is it ethical to write up my findings? What confidence can I have in my observations, given that I clearly assumed and misinterpreted so much? Is it ethical to draw conclusions that are to some extent ambivalent about the advantages and disadvantages of ProSAVANA and the AGR, given that these may be co-opted by powerful interests? I am particularly aware that in my discussions of Bairro's moral economies as 'complex', I risk reifying Bairro people's own racially charged narratives about *nrima* [envy], which positioned themselves, as black people, as inevitably, and negatively, '*complicado*'.

However, I believe that these questions do not undermine the project; rather, they are productive, and the thesis has been strengthened by its ethical engagement. By forcing me to face up to my positionality and the depth of my biases, writing Chapter 7 has allowed me to engage more rigorously with material in other chapters, again asking what I was assuming in my analysis and writing, peeling back the layers of possible meaning and interpretation, and discovering more contingency and agency

than I had previously assumed. The ethnographic and auto-ethnographic aspects of the thesis have mutually informed each other: for example, reflecting on Bairro's moral economies helped me to think about how I carried my own norms and values into research encounters, and vice versa. I believe that from an academic perspective, as well as a moral one, anthropologists need to engage more deeply and reflexively with the ethics of our research projects than our institutions and our biases and privilege tend to allow us to.

If this research project was, as I consider it, marked by failure, then to return to Halberstam (2011), what alternatives and spaces of possibility were made visible by this failure? I see this thesis partly as a provocation, an opportunity to consider more deeply how the academy can engage with postcolonial dynamics without reifying them. If the binary between peasant and project was broken down by this research, then so too was that of project and anthropologist. I was not, as I initially imagined, somehow morally superior to the AGR projects I was critiquing: I was tangled up in the same politics. The imperatives of radical reflexivity and refusal point us towards a decolonised academy, a more honest engagement with the ethics and the moral economies of research, and that seems like an alternative worth pursuing.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Glossary of Makhuwa and Portuguese terms

Emakhuwa	Português	English
	Bairro	Neighbourhood
	Barraca	Small shop/stall
Mkhunya (akhunya)	Branco	White/outsider
	Cabo da Terra	Land Chief
	Campanha	Growing season/campaign
	Capulana	Wax print sarong, worn by women and used for many everyday purposes
Matapa	Caril	Sauce
	Chefe de poste	Government-appointed administrator at administrative post level
	Chefe de Poste	Administrative Post Chief
	Comerciantes	Traders
	Curandeiro	'Traditional' header
	Enveijosos	Envious people
Okwiri	Feitiçaria	Witchcraft

Ntikwa	Folhas de mandioca	Cassava leaves
	Ganho-ganho	Casual labour in exchange for wages or payment in kind
	Horta	Lowland farm, suitable for irrigated cultivation
Nrima	Inveja/ciume	Envy/jealousy
Matcha	Machamba	Farm plot
Makhaka (nikhaka)	Mandioca seca	Dried cassava
	Mato	Bush, fallow/uncleared land
	Particulares	Private/unaffiliated individuals
Nkusi	Peixe seco	Dried fish
Apwiyamwene	Rainha	Customary spiritual leader ('queen')
	Régulo	Neighbourhood-level administrator
Mwene	Rei	Customary leader ('king')
	Técnico	Technical extension worker
Nttethe	Terra maternal	Matrilineal territory
	Xima	Starchy porridge
Karakhata	Xima de caracata	Xima made with dried cassava flour

Appendix 2: Timeline of project, from initial proposal to end of fieldwork

Month	Research activities
January 2014	Article about ProSAVANA published in *The Guardian*
February	PhD project advertised and recruited
March	
July	Supervisor's scoping trip to Mozambique
August	
October 2014	PhD starts
July 2015	Arrival in Nampula
August	'Scoping' trip 1: Alto Molocué, Gurué, Malema, Ribaué 'Scoping' trip 1b: Malema, Ribaué 'Scoping' trip 2: Mandimba, Cuamba, Lúrio
September	Ethical approval granted 'Credencial' obtained – provincial-level permission granted
October	District- and administrative post-level permissions granted
	First stay in Bairro
November	
December	
	Return to UK
February 2016	Arrival in Maputo, renewal of visa

Month	Activity	Events / Visits
	Renewal of provincial, district and administrative post permissions	
March	Return to Bairro Gatekeepers' meal Recruiting and beginning work with Tifa	
April	Farm visits and interviews with association members	7 de Abril party
May		
June		Stephen and Natalie visit
July	Farm visits and interviews with 'particulares'	Interviews with young people
August		Natalie visit
September		Andrew visit
		Parents visit
October	Writing up in Nampula	Tifa on holiday
	ProSAVANA onion harvest	Sewing group
November	Interviews with women in the association	
	Re-interviewing members of the association	
December	Focus group Farewells and departure	

Appendix 3: Interview schedules

'Particulares' and association members' interviews

- How old are you?

- Where are you from?

- Have you ever lived anywhere else? Did you leave during the war?

- If appropriate, further questions about life history

- What were things like in the past compared to how they are now?

- Did you go to school?

- What grade did you study up to?

- How many children and gradchildren do you have?

- Where do they live?

- How many people live in this house?

- How did you meet your husband/wife?

- If appropriate, further questions about life history of marriages and relationships

- How old is this house? Are you thinking of building a new house?

- How many *machambas* do you have?

- What crops do you grow on each?

- Which do you sell?

- How did you get the land?

- What meetings do you go to?

- Do you attend meetings at the association and forum?

- Do you farm together with your spouse or separately?

- Do you do *ganho-ganho*?

- How do you spend money in the household?

- Who decides how it gets spent?

- Do you have any problems, worries or hopes that you would like to tell us about?

Additional question for association members:

- When did you join the association?

Youth interviews

- How old are you?

- Where are you from?

- Are you at school?

    o Which grade are you in?

    o Which grade would you like to study up to?

    o If you don't go to school, why not?

- Who helps you with your studies?

- Are you thinking about getting married at the moment?

    o Are you engaged? How did that come about?

- Do you have a boyfriend/girlfriend?

    o How did you meet?

- Do you have your own *machamba*?

    o How big is it?

    o How did you get the land?

    o How long have you had it?

    o Why did you decide to farm your own *machamba*?

- What is your dream?

- Where would you like to study or live when you are older?

- How do you get things like clothes?

    o Does your family give them to you?

    o If you get them yourself, where does the money come from?

- What work do you do in the household?

- Do you do *ganho-ganho*?

    o Where?

    o What kind?

    o How much do you earn?

- Do you have a good relationship with your parents?

- What's your favourite food?

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