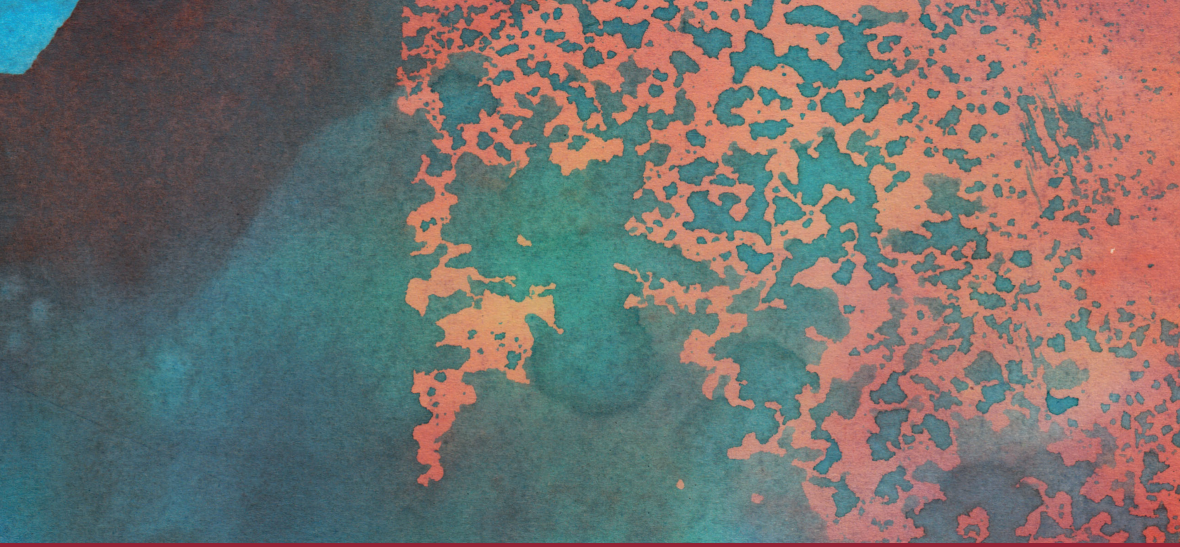
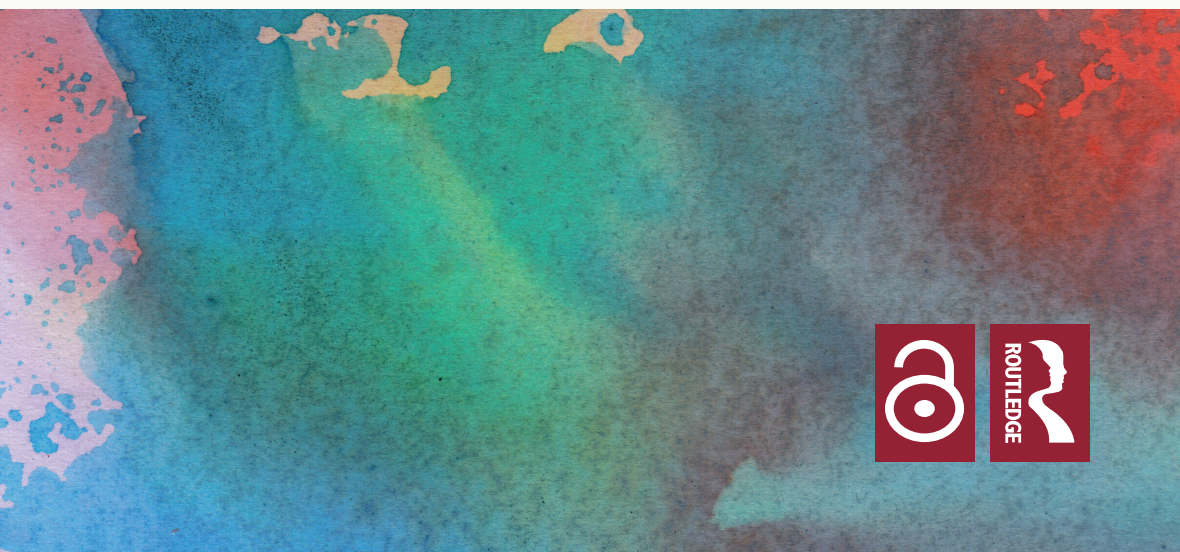


Memory Studies: Global Constellations

THE PORTUGUESE COLONIAL WAR AND THE AFRICAN LIBERATION STRUGGLES

MEMORY, POLITICS AND USES OF THE PAST

Edited by Miguel Cardina



The Portuguese Colonial War and the African Liberation Struggles

The Portuguese Colonial War and the African Liberation Struggles: Memory, Politics and Uses of the Past presents a critical and comparative analysis on the memory of the colonial and liberation wars that led to a regime change in Portugal and to the independence of five new African countries: Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, and São Tomé and Príncipe.

Covering more than six decades and based on original archival research and critical analysis of sources and interviews, the book offers the first plural account of the public memorialisation of this contested past in Portugal and in former colonised territories in Africa, focussing on diachronic and synchronic processes of mnemonic production. This innovative exercise highlights the changing and crossed nature of political memories and social representations through time, emphasizing three modes of mnemonic intersections: the intersection of distinct historical times, the intersection between multiple products and practices of memory and the intersection connecting the different countries and national histories.

The Portuguese Colonial War and the African Liberation Struggles: Memory, Politics and Uses of the Past a major output of the research developed by CROME – Crossed Memories, Politics of Silence, a project funded by a Starting Grant (715593) from the European Research Council (ERC). The book advances current knowledge on Portugal and Lusophone Africa and deepens ongoing conceptual and epistemological discussions regarding the relationship between social and individual memories, the dialectics between memory, power, and silence, and the uses and representations of the past in postcolonial states and societies.

Miguel Cardina is a Researcher at the Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra, Portugal. He was also the coordinator of the European Research Council-funded CROME – Crossed Memories, Politics of Silence. The Colonial-Liberation Wars in Postcolonial Times project (2017–2023). His research interests include colonialism, anticolonialism, and the colonial wars; political ideologies in the 60s and 70s; and the relationship between history and memory. He is co-author of *Remembering the Liberation Struggles in Cape Verde: A Mnemohistory* (Routledge, 2022, with Inês Nascimento Rodrigues), which is available on an Open Access basis at www.taylorfrancis.com.

Memory Studies: Global Constellations

Series Editor: Henri Lustiger-Thaler

Ramapo College of New Jersey, USA and
Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, France

The 'past in the present' has returned in the early twenty-first century with a vengeance, and with it the expansion of categories of experience. These experiences have largely been lost in the advance of rationalist and constructivist understandings of subjectivity and their collective representations. The cultural stakes around forgetting, 'useful forgetting' and remembering, locally, regionally, nationally and globally have risen exponentially. It is therefore not unusual that 'migrant memories'; micro-histories; personal and individual memories in their interwoven relation to cultural, political and social narratives; the mnemonic past and present of emotions, embodiment and ritual; and finally, the mnemonic spatiality of geography and territories are receiving more pronounced hearings.

This transpires as the social sciences themselves are consciously globalizing their knowledge bases. In addition to the above, the reconstructive logic of memory in the juggernaut of galloping informationalization is rendering it more and more publicly accessible, and therefore part of a new global public constellation around the coding of meaning and experience. Memory studies as an academic field of social and cultural inquiry emerges at a time when global public debate – buttressed by the fragmentation of national narratives – has accelerated. Societies today, in late globalized conditions, are pregnant with newly unmediated and unfrozen memories once sequestered in wide collective representations. We welcome manuscripts that examine and analyze these profound cultural traces.

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The Portuguese Colonial War and the African Liberation Struggles

Memory, Politics and Uses of the Past

Edited by Miguel Cardina

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Contributors

Natália Bueno is a Researcher at the Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra. She is currently working on the project "REINTEGRA – Reviewing the impact of amnesty in the reintegration of ex-combatants: A bottom-up view of the case of Mozambique", funded by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology. Her research interests include transitional justice, reconciliation, colonial-liberation wars, and memory. Natália is also a former visiting researcher at the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, University of Notre Dame.

André Caiado is a Junior Researcher at the Centre for Social Studies and PhD candidate in Heritages of Portuguese Influence at the University of Coimbra. He holds a master's degree in International Economics and Management from the University of Porto. Current research interests focus on the history and memorialisation of the Portuguese Colonial War, war memory studies, monumentalisation, museum studies, military pilgrimages, and battlefield tourism. Key publications include single-authored articles in the peer-reviewed journals *Memory Studies* (SAGE) and *Museum Worlds* (Berghahn).

Miguel Cardina is a Researcher at the Centre for Social Studies. He is currently a member of the coordination of the thematic line "Europe and the Global South: Heritages and Dialogues". He was an European Research Council (ERC) Grantee with the project: "CROME – Crossed Memories, Politics of Silence. The Colonial-Liberation Wars in Postcolonial Times" (2017–2023). He is the author or co-author of several books, book chapters, or papers on colonialism, anticolonialism, and the colonial wars; political ideologies in the 60s and 70s; and the dynamics between history and memory. His last book is *O Atrito da Memória. Colonialismo, guerra e descolonização no Portugal contemporâneo* (2023, ed. in Italian by Meltemi; ed. in Portuguese by Tinta-da-china).

Teresa Almeida Cravo is an Associate Professor in International Relations at the Faculty of Economics and a Researcher at the Centre for Social Studies, within the Thematic Line 3: Europe and the Global South - Heritages and Dialogues, both at the University of Coimbra, Portugal. She holds a PhD in Politics and International Studies from the University of Cambridge. Her research interests include critical

perspectives on peace and violence, security, development, global interventionism and foreign policy, particularly within the context of Portuguese-speaking countries.

Verónica Ferreira holds a PhD in "Discourses: History, Culture and Society" from the Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra (CES-UC). She has a BA and a MA degree in Political Science and International Relations from the NOVA University of Lisbon. Currently, she is an Assistant Researcher at the Centre for Research in Higher Education Policies, University of Aveiro (CIPES-UA), and her research interests include political representations, critical discourse analysis, gender studies, discourses on violence, and digital media research.

Bruno Sena Martins is a Researcher at the Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra (CES/UC). He has a degree in anthropology and a PhD in sociology. His research interests include disability, human rights, racism, and colonialism. He is the author or co-editor of several books, book chapters, or papers on disability, embodied experience, social memory, colonialism, colonial wars, and racism.

Vasco Martins is a Researcher at the Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra, and a visiting professor in the Faculty of Arts of the University of Porto and the University of Coimbra. Author of several articles in African Studies and Political Science, Martins recently published the book *Colonialism, Ethnicity and War in Angola* (Routledge, 2021). His research interests relate to memory, war, and citizenship in circumstances of state formation, particularly in countries that experienced colonial/liberation wars and civil conflict.

Inês Nascimento Rodrigues is a Researcher at the Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra. She is currently conducting a research project entitled "PRESENCE: The ghostly lives of colonial indentured labour in S. Tomé and Príncipe and Cape Verde (XX–XXI centuries)", which is funded by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (2023–2029). She holds a doctorate in sociology with a specialization in postcolonial studies. Rodrigues' research focuses on memory studies, postcolonial theories, representations of colonial violence, and the cultural history of indentured labour. Her most recent book is *Remembering the Liberation Struggles in Cape Verde: A Mnemohistory* (w/Miguel Cardina, Routledge, 2022).

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Introduction

Miguel Cardina

This book analyses the many disputes surrounding the memory of an important historical event: the colonial wars and the liberation struggles that brought an end to the Portuguese empire in Africa and, in the first half of the 1970s, led to the emergence of five new nations: Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde and São Tomé e Príncipe. The conflict that started in 1961 in Angola and later extended to Guinea and Mozambique lasted 13 long years and is central to the remarkable political rupture which took place in Portugal. On 25 April 1974, the old *Estado Novo* regime was overthrown by a successful coup led by middle-ranking officers who refused to continue a war that was, in political terms, already lost, thus paving the way for democracy, and creating the conditions for the end of the long imperial cycle. On African soil, the struggle for independence was embedded in an international context defined by decolonisation processes in the South and the emergence of new movements that viewed the armed struggle as a means to achieving national independence. Even Cape Verde and São Tomé e Príncipe, which had not experienced armed struggles within their territories, would gain independence by sharing the same anticolonial grammar.

This volume aims to explore the reverberations of this past in the successive presents. It traces a mnemohistory of the colonial wars and the liberation struggles, examining and the role played by social, political, cultural and economic forces in the diachronic modelling of the past. While analysing the discursive and symbolic production of these historical representations in each national context, it also presents intersecting and comparative approaches which have the potential to reveal surprising similarities, drawing parallels and proposing dialogues for a shared history which, more than sixty years later, is still alive.

*

Memory has become a hot topic in the social sciences and humanities. Having acquired academic status, particularly from the final decades of the twentieth century onwards, it is nowadays the driving force behind a prolific (trans)disciplinary field of research known as *memory studies*. An increasingly dense conceptual network has made it possible to consider memory – that is, the individual and collective

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processes of bringing the past into the present – in terms of its relationship to the social, the political and the cultural. Rather than serving as a mirror that reflects the past which institutions, collectives and individuals preserve and can accurately transmit or pass on, memory has been conceptualised as a social process shaped by cultural structures, ideological beliefs, markers of class, race or gender, strategic interests, life experiences and the prevailing models for historiographical research and its dissemination.

The emergence of memory studies has been closely linked to the theme of violence. As Ann Rigney observes, "there has been a close historical relationship between the emergence of the field and the atrocities that have marked recent history", and an area of research was therefore constructed which "gravitated towards violence and its collective legacies".[1] Hence, the main paradigm, particularly in its more markedly culturalist forms, would be constructed via a focus on the concept of trauma within an analytical framework that was based on the historical experience of the Holocaust – albeit belatedly, many years after the Second World War had ended.[2] Consequently, it would establish what has been defined as a "cosmopolitan mode of remembering" based, particularly from the 1980s onwards, on the convergence between the "consciousness of coming to terms with the violent past of the authoritarian regimes" and the transnational memory of the Holocaust.[3]

This framework is not entirely unrelated to the universalisation of human rights, which Samuel Moyn has described as the "last utopia", precisely because it coincides with the decline of major transformative projects such as socialism and Third-Worldism, and because it aspires to an ideal of harmonious coexistence that has yet to be realised. The emergence of "human rights" as a globalised paradigm – based on the potential and limits of the Enlightenment and so often mobilised to legitimise wars, occupations and geopolitical disputes – is inseparable from the centrality which the notion of the "victim" would increasingly acquire, very often through the memory of the Holocaust.[4]

In Enzo Traverso's analysis, the figure of the "victim" is associated with the erosion of the memory of revolutions, antifascism or anticolonialism.[5] If this is true, it is not inevitable that invoking idea of the "victim", in its many forms and contexts, always emerges as a counterpoint to notions of resistance or political engagement, leading to a depoliticisation of social processes and historical actors. In fact, the strategic use of the notion of "victim" – or the related notion of "human rights" – has also fuelled struggles for historical justice for individuals and groups targeted by violence, very often by resorting to a grammar of consensus and drawing on emotions such as empathy or suffering, of which the Latin American cases are the best-known examples.[6]

Moreover, the prevailing paradigm of trauma and violence within the field of memory studies has tended to erase theoretical reflections on experiences of struggle, exaltation and hope. Similarly, analyses that show how celebration and sacrifice, abnegation and hedonism may emerge as intertwined have been relegated to the margins, as Kristin Ross demonstrates in her study on the memory of May 68. In a critical reading of the dominant representations of the memory of the events, which featured mainly in the 1980s and 1990s, and were largely marked by regrets

about a political involvement seen as puerile or proto-totalitarian, Ross argues that in many cases "individuality was completed and not submerged by collectivity", providing accounts of experiences that were simultaneously "serious and happy".[7] In the same vein, Ann Rigney has recently proposed opening up space in the field of memory studies for consideration of experiences and representations of fulfilment, joy and happiness, specifically in the context of exploring the nexus between memory and activism.[8] To a certain extent, as can be seen in this book, remembering the colonial war and the liberation struggles requires us to engage in a similar exercise, creating a dialogue between the disruptive elements of violence and the evocations of hope and liberation which, particularly on the African side, converge and intersect in different historical times.

*

It is important to provide a brief outline of the nature of the colonial war and the liberation struggles and their impact on the "metropole", as it was known at the time and the colonised territories. The conflict emerged within the context of a broad-based and diverse movement for decolonisation that had erupted during the post-Second World War period. The Portuguese *Estado Novo* regime had been attempting, with little success, to resist the "winds of change" that had been blowing since then – with the Bandung Conference (1955), which gave voice to Afro-Asian proposals and expectations of independence, representing an important milestone – and would eventually lead to a conflict on several fronts in Africa: first in Angola (1961), and afterwards in Guinea (1963) and Mozambique (1964).

Although there were only four independent states in the African continent at the end of the Second World War – one of which was South Africa, at the time governed by a regime based on strict racial segregation – between 1956 and 1962, more than 30 territories became independent states. Counter to this trend, Portugal was refusing to engage in negotiations with the liberation movements that could have paved the way for the transfer of powers and prevented the war. At the same time, it had maintained the system of forced labour in the colonies – although this had been abolished on paper at the beginning of the 1960s, it still existed in practice[9] – and had adopted the Lusotropicalist theories of the Brazilian Gilberto Freyre, which envisaged Portuguese colonialism as benign and open to diversity.[10] Hence, a representation of a kind of "non-colonial colonialism" was disseminated and enshrined in the constitutional review of 1951. By replacing the word "colonies" with the term "overseas provinces", the review helped construct the myth of a great multiracial and pluricontinental Portugal, while also seeking to defend Portugal in international arenas where its colonial presence was increasingly being challenged.

In fact, these strategies failed in containing the momentum of the pro-independence forces. In February 1961, armed groups launched a few actions in Luanda (Angola), including an attack on the *Casa de Reclusão Militar*, where several political prisoners were being held. The following month, the UPA (United Peoples of Angola) organised a revolt in the fazendas in the north of the country,

resulting in the deaths of thousands of settlers and black labourers and equally ferocious reprisals. In Portugal, images of the violent events caused widespread concern, intensified by the press, which was subject to censorship at the time.

In April 1961, advocating a negotiated solution for the colonies, the Minister for Defence, Júlio Botelho Moniz, became involved in a failed coup to depose António de Oliveira Salazar, the Portuguese dictator who had been in power for almost three decades. Following this, Salazar delivered a famous public speech which was broadcast on radio and television, ordering the immediate dispatch of troops to subdue the revolt in Angola. In the territory, the MPLA (People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola), UPA/FNLA (which became the National Front for the Liberation of Angola in 1962) and UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) – a movement that emerged after a split in the FNLA leadership and would first take up arms on 25 December 1966, having for a certain period of time agreed to collaborate with the Portuguese – would draw up different plans and also fight among themselves. In Guinea, the PAIGC (African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde), committed to independence for both Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, led the fight against Portuguese colonialism. By the end of the 1960s, the PAIGC controlled more than half of Guinea and on 24 September 1973 – a few months after its leader, Amílcar Cabral, had been assassinated – it unilaterally proclaimed the independence of the territory. In Mozambique, the armed struggle would essentially be led by the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO), which had been founded in 1962 and took up arms two years later.

It is important to clarify the still widespread notion of the isolation of Portugal at the time. This view is not unrelated to the image cultivated by the regime – Salazar and his rhetoric of standing "proudly alone", announcing what would be, in his view, a hard but virtuous path – and the discourse of the opposition, committed to showing the backwardness and archaic nature of the *Estado Novo*. While it is true that part of the world had been endeavouring to support the liberation movements and Portugal had been condemned several times in international forums, countries such as France, Italy, England, the United States of America and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), within the framework of NATO, would provide military support for the war effort, sometimes discreetly or secretly.[11]

Taking place thousands of kilometres away from the "metropole", this war on three fronts required substantial financial resources – 40% of the General State Budget by the end of the conflict – and was pursued on a social scale that can be grasped simply by reference to certain statistics. Except for Israel, Portugal was the Western country with the greatest number of men in arms. In Africa, it deployed an army five times greater, proportionally, than the one used during the same period by the United States of America in Vietnam.[12] Out of a population of around nine million, approximately 800,000 young men were sent to Africa and forced to fight far away from their communities by the Portuguese state. In addition, the records show that over 200,000 failed to enrol for military service – in other words, around 20% of the young men called up for medical inspections in what was known as the metropole at the time, most of whom had fled in secret to central Europe – and

there were around 9,000 deserters and an estimated 10,000–20,000 draft evaders.[13] The official figures also indicate approximately 10,000 deaths, 30,000 wounded and over 100,00 cases of post-traumatic stress disorder, on the Portuguese side alone.[14]

To these numbers should be added the more than 500,000 Africans who were recruited into the Portuguese army, in a process that intensified as the war progressed: in the 1970s, taking the three theatres of war into consideration, local recruitment accounted for over 40% of the total number of regular troops, and in Mozambique, it would represent more than half from 1971 onwards.[15] This very significant number of Africans would meet different fates in the post-independence period: in Guinea-Bissau, hundreds were killed or fled the country; in Mozambique, they were subjected to a process of exposure and self-criticism in the late 1970s and early 1980s, prior to being admitted to the national army; in Angola they faced repression, some joining the ranks of the Angolan movements that were at war during the post-independence period.[16]

It is difficult to find complete and reliable data for casualties among the civilian populations and the African guerrillas.[17] In Angola, Mozambique and Guinea the fighting not only involved the two warring sides, but also the local populations, whose mobilisation and control were part of the dynamics of war. The liberation movements endeavoured to gain the support of the populations and, particularly but not exclusively in the case of the PAIGC, managed to establish "liberated zones" covering a significant part of the territory, which emerged as a kind of "embryonic state", organised on communitarian lines. At the same time, the Portuguese Armed Forces were developing a policy of relocation in village settlements run by the army, with the aim of controlling local populations, and a psychological action strategy designed to spread disinformation and garner local support by means of aid programmes for education, health, economy and infrastructures.

*

Portugal would see its colonial empire – and the dictatorial political regime – collapse as a consequence of the war. While other European colonial powers such as Britain, France, Holland and Belgium were dealing with their various decolonisation processes, Portugal was still forcing thousands of young Portuguese and African men into a protracted conflict. On 25 April 1974, a military coup led by middle-ranking officers from the armed forces deposed Marcelo Caetano – who had replaced António de Oliveira Salazar as head of the country in September 1968 – and overthrew the *Estado Novo* dictatorship which had been in power since the early 1930s. Between 1974 and 1975, the country lived through a revolutionary period that would have a powerful impact on Portuguese society. In the months immediately after the "Carnation Revolution", the liberation movements would only accept a ceasefire when independence had been recognised. In July 1974, the law recognising the colonised peoples' right to independence was passed, paving the way for procedures for the transfer of power. Between August 1974 and January 1975, formal agreements on independence were signed.

In Portugal, the memory of the colonial war resisted affirmation in the public arena, particularly its violent dimension and the articulation of the conflict with the colonial order. After the revolutionary period, in which the desire to forget imperial history was combined with denunciations of colonial violence, from the mid-1970s onwards the war gradually became a memory that was difficult to discuss in the public domain. This situation has changed in recent years, although the evident "colonial aphasia"[18] that permeates the public memory has still not been exorcised, as Chapter 1 of this book demonstrates. The recent proliferation of monuments to the colonial war is also an indication of this, several reviving themes associated with the "Discoveries" or the Portuguese maritime and colonial past, while also performing the role of remembering the Portuguese who died in the conflict (Chapter 5), or (re)creating online communities for sharing and circulating representations of the war which also tend to reinforce a certain dominant memory, centred on the life experiences of former combatants (Chapter 7).[19]

*

After the war ended and the new African countries were declared independent, they had to deal with several economic, cultural and social legacies in societies deeply scarred by discriminatory ideologies in which race had been a determining factor in defining the rights and obligations of citizenship – or rather, in denying them to the vast majority of the population. The Mozambican historian João Paulo Borges Coelho has also highlighted the impact of the "potential for violence" generated by the militarisation of the colonial areas during the war, creating what he terms a "violent post-colonial order".[20] Although this is by no means the only explanation, it helps in understanding the history of the conflicts in some of these countries in the post-independence period – including the so-called "civil wars" in Angola (1975–2002) and Mozambique (1977–1992) and the various coups and similar incidents in Guinea-Bissau.

In general terms, the impact of colonial rule was evident in the demarcation of geographical borders, the lasting effects of a type of society designed to exploit and marginalise based on "race", the erasure of indigenous structures for organisation and knowledge, and the repeated lack of economic, social and cultural investment available to the majority of the population. Moreover, in addition to being responsible for a considerable amount of weapons circulating within the country, the war also caused huge population displacements and internal migration flows which left the new countries facing the challenge of accommodating very large numbers of displaced people and refugees.[21] Thus, with regard to their colonial pasts, the historical burden which the former colonised territories bear has had a significant influence, although this is frequently downplayed in analyses and public perceptions of the contemporary dynamics of these regions.

The liberation struggle would have an important role to play in the various African countries – despite the significant differences between them – conferring additional legitimacy on the independence movements and rapidly becoming the driving force behind the construction of the new states and their leaders. It was the founding moment of the *struggle*, celebrated as the epicentre of the emerging

national projects that made it possible to imagine new beginnings and define new utopias, hopes, values, forms of social organisation, geostrategic alliances and power structures.

A luta continua ("the struggle continues"), the slogan used in the context of the new independent nations – particularly by FRELIMO, but also by the PAIGC and MPLA – endorsed the decolonising mission of the struggle, which would not end with the political declarations of independence. In fact, it would shape a plan that went beyond the mere transfer of power, presenting itself as an act of liberation that challenged the political, economic and cultural constraints imposed by colonialism. Hence, the *struggle* enabled independence, while also drawing up a framework of possibilities within which it would be envisioned and fulfilled. Moreover, this memory-symbol became an active mnemonic agent in the political dynamics of the post-independence period, ratifying the new powers and establishing a "multidirectional" mnemonic interplay – to draw on the concept developed by Michael Rothberg[22] – between the present of the struggle and independence and the broader past of oppression, resistance and suffering produced by colonialism.

The *continuity* of the struggle therefore established a decolonising momentum that did not end when the new flag was raised for the first time. In fact, political self-determination was only the first step, after which the *struggle* would unfold with increased strength. Hence it emerged both as a founding event and a mnemonic agent with multiple refractions in the successive presents, influencing political options, international alliances, the moral and political endorsement of the new leaders, socioeconomic dynamics and experimentation, the hopes projected in the present and the interpretations of a recent colonial past, whose rejection would be the driving force behind the future that was to be built.

In the case of Mozambique, João Paulo Borges Coelho refers to the existence of a "liberation script" in which the modern anticolonial struggle coincided both with the history of FRELIMO and with the construction of a "strategic discourse situated at the intersection between power relations and knowledge-based relations", which constituted the very basis of its political authority.[23] This rigid memory framework became dominant over the decades, although it coexisted with "rarely shared memories" originating in social and political groups or life experiences that were difficult to accommodate within the narrative produced through the states (see Chapters 3, 9 and 12).

There are some differences in the case of Angola, firstly due to the presence of the FNLA and UNITA as alternative movements in conflict with the MPLA, which resulted in "gradations of memory", although they were unable to challenge the official memory which the MPLA had constructed and spread via the state and the party.[24] To paraphrase Christine Messiant, in Angola this had generated what may be described as the "unpredictability of the past".[25] This peculiarity would define an approach that makes the role of the MPLA unique – in terms of its "precocity" in the struggle, the events it set in motion, and its leaders and heroes – within the anticolonial movement and the building of the independent Angola. This approach is gradually being diversified by recent trends in historiography and memory studies and new political events, as explained in Chapters 2 and 7 of this book.

In Guinea, the image of a successful struggle was affirmed internationally and was particularly well established in various Western chancelleries and international institutions, especially during the 1970s, as demonstrated in Chapters 4 and 10. The 1980 coup d'état in which Nino Vieira deposed Luís Cabral put an end to Guinean and Cape Verdean unity, which had been based on the idea of an intertwined history involving two states and the same ruling party. Troubled political times followed, involving foreign interventions, ethnic and political tensions, several military coups or attempted coups, and a civil war (1998–1999), which further undermined the already frail state.[26]

The situations in Cape Verde and São Tomé e Príncipe have specific characteristics, which are identified in Chapter 11. On the one hand, their histories were interlinked with the trade in enslaved people, the economic exploitation of plantations (São Tomé) or endemic famines (Cape Verde). At the same time, the elites from both archipelagos had access to education and the populations were not legally subject to the *Estatuto do Indigenato* (Indigenous Statutes). Moreover, when they gained independence from Portuguese rule, this had not been achieved by means of armed struggle in either of the archipelagos. However, this does not mean that there had been no resistance to anticolonialism. In fact, the MLSTP (Movement for the Liberation of São Tomé and Príncipe) and the PAIGC, the movement which fought for the joint liberation of Guinea and Cape Verde, had intervened clandestinely and through the diaspora and generically shared the same anticolonial perspectives as FRELIMO and the MPLA.[27]

In both countries significant nuances were added to ways of remembering the struggle in the early 1990s, when the parties that had inherited the legacy of the struggle were defeated in the first multiparty elections in both archipelagos. In a joint study with Inês Nascimento Rodrigues, we have developed the notion of "mnemonic device" to define the role of the liberation struggle in Cape Verde, understood as the signifier from which disputed symbols, meanings and uses stem. Given the particular history of the archipelago, the memory of the struggle has become a key political agent, expressed in narratives, memoryscapes, myths, commemorative practices, symbologies, power relations and moral hierarchies, both activated and celebrated but also, in more recent decades, reinterpreted and challenged, paradoxically revealing the fact that it is inescapable in any public debate on the past.[28]

Despite significant differences in the various national contexts, a historical-memorial framework was, to a greater or lesser extent, established, deeply embedded in the political hegemonies emerging in the post-independence period and, in general, adopting a common set of themes. Firstly, there was the visibility of the "founding massacres". Seen as the ground zero of the resistance, they also rank highly as the birth certificate of the nation, insofar as they defined the struggle as inevitable. I am referring here to the following: the Batepá massacre in São Tomé e Príncipe on 3 February 1953; the repression of the strike by seamen and stevedores working for the Casa Gouveia at the Port of Bissau Pidjiguiti docks in Guinea, on 3 August 1959; the Mueda massacre in northern Mozambique, in June 1960; the revolt and repression of agricultural workers in the Baixa de Cassange

cotton plantations in Angola, in January 1961. Despite the many differences concerning the reasons and the processes, all these events became important within the framework of the anticolonial struggle and, above all, in the choreography of memorialising the new nations, as clear examples of colonial violence, the justness of the fight against colonialism and the need to progress to new levels of resistance.

Secondly, there was the definition of the archetypal figures of liberation, which tended to focus on the "guerrilla" and marginalise life experiences associated with the clandestine struggle, logistical support for anticolonial resistance or political prisoners. On the basis of the symbolic capital and social recognition generated by the struggle, the combatants from the liberation movements generally functioned as the repository for the political legitimacy of the independent countries, many becoming part of the leadership of the new states. Hence, the figure of the combatant became a key national figure in the building of the nation, albeit subject to hierarchies of values, fluctuations and specific mnemonic flows. Finally, there was the focus on movements bearing the ideology of national liberation, as the driving force for the society to come.

It is also true, as observed elsewhere, that the forms of representing this past struggle have not been unaffected by the major changes taking place in the world due to the hegemony of neoliberalism from the 1980s onwards, foreign interventions by the IMF in Africa as part of so-called "structural adjustment", the shrinking of the state and the increasing role of the NGOs, as well as the growing disillusionment with important sections of the elites associated with the experience of liberation.[29] In that way, prominent figures from the struggle or the actual imaginary of the fight for freedom acquired new symbolic functions, not only in terms of the historical-memorial context associated with the liberation struggle and the recognition given to its protagonists, but also their mobilisation in the present day for the purposes of political argument.

Mary Ann Pitcher, for example, in a study published in 2006, noted how FRELIMO, from the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, had to reframe the discourse on its past in order to respond to the need to adapt to the new international context (the fall of the Berlin Wall, deregulation, structural adjustment, privatisations), as well as the national context (the 1992 agreements, the multiparty system and the need to recognise RENAMO as a political actor). Consequently, while the FRELIMO leadership was, at the time, tending to separate the memory of the liberation struggle from the memory of the socialist struggle, the popular sectors – namely urban workers in Maputo who for two decades had been educated and informed about the importance of their participation in the revolutionary project – were strategically using the memory of the struggle to criticise concessions to neoliberalism, reviving the vocabulary of the independence project to demand better working conditions.[30]

The case of Amílcar Cabral is the most striking example of this, due to the international recognition the revolutionary leader had gained. Killed on 20 January 1973, before independence, Cabral would acquire the status of "national hero" in Guinea and Cape Verde. While there was certainly not always a consensus surrounding the figure of Cabral in the two countries, particularly in Cape Verde and

specifically following the "mnemonic transition" in the 1990s which involved a certain "de-Africanisation"[31] and "de-Cabralisation" of national symbols (see Chapter 6), nevertheless his political, diplomatic and theoretical skills made him an important international reference, not only in the history of the anticolonial struggles, but also in the contemporary postcolonial theory itself. These factors are frequently cited in both countries, above all in urban intellectual circles and among the politicised sectors of young people, as a source of pride and as a critique of the betrayal of the emancipatory ideal by the ruling elite.[32] Cabral is thus transformed into a kind of spectre who laid the foundations for the promise of liberation, which the countries had not been capable of effectively achieving, as noted in Chapters 4, 6, 10 and 11.

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This book aims to explore the memory of the war and the struggle, demonstrating how echoes of both are formed and expressed, but also how they can be brought together in a dialogue, building on their differences and asymmetries. This volume presents some of the results of the research carried out as part of the CROME project (*Crossed Memories, Politics of Silence: The Colonial-Liberation Wars in Postcolonial Times*), funded by the European Research Council and developed between 2017 and 2023 at the Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra. The 12 chapters it contains may be read separately but are part of a common analysis that has been collectively elaborated and conceptualised.

We take as our starting point two challenges, which are both epistemological and political. Firstly, the aim here is to consider the war and the struggle as "mnemonic signifiers", from a diachronic and comparative perspective, while acknowledging that they are different in nature. From the outset, it is important to note that "colonial war" and "liberation struggles" are configured as two "mnemonic signifiers" which do not always coincide.[33] In fact, "war" refers to the conflict between the Portuguese state and the liberation movements, while "struggle" is the expression of other types of resistance which include much broader narratives on the processes of constructing colonial difference, micro and macro forms of violence, ways of contesting the Portuguese presence and ways of constructing identities and loyalties that are not always unambiguous. Taking the memory of the anticolonial struggles and setting it in dialogue with memories of the colonial war not only involves making the war visible as war, but also the colonial context which shaped it.

The second challenge concerns the intersection of memories, which involves three types of cross-referencing: firstly, the intersection of different historical times ("today's memory of the war is not yesterday's memory"); secondly, the intersection between what Henry Rousso calls "vehicles for memory"[34] – in other words, ceremonies and monuments, social and political groups, cultural works, etc. – in order to identify convergences or differences in the various ways of transmitting the past; thirdly, the intersection between different countries and national histories, whose power to express the past has been instrumental in defining systems and frameworks for memory. Although the comparative approach has been productive,

the way in which national overdetermination endures in the remembrance of this shared past is evident throughout this book. Hence, debates on the war and the struggle in the different countries are neither mimetic nor parallel but refer to the specific conditions in each country and the impact which the war had on each of them, crucially giving rise to disputes over internal legitimacy in each case. The book also reflects on this.

Notes

1 Ann Rigney, "Remembering Hope: Transnational Activism Beyond the Traumatic", *Memory Studies* 11, no. 3 (2018): 368–80.
2 Aleida Assmann, "The Holocaust – A Global Memory? Extensions and Limits of a New Memory Community", in *Memory in a Global* Age, eds. Aleida Assmann and Sebastian Conrad (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 97–117.
3 Anna Cento Bull and Hans Lauge Hansen, "On Agonistic Memory", *Memory Studies* 9, no. 4 (2016): 390–404.
4 Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2010).
5 Enzo Traverso, *Left-Wing Melancholia. Marxism, History, and Memory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 5–11.
6 A vast amount of academic work has been produced on these questions, which cannot be listed in detail here. One of the latest studies by Elizabeth Jelin, published in Argentina in 2017 and translated into English in 2021, provides a critical overview of these processes: Elizabeth Jelin, *The Struggle for the Past. How We Construct Social Memories* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2021). In addition, there is a need to complexify the analysis of "difficult pasts" beyond the victim and perpetrator binomial. In a thought-provoking recent book, Michael Rothberg develops the notion of the "implicated subject": "Implicated subjects occupy positions aligned with power and privilege without being themselves direct agents of harm; they contribute to, inhabit, inherit or benefit from regimes of domination but do not originate or control such regimes. An implicated subject is neither a victim nor a perpetrator, but rather a participant in histories and social formations that generate the positions of victim and perpetrator, and yet in which most people do not occupy such clear-cut roles". Michael Rothberg, *The Implicated Subject. Beyond Victims and Perpetrators* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2019), 1.
7 Kristin Ross, *May'68 and its Afterlives* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2002), 99–100.
8 Rigney, "Remembering Hope", 368–80.
9 At the end of the nineteenth century, when intermittent lengthy "pacification campaigns" were mounted and met with resistance from the colonised peoples, an ideological apparatus was constructed to define the legal status of forced labour as a central pillar in the development of the colonial economy and the "civilising mission" in which the Portuguese, like other colonial powers, had invested, drawing on the Eurocentric vision which prevailed at the time. Hence the Indigenous Labour Codes (introduced in 1878) and the Indigenous Statutes (from 1926 onwards) became legal-political structures for a colonial regime based on racial discrimination against black and indigenous subjects who, due to their alleged inferior social status, needed to be submitted to a civilising process and could therefore be obliged to supply forced labour for public or private purposes, in public works, transport, cleaning or as labourers in private enterprises, including the cotton, cocoa and coffee trade. This system had a dual purpose, serving as a key element in the colonial economy and as affirmation of Portugal's status as a colonial power among the imperial nations, and became a controversial issue for organisations such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO) particularly from the 1940s

onwards. See, for example: Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo, *The 'Civilising Mission' of Portuguese Colonialism, 1870–1930* (Cham: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015) and José Pedro Monteiro, *The Internationalisation of the 'Native Labour' Question in Portuguese Late Colonialism, 1945–1962* (Cham: Palgrave MacMillan, 2022).

10 On the adoption of Lusotropicalism, see, among others: Cláudia Castelo, *O modo português de estar no mundo. O luso-tropicalismo e a ideologia colonial portuguesa (1933–1961)* (Porto: Afrontamento, 1999); Marcos Cardão, "Allegories of Exceptionalism: Lusotropicalism in Mass culture (1960–74)", *Portuguese Journal of Social Science* 14, no. 3 (2015): 257–73; Michel Cahen and Patrícia Ferraz de Matos, eds., "New Perspectives on Luso-Tropicalism, Novas Perspetivas sobre o Luso-tropicalismo", *Portuguese Studies Review* 26, no. 1 (2018).

11 See, for instance, Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo and António Costa Pinto, eds., *Portugal e o fim do Colonialismo. Dimensões internacionais* (Lisboa: Edições 70, 2014).

12 John P. Cann, *Counterinsurgency in Africa. The Portuguese Way of War, 1961–1974* (Westport: Greenwoord Press, 1997), 106.

13 Miguel Cardina and Susana Martins, "Evading the War. Deserters and Draft Evaders of the Portuguese Army during the Colonial War", *E-Journal of Portuguese History* 17/2 (2019): 27–47.

14 Pedro Marquês de Sousa, *Os números da guerra de África* (Lisboa: Guerra e Paz, 2021).

15 Carlos de Matos Gomes, "A africanização na guerra colonial e as suas sequelas. Tropas locais – os vilões nos ventos da História", in *As Guerras de Libertação e os Sonhos Coloniais. Alianças secretas, mapas imaginados*, eds. Maria Paula Meneses and Bruno Sena Martins (Coimbra: Almedina, 2013), 123–41.

16 On Angola, see: Pedro Aires Oliveira, "Saved by the Civil War: African 'Loyalists' in the Portuguese Armed Forces and Angola's Transition to Independence", *The International History Review* 39, no. 1 (2017): 126–42. On Mozambique, see: Maria Paula Meneses, "Hidden Processes of Reconciliation in Mozambique: The Entangled Histories of Truth-seeking Meetings Held between 1975 and 1982", *Africa Development* 41, no. 4 (2016): 153–80; and Natália Bueno, "Different Mechanisms, Same Result: Remembering the Liberation War in Mozambique", *Memory Studies* 14, no. 5 (2021). On Guinea, see: Sofia da Palma Rodrigues, "Por ti, Portugal, eu juro!" Memórias e testemunhos dos comandos africanos da Guiné (1971–1974)" (PhD dissertation, Faculdade de Economia da Universidade de Coimbra/Centro de Estudos Sociais, 2022). Later, some of these combatants would seek symbolic recognition and financial support from Portugal. According to research by Fátima da Cruz Rodrigues, they came from sectors of society who were mainly critical of the position adopted by the Portuguese state, accusing it of abandoning them and giving up on the understanding of the war and of colonial Portugal as a pluricontinental nation and meeting point where Europeans and Africans lived together. See: Fátima da Cruz Rodrigues, "Antigos Combatentes Africanos das Forças Armadas Portuguesas. A Guerra Colonial como Território de (Re)conciliação" (PhD dissertation, Faculdade de Economia da Universidade de Coimbra/Centro de Estudos Sociais, 2012).

17 Pedro Marquês de Sousa estimated that there were around 30,000 deaths among the guerrillas and the population who supported them, although these figures, based solely on reports produced by the Portuguese army, should be treated with caution. Sousa, *Os números*, 164.

18 Ann Laura Stoler, "Colonial Aphasia: Race and Disabled Histories in France", *Public Culture* 23, no. 1 (2011): 121–156.

19 On the representations of the liberation struggles in Portuguese school textbooks, see: Marta Araújo, "Adicionar sem agitar: narrativas sobre as lutas de libertação nacional africanas em Portugal nos 40 anos das independências", *Revista Desafios* 3 (2016): 33–56.

20 Coelho, João Paulo Borges, "Da violência colonial ordenada à ordem pós-colonial violenta. Sobre um legado das guerras coloniais nas ex-colónias portuguesas", *Lusotopie* 10 (2003): 175–93.

21 Patrick Chabal et al., *A History of Postcolonial Lusophone Africa* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2002), 30–50.
22 Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*.
23 João Paulo Borges Coelho, "Politics and Contemporary History in Mozambique: A Set of Epistemological Notes", *Kronos* 39 (2013): 20–31.
24 Vasco Martins, "Hegemony, Resistance and Gradations of Memory: Of Remembering Angola's Liberation Struggle", *History and Memory* 33, no. 2 (2021): 80.
25 Christine Messiant, "'Chez nous, même le passé est imprévisible': l'expérience d'une recherche sur le nationalisme angolais", *Lusotopie* 5 (1998): 157–97.
26 Leopoldo Amado, "Guiné-Bissau, 30 anos de independência", *Africana Studia* 8 (2005): 109–35; Sílvia Roque, *Pós-guerra? Percursos de violência nas margens das Relações Internacionais* (Coimbra: Almedina, 2016).
27 These connections emerged even before the armed struggle began. Many of the leaders knew each other and were trained in the same places, such as the *Casa dos Estudantes do Império*. Following some previous organisational initiatives, in April 1961 the CONCP (Conference of Nationalist Organizations of the Portuguese Colonies) was founded at a meeting held in Casablanca, comprising African organisations engaged in contesting Portuguese colonialism and representatives from movements in Goa, a region that would be annexed by the Indian Union a few months later. In 1979, the so-called "Group of Five", known as the Portuguese-speaking African countries (PALOP), emerged to replace the CONCP in its mission to foster cooperation between Angola, Mozambique, Guinea, Cape Verde, and São Tomé e Príncipe.
28 Miguel Cardina and Inês Nascimento Rodrigues, *Remembering the Liberation Struggles in Cape Verde. A mnemohistory* (London and New York: Routledge, 2022).
29 See "Introdução: Do Império Colonial às Lutas de Libertação: memórias cruzadas da guerra", in *As Voltas do Passado. A guerra colonial e as lutas de libertação*, eds. Miguel Cardina and Bruno Sena Martins (Lisboa: Tinta-da-China, 2018), 9–18.
30 Mary Ann Pitcher, "Forgetting from Above and Memory from Below: Strategies of Legitimation and Struggle in Postsocialist Mozambique", *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 76, no. 1 (2006): 88–112.
31 See: Márcia Rego, *The Dialogic Nation of Cape Verde. Slavery, Language and Ideology* (New York and London: Lexington Books, 2015), 77.
32 This is evident, for example, in rap music. On rap and Cabral in Guinea and Cape Verde, see: Miguel de Barros and Redy Wilson Lima, "RAP KRIOL(U): The Pan-Africanism of Cabral in the Music of Youth", in *Claim no Easy Victories: The Legacy of Amilcar Cabral*, eds. Firoze Manji and Bill Fletcher Jr. (Dakar: CODESRIA and Daraja Press, 2013), 387–404. Samora Machel, the Mozambican president who died in a suspicious plane crash in October 1986, was also the subject of appropriations. See: Janne Rantala, "'Hidrunisa Samora': Invocations of a Dead Political Leader in Maputo Rap", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 42, no. 6 (2016): 1–17.
33 On the notion of the "mnemonic signifier" see: Gregor Feindt, Félix Krawatzek, Daniela Mehler, Friedemann Pestel and Rieke Trimçev, "Entangled Memory: Toward a Third Wave in Memory Studies", *History and Theory* 53 (2004): 24–44.
34 Henry Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome. History and Memory in France Since 1944* (London: Harvard University Press, 1991), 219.

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Part I: Politics, Representations and Counter-representations

1 Portugal, colonial aphasia and the public memory of war

Miguel Cardina

Introduction

On 2 September 2022, during an official visit to Mozambique, the Portuguese Prime Minister António Costa recalled the Wiriyamu massacre, commenting that it was an "inexcusable act that dishonours our history".[1] He was referring to the events that had taken place on 16 December 1972 in five villages in the province of Tete, when 385 men, women and children were killed by Portuguese soldiers. The world first learned of the massacre in an article written by an English journalist, Peter Pringle, which was published in *The Times* newspaper in 1973 after the story had been exposed by Catholic missionaries working in the Wiriyamu area. Days later, it would even embarrass Marcelo Caetano – the head of government in the final phase of the *Estado Novo* dictatorship – during an official visit to England, when he was confronted with public protestors on the streets of London. Three months after António Costa's statement – more precisely, on 16 December 2022, the date which marked the 50th anniversary of the massacre – Augusto Santos Silva, the President of the Assembly of the Republic, would describe it as "a fact that shames us, but should not be forgotten", considering that it was necessary to "ask for forgiveness". A statement issued by the President of the Republic, Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, stressed that it was "time for us to fully acknowledge the unacceptable and appalling work of some, for which Portugal, as a whole, has been held responsible".[2]

Even though it had quickly become a symbol of the iniquities of colonialism and the colonial war, the Portuguese state always resisted issuing any clear denunciation of the Wiriyamu massacre or other known violent episodes. This was still evident in 2008, during another official visit to Mozambique by Aníbal Cavaco Silva, the President of the Republic at the time. When asked whether it was not time for Portugal to publicly acknowledge the existence of massacres such as this and apologise for them, Cavaco Silva, significantly, replied that one should not "always be looking back to the past".[3] Years later, comments made by leading statesmen in 2022 would indicate how the memory of the war and colonialism had evolved in recent years in Portugal, although it was still subject to aphasia and impasses. The Portuguese Prime Minister's statements, together with other recent events discussed at the end of this chapter, are a reflection and result of a framework of social representations of the war which has its own historicity.

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A history of the memory of the colonial war

Portugal would experience a kind of "Pyrrhic defeat" at the hands of the African liberation movements and the soldiers of the Armed Forces Movement (Movimento das Forças Armadas – MFA) during the "Carnation Revolution": it suffered a political defeat in the war but gained a revolutionary process that would determine the nature of its democracy. However, within Portugal, the memory of battles fought in Africa to preserve the empire was determined by a process of attrition with regard to the violent aspects of the war and colonialism.

In the initial phase, under the dictatorship, the conflict was essentially erased as a historical phenomenon by the regime, concealing the reasons and the effects from society. However, in an apparently paradoxical fashion, praise was also produced at specific moments for the magnificent endeavours in Africa dedicated to preserving the integrity of this "pluricontinental and multiracial nation", within the framework of a Lusotropicalist formulation that would come to understand Portuguese colonialism as essentially non-colonial. As the philosopher and essayist Eduardo Lourenço observed in 1976, a mythological image was created for Portugal "inseparable from its existence as a coloniser", which would gloss over the fact that colonialism, by its very nature, involves the "subordination of the historical, economic, social and cultural reality of the colonised".[4]

Later, under democracy, the war tended to be shrouded in a process of selective memorialisation and persistent amnesia. The movement to denounce colonialism had already found expression and made some impact.[5] In the wake of the Carnation Revolution – in a new political context in which censorship had disappeared, groups from the left were calling for an immediate end to the war, the agenda of the liberation movements was affirmed and a timetable drawn up for recognition of independence in their respective countries – this dynamic was effectively accelerated, but only on a conjunctural basis. Manuel Loff emphasises the convergence – which was fragile and to some extent impossible to repeat after 1976 – of the antifascist memory and the anticolonial memory.[6] In the field of publishing, for example, Afrontamento, D. Quixote, Centelha, Ulmeiro, Sá da Costa and Prelo would all intensify the publication or republication of texts critical of the war and colonialism and the dissemination of perspectives originating from what was known at the time as the "Third World".[7]

In addition, organisations such as the Association for the Disabled of the Armed Forces (Associação dos Deficientes das Forças Armadas – ADFA) would develop into a social movement committed to denouncing both the war and the neglect of former combatants who had been wounded and disabled in action. Although it was created in May 1974, the idea of the need for an organisation of this kind predates 25 April and had first taken root within the Lisbon Military Hospital. It then became active during the revolution, above all in struggles demanding recognition for disabled war veterans and their claims for compensation and rights, materialising in the form of occupations of houses, bridges and streets, and demonstrations organised to bring the war into public space under an unusual banner: "the just cause of the victims of an unjust war".[8]

In fact, it was the experience of war and the acceptance of the anticolonial task as a just cause which to a large extent explain proclamations such as the need to engage – in the words of the MFA in June 1975 in the heat of the revolution – in a "process of internal decolonisation" that would ensure "national independence" and the "building of a socialist society".[9] Nevertheless, what has actually been constructed is a particular kind of *pacto del olvido*: a political change, in which middle-ranking military clearly played a leading role, that was defined by the idea of putting an end to the war but was unable to offer the conditions for coming to terms with what was still such a very recent past in which atrocities typical of colonial warfare had been committed, including massacres of local people, brutal treatment of prisoners and close links between the army and the PIDE/DGS, the secret police during the dictatorship. These incidents, already known at the time and to some extent made public, were not subjected to any procedure for determining responsibility, far less reconciliation and reparations for the victims. Although the overthrow of the dictatorship was directly related to the refusal to continue the colonial war, Portuguese democracy did not embark on any wider process of reflection on the place, the impact and the legacy of the conflict and colonialism.

In effect, the post-1976 period of "democratic normalisation" would establish a space for mechanisms for "the organisation of forgetting", illustrated very clearly by three events. In April 1976, a journalist José Amaro published a book which reported on episodes of mass slaughter in Tete (Mozambique), the district in which the Wiriyamu massacre had taken place. It presented official documentation on these massacres, which had "always been denied and concealed by the Portuguese Government and the ongoing allegiances of certain figures at different moments in Portuguese life after 25 April". It also referred to the role, among others, of Kaúlza de Arriaga, the Commander of the Armed Forces in Mozambique and one of the leaders of the far right in the years immediately after the revolution.[10] Ten thousand copies of the book sold rapidly and it became the subject of a lawsuit filed by the General Staff of the Armed Forces, headed at the time by Ramalho Eanes, the future President of the Republic (1976–1986), who claimed it had been responsible for "divulging military secrets essential to the defence of the nation and had contributed to undermining discipline and cohesion within the armed forces". José Amaro and the editor of Ulmeiro, José Antunes Ribeiro, were eventually prosecuted, but pardoned in 1983 at the time of Pope John Paul II's visit to Portugal.[11]

The second case concerns an incident which took place in 1977. In late 1966, author Luís de Sttau Monteiro had published *2 Peças em Um Acto: A Guerra Santa e A Estátua*. In his preface to a new edition of the book, written in June 1974, Sttau Monteiro describes his difficulties in finding a publisher and how the second edition had been seized by the PIDE. After being imprisoned in the Caxias Jail, where he remained for several months, the author was taken to the Lisbon military barracks and faced a series of convoluted procedures before he was released. In the June 1974 preface, he stated "I would be lying if I said I had changed my ideas or become a militarist", but that the book would serve as "a warning which, after 25 April, was no longer needed".[12]

Nevertheless, on 10 July 1977, a television programme Fila T, coordinated by Fernando Midões, decided to show extracts from a performance of *A Guerra*

Santa. The broadcast resulted in a communication from the General Staff of the Armed Forces, claiming that the play had caused "serious offence to the Portuguese Armed Forces, through its hierarchy, as well as to the moral values which, over and above the Armed Forces, belonged to the Nation". It acknowledged that it had been written in a very different context, but believed that its presentation nowadays could only serve to "tarnish and discredit" the Armed Forces. The Rádio e Televisão Portuguesa (RTP) Administrative Commission also reacted, condemning the "insulting content" of the programme and announcing that it had already taken "the necessary measures required in this situation".[13] The President of the Republic, Ramalho Eanes, criticised the broadcast.[14] The television programme was eventually cancelled and the author suspended.[15]

The third episode took place in March 1979. After the 11th episode of the documentary series *Os Anos do Século* – directed by José Elyseu and including text by the historian César Oliveira – was broadcast on television, the programme was suspended, as well as the director (who was later reinstated) and others who had collaborated in the making of the documentary. The episode looked back at the violence of the war and complicity with colonialism on the part of significant sectors of the Catholic Church. The RTP Administrative Commission considered the episode, entitled "*A guerra inútil*", had created a feeling of "deep repulsion among large sectors of the population, presenting passages that were extremely offensive to the feelings of the Portuguese people" and was underscored by "unnecessary cruelty". Political parties from the right and the left were divided in parliament, with the latter managing to pass a motion condemning this act of censorship. The Cardinal-Patriarch considered the programme "manipulative and dishonest" and the Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces described it as an "insult to all the Portuguese who had served in the Armed Forces".[16]

Although there was no official policy of silence, these three incidents show how the political, military and religious bodies reacted to any reminder of acts of violence and complicities that involved living actors and implied a judgement of the colonial presence which they were not willing to accept. Evocations of the conflict would subsequently circulate between a public silence and a series of subaltern memorialisations inscribed in private spaces, involving circles of former combatants, and in the more marginal political spaces, particularly those associated with the political and cultural right. In addition, the publication, in 1979, of two books, *Memória de Elefante* and *Os Cus de Judas*, by the novelist António Lobo Antunes would also highlight the possibility of literature functioning as a powerful anamnestic tool.[17] A number of novels and poems then emerged, particularly from the end of the 1970s and into the 1980s and 1990s, serving as a specific mechanism for problematising the colonial past and the experience of war, and attesting to a gradual shattering of the public silence surrounding this event through art and culture. Presenting bitter portraits of a "violent imperial twilight",[18] these literary texts helped demonstrate the extent to which the war still remained an uncomfortable experience.

Parallel to this, in the 1980s, the war still occupied a difficult public locus of enunciation within the complex framework for the construction of the democratic, European and post-colonial Portugal. For a long time, the society remained

unwilling to listen to a tragic story that tasted defeat. However, it should be noted that from the mid-1980s onwards, various collective projects based on personal accounts, journalism and historiography were beginning to be published. They included the anthology *Os Anos da Guerra. 1961–1975*, a collection of literary and historical texts, documents and images edited by the writer João de Melo and published in 1988, which circulated widely within the country.[19]

At around the same time a version of the conflict produced by the Army was being prepared, leading to the publication, from 1988 onwards, of volumes entitled *Resenha Histórico-Militar das Campanhas de África (1961–1974)*. The expression "Africa campaigns" appeared here as an alternative to the "colonial war" versus "overseas war" debate,[20] specifically omitting the fact that it referred to a war and opting instead to use a term that evoked the so-called "pacification campaigns" associated with the partition of Africa that continued in Guinea until the 1930s, resulting in the occupation of the territory and the extermination of colonised peoples.

The memory of the war would acquire greater visibility in Portugal during the 1990s. On 15 January 1994 an imposing "Monument to the Overseas Combatants" was inaugurated in Belém, which became the setting for ceremonies evoking the war and for patriotic celebrations (see Figure 1.1). The reference to "Overseas" inscribed in the name of the monument refers specifically to the characterisation

Figure 1.1 Monument to the Overseas Combatants, Lisbon.
Photograph by André Caiado.

of the African territories produced during the dictatorship and therefore defines a particular positioning and interpretation of the substance and legitimacy of the conflict: it had been a war to defend the "overseas territories". Moreover, as Roberto Vecchi stresses, beyond its attempts to harmonise, "striving to conceptualise the wounds, the losses and the scars", the monument would, in fact, establish an allegorical interplay in a very specific public place – Belém, in Lisbon – defined by the "celebratory rhetoric" of the Discoveries reflected in buildings, such as the Jerónimos Monastery, the Padrão dos Descobrimentos and the Praça do Império.[21]

In the 1990s, in addition to the growing number of meetings, reunions and social events involving former combatants, associations dedicated to presenting their demands in the public arena also came to the fore. Many had been in existence for a considerable time (such as the League of Combatants, founded in 1924) or had been created shortly after 25 April (such as the ADFA). They became spaces for medical support, political pressure, public recognition and socialising with peers, whilst also expressing differing representations of the conflict. In 1994, APOIAR (the Support Group for Former Combatants and Victims of War Stress – *Associação de Apoio aos Ex-Combatentes Vítimas do Stress de Guerra*) was founded, focussing explicitly on the issue of traumatic experiences originating in active service during the war. In 1999, Law 46/99 extended the concept of the "disabled of the Armed Forces" to include individuals suffering from "chronic psychological disorders resulting from exposure to traumatic stress factors during military service" and the state became responsible for creating a national support network for these former soldiers.[22]

These years corresponded to a period in which there was some development in terms of the visibility of the war, shaped by the definition of the idea of the soldier-victim of war, but also an appreciation of the heroic or patriotic nature of the soldiers' involvement in the conflict, which revived feelings of nostalgia or resentment at the "loss of Africa". Carlos Maurício examined opinion polls published between 1973 and 2004, from which it was possible to assess the evolution of public opinion regarding the war, the empire and decolonisation. He notes that "after a period of relative amnesia and rejection of public debate, the 20th anniversary of 25 April [in 1994] marked a change in the way in which public opinion viewed the colonial war and decolonisation", reflected in an increasingly expressed "revisionist vision of colonialism that was highly critical of decolonisation".[23]

In his analysis of works published during the second half of the 1970s, Maurício noted the publication of a significant number of books that were critical of decolonisation and the political solution to the war, and public interventions in far-right newspapers – such as *A Rua* or *O Diabo* – which were different from the material presented on television or in most of the press, which was, in fact, tending to abandon the subject. In his interpretation, "it is these repressed views, socially and politically belittled and labelled 'reactionary chatter', that surfaced in 1994", in the context of the fall of the Berlin Wall, the years of the hegemony of the right within the framework of "*cavaquismo*" (an allusion to the prime minister of the time, Aníbal Cavaco Silva) and the emergence of private television companies and competition to win audiences.[24]

Although the media had paid relatively little attention to the subject until the mid-1990s, shortly afterwards there was an explosion of content on this theme, although it often focussed more on an analysis of the war apparatus and technologies and less on its pluridimensional nature. Marcus Power identifies the same perspective in the fifty supplements and five films on the colonial war issued between 1997 and 1998 as supplements to the *Diário de Notícias*, a widely read newspaper, noting an emphasis on the bravery of the soldiers and a disregard for phenomena such as the role of black troops and the place of violence.[25] In addition, although some films and documentaries on the war and colonialism had been made earlier on, the subject acquired a greater and more regular presence, mainly from the start of the new century. In this context, mention should be made of the series *A Guerra*, by Joaquim Furtado, broadcast in 42 episodes on RTP1 between 2007 and 2013 and watched by large numbers of viewers.[26] It should also be noted that in the past two decades, there has been a significant increase in accounts written by former combatants published in print or digital format, and monuments to the conflict.[27]

Memories and counter-memories

Personal recollections are sensitive to the changes at work in the domain of public memory and how they are determined by dominant interests and discourses. In a text which became a classic in the field of oral history, Alistair Thomson notes how accounts of life tend to follow a logic of "composure", whereby individuals aim to find narrative coherence between the past, present and future, thus repressing memories that are painful and not easily accommodated within their present identity, memories that reveal tensions that are still unresolved, or those that result in silencing because they cannot find a social space willing to accommodate their narratives.[28] Hence, the public memory of war, conveyed via certain dominant themes – suffering, duty, camaraderie – inevitably shaped expressions of this past. It did so by mobilising the war as an inseparable component of a national(ist) memory forged from a "geography of belonging" that "implies a large task of suppression and denial of incongruous or undesirable elements".[29] As Joanna Bourke reminds us, in the context of the commemorations for the First and Second World Wars in Great Britain, celebrating war has often been as much a way of talking about "our" dead and wounded as forgetting the dead and wounded it has caused.[30]

If it is true that a dominant public memory was constructed in Portugal that tended to homogenise the notion of the "combatant", it is also true that the plurality of experiences and positionings on the war often emerges and becomes the subject of different understandings of the meaning of taking part in the conflict. It should be noted from the outset that for a significant percentage of these men – the few women present in war zones were either accompanying officials or serving as parachute nurses[31] – going to war was not a matter of choice. It was an obligation imposed by the state, resulting in large contingents of men being sent far away from their birthplace and community to fight in a war that came to an inglorious end.

To this should be added the diverse regional and class origins, life experiences, temperaments and political options of those who fought in the war. Going to war

as a military commander was not the same as serving as an ordinary soldier. Fighting as a commissioned officer was not the same as doing so as a militiaman or, in other words, as one of a vast contingent of young men who had been conscripted. Serving in the special forces, which in many cases were made up of Africans, was different from joining the war from the "metropole", in the regular forces. Those from a rural background, for whom joining the army could also have been a way of accessing new forms of social interaction and consumer goods, had a different experience to those who joined from an urban environment or had some purchasing power. Those who faced intensive combat and had killed or seen others die had a different experience from those who were able to get through the war without facing extreme situations. Believing that waging war corresponds to a deep moral and political design – becoming a man or defending the pluricontinental fatherland, for example – is different from doing so due to inertia, because it was impossible to find ways to escape one's fate or participate in the infrapolitical protests against the continuation of the war forged in a military environment. All these elements of experiential diversity are made uniform in public discourse, but also present a continual challenge to the processes of homogenising memory.

In more recent times, this challenge has also been expressed via the debate on desertion. Historiography's disregard for the rejection of war – and its extent and impact – reveals the subaltern nature of this memory.[32] From 2015 onwards, the work of the Association of Portuguese Political Exiles (AEP, *Associação de Exilados Políticos Portugueses*, 61–74) and the attention paid by sectors of academia and civil society to this subject has led to the emergence of books, articles, documentaries, reports and plays about exile and desertion. It has come to constitute an authentic counter-memorial field, to the extent that it provides an alternative mnemonic model that is based on a denunciation of the violence and injustice of war and calls for different ways of considering agency, heroism and personal sacrifice.[33] However, this recent visibility does not mean that desertion has ceased to be what the historian Enzo Traverso describes as a "fragile memory",[34] considered an inadequate gesture and a kind of dishonour to the memory of the war and those who fought in it.

Colonial aphasia, mnemonic challenges

In 2011, referring to the colonial past in France, Ann Laura Stoler proposed the notion of "colonial aphasia" to account for the peculiar nature of this ever-present past. According to the author, the notion of aphasia captures this feeling of "occlusion of knowledge", which consists of "a dismembering, a difficulty speaking, a difficulty generating a vocabulary that associates appropriate words and concepts with appropriate things".[35] Portugal is precisely one of the cases that Stoler mentions in passing as an example of this particular type of blocking of memory. Unlike amnesia or ignorance, which refer to something that has been involuntarily erased or blanked out, the notion of aphasia encompasses a broad means of organising forgetting, in which material structures and socially impregnated imaginaries converge.

In fact, despite the aforementioned changes, the specific memorialisation of the war cannot be understood without linking it to the broader colonial memory. If the war was part, albeit a very specific part, of Portuguese colonial rule in Africa, its memorialisation tended to be detached from this framework and from any direct relationship with 25 April. Instead, it was interpreted, particularly in conservative political circles, in association with a "process of decolonisation" which was seen as badly managed or damaging for the so-called "returnees" (*retornados*).[36] In Portugal, the regime change was accompanied by the end of colonialism as a political system based on occupation and the exploitation of colonised peoples and territories. At the same time, for significant sectors of the population essential traces of the imagination of the nation would remain tied to mythologies that were still operative and conjugated on the basis of a collective subject: *we were great; we gave new worlds to the world; we were not, and are not, racist*, etc.

Hence, the role of the physical and symbolic violence unquestionably overlying the colonial enterprise and the war itself often remained in the shadows of the unspoken. This attrition of memory is directly related to the importance of the so-called "Discoveries" in the definition of a collective identity with epic traits that remain compellingly operative. The contemporary version takes the form of an enduring and restyled Lusotropicalism which serves as the interpretative model for the Portuguese colonial experience. This singular representation – of Portugal as a good coloniser – influences the way in which the violence of the war and its colonial nature is (not) remembered, essentially because the conflict itself constitutes a clear denial of the principles of harmonious coexistence in the colonies.[37]

Although colonial aphasia still persists, it is being increasingly questioned. The ways in which it has been challenged by critical perspectives on the national(ist) use of war as virtue and sacrifice and by the emergence of the debate on desertion have already been explained here, although they never became hegemonic within the public debate. In addition, a series of interventions and controversies have breathed new life into the debate on the colonial past, at least from 2017 onwards. Among them, due to its direct link with the colonial war, it is worth highlighting the issue of the official tributes paid to Marcelino da Mata.

In February 2021, it was announced that Marcelino da Mata, a black soldier who became famous during the colonial war for leading a platoon of extremely aggressive African commandos in Guinea, had died from COVID-19. As was the practice in other colonial wars at the time (such as the French war in Algeria, for example), Portugal had introduced a process of Africanisation into the war, particularly in the final years of the conflict, incorporating thousands of black people into its troops. None of them became more famous than Marcelino da Mata, who was known for his singular aggressiveness. He was involved in various campaigns against civilian populations and the PAIGC, including secret missions in neighbouring countries such as Guinea-Conakry and Senegal – condemned at the time by the United Nations – and was responsible for documented atrocities.[38] Later, during the Portuguese revolution, Marcelino da Mata was briefly taken captive by individuals associated with the MRPP (Movement for the Reorganisation of the Portuguese Proletariat), a far left Maoist party, then became a symbol of the war

for certain ex-combatant sectors and was involved in various events organised by fringe groups linked to the far right.

The President of the Republic, Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, and the military leaders attended his funeral. João Gomes Cravinho, the Minister of Defence in the centre-left Socialist Party (PS) government, praised his "commitment and dedication" to serving Portugal. In the National Assembly, the various right-wing members of parliament and the PS approved a vote of condolence on the death of Marcelino da Mata. The bureaucratic nature of the text that was put to the vote is indicative of its omissions: in referring in abstract terms to the "individual courage and bravery" of the commando, it ignored the fact that this had materialised in the form of certain macabre acts which he himself had reported in various interviews. Several voices then adopted a conventional line of argument, affirming that Marcelino da Mata was the soldier who had received the highest number of decorations during the war, omitting the fact that they had been awarded by the colonialist dictatorship whose overthrow on 25 April 1974, within the context of a political defeat over the war itself, had made it possible to establish democracy in the country.

The episode caused a disturbance in Portuguese political circles, producing remarkable shock waves. The CDS/PP, a conservative right-wing party, proposed a state funeral and national mourning. The far-right Chega party said that it would file a complaint with the Prosecutor General's Office against Mamadou Ba – a well-known black Portuguese antiracist activist of Senegalese origin – who had questioned the justice of celebrating a "torturer from the colonial regime" as a hero. Following this, the CDS/PP called for the dismissal of Mamadou Ba from a public working party on racism. A petition that received around 30,000 signatures even demanded that he should be "expelled from the country". At the same time, a broad-based movement emerged in support of the activist, condemning the racism and the ignominy of a proposal that intended to deport a black Portuguese citizen.

Although increasingly contested by academics, engaged citizens and the anti-racist movement, the rationale underlying the nostalgia for a grandiose past and celebrations of nationalism, or the belief in the exceptionalism of Portuguese colonialism still intervene powerfully in debates on the colonial past. In 2016, deploying a metaphor, Sílvia Maeso observed the general narrative produced on the "Age of the Discoveries" through the image of a continuous loop. In the language of computer programming, this means that when certain circumstances hold, instructions are automatically executed in the same way. This was the case with the theme of the Discoveries: the fragility of the narratives on colonial violence and anticolonial and antiracist resistance enables the "Discoveries" – a kind of code word that often ends up encapsulating the colonial enterprise within the prevailing imaginary – to assume a constant "performativity in the current configuration of an imaginary of the Portuguese nation as a global and intercultural nation".[39]

It is the challenge to this memory framework – as well as the international discussions on settling accounts with the colonial past, including debates on material restitution and symbolic and economic reparations – which explains, for example, the statements made by the President of the Republic, Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, during the official celebrations for the 25 April in 2021. Unexpectedly, he decided

to focus his speech on the war, the colonial past and decolonisation. Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa then spoke of the need to avoid "excessive general self-flagellation" that would result in "our moving from an acritical, triumphalist and exclusively grandiose view of our history to an equally acritical total demolition of it all", deploying the rhetorical device of imagining the two opposite poles of the debate and positioning himself in what would be a sensible balanced position in the centre. However, he also spoke of the need to view this past with "eyes that are not ours", but those of the colonised and their descendants, and referred to violence, racism, the war and enslavement. Clearly, given that the speech was not followed by any concrete measures to initiate procedures for addressing the challenges he had outlined, it appeared to be less of a starting point and more a move towards refocussing a debate that could no longer be avoided.

For the same reason, the words of the Prime Minister António Costa in Mozambique, referring to Wiriyamu as an "inexcusable act" – and statements to the same effect delivered by the President of the National Assembly, Augusto Santos Silva, and the President of the Republic, Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa three months later – created certain expectations. Was it now a matter of acknowledging the existence of the most well-known and referenced war massacres and, at the same time, establishing a process for problematising this past? Would there be a willingness to advance with international dialogues, reparations and incentives to develop historiographical knowledge? Since no concrete steps have yet been taken, the debate on the violence of the war, the civilian victims and its link with the colonial order that determines it still needs to be deepened. Within a framework of dominant representations still defined by aphasia, the debate on the war is being increasingly drawn into the wider debate on colonialism – and it is precisely in this way that the future of this memory may be conceived.

Notes

1 "António Costa pede desculpa por massacre de Wiriamu: 'Acto indesculpável que desonra a nossa História,'" *Público*, no. 11815, September 3, 2022.
2 "É tempo de assumirmos Wiriyamu," Site Oficial de Informação da Presidência da República Portuguesa, accessed March 28, 2023, https://www.presidencia.pt/atualidade/toda-a-atualidade/2022/12/e-tempo-de-assumirmos-wiriyamu/ and Augusto Santos Silva (@ASantosSilvaPAR), "Passam hoje 50 anos do massacre de Wiriamu, em Moçambique," Twitter, December 16, 2022, https://twitter.com/ASantosSilvaPAR/status/1603667339173662720.
3 Ana Sá Lopes, "O antigo alferes não pede desculpas por Wiriamu," *Diário de Notícias*, March 25, 2008. See also: Mustafah Dhada, *The Portuguese Massacre of Wiriyamu in Colonial Mozambique, 1964–2013* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2016).
4 Eduardo Lourenço, "Situação Africana e Consciência Nacional," in *Do Colonialismo como Nosso Impensado*, eds. Margarida Calafate Ribeiro and Roberto Vecchi (Lisboa: Gradiva, 2014), 139 and 153. The original text cited here dates from 1976.
5 See, for example: Rui Bebiano, "Contestação do regime e tentação da luta armada sob o marcelismo," *Revista Portuguesa de História* 37 (2005): 65–104; Fernando Rosas, "O anticolonialismo tardio do antifascismo português," in *O Adeus ao Império: 40 anos de descolonização portuguesa*, eds. Fernando Rosas, Mário Machaqueiro and Pedro Aires Oliveira (Lisboa: Nova Vega, 2015), 13–24; Miguel Cardina, *O Atrito da Memória.*

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6 Manuel Loff, "Estado, democracia e memória: políticas públicas e batalhas pela memória da ditadura portuguesa (1974–2014)," in *Ditaduras e Revolução. Democracia e Políticas da* Memória, eds. Manuel Loff, Luciana Soutelo and Filipe Piedade (Coimbra: Almedina, 2015), 31.

7 For a detailed study of political texts published before and after 25 April 1974, see: Flamarion Maués, *Livros que tomam partido: edição e revolução em Portugal – 1968–1980* (Lisboa: Parsifal/Associação Promotora do Museu do Neo-Realismo, 2019).

8 Bruno Sena Martins, "Violência colonial e testemunho: para uma memória pós-abissal," *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais* 106 (2015): 105–26.

9 Movimento das Forças Armadas, "Plano de Acção Política do CR, 21 June 1975," in *A Revolução em Ruptura. Textos Históricos da Revolução II*, ed. Orlando Neves (Lisboa: Diabril, 1975), 17.

10 José Amaro, ed., *Massacres na Guerra Colonial (Tete, um exemplo)* (Lisboa: Ulmeiro, 1976).

11 Cited in Maués, *Livros que tomam partido*, 320–21.

12 Luís de Sttau Monteiro, "A 'Guerra Santa'," *Diário de Lisboa*, July 13, 1977.

13 "Nota Oficiosa: Fila T Especial," *Diário de Lisboa*, July 13, 1977.

14 "Eanes critica Fila T," *A Luta*, July 14, 1977.

15 "A Sociedade Portuguesa de Autores diz que o programa Fila T deverá prosseguir na RTP," *Diário Popular*, July 16, 1977.

16 Carlos Maurício, "Um longo degelo: a guerra colonial e a decolonisation nos ecrãs portugueses (1974–1994)," *Ler História* 65 (2013): 159–177; Dulce Simões, "Processos de construção da memória nas democracias ibéricas: os casos Os Anos do Século (1979) e Rocío (1980)," *Análise Social* 235 (2020): 244–73.

17 Paulo de Medeiros, "Hauntings: Memory, Fiction, and the Portuguese Colonial Wars," in *Commemorating War: The Politics of Memory*, eds. Timothy Ashplant, Graham Dawson and Michael Roper (New York: Routledge, 2000), 47–76.

18 Margarida Calafate Ribeiro, *Uma História de Regressos. Império, guerra colonial e pós-colonialismo* (Porto: Afrontamento, 2004), 429.

19 João de Melo, ed., *Os anos da guerra, 1961–1975. Os portugueses em África, crónica, ficção e história*, 2 vols (Lisboa: Círculo de Leitores, 1988).

20 Sectors associated with the far right or military organisations frequently opt to use the expression "overseas war", which had been established by the dictatorship, rather than "colonial war". The latter is nowadays the accepted term in historiography.

21 Roberto Vecchi, *Excepção Atlântica. Pensar a Literatura da Guerra Colonial* (Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 2010), 27. On the Belém district as the epítome of the colonial imaginary, see: Elsa Peralta, "A composição de um complexo de memória imperial: o caso de Belém, Lisboa," in *Cidade e Império. Dinâmicas Coloniais e Reconfigurações Pós-Coloniais*, eds. Nuno Domingos and Elsa Peralta (Lisboa: Edições 70, 2013), 361–401.

22 Law 46/99, of 16 June. On post-traumatic stress disorder, see also: Afonso Albuquerque and Fani Lopes, "Características de um grupo de 120 ex-combatentes da guerra colonial vítimas de 'stress de guerra'," *Vértice* 58 (1994): 28–32.

23 Carlos Maurício, "A Guerra Colonial e a Descolonização vistas pelas Sondagens de Opinião (1973–2004)," *Nação e Defesa* 130 (2011): 291.

24 Maurício, "Um longo degelo," 161.

25 Marcus Power, "Geo-politics and the Representation of Portugal's African Colonial Wars: Examining the Limits of 'Vietnam Syndrome'," *Political Geography* 20 (2001): 461–91.

26 Ansgar Schaefer emphasises that the first episode had a "an audience rating of 32.9%, equivalent to approximately 1,260,000 viewers", thus reaching a far wider public than written works on the same subject. From time to time, the series has been repeated on

RTP. Ansgar Schaefer, "Imagens de 'A Guerra': Interacção entre os discursos visual e verbal na série de Joaquim Furtado," *Práticas da História. Journal on Theory, Historiography and Uses of the Past* 1, no. 1 (2015): 33–60.

27 See, in this book, the chapter by André Caiado on monuments to the war and the chapter by Verónica Ferreira on public digital space.

28 Alistair Thomson, "Anzac Memories. Putting Popular Memory Theory into Practice in Australia," in *The Oral History Reader*, eds. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 224–54. For an example of how this concept can be applied to Portugal, see Ângela Campos, *An Oral History of the Portuguese Colonial War. Conscripted Generation* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

29 Katharine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone, "Patterning the National Past," in *Memory, History, Nation: Contested Pasts*, eds. Katharine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone (New Brunswick: Transaction, 2006), 169–70.

30 Joanna Bourke, *Deep Violence: Military Violence, War Play, and the Social Life of Weapons* (Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2015), 4–5.

31 This does not, in any sense, mean that the war had no impact on women. In addition, they were assigned the role of "war godmothers" – a broad-based initiative organised by the National Women's Movement (*Movimento Nacional Feminino*) which aimed to establish links between the young soldiers and young women who assumed a ghostly eroticised presence as long-distance confidantes – and several had to deal with the departure of sons, grandsons, husbands, brothers, and friends for war. In the post-war period, they were often relegated to the status of informal carers or, in some cases witnessed the transfer of violence from the battlefield to the home.

32 A recent study carried out by the author and by Susana Martins indicates the existence of around nine thousand deserters at least, with occasional gaps in certain years and military sectors. To this should be added a number of draft evaders – i.e., those who went to the military examination but did not enlist – amounting to 10–20 thousand young men, and those who missed the examination, totalling approximately 200 thousand, representing almost 20% of those called up in the former metropole, according to data compiled by the General Staff of the Armed Forces. See: Miguel Cardina and Susana Martins, "Evading the War: Deserters and Draft Evaders of the Portuguese Army during the Colonial War," *E-Journal of Portuguese History* 17, no. 2 (2019): 27–47. It should be noted that the theme of desertion has been referenced in Portugal since the time of the war itself, but nowadays receives much more public attention. On this subject, see Chapter 8 in Cardina, *O atrito da memória*.

33 On the notion of "counter-memory", see the chapter "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" in Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 139–64.

34 Enzo Traverso, *O Passado, Modos de usar* (Lisboa: Unipop, 2012), 71–87.

35 Ann Laura Stoler, "Colonial Aphasia: Race and Disabled Histories in France," *Public Culture* 23, no. 1 (2011): 125. The brief reference to Portugal only appears in the version published in the book: Ann Laura Stoler, *Duress. Imperial Durabilities in Our Times* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2016), 128.

36 This has also been mentioned by Loff, "Estado, democracia e memória," 55. During the post-25 April period, a sizeable contingent of Portuguese nationals, numbering approximately 500 thousand, arrived from Africa, specifically from Angola and Mozambique, the former settler colonies. The name "returnees" (*retornados*), which became part of the Portuguese vocabulary, refers to the creation, in 1975, of the Institute for the Support of Returning Nationals (IARN), an organisation founded to provide support for the arrival and integration of this population.

37 Various disputes involving memory have emerged in recent years in connection with events such as the following: the installation in Lisbon of a statue to Padre António Vieira, a Jesuit and missionary in the Americas, with indigenous children at his feet; statements made by the President of the Republic, Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, in Gorée

(Senegal), a former trading station for enslaved people, praising the pioneering role played by Portugal as the forerunner of human rights; his trip to Batepá, in São Tomé e Príncipe, where hundreds of people were killed in February 1953 in what became known as the "Batepá massacre"; the proposal to build a Museum of the Discoveries in Lisbon; the approval, by means of a Participatory Budget, of plans to construct a Monument to the Enslaved, also in Lisbon; the discussions on the colonial coats of arms in the Praça do Império gardens in Belém; the attention focussed on the Wiriaymu massacre; the homage paid to Marcelino da Mata on the occasion of his death; the award, by the Portuguese state, of the Order of Liberty to Amílcar Cabral. On these debates, see Chapter 4 in Cardina, *O atrito da memória*.

38 Led by Alpoim Calvão, in conjunction with António de Spínola, the Commander-in-Chief and Governor of Guinea at the time, Operation Green Sea, which took place in November 1970, involved the invasion of Guinea-Conakry to attack the headquarters of the PAIGC and destroy military supplies, and an attempt to assassinate Amílcar Cabral, free political prisoners and organise a coup d'état to depose Sekou Touré and instal a government favourable to Portuguese colonial policy in the country, which shares a border with Guinea-Bissau. In 1973, Operation Royal Amethyst involved the invasion of Senegalese territory. On Marcelino da Mata, including a description of some of his actions and tactics, see, among others: Nuno Gonçalo Poças, *O Fenómeno Marcelino da Mata* (Alfragide: Casa das Letras, 2022).

39 Silvia Rodríguez Maeso, "O Turismo e a Academia da 'Idade dos Descobrimentos' em Portugal: o silenciamento/reprodução do racismo no loop pós-colonial," *Revista Política & Trabalho* 44 (2016): 28.

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2 Politics of memory and silence

Angola's liberation struggle in postcolonial times

Vasco Martins

In 1998, Christine Messiant published an article with a title that rapidly became a colloquial expression for academics and observers of Angola: 'chez nous, même le passé est imprévisible' (in Angola, even the past is unpredictable).[1] The expression encapsulates in an elegant yet simple manner many of the pitfalls of studying the history and memory of the liberation war in Angola. As one of the countries in Africa with the most fragmented anti-colonial nationalism, Angola is rich not only in historical revisions and mnemonic politicisations, but also in producing politics of silence.

Angola holds significant differences to other African countries that also had processes of anti-colonial liberation struggle, as it developed not one but three strands of anti-colonial nationalism. The Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), the hegemonic power since independence in 1975, Marxist-Leninist in nature, often characterised as internationalist with a strong presence in urban areas, composed of a diverse array of cultures from all over the Angolan territory, including mestizos and Angolans of European descent; the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA), a movement with a regional implantation in northern Angola and the lower Congo region, generally associated with conceptions of autochthony and tradition; and National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), a movement created by Angolans from the central-southern regions and Cabinda that abandoned the FNLA to create a third alternative on the Angolan nationalist palette, associated with tradition, Maoism and black socialism, later with democratic and capitalist ideologies during the Cold War.

Each nationalist movement generated a complex collection of historical experiences that inform their current political claims and mnemonic configurations. The strength, centrality or subordination of their memories depends on the political force that each actor manages to exert over the current regime of memory, a regime that is dominated by the current hegemonic political power, the MPLA. It is for this reason that the Angolan context is characterised by a marked disconnect between historiographic production and official memory. Through the various geological layers of Angolan history, the archaeology of the memory of Angola's liberation struggle has become increasingly elusive, largely due to the exercise of power that has been constituted over it and draws upon it as a source of political power. Adding to the dilemma, Angola is still one of the rare cases in sub-Saharan Africa in

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which the formation of the state in the post-civil war period (1975–2002) is more defining of its political character than the various processes initiated after independence. Reading the memory of the liberation struggle that underlies all these processes is the challenge to rescue the history of the struggle and emancipation of the Angolan people, to which this chapter aims to contribute.

Politics of memory: the MPLA before Angola

Angola's armed struggle for national liberation began with the first anti-colonial actions led by two liberation movements – the MPLA and the UPA/FNLA – in the early months of 1961, later followed by UNITA after its founding in 1966, totalling the three movements that fought against Portuguese colonialism.[2] These actions symbolise a singular event in the history of Angola among the several actions of resistance against Portuguese colonialism. Throughout centuries, many insurgencies, and revolts against colonisation in various parts of the country had taken place.[3] Yet, it was the armed liberation struggle (1961–1975) that dealt the final blow to Portuguese colonial presence in Angola, which would come to an end in a process that began with the signing of the Alvor Accords and was firmed with the country's independence in 1975.

With the declaration of independence on 11 November 1975 by President Agostinho Neto, the MPLA took control of the state apparatus and installed a single-party rule. But it found a country torn apart, emptied of a bureaucracy formerly occupied by Portuguese civil servants and ravaged by a civil war that first opposed the FNLA and UNITA to the MPLA, and finally the latter movements in one of the longest and most destructive conflicts on the African continent south of the Sahara.

The challenges the MPLA faced during this period, especially the civil war that rapidly became international based on the logics of proxy conflicts within the framework of the Cold War, divided the country into regions of control and influence, thus motivating the urgency to create a solid narrative of unity, legitimacy and broad hegemony. To this end, the movement resorted, among other elements, to its very own idiosyncratic historical memory, armed with control over the official media and propaganda dissemination apparatus of the state that allowed it to define the properties that would become part of Angola's official history.

Already during the liberation struggle and continuing throughout the first 16 years of the civil war, the politicisation of the memory of Angolan nationalism proved instrumental in positioning the MPLA as the only legitimate power to govern Angola. As Christine Messiant states, historical discourse became a weapon in the defence of the movement's hegemony. Its historical experience assumed the status of official Angolan state history, the party's truths became state truths, and the official version of the history of Angolan nationalism became untouchable.[4] The history of this period was constructed as the history of the MPLA against the other two nationalist organisations, resorting to processes of marginalisation and demonisation of the role of the UPA/FNLA; stigmatising the other two movements as lackeys and puppets of imperialism; suppressing any signs of dissent within the MPLA; and purging controversial aspects of the movement's history.[5] These

elements coincide with what Borges Coelho called the liberation script in reference to the Mozambican case, that is, a script that defines the narrative of liberation.[6] The concept of the script is indicative of how the MPLA used its political experiences and historical memories of the liberation struggle to construct the official history of Angola, by constituting a script that is composed of various rules that define formats of memory and commemoration.[7] Akin to what Terence Ranger deemed 'patriotic history' in Zimbabwe, the MPLA's liberation script sets similar predicates: loyal militants must defend its role as the only liberation movement in Angola, and oppose all those who challenge its hegemony, either internally or externally, or challenge the leadership and memory of Agostinho Neto.[8] Drawing on Messiant's work, I propose to read the liberation script developed by the MPLA in light of four points:

1 The MPLA as the only legitimate liberation movement;
2 The war against internal and external enemies, namely imperialism and its puppets in Angola, the UPA/FNLA and UNITA;
3 The repression of all kinds of dissent within the MPLA;
4 The silencing of the internal purges that took place within the movement.

These elements provide a segmented understanding of the historical trajectory of the movement, the narratives of domination it constructed about the wars it was involved in, and the ways it sought to legitimise its political hegemony in the country. They also reflect some of the most acute dilemmas in the movement's history since the genesis of the liberation struggle, in large part stemming from the UPA/FNLA's military supremacy over the border between Congo-Leopoldville and Angola, which frustrated many of the MPLA's military incursions against Portuguese colonialism. The weight of these early years in shaping the movement's political character and in the subsequent establishment of official memory lines is evident in the narratives, products and practices of memory it produced in the 1970s and 1980s and has been practising ever since.

Historian Carlos Pacheco, wrote that 'forgetting the past (i.e. everything that does not interest the party's mythical narratives) is a weapon of the utmost importance in the MPLA's ideological arsenal.'[9] Indeed, as Messiant and Martins explain, the control of historical discourse and memory narratives has been one of the resources most used by the MPLA both to legitimise and maintain its power.[10] Several debates and unresolved controversies in Angola provide ample evidence of this process.

First and foremost is the format of the declaration of independence, which several opposition figures, particularly linked to the FNLA, accuse of having been partisan, since it was declared by Agostinho Neto in the name of the MPLA's Central Committee and not on behalf of all Angolan people. As the FNLA made public in a long, historically relevant communiqué relative to the celebrations of independence in 2004:

> Independence was proclaimed in Luanda on November 11, 1975 by Dr. Agostinho Neto, not in the name of the patriots, the nationalists, the guerrillas and

> all layers of the population who fought against the colonial yoke, but exclusively in the name of his movement, the MPLA. This configured a partisan independence and instilled similar reactions from the two other Movements who signed the Alvor Accord, by proclaiming another Republic, also partisan in nature, in Huambo. (…) 29 years after independence, instead of cultivating the politics of tolerance, of healing, making the past a reference for us to consider our actions in the present and in the future, we are reliving the colonialist politics of cultivating hatred and rancour among Angolans. (…) It is for this reason that our party believes that truth is not the daughter of governments but of the times.[11]

The FNLA unequivocally underscores the dimension pointed out by Messiant regarding the role the MPLA assumes in the country's official history as the legitimate and only liberation movement. This is a configuration that takes various formats among the multitude of practices and mnemonic products that make up public memory in Angola. Legislation informed by historical events underlines this very dimension. The law of national holidays of 2011, which, as Jon Schubert noted, relegated to second place the 15 March 1961, the date of the beginning of the war in northern Angola led by the FNLA, which for Portugal marks the beginning of the colonial war, from a bank holiday to a day of celebration, with the intention of remembering the 'expansion of the armed struggle for national liberation'; at the same time that it promoted 4 February 1961, the day of the attacks on several points of colonial power in Luanda, including the São Paulo prison, which the MPLA claims authorship of, to be a bank holiday and the day of the beginning of the liberation struggle.[12]

In fact, the contents of the generality of celebrations, especially of independence, but also days of celebration, from the day of the National Hero, which is Agostinho Neto, to the Youth Day which commemorates the life of Hoji ya Henda, or Women's Day, which remembers the Heroines of Angola, are dates that celebrate figures and events solely related to the history of MPLA.

The symbols of the state, the names of streets and schools, the semiotics of the currency and the flag, the lyrics of the anthem with references to the heroes of the 4 February, following a Marxist-Leninist tendency ontologically adapted to an

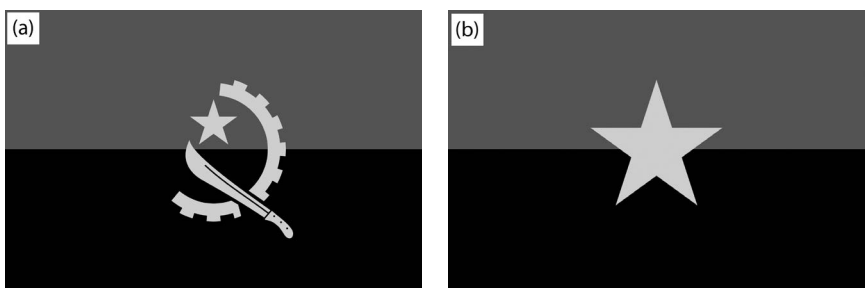

Figure 2.1 (a) Flag of the Republic of Angola. (b) Flag of the MPLA.

African context based on the logic of revolution, popular power and the construction of a new man, are some of the elements that aimed to position the MPLA as the dominant force with a hegemonic political identity.

Since 1975, one of the MPLA's main objectives was to establish and disseminate its own historical narratives, which included the mnemonic removal of all opponents, internal and external, in an attempt to shape and adapt public memory about the liberation struggle. To do this it embarked on a 'partisan nation-building process in an effort to secure hegemony. School syllabuses, the media and the political education carried out by the MPLA presented the party as the embodiment of the Angolan nation.'[13] This political body, which defined the party-state, defended its unity above all by silencing controversial aspects, such as the internal purging of the 27 of May or the case of Matias Migueis, but also dissidences, such as the Eastern Revolt or the Active Revolt, or even Viriato da Cruz and Mário Pinto de Andrade.[14] However, the overwhelming majority of these partisan national elements, as well as the narrowing of history and memory in favour of a single homogenised and hegemonic version, are above all an original figure of the 1970s and 1980s that has been prolonged over time.

Elsewhere I developed the concept of gradations of memory, a concept that aides in conciliating the contrasts of 'memories that deviate in certain respects from the hegemonic narrative without contradicting, negating or colliding with it entirely, but mostly assuming a less politicized stance.'[15] The concept proposes new ways of reading politics of memory by showing that a memory or collection of memories are 'never binary and exclusive but always comprise(s) multiple locations along a spectrum, creating gradations that do not entirely challenge ossified narratives but may not accord with them either.'[16] Gradations of memory are particularly useful to analyse products and practices of memory in a diachronic fashion, when subjected to changes in the political regime and the inevitable passage of time, two elements that I argue, are essential to analyse the political character of a memory, given its mutability and metamorphic tendency. As such, the concept raises important questions regarding the impact of democracy and democratic rule in memory making, questions that are central to this chapter. What were the impacts brought by the establishment of a democratic regime in post-1992 Angola? Did democracy encourage the MPLA to adopt mechanisms of mnemonic pluralism or did it maintain the adaptation of memory in favour of a politicised history?

During almost 30 years of civil war the MPLA managed to maintain control of the government even when its capacity to materialise a state apparatus and bureaucracy in conflict areas was weak. In the areas it controlled, especially the cities and coastal areas, the MPLA installed a one-party regime guided by its own distinctive socialism, a regime that lasted until its Third Congress in 1992, when it definitively abandoned the socialist model in favour of a democratic regime with a market economy. In this phase of Angola's history, an economy of memory emerged, configured by the activation or deactivation of mnemonic narratives depending on short-term political needs.[17] The political transition of the early 1990s in Angola did more than abolish the socialist model and its cultural practices. It challenged and altered the regime of memory, created new forms and rules of invocation for

the same memories and, most importantly, de-emphasised the liberation script that had been central in memory making during previous decades.[18] As in several other countries, in the 1990s Angola also became a market democracy oriented towards international capitalism, a regime that found little value in invoking the memory of the liberation struggle.

Jay Winter states that 'the process of democratisation incurs the termination of socially acceptable silences about what happened in the pre-democratic period,' although he concedes that there have been cases where silence has been followed by 'completely ambiguous narratives of the regimes' crimes.'[19] Angola's case seems to follow the proposal of silence and ambiguity with the past. A critical reading of the liberal promises of democracy suggests that the impact of democratisation processes – as normative albeit illusive, procedural forms of openness and plural discussion – upon the Angolan regime of memory requires better conceptualisation. The subordination of the memories of Angola's liberation struggle in the democratic period must be analysed considering a holistic, yet pragmatic reading of the forces and limitations that constituted the very process of democratic state formation. One example is illustrative of this need: Angolan sources working in the Ministry of Education in 1991/1992 spoke of a paralysis of the services when it became necessary to democratise the school curricula away from the MPLA's single party narrative. Lacking sufficient information and human resources to update history textbooks, the solution found was to remove the entire section on the liberation struggle rather than adding new content to diversify the previous heroic narrative focused on the MPLA's contribution.[20] In the early 1990s, sufficient studies published on the Angolan liberation struggle did not exist. What information was available was scattered and remained politically sensitive. This example demonstrates that the explanatory power of politics of memory in reading the political intention to silence or celebrate specific themes can be determined by very pragmatic, institutional and, indeed, human limitations.

Nevertheless, major memory frameworks continue to be guided by political decisions. Winter is right when concluding that 'democracies also have their silences, and they are probably more insidious because they seem to be forced without visible coercion.'[21] Indeed, from the moment Angola abandoned the socialist model and became a market economy, many aspects of society began to change. Tony Hodges described the democratic transition as 'taking place in a moral and ideological vacuum due to the abandonment of Marxism-Leninism,' which ended up producing a 'form of capitalism in which a handful of prominent families, politically linked to the regime (now firmly anchored in the presidency rather than the former "vanguard party"), exploited opportunities for self-enrichment.'[22] The democratic process, which translated into greater political control of the MPLA over Angolan society, especially after the civil war, gradually faded the memory of the liberation struggle, which no longer matched neither the narratives of the economic liberalism the Angolan government sought to implement in Angola nor the historical reality of the country, which had been engulfed in a civil war that lasted 27 years. The public space occupied by the narrative of the liberation struggle was replaced by new *raisons d'être* more attractive to the political elites, as was the construction

of a country open to international markets with development prospects that promised to rival the United Arab Emirates and the Asian tigers. The end of the war had finally made possible the unbridled development the Angolan government so desperately sought, relegating the urgencies of reconciliation to second place, and, at the bottom of the list of priorities, attention to the plurality of memories that constitute the history of the liberation struggle other than the one it vehiculated. The next section unpacks the silences and controversies of histories and memories other than those of the MPLA cosmology.

The logics of silence: the FNLA and UNITA

The memory policies of the FNLA and UNITA are defined differently, not only between them but especially in relation to the historical memory made official by the MPLA. If on the part of the FNLA, there is an open opposition to the mnemonic hegemony of the MPLA, assuming a format of counter-memory, for UNITA the silencing imposed upon it by the MPLA's liberation script is not really contested. In stark contrast to the FNLA, and little concerned with the controversies of the liberation period, UNITA has a vested interest in focusing the narrative elsewhere on another equally fracturing topic of recent Angolan history, that of claiming authorship for the transition to democracy.

The FNLA is the only party capable of politically challenging the MPLA's hegemonic domination over the history of the liberation struggle, since during the entire period of the war it fought against Portuguese colonialism – and against the MPLA – having succeeded in militarily occupying large areas of Angola's territory. In fact, from the coloniser's point of view, the FNLA was always a threat on a par with, and sometimes more urgent than, the MPLA itself. The army it created, the Army of National Liberation of Angola (Exército de Libertação Nacional de Angola), directly supported by the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, later Zaire, in the person of President Mobutu Sese Seko, had always presented a significant threat and a point of constant tension during the war. However, it is in the conflict between the MPLA and FNLA during the first years of the liberation war that the dispute over the memory and legacy of the liberation struggle originates.

Douglas Wheeler and René Pélissier argue that 'the mistrust and hatred accumulated in 1961 weighed heavily on Angola's future.'[23] A mistrust and a hatred that manifested not only between Angolans and the Portuguese but between Angolan liberation movements. Two aspects, in particular, characterise the FNLA's mistrust and opposition to the MPLA: one genealogical, concerned with autochthony, another diplomatic and military.

For several years during the liberation struggle, the FNLA's legitimation narrative was based on contesting the MPLA's credibility on racial grounds. The movement accused the MPLA of having colonial roots, of being led by the children of the colonialists, assimilated and privileged, denying it any Angolanness and consequently removing the nationalist character from its struggle.[24] The FNLA used the presence of white and mestizo individuals in the MPLA to characterise it as a

movement that sought to preserve Portuguese colonial presence in Angola, casting a dangerous shadow over its nationalist legitimacy and anti-colonial aspirations. Albeit one of the most central accusations made by the FNLA, no memory lingers of this politically discrediting narrative. The mnemonic narrative that does perdure and pushes the MPLA to subordinate the historical memories of the UPA/FNLA is based on old logics, not only of exasperated diplomatic competition, but also on the UPA/FNLA's blockage to the MPLA's military actions to fight Portuguese colonialism, and even on the perverse physical elimination of guerrillas and militants.[25]

The material needs of conducting a guerrilla struggle and the obligation to resort to diplomatic sponsorship to wage war against a colonial regime were met by the support the movements obtained from other countries. The most obvious way of achieving this, particularly at a time the alignments of the Cold War had not yet penetrated the nationalist dynamics of the country, was through the recognition of the Organisation of African Unity – today the African Union – which indicated to its member states which movement should be supported financially, diplomatically and materially. Holden Roberto, former leader of the FNLA, called it the war for recognition, the war the movements waged among themselves to gain political, diplomatic and military space, a destructive competition between the UPA/FNLA and the MPLA. This period of Angola's recent history is marked by the continuing deterioration of relations between these two movements, damaged by the brutality of military conflict, political intrigue and disputes over legitimacy. Adding to the animosity between the two movements are the very complex events of 1975, not only in the context of the transitional government, but above all the prelude to civil war in Luanda in the same year already with the involvement of various regional and international actors. With the expulsion of the FNLA and UNITA by the MPLA from Luanda in 1975, and after the failure of their military offensive to prevent the MPLA's declaration of independence, the FNLA became a spent force, both militarily and politically. Considering the continuing decline of the FNLA's political importance in contemporary Angolan society, one of its most vocal points of contestation has been against the MPLA's alleged marginalisation and sometimes exclusion of its role in the national liberation struggle. This is the founding premise that informs the mnemonic contestation spearheaded by the FNLA during national commemorative dates and events.

Cardina defines counter-memories as 'a memory that is not only defined as different and subaltern in relation to certain dominant memories, but also capable of challenging the topics through which certain readings become hegemonic.'[26] This is a useful premise to analyse how the FNLA seeks to claim its legitimacy as a precursor to national liberation. Struggling to generate any substantial political opposition due to its marginal influence in the Angolan political arena, the FNLA resorts to history, mainly to what it perceives to be the MPLA's exaggerated claims about the extent of its social mobilisation and military capabilities during the liberation war. This has been the predominant theme in the very few memory products produced about the FNLA. It is evident in the book *O Pai do Nacionalismo Angolano* by João Paulo Nganga, in Holden Roberto's and Ngola Kabangu's statements in the documentary *A Guerra* directed by Joaquim Furtado for RTP1, and in the various

statements the party has produced about national holidays, heroes, decorations and other events of national importance, including national independence, as discussed above.[27] These counter-memories are configured as narratives that aim to challenge the MPLA's hegemonic readings of Angolan history, although they have a limited reach, tied to the FNLA's scant political influence and therefore little capacity for signification and projection in the public sphere.

UNITA's official narrative of the liberation struggle differs from that of the other two movements for very particular reasons. Aware of its own controversies, UNITA prefers to claim the epithet of 'founder of Angolan democracy,' a claim that silences its timid military opposition to Portuguese colonialism. However, the party proudly displays its liberation credentials when referring to one dimension in particular, the political thought it developed during that period and informed the Muangai Declaration, a political document woven at the time of its foundation as a liberation movement in 1966 in Muangai, Moxico province. The Muangai Declaration, a document still relevant today both as a narrative mechanism and a political project for Angola, symbolises UNITA's most vivid link to the history of the liberation struggle and the most central format of politicisation of its own memory of the struggle. Muangai is governed by five inalienable principles, which the movement and the party have always defended and referenced:

1 Freedom and total independence for men and for the mother country;
2 Democracy ensured by the vote of the people through various political parties;
3 Sovereignty expressed and impregnated in the will of the people to have friends and allies, always prioritising the interests of Angolans;
4 Equality among all Angolans in the Country of their birth;
5 In the search of economic solutions, prioritise the countryside to benefit the city.

At the basis of Muangai was Jonas Savimbi's political thought, informed by an ideological format of liberation different from the generality of the cases that constituted liberation movements in Southern Africa, more aligned with Marxism-Leninism, as was the case with the MPLA. UNITA found in Maoism answers for organisation, mobilisation and philosophies of alliance-seeking, as it took on a strong dimension of black socialism and Africanism during the 1960s and 1970s. Between advances and retreats, contradictions and volte-faces, UNITA worked relentlessly to become a popular epitome of democracy in Angola in the 1980s, largely due to its association with the United States. Muangai survived through all these most troubled times of Angola's recent history and is today increasingly invoked by various sectors of Angolan society as a true alternative to the MPLA's rule.[28]

Although there is no official written history of UNITA during the Angolan liberation struggle, the movement had time to develop politically and mobilise the population in its areas of intervention without much interference from the colonial state. Its first attack against Portuguese colonialism took place on 25 December 1966, against a military compound in Teixeira de Sousa (today Luau). It is noteworthy that the attack of December 25 became a bank holiday for a short time,

ironically legislated during the Transitional Government by Angola's High Commissioner Silva Cardoso on 3 February 1975, and accepted by the representatives of the three liberation movements:

> Considering that it is the duty of the transitional government of Angola to praise the primordial deeds carried out during the national liberation struggle by the three liberation movements, the FNLA, the MPLA and UNITA; having in consideration the historical meaning to the liberation struggle of Angola the dates: 4 February 1961, attack to the prisons of Luanda, directed by the MPLA; 15 March 1961, generalised attack in the north of Angola directed by the UPA (FNLA); 25 December 1966, attack to Teixeira de Sousa, directed by UNITA. Using the faculty conferred by chapters II and III of the Alvor Agreement, the Transitional Government decrees and I promulgate the following: Sole Article – The 4th of February, the 15th of March and the 25th of December are considered holidays throughout the national territory, and workers are entitled to their wages. Approved by the Council of Ministers – Johnny Eduardo, Lopo do Nascimento and José N'Dele. The High Commissioner, General Silva Cardoso.[29]

Although the date figured as a bank holiday during the brief period of the transitional government that was formed after the Alvor Agreements, it never rivalled the 4 February or 15 March.

Throughout the liberation struggle UNITA was, in military terms, a force with little operational capacity, mainly due to its very limited access to weapons, although the movement did count successes in terms of popular mobilisation. However, there is a controversial episode that accompanies the history and contribution of UNITA to the liberation struggle against Portuguese colonialism, a history constantly refuted by its militants and cadres, but sufficiently well documented, which alludes to the non-aggression pact and subsequent collaboration agreement UNITA negotiated with the Portuguese armed forces in the 1970s. The pact entailed that UNITA would attack MPLA and FNLA camps and groups but not Portuguese troops under any pretext; assigned an implementation area to UNITA, which UNITA guerrillas and Portuguese troops could not violate; stipulated that if UNITA had knowledge of the location of enemy camps of other movements it should inform the Portuguese forces; and the Portuguese authorities pledged to provide support to the population and to UNITA residents in the area.[30]

The first evidence that something highly irregular and controversial had taken place appeared in a publication of the magazine Afrique-Asie, directed by Aquino de Bragança, in an article titled 'Un document explosive – Angola: la longue trahison de L'U.N.I.T.A.'[31] The article presented four letters exchanged between Jonas Savimbi, the founder of UNITA and Portuguese army officials.[32]

The theme was explored by William Minter in the book *Operation Timber: pages from the Savimbi dossier*, in which the author analyses a series of letters exchanged between Jonas Savimbi and the Portuguese armed forces, correspondence that was mediated by Portuguese loggers who operated in the forests of Moxico,

UNITA's only area of influence during the liberation struggle and the site where the battles between the movements and the Portuguese army took place after 1968. The loggers were the first point of contact between UNITA and the Portuguese military, so the latter called their contacts with UNITA's leader Operation Timber.

Minter describes four phases that marked this relationship: the search for negotiation between September and October 1971; the formalisation of the pact between November 1971 and February 1972; the pact put into practice, between September 1972 and May 1973; and finally, friction and reconciliation between January and June 1974, a period that exceeds the *coup d'état* of 25 April 1974 in Portugal. Towards the end of the war, the agreement was violated by UNITA, which began to attack Portuguese forces. This last phase marks the end of Operation Timber and the beginning of negotiations, first through a timber merchant named Zeca Oliveira and a priest named António Araújo de Oliveira, which eventually led to the ceasefire between UNITA and the Portuguese army, signed in June 1974, the first signing of a ceasefire between an Angolan liberation movement and the Portuguese armed forces.[33]

According to historian Mabeko-Tali there were contacts between Jonas Savimbi and the military leaders of the MPLA after the Inter-Regional Conference in 1974 which the latter organised in the east of Angola. In these contacts, Jonas Savimbi made an ideological approach to the MPLA, which, according to Mabeko-Tali, was not followed up, since 'the MPLA was perfectly aware of UNITA's collaboration with the colonial troops, but was probably unaware of its scope.'[34] After the publication of the letters by Afrique-Asie magazine, only a month after the ceasefire was signed, the MPLA accused UNITA of being a Portuguese creation and Savimbi a 'puppet of Lisbon,' which made any possibility of coalition or rapprochement with the MPLA impossible. On its side, UNITA has always denied any association with Portuguese colonialism. In the documentary *A Guerra*, produced more than 30 years after the end of Operation Timber, Samuel Chiwale, one of UNITA's major figures and founder of the movement in 1966, states that,

> A truce between UNITA and the Portuguese army? I cannot confirm because there never was one. (…) Letters written by Dr Savimbi to Zeca, to Acácio, who were loggers? I can confirm. Even for João, I confirm. But to the Portuguese army? Never, this is a lie.[35]

Since UNITA was accepted as one of the movements representing the Angolan people by the Portuguese state in the Alvor Accords, it managed to publicly affirm itself as a legitimate liberation movement, a virtue vehemently contested by the MPLA since independence with more or less intensity depending on the political context. But Angolan society never had a comprehensive debate on Operation Timber and its historical and political significance beyond the occasional discussion in more or less closed academic circles. Each party tends to recite their scripted monologue without room for the presentation of evidence, accusation, contradiction or independent arbitration. However, 11 years after the end of the civil war, in 2013, at a time UNITA was beginning to reorganise itself, its contribution as a

liberation movement began to timidly re-enter the public sphere, partly motivated by Isaías Samakuva's 2013 speech at the Opening of the III Ordinary Meeting of the Political Commission, in which he contested the MPLA's historical memory in an unorthodox manner:

> Three movements fought, arms in hand, for Angola's independence. Of these, only one retained the word 'independence' in its name. The other two used the word liberation to designate their objectives: Movimento Popular para a Libertação de Angola and Frente Nacional para Libertação de Angola. By adopting the name União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola), UNITA brought to the attention of the political community two fundamental values for the construction of the Angolan nation: independence and national unity.[36]

Several parts of the speech followed the points outlined in the Muangai Declaration 47 years after its creation. Samakuva stated that since its foundation in 1966 UNITA had identified the MPLA as being against Angolan independence and against the unity of Angolans; and, as in 1975, 'the economic structure of Angola is unbalanced. It is externally supported and outward looking when protecting the interests of the dictatorship.'[37] As Pearce puts it, Samakuva 'frames the contemporary political situation in Angola as the subjugation of a nation by an alien power. This places UNITA in a role in which political opposition merges with national liberation.'[38] This is the narrative UNITA uses when referring to the memory of the national liberation struggle. Unlike the other two movements, it focuses not on the episodes, deeds and heroes of the struggle, but rather on the political defence it made and continues to make of national independence – enmeshed with democratic credentials – of the economic sovereignty of the Angolan people and of equality without exception for all Angolans, elements which feature in the Muangai declaration. Mungai continues to represent the main reason allowing UNITA to claim a place in the memory of national liberation, a place that it fills not with the memories of strong military action but with political ideology and indeed, a project for a truly independent Angola.

Conclusion

A comprehensive reading of the MPLA's memory policies reveals that it has constituted itself as a monolithic memory block, opaque to the Angolan collective, eagerly devoted to present itself sanitised of polemics to guarantee the continuity of its political legitimacy. The cleansing of historical polemics and controversies, and the replacement and silencing of the memory of the genesis of the nation, promoted the creation of a dominant memory, procedurally democratic, but closed in itself, a memory that aims to reward the winner of all conflicts, dissidences and controversies without ever exploring and explaining them, symbolised in the eyes of the population as an MPLA cosmology. The reason why this hegemonic narrative remains prominent is due to the weakness of its contestants, the FNLA and UNITA, in either

harnessing sufficient political power in present times to vehemently contest it – in the case of the FNLA – or in actually being able to resort to solid credentials in what concerns the participation in the liberation struggle in the case of UNITA. To add more geological dust to this complex archaeology, UNITA enmeshes liberation with democracy and with its very particular project for Angola, in the form of the Muangai declaration. The result is a mnemonic opposition with little teeth that is thoroughly mixed with Angola's post-independence predicaments, a complicated invocation and use of historical memory that is nevertheless put more in the service of present political disputes than in sorting the history of the country.

Notes

1 Christine Messiant, "'Chez nous, même le passé est imprévisible': l'experience d'une recherche sur le nationalism angolais," *Lusotopie* 5 (1998): 157–97.
2 The 4 February and the 15 March are the dates of two important anti-colonial events whose authorship is claimed by the MPLA and the FNLA, respectively. These events represent a dispute within the politics of memory of Angola, particularly since both are claimed as the starting date of the Angolan armed struggle for national liberation.
3 See René Pélissier, *História das Campanhas de Angola: Resistência e Revoltas 1845–1941* (Lisboa: Editorial Estampa, 1986).
4 Messiant, "Chez nous," 159.
5 Messiant, "Chez nous," 161–2.
6 João Paulo Borges Coelho, "Politics and Contemporary History in Mozambique: A Set of Epistemological Notes," *Kronos* 39, no. 1 (2013): 10–19.
7 Vasco Martins, "Hegemony, Resistance and Gradations of Memory: The Politics of Remembering Angola's Liberation Struggle," *History & Memory* 33, no. 2 (2021): 80–106.
8 Terence Ranger, "Nationalist Historiography, Patriotic History and the History of the Nation: The Struggle over the Past in Zimbabwe," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 30, no. 2 (2004): 215–34.
9 Carlos Pacheco, "Dança macabra de perversidade: conluio com os assassinos de Estado," *Público*, 31 January 2021.
10 Messiant, "Chez nous" and Martins, "Hegemony."
11 "A verdade histórica procura-se," *Folha 8*, November 20, 2004.
12 John Schubert, "2002, Year Zero: History as Anti-Politics in the 'New Angola'," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 41, no. 4 (2015): 6.
13 Justin Pearce, "Contesting the Past in Angolan Politics," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 41, no. 1 (2015): 107–8.
14 On the silencing of factions within the MPLA, such as the dissidence of Viriato da Cruz, the Revolta de Leste or the Revolta Activa (two dissident movements that challenges the presidency of Agostinho Neto in the MPLA) see Jean Michel Mabeko-Tali, *Guerrilhas e lutas sociais: o MPLA perante si próprio, 1960–1977* (Lisboa: Mercado das Letras, 2018). On the 27 May 1977, see Lara Pawson, *In the Name of the People*: *Angola's Forgotten Massacre* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2014); and Dalila Mateus and Álvaro Mateus, *Purga em Angola, o 27 de Maio de 1977* (Alfragide: Texto Editores, 2009).
15 Vasco Martins, "Hegemony," 14.
16 Vasco Martins, "Hegemony," 20.
17 Vasco Martins, "Grande Herói da Banda: The political uses of the memory of Hoji ya Henda in Angola," *Journal of African History* 63, no. 2 (2022): 246.
18 By regimes of memory, I resort to Susannah Radstone and Katharine Hodgkin when noting that 'what is understood as history and as memory is produced by historically

specific and contestable systems of knowledge and power and that what history and memory produce as knowledge is also contingent upon the (contestable) systems of knowledge and power that produce them.' See Susannah Radstone and Katharine Hodgkin, 'Regimes of memory, an introduction,' in *Memory Cultures: Memory, Subjectivity and Recognition*, eds. Susannah Radstone and Katharine Hodgkin (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2005), 11.

19 Jay Winter, "Thinking about Silence," in *Shadows of War: A Social History of Silence in the Twentieth Century*, eds. Efrat Ben-Ze'ev, Ruth Ginio and Jay Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 29.

20 Informal, unrecorded conversation with people involved in the revision of the history school curriculum in the beginning of the 1990s, Luanda, 2019.

21 Winter, "Thinking about Silence," 29.

22 Tony Hodges, *Angola: Anatomy of an Oil State* (Oxford: James Currey, 2004), 21.

23 Douglas Wheeler and René Pélissier, *História de Angola* (Lisboa: Tinta da China, 2011), 206.

24 Mabeko-Tali, "Guerrilhas e lutas sociais," 455.

25 The assassination of the heroines of Angola, particularly of Deolinda Rodrigues who had been a prominent member of the MPLA, is one of the issues that most defined this mnemonic agenda.

26 Miguel Cardina, "Deserção de antigos oficiais alunos da academia militar," in *As Voltas do Passado: A guerra colonial e as lutas de libertação*, eds. Miguel Cardina and Bruno Sena Martins (Lisboa: Tinta da China, 2017), 203.

27 João Paulo N'Ganga, *O pai do nacionalismo Angolano: As memórias de Holden Roberto*, vol. 1, *1923–1974* (São Paulo: Editora Parma, 2008), 135. *A Guerra*, documentary series directed by Joaquim Furtado for the Portuguese national television.

28 On the search for alternatives to the MPLA and the uses of the memory of Jonas Savimbi see Vasco Martins, "'A nossa lâmpada não se apaga': The Mnemonic Return of Angola's Jonas Savimbi," *African Studies Review* 64, no. 1 (2021): 242–65. On the uses of the Muangai Project, see Justin Pearce, "From Rebellion to Opposition: UNITA's Social Engagement in Post-War Angola," *Government and Opposition* 55, no. 3 (2020): 474–89.

29 Paulo Gaião, "O feriado nacional da matança dos colonos brancos em Angola," *Expresso*, December 17, 2012, https://expresso.pt/blogues/blogue_paulo_gaiao/o-feriado-nacional-da-matanca-dos-colonos-brancos-em-angola=f774386.

30 Emídio Fernando, *Jonas Savimbi: no lado errado da história* (Lisboa: Dom Quixote: 2012), 125. Operation Timber, led by General Bethencourt Rodrigues and Commander Costa Gomes, inflicted a serious military blow to the other nationalist movements, having allowed colonial troops, supported by the PIDE-DGS to eliminate several military bases of the FNLA and the MPLA in the Eastern Front.

31 Jack Bourderie, "Un document explosif – Angola : la longue trahison de L'U.N.I.T.A.," *Afrique-Asie* 61 (8 July 1974): 7–17.

32 Four letters were published in this volume: letter from Jonas Savimbi to General Luz Cunha on 26 September 1972; letter from Jonas Savimbi to Lieutenant-Colonel Ramires de Oliveira on 25 October 1972; letter from Lieutenant-Colonel Ramires de Oliveira to Jonas Savimbi on 4 November 1972, and letter from Jonas Savimbi to Lieutenant-Colonel Ramires de Oliveira on 7 November 1972.

33 António Oliveira, *O Padre de Savimbi* (Lisbon: Alêtheia, 2017). In it, Oliveira details the encounters he had with Savimbi and other UNITA cadres.

34 Mabeko-Tali, "Guerrilhas e lutas sociais," 455.

35 Samuel Chiwale's testimonial to the documentary *A Guerra*.

36 Jorge Eduardo, "Discurso do Presidente Samakuva na Abertura da III Reunião da Comissão Política," *Portal de Angola*, November 8, 2013, https://www.portaldeangola.com/2013/11/08/discurso-do-presidente-samakuva-na-abertura-da-iii-reuniao-da-comissao-politica/.

37 Jorge Eduardo, "Discurso do Presidente Samakuva."
38 Pearce, "From Rebellion to Opposition," 8–9.

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Press

Expresso, Folha 8, Público

3 The liberation struggle and the politics of heroism in Mozambique

The war veterans as remains of memory

Natália Bueno and Bruno Sena Martins

Introduction

In 1979, four years after Mozambique became independent, a star-shaped monument was built to house the mortal remains of the nation's heroes and thus pay tribute to their participation in the Liberation Struggle (1964–1974). Eduardo Mondlane, Josina Machel, and Samora Machel are among those represented in the monument, which stands in the *Praça dos Heróis* in Maputo. Their celebration as heroes also materialised in the form of statues erected throughout the country and the dedication of the years 2009 and 2011 to the "year of Eduardo Mondlane" and "year of Samora Machel", respectively. As in many national narratives, in Mozambique the memorialisation of the struggle for independence and the public representation of its heroes have become the pillars of a public memory which overlaps with the nation state. The legitimating quality of heroic memorialisation is evident and therefore "serves to strengthen the bonds between citizens or members of the political community by representing the values of the community, or by enacting real or symbolic victories over outsiders".[1]

In the case of Mozambique, the centrality of the memory of the liberation struggle, as the mainstay of the national community, structures – and is structured by – the continuity between the FRELIMO that led the anticolonial war (1964–1974) and the FRELIMO which has governed the country uninterruptedly, from independence to the present day. João Paulo Borges Coelho summarises the master narrative in which the events that took place in the multiple geographies and temporalities of the liberation struggle are set. According to this author, the liberation struggle was codified

> as a grand narrative with the simple structure of a fable, starting symbolically with an act of colonial aggression (the Mueda massacre, corresponding other identical phenomena such as the 1959 Pidjiguiti massacre in Guinea-Bissau, or the wave of repression in response to the attack on the Luanda Prison in 1961 in Angola, Viriathus in Portugal, etc.), followed by the "first shot" fired by the guerrillas against the colonialists, and unfolding as a heroic story in which the movement gradually purged itself of the burden of the reactionaries (the Second Frelimo Congress) and began to assume greater revolutionary

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> purity. The story is underpinned by a series of binary oppositions (colonialism versus revolution, reactionaries versus revolutionaries, civilians versus soldiers, rural versus urban, etc.) and it is clearly its simplicity that makes it tremendously effective.[2]

As Borges Coelho also notes, it is reasonable to speak of an exaggeration of the status of the liberation struggle within the memoryscape erected and maintained in independent Mozambique, considering, on the one hand, the relative erasure of the colonial past and, on the other hand, the failure to include the civil war (1976–1992) with RENAMO, which would result in a peace agreement in 1992 marking the end of the war and the political transition from socialism to a new democratic order.[3] In this sense, recognising "[the] status of the liberation struggle as the only experience"[4] involves understanding how FRELIMO forged a revolutionary chronology in which the splendour of the armed struggle and the innovation brought from the liberated zones defined the new age, either overriding the sad memory of colonialism, meanwhile eradicated, or relegating the essential tensions of the post-independence social experience to a subaltern past.

In this context, the figure of the national hero within the memoryscape of Mozambique should be considered in the light of the processes used, within different political frameworks, to establish and re-establish the liberation struggle as the unifying experience of Mozambican nationalism under the aegis of FRELIMO.[5] The memorialisation of heroic figures from the liberation struggle[6] bequeaths to the future a form of exaltation inscribed in the same grammar of meaning used for the past, in which "the figure of the enemy inspired the construction of a shared national consciousness".[7] It is in the light of this contraposition, reaffirming Portuguese colonial power as the original enemy, that the process which led to the gradual recovery and veneration of the figure of Ngungunhane[8] should be understood within the Mozambican political memory.[9] In fact, as Maria Paula Meneses demonstrates,[10] the figure of the enemy was crucial to the construction of a Mozambican nationalism within the anticolonial struggle, for FRELIMO's transition from a liberation movement to a vanguard party, and for the affirmation of different political projects over the course of time. Hence, the enemy was, in succession, Portuguese colonialism, Rhodesia, South Africa and its allies, and a category of Mozambicans accused of acting as "internal enemies". These "internal enemies" included the following: troops who joined the Portuguese army's war effort, in particular those belonging to the Commandos, Special Forces, and Special Paratrooper Units; individuals who collaborated with the PIDE; members of the Provincial Volunteer and Civil Defence Organisation (*OPVDC*); members of Mozambican nationalist movements or parties; the traditional and religious authorities; dissidents who did not observe the official FRELIMO line; political prisoners suspected of collaboration; individuals with socially unacceptable behaviour (such as prostitutes) and members of RENAMO.[11]

Despite the grand narrative that gives meaning to the heroes consecrated by the official memory and the different representations of the enemy, a vast amount of the experiences of Mozambican people retains perspectives on the war of liberation

that are scarcely represented in the shared memory of Mozambique. The concept of shared memory is used here on the basis of the distinction which Avishai Margalit establishes between common memory and shared memory. According to this author, common memory is the aggregate of the individual memories of people who record a particular event. However, shared memory:

> is not a simple aggregate of individual memories. It requires communication. A shared memory integrates and calibrates the different perspectives of those who remember the episode – for example, the memory of the people who were in the square, each experiencing only a fragment of what happened from their unique angle on events – into one version. Other people in the community who were not there at the time may then be plugged into the experience of those who were in the square, through channels of description rather that by direct experience. Shared memory is built on a division of mnemonic labour.[12]

Given the relatively circumscribed nature of the geography of the liberation struggle and the fact that a large percentage of Mozambicans belong to a generation born after 1974, the memory of the liberation struggle, considered here as a "shared memory", depends on a "division of mnemonic labour" between those who experienced the struggle and those who access it through various communications channels. This chapter specifically aims to recognise the bearers of what we call "rarely shared memories" of the liberation struggle, in particular the war disabled. In territory far removed from the politics of exaltation and demonisation that define the epic of the struggle, there are countless veterans and communities who have first-hand experience of the events of war. Starting with the monuments to the national heroes erected in Maputo, we then travelled to the far north, to Nangade in the province of Cabo Delgado, to recover the voices of FRELIMO veterans whose experiences of war have been defined by physical disability.

The politics of heroism in Mozambique

Judith Butler developed the concept of "frames of war" to refer to structures of intelligibility which, with the support of communities of belonging (in modern times codified in the form of nation states), seek to confer meaning and legitimacy on armed violence. Under different formulations, these frames are firmly linked to the idea that "[war] is precisely an effort to minimize precariousness for some and to maximize it for others".[13] From this perspective, defending the war effort involves accepting that the precariousness and exposure to violence which this instils in "us", as well as the enemy, is justifiable to the extent that it deals with (or avenges) greater precariousness. This acceptance is crucial for the social mobilisation required to start an armed conflict and the continuing support of populations throughout the war effort, but also for the revisitation and remembrance of the place of war in representations of the past.

As Jay Winter observes,[14] the delegitimation of war is, to a large extent, the delegitimation of the powers of the state. Since the opposite also applies, the link between the memory of war and the legitimacy of the ruling powers is particularly deep in the case of conflicts such as the liberation struggle in Mozambique, which are celebrated as the founding moment of the nation state and the national community. We are dealing here with what Jay Winter[15] terms "frameworks of memory", referring to the languages and iconographies that make up the memoryscapes through which war is laboriously inscribed in collective memories. These mnemonic frameworks enable us to understand how war is perceived in various ways in different social contexts, whether in terms of the different iconographies of public representations – statues, street names, films, novels – or the place occupied, for example, by the veneration of individual heroes, representations of martyrdom or revolutionary sacrifice, or elegies to the unknown soldier. In the same sense, the "frameworks of memory" also call for an analysis of the establishment and reinscription of particular tropes, such as those embodied in the heroic narratives of individual nation states.

The heroicisation or construction of national heroes is an ongoing process that is socially and politically determined and hence subject to reconstruction and reinterpretation over time.[16] Its importance stands out above all in times of uncertainty, namely in the necessary reiteration of a particular social order or in the transition to a new one. In this context, political leaders create a hero as a rallying point to consolidate a sense of shared belonging or to justify and legitimise their objectives.

In the case of Mozambique, Heroes' Day is celebrated on 3 February, a date chosen in homage to the first president of FRELIMO, Eduardo Chivambo Mondlane, who died on 3 February 1969.[17] Although the exact criteria used at the time to attribute the title of hero of the armed struggle for national liberation are unknown, the newspapers of the day offer some clues. "The hero of today", according to a statement released by the Standing Committee on Politics, "is the combatant in the frontline of the political and ideological struggle, production, or armed combat, who is committed, steadfastly and to the maximum extent, to the values of the revolutionary struggle of the Mozambican people and its internationalist dimension".[18]

In order to mark the tenth anniversary of Mondlane's death, the Frelimo Central Committee decided that the commemorations on 3 February 1979 would include the transfer to Mozambique of the bodies of heroes buried abroad, to be laid to rest in a monument built especially for this purpose. Coffins containing the mortal remains of Mondlane, Filipe Samuel Magaia, Mateus Sansão Muthemba, Paulo Samuel Khamkomba, Josina Machel, and Francisco Manyanga were received from Dar es Salaam by an official committee at the airport in the capital, Maputo, and laid to rest in a crypt that had been constructed in the *Praça dos Heróis*. Although it had been built rapidly, the monument has great symbolic significance. As the press noted at the time, the crypt was designed in the shape of a socialist star and, due to the "marble facing, will be illuminated by natural light during the day and by the reflection of the interior electric lighting on the exterior of the monument throughout the night. This means that the monument will always appear as a shining star".[19] Moreover, "in the centre of the chamber there is a place for a torch to be lit, which will always be kept burning".[20]

The celebrations for 3 February illustrate how heroism can be invoked as unifying device. Many of the celebrations that have been held and repeated over time serve to consolidate the importance of the armed struggle for the liberation of the country and the benefits delivered by the combatants, whilst also aiming to encourage the population of the independent nation to emulate their inspiring example. "We have to make sacrifices and give all we can so that the work begun by these fighters is ever greater",[21] stated one worker taking part in the 1979 celebrations.

It is also worth remembering that the Mozambican Heroes' Day celebrations were instrumental in reinforcing the fight against the "enemy". When asked about the best way to honour the heroes, Joaquim Chissano and Jorge Rebelo, members of the political bureau of the FRELIMO Central Committee at the time, stressed that

> the best way is to fight to destroy the armed bandits who are trying to ruin everything our people fought for, for years. The assassins of Eduardo Mondlane, the assassins of all our Heroes and these armed bandits come from the same background, they have the same nature and use the same methods to betray us and commit crimes.[22]

The politics of heroism established institutional roots in 1981 with the approval of Law 8/81, establishing the System for Decorations, Honorary Titles, and Distinctions.[23] Under this law, the honorary title of "Hero of the People's Republic of Mozambique", the "Order of Eduardo Mondlane", and the "Veteran of the Mozambique Liberation Struggle" medal were created as decorations, together with the "15 years in the FPLM" (Popular Liberation Forces of Mozambique) distinction, among others.[24]

In this context, during the celebrations for the 20th anniversary of the founding of FRELIMO and the 7th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, the then President Samora Machel was honoured with the title of Hero of the People's Republic of Mozambique, on 25 June 1982.[25] During the ceremony, other FRELIMO members and activists were also awarded decorations and medals, such as the "Veteran of the Mozambique Liberation Struggle" medal.[26]

A new emphasis was placed on national heroes during the celebrations for the 20th anniversary of the start of the Armed Struggle for National Liberation, in 1984. In a ceremony similar to the one held in 1979, the mortal remains of 13 national heroes were transferred to be laid to rest in the *Praça dos Heróis* crypt on 22 September 1984.[27] As part of the celebrations for the 20th anniversary of the start of the struggle, certain national heroes were also decorated with the "Order of 25th September",[28] including those who had already received the Order of the 20th Anniversary of Frelimo' a few years earlier: Marcelino dos Santos, Alberto Chipande, Sebastião Mabote, Raimundo Pachinuapa, and José Moiane.[29] During the honours ceremony, emphasising the importance of the national heroes, Samora declared: "The hero does not die; he remains forever in the memory of his people, because his life is charged with geography, history and science".[30]

Although they were not always carried out with the same pomp and ceremony reserved for special occasions such as those described above, and were also affected

by the vicissitudes associated with different political and economic contexts, it is valid to argue that the 3 February celebrations, as well as those associated with other public holidays linked to the liberation struggle, kept the exaltation of the struggle and its heroes alive over the years.[31] It should also be noted that this was not only expressed in material terms through the aforementioned titles, decorations and honours, but also by awarding offices and positions to certain important figures in the power apparatus. In this regard, praise and honours for the heroes contrast with the feeling of being forgotten and abandoned experienced by many low-ranking veterans.

On the banks of the Rovuma: "memories rarely shared"

In the context of Africa, colonial violence has forged a complex genealogy involving slavery, wars of occupation, displacements, genocides, forced labour, everyday racism, massacres, and liberation wars. The inclusion of the liberation wars in laudatory narratives does not cancel out the fact that these wars are pervaded with experiences of suffering, including massacres, rapes, arrests, and deaths or injuries in battle. However, unlike other periods defined by the violence of long-term colonialism, these forms of suffering can be remembered within the framework of a triumphal teleology, insofar as they may be viewed as instrumental to achieving independence or, in other words, the end of colonialism and the emergence of sovereign nations. Yet, whilst it is true that many individual and collective experiences can be accommodated within the teleology of sacrifice, this desire crucially depends on the particular place each occupies in an independent society. The confrontation is certainly inescapable for populations and veterans whose memory of war has been inscribed in the form of physical disabilities or recollections relived as post-traumatic experiences. Achille Mbembe refers precisely to this:

> Memory and remembrance put into play a structure of organs, a nervous system, an economy of emotions centered necessarily on the body and everything that exceeds it. (…) All forms of memory therefore find consistent expression in the universe of the senses, imagination, and multiplicity. For this reason, in African countries confronted with the tragedy of war, the memory of death is directly written on the injured or mutilated bodies of survivors, and the remembrance of the event is based on the body and its disabilities. The coupling of imagination and memory enriches our knowledge of both the semantics and the pragmatics of remembrance.[32]

In fact, from the way in which these veterans and other embodied witnesses of the war are "inhabited" by the memory of war, present in the terrors and shock, the wheelchairs, the amputated legs and artificial limbs, the white canes, the ringing in the ears, and the incessant pain, we find a whole range of "vestigial wars".[33] Inscribed in body memories, these wars may be understood as vestigial (in the sense that they are residual and disposable) because of the way in which they resist being shaped by the collective epic of triumphal liberation. Symbolic and socioeconomic

recognition is crucial to ensuring that the individual, private memory of war as suffering is not overridden by the triumphant memories forged within the public memory.

In the context of Mozambique, the issue of recognition for the rights of the veterans of the liberation struggle periodically erupts in the form of protests denouncing the inadequate compensation that is awarded, the bureaucratic obstacles and the delays in granting benefits. The legislative framework which governs social policies allocated pensions for veterans of the national liberation struggle, extraordinary pensions for the Disabled of the Armed Forces of Mozambique (*Deficientes das Forças Armadas de Moçambique* – DFAM) and pensions for relatives of the DFAM, among other benefits. The politics, in this case, are not a matter of honouring individual heroes who merit statues but instead address the situation of thousands of combatants who contributed to national independence. Although socially recognised as heroes, this mass of veterans is overwhelmingly made up of anonymous figures whom the state has come to recognise through welfare and social inclusion policies. It is a matter of granting a modicum of remuneration for their contribution to the nationalist cause and also to compensate for the disruptive impact of war on those permanently marked by the events of the armed struggle, such as the disabled FRELIMO veterans who are a particular focus of this chapter.

In order to grasp the "mnemonic structures" of the war beyond the narrative that has established the pantheon of heroes, we sought out the locus/loci of enunciation of veterans who had become disabled during the liberation struggle. To this end, via an intermediary from the Association for the Disabled of the Armed Forces in Portugal, we were put in contact with the ACLLN (the Association of Veterans of the National Liberation Struggle) which, in addition to indicating some interviewees with this profile in the Maputo area, also suggested a visit to the Mueda Plateau in Cabo Delgado, since the Nangade district headquarters, near the River Rovuma and the border with Tanzania, was the area where accommodation had been provided for disabled veterans from the liberation struggle. In September 1974, FRELIMO had occupied the Portuguese barracks in Nangade and, after 1975, reserved the existing structures for the war disabled. Later, in the twenty-first century, 50 more houses were built to accommodate former soldiers and their families.

In order to meet the veterans resident in Nangade, we received support from the Provincial Delegation of the Cabo Delgado ACCLN, who provided us with transport, accommodation, and, when necessary, assistance with translation for the interviews. Although the conditions for the interviews were defined by the local authorities in Nangade who, in addition to allowing only a short time for each interview also drew up a shortlist which did not, for example, include women,[34] the opportunity to visit a place where a community of disabled veterans and their families lived was, from the outset, a striking example of legacies of war that were different from the models enshrined in the public representation of national heroes.

In addition to a group conversation and some informal conversations, a series of 12 individual interviews were held with disabled veterans (eight of which could be recorded). The veterans, originally from different areas in the northern provinces

of Mozambique, shared the following characteristics: they had joined FRELIMO as youngsters; they had received their political-military training during the struggle in Nachingwea, in Tanzania; they had fought the Portuguese army for long periods of time; they had been wounded in action (by anti-personnel mines or in enemy ambushes) and subsequently lost their sight or their legs and/or arms; they had been living in Nangade since the end of the war (in most cases from as early as 1975), where they remained with their families up to the time of the interview (2012).

In general, the life stories and reflections of these veterans bear witness to a continuing link with FRELIMO and the illustrious memory of the struggle. This is consistent with the broader social recognition of anticolonial veterans in Mozambican society, and the interviewees are aware of this and symbolically proud of it. It also stems from the fact that they are living in Nangade in houses that had been reserved for them and receive a pension, which not only constitutes a material form of recognition on the part of the state but also creates a sense of belonging to a kind of veterans' community. This sense of belonging was very evident in the way in which they responded to the call to assemble in the centre of the village to be interviewed. As soon as the local representative rang the bell, a crowd of disabled women and men were seen to leave their houses, marching with all the discipline of an army, at the pace imposed on each one by the shrapnel of war.

Within this specific framework, a consensual idea emerged of purpose to the armed cause to which they had dedicated themselves, as illustrated in the following extracts:

> But then, this happened because I wanted to free this country. […] I am aware that this had a result for the struggle for national liberation. I had some unforgettable experiences during the liberation struggle. In one day alone we faced four, five attacks! On the same day! Man, I was trying … I was walking that way, and there were shots! Those are moments I don't forget. Moments I don't forget. And the result was just. This is what happened to us and this is the result: we're independent now.[35]
>
> When it happened … when I returned to Nampula, I felt I wanted to go back to living with my family. But the Mozambican government, when they then organised the Nangade centre here, that made me aware. "There's no problem. You go and live with others who have the same problem. The state will give you as much support as it can".[36]
>
> I have no reason to complain! The state hasn't forgotten. The state hasn't forgotten me. *[And do you feel proud to have been part of the struggle for independence?]* I don't have any … only the act, only… I am very… I did a lot! And it's thanks to that that I'm sitting here now![37]

It may be said that having taken part in a victorious war, still acclaimed as a just war nowadays and as the foundation for national independence, provides these veterans with a solid redemptive narrative.[38] However, this narrative does not prevent some from expressing dissatisfaction with the meagre pensions they receive or the difficulties imposed by red tape when they attempt to claim benefits to which they

are entitled, such as a pension for their relatives. Independence as salvation does not mean that their memories of war, far removed from any glorious epic, are not deeply marked by stories of suffering that have lasted to the present day, specifically those relating to the time and lingering nature of the injury that would embed itself in their lives or the experience of witnessing the death of comrades-in arms at first hand:

> I suffered during the war. (…) I was caught in an ambush. The Portuguese soldiers had set up an ambush and I walked into it and during the shooting I was hit… Lead! Lead! A real bullet. (…) After the attack I got away, I spent six days alone in the bush! (…) During this time I suffered badly! I was dragging myself along, little by little, little by little. Badly wounded! Then I managed to get out to a settlement and so… Malunda. We call it… I mean, it's in the Second Sector. (…) After I was wounded, I was transported to Tanzania. The treatment … ok. I returned in 1975, the year of independence. […] Nangade. Straight from Tanzania to here![39]
>
> I really long [to see] if … to be able to do things like the others, the ones who are walking around here, riding motor bikes, having a drink at the store, I don't know… that's what I'd like most. There are small jobs, but ok… because I have to have children. I have no support.[40]

The centrality of the suffering, loss, and tortuous paths in search of reparation that feature in the biographical memories of these veterans is echoed in the words of Veena Das, who observes that:

> guarantees of belonging to larger entities such as communities or the state are not capable of erasing the hurts or providing a means of repairing this sense of being betrayed by the everyday.[41]

We are aware that the perspectives presented here, which are the result of a form of recruitment mediated, in institutional terms, through the ACLLN, reveal an identification with the liberation struggle due to a specific context defined by the important protection provided by the state, which is something many other veterans in Mozambique have been unable to secure.[42] Equally, we are dealing with subjects whose disabilities have corroborated a socially and administratively recognised "narration of suffering"[43] that has thus inscribed them within a "common revolutionary experience"[44] based on the colonial experience.

However, in Nangade, a very remote area away from the seats of power where the governing bodies claim to be the heirs of the liberation struggle, we found mutilated bodies that have no place in the ceremonials for the memorials that have been constructed, and we encountered the force of the reverberations of war as memories of irredeemable loss. In the end, we found a living memorial filled with sorrows, sacrifice, and deeds of combat that both exceed and fall short of the "docile heroism"[45] that is shaped to fit the "frames of war" defined by the "liberation script" for Mozambique.[46]

Conclusion

The relation between biography and the liberation struggle is of crucial importance to the political memory in Mozambique, in close connection with what Joan Scott has termed the "authority of direct experience".[47] However, the legitimacy derived from this authority is always ranked by constructs in which the protagonism recognised for each individual in the historic act of gaining independence intersects with various strands of inequality: rank or office in FRELIMO during the war, gender, level of education, ethnic, and/or territorial background, able-bodied/disabled, etc. As João Paulo Borges Coelho observes:

> Not all the combatants followed the path that would promote a mere protagonist in an event to the status of witness. Becoming a witness presupposes having won and maintained a voice capable of telling the story, within the new order that followed the declaration of independence. And since, after independence, there has been no systematic undertaking to adequately record the testimonies of the combatants and others who took part in the armed struggle, those who did gain a voice and could tell the story were those who entered the cities and began to occupy important positions in the Frelimo and state structures.[48]

In a framework in which the authorised witnesses are precisely those who have the prerogative to recognise – or be recognised as – the unique heroes of the liberation struggle, encountering the voices of the war disabled in Nangade makes us aware of memories which barely travel beyond the local worlds in which they exist or, in other words, beyond private, family, and community space. Even though the national narratives of modernity rarely fail to include a pantheon of names enshrined as heroes who embody the idea of a nation, a more democratic representation of anticolonial resistance may involve engaging with different experiences of colonialism and resistance in which more of the "rarely shared memories" can circulate.

Notes

1 Veronica M. Kitchen and Jennifer G. Mathers, *Heroism and Global Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2019), 12.
2 João Paulo Borges Coelho, "Abrir a fábula: Questões da política do passado em Moçambique," *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais* 105 (2015): 156.
3 Coelho, "Abrir a fábula."
4 Coelho, "Abrir a fábula," 158.
5 It is important to note that the post-independence period is marked by various programmes and policies designed to strengthen the fight against the "enemy" and, at the same time, contribute to the formation of the *New Man*, such as re-education camps and meetings with the "compromised". On these issues see, for example, Maria Paula Meneses, "Hidden processes of reconciliation in Mozambique: the entangled histories of truth-seeking meetings held between 1975 and 1982," *Africa Development* 41, no. 4 (2017): 153–180; Benedito Machava, "Reeducation camps, austerity, and the carceral regime in Socialist Mozambique (1974–79)," *The Journal of African History* 60, no. 3 (2019): 429–55.

6 On the relationship between biographical narratives and the construction of "official histories" in the context of Mozambique, see Teresa Cruz e Silva, "Memória, história e narrativa: Os desafios da escrita biográfica no contexto da luta nacionalista em Moçambique," *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais* 106 (2015): 133–52.
7 Maria Paula Meneses, "Xiconhoca, o inimigo: Narrativas de violência sobre a construção da nação em Moçambique," *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais* 106 (2015): 9–52.
8 The last emperor of Gaza (defeated and captured in 1885), consecrated as a national hero on 15 June 1985.
9 Fernando Bessa Ribeiro, "A invenção dos heróis: nação, história e discursos de identidade em Moçambique," *Etnográfica* 9, no. 2 (2005): 257–275.
10 Meneses, "Xiconhoca, o inimigo."
11 Meneses, "Xiconhoca, o inimigo."
12 Avishai Margalit, *The Ethics of Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 51–52.
13 Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* (London and New York: Verso, 2009), 54.
14 Jay Winter, *War Beyond Words: Languages of Remembrance from the Great War to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).
15 Winter, *War Beyond Words*.
16 On the question of heroism, see also Sibylle Scheipers, *Heroism and the Changing Character of War Toward Post-Heroic Warfare?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), and Kitchen and Mathers, *Heroism and Global Politics*.
17 The decision to introduce Heroes' Day, as in the case of other national holidays (see Note 8), was approved by the Council of Ministers via Decree-Law No 15/76 of 17 April (BR, 1982).
18 "Monumento aos heróis erguido no Maputo," *Notícias*, February 2, 1979.
19 *Notícias*, "Monumento aos heróis erguido no Maputo."
20 It is also worth noting the mural (the Praça dos Heróis Mural) on the front of the monument, filled with paintings depicting some of the "most important pages in our History", in *Notícias*, "Monumento aos heróis erguido no Maputo," namely illustrations of resistance to foreign domination by figures such as Eduardo Mondlane, Samora Machel, etc.
21 "Momentos altos que vivemos reforçaram a nossa determinação," *Notícias*, February 4, 1979.
22 "Armed bandits" was the pejorative term normally used by FRELIMO to describe RENAMO during the so-called 16-years war, see "Liquidar bandidos armados é honrar nossos heróis," *Notícias*, February 5, 1985.
23 "Aprovados Plano para 82 e Lei das Condecorações," *Notícias*, December 15, 1981.
24 "As Medalhas do Povo," *Notícias*, June 25, 1982. For a complete list of the titles, decorations, and distinctions created at the time, see *Boletim da República I Série* – no. 24, June 23, 1982.
25 *Notícias*, "As Medalhas do Povo."
26 According to the "As Medalhas do Povo", the "Veteran of the Mozambique Liberation Struggle" medal was awarded to "other outstanding Party activists, including Mário Machungo, João Américo Mpfumo, António Hama Thai, Guidione Ndobe, Morais Mabyeca, Matias Kapesse and Daniel Maquinasse".
27 According to sources at the time, the mortal remains of Milagre Mabote, Romão Fernandes Farinha, Franscisco Orlando Magumbwé, Belmiro Obadias Mulanga, José Macamo, Luis Joaquim Marra, John Issa, Tomás Nduda, Emília Daússe, Armando Tivane, António Elias Francisco Langa, Carlos Robati, and Bernabé Kajika were transferred, "Restos Mortais de 13 Heróis vão ser trasladados," *Notícias*, September 22, 1984.
28 "Condecorados heróis da Luta," *Notícias*, September 25, 1984.

29 "Título de 'Herói da RPM' atribuído a Samora Machel," *Diário de Moçambique*, June 26, 1982.
30 *Notícias*, "Condecorados heróis da Luta."
31 For an overview of the transmission of memories of the liberation struggle in the post-independence period see, for example, Amélia Neves de Souto, "Memory and Identity in the History of Frelimo: Some Research Themes," *Kronos* 39 (2013): 280–96. The other public holidays associated with the struggle are Independence Day (25 June), Victory Day (7 September – commemorating the signing of the Lusaka Accord), and Armed Forces Day (25 September – commemorating the day on which the struggle started).
32 Achille Mbembe, *Critique of Black Reason* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2017), 121–2.
33 Bruno Sena Martins, "Corpos-memórias da Guerra Colonial: os Deficientes das Forças Armadas e o 'restolhar de asas no telhado'," in *Geometrias da Memória*, eds. António Sousa Ribeiro and Margarida Calafate Ribeiro (Porto: Afrontamento, 2016), 305–25.
34 On women's involvement in the liberation struggle in Mozambique see, for example, Harry G. West, "Girls with Guns: Narrating the Experience of War of Frelimo's 'Female Detachment'," *Anthropological Quarterly* 73, no. 4 (2000): 180–94; Benigna Zimba, ed., *A mulher moçambicana na luta de Libertação Nacional: Memórias do Destacamento Feminino* (Maputo: CPHLLN, 2012); Alda Saúte Saide, "As mulheres e a luta de libertação nacional," in *História da luta de Libertação Nacional*, vol. 1, ed. Joel das Neves Tembe (Maputo: Ministérios dos Combatentes, 2014), 553–60; Maria Paula Meneses, "Women and Mass Violence in Mozambique during the Late Colonial Period," in *The Pluriverse of Human Rights: The Diversity of Struggles for Dignity*, eds. Boaventura de Sousa Santos and Bruno Sena Martins (London and New York: Routledge, 2021), 148–67.
35 Xaque Anisse, interview by Bruno Sena Martins, Nangade (Mozambique), 2012.
36 Aripunevila Sauari, interview by Bruno Sena Martins, Nangade (Mozambique), 2012.
37 Quenha Muikalila, interview by Bruno Sena Martins, Nangade (Mozambique), 2012.
38 Not found, for example, among the war disabled who fought for Portugal in the colonial war, Bruno Sena Martins, "Violência Colonial e Testemunho," *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais* 106 (2015): 105–26 and Martins, "Corpos-memórias da Guerra Colonial."
39 Muikalila, interview.
40 Sauari, interview.
41 Veena Das, *Life and words: violence and the descent into the ordinary* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 9.
42 Cf. e.g., Elias Jossias, *Entre a Colónia e a Nação: Moçambicanos Deficientes Físicos das Forças Armadas Portuguesas* (Lisbon: ISCTE, 2007); João Paulo Borges Coelho, "Antigos soldados, novos cidadãos: uma avaliação da reintegração dos ex-combatentes de Maputo," in *Conflito e transformação social*, vol. 1, eds. Boaventura de Sousa Santos and João Carlos Trindade (Porto: Afrontamento, 2003) and Nikkie Wiegink, "The Good, the Bad, and the Awkward: The Making of War Veterans in Postindependence Mozambique," *Conflict and Society* 5, no. 1 (2019): 150–67.
43 João Paulo Borges Coelho, "Politics and Contemporary History in Mozambique: A Set of Epistemological Notes," *Kronos* 39, no. 1 (2013): 4.
44 Coelho, "Politics and Contemporary History," 4.
45 A gloss on what Michel Foucault terms "docile bodies", referring to the strategies, disciplines, and concepts which, by means of an "anatomo-politics of the human body", establish the body as a machine, aiming at its usefulness, economic exploitation and incorporation within systems of control, see Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1980), 172.
46 Coelho, "Politics and Contemporary History."
47 Joan W. Scott, "The Evidence of Experience," *Critical Inquiry* 17, no. 4 (1991): 773–97.
48 Coelho, "Abrir a fábula," 158–59.

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4 *Mantenhas para quem luta*! Evoking the liberation struggle in postcolonial Guinea-Bissau

Inês Nascimento Rodrigues

Introduction

The attack on the Portuguese barracks in Tite on 23 January 1963 – celebrated as the "Day of Liberation Struggle Combatants" – symbolically marks the start of the liberation war launched by the PAIGC in Guinea. The armed conflict, which lasted for roughly 11 years, presents a number of specific features which Leopoldo Amado considers relevant when reflecting on the memory of the liberation struggle and examining the ways in which it was projected during the course of the postcolonial development of the country.[1] It was a war fought jointly for the liberation of two territories, Guinea and Cape Verde, in which the PAIGC was able to gain military control over vast regions of Guinea (with the exception of the cities). It was a war which, in the liberated zones, established political, social, educational, and economic conditions that anticipated the structures and priorities envisaged by the movement for the construction of the future independent state. It was a war conceived and planned not only in military terms, but with significant political and diplomatic elements that gained widespread international recognition. It was a war which led to the unilateral proclamation of the independence of Guinea-Bissau in 1973, paving the way for the "Carnation Revolution" in Portugal, and the independence and decolonisation processes in Cape Verde, S. Tomé and Príncipe, Angola, and Mozambique.

In Guinea, as in other countries that experienced armed struggles, the violence of the war, together with other forms of colonial violence, became a constituent part of the new nation, structuring the social life of the population and determining postcolonial memorialisation processes. Firstly, this was because the independent Guinean state was built in the aftermath of the conflict, based on a militarised approach that included the complex dynamics of demobilisation and social reintegration. Secondly, power was distributed unequally in the immediate post-independence period, in part reproducing the hierarchies inherited from colonialism.[2] Unlike the Cape Verdeans who took part in the war, the majority of whom possessed formal educational capital, most of the Guinean combatants were peasants from rural areas. This led to tensions and differentiations in status during the struggle – the former mainly held positions of leadership, while the latter, many of whom were of Balanta ethnic origin, fought in the front line.[3] In the immediate

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post-independence period, these categorisations were reflected in access to positions of power and public administration: within the framework of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde binational unity advocated by the PAIGC, most of these positions were occupied by Cape Verdeans and by Guineans from urban areas.[4]

According to Leopoldo Amado, the struggle would therefore create forms of violence that would take root as a "negative legacy".[5] The "negative legacies" of the struggle would reappear cyclically during the post-colonial path of the country: in certain continuing tensions between the Cape Verdeans and the Guineans, in intensifying ethnic resentments, and in the power struggles between João Bernardo "Nino" Vieira and Luís Cabral which would culminate in a coup d'état led by the former on 14 November 1980. After this, the boundary between the politicians and the military became increasingly blurred, reflecting the definitive militarisation of power in Guinea.[6] It was followed by a series of other coups and by a period of armed conflict in 1998–1999 which, among other reasons, was caused by discontent on the part of some sectors of former combatants.[7] This chapter identifies the ways in which the idea of the liberation struggle has become an operative concept, weaving renewed networks of meaning around these and other moments in the country's post-colonial journey. Although Guinea-Bissau is still haunted by certain spectres from the war, the chapter argues that the liberation struggle essentially refers to a space and time of promises to be redeemed, and remains a relevant mnemonic subject mobilised in various historical contexts for different political purposes.[8] It, therefore, aims to demonstrate how the struggle has been established as a memorial symbol that has a critical, strategic, and/or redemptive function.

After independence: a nation forged in the struggle or the struggle as a lesson in history

On 24 September 1973, the independence of Guinea-Bissau was unilaterally declared in Madina do Boé, a liberated zone in the east of the territory. The Constitution of the Republic was approved at this first meeting of the National People's Assembly and Luís Cabral, the brother of Amílcar Cabral – who had been assassinated a few months earlier in January 1973, in circumstances that have never been entirely ascertained – was elected President of the Council of State. This historic moment, which represented the culmination of a long and effective struggle for liberation led by the PAIGC, would have a profound impact, not only in proclaiming the de facto existence of the new African country, but also because of the decisive role it would play in the 25 April 1974 revolution in Portugal and in defining the processes of Portuguese decolonisation that would follow. The Portuguese authorities, however, did not recognise Guinea-Bissau as an independent country until one year later, when the Algiers Agreement, which also acknowledged the right to self-determination of Cape Verde, was signed by both the Portuguese government and the PAIGC on 10 September 1974. In the months which followed, thousands of Portuguese soldiers left Bissau and some of the most distinguished Cape Verdean PAIGC combatants returned to the archipelago, which was proclaimed independent on 5 July 1975.

As a result of the high expectations for Guinea-Bissau, considerable attention was devoted to the small territory in West Africa where the PAIGC had been engaged in what was regarded as an exemplary liberation struggle, which gained a wide range of international recognition, support, and prestige (see Chapter 10 of this book). Many expected that, like the struggle from which it had emerged, this independent nation state would serve as a model for success that could be replicated or followed. Although, for various reasons, this has not been the case, the struggle as a historical lesson – and mission – became central to defining the identity of the country from the very first years of independence. Some of the experiences of the liberation struggle would therefore find expression in the early years of post-colonial life in Guinea-Bissau, including the proclaimed – and never completely consensual – objective envisaged by Amílcar Cabral of gradually moving towards the founding of a binational state together with the archipelago of Cape Verde, based on their shared history of violence.[9]

While the struggle, as a mnemonic subject, now allowed for other ways of reading a past of resistance and oppression, it also became established as a mechanism for constructing the present and the future. In the post-independence period – within the context of a weak economy (exacerbated by global crises and recessions), the destruction of infrastructures and means of production in the areas worst affected by the war, illiteracy and a shortage of basic foodstuffs between 1977 and 1980 caused by a lengthy drought – the state embarked on an agenda that focussed on development, opting for a centralised economy and a single-party system known as "revolutionary national democracy".

It was no longer a struggle for liberation but rather a much broader struggle for which the former, the inaugural movement, served as a metaphor: for strengthening the economy, eliminating rural-urban inequalities, developing sustainable agriculture, assisting with the reintegration of former combatants, promoting political and cultural affirmation to achieve literacy for the populations, reinforcing international solidarity, and fostering national unity. The role of this unprecedented struggle against Portuguese colonialism was mobilised as a historic lesson that had to be continued in the fight against the legacies of colonialism. This was explicitly stated at the opening session of the National Assembly in Bissau in April 1975, when Aristides Pereira – the Secretary General of the PAIGC, who would become the first president of the Republic of Cape Verde a few months later – announced that the revolution was in progress, the struggle would continue and it would be "possibly more arduous, more complex and more difficult than during the harsh years of war".[10] A similar comparison was established by Luís Cabral who, on the same occasion, affirmed that "the glory of the combatants" had emerged "on the battlefields, in the prisons of the colonialists or, nowadays, in the struggle for the independence of Cape Verde and in the national reconstruction of Guinea".[11] Moreover, on 24 September of that year, during the celebrations for the second anniversary of the proclamation of the state of Guinea-Bissau, he declared that the combatants of the Armed Forces were "soldiers in the battle for National Reconstruction".[12] In May 1979, an article in the *Nô Pintcha* state-owned newspaper also made the same point when, referring to a recently opened tailoring cooperative for

freedom fighters, it observed: "Yesterday with rifles, today at the sewing machine: the same struggle for a better Homeland".[13]

Several of the innovative experiments that had been conducted in the liberated zones, as well as the semantics of the struggle, now emerged, in part, as models for social, political, and cultural organisation, defining the state and its institutions as they were to be built. This was developed in ideological and discursive terms, but also in areas such as justice (with a particular focus on the question of popular participation and the creation of village peoples' courts), education (involving literacy campaigns, projects for popular education, reforms to education, provisions for technical training, and the building of schools) and healthcare (expanding the healthcare network and including community development projects).[14] It also materialised in other fields: in the preparation of special legislation for populations from the former liberated zones, the creation of cooperatives and state-run companies and the democratisation of culture through radio, music, and cinema.[15]

To a large extent, a similar process was also taking place within the hierarchies inherited from the struggle. In fact, participation in the liberation struggle had produced a certain political legitimacy and symbolic recognition, which was extended to the movement that had led the struggle. Praised for their sacrifice, courage, and self-denial in taking part in the war that liberated the country, the most distinguished PAIGC combatants were seen as heroic figures who now had the political legitimacy to lead the country. Over half of the senior military cadres within the party would therefore occupy positions of great responsibility within the state hierarchy after independence (at the top of the PAIGC leadership and including most of the cabinet ministers).[16] Through several actions, the ruling party incorporated the teachings, martyrs, and heroes of the struggle into the Guinean festive calendar and the everyday lives of the population. Amílcar Cabral, proclaimed the "Founder of Nationality", was the greatest national figure: episodes from his life and certain ideas and extracts from his works were regularly quoted in the state newspaper *Nô Pintcha* or invoked by party organisations. In addition, 20 January and 12 September – the dates of his death and birth, respectively – became National Heroes' Day and Nationality Day. The figure and memory of Cabral were a constant reference in literature, music, and film, from the songs of José Carlos Schwarz and Cobiana Djazz to Super Mama Djombo, the films of Flora Gomes and the poetry of Tony Tcheka.[17]

In 1976, his image featured in the recently designed Guinea-Bissau *peso* banknotes and, in an emotional ceremony held on 2 September of the same year, his mortal remains were transferred from Conakry to Bissau and laid to rest in a mausoleum designed especially for this purpose at Fortaleza de Amura, the headquarters of the Guinean Armed Forces, which was transformed into a kind of national pantheon, a space for preserving memories and paying tribute.[18] In 1979, the bodies of Domingos Ramos, Osvaldo Vieira and Pansau na Isna (the first two, who were killed in 1966 and 1974, important leaders in the PAIGC and the third a Balanta combatant who had played a key role in the battle of the island of Como) were also laid to rest there.[19] The main squares and streets in the Guinean capital had already displayed their names since January 1975 when, in a rally held on

20 January – National Heroes' Day – it was decided to replace colonial toponyms in the city of Bissau with names associated with the chronology and heroes of the liberation struggle.[20]

In the creation of the independent nation, the highest expression of national heroism was reserved for those who made the greatest sacrifice, namely by giving their lives. This included Amílcar Cabral and his comrades who died in battle, but also those who had come before them: the martyrs of the Pidjiguiti massacre, considered one of the landmarks in the strategic reorientation of the struggle. A key symbol of the prolonged resistance mounted by the Guinean people against colonialism, the massacre was a reminder of the brutal repression used by the colonial authorities to end a strike for better pay organised by stevedores at the Pidjiguiti docks, on 3 August 1959, resulting in 50 deaths and dozens of wounded. The incident had led the PAIGC to proclaim that it was necessary to proceed by means of armed struggle, thus setting a new path for the movement.[21]

The PAIGC leadership announced that 3 August would be known as the "Day of the Martyrs to Colonialism" and celebrated as a national holiday in Guinea. Those killed in Pidjiguiti were transformed into role models for the nation and their lessons in courage and sacrifice were meant to offer guidance for the Guinean people in this new phase.[22] There was therefore an element of gratitude and indebtedness expressed in evocations of the massacre. Sílvia Roque, in an analysis of the memorialisation of this event over time, demonstrates how, after independence, Pidjiguiti would be mobilised as one of the main symbols of the independent state, inextricably linked to the Party and the need to maintain national unity.[23] Between 1975 and 1980, the 3rd of August became associated with the celebration of independence as "the restoration of justice that honours the martyrs of colonialism, placing great emphasis on the victims of the massacre".[24] However, this would change after 1980, as the next section will reveal. Although Pidjiguiti remains an important moment in the life of the nation, another historical reference from the struggle would be mobilised in this new political phase in the country.

After the 1980 coup d'état: a nation betrayed or the struggle as a means of legitimation

On 14 November 1980, a coup d'état in Guinea led by the then prime minister João Bernardo "Nino" Vieira, one of the most important commanders of the PAIGC and the first president of the National Assembly, would put an end to the project for binational unity with Cape Verde. In the immediate aftermath of the coup, Luís Cabral was deposed as president of the Republic and arrested, together with several other party leaders. Although there were no widespread confrontations, three deaths were recorded during the events (one of which was accidental, according to a report produced by a delegation from the Amílcar Cabral Information and Documentation Centre – CIDAC sent from Lisbon to Bissau).[25] The Guinean state was then taken over by a recently formed Council of the Revolution, headed by Nino Vieira. Initially, Nino Vieira, speaking on the radio, stated that the purpose of the coup, the self-designated "Readjustment Movement", was to expel "the colonists"

from Guinea-Bissau, referring to the Cape Verdeans who remained there. In a second phase, he affirmed the intention to continue the political line established by Cabral and by the party, stressing the need to revitalise unity, but on equal terms for both parties.[26]

As explained by Nino Vieira in a speech at the end of 1980, the reasons cited for the military coup included the following: recovering the values and objectives of the struggle mapped out by Amílcar Cabral; putting an end to the anti-democratic stance of Luís Cabral and the economic options chosen by the head of state which, by neglecting investment in agriculture, were leading the country into a catastrophic situation; responding to the desperate circumstances in which many former combatants found themselves and to the growing discontent within the FARP; providing for the needs of the population, afflicted by famine; restoring the dignity of the people by ending the inequality that was considered to exist between Guineans and Cape Verdeans; denouncing the execution of hundreds of Guineans who had joined the African commandos – an elite unit in the Portuguese colonial army – or who were the political enemies of Luís Cabral; fighting the asymmetry between Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau, considered evident in the discrepancies in the constitutions of the two countries which had been approved a few days earlier.[27] In this regard, the absence in the Guinean Constitution of any explicit reference to the fact that the president had to be a Guinean citizen was a relevant point, in addition to the concentration of power in the head of state, with the consequent undermining of the prime minister's functions, and the sanctioning of the death penalty.[28]

In Cape Verde, the ruling authorities held an emergency meeting the day after the coup and were quick to condemn what had happened. The November editions of the *Voz di Povo* were almost entirely dedicated to the events and the reactions of the main leaders, who denied the accusations against the Cape Verdeans made by the Council of the Revolution, which were seen as revealing a certain anti-Cape Verde attitude present in Bissau.[29] Throughout this month and the next, Aristides Pereira and Nino Vieira exchanged messages and sent envoys until communication was cut on 16 December 1980, when the Cape Verdean head of state and Secretary General of the party wrote to Nino Vieira to disassociate the Cape Verdean wing from what was happening in Guinea, stressing the negative consequences for the project of unity and the survival of the PAIGC.[30] The final break came at a meeting of the Cape Verde National Commission held on 20 January 1981, the anniversary of the death of Cabral, when the formation of the African Party for the Independence of Cape Verde (PAICV) was officially announced. On this occasion, Aristides Pereira stated that the coup against the state of Guinea also constituted a coup against the Party and that the "painful experience of 14 November" was proof that the "principle of unity, one of the founding principles of the party as a binational organisation, had been rejected".[31]

From 1985 onwards, the break with unity and establishment of the PAICV allowed for a gradual introduction of political, social, and memorial changes in Cape Verde, which intensified in the 1990s after the defeat of the party in the first multiparty elections, resulting in a mnemonic transition with anticolonial characteristics which is discussed in Chapter 6 of this book. In Guinea-Bissau, however, the

situation was different. After 14 November, drawing on notions of betrayal and deviation from Cabral's ideas and guidelines, the evocation of the struggle intensified as a means of politically legitimising the Council of the Revolution, whose members included several individuals from the deposed government. The front-page headline of the first edition of *Nô Pintcha* to be published after the events read: "14 November 1980: End of injustices and corruption, return to Cabral's line".[32] This edition, dedicated almost entirely to the events of 14 November, explained the reasons for resorting to the use of arms, presented a series of statements from Guineans who supported the action, reported on the existence of mass graves allegedly containing the corpses of opponents of Luís Cabral (accompanied by photographs) and published excerpts from Nino Vieira's speech to the population in which he affirmed that this was a revolution that would honour the national heroes and would be "faithful to the sacrifice and the blood" they had shed. On this occasion, Vieira also mentioned the "prevailing climate of oppression and mistrust" during Luís Cabral's presidency and referred to money invested in industrialisation projects by the former head of state which had failed to take the economic reality of Guinea into account and had, in his opinion, contributed to worsening the living conditions of the people and the former combatants.[33] He reaffirmed that "the Homeland of Cabral would finally be built", since the 14 November coup, which had received ample popular support, would enable the necessary readjustments to be made.[34]

In July of the following year, Decision no. 16/81 of 20 July established a public holiday to celebrate the 14 November 1980 "Readjustment Movement" Day, indicating the intended importance of the date by including it in the national calendar. Between 8 and 14 November 1981, selecting the period in which the anniversary of the "Readjustment Movement" would be celebrated, the 1st. Extraordinary Congress of the PAIGC was held, at which Nino Vieira was elected Secretary General of the Party.[35] At the time, recalling the grammar of the struggle, the congress was called the "second Cassacá", thus creating a symbolic equivalence between the events of 14 November and the historic meeting of cadres in February 1964 in the early days of the armed struggle, which became the 1st. Congress of the PAIGC and provided the inspiration for the liberation movement to take a new path.

The 1964 Congress of Cassacá had represented a turning point in PAIGC politics. Reflecting on the movement's strategy up to then, Amílcar Cabral had identified three key problems which he considered to be the result of inadequacies in the way in which the struggle had been conducted: a tendency towards militarism, the ethnic localism and a third issue associated with cultural matters.[36] According to Patrick Chabal, the militarism referred to reports of abuses of power targeted at populations in areas where PAIGC guerrilla groups had had significant military success and some had established themselves as kinds of local chieftains. The ethnic questions concerned the PAIGC's failure to develop more solid links with the Fula and other Muslim ethnic groups, among other problems. The third issue was related to traditional religious and cultural practices – such as some animist beliefs – which at certain times hindered the efforts of the struggle.[37] The Congress of Cassacá, which was convened to deal with these problems, would lead to a restructuring of the struggle, curbing the militarist approach by "making the

military wing subordinate to the political leadership" of the PAIGC.[38] The direct results included the transfer of power to local bodies and the introduction of special coordinating committees, the creation of the *Armazéns do Povo* (People's Stores) and schools, and the founding of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of the People.

Cassacá, one of the most significant and successful moments in the realignment of a PAIGC facing difficulties, became a mnemonic device strategically mobilised in the wake of 14 November 1980. It is the lesson that encapsulates and rounds off the process for legitimising the Readjustment Movement. Just as Cassacá had made the first adjustment in the face of deviations from the struggle, the 14th of November would produce a second adjustment to "save the PAIGC" from ruin. This was actually stated in 1982:

> Cassacá emerged and its voice endured. Nevertheless, another 'Cassacá' was recently celebrated (…). The path followed by the Party after independence had perhaps strayed from the sacred line once more. The lesson of Cassacá has been learnt. (…). From one Cassacá to another, we are consolidating the irreversible victories won, from one sunrise to the next, by our valiant people, to make the Party even more our Party. Because Cassacá is a lesson never to be forgotten.[39]

However, Nino Vieira was unable to put an end to the discontent felt by the people and the former combatants. In fact, several individuals were accused of conspiracy, imprisoned and, in some cases, executed, creating growing tensions in the country.[40] In November 1985, following a political crisis which led to the imprisonment of Paulo Correia – the Minister for Justice at the time – and Viriato Pã (the former Attorney General of the Republic), in addition to around 50 other people, accused of planning a coup d'état to overthrow Nino Vieira, the analogy between 14 November and the Congress of Cassacá intensified. Comparisons were made between the same evils and therefore the justification for resorting to a similar solution. In a special edition of *Nô Pintcha* dedicated to the occasion, the front-page headline read: "5th anniversary of the heroic 14 November. Cassacá repeated in Bissau to save the party of Cabral".[41]

According to Lars Rudebeck, the 1980 coup was a manifestation of the structural crisis which the country had been facing since the first years of independence, a crisis characterised by the growing political and economic disparity between the ruling elite and the peasant farmers.[42] Although Nino Vieira claimed to have returned to the ideas of Cabral and promised policies with a greater focus on rural issues, as well as a more open political environment, the changes were limited and the coup ended up delivering exactly the opposite of Cassacá, initially sanctioning the victory of the military wing over the politicians.[43] Koudawo, therefore, considers that "developments following the 14 November coup d'état show the disintegration of the legacy from the period of the liberation struggle".[44] In the midst of recurring political instability, the World Bank and IMF structural adjustment programme launched in 1987, and regional disputes with Senegal and Guinea-Conakry, the coup was responsible for the increasing assertion of power by Nino

Vieira, who drew on the support of the party – having become its leading figure – to institute what Raúl Fernandes calls "presidential Bonapartism".[45] The ongoing political and socioeconomic crises would culminate in the 1998–1999 civil war in Bissau, which ended with the overthrow of Nino Vieira, who was granted political asylum in Portugal.[46] Despite the deterioration in the living conditions of the Guinean people under these circumstances, a grassroots base still resists and deploys the past of the liberation war as a symbolic reference.

The struggle today: time for disputes, space for promises

Following the economic and political transitions that led to the first multiparty elections in 1994 (in which Nino Vieira triumphed), the structural adjustment programme in 1987 which installed a robust neoliberal policy in the country, the 1998–1999 civil war, the lack of opportunities, and the social discontent generated by ongoing cycles of political and economic instability, the struggle – and in particular the figure of Amílcar Cabral – remains a significant presence, mobilised above all within the civil youth movements that emerged in the 1990s and were consolidated in the 2000s, as Miguel de Barros and Redy Wilson Lima have shown in the case of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde.[47] According to these authors, the recovery of the legacies of the liberation struggle which led to independence constituted "a new expression of African awakening".[48] Christoph Kohl and Anita Schroven believe that, in the case of the Guinean people, Cabral is nowadays considered a martyr, personifying qualities that appear to be similar to those of a prophet.[49] This movement is active in the field of music, among other domains, particularly in rap and hip-hop. In these representations, Cabral is revived as a "messenger of truth" and recalled as a figure for criticising present-day political powers and politicians, who are accused of forgetting his teachings and distorting the aspirations of the people.[50] The same is happening with urban art. In a contemporary appropriation of the legacies of the struggle, which is paralleled in Cape Verde, as discussed in Chapter 6, murals have been appearing in the main streets of Bissau since 2020, paying homage to some of the leading PAIGC combatants who died in the struggle or shortly after independence and are considered national heroes, including Titina Silá, Pansau Na Isna, Domingos Ramos, Francisco Mendes (Tchico Té), José Carlos Schwarz and, naturally, Amílcar Cabral.[51]

The political disputes that occasionally flare up in Guinea and in which the memory of the struggle plays a central role – the argument over who Cabral belongs to; the transfer of the mortal remains of Nino Vieira, assassinated in 2009, from the municipal cemetery in Bissau to Amura where, in addition to the national heroes, some former presidents of the republic are also buried; the title of "Hero of the Armed Struggle for National Liberation" also bestowed on Vieira; or even the emergence of the "Nino ka muri" movement (echoing the famous slogan "Cabral ka muri"/Cabral is not dead) – pose no threat to the legacy of the struggle. On the contrary, these manifestations demonstrate how this past remains an important discursive actor that has been mobilised from 1973 to the present day to invoke both the disappointments and failures of the post-colonial trajectory of the nation,

at least at the hands of the political powers who led the country during the post-independence period, and also as a means of resistance and emancipatory reinvention, transporting the legacies of the struggle into the times and challenges of the present. In Guinea-Bissau, the memory of a successful liberation war and of its leader are redemptive elements that are revived to project the unfulfilled hopes of a more just future.

Notes

1 Leopoldo Amado, "Guiné-Bissau: 30 Anos de Independência," *Africana Studia* 8 (2005): 109–35. The author wishes to thank Sumaila Jaló for his careful reading of this text.
2 Sílvia Roque, *Pós-Guerra? Percursos de violência nas margens das Relações Internacionais* (Coimbra: Almedina, 2016), 266.
3 The ethnic dimensions were strategically mobilised by both the colonial army and the liberation movement: for example, the colonial powers sought to establish alliances with the Fula and the PAIGC mainly mobilised the rural Balanta population, who were among those most affected by colonial violence, for war. Cf. Marina Padrão Temudo, "From 'People's Struggle' to 'this war today': Entanglements of peace and conflict in Guinea-Bissau," *Africa* 78, no. 2 (2008): 245–63; Joshua Forrest, *Lineages of State Fragility: Rural Society in Guinea-Bissau* (Athens: Ohio University Press 2009); Marina Padrão Temudo, "From the margins of the State to the presidential palace: the Balanta case in Guinea-Bissau," *African Studies Review* 52, no. 2 (2009): 47–67.
4 Joshua Forrest, "Guinea-Bissau since Independence: A Decade of Domestic Power Struggles," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 25, no. 1 (1987): 96, and Roque, *Pós-Guerra?* 271.
5 Amado, "Guiné-Bissau," 121.
6 Forrest, "Guinea-Bissau Since Independence," 105, and Roque, *Pós-Guerra?* 262.
7 Roque, *Pós-Guerra?* 281.
8 The notion of the "mnemonic subject" is used here in a sense very close to the meaning attributed by Miguel Cardina and Inês Nascimento Rodrigues to the concept of the "mnemonic device", that is, as "the constellation of representations that radiate from a particular historical past and the way in which the device lends itself to appropriations and disputes that transform it into a decisive – and fluctuating – political agent". Cf. Miguel Cardina and Inês Nascimento Rodrigues, *Remembering the Liberation Struggles. A Mnemohistory of Cape Verde* (New York and London: Routledge, 2022), 6.
9 Guinea-Cape Verde unity had been a controversial subject since the beginning of the struggle. Julião Soares Sousa notes that the majority of the liberation movements, particularly in Guinea, were opposed to unity. In Senegal, more than a dozen movements formed by Guineans who had emigrated there were only in favour of independence for Guinea (including the Union of the Peoples of Guinea – UPG, the Popular Union for the Liberation of Guinea – UPLG, and the National Front for the Liberation of Guinea – FNLG). In addition, three Cape Verdean movements, also in Dakar, were opposed to the idea of unity advocated by Cabral: the Cape Verdean Democratic Union (UDC), the Movement for the Liberation of the Cape Verde Islands (MLICV) and the Union of the People of the Cape Verde Islands (UPICV). Cf. Julião Soares *Amílcar Cabral. Vida e morte de um revolucionário africano* (Lisboa: Vega, 2011), 252–4.
10 "Aristides Pereira na abertura da Assembleia Nacional. A nossa revolução está em marcha e a luta continua," *Nô Pintcha*, no. 15, April 29, 1975.
11 "O discurso de Luís Cabral. Sete meses da batalha pela reconstrução nacional," *Nô Pintcha*, no. 15, April 29, 1975.
12 "Os combatentes das nossas Forças Armadas são soldados na batalha da Reconstrução Nacional," *Nô Pintcha*, no. 78, September 27, 1975.

13 "Alfaiataria dos Combatentes da Liberdade da Pátria. Ontem com a espingarda, hoje na máquina de costura, a mesma luta por uma Pátria melhor," *Nô Pintcha*, no. 585, May 10, 1979.
14 See, among others, Lars Rudebeck, *Guinea-Bissau – A Study of Political Mobilisation* (Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1974); Patrick Chabal and Toby Green, eds., *Guinea-Bissau: Micro-State to 'Narco-State'* (London: C. Hurst & Company, 2016); Ângela Benoliel Coutinho, *Os Dirigentes do PAIGC. Da fundação à ruptura, 1956–1980* (Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra, 2017); Sónia Vaz Borges, *Militant Education, Liberation Struggle, Consciousness. The PAIGC Education in Guinea Bissau* (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2019), and Sumaila Jaló, "Ideologias Educativas na Guiné(-Bissau) – 1954–1986" (Master's diss., U. Porto, 2020).
15 Cf. The proposal for linking popular culture and political and economic liberation presented at the III Congress of the PAIGC (1977) and mentioned by Mário Pinto de Andrade, Minister for Culture until 1980, in "Democratização da Cultura – Mário de Andrade," *Nô Pintcha*, no. 480, June 24, 1978.
16 Coutinho, *Os Dirigentes do PAIGC*, 122–4. See also: Carlos Cardoso, *A Formação da Elite Política na Guiné-Bissau* (Lisbon: Centro de Estudos Africanos, 2002), 19.
17 See Moema Parente Augel, *Ora di kanta tchiga. José Carlos Schwarz e o Cobiana Djazz* (Bissau: INEP, 1998); Moema Parente Augel, "Vozes que não se calaram. Heroização, ufanismo e guineidade," *Scripta* 14, no. 27 (2010): 13–27; Erica Cristina Bispo, "Cabral vive: A permanência do discurso de Amílcar Cabral na literatura da Guiné-Bissau," *Sintidus* 3 (2020): 33–51; Catarina Laranjeiro, *Dos sonhos e das imagens. A guerra de libertação na Guiné-Bissau* (Lisboa: Outro modo, 2021), and Sílvia Roque, "Mulheres, nação e lutas no cinema anti/pós-colonial da Guiné-Bissau," *Revista De Comunicação E Linguagens* 54 (2021): 276–95.
18 "Amílcar Cabral na nossa terra livre" and "Homenagem nacional ao fundador e militante número um do PAIGC," *Nô Pintcha*, no. 221, September 2, 1976.
19 Francisco Mendes ("Chico Té") was also laid to rest in Amura, as one of the leaders of the PAIGC during the struggle and Prime Minister of Guinea-Bissau between 1973 and 1978, the year in which he died in a car accident. A tombstone was placed there in honour of Ernestina "Titina" Silá, a leading combatant killed in a Portuguese ambush while on her way to Cabral's funeral in 1973. Cf. "Domingos Ramos, Pansau e Osvaldo ao lado de Cabral e Chico Té," *Nô Pintcha*, no. 617, August 9, 1979.
20 Imperial Square was changed to National Heroes Square, Republic Avenue to Amílcar Cabral Avenue, Nuno Tristão Square to Martyrs of Colonialism Square, Lusíadas Square to Titina Silá Square, Av. Américo Tomás to Av. Pansau na Isna, Av. Agostinho Coelho to Av. 3 August and Av. Carvalho Viegas to Av. Domingos Ramos, among many other changes. Cf. *Aviso de 25 de janeiro de 1975*, approved on 21 January.
21 As Cabral described it, in a text republished in the newspaper *Nô Pintcha*: "O massacre de Pidjiguiti e o novo caminho da luta," *Nô Pintcha*, no. 210, August 7, 1976. On the meanings of Pidjiguiti, see: Leopoldo Amado, "Simbólica de Pindjiguiti na óptica libertária da Guiné-Bissau," *Guineidade*, February 21, 2006, https://guineidade.blogs.sapo.pt/15548.html and Sílvia Roque, "3 de agosto de 1959, Massacre de Pindjiguiti, Bissau," *Esquerda.net*, August 3, 2021, https://www.esquerda.net/dossier/3-de-agosto-de-1959-massacre-de-pindjiguiti-bissau/63784.
22 Cf. "O povo homenageou os mártires do Pidjiguiti," "Aristides Pereira: A força está do nosso lado," *Nô Pintcha*, no. 57, August 5, 1975. See also "3 de agosto de 1959 – 3 de agosto de 1976: 17 anos depois, o nosso Povo prepara-se para evocar, pela segunda vez após a libertação completa, o aniversário do massacre de Pidjiguiti, um dos crimes mais abomináveis praticados pelos colonialistas da nossa terra," *Nô Pintcha*, no. 208, August 3, 1976, and "Comité 3 de agosto. Luiz Cabral evoca o Pidjiguiti," *Nô Pintcha*, no. 209, August 5, 1976.
23 Roque, "3 de agosto," *Esquerda.net*.

24 Roque, "3 de agosto," *Esquerda.net*.
25 Cf. *Relatório sobre a situação atual na Guiné-Bissau* (Lisbon: CIDAC, 1980), 10, written by Luís Moita and Carolina Quina after a stay in Bissau, with the agreement of the Council of the Revolution, and in Praia, in Cape Verde, where they met several PAIGC leaders. After publishing the report, the CIDAC decided to resume their cooperation with Guinea-Bissau, which had been suspended since 14 November, while also calling for the release of political prisoners.
26 Cf. "Golpe de Estado é contrário aos princípios do partido," *Voz di Povo*, no. 251, January 17, 1981, and José Vicente Lopes, *Cabo Verde. Os Bastidores da Independência* (Praia: Spleen, 2013), 606.
27 João Bernardo Nino Vieira, *'Vamos construir a Pátria de Cabral'. – Discurso do fim do ano proferido pelo Presidente do Conselho da Revolução Comandante João Bernardo Vieira* (Bissau: Edições Nô Pintcha, 1980–1981).
28 Moita and Quina, *Relatório*, 3–4, and Fafali Koudawo, *Cabo Verde e Guiné-Bissau. Da democracia revolucionária à democracia liberal* (Bissau: INEP, 2001). See also Álvaro Nóbrega, *A luta pelo poder na Guiné-Bissau* (Lisbon: ISCSP-UTL, 2003).
29 See, for example, "O Secretário-Geral do PAIGC falou à Nação sobre os acontecimentos de Bissau. Golpe aventureiro trai 'princípios' e compromete uma luta de dignidade," "A história do golpe," "O golpe é uma aventura de graves consequências" and "A verdade por si só é revolucionária," *Voz di Povo*, no. 244, November 19, 1980; "Assumir a história da luta, aprendê-la com objetividade e no seu verdadeiro contexto´ – afirmou Pedro Pires no 'meeting' da Assomada," "Guiné-Bissau. Responsabilidade histórica ou rutura com a Luta," *Voz di Povo*, no. 245, November 29, 1980.
30 Lopes, *Cabo Verde*, 588–9.
31 PAICV, *I Congresso do PAICV* (Praia: Grafedito, 1981), 41–45.
32 *Nô Pintcha*, no. 753, November 24, 1980.
33 "14 de novembro – o fim da injustiça," *Nô Pintcha*, no. 754, November 29, 1980. According to Ângela Benoliel Coutinho, priority was given to the processing industries: 18 new production units were created during the period after independence up to 1979. Coutinho, *Os Dirigentes do PAIGC*, 201. Some of the options included in the economic and development plans, considered inappropriate for needs of the country and its populations, as well as the state elite's monopoly over resources, would contribute to the crisis of legitimacy in Guinea. See Rosemary E. Galli, "The Political Economy of Guinea-Bissau: Second Thoughts," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 59, no. 3 (1989): 371–80, and Wilson Trajano Filho, "O projeto nacional na Guiné-Bissau: uma avaliação," *Estudos Ibero-Americanos* 42, no. 3 (2016): 925.
34 Front page: "Mensagem do comandante Nino Vieira. Vamos construir a Pátria de Cabral," *Nô Pintcha*, no. 759, December 31, 1980.
35 "Congresso Extraordinário. Nino Vieira eleito Secretário-Geral do PAIGC," *Nô Pintcha*, no. 831, November 14, 1981.
36 "Fizemos o Congresso de Cassacá para pormos o partido no caminho certo," *Nô Pintcha,* no. 137, February 17, 1976.
37 Patrick Chabal, *Amilcar Cabral. Revolutionary Leadership and People's War* (Trenton/Asmara: Africa World Press, 2003), 77–81.
38 Koudawo, *Cabo Verde e Guiné-Bissau*, 202. See also Mustafah Dhada, *Warriors at Work: How Guinea Was Really Set Free* (Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1993).
39 "Cassacá: Uma lição a não esquecer," *Nô Pintcha*, no. 855, February 13, 1982.
40 Temudo, "From 'People's Struggle'," 248.
41 *Nô Pintcha*, no. 1190, November 14, 1985.
42 Lars Rudebeck, "Kandjadja, Guinea-Bissau 1976–1986: Observations on the Political Economy of an African Village," *Review of African Political Economy* 15, no. 41 (1988): 22.
43 Koudawo, *Guiné-Bissau e Cabo Verde*, 202–3.

44 Koudawo, *Guiné-Bissau e Cabo Verde*, 132, and Trajano Filho, "O projeto," 926. See also Carlos Lopes, *A transição histórica na Guiné-Bissau: do movimento de libertação nacional ao Estado* (Bissau: INEP, 1987).
45 Raúl Fernandes, "Processo democrático na Guiné-Bissau," *Soronda* 17 (1994); Koudawo, *Guiné-Bissau e Cabo Verde*, 133, and Cardoso, *A Formação da Elite*, 20.
46 The second multiparty elections were then held in the country and were won by Kumba Yalá for the Party for Social Renewal, thus ending over 20 years of PAIGC political hegemony. Nino Vieira would return to Guinea-Bissau in 2005, when he stood as a candidate in the presidential elections and was re-elected. He was assassinated while in office, in 2009.
47 Miguel de Barros and Redy Wilson Lima, "RAPensando novos mapeamentos culturais e territórios de emancipação cívica na Guiné-Bissau e em Cabo Verde," *Mundo Crítico* 6 (2021): 82–101.
48 Barros and Lima, *RAPensando*, 90.
49 Christoph Kohl and Anita Schroven, "Suffering for the Nation: Bottom-up and Top-down Conceptualisations of the Nation in Guinea and Guinea-Bissau," *Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology Working Papers* 152 (2014): 16.
50 Miguel de Barros and Redy Wilson Lima, "Rap Kriol(u): o pan-africanismo de Cabral na música de intervenção juvenil na Guiné-Bissau e em Cabo Verde," *Realis – Revista de Estudos Antiutilitaristas e Pós-Coloniais* 2, no. 2 (2012): 99–101.
51 Barros and Lima, *RAPensando*, 94. See "A história e a arte de mãos dadas," *Na nô mon*, January 4, 2021, https://nanomon.org/noticias/historia-e-arte-de-maos-dadas. On the PAIGC liberation heroes, see Ângela Benoliel Coutinho, "Imaginando o Combatente Ideal do PAIGC. A construção dos heróis nacionais na imprensa pós-independência na Guiné-Bissau e em Cabo Verde," in *Comunidades imaginadas: nações e nacionalismos em África*, eds. Luís Reis Torgal, Fernando Tavares Pimenta, and Julião Soares Sousa (Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra, 2008), 173–80. On the role of women in the Guinean liberation struggle, see among others: Stephanie Urdang, "Fighting Two Colonialisms: The Women's Struggle in Guinea-Bissau," *African Studies Review* 18, no. 3 (1975): 29–34; Stephanie Urdang, *Fighting Two Colonialisms: Women in Guinea-Bissau* (New York: Monthly Press Review, 1979); Patrícia Godinho Gomes, "Amílcar Cabral and Guinean Women in the fight for emancipation," in *Claim No Easy Victories. The Legacy of Amílcar Cabral*, eds. Firoze Manji and Bill Fletcher Jr. (Dakar: Codesria/Daraja Press, 2013), 279–94; Aliou Ly, "Promise and Betrayal: Women Fighters and National Liberation in Guinea Bissau," in *Pan-Africanism and Feminism*, eds. Amina Mama and Hakima Abbas (Cape Town: African Gender Institute, 2014), 24–42; Odete Semedo, *Carmen Maria de Araújo Pereira. Os meus três amores* (Bissau: INEP, 2016); Inês Galvão and Catarina Laranjeiro, "Gender Struggle in Guinea-Bissau: Women's Participation on and off the Liberation Record," in *Resistance and Colonialism. Insurgent Peoples in World History*, eds. Nuno Domingos, Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo, and Ricardo Roque (Cham: Palgrave MacMillan, 2019), 85–122.

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Decisão no. 16/81 de 20 de Julho de 1981.

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Part II: Space, Imaginaries and Memoryscapes

5 Monuments to the colonial war in Portugal

A 60-year portrait

André Caiado

Introduction

Given its duration, scale, dynamics and the set of representations which it projects in public areas, the process of monumentalising the colonial war is a case study that provides a unique opportunity for reflecting on contemporary processes for memorialising and commemorating imperial pasts and colonial wars in public space. In the Portuguese context, as discussed in the introduction to this volume, the commemoration and official remembrance of the war have come under pressure since the conflict came to an end. Over the past 60 years, around 450 monuments commemorating the war and the soldiers of the FAP (Portuguese Armed Forces) who fought in it have been constructed throughout Portuguese territory. This monumentalisation shapes a material *memory landscape* that has established itself as the heritage of the communities of Portuguese veterans.

Through a diachronic analysis of the evolution of this process, my aim is to discuss the way in which these monuments are established as *memory markers* and intersect with the public memory of war. As Bodnar affirms, public memory "emerges from the intersection of official and vernacular cultural expressions"[1] and is the result of a process of political discussion and negotiation.[2] From this basis, I aim to determine which aspects of the public memory of war are reflected in the monuments, as mnemonic products. I will also explore the way in which the motives, memory(ies) of war, personal military experiences, perspectives on the conflict, and ideologies of the subjects who organise the construction of these memory markers influence the representations which are projected.

The evolution of the monumentalisation process

The task of creating inventory points to the existence of almost 450 monuments in Portugal by the end of 2022.[3] The majority, amounting to roughly 389, were constructed from the year 2000 onwards (see Table 5.1).[4] In the interest of providing a better understanding of this phenomenon, I have identified three different phases[5] that are related to the social dynamics of the process, changes in the pace of construction of the monuments, and the diversity of the iconographic and sculptural options they present. I will attempt to demonstrate the relationship that is established between

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Table 5.1 Monuments inaugurated, by period.

Date of inauguration	*Number*	*Monuments/year*
Unknown	10	n.a.
1963–1974	20	1.7
1975–1999	29	1.2
2000–2022	389	16.9
	448	

Source: see Note 4.

these dynamics and other public processes for memorialising the war, arguing that these changes are, to a large extent, influenced by changes in the ways and types of memorialising and evoking the war that have taken place in Portuguese society.

The monuments built in the first two phases defined in this study are characterised by more simple, classical and formal sculptural and iconographic choices. In many cases, they replicate international models and are inspired by the monuments to the fallen of the First World War constructed in Portugal in the decades after this conflict ended.[6] From the early years of the new century in particular, the aesthetic and architectural options featured in these monuments have multiplied, influenced by the dynamics and porosity of the processes for re-elaborating individual memories and testimonies and the emergence of the authority of self-recognised lived experience.

First phase: 1963–1974

During this period, while the war was still ongoing, the monuments were mainly small and characterised by their sculptural simplicity, invariably featuring a column, obelisk, pillory or memorial plaque. However, some were significantly larger and others featured the figure of the "soldier-hero," which would become a common style for monuments constructed in later decades (Figure 5.1). Certain dynamics typical of the entire monumentalisation process can already be identified in this first phase, namely the decentralised nature of the process and the fact that it does not result from a politics of commemoration and remembrance directly implemented by the government, but instead included military regiments, veterans' associations and local public administrations among its organisers.

Second phase: 1975–1999

This phase covers the 25 years immediately after the end of the war, in which around 30 monuments were built, in styles varying from the classic representation of the soldier to the usual memorial plaque bearing the names of soldiers, or the traditional column or obelisk. Despite the fact that the memory of the war was receding in public space during the 1970s and 1980s, within the Armed Forces and veterans' communities' efforts and resources were mobilised to consolidate the history and memory of the war and pay tribute to the fallen and to the soldiers

Figure 5.1 Monument to the Fallen, Paratroopers Regiment Establishment – Tancos. Photograph by André Caiado.

who had taken part in it. In 1978, the first sizeable monument to be inaugurated after the revolution paid homage to the commandos[7] and had been organised by the Association of Commandos (*Associação de Comandos*). These efforts continued throughout the 1980s, when a further 10 monuments were erected in military establishments and work began on the national monument dedicated to veterans. After an initial impasse, the Executive Committee for the Monument to the Overseas Combatants, which included various veterans' and soldiers' associations, organisations from the Armed Forces, and academic societies, was founded in 1987 (see Figure 1.1 in chapter 1 of this book). The process of building the monument, which began in 1985 and ended with its inauguration on 15 January 1994, was the subject of various controversies, ranging from the reason for building it, the differing opinions of the various veterans' associations and the fund-raising for its construction, to the choice of site, the model that was selected, and even the refusal of the President of the Republic and ex-officio Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces – at the time, Mário Soares – to preside over the Committee of Honour for the Installation of the Monument which consequently was never officially constituted, and the booing which greeted him during the official inauguration of the monument. Despite receiving institutional support from the Portuguese state in the form of donations from various entities, it was the various veterans' associations that were responsible for the initiative and all the work leading to the construction of the monument. Installed in the Belém *memory*

complex,[8] a monumental space which celebrates the imperial past of the country, the monument is a *memory marker* which also records the end of the Portuguese imperial cycle within the same space.

A large memorial plaque not included in the initial project but completed a few years after the monument had been inaugurated (5 February 2000), at the request of some veterans, stands behind the structure, adjacent to the walls of the Bom Sucesso Fort, and bears the names of "all the soldiers who died in the service of Portugal" while on duty overseas. Further plaques were added later, as new names and numbers for those who died in service came to light, together with the names of some black soldiers in the FAP who had not initially been included. The sacralisation of this space was extended in 2015 following the construction of a Catholic chapel and memorial to the combatant containing a tomb of the unknown soldier, in which the mortal remains of a soldier from Guinea-Bissau were laid to rest. Over time, the dynamics of the appropriation of space extended beyond the memorialisation of the "overseas combatants." Through the inscription of names on plaques and the construction of smaller monuments nearby, other soldiers or agents of the security forces who had perished in military campaigns or in peacekeeping and humanitarian aid operations abroad were also honoured. The space was thus converted into a pantheon of the military community and a *site of memory*, the stage for military parades and ceremonies that were not exclusively associated with the colonial war.

Third phase: 2000 to the present

From the year 2000 onwards the number of monuments inaugurated each year began to increase, together with the range of architectural models, aesthetic options and visual communication tools chosen by their authors and designers. This third phase reflects a significant development in the different expressions of the memorialisation of war[9] during this period, which extended to memoirs, autobiographies, academic projects and historiographical studies, films, television series and documentaries, debates in the press and other media, and interventions and testimonies shared by veterans in the blogosphere and via social networks,[10] as well as veterans' reunions[11] and remembrance ceremonies held in public areas.[12]

The organisers

With the exception of monuments constructed within military establishments up to the 1990s, the impetus to construct these memory markers essentially came from the efforts of veterans acting individually or in groups, veterans' associations and local authorities (municipal and parish councils). In order to understand the growth in this process from the turn of the century onwards, it should be considered within the framework of the much broader phenomenon of the expansion of processes for the public and private remembrance of the war described above, many of which have gained access to public space and greater media attention. The phenomenon has been triggered by various factors, beginning with the *memory work* undertaken

by veterans' communities and associations. Among the latter, the role played by the oldest of these associations, the League of Combatants, stands out.[13]

The involvement of veterans in these memorial projects also seems to have been impelled by the fact that they are now ageing and have more time available, following retirement. In many cases the awareness that they are reaching the end of their lives has generated an urgent need for commemoration, a need to tell their stories and memories of war and to share and socialise – either in person or digitally – with other comrades.[14] Added to this is the desire to pay public tribute to the fallen, as well as to the combatants who took part in the conflict. Thirdly, the activities of the associations and the commemorative events organised by these communities and associations have benefited from the support of the state, in particular through the local authorities. With regard to monumentalisation, it should be noted that municipal and parish councils are almost always co-promotors of the building projects. Their involvement takes the form of financial contributions and sometimes includes the initiative to build monuments or the appointment of a council architect to design the plans.

Nevertheless, the central public administration is less involved in this process. Although several constitutional governments have co-financed the building of monuments – namely the national monument and those constructed inside the premises of military regiments – over the years it has mainly provided indirect aid, specifically through the presence of members of the government at certain inauguration ceremonies and via the institutional and occasional financial support provided by the League of Combatants. As an official organisation overseen and funded by the Ministry of National Defence, this entity can be identified as the main driving force behind the official politics of commemoration for the conflict.

Past and present imaginaries

From the year 2000 onwards, maps of the three territories in which the war had been fought frequently began to appear on monuments, and sometimes a map of mainland Portugal and its islands. Moreover, although they were less common, when the homage was extended to combatants who had served in other parts of what was known as Overseas Portugal, maps of these territories were also included, together with the names of the soldiers who had served there.[15] However, it does not seem that the inclusion of maps in around 60 of the monuments can be explained only as tools designed to help passers-by/visitors identify the territories in which the war took place: in monuments that feature world maps in which the overseas territories are identified, this may be understood as a valorisation mechanism which aims to underline the territorial dimensions and geographical spread of the "overseas" component of the country at the time of the conflict, as suggested by the monument and square recently constructed in Calendário (20 October 2018) (Figure 5.2).

The Santa Comba Dão monument (13 May 2010) (Figure 5.3) consists of an illuminated fountain flanked by seven vertical elements on which the names and maps of the seven Portuguese colonies established during the final phase of Portuguese colonialism are engraved, together with the dates when they were under Portuguese

Figure 5.2 Calendário Monument/Square.
Photograph kindly provided by JOPH – Engenharia e Construção, Lda.

Figure 5.3 Monument to the Overseas Heroes, Santa Comba Dão.
Photograph by André Caiado.

administration. As noted in the architectural plans, the presence of water is intended to refer to the imaginary of the maritime conquests. The author, Manuel Gamito, a council architect, stated that he was given artistic freedom to design the proposal and opted to develop a project based on the concept of Overseas Portugal. As he explained to me, he understood it as a mechanism for valorising the history of the country.

Another related dynamic characteristic of this monumentalisation process is the continuation – and reinforcement, from 2010 onwards – of messages and visual narratives in various monuments which project a certain imperial imaginary. This epiphenomenon, which I have analysed in greater detail in a previous study,[16] can be observed on two levels: on the one hand, in the continuing presence of symbols and figurative elements from national heraldry associated with the imperial past, specifically the armillary sphere and the cross of the Order of Christ; on the other hand, in the extent to which the imaginary of the process of Portuguese maritime expansion during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries has been used as a source of inspiration. There are some monuments which display caravels, while others are designed in the form of the stone pillar (*padrão*) used by Portuguese navigators to establish Portuguese sovereignty over the territories they had reached, and some whose inscriptions include excerpts from works from the canon of Portuguese literature that are associated with this set of ideas, namely *Os Lusíadas*, by Luís de Camões, and *Mensagem*, by Fernando Pessoa.

The Tondela monument (30 June 2002), which at first sight appears to be a celebration of the epic maritime endeavours of the Portuguese, is a typical example of this in terms of the way in which it seeks to honour the combatants of the region over the centuries. This is achieved by means of a visual representation supported by a narrative line that begins with the founding of the nation, spans the entire imperial cycle and ends with the colonial war. The sides of the monument display reproductions of maritime navigation charts of the African coast dating from the time of the "Maritime Expansion" and excerpts from *Os Lusíadas* and *Mensagem* associated with this imaginary. The monument serves the purpose of paying tribute to the local combatants killed in action during the colonial war, who are symbolically represented by 49 metallic "crossbows" encircling the central structure of the monument, which have their names engraved on their bases.[17] As António Ferraz[18] informed me, the idea of including references to the fifteenth-century "Discoveries" was intended to highlight the fact that the empire for which it was the combatants' duty to fight had come into being with the "Discoveries."[19] This conceptual proposal aimed to create a link between the inhabitants of the municipality who had fought in the colonial war in Africa, and those of the Middle Ages who had contributed to the founding of the nation, thus forging a historical continuum that emphasis the efforts of the men of the region in the construction and defence of the country.

In the entangled web that interlinks the memory of the colonial war and the end of the Portuguese imperial cycle, reclaiming the ideas of the "Discoveries" and the empire appears to function as a compensation mechanism. Faced with the responsibility and difficulty of evoking the memory of a "lost" war, "waged against the

tide of history" and therefore lacking political legitimacy, the national-imperialist imaginary[20] is summoned, as a nationalist myth. These and other cases previously explored[21] reveal how one way of valorising the history of Portugal and projecting the grandeur of the nation and the Portuguese people is naturalised by drawing on a certain idea of the longevity and vast reach of the Portuguese colonial empire. They appear to express a form of *vernacular remembering*[22] of the *imperialisation of the nation state*,[23] whose legacy pervades a certain common sense and fuels public and private narratives of the colonial past of the country, even today. They reproduce historical and semantic reconfigurations in which the "unique nature of Lusitanian expansion(ism)" is not interpreted as colonial and the consequences of this political project are omitted.[24]

Contestation and appropriation

The materiality of monuments and their installation in public space means that their life cycles are subject to interference from the different dynamics of discussion, contestation and appropriation. This begins in the design and planning phase and moves on to include the opinions generated by their aesthetics, the message they convey, and even the specific ways in which they may be appropriated by particular communities and political groups with political and identitarian objectives.

The selection of a site that might be considered appropriate and suitably distinguished for a national monument lay behind some of the discussions and tensions surrounding the construction of the Monument to the Overseas Combatants in Lisbon, in addition to the choice of architectural plans and the aesthetics of the monument. Moreover, the construction of the Santa Comba Dão Monument to the Combatants in 2010, on the same site where, decades earlier, a statue of Salazar had been erected and later destroyed, did not escape controversy. While the choice of site was an attempt by the mayor of the time to put an end to putative plans, which had not disappeared in the intervening period, to re-erect a statue of the dictator on the original site, this decision still fuels dissent among the local population today. Parallel to this, the lack of consensus on the choice of a site appears to have been one of the main obstacles to proceeding with plans to build a memorial for the victims of the colonial war in Lisbon, a category which included the war disabled of the armed forces.[25] The proposal, which emerged from within the ADFA (the Association for the Disabled of the Armed Forces), was initially intended for the Cais da Rocha do Conde de Óbidos (the property of the Lisbon Port Authority), due to the symbolism associated with its location as a place where soldiers set off and returned from the war.

The Valado dos Frades monument (19 January 2020), which includes the coats of arms of the eight overseas provinces, was also the subject of negative comments and criticism, mainly via social networks, after it was inaugurated. Some claimed that it drew on imperialist representations, while in the opinion of certain critics, it represented a form of neocolonialism.

More recently, the construction of the Porto Memorial to the Overseas Combatants was the target of some protest. Among other initiatives, an online public

petition,[26] which gathered 178 signatures, called for the construction work to be halted and, together with other measures, demanded that all instances of the use of the title "Overseas War" should be removed from public space and new constructions should be forbidden to use this terminology. It also demanded that the process of constructing the said monument should be transparent and subject to public discussion. At the same time, a motion presented by the CDU[27] to the Municipal Assembly in Porto, calling for a halt to the building work or, at least, a change in the name of the monument so that it would pay tribute to "the victims of the colonial war" rather than just the combatants, was rejected.[28] The Coimbra monument, discussed in the following section, is particularly illustrative of these dynamics.

The public life of a monument

The Coimbra monument was commissioned by the city council to honour the soldiers who fought in Africa and was inaugurated in 1971 on National Day (10 June). This sizeable monument incorporated, for the first time, the figure of the "soldier-saviour protecting the African child," comprising the figure of a soldier in motion, holding a weapon in his right hand and carrying the racialised figure of a naked African child on his back (see Figure 5.4). The grouping, intended to convey an image of the protection granted by Portuguese soldiers to African populations, served as propaganda to gain public support for the war effort. However, more than two decades after the war had ended, this paternalistic vision was reprised in three other monuments.[29]

Dedicated to the "Overseas Heroes," the monument was erected in the centre of a square that had been given the same name and resisted the toponymic changes introduced after 25 April, when some nearby streets that had names associated with the New State (*Estado Novo*) were renamed. After the revolution, on National Day the monument continued to serve as a place for paying tribute to soldiers who had lost their lives in the war. At the start of the new millennium, due to building work for the new municipal stadium which opened in 2004, the monument was moved a few metres and the square in which it stood was reconstructed, losing some of its former visibility. Nevertheless, during the course of this urban redevelopment project, the structure of the statue, the inscription and the name of the square were preserved and they have remained unchanged to the present day.

Recently the monument became a target for protests and appropriations that highlighted the potential for mobilising such monuments for current political, identitarian and memorial disputes. The graffiti which appeared on the monument on the night of 26–27 September 2020 triggered certain reactions in the days and months which followed.[30] Although no one claimed responsibility for the act, it should be noted that an anti-fascist demonstration had taken place in the city a few hours earlier, in response to a dinner and rally for the CHEGA party that was to be held in Coimbra that night.[31] On 5 October, graffiti once again appeared on the monument, with the word "CHEGA" having been painted in green on one of the sides. These acts were condemned by many veterans and veterans' associations, who described them as vandalism. The episode even saw the President of the Portuguese Republic, Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, take a stand during a visit to

Figure 5.4 Monument to the Overseas Heroes, Coimbra.
Photograph by André Caiado.

the city two weeks later, when he accompanied the mayor to the monument to lay a wreath of flowers and, through this symbolic gesture, pay tribute to the veterans and condemn the act. Months later, at the end of May 2021, the monument was once again appropriated when it served as the venue for a political demonstration

by CHEGA involving a march through the streets of Coimbra to mark the opening of the party's III National Congress, ending next to the monument where its leader, André Ventura, gave a speech.

The work of recontextualisation

Monumentalisation is one of the vectors in the *historical remembrance* of the conflict, together with other acts and practises developed by communities of veterans. The representations and messages projected by the monuments help construct an image of the soldier as a hero and, simultaneously, the victim of war, whether through their imagery or the inscriptions engraved on them. In monuments which include statues of soldiers, the figurative representation conveys their strength, courage, determination and physical stamina: there are no images of dead, wounded and physically or mentally frail soldiers. The inscriptions on the monuments, which help to establish the meaning of the tribute, sometimes reinforce this quite powerfully. The way in which these invocations are formulated helps sacralise the figure of the combatant: "TO THE OVERSEAS HEROES" is one common example. Others reinforce the apologia of love of the fatherland and confer an eschatological meaning on the act of dying for one's country, paying tribute to "THOSE WHO DIED IN THE SERVICE OF THE FATHERLAND."

In a number of testimonies and private narratives,[32] many veterans denounce the coercive nature of the mobilisation for war and try to distance themselves from the responsibility of having been active agents in a war which, decades later, many consider to have been anachronistic and unjust. In some cases, however, the testimonies of veterans are at odds with the prevailing discourse, given that they accept their role as the authors of violent acts. This becomes clear in the narratives of many disabled members of the armed forces, whom Martins defines as "paradoxical victims," given that "they are very often, concomitantly, victims, perpetrators and witnesses to the violence of others."[33] However, narratives such as these, which have the potential to destabilise the hegemonic narrative, are purged from the public memorialisation project. No monument features representations that establish any condemnation of war or denial of this military experience, nor do they reveal "a desire to atone for their sins" expressed in the stories of many combatants.[34] The use of monumentalisation as part of the wider *politics of regret*,[35] which could have been promoted by the Portuguese state, has also been excluded from the process.

The work of recontextualisation practised as part of this process of monumentalisation reconfigures conscription as a service to the nation and exempts the combatants from any responsibility. It draws on the semiotic resources used by the developers and designers of monuments which are crucial to the recontextualisation of the social practise of war, building up discourses "that are largely celebratory and which distract from the actual meaning, causes and nature of warfare."[36] This process is also characterised by the absence of any markedly warlike imagery and representations of the "enemy" or the civilian victims of the conflict, the lack

of expression on the faces of most of the statues – which show no emotion – and the lack of inscriptions which directly justify the war or defend the political reasons for which it was fought. These mechanisms are designed to avoid any questioning of the political and historical legitimacy of the conflicts and any implication that the soldiers were directly responsible for the (political) conduct of the war or morally responsible for any excesses that may have been committed. In focussing the representation on a simplistic and unifying narrative of a war fought for the sake of the fatherland, the intention is to honour the soldiers' involvement in the conflict and dismiss the notion that they have any responsibility as the agents carrying out the war, perpetrators of violence or authors of alleged war crimes.

The message of a "war fought for the fatherland" is a common laudatory inscription in the language corpus of war monuments. This standard message is still reproduced in recent monuments, without establishing any critical reflection on the territory or symbolic community of identity and belonging which they epitomise. The uncritical reproduction of existential assumptions such as "THEY SERVED AND DIED FOR THE FATHERLAND" or "TO THOSE WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES FOR THE FATHERLAND" – a common device in war monuments – tends to disregard the fact that in this particular case the "fatherland" for which the soldiers "gave their lives" was not their homeland. They were not fighting for mainland Portugal and its islands, but to defend the imperial concept of "Overseas Portugal." This type of inscription was widely used in the intensive monumentalisation processes developed in various European countries in the decades after the First World War[37] and had a dual purpose. For bereaved families, it provided an eschatological meaning for the death of their loved ones, cut down in the prime of life, while for political leaders it eased the discontent and social revolt which could result from protests against the mass deaths of millions of young people in a meaningless war that was considered useless. This practise was converted into a script that was frequently used in processes for the memorialisation of conflicts and the fallen, which can also be observed here.

Concluding remarks

This monumentalisation process reveals a recontextualisation that reflects a form of *dominant memory*[38] of the war and the war veterans. It is anchored in the heroisation of the figure of the combatant and the glorification of the idea of serving the fatherland, reproducing many of the ideas and discourses of *banal nationalism*.[39] Through this operation, soldiers are not presented as young men (most of whom were depoliticised and badly informed) forced to fight in a colonial war waged by a dictatorship, but as heroes who served and gave their lives for the nation. The colonial nature of the war and the violence associated with the conflict are suppressed in the selection of visual narratives and discourses that are projected, while the historical process which triggered it is depoliticised. These narrative lines constitute the main *narratives of articulation*[40] on which the *agents of remembrance* base their memorial project. They represent a partial reconstruction of the past and

an *apolitics of memory*[41] which, in erasing all that is unspeakable and all the uncomfortable images of war, make public commemoration possible and enable the recipients of this homage to identify and connect with these markers, as the *official carriers of memory*.[42]

Expressions of the monumentalisation of the colonial war reproduce some of the classic paradigms of other similar processes, resulting in a certain normalisation of war and militaristic discourses. The dynamics of this process have, so far, managed to ward off the construction of counter-monuments or monuments that present counter-narratives establishing condemnation of the war, a critique of the colonial nature of the conflict or any explicit portrayal of its consequences, namely the civilian victims of the conflict and the thousands of soldiers who are left disabled[43] or suffer from post-traumatic stress[44] and bear the scars and traumas of war for life, very often bringing this burden into their home and family life. Even the impact of the inclusion of black troops within the FAP during the conflict, a phenomenon known as the *Africanisation of the war*, is not reflected in the chosen forms of monumentalisation.[45] Moreover, women rarely merit tribute; very few monuments pay homage to mothers, wives and war godmothers.

This process constitutes a tribute that is almost always initiated or (co)developed by veterans' groups or associations. It is shaped by the *agencies of articulation* through which these social actors aim to promote and ensure recognition of their memories of war.[46] It appears to emerge primarily in response to their need for public recognition, to overcome the social indifference and alienation they feel they are subjected to by Portuguese society with regard to their needs, and which is identified in testimonies and interviews,[47] in speeches given at inauguration ceremonies, the actual inscriptions on the monuments and the interviews I held with some veterans for this study. The messages emanating from the monuments aspire to be *public representations* which acquire a central focus in the public domain.[48] The most visible objective is to honour the fallen and dignify the memory of the combatants. Nevertheless, the increasing number of monuments, together with other memorialisation processes unfolding during the same period, may be viewed as *arenas of articulation*[49] used by communities of veterans to gain visibility for their psychological and medical needs, including medication, and public backing for the claims they present to the state authorities for improvements to social support and social security benefits.

In the eyes of the organisers, the aims are to develop a sense of public recognition for the generation of Portuguese soldiers who took part in the war, and to transmit the "history" of the period and the memory of these men to younger and future generations. However, the monuments tend to fail in terms of the relationship they aim to establish with passers-by in public space and often remain unnoticed in the urban landscape of which they are a part. Paradoxically, their potential tends to be realised when they become the subject of protest, appropriation or reinterpretation and are mobilised for political debates and present-day disputes over remembrance that galvanise society at such times.[50] With the exception of the aforementioned cases, monumentalisation has expanded without any significant protest targeting the process and the representations which feature in certain monuments, even

though this has not been the case recently with other monuments and symbols associated with the colonial past.

In focussing on the combatant as the subject of the tribute – whose figure is sacralised by means of the communication and semiotic tools used – rather than the war itself, a formula has been found that allows for remembrance, while taking into account the various tensions and disputes which the memory of war continues to provoke in Portuguese society. The monuments tend to blur the distinction between *historical knowledge* and *historical memory*. Moreover, it is a truism that monuments say much more about those who evoke than those who are evoked; in fact, they provide information about the motives and desires of the former and their visions of history and the conflict that is memorialised. The cases discussed here show how the authors' individual military experience, ideologies and interpretative frameworks for the war, the history of Portugal and the Portuguese colonial past are all channelled into the representations in the monuments which they create. However, one of the main objectives behind the construction of many recent monuments does appear to have been realised, namely that of contributing to the public (self)-valorisation and (self)-recognition which many veterans claim to feel. The monuments are also potential *sites of memory* where remembrance ceremonies are held for deceased comrades and for war service, in which the identity of a former combatant is revived. In paying tribute to comrades who lost their lives in the conflict and, in many cases simultaneously, to all combatants who served in the war, those who evoke, aware that their own lives are coming to an end, are expressing a "desire for eternity" for their comrades and for themselves. The *work of remembrance* and *anamnese* in which they are engaged demonstrates their agency and reveals how, while they are still alive, they are striving to establish the paradigms and narrative framework for the way in which they would like to be remembered in the future.

Notes

1 John Bodnar, *Remaking America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 13.
2 Bodnar, *Remaking America*, 13–14.
3 Using criteria defined by the author, only monuments built in Portugal and located in public areas or military establishments were counted.
4 The monuments were counted and the inventory of the inauguration dates produced by cross-referencing data available from the following sources: Liga dos Combatentes, 2022; UTW – Portal dos Veteranos da Guerra do Ultramar, 1954 a 1975, 2022; António Porteira and Jorge Martins, eds., *Monumentos Aos Combatentes Da Grande Guerra e Do Ultramar*, 2nd ed. (Lisboa: Liga dos Combatentes, 2018); reports available from the media, local authorities and veterans' associations via their websites. Several municipal councils, parish councils and military regiments were also contacted by email or telephone to request missing data and, in some cases, visits were made to gather information.
5 Cf. Table 5.1.
6 Sílvia Correia, *Entre a Morte e o Mito* (Lisboa: Temas e Debates, Círculo de Leitores, 2015).
7 The Commandos were an elite force of the Portuguese Army created in 1962. They were a counterguerrilla unit created to carry out particularly demanding missions in Angola, and later in Guinea and Mozambique.

8 Elsa Peralta, *Lisboa e a Memória do Império* (Lisboa: Deriva/Le Monde Diplomatique, 2017).
9 On the so-called "memory boom" associated with the colonial war, see Ângela Campos, *An Oral History of the Portuguese Colonial War* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017), 249–50, 265; Miguel Cardina, "O Passado Colonial: Do Trajeto Histórico Às Configurações Da Memória," in *O Século XX Português*, eds. Fernando Rosas, Francisco Louçã, João Teixeira Lopes, Andrea Peniche, Luís Trindade and Miguel Cardina. (Lisboa: Tinta-da-China, 2020), 384–6, and António Sousa Ribeiro and Margarida Calafate Ribeiro, "A Past That Will Not Go Away. The Colonial War in Portuguese Postmemory," *Lusotopie* 17, no. 2 (2018): 277–300.
10 Verónica Ferreira, "'Rebuilding the Jigsaw of Memory': The Discourse of Portuguese Colonial War Veterans' Blogs," in *Mass Violence and Memory in the Digital Age*, eds. Eve M. Zucker and David J. Simon (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2020).
11 Maria José Lobo Antunes, *Regressos Quase Perfeitos. Memórias da Guerra em Angola* (Lisboa: Tinta-da-China, 2015).
12 Fátima da Cruz Rodrigues, *Antigos Combatentes Africanos Das Forças Armadas Portuguesas* (Lisboa: Instituto Camões, 2017).
13 According to its own data, the League of Combatants experienced a growth phase between 2004 and 2017, both in terms of the number of local branches, which rose from 63 to 114, and the number of (registered) members, which increased from 149,000 to 181,000. Joaquim Chito Rodrigues, "A participação do soldado português na Grande Guerra," *Liga dos Combatentes*, May 6, 2017, http://www.ligacombatentes.org.pt/upload/discursos_presidente/114.pdf.
14 On the need felt by veterans to provide and share testimonies and narrativisation processes, see the studies by Antunes, *Regressos Quase Perfeitos*; Campos, *An Oral History of the Portuguese Colonial War*; Ferreira, "Rebuilding the Jigsaw of Memory"; Rodrigues, *Antigos Combatentes Africanos Das Forças Armadas Portuguesas*, Bruno Sena Martins, "Corpos-Memórias Da Guerra Colonial: Os Deficientes Das Forças Armadas o 'restolhar de Asas No Telhado'," in *Geometrias Da Memória*, eds. António Sousa Ribeiro and Margarida Calafate Ribeiro (Porto: Afrontamento, 2016), and Luís Quintais, *As Guerras Coloniais Portuguesas e a Invenção Da História* (Lisboa: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais – Instituto de Ciências Sociais da Universidade de Lisboa, 2000).
15 Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe, Timor, the Portuguese State of India and, more rarely, Macao.
16 André Caiado, "The Monumentalisation of the Portuguese Colonial War: Commemorating the Soldier's Efforts amid the Persistence of Imperial Imaginaries," *Memory Studies* 14, no. 6 (2021): 1208–25.
17 A medieval weapon used in Europe which, due to its historical connotations, features in the coat of arms of the municipality.
18 President of the Board of the National Association of Overseas Combatants. The association is based in Tondela, whose municipality organised the construction of the monument.
19 Statements sent by email, 26 July 2021.
20 Elsa Peralta, "Fictions of a Creole Nation: (Re)Presenting Portugal's Imperial Past," in *Negotiating Identities*, ed. Helen Vella Bonavita (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2011).
21 Caiado, "The Monumentalisation."
22 Michael Pickering and Emily Keightley,"Vernacular Memory," in *Research Methods for Memory Studies*, eds. Emily Keightley and Michael Pickering (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013).
23 On this subject, see, among others: Maria Isabel João, *Memória e império: comemorações em Portugal (1889–1960)* (Lisboa: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, Ministério da Ciência e do Ensino Superior, 2002); Miguel

Bandeira Jerónimo and António Costa Pinto, "Ideologies of Exceptionality and the Legacies of Empire in Portugal," in *Memories of Post-Imperial Nations*, ed. Rothermund Dietmar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Cardina, "O Passado Colonial" and Peralta, "Fictions of a Creole Nation."

24 Cardina, "O Passado Colonial," 406.

25 The proposal signed by the then councillor Ruben de Carvalho, from the Portuguese Communist Party, was approved on 26 May 2010 at a meeting of the Lisbon City Council, with 16 votes in favour and only one abstention, from the CDS-PP, a right-wing conservative party.

26 "Apelo à paralisação da construção do "Memorial do Porto aos Combatentes do Ultramar," *Petição Pública*, 2021, accessed July 15, 2022, https://peticaopublica.com/?pi=PT107354.

27 The CDU - United Democratic Coalition is a left-wing coalition formed by the Portuguese Communist Party, the Ecology Party "Os Verdes," and the ID – Democratic Intervention Association.

28 "Polémica no Porto. Rui Moreira diz que monumento de homenagem do Ultramar é herança de Rio," *TSF – Rádio Notícias*, 2021, accessed March 28, 2023, https://www.tsf.pt/portugal/politica/polemica-no-porto-rui-moreira-diz-que-monumento-de-homenagem-do-ultramar-e-heranca-de-rio-13535394.html.

29 Oeiras (21 June 1997), Vila Real (1 December 2000) and Leomil (25 April 2009).

30 On the pedestal, the dedication "To the Overseas Heroes" had been partly erased by red paint and the word "murderers" added so that the inscription on the statue now read "To the Overseas murderers." The phrase "Fascist shits" was also painted on one of the sides.

31 CHEGA is a far-right political party which was created in 2019 and has a nationalist, conservative and populist agenda.

32 Antunes, *Regressos Quase Perfeitos,* and Campos, *An Oral History.*

33 Martins, "Corpos-Memórias Da Guerra Colonial," 313.

34 Martins, "Corpos-Memórias Da Guerra Colonial," 315.

35 Jeffrey K. Olick, *The Politics of Regret* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007).

36 Gill Abousnnouga and David Machin, *The Language of War Monuments* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 7.

37 Abousnnouga and Machin, *The Language of War Monuments*; Correia, *Entre a Morte e o Mito;* Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

38 Henry Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991).

39 Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1999).

40 Timothy G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson and Michael Roper, "The Politics of War and Commemoration: Contexts, Structures and Dynamics," in *Commemorating War. The Politics of Memory*, eds. Timothy G. Ashplant, Graham Dwason and Michael Roper (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2009).

41 Leith Passmore, "The Apolitics of Memory: Remembering Military Service under Pinochet through and alongside Transitional Justice, Truth, and Reconciliation," *Memory Studies* 9, no. 2 (2016): 173–86.

42 Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome*, 219–20.

43 Martins, "Corpos-Memórias Da Guerra Colonial."

44 Quintais, *As Guerras Coloniais Portuguesas*.

45 Caiado, "The Monumentalisation," 1216–7.

46 Ashplant, Dawson and Roper, "The Politics of War and Commemoration," 17.

47 Antunes, *Regressos Quase Perfeitos*; Campos, *An Oral History,* and Rodrigues, *Antigos Combatentes Africanos.*

48 Popular Memory Group, "Popular Memory: Theory, Politics, Method," in *Making Histories: Studies in History-writing and Politics*, eds. Richard Johnson, et al. (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 210.

49 Ashplant, Dawson and Roper, "The Politics of War and Commemoration."
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6 Memoryscapes of the liberation struggle in Cape Verde

Miguel Cardina and Inês Nascimento Rodrigues

Introduction[1]

In June 2020, Gilson Varela Lopes, a young Cape Verdean living in Luxembourg, launched an online petition calling for the removal of the statue of the Portuguese navigator Diogo Gomes, the supposed discoverer of the islands, from the capital of his country. The text was intended to lead to a discussion of the subject in the National Assembly and would trigger some debate in the archipelago between the political elites and certain politicised sectors of young people. The petition was based on the argument that Diogo Gomes was "a navigator who was also involved in part-time slave trading" and made an explicit connection with recent events taking place internationally: the dismantling and/or appropriation of colonial statues and the anti-racist demonstrations that were intensifying and expanding throughout the world in the wake of the murder of the North American George Floyd. "In a period of racial protest in which the suffering caused by these traders of black human beings has reopened deep wounds caused by trauma, discrimination, and injustice, which we still suffer", the text argued, it was fundamental to question the lingering presence of sculptures and memorials associated with the slave-trading past in the contemporary public space. The petition ended by proposing that the figure of Diogo Gomes should be replaced with the statue of Amílcar Cabral, the face of Cape Verdean independence.[2]

The petition led Abraão Vicente, the minister for Culture and Creative Industries, to intervene, stating that no statue would be removed since each had its own place in the history of Cape Verde. As an alternative to the removal of statues or the "destruction of memory", the minister proposed an exercise in overall perspective as the antidote for what he considered would be a very incomplete view of history.[3] This chapter, tracing the "post-colonial" trajectory of Cape Verde after the proclamation of national independence, aims to identify the contexts which led to the contemporary production of a composite memoryscape – combining colonial and anticolonial legacies – that contains elements which are contradictory, yet considered compatible. From a diachronic perspective, it explores the ways in which, from 1975 onwards, different memoryscapes of the liberation struggle have been produced in the archipelago, ranging from explicit celebration to implicit deprecation. It will analyse the way in which these memoryscapes were constituted, their

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components and characteristics, and the practices used to implement them. As we have argued elsewhere, the concept of memoryscape is understood here not as referring to physical markers in public space, but to an amalgam of the material land the imaginary which, in this particular case, conveys a given representation of the heroicised values and figures of a nation.

The liberation struggle and the post-independence memoryscape

In the first 15 years of independence under the so-called First Republic a political legitimacy and symbolic recognition conferred by involvement in the liberation struggle prevailed in Cape Verde, also extending to the movement that had led the struggle, namely the PAIGC (the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde). For a number of reasons, its historic leader, Amílcar Cabral, was considered the leading figure in the country. Cabral was a constant presence throughout this period: he featured in the Cape Verdean songbook and on commemorative stamps; he was cited as an example to be followed in the 5 July celebrations; the *Voz di Povo* newspaper regularly published extracts from his writings, speeches, and interviews; the preamble to the 1980 Constitution refers to him as the "Founder of the Nation"; in 1983, the Amílcar Cabral Symposium was organised in his honour and on 12 September of the following year, the Amílcar Cabral Foundation was created. In 1987, the famous Brazilian architect Óscar Niemeyer presented a project for a Cultural Centre in memory of the anticolonial political leader, although it would never be built.

Those who fought alongside him – particularly those with direct experience of combat in Guinea, many of whom were members of the new Cape Verde governing body – would serve as the moral repository for the political legitimacy of the new country. Paradoxically, a significant part of the new political elite and the emerging bureaucracy were the product of investments in education by Portugal after it became a Republic in 1910, developed from the 1950s onwards by Catholic congregations and, more significantly, the expansion of the late colonial state.[4] In allocating resources and expanding the public administration to curb the spread of anticolonial sympathies that were raging inside and outside the country, the late colonial state would pave the way for this new elite with ambitions to govern the nation, who had acquired legitimacy through the struggle.[5] After 1975, its members would establish themselves as important agents in the construction of a mnemopolitical landscape for the country, deploying various memorial practices and products through which the independence process was incorporated into everyday life and given meaning. The armed struggle thus became the birth certificate for the post-colonial nation, at the same time establishing itself as a grand narrative symbolising the return of Cape Verde to "Africa", which would materialise through a project for binational union with Guinea-Bissau.

Officially instituted in 1976, the national symbols of Cape Verde (the flag, coat of arms, and anthem) are a good illustration of this. The national flag adopted by the archipelago was based on the PAIGC flag and is also very similar to that of

Guinea-Bissau. Consisting of three rectangular bands in yellow, green, and red, colours symbolising pan-Africanist ideas still present today in countless other African countries, it displays images of two ears of corn, a shell, and a black star. The national anthem, "This is our beloved fatherland", shared with Guinea-Bissau and with words by Amílcar Cabral, is a text in praise of ancestors and the nation but also a hymn that exalts the liberation struggle and urges the people to overthrow colonial rule.[6]

With regard to the official calendar, the following, among others, were proclaimed national holidays in 1976: 5 July, National Independence Day; 12 September, National Day, commemorating the birth of Amílcar Cabral; 20 January, the date of Cabral's assassination, known as "National Heroes' Day". The currency in circulation after independence, namely the Cape Verdean *escudo*, displayed an image of Cabral on one side of all banknotes and the faces of African revolutionaries on coins. This tribute was in keeping with the "re-Africanisation of spirits" advocated by the PAIGC but, obviously, was not limited to these figures and also featured, for example, in music,[7] political discourses, sports competitions, and toponyms. On the Island of Sal, the airport was renamed "Amílcar Cabral International Airport" and throughout the archipelago public buildings, monuments, streets, and squares were given names associated with the liberation struggle.

Nationalising memories of the struggle, particularly in a territory that had not experienced armed conflict, was a process considered essential to the building of the state in the post-independence period and acquired renewed significance after the project for binational unity with Guinea-Bissau came to an end, leading to the creation, in 1981, of the African Party for the Independence of Cape Verde (PAICV).[8] During the First Republic, a memoryscape of the struggle as the origin of the nation would be produced and disseminated, mainly focussing on the following strands: (a) condemnation of the colonial system and valorisation of the suffering associated with the history of the island, highlighting the famines which had periodically devastated Cape Verde; (b) the rhetoric of bringing the archipelago closer to the African continent; (c) the symbolic grammar structured around values such as heroism, sacrifice, and courage, which would ultimately elevate combatants of the armed struggle, now political actors, to the status of super-citizens in Cape Verdean society (see Chapter 11 in this book).

The mnemonic transition and the anti-anticolonial memoryscape

The political transition that took place in Cape Verde in 1991 was preceded by a process of economic and political liberalisation that began in the mid-1980s.[9] This latent period was followed by a strict cycle of political transition, following the sweeping victory of the Movement for Democracy (MpD) in the legislative elections on 13 January 1991, in addition to its victories in the presidential and local elections also held in the same year.[10] According to Koudawo, "the PAICV, which had introduced the economic reforms, would have carried them out in any case", the distinguishing factor now being the clear espousal of neoliberal philosophy

on the part of the new party-political elites. He also noted how liberalisation and politics had emerged as intertwined during the process.[11]

In fact, from 1988 onwards a liberalising model based on "economic extroversion" would be proposed from within the PAICV itself and the first steps would also be taken towards pluralism, significantly accelerated by domestic social pressure. Silva refers to the contradiction facing the PAICV – "it neither liberalised the economy to the point that would enable a section of the petty bourgeoisie to convert their cultural capital into economic capital, nor did it maintain the welfare support required to continue providing peasants affected by drought with the aid they demanded" – which would partly explain this political opening up.[12] To this should be added what he calls the "Tocqueville paradox": it was, to some extent, the success of the PAICV in government, from the outset in education and the training of new cadres, which generated social demands that could not be met.[13] Koudawo also notes, as causes which explain the transition, external pressure, the erosion of power, the internal disputes facing the party, and the role of the well-established Catholic Church which functioned as a kind of accepted permanent semi-opposition and protest body at specific moments, such as during the agrarian reforms in 1981 or the decriminalisation of abortion in 1986.[14]

The political transition was followed by what we have already described as the "mnemonic transition".[15] This would involve replacing the prevailing memoryscape with a new memoryscape that erased the central focus of the anticolonial legacy and the link with Africa and proceeded to reclaim events and figures from the time before independence. Within the international context of the fall of the Berlin Wall, criticism of single-party regimes, and the global expansion of neoliberalism, these changes were an essential part of constructing an emerging "democratic legitimacy" to oppose the "revolutionary legitimacy", which the state and the new government would then use to map out a new imaginary of the nation.

One of the first measures involved reinstating monuments dating from colonial times. In March 1991, fulfilling an election promise made by the MpD, the statue of Diogo Gomes, the Portuguese navigator believed to be the first to have arrived on the Island of Santiago in the fifteenth century, was returned to the city of Praia, the capital of the country. Erected in 1958, the statue had been removed in the context of independence and its return, to a site next to the presidential palace on the eve of the inauguration of the new President of the Republic, was hailed on the front page of the newspaper *Voz di Povo* as a "release from clandestinity". Between 1991 and 1992, the busts of Luís Vaz de Camões and Marquis Sá da Bandeira were returned to the centre of Mindelo, on the Island of S. Vicente, to their former positions in a square that had been named after Amílcar Cabral. In S. Filipe on the Island of Fogo, the bust of Alexandre Serpa Pinto – a commander who had played a role in the so-called "pacification" of uprisings against the Portuguese colonial presence in Africa and had been a former governor of Cape Verde – was also returned in 1991. In the same decade, the statue of another Portuguese explorer, Diogo Afonso, was restored to a prominent site in Mindelo.[16]

Figure 6.1 (a) Statue of Diogo Gomes (Praia). (*Continued*)
Photographs by Inês Nascimento Rodrigues and Miguel Cardina.

Figure 6.1 (Continued) (b) Diogo Afonso (Mindelo).

In addition to reinstating busts and statues, in some cases changes were also made to toponomy, replacing the names of African leaders which they had been given during the post-independence period with names formerly used in colonial times. Krzysztof Górny and Ada Górna have studied this process in detail with reference to Plateau, the institutional and symbolic centre of the city of Praia, where some of the streets and avenues that existed prior to 1974 were renamed after independence.[17] After the 1990s, some names were changed back: nowadays 31 of the 35 main roads in Plateau refer directly to the colonial era, usually bearing the names of statesmen, soldiers, or governors. Still in the capital but outside the wealthier district, in 1993, Bairro Craveiro Lopes – built in 1954 and renamed Bairro Kwame Nkrumah after 1975 in homage to the Ghanaian who was one of the founding fathers of Pan-Africanism – had its original name restored, a reference to the politician and military leader who was President of the Republic of Portugal between 1951 and 1958.

Attempts by the PAIGC/CV to nationalise Cabral through the media, political discourses, songs, and public ceremonies were followed, in the years of the mnemonic transition, by what we term a process of de-Cabralisation of the national symbols: his image disappeared from Cape Verdean *escudo* banknotes and coins, the anniversary of his birth was no longer celebrated as a national holiday, and the anthem with the words he had written was replaced. This process of de-Cabralisation coexisted with a series of measures against the "Guinea combatants", who were described in the newspapers as corrupt oppressors.[18] Changes to the award of the Order of Amílcar Cabral, instituted in 1987 as the highest honour granted by the Cape Verdean state, can also be considered within this context.[19] The first president, Aristides Pereira, awarded the medal over a period of approximately one month (from 22 December 1990 to 19 January 1991) to 47 Cape Verdean combatants, most of whom were commanding officers from the Revolutionary Armed Forces of the People, the armed wing of the PAIGC, for their services during the struggle. However, the same decoration was only awarded seven times during the ten years in which António Mascarenhas Monteiro was president, and only to foreign heads of state.

This mnemonic transition established a new paradigm for the memorialisation of the struggle and the nation, leading to the emergence of a new memoryscape reflecting the desire for a break with the legacies of the armed struggle and the icons created by the previous regime in this context. A process for replacing the national symbols was activated, via a committee created for this purpose which the PAICV refused to join, and the narrative of exception and particularity associated with Cape Verdean identity found a new impetus in the 1930s legacy of the *Claridosos*, emphasising the elements of this identity that supposedly derived from the Portuguese matrix.[20]

The new flag, raised for the first time in September 1992 and chosen from among 64 proposals submitted in a contest, saw the disappearance of the visual resemblance to the flags of Guinea-Bissau and the PAIGC, together with the colours associated with Pan-Africanism.[21] Incorporating a graphic design and colour scheme which many consider similar to that of the European Union flag, the transformation

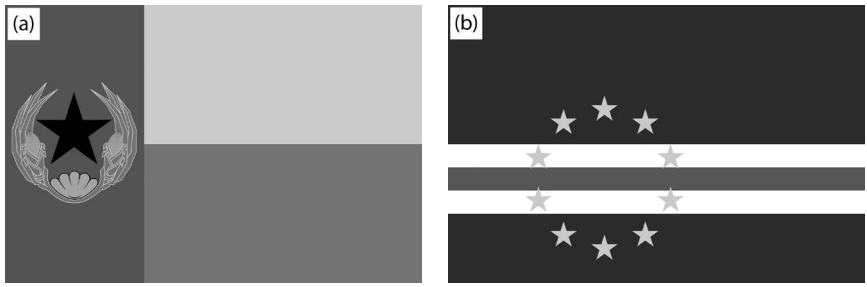

Figure 6.2 (a) The Cape Verdean flag until 1991. (b) The present-day flag.

is a clear sign of the new political-strategic and economic alliances taking shape in the country, with Portugal and Europe in general heading the list of privileged partners of Cape Verde.[22]

However, the architect responsible for the winning proposal, who was accused at the time of displaying a certain anti-Africanism, rejected the idea that it was inspired by the EU flag, explaining that the ten equidistant yellow stars represented the ten islands that comprise the archipelago, which were all equally important, and justified the use of blue to cover almost the entire flag by the fact that it was the colour of the sea and sky and therefore the colour most closely associated with the everyday life of the Cape Verdeans.[23] Thus, in the blink of an eye, the symbolism ascribed to the various elements of the current flag highlights the great Cape Verdean diaspora and potential for international cooperation, the Cape Verdean people's predisposition for migration, and the geostrategic position of the country within Macaronesia (comprising the Azores, Madeira, the Canary Islands, and Cape Verde).

The change of flag was greatly contested and debated in Cape Verde, leading to heated exchanges in parliamentary debates and in the media in 1991 and 1992. There were demonstrations in Santiago and S. Vicente, the two largest islands in the archipelago, and also in the diaspora, particularly in the USA. A petition in favour of keeping the original flag, signed by around 25,000 citizens, was presented to parliament and the PAICV submitted a proposal for a referendum, which was rejected by the ruling party who alleged, among other matters, that when the people had voted on 13 January they had rejected the PAICV and all its national symbols and that the flag introduced by the combatants and "imposed by force of arms" in no way reflected the reality of Cape Verde and its history.[24]

The change of anthem, which had been the same as that of Guinea-Bissau, was a more unanimous decision in party-political terms, mainly due to issues of protocol given that the union with the latter had ended, but was more difficult to accomplish. For years it was considered that no proposal submitted to the contest was of a suitably high standard and it was therefore impossible to find an acceptable alternative. The new anthem, "Hymn to Liberty", was only approved in 1996, following a vote on a bill presented by the parliamentary benches of the MpD after the party had

once again won the elections with a qualified majority.[25] All references to the struggle were removed and replaced with the values of liberty, which now also meant democracy, conquests symbolically venerated by the MpD as the exclusive property of own its party and which gave their name to the national holiday of 13 January, introduced in 1999 and known as Liberty and Democracy Day in honour of the date on which the first multiparty elections were held.

Like other national symbols, the currency may also be said to have undergone a process of "de-Africanisation".[26] The notes and coins bearing images of Cabral and other African revolutionaries were gradually withdrawn from circulation during the 1990s and replaced with designs featuring local fauna and flora and images of different individuals, all illustrious Cape Verdean figures from the time before the African nationalists, thus setting new standards for the award of honours to

Figure 6.3 (a) 500 escudos banknote, issued in 1989, with Amílcar Cabral's image. (b) 500 escudos banknote, issued in 1992, with Baltasar Lopes da Silva's image.

citizens which were more in keeping with the new values intended for the nation. The figures, all men from the Creole elite (the "*brancos da terra*"), despite having established themselves as critics of the subaltern status of the Cape Verdean in the archipelago, had not fought in general terms for the anticolonial cause, the defence of Africanism, or the independence of the islands. The new choice of iconography for the national currency demonstrates how the "dilution of Africa" movement, which Fernandes refers to, operated alongside the devaluation of the anticolonial legacies and the aforementioned de-Cabralisation of national symbols.[27]

There are certain reasons which explain this process of mnemonic transition, which was particularly incisive in the 1990s. Firstly, there was the defeat of the PAICV within an international context in which liberation movements that became single-party regimes were widely criticised. Secondly, there was the broad party-political hegemony achieved by the MpD, enabling it to alter the Constitution and introduce changes to symbology and public space, benefitting from the legitimacy conferred on it by the elections. Thirdly, a diffuse social and political arena was reactivated in which political opponents of the PAIGC before and after independence, together with movements and institutions such as the Catholic Church, expressed an interest in revising the past, reprising the pre-existing tensions. Finally, these symbolic and political changes resonated with the sympathies of significant sectors of the population who were receptive to reinforcing the ambiguous identity that Cape Verde had established in its relations with Portugal and the colonial legacy. The social willingness to accept the mnemonic transition, therefore, suggests that, in addition to the loss of legitimacy affecting the PAIGC/CV and the regime, the lingering presence in Cape Verdean society of a colonial imaginary that was forging post-colonial representations of the nation was also an issue.

Adding, reconciling, contesting – a composite memoryscape

Despite the activation of the abovementioned measures for erasure and the repositioning of Amílcar Cabral as a key national figure, he was never totally removed from the public memoryscape in Cape Verde, mainly because he was recognised, both internally and externally, as greater than the PAIGC itself. The case of the Amílcar Cabral Memorial is an example of this. After the idea of creating a cultural centre in his memory was abandoned, a memorial was unveiled on 5 July 2000, marking the end of a process marred by various impasses and indecisiveness. The statue, a gift from China in the context of various investments in the country, is frequently questioned, mainly because of its style. Imitating statues of Asian political leaders, Cabral is presented in a rigid pose, wearing a heavy raincoat: "it looks like Mao Tsé Tung with Cabral's head" was the description sometimes heard in interviews and informal conversations.

Although a certain anti-anticolonial memoryscape asserted itself hegemonically during the 1990s, in the past two decades this complex memorialisation has been accompanied by the relative re-emergence of the memoryscape of the immediate post-independence period. This is evident not only in the memorial constructed in honour of Amílcar Cabral, but also in specific re-evaluations of the figure of

Figure 6.4 Amílcar Cabral memorial in Praia.
Photography by Miguel Cardina.

the combatant. Equally, public recognition of actors involved in the struggle who had previously been attributed a relatively subaltern role has now diversified.[28] Moreover, from the first decade of the new century onwards, new political and artistic appropriations of the figure of Cabral have emerged, involving rappers and social activists, for example.[29] This process of mnemonic pluralisation has led to the re-emergence of debates on memory and the actual adjustments and accommodation of elements of previous – post-independence and anti-anticolonial – memoryscapes, resulting in the emergence of a composite memoryscape.

The public representations of Cape Verde, which we have called a composite memoryscape, are therefore constructed on the basis of a process of mnemonic accommodation or, in other words, a process of integrating the different legacies considered to constitute the broader trajectory of the nation. This memoryscape, which is very often depoliticised and removed from its historical context, emerges

with a veneer of supposed neutrality, at times in search of a national consensus – in conjunction with religious bodies, private enterprise, social movements, and academia, to give only a few examples – and at other times aiming to project self-representations of the country that are deemed more attractive, both domestically and abroad. They are very often the result of opportunities which, given the economic constraints facing the archipelago, are defined externally, via support from supranational entities (such as the EU, ECOWAS, or IMF), possibilities for funding, cooperation, and redevelopment projects promoted by private enterprise, foreign states, and international organisations or through the reproduction of the more global language of interculturality, heritage, and human rights.

Hence the definition of a composite memoryscape which combines apparently diverging or incompatible elements – ranging from a colonial past constructed from European and African presences to the struggle for independence and the construction of a post-colonial Cape Verde – is made up of both acts of evocation and acts of silencing, which are precisely what make it coherent as part of a national odyssey in which everything has its place, although in historical terms this is hardly the case. Rather than producing the dynamics of "agonistic memory",[30] it tends to generate occasional specific clashes of memory or a more general search for consensus. Within this context, challenges have emerged, such as the voice of Gilson Varela Lopes defending the removal of the statue of Diogo Gomes and its replacement with the statue of Amílcar Cabral, cited at the beginning of this chapter.[31] Considered together – standing only half a kilometre apart – these two statues are part of a composite and incongruous memoryscape of the country, composed of symbols, monuments, and self-referential discourses that tend to lend consistency to whatever emerges as conflictual or antagonistic through the notion of a Creole Cabo Verde.

Social protests involving the urban youth of Praia can also be viewed as part of this sequence. Challenges to the presence of this composite memoryscape (or some of its components) have emerged via sectors of young people who have been politicised or have connections abroad (in particular with Portugal, Holland, the United States, and Brazil) and are updating the current debates in Cape Verde on racism, slavery, colonialism, and their legacies. Redy Wilson Lima observes that they are led by young people influenced by what he defines as "counter-colonial discourses" that "call for a second liberation and re-Africanisation of spirit and minds".[32] Rap music, public petitions, cyberactivism, and the reappearance of Afrocentric and/or pan-Africanist cultural demonstrations, together with youth community activism, are some of the emerging forms of action identified by the author. It is also the case with the *Marxa Kabral* – a demonstration first held in 2010, which has taken place every year since 2013 on 20 January, the date of the assassination of Cabral – organised by the *Korrenti di Ativiztas*[33] and sectors of the Praia youth.

This event has established a counter-ritualisation of Cabral, celebrating his words, image and public representation, with the *Marxa* passing by his statue and ascending noisily to Plateau, the political and symbolic centre of the city where the statue of Diogo Gomes stands, breaking down the imaginary borderline between the Creole property-owning elite and a substantial part of the population who have felt forbidden to occupy the area. At the same time, the *Marxa* is also a clear

Figure 6.5 (a–c) 8th *Marxa Kabral*, 20 January 2020. (*Continued*)
Photographs by Inês Nascimento Rodrigues and Miguel Cardina.

Figure 6.5 (Continued)

affirmation of Africanness, evident in the choice of clothing, hairstyles and music, the slogans, and the use of capoeira as a global symbol of black resistance. The *Marxa Kabral*, like other protests in the city of Praia in recent decades, therefore emerges as associated with a broader dispute over the memoryscapes that constituted the country – and continue to do so – suggesting that it is necessary to return to Amílcar Cabral and the legacy of the struggle to express present-day concerns.

The alternative imagery created in the city of Praia in recent years can also be understood within this context. Since 2017, new "itineraries" associated with the liberation struggle have helped design other symbolic geographies of the capital. Through the urban art produced as part of the *Xalabas di Kumunidadi* community intervention programme – promoted by the Africa 70 NGO and the Associação Pilorinhu and funded by the European Union – it is nowadays possible to visit the Achada Grande Frente district outside the wealthier area of the city and observe arts projects in public space which evoke some of the great symbols of resistance and anticolonial struggle. They constitute ways of challenging the prevailing composite memoryscape, in which the visual and symbolic presence of the liberation struggle and the anticolonial matrix coexist with elements from the colonial period (such as statues, busts, and the names of explorers, governors, men of the Church, and other Portuguese figures), affirming a Cape Verdean Creoleness in which all these elements have a place and are connected.

Notes

1 Part of the argument of this chapter was developed in Miguel Cardina and Inês Nascimento Rodrigues, "The mnemonic transition: the rise of an anti-anticolonial memoryscape in Cape Verde," *Memory Studies* 14, no. 2 (2021): 380–394, and in Miguel Cardina and Inês Nascimento Rodrigues, *Remembering the Liberation Struggles in Cape Verde. A Mnemohistory* (New York and London: Routledge, 2022).

2 "Remoção de monumentos pró-escravagistas e coloniais em Cabo Verde," *Petição Pública*, 2021, accessed June 20, 2022, https://peticaopublica.com/pview.aspx?pi=PT100526.
3 Cf. "«Cabo Verde tem que conhecer a sua história de uma forma profunda», Abraão Vicente," *Expresso das Ilhas*, 16 June 2020, accessed June 25, 2022, https://expressodasilhas.cv/cultura/2020/06/16/cabo-verde-tem-que-conhecer-a-sua-historia-de-uma-forma-profunda-abraao-vicente/70013.
4 Crisanto Barros, *As elites político-administrativas cabo-verdianas: 1975–2008* (PhD thesis, Universidade de Cabo Verde/Université Catholique de Louvain-la-Neuve, 2012).
5 Cláudio Furtado*, Génese e (Re)Produção da Classe Dirigente em Cabo Verde* (Praia: ICL, 1997); António Correia e Silva, "O Nascimento do Leviatã Crioulo: esboços de sociologia política," *Cadernos de Estudos Africanos* 1 (2001): 53–68; Barros, *As elites...,* and Odair Barros-Varela, *Crítica da Razão Estatal. O Estado Moderno em África nas Relações Internacionais e Ciência Política* (Praia: Pedro Cardoso Livraria, 2017), 261–89.
6 The words of the anthem: "Sun, sweat, the green and the sea, /Centuries of hope and pain; /This is the land of our ancestors! /The fruit of our hands, /The flower of our blood: /This is our beloved fatherland. /Long live the glorious fatherland! /The flag of struggle flying in the skies. /Onwards, against the foreign yoke! /We shall build/Peace and progress/In the immortal fatherland! /(x2)/Branches of the same trunk, /Eyes in the same light: /This is the force of our union! /Let the sea and the earth/The morning and the sun/Sing that our struggle has borne fruit. [.. .]".
7 In the case of types of music considered more "African", such as *funaná*, *batuque* and *tabanca*, which were banned under colonialism and scorned by the local elites. João Vasconcelos, "Espíritos Lusófonos numa ilha crioula: língua, poder e identidade em São Vicente de Cabo Verde," in *A Persistência da História*, eds. Clara Carvalho and João Pina Cabral (Lisboa: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, 2004), 149–90 and Rui Cidra, "Cabral, popular music and the debate on Cape Verdean creoleness," *Postcolonial Studies* 21, no. 4 (2018): 2–19.
8 The coup d'état in Guinea-Bissau led by Nino Vieira in 1980, which deposed Luís Cabral – brother of Amílcar Cabral – and intensified the political divisions between Guineans and Cape Verdeans inherited from the liberation struggle, did not result in any significant changes to the first memoryscape.
9 See Michel Cahen, "Arquipélagos da alternância; a vitória da oposição das ilhas de Cabo Verde e de São Tomé e Príncipe," *Revista Internacional de Estudos Africanos* no. 14/15 (1991): 113–54; António Correia e Silva, "O Processo Caboverdiano de Transição para a Democracia" (Master's dissertation, ISCTE, 1997); Fafali Koudawo, *Cabo Verde e Guiné-Bissau. Da democracia revolucionária à democracia liberal* (Bissau: INEP, 2001); Roselma Évora, *Cabo Verde: A abertura política e a transição para a democracia* (Praia: Spleen Edições, 2004), and Edalina Sanches, *Party Systems in Young Democracies. Varieties of Institutionalization in Sub-Saharan Africa* (London and New York: Routledge, 2018), 73–95.
10 In the first of these elections, the MpD, which had emerged a few months earlier, won with a broad margin that would ensure it over two-thirds of the seats in the National Assembly, a necessary condition to enable it to proceed with alterations to the Constitution, which were implemented in 1992. On 17 February 1991, António Mascarenhas Monteiro won 72.6% of the vote, beating Aristides Pereira, the PAICV candidate and former president. The local elections in December would confirm the party-political hegemony of the MpD.
11 Koudawo, *Cabo Verde e Guiné-Bissau*, 156 and 216.
12 Silva, "O Nascimento do Leviatã Crioulo," 67.
13 António Correia e Silva, "Cabo Verde: Desafios económicos e a estruturação do Estado. Do Estado-Providência (sem contribuintes) ao liberalismo sem empresários. O Ciclo da

Iª República," paper presented at the VIII Congresso Luso-Afro-Brasileiro de Ciências Sociais – A Questão Social no Novo Milénio, Centro de Estudos Sociais da Universidade de Coimbra, September 16–18, 2004, 3, https://www.ces.uc.pt/lab2004/inscricao/pdfs/grupodiscussao5/AntonioLeaoSilva.pdf.

14 Koudawo, *Cabo Verde e Guiné-Bissau*, 118–27.

15 Cardina and Rodrigues, "The mnemonic transition."

16 From 1985 onwards, still under the First Republic, certain busts that had been removed during the post-independence period were already being reinstated.

17 Krzysztof Górny and Ada Górna, "After Decolonization: Changes in the Urban Landscape of Platô in Praia, Cape Verde," *Journal of Urban History* 45, no. 6 (2019): 1103–30.

18 During this phase a decree was issued obliging the PAICV to provide proof of how it had acquired its assets. During his presidential election campaign, Mascarenhas Monteiro stated in an interview with Daniel Santos that there was "widespread corruption" within the PAIGC in Guinea, insinuating that the involvement of Cape Verdeans in the armed struggle was hardly representative and far removed from the situation in the islands, adding that this meant that the PAICV had been punished in the elections: "if [the people] had ascribed any importance to this struggle, the PAICV would still be in power". "Sou um desertor especial," *Voz di Povo*, no. 1055, February 16, 1991.

19 Law 19/III/87 of 15 August.

20 *Claridosos* is the name for the leaders of the literary movement associated with the journal *Claridade*, which affirmed the exceptionality and superiority of the Cape Verdean, due to his "Creole" nature and the Portuguese contribution to the formation of society. See José Carlos Gomes dos Anjos, *Intelectuais, literatura e poder em Cabo Verde: lutas de definição da identidade nacional* (Praia: Instituto Nacional do Património Cultural, 2002); Vasconcelos, "Espíritos Lusófonos," 149–190 and Victor Barros, "As sombras da Claridade. Entre o discurso de integração regional e a retórica nacionalista," in *Comunidades Imaginadas. Nação e Nacionalismos em África*, eds. Luís Reis Torgal, Fernando Tavares Pimenta and Julião Soares Sousa. (Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra, 2008), 193–214. The active recovery of this cultural and intellectual heritage, beginning with Mascarenhas Monteiro's announcement in May 1991 that a foundation would be created in honour of Baltasar Lopes da Silva, a writer, teacher and one of the most distinguished founding members of the journal, underpins a theory that was very popular in the 1990s, namely that in Cape Verde the idea of nation predated the anticolonial struggle and liberation. Once again, it was during the First Republic that the re-evaluation of the *Claridosos* had emerged, with a symposium organised to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the movement, the founding of a literary prize dedicated to Baltasar Lopes da Silva, and other measures. For a for a critical review of *Claridade*, including the 9 issues of the magazine in facsimile edition see *Claridosidade. Edição Crítica*, eds. Filinto Elísio and Márcia Souto (Lisboa: Rosa de Porcelana, 2017).

21 Minutes of the 1992 Second Extraordinary Legislative Session, IV Legislature, Plenary Meeting of 21 July. See also, Vasconcelos, "Espíritos Lusófonos," 184.

22 Márcia Rego, *The Dialogic Nation of Cape Verde. Slavery, Language and Ideology* (New York and London: Lexington Books, 2015), 72.

23 Pedro Gregório Lopes, interview by the authors, Praia, 17 January 2019.

24 Minutes of the Third Legislative Session, IV Legislature, Meeting of 8 June 1992, 482–483. See also Rego, *The Dialogic Nation of Cape Verde*, 71–72 and, on symbols in general, its Chapter 3.

25 Words of the anthem: "Sing, brother/sing, my brother/that Liberty is a hymn/and Man is certainty. /With dignity, bury the seed/in the dust of the bare island; /on the cliff of life/ hope is the size of the sea/that embraces us. /Sentinel of seas and winds/persevering/ between stars of the Atlantic/sing the song of liberty (…)". Words by Amílcar Spencer

Lopes – president of the National Assembly at the time – and music by Adalberto Higino Tavares da Silva, both MpD members.

26 Rego, *The Dialogic Nation of Cape Verde*, 77.

27 Gabriel Fernandes, *A diluição de África: uma interpretação da saga identitária cabo-verdiana no panorama (pós)colonial* (Florianópolis: UFSC, 2002).

28 E.g. José Vicente Lopes, *Tarrafal: Chão Bom: memórias e verdades*, 2 vol (Praia: IIPC, 2010); Celeste Fortes and Rita Rainho, "Início das emissões da Rádio Libertação, do PAIGC (1967)," in *As Voltas do Passado*, eds. Miguel Cardina and Bruno Sena Martins (Lisboa: Edições Tinta-da-china), 178–183, and Euclides Fontes, *Uma história inacabada* (Praia: Pedro Cardoso Livraria, 2018).

29 Miguel de Barros and Redy Wilson Lima, "Rap Kriol(u): o pan-africanismo de Cabral na música de intervenção juvenil na Guiné-Bissau e em Cabo Verde," *Realis – Revista de Estudos Antiutilitaristas e Pós-coloniais* 2, no. 2 (2012): 88–116.

30 Anna Cento Bull and Hans Lauge Hansen, "On agonistic memory," *Memory Studies* 9, no. 4 (2016): 390–404.

31 See also the contribution by Redy Wilson Lima in June 2018, during the period of uncertainty over whether the figure of Cabral would remain in its current site. Advocating an "insurgent citizens" movement, he proposed that the centrality Cabral merited should include installing his statue at the top of Plateau where the statue of Diogo Gomes stood: Redy Wilson Lima, "E que tal um movimento de cidadania," *Ku Frontalidadi*, June 2018, http://ku-frontalidadi.blogspot.com/2018/06/e-que-tal-um-movimento-de-cidadania.html. This comparison has emerged in music, drawing attention to the symbolic asymmetry in the positioning of the two statues: on the one hand the prime site provided for Diogo Gomes, in front of the presidential palace and overlooking the vast ocean; on the other hand, Amílcar Cabral, in a less visible spot in the capital, overlooking the cemetery. See "Odja Oby Ntedy Dypoz" by Nax Beat: "N'ka kre odja statua di Cabral rostu para simiteriu / Di Diogo Gomi rostu para palasiu di governu". "I don't want to see Cabral's statue looking at the cemetery and Diogo Gomes looking at the government palace", cited in Barros and Lima, "Rap Kriol(u)," 101. The singer, songwriter and former Minister for Culture, Mário Lúcio also voiced this issue in *Diogo e Cabral*.

32 Redy Wilson Lima, "Di kamaradas a irmons: o rap cabo-verdiano e a (re)construção de uma identidade de resistência," *Tomo* 37 (2020): 47–88.

33 On the *Korrenti di Ativiztas,* see Silvia Stefani, "Resistência Urbana e Ativismo social na Praia: o caso da 'Korrenti di Ativiztas'," *Caderno de Estudos Africanos* 31 (2016): 69–94.

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7 Historical controversies, *Netoscapes* and public memory in Luanda

Vasco Martins

On 1 November 1975, ten days before the independence of Angola, the last high-commissioner and general-governor of the Portuguese colonial government in Angola, Leonel Cardoso, signed and made public the following dispatch:

> We call special attention to all Portuguese citizens who left the airport terminal yesterday after dinner, to the fact that the aero bridge has come to an end, at midnight of the same day, 31 October, in accordance with insistent warnings diffused in the press and radio since 9 October 1975.[1]

In this warning resided, even if symbolically, a definitive change to the human landscape of Angola. Amidst much confusion, between the escape of the Portuguese, the nervousness of the Portuguese army and the intense political and military activity of the three liberation movements, a new concern made its way into the limelight, regarding not the human but the material landscape of Angola. On 8 November 1975, one week after the end of the aero bridge that transported hundreds of thousands of Portuguese citizens out of Angola, and still three days before official independence, began the dismantlement of various colonial monuments. On that day, the *Jornal de Angola* announced in headline:

> The date of the independence of our country approaches. For that reason, there is a necessity to clean the nation of all the evils that were inherited from colonialism. Statues and monuments, although not a malign legacy, are above all a memory the Angolan people are not interested in keeping.[2]

The door opened to the removal of statues, monuments and plaques, the process was to cut the most visible colonial traces and create a new mnemonic landscape in Angola, above all in Luanda. This process was as vast as it was diversified. If the statues most representative of Portuguese colonialism were removed from their pedestals, as were those of Luís Vaz de Camões, Afonso Henriques and Paulo Dias de Novais, moved to the interior of the Fortress São Miguel of Luanda, others, like the monument dedicated to Norton de Matos in Huambo were taken from central areas of the city and placed in more peripheral spaces. Others even, like the plaque

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indicating the name of the Liceu Salvador Correia de Sá, today the Liceu Mutu ya Kevela after one of the leaders of the Bailundo Uprising (1902), were removed but reposted after some time, although only for a brief period. In their place new material celebrations were built, statues and monuments that gained life and created new narratives. The new regime of memory that began with the independence of Angola on 11 November demanded a new mnemonic order, one that primed the rupture of colonial celebrations to make a political statement and promote the edification, celebration and dissemination of histories and cultural legacies that were more common and well-known in the Angolan popular imaginary. It became clear, already in 1975, that the government of Angola would resort to the materiality of memory as a substrate for the construction of the nation.

This chapter analysis the formats and contents that guided the new monumentalisation efforts in Luanda in three specific places, the Museum of the Fortress of São Miguel, the monument to Agostinho Neto at Independence Square, and the António Agostinho Neto Memorial (MAAN). Its focus is not on the removal of colonial monuments but on the mnemonic signifiers and subsequent metaphorical segments of the new materialities of memory in Luanda throughout the recent political history of the country. I invoke the concept of memoryscapes, which refers to the spaces that occupy, and the symbology that accompanies, the materialities of memory, whether museums, squares, monuments, statues or plaques. But I follow its application by Cardina and Nascimento Rodrigues who adopt a 'broader perspective, which does not only merely focus on materialisations of memory in concrete physical and territorial spaces but also attempts an integrated analysis of the materiality, politics and social imaginary involved in the composition of memoryscapes'.[3] In doing so, I add Philips and Reyes reading of the memoryscape as a 'complex and vibrant plane upon which memories emerge, are contested, transform, encounter other memories, mutate and multiply'.[4]

The search for solutions that invoke the material and mnemonic but cross them with alternative political narratives and immaterial imaginaries is at the very genesis of this chapter. Through the memoryscapes of Luanda, I analyse the dominant discourse that defines the ways in which the Angolan population is encouraged to consider, narrate and visualise their historical past, specifically that of the liberation struggle. This is accomplished by positioning the concept of memoryscape as a central configuration not only to read public memory but also to analyse its instrumentalisation and categorisation by the political regime of memory in postcolonial Angola.

Resorting to the concept of memoryscapes to read the dominant political narrative on historical memory in the public sphere of Angola, my proposal shows the memoryscapes of Luanda as *Netoscapes*, that is, memoryscapes that communicate with the Angolan liberation struggle and national independence, but do it tendentially through the celebration of the figure of Agostinho Neto. To do so I compare three contrasting case-studies that characterise this tendency to configure the memoryscapes of Luanda as *Netoscapes:* the Museum in the Fortress of São Miguel of Luanda, the space where Portuguese colonial presence is more evident; the Independence Square, where the monument to Agostinho Neto stands central

and tall, the space where the memory of the founder of the nation was immortalised; and the MAAN, where the embalmed remains of Agostinho Neto are kept, the biggest memorial of Angola, a *Netoscape* to its very core.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section explores the genesis of the *Netoscape*, looking at the diachronies that categorise the tendency to agglutinate in the figure of Agostinho Neto the vast history of the memory of the Angolan liberation struggle, through the various polemics and initial controversies of the post-independence period. The second section looks for contrast and deviance by analysing the semiotic lines of the three above-mentioned memoryscapes, all located in Luanda. It crosses the three sites of memory to demonstrate that *Netoscapes* were constituted in a deliberate effort, seeking to congregate upon the figure of Agostinho Neto the memory of the Angolan liberation struggle in acritical fashion. It shows that the *Netoscapes* became a vehicle for a segment of the MPLA to benefit from the legitimacy of this historical era by creating politics of memory that were mostly erected by silencing the initial controversies of the recent history of the country. The last section analyses the political controversies and contestations of the memory that is encapsulated by the *Netoscapes*. It demonstrates that the only segment of Angolan society that refuses to accept Agostinho Neto as a national hero is the families of the victims of the 27 of May, as all other political parties opt not for the exclusion of Neto but for the elevation of their nationalist leaders to the same rank.

Research for this chapter was conducted during archive work in Luanda between 2017 and 2022. Archive research took place mainly at the Lúcio Lara Archive of the Associação Tchiweka de Documentação and the archive of the National Library of Angola.

'Aquele por quem se espera'

'Our long path represents the heroic history of a People, who under the unitary and correct guidance of its vanguard, relying only on its own forces, decided to fight for the right to be free and independent'.[5] Words proffered by Agostinho Neto during the proclamation of Angola's independence on 11 November 1975, referencing the long path undertaken by the MPLA to fundament the heroic history that delivered national independence. On that day of November, the heroic history of liberation contrasted with the material representations that still populated the mnemonic landscape of Luanda and began being removed on 8 November.

The removal of colonial monuments made clear that even before independence the new government of Angola would resort to historical memory to build the new nation.[6] The only possible way to achieve such a goal required a complete cut with the colonial past, by installing new mnemonic materialities that reflected the heroic history of the Angolan people as Neto defined it. However, the parameters used to define the new landscape, centred on the complex historical challenges the movement had experienced, allied to the urgent need of political affirmation both nationally and internationally, and the fundamental issue of nation-building, forced the congregation of various segments of the MPLA's heroic history into a single

memory and mode of celebration, largely defined around the figure of Agostinho Neto. The MPLA's need to affirm its rule in Angola, a consequence of the civil war it fought against the FNLA, UNITA and the army of Apartheid South Africa, and no less important, the intense internal contestations Neto faced within the MPLA, forced the inclusion of a large spectrum of memories that communicate with the liberation struggle and resort to it as means of legitimacy, but are presented through the figure of Agostinho Neto.[7]

The absence of well-defined traces of the memory of the liberation struggle crystalises in what Werbner terms elite memorialism, the subordination of several experiences and histories to the promotion of the role of struggle heroes.[8] Following this notion, the formats of the celebration of the Angolan liberation struggle, and in fact of the very independence of the country, came to rest on the celebration of Agostinho Neto. Yet, the mnemonic materiality of Agostinho Neto as an agglutinating figure of the victories against Portuguese colonialism was erected after the dilemmas and controversies of the history of the liberation struggle and those of the MPLA immediately after independence, when the latter had already assumed control of the state apparatus.

Mabeko-Tali argues that, among various episodes of contestation, Neto solidified his control of the party in two key moments, the Inter-Regional Conference of Militants in 1974, where Neto's presidentialist faction emerged victorious among the factions that divided the MPLA; and after the repression of the alleged coup on 27 May 1977, which independently of its origins resulted in the assassination of many MPLA cadres, some in favour others against the presidential line of Agostinho Neto, who emerged uncontested.

Before his apotheotic arrival in Luanda, symbolically on 4 February 1975, Agostinho Neto had a mythic aura. Within the clandestine activities in Luanda, and among the various popular groups that flourished in support of the MPLA, Neto truly was the leader who was awaited, has he described himself in the poem 'Adeus na hora da largada' [Farewell at the time of parting]. However, after independence, his aura of providential leader would be the target of contestation and intense struggles for power. Among the various elements that obscured the MPLA's rule during those first years of the independence of Angola, one would be essential in the fragilisation of Neto's reputation as an uncontested leader: the contrasting ideological positions between the ruling wing of the MPLA and the popular masses of Luanda, which culminated into one of the largest episodes of conflict and massacre in the recent history of Angola.

The popular masses, organised in autonomous groups of action, neighbourhood and workers committees, to whom the MPLA owed 'its supremacy and political regeneration, whether militarily whether referent to social and popular mobilisation in Luanda during 1974/75', represented to the leadership of the movement 'an impressive yet unknown MPLA, above all organised by a youth without any directive from the MPLA itself'.[9] The majority were young people who never had contact with the MPLA before the 25 April, but saw in it a vehicle for the materialisation of their political aspirations, mostly connected to the extreme-left. This absence of contact and familiarity between the two segments rapidly caused tensions between

the popular masses that had remained in Luanda building support to the MPLA and the leadership of the party arriving from exile,

> The MPLA intended to install a model of socialism that was very much its own. This attitude, no doubt pragmatic, cooled the delegates temper and caused a bad impression. (…) they did not lower their guard in supporting the MPLA against rival movements, but a breach had been opened in the ideological wall they had built around the image of the MPLA and of its main leader.[10]

Ideological tendencies and configurations divided the socialist model that Neto and the MPLA were looking to install in Angola from the pro-Soviet and/or Maoist organisation a considerable segment of the extreme-left of Luanda ambitioned for the country. An irreconcilable breach opened between a substantial part of the popular masses who supported the MPLA as they had imagined it, aggregated around some of the nationalists who had been involved in the clandestine struggle as well as combatants who had fought against the colonial army, and the leadership of the movement which had been exiled for almost two decades and was returning in 1974/75 to a country that was less familiar than the one they had left to fight Portuguese colonialism. As Moorman suggests,

> Under such circumstances, the party needed charismatic spokespeople who could reassure the people and redirect their concerns. Nito Alves fit the bill: 'In an organization – the MPLA – which did not have a reputation for possessing great orators among its leaders, Nito Alves was an exception: he knew how to find the right tone – vigorous and daring – to speak to the populace.' Musicians allegedly involved with Nito Alves, notably Urbano Castro, David Zé and Artur Nunes, likewise stood out in the popular imagination because of their stage presence and recognizable voices. Audiences respected them for their ability to represent the troubles and joys of daily life, troubles and joys that these musicians, unlike the recently returned political leaders, know firsthand.[11]

Bernardo Alves Baptista 'Nito Alves' enjoyed support from various groups, above all the Comités Henda, who published his speeches and saw him as a hero of the 1st Region; the Grupo de Reflexão Sita Valles, which supported his rise and had influence in his following of a pro-Soviet line; and the Comité Talahadi, constituted by young people who gravitated around Nito Alves, initially adopting a Maoist discourse that soon followed the 'Nitist evolution towards a pro-Soviet fraseology', who participated in the radio programme Kidubanguela and later allied with the Comité Henda in an attempt to dominate the base structures of the MPLA.[12] The political support these groups provided to Nito Alves, above all the attempts to infiltrate and dominate the MPLA, lead to their expulsion from the movement and consequent cut of relations with Neto in May 1977, a process that resulted in the repression of 27 May of the same year and ended with the continuation of

the political wing of Neto in the leadership of the MPLA and the Angolan state.[13] Neto had already survived several episodes of internal contestation, from the initial controversies with Viriato da Cruz and Mário Pinto de Andrade, to the Revolta de Leste lead by Daniel Chipenda and the Revolta Activa. However, a substantial part of this contestation had been either eliminated or marginalised when Angola became independent. And it had been so when the removal of colonial statues began and the construction of a new identity around new mnemonic materialities began.

In opposition to the Revolta de Leste and the Revolta Activa, to which Nito Alves stood against in defence of Agostinho Neto in 1974, the contestation of the Nitistas occurred after the MPLA had taken control of the Angolan state, that is, 'it had the particularity of happening within a party already installed in power', in control of its properties of communication and signification.[14] The control of the state paralleled to the strong contestation Neto suffered incentivised the construction of memoryscapes that were tendentially constituted as *Netoscapes*, a form of politically affirming and legitimating the winning side of the many internal contestations within the MPLA. The result, particularly after the events of 27 May 1977, was the production of state symbolism ubiquitously in favour of the elevation of Agostinho Neto as a statesman, a truly uncontested leader, as much for fear as for support and veneration. If already in 1976, the new Angolan currency presented the figure of Agostinho Neto, all of its subsequent iterations came to include the face of the first president of Angola, having introduced, and recently excluded, the figure of José Eduardo dos Santos from the numismatic.

The premature death of Agostinho Neto on 17 September 1979 and subsequent change in the leadership of the MPLA and the presidency of Angola did not readdress the uses of his memory from the central narratives and materialities of mnemonic celebration that were constituted. It motivated not only a long and important funeral procession, with Neto's body deposited in the provincial government's headquarters in Mutamba, Luanda, open to the public, but more importantly the construction of the biggest monument of Angola, the MAAN. The national press was largely responsible for the maintenance of his memory and legacy. Apart from numerous texts and articles, the *Jornal de Angola*, the daily newspaper of the state, published a photograph and saying of Agostinho Neto in the header of all its daily editions between November 1979 until, for what I could gather, January 1991.

The first president of Angola occupies a central role in the memory of the liberation struggle, mostly in the imaginary of a people who were incentivised to follow the teachings of the Immortal Guide of the Angolan Revolution, as Neto was called. By establishing himself as the undisputed leader of the MPLA while in control of the state apparatus, Neto became an unavoidable presence within the many formats of the memory of the liberation struggle, consequently forging and defining the memoryscapes of Angola. I have considered elsewhere that by defining the memory of the liberation struggle of Angola around the figure of Agostinho Neto, the regime of memory that defines it silenced a vast palette of figures, episodes, victories and ruptures that constituted the essential history not only of Neto but of the MPLA.[15] The constitution of memoryscapes as *Netoscapes*, namely in the three sites under analysis in this chapter, exhibits the same defining logic that

steers these politics of memory: the celebration of Agostinho Neto as the primary narrative to inform the materiality of the liberation struggle, in subjugation of various other possible elements.

Under the silent gaze of Neto

Of all the monuments and sites of memory that exist in Luanda, the one that better presents the liberation struggle is the Museum of the Fortress of São Miguel of Luanda. This is a space where history is palpable, where not only the memory of Portuguese colonialism but also of the liberation struggle is more vivid, both materially and symbolically.

The fortress was the first major military compound constructed by the Portuguese in Luanda. Commissioned by Paulo Dias de Novais in 1575 after the occupation of the island of Luanda, it went through numerous phases of construction and expansion, purpose and tutelage, having been the place where the last Portuguese flag was lowered in Angolan soil, on 10 November 1975. After independence, the Fortress became home to the Armed Forces Museum, also serving as a venue for various state events. The Museum of the Fortress is the only space where the material remains of the Angolan liberation struggle and the Portuguese colonial presence are deposited. At the entrance to the fortress, outside the museum, two aircraft of the Portuguese Air Force can be found, which contrast with two large panels alluding to the liberation war and the signing of the peace agreements that ended the civil war in 2002, united at the entrance gate by a five-pointed star flanked by two pieces of artillery from the early twentieth century.

The entrance to the Museum of the Fortress contains speeches by Agostinho Neto and photographs of the inauguration of the space, alongside a commemorative plaque of the founding of the MPLA-PT in 1977 by Agostinho Neto, among various other plaques of historical interest. In the museum, inside the fortress and at ground level, are deposited several statues of Portuguese historical personalities, those that began being removed on 8 November 1975. Among the statues of Afonso Henriques, Luís Vaz de Camões and Vasco da Gama, military vehicles captured from the Portuguese Armed Forces and the South African army can be found, a sample of the wars that took place in Angola in the second half of the twentieth century. Between the military hardware, the car Agostinho Neto used when the MPLA had its headquarters in Congo-Brazzabille conspicuously stands out, the only civilian vehicle in the exposition, alongside his bust, sided by that of Hoji ya Henda, and a statue of Njinga Mbandi, formerly located in the Kinaxixi square.[16]

As one of the spaces that most communicate with the material remains of Portuguese colonial presence and the Angolan liberation struggle, the Museum of the Fortress is also the one that appears to least promote the memory of Agostinho Neto. This, however, does not mean his presence is less clear. If the figure of Neto appears to be balanced with other relevant themes of the recent history of Angola, the street that leads to the Museum of the Fortress dispels any doubts concerning the political intentions of its design: Rua 17 de Setembro, day of the National Hero and birthday of Agostinho Neto. It becomes clear that the designers of the

Museum made a deliberate effort to include Neto as a narrative nexus to address the lack of political contextualisation that would otherwise manifest with the presence of airplanes and colonial statues, pieces that if devoid of such a narrative would hardly be constituted as elements of Angolan national memory circumscribed to the history of the liberation struggle. If, in the words of Agostinho Neto, it was 'under Lenine's silent gaze' that the MPLA-PT was founded, as can be read in the commemorative plaque celebrating the event, it is under Neto's silent gaze that Portuguese statues and other historical pieces are judged and Angolan historical memory edified.

The very display of statues and busts on the ground level of the museum is indicative of that silent gaze. Exposed at a 90 degrees angle, colonial statues are observed from the entrance of the fortress' hallway by Agostinho Neto, Hoji ya Henda and Njinga Mbandi. However, this is but one of the material aspects of the space. The fortress, much like other sites of memory in Angola, displays a skewed immaterial version of the recent history of Angola, which assists in defining it as a *Netoscape*. The immaterial element that best configures the fortress as a *Netoscape* might well be its symbolic signifier as a place of Neto's uncontested leadership. Given the contestations that Neto endured after the independence of Angola, above all stemming from Nito Alve's wing, and knowing that Nito Alves, José Van Dúnem and Sita Valles were allegedly arrested and assassinated inside the Fortress, the silence that surrounds this critical episode of the history of the country is palpable in the dichotomies that stand out in the space: Neto and the MPLA against Portuguese colonialism during the first liberation war; and Neto and the MPLA against Apartheid and the 'puppets' supported by international imperialism during the second liberation struggle.[17] This binary presentation silences alternative narratives, erasing the internal contestation that always defined the MPLA by showcasing a unity of forces that rarely existed. The Fortress is a site of memory that configures itself as a memoryscape not only because of its structure and unavoidable presence in Luanda, but also due to its Museum and to the very symbolic place that the ghosts that inhabit it occupy in the Angolan imaginary.

Yet, Angolan people do not visit the Fortress of São Miguel, a place far from their daily obligations and necessities and too closely situated to the *cidade Alta*, where rests the political power of Angola guarded by an omnipresent military apparatus. But they do cross the statue of Agostinho Neto at Independence Square on a daily basis. The square displays a semiotic interpretation only possible in Angola, a place that owns a symbology politically rooted in the history of the country since the declaration of independence – proclaimed there –, contrary to the Fortress which has a long life amply situated on the history of Portugal and its colonial expansion.

The contrast of the monument of Agostinho Neto in Independence Square with the Fortress is obvious. The area where Independence Square is located, formerly called Primeiro de Maio, was before independence, the Largo dos Liceus, the schools square. During the colonial period that part of the city was an open and empty space with a large mulemba tree, an important point of transit between the road to Catete and the D. João II Avenue. After independence, the square became

the birthplace of the new country. It was at the formerly known Primeiro de Maio Square that Agostinho Neto proclaimed 'before Africa and the world, the independence of Angola'. With the proclamation, the space became connected with the birth of the Popular Republic of Angola, a new country, emancipated and independent. The area was used throughout the years for mass political rallies, privileged as one of the sites of political affirmation of the MPLA.

The monument to Agostinho Neto at Independence Square was inaugurated on 17 September 2000 by then President dos Santos. The statue of Neto, at the centre of the square, presents a hagiography of the leader, elevating his virtues as a statesman and founder of the nation, as can be read in the description on the centre of the pillar. The base of the monument displays four panels with references to the liberation struggle and the political history of Angola. The front mural contains a transcription of the poem 'Havemos de Voltar' [We shall return] by Neto, with a map of Angola. The last verse of the poem reads 'We shall return, to a free Angola, to an independent Angola'. The second mural exhibits a woman carrying a child, a symbol of the Angolan people, more precisely of Angolan women, pointing to the future, alongside a white dove, the symbol of peace. The third mural a combatant raising a rifle accompanied by his comrades, an allusion to the armed struggle for national liberation. Finally, the last panel presents an African man enslaved, in a heroic pose freeing himself from the shackles of slavery and colonialism.

The murals provide a mnemonic experience to passers-by, a memory of liberation and independence. It is a memoryscape planned and designed as a *Netoscape* that interferes with the place that was the genesis of the new country, translated by the figure of Neto as the ultimate representation of the defeat of Portuguese colonialism, the end of colonial oppression and the foundation of the nation by the

Figure 7.1 Statue of Agostinho Neto at Independence Square in Luanda.
Photograph by Bruno Cabral.

Figure 7.2 Murals of the monument to Agostinho Neto at Independence Square. (a) Map of Angola with the poem 'Havemos de voltar' by Agostinho Neto. (b) Angolan woman and child with a white dove pointing towards a future of peace. (c) A representation of the Angolan armed struggle for national liberation. (d) Angolan man breaking his shackles, a representation of the end of slavery. (*Continued*)

Photographs by Bruno Cabral.

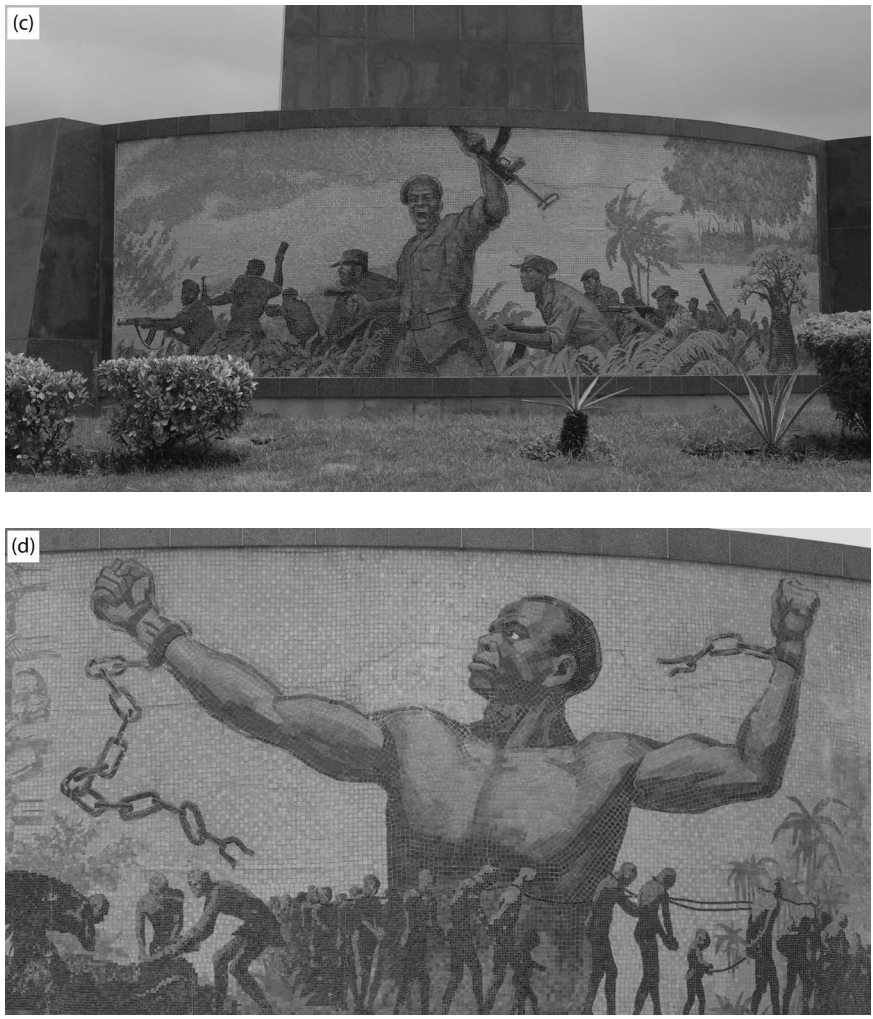

Figure 7.2 (Continued)

MPLA. It was also the place where the public transference of power from Neto to dos Santos took place. On 11 November 1979, less than three months after the death of Neto on 10 September of the same year, dos Santos addressed the country as president for the first time. In his speech, he included the square in the historical narrative and destiny of the country:

> We all remember that it was in this square of Primeiro de Maio that in 11 November 1975, with the canons of the enemies still roaring in Kifangondo,

> when the majority of the country was occupied by the racist South Africans and other invaders commanded by international imperialism, that the Immortal Guide of the Angolan Revolution solemnly proclaimed, before Africa and the world the independence of Angola, giving birth to the Popular Republic of Angola as a firm trench in the revolution of Africa. (…) In this memorable square, we always said no to neo-colonialism. No to the pressures, the blackmail and the Machiavellian manoeuvres of imperialism. In this square we freely declared, as a sovereign people, popular democracy and scientific socialism as the way to organise our society.[18]

The uses of the square throughout the years never severed the connection to Agostinho Neto, even when the historical period and the political challenges surpassed those that defined his political action, above all the long 27 years of civil war. It is under his gaze and according to his teachings that the Angolan people are encouraged to solve the problems that challenge Angola. In this sense, it is a mnemonically efficient site, as it allows the population of Luanda a daily, unrestrained interaction with the place.

The last site that constitutes a *Netoscape* is the one that not only showcases the elitisation and tendency to transmit memory through Neto, but also the ruptures in the recent history of Angola and the MPLA. Together with Cardina, I demonstrated that the MAAN produces silences that become evident upon a semiotic mnemonic analysis.[19] These silences fall upon two elements: the subalternisation of the MPLA and its many heroes to Neto, by presenting a version of the liberation struggle exclusively lead by him; and the silencing of the heroic people, presented in a culturally and socially uprooted and uncharacteristic format, voiced only through Neto. These characterisations make the MAAN the quintessential *Netoscape*. Through its careful and thorough management of displays, the MAAN is unable to hide the absolutist funnel of the people and the MPLA onto Agostinho Neto, a closed celebratory jubilation that cannot escape the first president of Angola.

Nevertheless, *Netoscapes* are always the target of contestation by other political forces, specifically by those that always resided within the political ecosystem of the MPLA, as other social and political segments opt for the addition of other important figures and not the subtraction of the first president of Angola. The next section deals precisely with the diversity of contestations to the *Netoscapes*, a reading that exhibits both calls for inclusion but also for revision and historical reform.

Problems of memory and the strength of the *Netoscapes*

Contemporary polemics regarding heroes, foundational dates, national holidays, monuments and statues display not only mere political contestation but ampler debates about the identity and political representation of those commonly referred to as founders of the Angolan nation. The celebration of heroes of the struggle remains one of the most fundamental points to those who contest the overlapping of the MPLA over the Angolan nation. The construction of statues to honour the memory of other nationalist leaders, namely Holden Roberto and Jonas Savimbi,

in an attempt to include them as founders of Angolan nationalism alongside Neto, constitutes a controversy that frequently ends in accusations of political exclusion. However, this contestation seeks not to exclude Neto but to include other leaders at his side, presenting a critique to the closed narrative the *Netoscapes* exhibit. Evidence can be found in various political sectors, with or without parliamentary representation, and among intellectuals in Angolan society.

On 11 November 2005, UNITA organised a ceremony to pay homage to the three historical leaders of the liberation movements, Agostinho Neto, Jonas Savimbi and Holden Roberto. Two years after the event, Adalberto da Costa Júnior, today the president of UNITA, stated that although it was a private ceremony organised by only one party, it would have been preferable to have the state pay homage to them.[20] Patrício Batsîkama, Angolan anthropologist with published work on Angolan nationalism, considered that 'due respect is not given and history told as it should be', mentioning the existence of contempt towards Jonas Savimbi and Holden Roberto while lamenting that Agostinho Neto is only remembered in September. Batsîkama stated that it is imperative to 'rethink how to apply reconciliation starting from the figures of Agostinho Neto, Holden Roberto and Jonas Savimbi, and build a great monument that speaks of them'.[21] The Democratic Party for Progress and National Alliance of Angola (PDP-ANA), today without parliamentary representation, created by Mfulupinga Nlando Vitor, also asked the Angolan government to build a historical monument that included the names of Jonas Savimbi and Holden Roberto, stating that 'if Agostinho Neto has the value he deserves for having been the first president of the republic, resulting from the Alvor Accords, so to do Jonas Savimbi of UNITA and Holden Roberto of the FNLA'.[22] The same logic emanates from the FNLA which, reacting to the posthumous attribution of the rank of general of the army to Neto, considered the side-lining of Savimbi and Roberto to the same honour a historical error.[23]

These examples are indicative of the inviolability that cuts across all political forces in what concerns the memory of the figure that informs the *Netoscapes* of Angola. Contestation always resides in historical justice, in pleas of plurality and inclusion and not upon revisionist tendencies. There is, however, a segment of Angolan society, that although organically connected to the MPLA, vehemently contests the celebration of Neto as an uncontested hero, the families of the victims of the 27 May 1977. In a letter published on 25 May 2021, reacting to the programme outlined by the Commission for Reconciliation in Memory of the Victims of the Political Conflicts (CIVICOP), the 27 of May Association considered that a formal public apology was necessary, as the people 'politically responsible, specifically Agostinho Neto, green-lighted the massacres with the incendiary sentence "We will not waist time with trials"'. Although President João Lourenço did issue a formal apology, the 27 of May Association continued criticising the programme of the CIVICOP, noting that it was 'promoting a theatrical performance (…) a caricature that plans to lay a wreath of flowers in the statue of the man responsible for the slaughter of so many Angolans, certainly paying him homage for having ordered the barbaric episode'.[24] The statue was precisely the monument to Agostinho Neto at Independence Square.

The most visible contestation to the *Netoscapes* originates among the survivors and families of the victims of the 27 of May, the only segment in Angolan society to have always criticised the memory of Agostinho Neto and the material apparatus I call *Netoscapes*. This segment interprets the *Netoscapes* differently from other actors, by reading them in light of a recent episode that still carries much pain and produced a substantial number of victims. They observe the mnemonic tendency towards the *Netoscape* as heinous and barbaric, intending to erase from public narrative their closest relatives and the ordeals to which they fell victim. This critique displays a more generic format of protest to monuments to historical personalities that have been strongly contested by the immorality, exploitation and criminality they practised in life. It is following this internationalised format that the contestation of the families of the victims of 27 May to the *Netoscapes* is strengthened and configured as a critical debate within Angolan society. A debate that seeks to discuss and reconcile autochthonous themes not related to the materialities of colonial memory as they are presented in places like the Museum of the Fortress, but with those sites at the genesis of Angolan independence. It is a frontal yet ambiguous position, since the 27 May was an episode of revolt and consequent purge within the MPLA itself, between comrades of the same liberation movement. It is due to this fact that their interpretation of the *Netoscapes* is nuanced, since these scapes are not criticised for their symbolic materiality of the liberation struggle and national independence, ideals for which many of the people who succumbed to the repression fought for. The families of the victims of the 27 May contest what they characterise as the repressive and barbaric nature of the political system Neto built at the end of his life, a system that heavily dictated his presence in the history of the country and ended configuring the memoryscapes and the narratives that stem from them as *Netoscapes*. Historical memory within the ample ecosystem of the MPLA generically tends towards the *Netoscape*. What does oscillate are the interpretations, heavily defined by historical experience, but which display a unison with regards to the legitimacy of the liberation struggle and independence. It is a conversation that exhibits a historical maturity that flourishes through pain, silence and taboo, one that Angolans are attempting to solve among themselves.

Conclusion

Memoryscapes hold material and immaterial interpretations that provoke fundamental conversations for the history of any country. Angola fits this description well, as since the country's independence the MPLA has resorted to historical memory to build not only its legitimacy to rule, but more essentially, its very place in Angola. Yet, Angola's postcolonial woes and the complex controversies surrounding the history of the MPLA, sponsored the production of memoryscapes constituted through a tendency to celebrate a host of historical events funnelled and transmitted through Agostinho Neto, the first president of Angola, a process I call *Netoscapes*.

Grounded on the notion of the *Netoscape*, the chapter analysed the three most important mnemonic spaces in the city of Luanda, demonstrating that, albeit

containing different narratives, all are constituted as *Netoscapes*. It then searched for calls for reform and revision of these spaces among various political and intellectual segments of Angolan society. The exercise showed that, while most of Angolan society does not agree with the depictions presented, they are only contested for not being more inclusive. That is, *Netoscapes* are criticised not for celebrating Neto but for only celebrating Neto. The chapter then identifies and reads existing calls for revision, noting that they stem not from any opposition force but from an important section of the MPLA itself, constituted by the families of the victims of the 27 of May. This fact constitutes an important drive not only to continue debating memoryscapes but to further democratise historical memory in Angola, a historical memory that albeit largely constituted through the *Netoscapes* continues to be subjected to intense debate.

Notes

1 Originally published in the *Jornal de Angola*, reproduced in a special edition dedicated to the independence of Angola by the weekly newspaper *Angolense*, "Sabia que…," *Angolense*, November 11–18, 2000, 14.
2 "Sabia que…," *Angolense*.
3 Miguel Cardina and Inês Nascimento Rodrigues, 'The Mnemonic Transition: The Rise of an Anti-Anticolonial Memoryscape in Cape Verde', *Memory Studies* 14, no. 2 (2021): 381.
4 Kendall R. Phillips and G. Mitchell Reyes, 'Surveying Global Memoryscapes: The Shifting Terrain of Public Memory Studies', in *Global Memoryscapes: Contesting Remembrance in a Transnational Age*, eds. Kendall R. Philipps and G. Mitchell Reyes (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2011), 14.
5 Speech by Agostinho Neto during the proclamation of the independence of Angola, November 11, 1975. https://www.novacultura.info/post/2021/11/11/discurso-de-agostinho-neto-na-proclamacao-da-independencia-de-angola.
6 See Vasco Martins, "Hegemony, Resistance and Gradations of Memory: The Politics of Remembering Angola's Liberation Struggle," *History & Memory* 33, no. 2 (2021): 80–106.
7 The only exception in Luanda is the Monument to the Heroines of Angola.
8 Richard Werbner, "Beyond Oblivion; Confronting Memory Crisis," in *Memory and the Postcolony: African Anthropology and the Critique of Power* (London: Zed Books, 1998), 8. See also Vasco Martins and Miguel Cardina, "A Memory of Concrete: Politics of Representation and Silence in the Agostinho Neto Memorial," *Kronos* 45 (2019): 46–64.
9 Jean Michel Mabeko-Tali, *Guerrilhas e lutas sociais: o MPLA perante si próprio, 1960–1977* (Lisboa: Mercado das Letras, 2018), 424–5.
10 Mabeko-Tali, *Guerrilhas*, 441–2.
11 Marissa Moorman, *Intonations: A Social History of Music and Nation in Luanda, Angola, from 1945 to Recent Times* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2018), 175.
12 See Mabeko-Tali, *Guerrilhas*, 434–5. The 1st Political and Military Region of the MPLA was located in the hinterland of Luanda.
13 On the 27 May 1977, see Lara Pawson, *In the Name of the People*: *Angola's Forgotten Massacre* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2014); and Dalila Mateus and Álvaro Mateus, *Purga em Angola, o 27 de Maio de 1977*, 3rd ed. (Alfragide: Texto Editores, 2009).
14 Mabeko-Tali, *Guerrilhas*, 538.
15 Martins and Cardina, 'A Memory of Concrete'.

16 On the memory of Hoji ya Henda see Vasco Martins, 'Grande Herói da Banda: The Political Uses of the Memory of Hoji ya Henda in Angola', *Journal of African History* 63, no. 2 (2022): 231–47.
17 See Martins, "Hegemony."
18 José Eduardo dos Santos, "O povo angolano escolheu livremente a Democracia Popular e o Socialismo," *Jornal de Angola* 1508, November 12, 1979, 1–3.
19 Martins and Cardina, "A Memory of Concrete."
20 "Líder FNLA morreu sem o reconhecimento devido," *Lusa – Agência de Notícias de Portugal*, August 3, 2007, https://www.rtp.pt/noticias/mundo/lider-fnla-morreu-sem-o-reconhecimento-devido_n139200.
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8 The past is (not) another country

Discursive dynamics and representations of the colonial war in digital space

Verónica Ferreira

Introduction

The production of memories by veterans simultaneously involves recreating the past and distant geography in the present time and transnational space of the internet. This interplay of different temporalities via subjective constructions of the colonial war shows how, for most people who have no experience of Africa, it is part of a geographically and historically distant past – a dead past – whereas for the combatants – and for those directly or indirectly affected by it – the past is not located in another time and place. The past is not a static or fixed time; it is not distant or dead. Although time is experienced in many different ways, depending on the individual who is recalling it – which makes it difficult to reify or standardise the veterans' subjectivities or engage in excessive generalisations – it would not be incorrect to infer that the men and women who narrate their stories of war are reconstructing them in the present.

This convergence of temporalities is evident in the mnemonic products created by veterans who provide accounts of first-hand experiences in Africa on sites, blogs or Facebook pages. Memory consolidates identity: Not only individual, but also group identity. It is a relatively coherent link between the past, present, and future which constructs a sense of subjectivity. In the specific case of the colonial war, the community that was formed – through contacts made at the time, or later – is for many people crucial to shaping their identity. This fact explains the phenomenon of metonymic identification: In practise, the bonds of comradeship reinforce the idea that an attack on certain members of a community is an attack on all, or that an attack on the community represents an attack on each and every combatant.

This dynamic is more easily discernible in the reactions expressed on the many digital platforms used by Portuguese veterans, albeit subject to different levels of visibility and accessibility, ranging from blogs to veterans' personal pages on social media and, in particular, the Facebook groups they frequent. From an initial analysis, reactions to certain items of news highlight two questions which are important to our understanding of the narrative dynamics developing within digital media associated with representations of the colonial war (1961–1974) and the veterans. The first stems from the increasing complexity of the mnemonic circuit for the colonial war over the past 20 years, while the second is associated with the production

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of a public image for the figure of the Portuguese combatant. This chapter aims to contribute towards mapping the digital mnemonic circuit for the colonial war, starting with an analysis of veterans' blogs – the first platform to host (re)creations and (re)writings of their memories – before moving on to the labyrinthine paths of veterans' Facebook groups. The objective is to outline the social representations, narratives, and discursive dynamics of combatants in Portuguese digital space, following three lines of analysis: The narrative, the archive, and the hybrid mnemonic community. The digital is understood here as a mnemonic space that has been expanding over the past two decades (2000–2020) due to the advent and democratisation of internet access. Consequently, digital platforms have become – among other things – sites for creating and bringing together communities based on shared interests or common experiences. In fact, blogs, and later Facebook, have enabled Portuguese veterans to find comrades they had lost touch with long ago and/or contact other soldiers who also fought in the colonial war. This has strengthened the dynamics established in digital space by stimulating the (co)narrativisation of lived experiences, thus ensuring the inscription of their memories, political and socioeconomic demands, and identity in digital public space and beyond.

Narrating the war, "(re)mediating" the war

Within the same genealogical path traced by Miguel Cardina and André Caiado in this volume,[1] the war, although never completely absent, was relocated to a marginal locus of enunciation in the years immediately after 25 April. Many of the veterans I spoke to said they had forgotten, or tried to forget, the war.

> The rest I completely forgot. In fact, there are people who have forgotten so completely that they have never mentioned that they fought in the war. I worked in the same office as people who were in Guinea and they never, never said – some were even stationed very near me […] and they had blanked it all out and never talked about Guinea again. It's interesting, even nowadays they don't talk about it.[2]

This was the case with the comrades of Jorge Cabral – above – who suppressed the experience in their public narratives.

> […] bringing up a story from another world – that was science fiction, that couldn't be real. I saw people getting very embarrassed, very uncomfortable listening to me and suddenly someone said, 'let's talk about something else now' and when we got home I said to my wife: 'Look […], no matter how painful it is I'm never going to talk about this again. I can see nobody is interested in it; nobody is interested.'[3]

The veterans' need to forget and to rebuild their lives after the war was reinforced, as the previous extract shows, by the lack of any genuinely interested audience willing to hear their reports and stories.

From the late 1990s and early 2000s onwards the subject of war re-emerged in public space, driven by the work of the existing organisations which represented combatants, such as the League of Combatants (*Liga dos Combatentes*), and a new wave of associations emerging in the context of public awareness of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).[4] The process by which the Portuguese state recognised this psychological disorder began in 1999 and was completed when it officially acquired the status of a disability within the Armed Forces.[5] Moreover, to paraphrase Luís Quintais, the association between war and the phenomenology of trauma facilitated the narrativisation – the creation of narratives – of veterans' war experiences by giving them access to a new, institutionally recognised vocabulary which they could use. The narrative of trauma provides coherence and an intelligible structure for their past actions. Ultimately, creating a new, culturally established vocabulary has allowed Portuguese society to express, describe, and remember a difficult and forgotten/silenced past. In other words, social and political recognition of PTSD has enabled these men's experiences to be incorporated into an officially recognised narrative – trauma – which allows many veterans to interpret the events they experienced as medical trauma and creates a terrain that is more favourable to active listening of their stories.[6]

On a strictly material level, claiming public space not only gave rise to a rapid increase in the number of monuments in honour of the war veterans,[7] but also the production of books, published by the authors themselves or the small presses, featuring the personal memories of the veterans, fictionalised to a greater or lesser extent. Over the past 20 years, the growing number of such publications has coincided with, and is reinforced by, the advent, massification and democratisation of new digital media.[8] One of the reasons for this is the flexibility and ease with which texts can be published and circulated without the author needing to resort to intermediaries, such as editors.[9] A new space for public expression has therefore been created, characterised by a growing discursive authority based on individual, but also – as we shall see – collective lived experience.[10]

The internet has expanded the readership that has access to texts produced at very little cost and without intermediaries. On the one hand, open access to independently published texts provides visibility for those who have had no opportunity to publish their points of view, reflections, comments or memoirs on the commercial markets – due to lack of interest on the part of publishers or the authors' lack of financial means – while also stimulating immediate and interactive dialogue among comrades and among authors and their readers/public.[11] This immediate and intersubjective dynamic had not been possible via the traditional media, such as radio or television, and is one of the most important characteristics of digital platforms, shaping the increasing complexity of the mnemonic circuit for the colonial war over the past 20 years.

The first interactive platforms to be used as repositories for texts alluding to, or in some way related to, the colonial war were websites and blogs.[12] The blogosphere "revolution" or, in more prosaic terms, the explosion of personal blogs, took place in Portugal in around 2003, later than in the Anglo-Saxon virtual world.[13] It was during this period that the first blogs by veterans of the colonial war appeared

and began to form their own blogipelago,[14] i.e. sites on the internet where veterans write for future generations, for their companions and for themselves. Writing for anyone who wants to read them, they are creating a vast archive of narratives and mnemonic artefacts in cyberspace.[15] However, as on a social level outside the internet, the resurgence of the memory of the colonial war is not free from tensions and disputes over meaning.

Briefly mapping out the main narrative threads which stand out in an analysis of these blogs, the first to be identified is the reproduction of the idea of the exotic and lost Africa of the Portuguese empire. This is a space defined by its difference, yet open to anthropological interpretation, which has left a lingering feeling of nostalgia in those who had been there; a space where nature and people are very different to those in the former metropole. It is understood through the veterans' observations and classifications, while coexistence is facilitated by the ability of the Portuguese soldier to adapt to this lush environment. This is a subtle reproduction of Lusotropicalist concepts and is common in the veterans' narratives.

Added to this nostalgic dimension of a lost youth in Africa, there is also an element of catharsis. For many veterans, the construction of narratives based on experiences and feelings associated with their time there, as well as messages exchanged with other comrades, functions as a kind of therapy. The term *blogoterapia* (blogotherapy), created by members of the largest Portuguese blog on the colonial war, *Luís Graça e Camaradas da Guiné*,[16] can be extended to include other more, or less, active veterans' blogs. For some authors, it is the constant stream of updates and consequently their inclination towards the personal legitimacy of the affective-emotive register which distinguishes blogs from other personal pages.[17] On these new, easy-to-use platforms, veterans have created a space for expressing ideas and socialising or, in the words of Levent Soysal,[18] a space for *intimate engagements of the public kind*, which distinguishes them from pages in ".com" format. They are spaces open to the public, where narratives are produced and relationships are established, from which the intersubjective dynamics required for the joint creation of memories are generated.

The possibility of gaining public recognition and becoming involved in a rewarding activity after retiring – within the dynamic of active ageing, which cannot be disregarded – the literary revelations of some authors, in the form of fictional texts, war diaries or memoirs, together with the social contacts that are created, constitute the framework for understanding the importance of blogs, and later social networks – discussed in the third section – in the lives of veterans.

Veterans' blogs are sites in which the past is narrated and media representations of war are (re)negotiated. Within this medium, veterans may contest public representations when they do not see themselves reflected in the images presented by the traditional media. In providing visibility for their memories, blogs become sites for the active creation of alternative narratives and sometimes political demands.[19] The construction of the public image of the figure of the Portuguese combatant is one of the main concerns evident in the narratives and discursive dynamics of these platforms. The objective is to establish a dignified portrait and respect for those who fought in the name of the Portuguese state, unfolding in various narratives that may

be relatively (de)politicised and/or relatively conservative. Moreover, this relationship is established with other formats, specifically regarding the support provided for those who decide to compile their publications/memories in book form:

> Acknowledgements […] I wish to make it clear that this book has taken shape via the Luís Graça & Camaradas da Guiné blog, where I regularly write about my time as a soldier in the Gabu region. It is an experience I still remember today with great nostalgia and which has led me to elaborate on themes I consider transversal to all comrades who shared the same experiences during their time in service, fighting in the Guinea war. […] Thank you Luís Graça for welcoming me into this universe of veterans and for the unassuming kindness with which you have always received me, not only as a comrade-in-arms, but above all as a trusted friend.[20]

The visibility of criticisms made by some veterans regarding "the way they were treated by the Portuguese state" may sometimes be combined with the reproduction of a glorified image of the "overseas combatant" who "sacrificed" himself – in some cases by giving his life – in the name of patriotic duty.[21] In fact, to paraphrase R. W. Connell, the representation of the combatant "hero" is not specific to this conflict, but has a certain importance in military culture and in promoting discipline, cohesion and unity within the Armed Forces. Consequently, the main purpose of the narrative of heroism is to maintain the efficiency of the violent war machine.[22] It is a cultural marker that was socialised during the conflict by *Estado Novo* (New State) propaganda and is still used today by some combatants. It uncritically justifies participation in war as "sacrifice in the name of the Fatherland" or "the duty to defend the Fatherland," universalist and abstract values which nevertheless provide a coherent and conciliatory narrative structure for the past, from a patriotic or nationalist point of view and erase the colonial nature of the war. In other words, it is part of an individual and/or collective effort to compose, in terms of the concept of "composure," a life story with which they feel comfortable.[23]

In another discursive thread, accounts of episodes from the war reported as descriptions of military tactics, thereby depoliticising the war, are common. This approach covers the war with a veneer of objectivity which, consciously or unconsciously, masks the most problematic issues associated with violent acts committed by the Armed Forces and the PIDE/DGS in Africa, which were never discussed openly by the state and therefore never held to account or judged.[24] Discourses on the war adapt to past experiences, present needs and discourses circulating within society over the years, and also reflect the social environment of the enunciator. Moreover, despite the democratic potential of the internet in terms of inscribing narratives that would not otherwise be available or would not be visible in public space, this does not necessarily imply that the discursive dynamics involved in creating social representations of the colonial war give visibility to under-represented experiences and discourses within the actual veteran community.[25]

The process of constructing narratives of the past continues to reproduce other silences and absences. Even veterans who support a critical stance in relation to

their war service and/or the war itself are not exempt from reproducing other power dynamics within the platforms, not only because conflicts of opinion are evident in the latter, but also because the use of this new technology implies a mastery of computer literacy which many do not have and which is closely connected to the material resources and social class of the veterans. In other words, it is not possible to consider that the narratives presented in the blogs are representative of all veterans who served in Africa: There is a greater representation of officers and sergeants, particularly in the case of the blogs, while the lower ranks, where illiteracy was, and still is, commonplace, are under-represented. Social networks, such as Facebook have introduced a measure of diversity, evident in the different ways of writing posts and comments. In addition to this, the most striking absence is that of African soldiers. These men fought for the Portugal colonial army but are not part of, and have no significant expression or visibility in, the community created in the digital environment.[26]

A digital archive of shared memories

The digitalisation and publication of mnemonic objects from combatants' private archives essentially constitute a remediation in the digital space of previously existing mnemonic objects[27] – such as photographs or other digitalised documents.[28] Through this remediation, the private archives of the veterans enter the public domain and become accessible, via a personal computer – with no major costs or restrictions – to a much wider public, thus giving visibility to history from the point of view of the protagonists. One of the prime examples of this is the aforementioned *Luís Graça e Camaradas da Guiné* blog. Created as an individual blog in 2004, it quickly grew through contact with other veterans via the site.

Sixteen years later, it takes pride in describing itself as the largest collective veterans' blog, with over 800 members active, to a greater or lesser extent, and publishing new texts every day. As the description below the title states, its "[…] objective […] is to help veterans reconstruct the memory puzzle of the colonial war in Guinea." It is important to note that the content of the posts varies greatly. It is a collective archive composed of artefacts and mnemonic texts organised in its own distinctive way, constructed as the blog develops. Digital archives hosted on platforms, such as blogs or social networks, have a dynamism and fluidity that is not found in the more traditional, static archives.[29]

On the one hand, private archives that have become public, such as the *Luís Graça e Camaradas da Guiné* blog, challenge the institutional authority of traditional physical – and digital – archives. There is, to some extent, a break with the recognised authority that chooses what should be preserved, and how, where and who should have access to it: Ultimately, through comparison, they show what the traditional archives hide or do not consider worth preserving.[30] From another perspective, these new archives are revolutionary because they serve to humanise the war by putting faces to the men who fought and, in some cases, died in it. Moreover, they link these men to the geographical space in which the memories were formed – in another time and continent. Africa represents a nostalgic space to

which the veterans return by creating simulacra of the lost land, constructed from photographs and accounts of lived or imagined events.

On the other hand, the archives also make reference to mourning: For a lost youth in Africa, for comrades killed in Africa and for those still suffering as the years go by. Homage to deceased comrades shows that the bonds of friendship forged during the war remain long after it has ended. They also prove that in the absence of public recognition, these comrades-in-arms take it upon themselves to preserve the memory of others and humanise them. Without this, some of these *histories from below* would be lost in attics or street markets.

In addition to their archival function *per se* – the function which has received the most attention from academics working in the field of digital humanities – these digital spaces have a social function which is greatly valued by veterans. The platforms enable them to comment on, contest or confirm the narratives being created from the artefacts and published texts. Some of the posts are reactions to representations produced by the media in the form of news, reports, and interviews.

However, this same flexible, accelerated and dynamic quality confers a certain degree of unpredictability on the digital archive.[31] Platforms evolve according to the economic interests of the moment and blogs and social networks are an example of this, since they depend both on servers and on the interests and objectives of their editors. In order to survive, the veterans' blogipelago has had to make some changes, mainly in the form of cuts, as their servers have shut down and/or editors have lost interest. Adding to this the real prospect of editors passing away, given that many of them are elderly, the precarious and highly unstable nature of the digital archive makes it impossible to study the phenomenon in its entirety. Hence, it is important to understand the limitations of any analysis of the medium. The knowledge that is produced from these platforms is always incomplete, fragmentary and, above all, unstable and rapidly changing. It is a field that generates greater anxiety over the continuity of materials in an open space accessible to the public than in the case of traditional physical spaces.[32]

Hybrid communities: Mnemonic dynamics within and outside digital space

In addition to their discursive and archival dimensions, the pages have a genuine capacity to create mnemonic communities that materialise in meetings, social events and friendships away from the computer screen. As an open and dynamic public space, the internet has made it possible for these men to meet and socialise, engaging in interactions that are not merely restricted to computer-mediated communication but, due to the significant amount of traffic between digital mnemonic activities and regular offline meetings, extend beyond it. The blogs and social networks, in particular Facebook, are very often a means of communicating and coordinating the various veterans' social events held all over the country throughout the year, as well as for exchanging ideas and contesting public representations shared in Facebook groups and on personal pages on the platform.

This global network of contacts serves as the vehicle for veterans to meet and communicate regardless of geographical barriers, providing increasing form and visibility for the mnemonic communities. Based on the aforementioned narrative construction of their experiences via multiple platforms and formats, the veterans create mnemonic networks that enable some comrades to (re)connect with each other and with their past – the shared memory of Africa and everyday experiences of war – thus forming *affective networks* for mnemonic creation.[33]

The internet has amplified discourses latent in Portuguese society that previously had no public or visible space in which they could be expressed. This is as true for the veterans' mnemonic discourses as it is for the nostalgic discourses of some who have returned from the lost Portuguese Africa, and for discourses that question the Portuguese colonial legacy. This dynamic is particularly visible in the social networks, since the blogs have lost some of their vitality following the rise of the former. Spaces, such as Facebook or Twitter, are the new sites for constructing and contesting representations of the past. As Jorge Cabral and Luís Graça, veterans and permanent members of the *Luís Graça e Camaradas da Guiné* blog, note:

> Facebook was a massive blow for the blog. It's easier. It just takes a few *likes*, the blog doesn't have *likes*. And it's interesting that even people who were in Guinea know more about what I write about it from Facebook than from the blog.[34]
>
> That would have helped [people to talk more about the war], wouldn't it? I don't know what influence the blogs had – and then Facebook as well, but later, much later. I also have a Facebook page but I'm not a big fan because it doesn't allow for any continuity or control, it doesn't allow you to cross reference information, does it? On the blog, you can't lie; you can't lie because there's always someone around who was there on the same day, isn't there? In the same situation. Personally, I don't like Facebook, although I do have a page, Tabanca Grande Luís Graça. But people show up there who are interested in, well, sharing things, making friends and I don't know what, that have nothing to do with Guinea and that is acceptable. We have three thousand friends… and on the blog there are 773,[35] and sixty or so have already died.[36]

The concerns expressed by Luís Graça reflect some of the most common dynamics of the social networks. Before they become places for mnemonic creation, sites such as Facebook are designed to boost interactions between users based on the construction of a digital *persona* – with photographs, opinions, and friends. Centring on forming identities for its users, they do not focus exclusively on the production of memories or on socialising with friends. Nevertheless, it is within the network that shared news, whether on personal pages or in groups, facilitates a rapid reaction and response to controversies that grow as they are shared.

One of the most immediate of these dynamics involves sharing and commenting on news without reading it first, thus facilitating glib pejorative comments or parallel discussions based on perceptions taken from increasingly eye-catching

news headlines.[37] These are instant reactions generated within a group dynamic defined by indignation and escalating discourse. Hence, echo chambers are formed which reinforce the group dynamics and result in the reproduction of the same ideas and/or feelings and emotions; a positive reinforcement by an audience of veterans which mirrors the majority opinion in the comment boxes – a dynamic that is already present in the comments sections of newspapers.

The visibility afforded to narratives on controversial themes is not viewed favourably, either because it contrasts with/contradicts the self-justifying narratives of the combatants or because it takes away their visibility. The sense of lost time and the fragility of the narrative that frames their efforts as a sacrifice in the name of the fatherland results in hostile reactions to dissident narratives or those considered to denigrate the image of the veterans. Comments below the line and escalating debates are heightened by the anonymity of these media channels. Added to this is the idea, widespread among veterans, that they should be the ones to tell their own stories, resulting in a certain hostility towards those who have no experience of the war but gain visibility through the study of specific themes.[38]

This is also the case with other mnemonic communities associated with the memory of the Portuguese empire. Elsa Peralta[39] identified the same dynamic in communities of former – first or second generation – Portuguese colonials who returned to Portugal after decolonisation and are known as *retornados*. These communities also began to create personal or collective blogs in the early 2000s, but the explosion came with the growth of Facebook.

Final considerations

The digital memories of veterans of the colonial war are an integral part of an increasingly complex mnemonic circuit for the colonial war. Understanding the evolution of the memory of the colonial war in Portugal involves considering not only the policies for remembrance and silence produced by the Portuguese state, but also the practises and discursive dynamics of particular groups and communities based on belonging and mnemonic sharing. This brief cartography of the digital mnemonic circuit for the colonial war has aimed to outline an initial picture of the social representations and discursive dynamics of combatants within Portuguese digital space, a space that has become a site for creating and bringing together communities with shared interests or common experiences. It has essentially focussed on two platforms, namely blogs and Facebook, although this does not mean that the veterans' practises and discursive dynamics are restricted to these digital subspaces. This choice was made because of the social importance and possibilities for the creation of narratives which both possessed and will continue to possess within the veteran community.

The digital is a mnemonic space that has been expanding over the past two decades and will continue to do so in the near future. The recognition of its importance should be reflected in increased research within the social sciences – particularly in the field of memory studies – focussing on digital platforms as spaces which shape

and host the social practises, discursive dynamics, and social representations of many different mnemonic communities. The contribution of digital space extends far beyond the archive and researchers must take into consideration the fact that it is a social space with its own social dynamics, which are intertwined with the traditional social world.

Digital social platforms, such as blogs and Facebook, have given Portuguese veterans the opportunity to meet and form a mnemonic community. This community has galvanised the (co-)narrativisation of their memories of the colonial war, their political and socioeconomic demands, and the production and projection of self-representations of the figure of the combatant, which then engage in dialogue with the representations presented by the traditional media, either contesting or reaffirming them. Driven by the dynamics of social networks, such as Facebook, increasing numbers of echo chambers are being constructed that project and give a voice to the most conservative veteran narratives that are primarily concerned with uncritically preserving a dignified image of the veteran, free of controversies that may tarnish the representation of soldiers who "did their duty by serving the fatherland," and which honours the military establishment and the Portuguese state.

Notes

1 See the chapters by Miguel Cardina, "Portugal, colonial aphasia and the public memory of war" and André Caiado, "The Colonial War Monuments in Portugal: A 60-year portrait" in this volume, and André Caiado, Verónica Ferreira and Miguel Cardina, "Os regressos da guerra: espaço público, mundo digital e (re)produções mnemónicas," *Ler História* 79 (2021): 215–40.

2 Jorge Cabral, veteran and permanent member of the *Luís Graça e Camaradas da Guiné* blog. Interview by the author, Lisbon (Portugal), April 15, 2019.

3 Mário Beja Santos, veteran and permanent member of the *Luís Graça e Camaradas da Guiné* blog. Interview by the author, Lisbon (Portugal), January 7, 2019.

4 The APOIAR association was created in 1988 by a group of professionals and patients from the Behavioural Psychotherapy Department therapy group based at the Hospital Júlio de Matos. Its legal status as a voluntary organisation dates from 1994. The psychiatrists Dr Afonso de Albuquerque, who offered his services as a consultant and was actively involved in the legislation recognising the diagnosis of PTSD as a psychological disorder originating in experiences of war, and Dr Fani Lopes were the driving force behind the association. Information taken from the official webpage, available at https://apoiar-stressdeguerra.com/pt/ [last accessed March 31, 2023]. Afonso de Albuquerque is also one of the authors of the only epidemiological study on PTSD in Portugal, from 2003. Afonso de Albuquerque and Catarina Soares, Paula Martins de Jesus, Catarina Alves, "Perturbação pós-traumática do stress (PTSD). Avaliação da taxa de ocorrência na população adulta portuguesa," *Acta Med Port* 16, no. 5 (2003): 309–320. Other associations, whose aims were not always directly related to PTSD, followed. They include the *Associação Portuguesa dos Veteranos de Guerra* (APVG – the Portuguese Association for War Veterans) founded on 18 March 1999 as a voluntary organisation, the *Associação de Combatentes do Ultramar Português* (ACUP – the Portuguese Association for Overseas Combatants) founded on 7 June 2002 and the *Movimento Cívico de Antigos Combatentes* (Civic Movement for Veterans) founded in October 2006, as well as other local organisations.

5 This recognition has its basis in Law no. 46/1999, updating Law no. 43/76 defining the status of the disabled person within the Armed Forces, and Decree-Law No 50/2000 creating the National Support Network for Portuguese Soldiers and Former Soldiers with "psychological disorders resulting from exposure to traumatic stress factors during military service." Legislation available at: https://apoiar-stressdeguerra.com/pt/o-stress-de-guerra/legislacao/ [last accessed March 31, 2023].
6 Luís Quintais, "How to Speak, How to Remember: Post-traumatic Stress Disorder and the Portuguese Colonial Wars (1961–1974)," *Journal of Romance Studies* 1, no. 3 (2001): 98.
7 See Chapter 5 in this volume, and André Caiado, "The Monumentalization of the Portuguese Colonial War: Commemorating the Soldier's Efforts amid the Persistence of Imperial Imaginaries," *Memory Studies* 14, no. 6 (2020): 1208–25.
8 Between 2000 and 2010 there was a 530.9% increase in internet subscribers in Portugal. This figure has been calculated based on data provided by ANACOM and the *Instituto Nacional de Estatística* (Statistics Portugal), available at https://www.pordata.pt/Portugal/Assinantes+do+acesso+à+Internet-2093 [last accessed July 11, 2022]. The penetration rate in Portugal was 16.43% in 2000, rising to 53.3% in 2010. More recent data indicates a rate of 73.79% in 2017, using data from the International Telecommunication Union via Eurostat and Statistics Portugal, available at https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/stat/default.aspx [last accessed on July 11, 2022], and, according to Internet World Stats, 78.6% on 31 December 2021, based on information available at https://www.internetworldstats.com/stats9.htm [last accessed July 11, 2022].
9 José van Dijck, *Mediated Memories in the Digital Age* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 71.
10 Joan W. Scott, "The Evidence of Experience," *Critical Inquiry* 17, no. 4 (1991), available at https://www.jstor.org/stable/1343743.
11 There are costs, starting with the purchase of the hardware and the internet contract, but they are lower than the costs associated with publishing a book, for example. In addition, no payment is required to access blogs or other open-access personal pages.
12 Blogs may be defined as personal pages hosted on servers which, due to their relatively standardised design, enable non-specialists to create texts without needing to master computer coding. They became popular in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Although personal or institutional pages and forums emerged both before and during the blog server explosion, this chapter focusses on platforms which combine the characteristics of both, i.e. those which allow for community dynamics but also serve as private archives with open and more or less public access.
13 Paulo Querido and Luís Enes, *Blogs* (Lisboa: Centro Atlântico, 2003), 7, and Catarina Rodrigues, *Blogs e a Fragmentação Do Espaço Público* (Covilhã: LabCom, Universidade da Beira Interior, 2006), 21. According to Catarina Rodrigues, the first Portuguese blog only appeared in 1999.
14 "I favor the term 'blogipelago' over the more common 'blogosphere.' [...] The term 'blogosphere' tricks us into thinking community when we should be asking about the kinds of links, networks, flows, and solidarities that blogs hinder and encourage. 'Blogipelago,' like archipelago, reminds us of separateness, disconnection, and the immense effort it can take to move from one island or network to another. It incites us to attend to the variety of uses, engagements, performances, and intensities blogging contributes and circulates," in Jodi Dean, *Blog Theory* (Cambridge and Malden: Polity Press, 2010), 38.
15 Cf. *Infra*.
16 Blog available at https://blogueforanadaevaotres.blogspot.com [last accessed July 19, 2022].
17 Greg Myers, *The Discourse of Blogs and Wikis* (London and New York: Continuum, 2010), 2, and Geert Lovink, *Zero Comments* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 3.

18 Levent Soysal, "Intimate Engagements of the Public Kind," *Anthropological Quarterly* 83, no. 2 (2010): 373–99.
19 Such as publishing petitions, e.g. Petition no. 309/XIII/2.ª, "Request for the special pension supplement awarded to veterans to be replaced by early retirement," launched by Inácio Silva, available at https://blogueforanadaevaotres.blogspot.com/2018/01/guine-6174-p18171-ex-combatentes-da.html [last accessed July 19, 2022].
20 Saúde, *Um Ranger na Guerra Colonial*, 19. For more examples of acknowledgements of this kind, see for example, Caiado, Ferreira and Cardina, "Os regressos da guerra," 227–36.
21 The use of the term "overseas" reproduces the terminology used by the *Estado Novo*, although the regime did not recognise the existence of the war. The expression "overseas war" became established in Portuguese society and, according to Miguel Cardina, it is interesting to observe "[…] that the use of the term 'overseas war' transcends the circles of the more conservative veterans or those nostalgic for the regime, revealing an understanding of the conflict determined by the experience of the combatant and by ways of naming this experience that are rooted in the self-justificatory language of the regime," cited in Miguel Cardina, "O passado colonial: do trajeto histórico às configurações da memória," in *O Século XX Português: política, economia, sociedade, cultura, império*, eds. Fernando Rosas, Francisco Louçã, João Teixeira Lopes, Andrea Peniche, Luís Trindade, and Miguel Cardina. (Lisboa: Tinta-da-China, 2020), 382–83. The term reproduces the idea spread by the *Estado Novo* of territorial continuity, as opposed to a territory under colonial rule.
22 Raewyn W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), 214.
23 Penny Summerfield, "Culture and Composure: Creating Narratives of the Gendered Self in Oral History Interviews," *Cultural and Social History* 1 (2004): 65–93.
24 On one of the massacres which received the most media coverage, see Mustafah Dhada, *The Portuguese Massacre of Wiriyamu in Colonial Mozambique, 1964–2013* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017).
25 Michael Pickering and Emily Keightley, "The Modalities of Nostalgia," *Current Sociology* 54, no. 6 (2006): 923–25.
26 The reasons for this lack of representation may be posed as hypotheses, but more specific and detailed research is needed to corroborate them. Some are linked to the death of some of these men after independence – in particular in Guinea – or to the lower level of internet access in certain African countries. The internet penetration rate amounts to around 43% in Africa, in comparison to 87.7% in Europe. For example, the rate in Guinea-Bissau is 44%, in Angola 26% and in Mozambique 20.3%. Data provided by Internet World Stats for 31 December 2021, available at https://www.internetworldstats.com/stats1.htm [last accessed July 11, 2022].
27 Jay Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003), 14–15.
28 Cf. Dijck, *Mediated Memories in the Digital Age*.
29 Cf. Michael Moss, "Opening Pandora's Box: What Is an Archive in the Digital Environment?" in *What Are Archives?* ed. Louise Craven (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), 71–88.
30 Cf. Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1998).
31 Not unconnected with the intertwinings of the current economic model. Essentially, although the aim of the platforms that stand out in this phase of the internet is to create content for their users, in fact most of the time they exploit the creators by capitalising on their work. This is also the case with Google which, in turning itself into the key tool for "organising the world's information," has developed a parasitic strategy for blogs. According to Geert Lovink "user-generated content" accumulates profiles which are later sold "[…] to advertisers as direct marketing data, and Google soon discovered it could profit from all the free information floating around the open Internet, from

amateur videos to news sites," in Geert Lovink, *Networks Without a Cause* (Cambridge and Malden: Polity Press, 2011), 5.

32 One example of the instability of digital pages is the *Guerra Colonial* page created by RTP to accompany a major documentary by Joaquim Furtado, entitled *A Guerra* (2007). The page is no longer available: http://www.guerracolonial.org/home.

33 Dean, *Blog Theory*, 96.

34 Cabral, interview.

35 At the time of the interview. The figure now stands at around 862 members, according to data from 19 July 2022.

36 Luís Graça, Guinea veteran and founder member of the *Luís Graça e Camaradas da Guiné* blog. Interview by Diana Andringa, Lisbon (Portugal), May 15, 2018.

37 Headlines are becoming more eye-catching precisely because social networks influence the way in which news is consumed. The more eye-catching – or, in more extreme cases, sensationalist – a headline is, the more "clicks" or readers it will attract and consequently there will be more traffic on the newspaper's page.

38 Cf. Scott, "The Evidence of Experience," and Jay Winter, "Thinking about Silence," in *Shadows of War*, eds. Efrat Ben-Ze'ev, Ruth Ginio, and Jay Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 3–31.

39 Elsa Peralta, "The Return from Africa: Illegitimacy, Concealment, and the Non-Memory of Portugal's Imperial Collapse," *Memory Studies* 15, no. 1 (2022), 13.

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Part III: Scales, Entanglements and Intersections

9 Transitional justice mechanisms and memory

A look into Mozambique's liberation war narrative[1]

Natália Bueno

Introduction

On 25 June 2022, the *Frente de Libertação Nacional* (Frelimo) celebrated 60 years of its foundation as well as 47 years of Mozambique's independence. "It was Frelimo that built the idea of a sovereign, united and indivisible Mozambican nation. The foundation of Frelimo represents the height of a nationalist consciousness, the original and genuine form of organization and union of Mozambicans […] in the arduous struggle against colonialism"[2] voiced President Filipe Nyusi in one of the several ceremonies held around the country to mark such occasions. This declaration reiterates the central place Frelimo confers to the liberation war as a legitimizing episode of a continuous line connecting the Frelimo that battled against colonialism to the Frelimo that has been in power since independence.[3] Even though such linearity has been disputed and reconfigured as further explained later, it has become hegemonic throughout the years.

Taking a short step back, Mozambique became independent on 25 June 1975 following a 10-year liberation war, from 1964 to 1974. This emblematic moment inaugurates the juxtaposition of Mozambique and Frelimo's histories since it happened on the same day Frelimo was formed, only 13 years later. The ceremony of the proclamation of independence was held at the *Machava* football stadium where Samora Machel, at the time president of Frelimo, became the president of Mozambique as well.

The question of what action to take against the *comprometidos*[4] or the compromised was one among the many post-independence matters. Allegedly inspired by a Chinese method of public-shaming,[5] Frelimo determined that the pictures of the compromised were to be placed on their workplaces together with an explanation of what they had done. The pictures remained in their respective locations for a period of nearly four years at the end of which Machel himself coordinated the Meeting of the Compromised.[6] These meetings were held in 1982 during the months of May and June and brought together more than a thousand people.[7] Moreover, they were characterised by a series of Q&As[8] presided by Machel during which the *comprometidos* talked about their past experiences. This look towards the past was present

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in Machel's inaugural speech for the *Reunião dos Comprometidos* on 10 May 1982, when he voiced: "it's only by reviewing the past [that] will we know the present. Only by knowing the present [that] will we have a perspective for the future".[9]

By comparison with the process of "leaving the past behind" that followed the post-civil war period, the process revolving around the *comprometidos* presented a certain dose of "public acknowledgement of the past" and search for "the truth".[10] That is, despite the lack of consensus about its causes and whether it was a civil war or not (1976–1992), the fact is that Mozambican society added 16 more years to its devastating war résumé in which 1.5 million were forcibly displaced and made refugees in the neighbouring countries due to the horrors provoked by both sides, Frelimo and the *Resistência Nacional Moçambicana* (Renamo),[11] and the number of war-related deaths was close to one million.[12] When this armed conflict came to an end, however, neither a call for investigations nor for the punishment of those responsible for the human rights violations and war crimes committed during this fighting were made. After the signing of the General Peace Agreement (GPA) on 4 October 1992, the Frelimo-led government passed Amnesty law 15/92 that exempted members of both sides from the crimes and abuses committed from 1979 to 1992.[13] To start anew became the new motto, and political leaders advised people to "replace hatred with understanding and solidarity, revenge with forgiveness and tolerance, distrust with brotherhood and friendship".[14]

Trying to understand the ways in which the reproduction of the liberation war memory narrative has become hegemonic, this chapter connects the fields of transitional justice and memory studies and questions the way transitional justice mechanisms (TJMs) affect memory narratives. To build this analysis, it makes use of two explanatory logics further detailed below: critical junctures and path dependence. Applying these logics to Mozambique's violent past, this work identifies two critical junctures. First, the country's independence in 1975, and, second, the end of the civil war between Frelimo and Renamo in 1992. These moments epitomise the intricate relationship between a bellicose past, the implementation of mechanisms to deal with it, and political leaders' pursuit for political legitimacy. The immediate question that arises is whether these moments of transition and their TJMs have shaped Mozambique's memory narratives across time as to explain their shifts and/or variations.

Elizabeth Jelin reminds us that the emergence of multiple narratives results from the agency of "memory entrepreneurs", i.e., those "who seek social recognition and political legitimacy of one (their own) interpretation or narrative of the past".[15] During and in the aftermath of violent episodes such as dictatorships and war, "it is impossible to find one memory, or a single vision and interpretation of the past shared throughout society".[16] This does mean, however, that they acquire the same level of relevance and acceptance within a society. On the contrary, more often than not "a single script of the past [becomes] widely accepted, or even hegemonic"[17] in spite of the existence of counter-memories.

The analysis of the Mozambican case shows that whether opening up about the past or seeking to leave it behind, the result has been the same: the remembering of the liberation war narrative. As any other memory narrative, Frelimo's celebratory account of the liberation war has undergone small variations every time it was retold. Yet these dynamics of change did not preclude it from becoming the official,

hegemonic memory narrative about Mozambique's struggle against colonialism for the last forty years. This analysis is relevant not only to the case of Mozambique, but to the literatures on TJ and memory more broadly. Much as critical junctures (and their respective TJMs) might favour change, one must not underestimate path dependence's capacity to overpower it with its inertia or self-reinforcing nature.

Path dependence, TJ and memory

The goal of the present chapter is to analyse how the Meeting of the Compromised and the Amnesty Law 15/92 have functioned as channels of memory by outlining which stories were told (and concomitantly which were silenced) and how they should be interpreted. More broadly, the idea is to pay attention to the ways in which different and subsequent TJMs, namely a quasi-truth commission and an amnesty, have shaped memory narratives (MNs) across time.

In examining these mechanisms and their impact on MNs, it is also important to understand the context in which they have emerged. Critical junctures come to the picture at this point. Ruth Collier and David Collier define critical junctures as "transitions [that] establish certain directions of change and foreclose others in a way that shapes politics for years to come".[18] In a simpler way, one could argue that critical junctures are moments of change that take place within certain windows of opportunity. In this sense, moments such as those experienced in Mozambique – independence and end of civil war – can easily be considered as critical junctures. In the country's postcolonial history, no other periods were characterised by major changes in the political, economic, social, and cultural spheres that shaped Mozambican society for years to come like the ones experienced during those singular times.

Earlier works used critical junctures in the attempt to understand MNs shifts. Francesca Lessa, for instance, utilises critical junctures to explain both the alterations of TJ policies and MNs across time in Argentina and Uruguay. According to her, critical junctures help to identify the moments of change in what she understands as a mutually shaping constitutive relationship between memory and transitional justice policies.[19] While reinforcing the relevance of critical junctures to understand the interrelations between TJ and memory, the present analysis adds a twist by calling attention to an equally important element: path dependence, or more broadly, to the fact that "history matters".

The past is a malleable narrative as it is revisited and rewritten every now and then. This, of course, is different from saying it can be freely manipulated and reconstructed.[20] Attentive to this understanding, one must also consider the ways in which they are reproduced. If critical junctures are seen as windows of opportunities for change, path dependence, in contrast, is understood as "historical sequences in which contingent events set into motion institutional patterns or event chains that have deterministic properties".[21] To this matter, two observations follow. First, these historical sequences are causal, that is, they lead to a particular ending (in this case the reproduction of the liberation war narrative). Second, they launch specific institutional patterns that can have a self-reinforcing nature or inertia, replicating themselves across time. Together these aspects help to explain how MNs are conceived and reproduced across time.

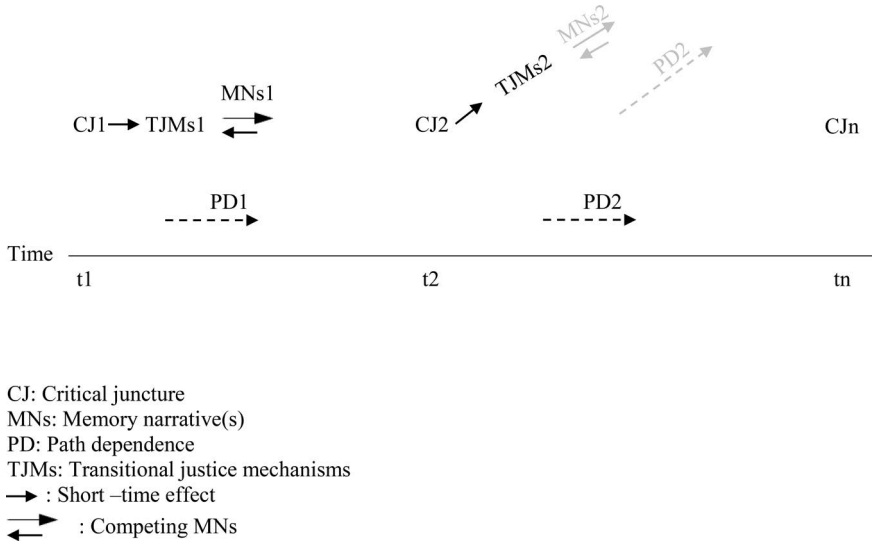

Figure 9.1 Critical junctures, path dependence, and time.

Figure by the author.

Applying the logics of critical junctures and path dependence to the study of TJ and memory, whereas the former facilitates the identification of moments in which institutional elements are eased, favouring transformations, the latter helps to pin down the institutional elements that remain in place, hindering those transformations. These elements are central when examining the question of how TJMs shape MNs in each society. Figure 9.1 graphically illustrates this understanding. In t1, critical juncture 1 unlocks the first window of opportunity for change. The TJMs implemented during this period help(s) to generate specific institutional patterns (in this case MNs) that, due to their inertia, are replicated across time, conforming a path-dependent sequence. In t2, the critical juncture 2 opens another window of opportunity for change. Identically to the first critical juncture, the TJMs implemented during this period also have the potential to generate specific institutional patterns. This time, however, one needs to consider the institutional patterns already in place and whether they are overpowered or able to overpower any attempts of change. If the current institutional patterns are overpowered, a different path-dependent sequence is created. If they overpower, the earlier sequence is maintained. In case of a critical juncture 3, the same reasoning applies, and so forth.

Setting the stage

With independence in 1975 came the first critical juncture. It gained special contours when, following the national campaign for the restructuring of Frelimo in November 1978, its high-ranking leaders opted for the public-shaming strategy. The process of identifying and revisiting the *comprometidos'* past lasted for nearly

four years ending with the meetings held in 1982. "Our power is not revengeful or vindictive"[22] claimed Machel when giving the reasons why Frelimo had decided for such strategies. "In other countries, you [the compromised] would had been tried or shot"[23] said Machel as to emphasise Frelimo's practices of clemency towards the compromised.

The *comprometidos'* connection with their own past was another crucial element. In the view of Machel, their reintegration and transformation into full Mozambicans implied the public acknowledgement of their past actions. Such an exercise would be the first step towards breaking them away from the burden weighing on their consciences.[24] In contrast to the ex-political prisoners – clandestine Frelimo members who allegedly collaborated with the Portuguese after being imprisoned and tortured – the compromised included those who had voluntarily worked for the Portuguese. For this reason, to expose the *comprometidos*' past was seen as essential. The understanding was that "the enemy" would have no way to get back to them as blackmailing, for instance, since their secrets were already brought to the open.

Moreover, the process also required a dose of willingness. "Compromised or compatriots?"[25] questioned Machel once and again during the meetings as to distinguish those who had reflected on their "unpatriotic" past deeds from those who were still subjects of the enemy and in need of "mental decolonization" in order to become full Mozambicans.[26] In addition to its use as a rhetorical instrument, the question repeatedly voiced by Machel also mirrored two foundational logics of Frelimo's discourse: the idea of the enemy and of the new man.

As José Luís Cabaço observed,

> […] the experience of the politico-military struggle of the Mozambique Liberation Front in the 1960s was essential in forming the thought of Frelimo and of Samora Machel. In this period, divergent positions arose on several questions […] but in the final analysis, it was always the definition of the enemy the central problem that was under discussion.[27]

Not only the central issue of endless debates and fratricidal conflicts, the idea of the enemy has also functioned as a guiding principle of the "main direction of the struggle"[28] since Frelimo's early stages. One of Machel's catchphrases "the struggle continues" was a clear reminder of that. After defeating colonialism, it was also essential "to wage a constant battle against all divisive situations and tendencies".[29] The nostalgia of the colonial times, characteristic of those who still had not accepted that independence was irreversible, was a good example of the latter.[30]

Since Frelimo had defeated the external enemy, the "main direction of the struggle" became the internal one as more attention was given to the (mis)deeds of Mozambicans. Under this logic, the Meeting of the Compromised helped Frelimo to separate the wheat from the chaff. This meant that whoever was considered as a non-Frelimo supporter, was automatically labelled as an enemy.[31]

While new "enemies" were being identified, Machel was also giving emphasis to people's capacity for transforming themselves and becoming active agents,[32]

that is, of becoming "new men". The notion of what meant to be a Mozambican followed suit and adapted to the new realities of post-independence Mozambique like the notion of the enemy. As Machel said,

> Politico-military training was the forging of national unity, of common thinking, and of patriotic and class awareness. We came in as Macondes, Macuas, Nyanjas, Nhungues, Manicas, Changanas, Ajauas, Rongas or Senas, but we came out of it as Mozambicans. We came in as blacks, whites, mulattoes or Indians, but we came out of it as Mozambicans. When we arrived, we brought with us vices, defects, greed, liberalism, and elitism. We destroyed the negative values, the reactionary values. We learnt to carry with us the habits and behavior of a Frelimo militant.[33]

This meant that the transformation into a full Mozambican required the abandonment of his/her old self – which beyond his/her ethnic origins also included any colonialist, bourgeois, and individualist values, among others – as well as the adoption of the nationalist and popular values proposed by Frelimo.

Therefore, the ideas of the enemy and of the new man functioned as complementing-but-opposing sides in Frelimo's pursuit of creating a "Mozambican nation". In other words, "the building of national unity and the transformation of mentalities arose as two sides of the same coin, linked indissociably to the consolidation to what Machel and Frelimo called 'our area' in opposition to the 'enemy area'".[34] In this process, Frelimo managed to secure its role as the sole power in Mozambique by claiming to be "the heirs of the tradition of resistance and the legitimate representatives of the Mozambican people from Rovuma to Maputo".[35]

In light of this, the Meeting of the Compromised helped to materialise those logics in different ways. It allowed Frelimo to identify who was with them and who was not by exposing people's past misdeeds. At the same time, this event also reinforced the logic of transformation required by Frelimo in their attempt to mentally decolonise the compromised. All in all, by allegedly separating the wheat from the chaff and guiding people's transformation, the Meeting helped Frelimo to build on the ideas of saviours and founders of Mozambique, cornerstones of what was later known as the "liberation script" – the hegemonic tale that narrates how Frelimo freed the country from Portugal's colonial grip.[36]

Keeping the script on rolling

Frelimo had a new "enemy" to fight as early as 1976, only a few months after independence.[37] Renamo or the "armed bandits", as Frelimo commonly characterised them, initially enjoyed the support of former Rhodesia and later of the Apartheid regime in South Africa, which was used by Frelimo to portray the armed conflict as an extension of the war of external aggression, and, as such, a war of destabilisation.[38] In contrast, by calling attention to the authoritarian regime and repressive policies undertaken by Frelimo, Renamo labelled it a war for democracy.

Whether a war of destabilisation, a war for democracy, or both, the fact is that the war pitted Mozambicans against Mozambicans,[39] and its termination, in 1992, unlocked another window of opportunity for change. In contemporaneous cases such as El Salvador and Rwanda, the international community pushed for the implementation of mechanisms to investigate and bring to justice the responsible for the violations of international humanitarian law. In Mozambique, however, such demand was not on the table. The discourse that prevailed in the country was that of forgiveness and of leaving the past behind.[40] In unison, political leaders from both sides, Frelimo and Renamo, expressed their hopes of a harmonious and inclusive future. The following declaration of Afonso Dhlakama, the leader of Renamo at the time, serves as an example:

> Renamo wants a genuine negotiation conducive to national reconciliation without victors or vanquished and without recrimination followed by constitutional reform; to unite efforts in order to form a new Mozambique where **brotherhood will be affirmed by free debate of ideas and decision of consensus**; a new Mozambique where armed struggle need never be the last and only resort for the solution of our problems (emphasis added by the author).[41]

According to Mozambican political leaders, amnesty was the TJM that would materialise national reconciliation. "Amnesty transforms them [referring to Renamo] into normal people and considers them free from guilt"[42] justified Joaquim Chissano in favour of this mechanism. The understanding then was that amnesty would allow old enemies to become normal people and that together they would form a new Mozambique. Therefore, the Frelimo-led government enacted Amnesty Law 15/92 on 14 October 1992, ten days after the signing of the GPA between both sides. This meant that this law exempted members of both sides from the crimes and abuses committed from 1979 to 1992 "within the principle of national reconciliation and harmonization of the life of the Mozambican people".[43] In compliance with the principles of the GPA, Renamo became a political party and participated in the general elections in 1994. Concomitantly, the majority of ex-combatants were demobilised and reintegrated into Mozambican society under the auspices of the UN.[44]

In terms of memory, the first post-civil war decade saw the emergence of new versions about Mozambique's past that either added nuances or directly challenged the official narrative reproduced by Frelimo.[45] By contradicting Frelimo's narrative of the past, these counter-memories brought to light the life stories of figures deemed traitors by Frelimo.[46] Meanwhile, Frelimo "quieted down" the memories of its heroic past and gave prominence to the need to reshape the party's ideological and economic discourse in light of Mozambique's new realities, multiparty and capitalist systems.[47]

Yet, this process was far from a full reformulation of MNs. From time to time, Frelimo still resorts to old pejorative labels – such as "armed bandits" – as well as to memories of the armed conflict to discredit and accuse Renamo.[48] From its side, Renamo has not acted differently. More than ten years after the end of the armed

conflict, Dhlakama still recalled the ill-treatment received during the peace negotiations as well as blamed Frelimo for the crimes of the civil war.

> According to Dhlakama, Frelimo has always denied implementing democracy, 'that is why the war lasted 16 years.' 'Samora Machel […] and Joaquim Chissano, then Foreign Minister, told the invited bishops that they did not want to negotiate with bandits and wild boars.' Dhlakama [also] accused Frelimo of being responsible for the massacre of about one million people during the armed conflict.[49]

After all, despite all calls for reconciliation, Frelimo and Renamo have continued to rely on their own (competing) versions of the past. Frelimo's authorities still characterise the civil war as a war of destabilisation, whereas Renamo still portrays it as a war for democracy. The following examples illustrate how Frelimo and Renamo have relied on their competing narratives of the civil war over the years:

> Although […] Joaquim Chissano tries to identify himself as the best democrat in the country, he has never known, and neither could hide from his eyes that he still remains the president of the Frelimo Marxist-Leninist fanatics. It constitutes a major threat to peace and **democracy**, which must be vigorously denounced by all citizens at all levels […].[50]
>
> According to Guebuza,' this was a "**war of destabilization**" since, in his words, a civil war arises when citizens of the same country go to war after failing to reach consensus on a particular matter.[51]
>
> They say they were opposing communism, dictatorship, but this **war of destabilization** begins just six months after independence, and [they] had not seen how Frelimo was going to rule.[52]
>
> According to Ivone Soares, the **war for democracy**, which began in 1977, was imposed on us by Frelimo because it left no alternative to the Mozambican people. Any attempt of opposition to the system imposed by the Front was violently repressed […][53] (all emphases added by the author).

Whether the implementation of other TJMs – such as a truth commission or a tribunal – would have led to a different result remains to be seen. Concretely, what one observes is that in the presence of amnesty, Frelimo and Renamo have continued to wage their war with memories as weapons.[54] But, as argued by Luis Brito, Renamo has never managed to question Frelimo's legitimacy – regarding the liberation war – nor its nationalist foundation.[55] As such, a "memory deadlock" never took place. Meanwhile, Frelimo managed to keep the old logic of "the enemy" alive with Renamo taking over from the Portuguese colonialism, the Rhodesian racism, and the South African racism as the main character.

Frelimo has also revived the liberation war narrative through the revitalisation of Mozambique's memoryscape. The celebration of the 40th anniversary of the deaths of the liberation war heroes who had died in 1968[56] during the government of the former President Armando Guebuza serves as an example of this revitalisation process. Referring to this celebration, Guebuza said: "Mozambique is a true

Homeland of Heroes. We all should be proud of this fact, in the present and in the future".[57] In his speech, he also listed the names of all heroes that had already been honoured during 2008. The list was made up of names of former Frelimo combatants who had participated in the liberation war.[58] In the coming years, other ceremonies were also held.[59] In particular, these ceremonies were organised in different localities, usually in the birthplaces of those ex-combatants, which has allowed Frelimo to continuously reactivate the memories of the liberation war throughout the country and in somewhat isolated zones.

The revitalisation of the liberation war narrative also included the publication of ex-combatants' biographies by the *Instituto de Investigação Sócio-Cultural* (ARPAC). ARPAC is a public institution under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture and is responsible for promoting activities to preserve the national cultural heritage and conduct research about Mozambique's history and cultural diversity. They published dozens of books about the life stories and deeds of liberation war combatants. Such a task has been "one of the highest impact projects developed by ARPAC" (ARPAC) at the request of the Frelimo-led government.[60]

Mozambique's memoryspace is also a mirror imagine of who and what is to be remembered in the country. The 40th anniversary of the death of the "architect of the national unity", as Eduardo Mondlane is characterised by allegedly bringing together the minor movements that formed Frelimo, was celebrated in 2009, and, to honour his memory, Frelimo declared 2009 the year of Mondlane. The Frelimo government also built a museum in Nwadjahane, Gaza province, Mondlane's birthplace.[61] The memorialisation of Samora Machel was also part of this process. To mark the 25th anniversary of his death in an airplane crash in Mbuzini, South Africa, the party declared 2011 as Machel's year. The "father of Mozambique", as he is known, also gained a 9 meters tall statue, which was laid in the main square of the capital Maputo, *Praça da Independência*. "This statue was built by the Mansudae Overseas Project, in Pyongyang, North Korea, and weighs 4.8 tons".[62] Even if smaller, Armando Guebuza ordered the production of additional 11 statues to be placed in the provincial capitals of the country.[63]

Concomitantly to the celebratory remembering of the liberation war, Frelimo has also tried to prevent the memorialisation of its counterparts. The episode regarding the nomination of a square in memory of André Matadi Matsangaíssa[64] in one of Beira's neighbourhoods serves as an example. Following Renamo's proposal to the Municipal Assembly to attribute the name of Matsangaíssa to the square, Frelimo reacted accusing Renamo of abuse of power and made several attempts to overrule the process.[65] At the end, however, Renamo managed to secure the naming of the square, but only because it had the majority in the Assembly.

Figure 9.2 summarises this analysis. Mozambique's first critical juncture happened in 1975, when a quasi-truth commission helped to shape the liberation war memory narrative. In 1992, there was the second critical juncture with the end of the civil war. As the figure graphically illustrates, in the context of amnesty the transformation of MNs did not materialise. Instead, what one observes is that the inertia of the liberation war narrative and its inherent legitimizing power – set in motion decades before – triumphed, overpowering any alteration of direction.

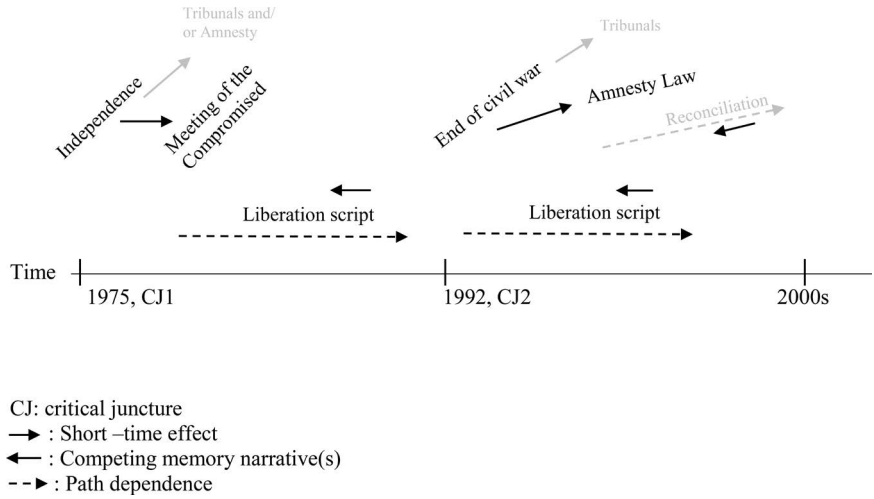

Figure 9.2 Mozambique's memory narratives across time.

Figure by the author.

Conclusion

As the opening of this chapter showed, Frelimo still relays on its historical role as the major player on the front line against Portuguese colonialism to legitimate its place as the sole ruler since Mozambique's independence, rendering its memory war narrative both official and hegemonic. In trying to understand the ways in which TJMs have shaped MNs in Mozambican society, this study drew upon the explanatory logics of critical junctures and path dependence. It results that two major conclusions can be gathered from this analysis.

First, the review of the Mozambican case shows that even though top political figures opted for the implementation of distinct mechanisms with different purposes – a quasi-truth commission and an amnesty and its great emphasis on revealing past misdeeds and its focus on leaving past wrongs behind, respectively – the same result was achieved: the celebratory remembering of the liberation war. A narrative that has become hegemonic, helping Frelimo to legitimate its dominant status for more than four decades. For better or worse, Frelimo remains the "saviours and founders of Mozambique" while those who opposite them take the risk of swelling the ranks of "the enemy".

Second, this analysis advances the study of the Mozambican case as well as of other cases that experienced anti-colonial wars. This study shows that for understanding the role of TJMs and memory is crucial to consider the elements that favour narratives shifts, but also the ones that condition their continuities, that is, critical junctures and path dependence. That said, this theoretical framework could inform new research in different ways. One way would be by helping researchers to identify the variations memory narratives that assume path-dependent trajectories experience as a result of memory entrepreneurs' struggles within moments

of critical junctures. Another way would be by allowing scholars to determine how memory narratives develop across time whether assuming a path-dependent trajectory like in the present analysis or not. Regardless of the chosen research topic, this chapter could inspire the development of new research agendas by helping to uncover continuities and/or changes in those different levels of analysis, and by fostering the debate about TJ and memory in societies with violent pasts more broadly.

Notes

1 Parts of the argument presented in this chapter was developed in Bueno, Natália, "Different Mechanisms, Same Result: Remembering the Liberation War in Mozambique," *Memory Studies* 14, no. 5 (2021): 1018–34.
2 Felipe J. Nyusi, "Lançadas em Maputo celebrações dos 60 anos da fundação da FRELIMO," *Rádio Moçambique*, June 25, 2021.
3 The Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) resulted from the merger of "UDENAMO (*União Nacional Democrática de Moçambique*) formed in 1960 in Salisbury; MANU (Mozambique African National Union) formed in 1961 from a number of smaller groups already existing among Mozambicans working in Tanganyika and Kenya, one of the largest being the Mozambique Makonde Union; UNAMI (*União Africana de Moçambique Independente*) started by exiles from the Tete region living in Malawi." Eduardo C. Mondlane, *The Struggle for Mozambique* (Penguin: Baltimore, 1969), 118–9.
4 "Mozambicans who during the colonial period belonged to or were linked to political, ideological, administrative, military, and police organizations of the Portuguese colonial system," such as PIDE (International Police for the Defense of the State) and the Portuguese colonial army. "Reintegração de moçambicanos comprometidos. Direcção do Partido promove reunião," *Notícias*, June 4, 1982, 1.
5 "Chinese-Style Public Shaming. Subtle Mozambican Force Used on Ex-collaborators," *International Herald Tribune*, March 9, 1979.
6 On the subject see e.g., Victor Igreja, "Frelimo's Political Ruling through Violence and Memory in Postcolonial Mozambique," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 36, no. 4 (2010): 781–99; Maria Paula Meneses, "Hidden Processes of Reconciliation in Mozambique: The Entangled Histories of Truth-Seeking Commissions Held between 1975 and 1982," *Africa Development* 41, no. 4 (2016): 153–80.
7 António Sopa, ed., *Samora, man of the people* (Maputo: Maguezo, 2001).
8 These meetings are understood as a quasi-truth commission for it does not fulfil all required elements of a truth commission. For a definition of truth commission, see Priscilla B. Hayner, *Unspeakable Truths: Transitional Justice and the Challenge of Truth Commissions* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011).
9 Samora Machel. "Descolonização mental: o nosso problema actual," *Revista Tempo*, no. 608, May 23, 1982, 29.
10 Igreja, "Frelimo's Political Ruling"; Meneses, "Hidden Processes."
11 Jessica Schafer, *Soldiers at Peace: Veterans of the Civil War in Mozambique* (New York: Macmillan, 2007); Nikkie Wiegink, "The Forgotten Sons of the State: The Social and Political Positions of Former Government Soldiers in Post-war Mozambique," *Colombia International* 77, no. 316 (2013): 43–72.
12 Joseph Hanlon, *Who Call the Shots?* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991).
13 *Boletim da República* I Série – no. 42, October 14, 1992.
14 "Reconciliação nacional é tarefa de todos os moçambicanos," *Notícias,* October 5, 1992, 1.
15 Elizabeth Jelin, *State Repression and the Labors of Memory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 33–34.

16 Jelin, *State Repression*, xviii.
17 Jelin, *State Repression*, xviii.
18 Ruth Collier and David Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena: Critical Junctures, the Labor Movement, and Regime Dynamics in Latin America* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002), 27.
19 Francesca Lessa, *Memory and Transitional Justice in Argentina and Uruguay: Against Impunity* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 28.
20 Paloma Aguilar, *Memory and Amnesia: The Role of the Spanish Civil War in the Transition to Democracy* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2002).
21 James Mahoney, "Path dependence in Historical Sociology," *Theory and Society* 29, no. 4 (2000): 507.
22 Machel, "Descolonização mental," 31.
23 Machel, "Descolonização mental," 31.
24 Machel, "Descolonização mental," 33.
25 "Reintegração de moçambicanos."
26 Machel, "Descolonização mental," 33.
27 José L. Cabaço, "The New Man (brief itinerary of a project)," in *Samora, Man of the People*, ed. António Sopa (Maputo: Maguezo, 2001), 105.
28 Cabaço, "The New Man," 105.
29 Samora Machel, "The People's Republic of Mozambique: The Struggle Continues." *Review of African Political Economy* 4 (1975): 23.
30 Machel, "Descolonização mental."
31 On the subject, see Maria Paula Meneses, "Xiconhoca, o inimigo: Narrativas de violência sobre a construção da nação em Moçambique," *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais* 106 (2015): 9–52.
32 Machel, "Descolonização mental," 33.
33 Cabaço, "The New Man," 105.
34 Cabaço, "The New Man," 106.
35 Machel, "Descolonização mental," 32.
36 João P. Borges Coelho, "Politics and Contemporary History in Mozambique: A Set of Epistemological Notes," *Kronos* 39, no. 1 (2013): 10–19.
37 Sérgio Chichava, "The Anti-Frelimo Movements & the War in Zambezia," in *The War Within: New Perspectives on the Civil War in Mozambique, 1976–1992,* eds. Eric Morier-Genoud, Michel Cahen, and Domingo do Rosário (New York: Boydell and Brewer, 2018), 17–45.
38 Alex Vines, *Renamo: Terrorism in Mozambique* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991).
39 Eric Morier-Genoud, Michel Cahen, and Domingo do Rosário, "Introduction: The Civil War in Mozambique: A history Still to Be Written," in *The War Within: New Perspectives on the Civil War in Mozambique, 1976–1992,* eds. Eric Morier-Genoud, Michel Cahen, and Domingo do Rosário (New York: Boydell and Brewer, 2018), 2.
40 Natália Bueno, "Reconciliation in Mozambique: Was It Ever Achieved"? *Conflict, Security & Development* 19, no. 5 (2019): 427–52.
41 Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (Renamo). "16-Points Declaration," News release, August 15, 1989, 2. https://www.mozambiquehistory.net/peace_89_08.php.
42 Joaquim Chissano, "Press Conference," News release, July 17, 1989, 5. https://www.mozambiquehistory.net/peace_89_07.php.
43 *Boletim da República* I Série – no. 42, October 14, 1992.
44 João P. Borges Coelho, "Antigos Soldados, Novos Cidadãos: A Reintegração dos Desmobilizados de Maputo," *Estudos Moçambicanos* 20 (2002): 141–236.
45 Amélia Neves de Souto, "Memory and Identity in the History of Frelimo: Some Research Themes," *Kronos* 39 (2013): 280–96.
46 On the subject, see Barnabé L Ncomo. *Uria Simango: um homem, uma causa* (Novafrica: Maputo, 2003).
47 Neves de Souto, "Memory and Identity."

48 "Ao que chegou a AR. Bombeiros e bandidos discutem assuntos da nação." *Savana*, April 11, 2003, 3.
49 "Dhlakama farto de acusações dispara. Queríamos negociar em 1982, e chamaram-nos de javalis," *Savana*, October 24, 2003, 4 and "Reintegração de moçambicanos comprometidos. Direcção do Partido promove reunião," *Notícias*, June 4, 1982, 1.
50 "Mensagem de sua Excelência, o Presidente da Renamo, Afonso Dhlakama por ocasião do fim do ano," *Savana*, January 3, 1997.
51 "MARP apela ao fim dos homens armados da Renamo," *Savana*, July 10, 2009, 3.
52 "Pena que não continuemos a ter campos de reeducação," *Savana*, May 5, 2012, 16.
53 "Sabe melhor o mel e não este fel associado à pólvora," *Savana*, July 18, 2014, 21.
54 Vitor Igreja, "Memories as Weapons: The Politics of Peace and Silence in Post-Civil War Mozambique," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 34, no. 3 (2008): 539–56.
55 Luis Brito. "Discurso político e pobreza em Moçambique: análise de três discursos presidenciais," Paper presented at *II Conferência do IESE, Dinâmicas da Pobreza e Padrões de Acumulação em Moçambique*, *Maputo*, Mozambique, April 22–23, 2009, 7. https://www.iese.ac.mz/lib/publication/II_conf/CP8_2009_Brito.pdf.
56 This process of recollection and celebration of Frelimo heroes had been officially launched two years earlier, on 10 October 2006, "with the tribute to the first Head of the Department of Security and Defense, Filipe Samuel Magaia, murdered by enemy bullets inside Niassa". See Renato Matusse, Josina Malique and Joharia Issufo, *Moçambique – Pátria de Heróis: Colectânea de Comunicações do Chefe de Estado (2005–2014)* (Maputo: Gabinete de Imprensa da Presidência da República, 2015), 186.
57 Matusse, Malique and Issufo, *Moçambique – Pátria de Heróis*, 14.
58 The names listed were the following: John Issa, Tomás Nduda, Mateus Sansão Muthemba, and João Macamo. Moreover, during 2008, Frelimo also held ceremonies to honor Josina Machel, Paulo Samuel Kankhomba, as well as to mark the 75th birthday of Samora Machel had him been alive, see Matusse, Malique and Issufo, *Moçambique – Pátria de Heróis*, 14.
59 The inauguration of the monument to honor Eduardo Mondlane in Nwadjahane in June 2009, the celebration of the 75th birthday of Samora Machel in Chilembene in September 2008, the inauguration of the Samora Machel statue in Nampula in 2011, among other events.
60 For further information on these publications, see ARPAC's website (http://www.arpac.gov.mz/index.php) and Neves de Souto, "Memory and Identity."
61 An open-air museum, Mondlane's historical site includes the house where he was born in 1920, the house where he stayed during his visit to the country in 1961 after years of living abroad, and a memorial with a detailed account of his life achievements, among other buildings. The author visited the museum in Abril 2019. For an overview of Mondlane's life story see e.g., Teresa Cruz e Silva, "The Influence of the Swiss mission on Eduardo Mondlane (1930–1961)," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 28, no. 2 (1998).
62 Natália Bueno, "Marginalization and Conflict – The Politics of Memory in Mozambique," *Justice in Conflict* (2019): 1–2.
63 "Samora retorna à Praça da Independência e Graça manda recados." *Savana*, October 21, 2011, 4.
64 Renamo's supporters consider Matsangaísa the founder of the movement and admire him for initiating the guerrilla movement against Frelimo.
65 "Depois de Matsangaíssa, Renamo avança com mais nomes." *Savana*, June 26, 2007, 2.

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10 Western representations of the liberation struggle in Guinea-Bissau

Teresa Almeida Cravo

Introduction

Guinea-Bissau is today most commonly associated with unflattering epithets and widely derided as a "failed state". Since the late 1970s, the country's reputation progressively and then definitively became one of political and economic instability. "There is little remarkable about the country … except its indebtedness", the *Economist* could write in the 1990s.[1] Marked by a succession of *coups d'état* and a short but shattering civil war between 1998 and 1999, the country's external image has been one of "a feast of corruption and repressive misrule".[2] In the new century, "failed state" was joined by "narco-state" as common descriptors for a country now firmly associated with the illicit drug trade, the only doubt being whether it was "Africa's first narco-state", as the *Independent* put it,[3] or "the world's first narco state", according to the *Guardian*.[4] Little control or monitoring of the country's 350 km of coastline (fragmented into 82 islands), together with corruption of police and other officials, turned Guinea-Bissau into "an easy mark for the world's drug cartels", according to the *LA Times*.[5] This representation, regularly reproduced in media and scholarly accounts of the country, obscures memories of a much more positive image enjoyed by Guinea-Bissau as the country emerged from a notable national liberation struggle against Portuguese colonialism, in the 1970s.

The Portuguese colonial encounter with Africa dates to 1446, although effective control of the Guinean territory only followed the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885. The territory now corresponding to Guinea-Bissau was amongst the first to be integrated into the newly founded economic, social, and political system of the Portuguese colonial order and amongst the last to free itself from these colonial shackles.[6] At the vanguard of the national liberation struggle was the PAIGC,[7] founded in 1956 by Amílcar Cabral, Luís Cabral, Aristides Pereira, Fernando Fortes, Eliseu Turpin, and Júlio de Almeida, fighting for the independence of both colonies, Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, with the aim of creating a unified independent state. That struggle garnered significant international attention, with the PAIGC and Guinea-Bissau the prominent focus of international attention, widely celebrated as an exemplary case of an anti-colonial movement. More than other Portuguese colonies fighting for independence from colonial rule, Guinea-Bissau appeared to represent the epitome of a "textbook" armed decolonisation.

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With the close of the anti-colonial war and Guinea-Bissau's establishment as an independent state, the country continued to attract praise. Western observers celebrated the commitment to social welfare and the development of democratic political institutions in liberated territories, auspicious signs of a post-colonial horizon – and an example for other newly emerging states. Yet this image of the country has all but vanished in today's dominant narrative of political instability and insecurity. This chapter seeks to rescue this history of the armed struggle and the embryonic construction of the Guinean nation as it was memorialised by its Western contemporaries. Drawing from scholarly work, media reports, international organisations' declarations, government statements, and personal narratives, the chapter recovers these lost memories of Guinea-Bissau's liberation trajectory in the Western imaginary. Such memories, of course, were not limited to the West – Guinea-Bissau was celebrated also by contemporaries in the Soviet bloc and the Third World, and the UN reports cited below reflect those broader shared attitudes. The concern of the chapter, however, is primarily with Western commentary, if only because here the juxtaposition with today's image of the country is most stark. The chapter focuses on three themes central to the country's external image of success: an impressive struggle against the Portuguese colonial empire; the liberation movement's exceptional leadership and organisation; and the promising experience of a proto-state in liberated areas under PAIGC control.

An unexpectedly successful armed struggle

Rarely discussed in the West and, when mentioned, dismissed as a "small swampy West African enclave"[8] and a "miserable territory",[9] Guinea-Bissau – then known as Portuguese Guinea – first rose to prominence with the start of a liberation war against colonial rule. As the PAIGC's strategy for independence took off, it quickly became an inspiration for anti-colonial movements and states, solidarity groups, academics, and journalists – all eager to support and report on the cause of defeating Europe's last colonial power. Amílcar Cabral, the movement's founder, leader, and revolutionary theorist caught the world's interest and was soon celebrated as one of Africa's greatest thinkers and guerrilla strategists. Guinea-Bissau, much earlier than other sites of anti-Portuguese struggle such as Angola and Mozambique, was heralded as an extraordinary example for others in the southern African anti-colonial movement – such as those in Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa.[10]

That Guinea-Bissau became the exemplar of important transformations in the history of decolonisation could not but come as a surprise. The idea of a viable and successful armed struggle emerging from "the smallest and most backward of the Portuguese colonies"[11] was, as late as the early 1960s, difficult to entertain. After a few unsuccessful attempts to organise workers in Bissau against the colonial regime, the PAIGC transferred its headquarters to Conakry, in neighbouring Guinea, in 1960, to prepare for armed struggle. From 1960 to 1963, Amílcar Cabral worked to convince his countrymen of the seriousness and feasibility of the movement's strategy of peasant mass mobilisation. When the war began, in 1963, the movement

thus appeared to external observers surprisingly well prepared, united, and skilful. In stark contrast to the territory's earlier external image, the party's organisation "within this disinherited wilderness" rapidly gained a reputation as "impressive".[12] Even those hostile towards the revolution, such as John Biggs-Davidson, a British MP from the Conservative Party, recognised that the guerrilla war in Portuguese Guinea was "perhaps the most vital because of the effects of its outcome on Portuguese resistance elsewhere, and the consequences for Rhodesia and South Africa of a Portuguese collapse".[13]

The unexpected success of Amílcar Cabral's PAIGC soon exerted a fascination over those cheering for the defeat of the Portuguese and other remnants of colonialism in Africa. "The small triangle of former Portuguese territory in West Africa […] sandwiched between Senegal and Guinea-Conakry […] is the scene of the most advanced political and military struggle against Portuguese colonialism in Africa", explained Richard Lobban, in a special issue of US-based magazine *Africa Today*, dedicated to the liberation struggles against Portugal's colonial yoke.[14] Odd Arne Westad, a Norwegian *cooperante* in Mozambique confirms: "I became interested in the decolonisation of Portuguese Africa in the early 1970s" when "Mozambique was struggling: Frelimo was less prepared than the PAIGC … in fact, Guinea-Bissau was the success story".[15]

Journalists also rushed to cover the liberation war and meet the reputed leader. The academic community too was impressed by developments in Guinea-Bissau and wrote profusely throughout the late 1960s and 1970s on the reasons for the movement's successes. Numerous books and articles on the liberation struggle revealed admiration for the PAIGC and optimism for the possibilities the movement was opening in the war against colonialism.[16] The country's struggle against colonialism even featured in Chris Marker's documentary *Sans Soleil*. Guinea-Bissau would never again be in the international spotlight – and benefit from such favourable accounts – as during these early years.

An impressive liberation leader

The major reason for this enthusiasm was undoubtedly Amílcar Cabral, "PAIGC's most important asset".[17] Academics devoted pages to his striking personality and achievements, many writing in glowing terms about Cabral's political thought.[18] Those who met him, such as the Swedish academic Lars Rudebeck, speak of being impressed by his "quiet charisma, his capacity to combine in an unusual way intellectual sharpness and emotional strength".[19] In fact, long after they had ceased to celebrate Guinea-Bissau as an example of a successful revolutionary movement, many scholars continued to dedicate pages to Cabral and his thought.[20] The Western press also wrote admiringly of Cabral, presenting him as "Africa's most distinguished guerrilla leader".[21] Even more conservative journalists conceded he was a "businesslike, Westernised" leader, assuring readers that, notwithstanding the use of "communist weapons and communist theories of revolutionary warfare", he was "clearly not a communist".[22] Publications also praised Cabral's fairness, ordering his forces to avoid killing civilians of any race, turning over Portuguese prisoners

of war to the Red Cross, and exhibiting a seemingly endless willingness to negotiate, with Lisbon, an end to the war and the country's self-determination.[23] Amílcar Cabral was the main responsible for and the central recipient of internal and external optimism and high expectations. Indeed, Cabral's influence at this juncture was central to internationalising the cause of the defeat of Portuguese colonialism and bringing recognition to the PAIGC's struggle.

A promising proto-state

Western discourse at this time did not focus only on the armed struggle. Another pillar of the PAIGC's success, in the eyes of both internal and external observers, was the construction of a new society ostensibly free from exploitation and oppression. Amílcar Cabral and the PAIGC offered sympathisers evidence of a "consciously applied strategy" to "challenge … the social, political, and economic *status quo* of underdevelopment".[24]

The powerful revolutionary elite, formed and strengthened by the armed conflict, gained increasing influence over the course of the struggle, and began to establish a prototype of "people's power" in the areas freed from Portuguese control. These so-called "liberated areas" – which the movement claimed covered two-thirds of the country and fifty per cent of the population by the early 1970s were to become the basis for a new independent state. These were social experiments in a new African socialist ideology (although the movement's gradual alignment with a Marxist-Leninist line was discussed only *sotto voce* so as not to alienate potential Western sponsors). According to Carlos Lopes, "[t]he embryo of institutional power was decisively created in the liberated areas of Guinea Bissau".[25] Strong organisational measures, envisaging a profound cultural transformation, were designed and implemented. These concerned the idea of *people's power*: village committees, people's courts, people's stores, agricultural production, women's empowerment, and educational and health projects offered successful examples of the PAIGC's capacity to govern. Lars Rudebeck, visiting in November and December of 1970, noted the movement's success in transforming itself into a de facto state in the liberated areas:

> the days when the PAIGC was just a rebel movement had thus passed long ago. It is easy to confirm this opinion after having spent some time in the liberated areas of the country. There can be no doubt that the PAIGC today is a revolutionary movement building a new society with broad popular support, and a small but well-organised people's army.[26]

From 2 to 8 April 1972, the UN sent a Special Mission, composed of observers from various member states, to visit the liberated areas in Guinea-Bissau. The Mission, able to confirm the party's reported achievements, proved a major diplomatic success for the liberation movement. Its report praised the PAIGC's efforts in health and education, conveying the party's achievements in the liberated territories which, by 1972, included the establishment of 200 medical clinics; the

enrolment of 20,000 children, taught by a staff of 251 teachers, in around 200 primary schools; the enrolment of 495 people in high school and universities in allied countries; and the training of 497 high and middle-level civil servants.[27] The contrast with Portuguese colonial legacy was striking: under the colonial regime there were no doctors outside the main cities, over 90 per cent of the population was illiterate, the first and only high school had been built in the 1950s and, as Basil Davidson reports, in the 1960s, under the colonial regime, only fourteen Guineans had had access to university.[28]

The Mission "was impressed by the enthusiastic and wholehearted cooperation which PAIGC receives from the people in the liberated areas and the extent to which the latter are participating in the administrative machinery set up by PAIGC and of the various programs of reconstruction".[29] Based on the Mission's report, the UN's Special Committee on Decolonisation adopted a resolution on 13 April 1972 claiming a success of its own, expressing "its conviction that the successful accomplishment by the Special Mission of its task – establishing beyond any doubt the fact that *de facto* control in these areas is exercised by the PAIGC, the national liberation movement of the territory – constitutes a major contribution by the United Nations in the field of decolonization".[30]

Later that year, the UN General Assembly, on its 27th session, appealed "to the governments and the peoples of the world to hold annually a Week of Solidarity with the Colonial Peoples of Southern Africa and Guinea (Bissau) and Cape Verde Fighting for Freedom, Independence and Equal Rights" and proposed that "the Week should begin on 25 May, Africa Liberation Day".[31] Shortly after, the General Assembly and the Security Council reaffirmed the right of Portuguese Guinea's people to self-determination and independence in General Assembly Resolution 2918(XXVII) of 14 November 1972[32] and Security Council Resolution 322(1972) of 22 November 1972.[33] Moreover, as proposed by the Special Committee on Decolonisation, the Fourth Committee of the 27th UN General Assembly recognised the PAIGC as "the only and authentic representative of the people of the territory", reviewing very favourably the party's achievements.[34]

Women's role in the liberation struggle was also a matter of international attention. Stephanie Urdang's first-hand account drew a particularly favourable picture of PAIGC's achievements in this area:

The involvement of women in the revolution, a goal from the very beginning, was not an afterthought (…). When the first mobilisers went into the countryside in 1959–1960, the program of political education for which they were trained by Cabral included raising the consciousness of both women and men about the oppression of women and the need to fight against it. (…) By the time I visited the country just over a decade later, men and women were attending meetings of the population in equal numbers. Half the speakers that I heard were women, who told me of their participation in the revolution and who spoke with confidence before hundreds of people.[35]

Urdang stressed that "the PAIGC helped pave the way for increased freedom of women".[36] According to the author, in order to fight against discrimination against women in education, girls' enrolment in primary schools was considered a priority and girls were sent abroad to study at allied countries' secondary schools. Rice

provision for the guerrilla, for the most part in the hands of women, became a political task from which women began to derive power and status. Two out of five elected village councillors, moreover, had to be women, thus including them from the inception in the grassroots political leadership; this was also visible at higher levels, for instance, of the three political workers, corresponding to the three war fronts – northern, eastern, and southern – responsible for the social reconstruction and political education program, two were women. There were women directors of schools, heads of hospitals and chief nurses, many coming from peasant families. Oppressive traditional customs such as the absence of divorce and forced marriage were reversed and the People's Courts were instructed to intervene. Polygamy was forbidden for Party members, in the hope of slowly changing this ingrained custom. If not blind to continuing inequalities – more notably the absence of women in combat roles – Urdang confidently concludes that Guinean women appeared well positioned to continue their second fight after independence: the one for equality.[37]

A further source of praise was the PAIGC's apparent commitment to democratic principles. In 1972, in the midst of guerrilla warfare, the PAIGC managed to organise elections in the liberated areas for regional councils that would later elect representatives for the People's National Assembly – again, in stark contrast with the areas under Portuguese control at this time, where no elections were held: Bissau, Bolama, Bijagós Islands, and Bafatá. The PAIGC elections were reported as "steps toward democracy" and considered "impressive" by the *Economist*.[38]

PAIGC leaders held the conviction that the development of these democratic political institutions would enable the political participation of villagers – some 52,000 voters in the 1973 elections – and establish connections with the highest level party officials, thus allowing ordinary citizens to participate in decision-making processes while also conferring legitimacy on the PAIGC.[39] Writing in the *New York Times*, one journalist applauded this "measure of the guerrilla's success in bringing democracy to Guinea-Bissau".[40]

Welcoming Guinea-Bissau into the world community

These developments all won the PAIGC leadership significant sympathy in Western countries. The *New York Times* labelled it "the most successful of the African movements attempting to end Portugal's rule".[41] Yet, the positive exposure Guinea-Bissau enjoyed throughout the struggle was the product of earnest diplomatic manoeuvring.[42] The PAIGC was clear about the need to garner external support and invested in its foreign relations from its inception. On the basis of the historic UN General Assembly Resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960, *Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and People*,[43] Amílcar Cabral sent regular information to the UN about the struggle and received encouraging feedback from the organisation. In 1971, Guinea-Bissau, represented by the PAIGC, became an associate member of the UN Economic Commission for Africa.[44] Portugal was, at this time, repeatedly condemned within the world organisation. With the Western bloc abstaining, even the Security Council approved resolutions against Portugal, affirming to be "*deeply disturbed* at the reported use of chemical substances by Portugal in its colonial wars against the peoples of Angola

Mozambique and Guinea (Bissau)" and "recognising the legitimacy of the struggle … in their demand for the achievement of self-determination and independence".[45]

Besides cooperation from Guinea-Conakry and Senegal, the movement also received military and technical assistance, primarily from the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, China and Cuba.[46] It also rapidly added financial assistance from anti-colonial countries and movements, such as Sweden or France,[47] as well as private organisations such as the World Council of Churches, and UN agencies such as the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organisation (UNESCO).[48]

As PAIGC's external capital grew, Portugal's rapidly diminished. When Cabral was assassinated, contrasting attitudes towards the two sides in the war were patent in Western coverage. Douglas Pike, writing in the *New York Times*, announced: "[t]he night of Jan. 20, 1973, Amílcar Cabral's death became the final sacrifice to the cause for which he had dedicated his life. (…) In Portuguese Guinea … Lisbon clings to an African colony fighting for independence, aided and abetted by the freedom-loving Atlantic Alliance".[49] The *Economist* was similarly glowing in its praise of Cabral and the PAIGC: "Mr Cabral's achievement was to make the PAIGC into a force which fought with schools, clinics and ballot boxes as well as with weapons, and which can sustain its momentum even without his leadership".[50]

Emboldened by criticism of Portuguese colonial policy, the PAIGC grew robust enough to overcome the tragic assassination of its acclaimed leader and actually intensified the anti-colonial war, mostly by making use of Soviet anti-air rockets, against, at that point, 35,000 Portuguese troops. Only a few months after this setback, and purposefully coinciding with the General Assembly's annual meeting, the PAIGC held a People's National Assembly session in the liberated region of Medina de Boé. The Assembly, with 120 deputies, unilaterally declared independence of the "Republic of Guinea-Bissau" on September 24, 1973, noting "the *de facto* existence of an efficiently functioning State structure".[51] Amílcar's half-brother, Luís Cabral, was formally elected President of the State Council. "On 24 September 1973 history was made in Africa", Lobban stresses; "[t]he first sub-Saharan African nation unilaterally declared its sovereignty from European colonialism following a protracted armed struggle" – "[t]he implications of this move are immense", he concludes.[52] The declaration was attended by foreign reporters from Sweden, the Soviet Union, Eastern Germany, and China.[53] Albeit in a rather weak-kneed reaction, even the British Mission to the UN, in a letter to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London in October, stated its position to be "that it is harmful to our interests to seem to be defending the Portuguese, especially if we do so in isolation or comparative isolation", fearing hostility on the part of independent African states.[54]

Independence, if not yet recognised by Portugal, affirmed the country's glowing reputation amongst Western counterparts. The period following the announcement was, effectively, the country's *honeymoon period* in its relations with the outside world. The warm welcome extended to Guinea-Bissau by the international community of states was shaped, in important ways, by the country's external representation.

A series of diplomatic achievements rapidly followed the unilateral declaration of independence in September 1973, as Guinea-Bissau was placed squarely on the agenda of various Western states and organisations. Less than a month later, the new state had been officially recognised by 54 countries.[55] In his speech to the 1973 UN General Assembly, General Gowon, then President of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), appealed to all "friends of Africa" to accommodate the new nation's "rightful position as a proud member of the international community".[56] In November 20, 1973, the PAIGC was officially admitted to the OAU as a full member,[57] and Luís Cabral later elected deputy chairman.[58] On 3 December 1973, Guinea-Bissau participated in the third UN Law of the Sea Conference, despite Portuguese protests.[59]

By the end of the year, with the colonial regime still blocking Guinea-Bissau's full independence, the 28th UN General Assembly adopted a Resolution welcoming Guinea-Bissau's accession to independence, and condemned Portugal for "perpetuating its illegal occupation of certain sectors of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau and the repeated acts of aggression committed by its armed forces against the people of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde",[60] notwithstanding objection once more from Portugal, but also the US and Britain, amongst others.[61] In March 1974, Guinea-Bissau was granted observer status at the UN and was admitted with full voting rights to the International Conference on Rules of War in Geneva – in contrast with other liberation movements which were granted only observer status.[62] Besides political recognition, the PAIGC was also proving capable of capturing financial and material support: in April the OAU announced the establishment of a US$ 450,000 fund for the territory under the PAIGC's control and Libya pledged an additional US$ 500,000;[63] following the FAO's earlier recognition of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, the World Food Program made food aid available to peoples in liberated areas in African colonial territories, acknowledging the decision had been made with Guinea-Bissau, as well as Angola and Mozambique, in mind.[64]

Criticism of Portugal's African wars, and demands for the colonial power to concede defeat and start political negotiations, were accompanied by popular support for the PAIGC's liberation struggle in various Western countries and concomitant pressure on domestic parliaments to recognise Guinea-Bissau.[65] Important personalities in the United States, for instance, made passionate pleas for the recognition of the country's independence, making parallels with French and North American revolutionary history. The African Studies Association, bringing together institutions and individuals with a scholarly interest in Africa, called on the United States to recognise the new country.[66] Charles Diggs Jr, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa, of the US House of Representatives' Committee on Foreign Affairs, also publicly called on his government to recognise the state of Guinea-Bissau. "Let us not", the Congressman plead, "on the eve of our Bicentennial, turn our back on the words of Jefferson in 1792 in reference to the revolution in France: 'It accords with our principles to acknowledge any government to be rightful which is formed by the will of the nation, substantially declared'".[67] George Houser, executive director of the American Committee on Africa, a private organisation which supported African independence, also wrote an enthusiastic article for the *New York Times*

calling on the United States to recognise the liberation movement's declaration of independence, going so far as to compare it with that of the US in 1776.[68] The recognition of Guinea-Bissau's independence by the United States was problematic, given the superpower's use of Portugal's Azores military base in the 1973 Yom Kippur war, in exchange for which Lisbon had demanded political and military support for its colonial policies and wars.[69] Britain continued to ambiguously move between opposition to Guinea-Bissau's aspirations of recognition and attempting, in the background, to mediate between the PAIGC and Portugal in order to safeguard its own relations with sub-Saharan Africa.[70] Western powers were careful not to publicly confront their NATO ally, yet while Portugal and the PAIGC were still holding negotiations for the transfer of power,[71] the UN Security Council unanimously recommended that Guinea-Bissau be admitted to the UN.[72]

These events were an undisputable confirmation of the movement's exceptional international standing at this particular historical juncture. The international community looked upon the new Guinean state, heir to one of the most inspiring and reputed liberation movements in Africa, with confidence and optimism and appeared vested in producing results. Patrick Chabal, a clearly sympathetic academic, summarises succinctly the reasons animating this external representation and attitude of confidence in its future:

> Guinea-Bissau stands as a symbol of African will against colonial might. The first African country (other than Algeria) to launch a full-scale nationalist war, the first to attain independence through guerrilla war, and the first to attempt to construct a socialist state on the basis of free and fair elections before independence, Guinea-Bissau was in the mid-seventies a beacon of hope for those concerned with the fate of socialism in Africa. Amílcar Cabral, the founder and leader of the nationalist movement (PAIGC) which had achieved so much, was, at the time of his death in 1973, probably the most highly respected nationalist leader in Africa. He was recognised as the architect of what was then and remains today the most successful people's war in Africa and was widely regarded as the most original political thinker of his generation.[73]

By the time of the Portuguese revolution, in April 1974, the PAIGC had been recognised by 82 countries as the official government of Guinea-Bissau[74] – more countries than with which the Portuguese dictatorship enjoyed diplomatic relations. Indeed, many commentators recognised that the bloodless military coup which ousted the dictatorship and initiated the democratic transition of the former colonial power had begun with an army mutiny for which the PAIGC's military success was directly responsible.[75] Several months before any other colonies, Guinea-Bissau was finally recognised as an independent country by Portugal on 10 September 1974. The country became a UN member on 17 September, at the opening of the 29th General Assembly.

After independence, the new state continued to enjoy a positive image abroad. Eastern and Western states and movements and international institutions which had

supported the liberation rushed to help build the new country. Support flowed from the Soviet Union, Cuba, East Germany, and China, as well as Sweden, Holland, Norway, Denmark, France, Austria, Italy, Switzerland, Britain, Finland, Yugoslavia, several Arab states, the European Economic Community (EEC), the UN, and even (post-revolution) Portugal (albeit only after initially strained relations).

Luís Cabral rejected foreign military bases in the country[76] and insisted on non-alignment in order to maintain and open door to both Cold War geopolitical blocs and secure funds from multiple sources.[77] Media reports emphasised the absence of nationalisation of major industries and the return of Portuguese and Lebanese traders (many of whom had left upon initial independence).[78] The President was perceived by Western powers as avoiding the more radical Marxist stance adopted by independence movements in Angola and Mozambique: "[t]o the welcomed surprise of many Western leaders, President Luís Cabral appears to be steering this former Portuguese colony on a course of political moderation and economic pragmatism".[79] He was depicted in the Western press as a leader who did not "speak in the political clichés familiar in 'revolutionary' Africa"[80] while being responsible for the establishment of jungle stores, hospitals and schools that has been described as amongst the best on the continent.[81]

Luís Cabral was, however, to benefit only shortly from his acclaimed predecessor's political capital. And the same fate would befall Guinea-Bissau. If Western representations of Guinea Bissau were largely optimistic during the country's liberation war and independence, thus producing favourable dynamics in the country's interaction with the outside world, international attention soon began to fade as hopes for a smooth and successful transition to statehood were progressively crushed in the post-colonial period. Not only did external interest rapidly decline from the late 1970s onwards, but mainstream portrayals of the country increasingly focused on internal tensions and crises in what would become a pattern for external representations and understandings of the Guinean postcolonial context.

Conclusion

The enthusiastic and optimistic representations of Guinea-Bissau on the eve of independence from Portuguese colonial rule are in sharp contrast with the country's image in the West today. They were also in stark juxtaposition with earlier attitudes that cast the country as a "Scotland-sized piece of swamp".[82] Over the course of an 11-year anti-colonial armed struggle, Guinea-Bissau's reputation was dramatically transformed, gaining moral and political support from across the international community, and financial and military support from a significant number of both Eastern and Western states, along with solidarity groups and private organisations. The PAIGC demonstrated a remarkable capacity to govern territories liberated from the Portuguese and rose to independence and power in the midst of widespread popular support – from both domestic and international audiences. Yet years later, the same country would be regarded with suspicion by the Western community, and ultimately labelled a "failed state" and a "narco-state".

Once celebrated as exceptional, Guinea-Bissau no longer stood out from the usual gloomy accounts of African decline into political instability and economic decadence. The country ceased to be a beacon of hope, instead now merely one more example of a supposedly disorderly and threatening periphery. Similarly, Western perceptions of the country's leadership have shifted from impressive and capable to corrupt and unstable, with a corresponding erosion of institutional and personal support.

Today, the country's profoundly negative representation has become hegemonic, Western discourse reproducing an image of seemingly unredeemable failure and contributing to collective forgetting. The erasure of the radical potential of Guinea-Bissau's national liberation movement from our historical memory contributes to the denigration of the promise it and other such movements once offered to those struggling against imperialism, thereby serving, today, the (neo)colonial interests they were born to oppose.

Notes

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11 Who is the combatant?

A diachronic reading based on Cape Verde and São Tomé and Príncipe

Inês Nascimento Rodrigues and Miguel Cardina

Introduction

How have post-colonial states shaped the figure-archetype of the combatant? Drawing on a cross-cutting analysis of two countries – Cape Verde and São Tomé and Príncipe – which had no experience of the armed struggle within their territory, this chapter will examine how the category has been diachronically defined, produced, and negotiated over time through specific modes of memorialisation and silencing. It will argue that the changes that can be observed in the "combatant" reveal a mnemonic expansion that reclaims the discursive and moral traits generally associated with this figure – namely those related to notions of heroism, resistance, sacrifice, and suffering – and extends them to other sociopolitical and temporal sites. Hence, although the category of the combatant – often coinciding with that of the hero – mainly refers to the context and chronology of the liberation struggles, it would acquire its own plasticity and be mobilised and expanded to refer to other historical periods.[1]

Cape Verde and S. Tomé and Príncipe have intertwined colonial and post-colonial histories that can be viewed from a comparative perspective. Firstly, there is the fact that they are both small African island countries that were formerly under Portuguese colonial rule, having been established as important trading posts for the trafficking of enslaved subjects taken by Portugal from Africa to Europe and the Americas. In addition, they have both lived through anticolonial processes rooted in histories of colonial violence – e.g., the famines in Cape Verde and the Batepá massacre in S. Tomé – but also in narratives of the many forms of resistance produced by colonial domination. They share one other characteristic: unlike Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea, the independence process did not involve armed conflict within the archipelagos. Nevertheless, in these countries, the liberation struggle is celebrated as the prelude to national independence. There are also some similarities between their post-colonial political trajectories: in both cases, the liberation parties – the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde/the African Party for the Independence of Cape Verde (PAIGC/CV) and the Movement for the Liberation of São Tomé and Príncipe (MLSTP) – suffered major defeats in the first multiparty elections in 1991, which had an impact on the meanings associated with the notion of the "combatant".

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The central focus that this figure has acquired in the process of building the post-colonial state and in the memory of anticolonialism is not exclusive to Cape Verde and S. Tomé and Príncipe. In East Timor, various authors have noted how the dominant narrative of the past revolves around the "combatant". Whether hero or martyr, the category is often used identically when celebrating former experiences of resistance, evoking "a code of reciprocity in which those who suffer to bring something forth must be repaid".[2] In independent Namibia, Becker, and Metsola mention the existence of a hegemonic nationalist grand narrative which foregrounds the armed struggle and its leading figures, emphasising their role as "heroic liberators" and determining the distribution of resources and state power.[3] Moreover, in Zimbabwe, South Africa, Mozambique, and Angola, the combatant who occupied high-ranking positions during the struggles (each with their own particular representations and hierarchies) is one of the key figures through whom the state is legitimised and the nation imagined.[4]

In Cape Verde and S. Tomé and Príncipe, as in some of these other contexts, the concept has been expanded, both formally and informally, to include other men and women who played different roles in the struggle (or even outside it). Hence it is of interest here not only to identify changes in the meanings of the concept but, above all, to reflect on the meanings of these changes. How has the figure of the combatant acquired social and political significance? Which legal, discursive, economic, and citizenship hierarchies produce this category, especially when it is institutionalised by the approval of its own statutes? Finding answers to these questions through an analysis of the mechanisms for recognition and compensation – whether financial, symbolic, or other – awarded by the state to the "combatant", together with the sociopolitical uses and mnemonic appropriations of this category, will provide other interpretative keys for examining the memorialisation of the liberation struggles in Cape Verde and S. Tomé and Príncipe.

The "combatant" in Cape Verde

Although Cape Verde's independence was not the result of armed struggle in the archipelago, it was a direct consequence of the war fought by the PAIGC in Guinea for the liberation of both territories. This means that many Cape Verdeans were involved – in different ways – in the national liberation struggle. Several joined the armed struggle in Guinea, while others were involved in mobilisation and clandestine activities in Cape Verde and Portugal, some of whom were arrested as a result. Others engaged in diplomatic and political work in exile, either in European or African countries (e.g., France, Holland, and Sweden or Senegal, Algeria, and Conacry).[5]

Hence in the early post-independence years a memory of the struggle was formed that was composed of discursive, visual, and political spaces in which the valorisation of this past prevailed, although not without periods of some popular protest. Rejecting colonial symbols (a measure explored in detail in Chapter 6 of this volume), independence brought its own pantheon of national heroes, namely the heroes of the liberation struggle, a set of key figures and individuals who were

predominantly senior combatants and therefore considered worthy of respect and honour. Cláudio Furtado describes them as the "uncommon ones", i.e., those whose experiential references were directly connected with the legacy of the struggle.[6]

In these years, certain qualities were ascribed to the combatants which distinguished them from other Cape Verdean citizens. They were celebrated in the press, in music, in national holidays, in the words of the national anthem and in political discourses as "the best sons of Cape Verde" or "the most honourable sons of the land" because they had given their lives – or sacrificed years of their youth – to the anticolonial cause. They were also referred to as "liberators", largely in recognition of their role in the victorious struggle against Portuguese colonial rule. This memory became established, although not without some dispute, as the generator of cultural capital, prestige and recognition, attributed both to the PAIGC and those of its members who had fought in the struggle.

Under the single-party PAIGC/CV regime, the "combatant" emerged structured and framed, both symbolically and morally, within a grammar of heroism and sacrifice (and, in some cases, martyrdom as well), activated for the purposes of political legitimation, among other reasons. The hegemony of the combatants would become visible in the dispute over positions in the leadership structures of the PAIGC even before independence, as early as March 1975. Of the 32 members appointed to the National Commission of Cape Verde (CNCV – *Comissão Nacional de Cabo Verde*), the most important party-political decision-making body, 19 were combatants from the armed struggle, 15 of whom occupied the top positions in the hierarchy. The five names in the Permanent Secretariat of the CNCV were all prominent combatants from the "old guard", that is, historical leaders of the PAIGC.[7] In the first decade of independence, the ruling elite – those in positions bearing the highest level of responsibility within the state institutions (ministers, the head of state, the president of the National Assembly, etc.) – had the armed struggle as their key reference, as well as memories of the famines and resistance to colonialism as formative milestones, among others.[8] These combatants served as a repository for the political legitimacy of the independent nation, underpinning a symbolic hierarchy which granted them the status of super-citizenship as the representatives of a country that would not exist without them and their contribution.

In the case of Cape Verde (and, in different ways, Guinea), the hierarchies of power and citizenship were confronted with the existence of a supreme hero, Amílcar Cabral, who had been given the title of "Founder of the Nationality" on the eve of Independence Day, 5 July 1975, and was a constant presence in those early years. Through "direct contact with the legendary hero", the combatants who fought alongside him would become "a kind of priesthood of this sacred knowledge [the ideas of Cabral]".[9]

One of the most important strands in the ongoing politics of exalting the memory of the struggle would materialise in a political and symbolic grammar structured around the creation of a specific legal statute establishing the "Liberation Struggle Combatant" (hereinafter the LSC) as a national figure who merited protection and homage from the state.[10] The first law to officially approve the Statute of the Combatant dates from 1989.[11] However, since 1980 this title had, on occasion, been

formally recognised, mainly in the case of historic figures from the armed struggle, some of whom had become leading figures in the independent state. Only two of the 32 names listed up to this point had not been in the PAIGC's combat zones in Guinea and/or the movement's logistical, strategic, and political bases in neighbouring Guinea Conakry. The strict definition of the combatant contained in this first statute followed the affirmation of war credentials as the source of political and social legitimation in the early years of independence. On the one hand, the statute explicitly restricted this status to those who had fought for the PAIGC – excluding militants who had not been organically linked to the liberation movement, or members of other political projects – while prioritising activities developed in an "active, ongoing" manner. The wording of this latter criterion, which presupposed exclusive dedication to the struggle, could potentially obstruct the recognition process or even the eligibility of militants who had been engaged in clandestine activities, among other cases.

Thus, a significant number of LSCs recognised in Cape Verde prior to 1991 largely correspond to one concrete profile: men who had been involved in the war in Guinea via the PAIGC in posts of responsibility and/or command, many of whom had subsequently played key roles in the political and social geography of the archipelago following independence. The LSC Statute approved in 1989 is therefore a text which acknowledges the symbolic importance of certain individuals in the history of the nation, providing them with conditions that dignify their past history of dedication and combat. However, due to the processes it instituted for the recognition and definition of who might be eligible as a combatant, the same statute would exclude other political paths followed during the struggle. It was also a symbolic instrument for the reproduction, legitimation and sustainability of political power after 1975, valuing the armed struggle and endowing it with a foundational role in building the independent nation.

The PAICV was defeated in the 1991 elections, which were won by the Movement for Democracy (MpD – *Movimento para a Democracia*) with a large majority. In the same year, the law on the LSC Statute was revised.[12] Whereas the first text had been more restricted, with the advent of the multiparty system the definition of its potential beneficiaries was significantly extended. During the 1990s the changes made to specific legislation concerning the combatant allowed for diversification in terms of mobilisation and forms of participation in the struggle for independence, reflecting the ongoing mnemonic transition.[13] This no longer necessarily implied involvement in the armed struggle or membership of the PAIGC, thus reflecting the wide range of political experiences that had shaped the national liberation struggle in Cape Verde, from the reasons for joining it to the different types of activities carried out and the time dedicated to the cause, or even to different relationships with the PAIGC cells and the party itself after independence.

The process of achieving party-political legitimacy for the new government unfolded within this new mnemonic context. A significant number of the founder members of the party which won the elections in 1991 consisted of a group of post-independence PAIGC dissidents, some of whom were associated with Trotskyism and had been politicised during the clandestine struggle in Portugal. In a

dichotomous and antagonistic act against the historic leaders, they produced themselves as dual "combatants", firstly as LSCs, since some of them had taken part in the struggle for national independence, although usually from positions – held clandestinely in Portugal or the archipelago – that were not considered to be at the top of the combatant hierarchy as defined by the First Republic.[14] In addition, and more importantly in this context, they also defined themselves as combatants for democracy, since they understood that the "true" liberation of the archipelago had not been accomplished until the 1991 elections, at their instigation and as a result of their pressure.

The flexibilisation of the criteria in the statute and the activation of a series of memorialisation practises had social, political and cultural impacts on the ways in which the historical PAIGC/CV combatants were, in part, perceived. These impacts materialised in the form of the conflicting representations of them that were produced, ranging between legitimation and delegitimation: they were no longer seen solely as liberators and national heroes, but also as "lords of the islands", who were "intolerant" and "autocratic" and had been attributed a moral status which some considered unjust and self-imposed.[15] These negative reactions, mainly targeting the "Guinea combatants"[16] who, as previously noted, were representative of the path taken by a significant number of leaders in the immediate post-independence period and during the time of the single-party system, are elements in a process of decentralising the status of the armed struggle in the Cape Verdean imaginary. This process benefited from the fact that there had been no war on the islands and therefore its experiences had not been inscribed in the memory of the majority of the population but also, in part, because the hegemony of the combatants – in some cases socialised in other contexts and separated from everyday life on the islands for many years – was configured, in a certain sense, as fragile and contextual.

As part of the continuing discussions on the politics of memory and silence associated with the combatant, from the 1990s onwards (auto)biographical memoirs would be published, focussing on the different forms of Cape Verdean participation in the liberation struggle. Hence the fight for the production and imposition of a narrative of the nation and a historical memory of the struggle was pursued less by means of historiography and more by its political and social protagonists, via biographies, autobiographies, essays or interviews which aimed to establish what should be considered relevant for the history of contemporary Cape Verde.[17] Initially this involved sectors such as clandestine activists and political prisoners who had previously been considered to have less of a public profile or received less recognition from the state and were therefore demanding adequate recognition for their particular category of combatant. Later, in particular, during the 2000s, it also included some of the protagonists from the armed struggle and other political actors who were not from the PAIGC. Through these memorial products, the aim was not only to evoke and include certain perspectives and experiences associated with the past of the struggle, but also to produce a more plural archive which enabled institutionalised narratives of the process that had led to national independence to be negotiated and reconfigured.

However, in terms of legislation, the major changes only took place in 2014, the year before the 40th anniversary of independence.[18] Law 59/VIII/2014, of 18 March, broadens the scope of application of the LSC statute to explicitly include former political prisoners with a definition that is different from the more general one applied to LSCs but equivalent in terms of symbolic and legal value. The introduction of a pension of 75,000 Cape Verdean *escudos* (roughly 680 euros) for LSCs who had no other income, or as a supplement to the pensions of those whose entitlements amounted to less than this, once again reinforced criticism of the statute in certain sectors. Although the new law was crucial to dignifying certain combatants who were living in extremely precarious circumstances, it also contributed to the emergence of other debates. On the one hand, this remuneration was intended to provide recognition of a symbolic status of exception for LSCs within the narrative of the nation, in a country where the minimum wage in 2018 was 13,000 *escudos* in the private sector (roughly 118 euros) and 15,000 *escudos* (roughly 136 euros) in the public sector, these amounts could lead to accusations of privilege in comparison to the rest of the population. On the other hand, it would also contribute to reinforcing the sense of trivialising the image of the combatant, as expressed by some of those who had fought for years in Guinea or lost part of their youth as prisoners. It also raised another question that had often been debated since the appearance of the first statute, associated with the nature of the contribution to the struggle, on which the law was either comprehensive or else not very explicit, namely the minimum level of sacrifice and dedication required for an individual to be considered to merit the title of LSC.

These disputes over memory find parallels in two of the most significant cases of negotiating the perceptions of who is (or is not) a combatant and national hero and recognising the various causes for which it is deemed valid to have fought on behalf of the nation – whether political, cultural or social. In recent years, actions performed in the context of combat and the actions of those who resisted Portuguese colonialism and the everyday adversities of the archipelago *before* and/or *outside* the context of the liberation struggle have sometimes been cited as equivalent. The speech by Jorge Carlos Fonseca, the President of the Republic at the time, delivered at the ceremony in honour of the LSCs on 20 January 2018 is an example of this.[19]

On this occasion the president emphasised "tenacity, courage and commitment" as the values praised by the nation on 20 January, the date which served "as a temporal marker for honouring, through the National Heroes, all those, whether well-known or anonymous, who dedicated themselves to the cause of liberation". In the same speech, Jorge Carlos Fonseca stressed that the country had built itself up internationally "as the expression of a fighting people who, throughout history", have known how to "face and overcome a wide range of difficulties". The message he conveys is that, in the face of different challenges in different contexts, it is the "tenacity, courage and commitment" of the Cape Verdean that endures, given that "the struggle for survival and for the affirmation" of its people "has been arduous, just as it was very challenging for the combatants on the military and political fronts, whether clandestine or not, […] to confront the colonial regime and its allies".

In this speech, which symbolically recognises the same quality of heroism in the LSC and the anonymous population fighting adversities in the archipelago, Jorge Carlos Fonseca reinforced his position of non-partisan harmonisation of the past of Cape Verde, thus steering the "national hero" status, celebrated on 20 January, away from the profiles of individuals with profiles linked solely to the national liberation struggle or to military experience. By seeking out the discursive features of the figure of the combatant and applying them to other actors, a narrative of the nation which foregrounds the idea of "combat" is substantiated.

There is another case which is even more relevant to this discussion. In 2019, legislation was introduced to create a financial pension for Cape Verdeans who had been opposed to the single-party regime in São Vicente and Santo Antão, in 1977 and 1981, respectively, and had been involved in confrontations with the authorities.[20] The preamble to this law, citing the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the possibility of historical reconciliation, states that it is imperative for state justice to proceed with reparations for possible abuses and arbitrary acts committed against Cape Verdean citizens under the First Republic, which were considered to be particularly serious in São Vicente and Santo Antão in the abovementioned years. The right to a monthly pension was thus established for the beneficiaries of this law (providing exactly the same amount as the pension attributed to the LSCs).[21]

The legally defined financial compensation is a political gesture that equates, on the one hand, to establishing a symbolic equivalence between these figures and, on the other hand, to the activation of a strategy of party-political confrontation which takes the image of the combatant as one of its focal points. Hence, the opponents of the single-party regime, whose form of opposition was now officially sanctioned as a sacrifice made for the development of the nation, were no longer merely perceived as victims but also as fighters for freedom and democracy. Jorge Carlos Fonseca, commenting on the text of the law he had promulgated, explicitly made this comparison:

> On the one hand there is the representation of independence, of those who fought for independence, the heroes of independence; on the other hand, those who fought against the single party, for democracy and for freedom, who would be the heroes of freedom and democracy. I myself once expressed this in terms that were controversial, although symbolic, stating that while there were liberation struggle combatants *for* the homeland, there were also liberation struggle combatants *in* the homeland (our italics).[22]

This excerpt is particularly significant in terms of the ways in which the party-political powers and their representatives have been mobilising the concepts of heroism, suffering and resistance that underpin the notion of the combatant, thus removing it from its specific historical context. In doing so, a levelling out of different events, and thus their importance and consequences for the history of the nation, unfolds, interfering in the way in which Cape Verdeans socialise the different versions of national history and the past of the struggle in particular.

The "combatant" in São Tomé and Príncipe

On 12 July 1975, when the national flag was raised for the first time and Manuel Pinto da Costa, who would become the country's first President, gave his inaugural speech in the *Praça da Independência* (Independence Square) in the capital of the new Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe, the message was one of revolution and unity. The symbolism embedded in the speech, delivered in the presence of hundreds of Santomeans and a Portuguese delegation, emerged within the framework of a long history of colonial oppression and a period of troubled months on the islands following the 25 April in Portugal (which continued almost until the official proclamation of independence).

In the archipelago, the prevailing narrative for this era became the one that was written and disseminated by the movement which was engaged in the political struggle and which was not only recognised by the Portuguese authorities as the favoured interlocutor in negotiations regarding the transition to independence, but also as the legitimate representative of the Santomean people, namely the Movement for the Liberation of São Tomé and Príncipe (MLSTP – *Movimento de Libertação de São Tomé and Príncipe*). This symbolic and discursive political hegemony, constructed during the months prior to the formal declaration of independence and afterwards consolidated under the single-party regime which governed the country from 1975 to 1991, was extended to the historical leaders of the MLSTP and its predecessor, the Committee for the Liberation of São Tomé and Príncipe (CLSTP – *Comité de Libertação de São Tomé and Príncipe*), which had been engaged in the political and diplomatic struggle in exile and returned to the archipelago with the legitimacy to guide and direct the path of the independent nation, a nation heir to the centuries-old symbolic resistance of its people.[23]

Augusto Nascimento observes that, after 1975, "induced by the hegemony of the MLSTP, the country tended to identify itself" with the movement, although "the history of the country was far more plural".[24] Hence in the early years after independence, the presence of other political associations in the territory after 25 April 1974 would be forgotten. In this context, the *Associação Cívica Pró-MLSTP* (Pro-MLSTP Civic Association) stands out. Created in São Tomé and Príncipe in June 1974, in the absence of the members of the original party in the territory, it aimed to function as its branch in political implementation.[25] During that month, successively more than 20 young students arrived from Lisbon to wage the political struggle. They had been politically socialised by the ideas of Pan-Africanism, Black Power, Marxism, and Maoism. This group of young people was committed to organising a series of measures to raise political awareness among the population, ranging from strikes and demonstrations to boycotts to commercial shops. This created a climate of fear among the Portuguese residents and led to clashes with the colonial authorities, who threatened to bring forward the date for the elections established in the Algiers Agreement signed on 26 November 1974, and cut off Portuguese funding for the islands, among other measures.[26] Given the situation, the Secretary General of the MLSTP at the time and future head of state of the archipelago, Pinto da Costa, made an early return to São Tomé and Príncipe

in March 1975, whereupon he dissolved the *Associação Cívica*, leading to the more or less forced departure of some of its members from the territory.[27]

It then became partially or totally silenced during the single-party regime led by the MLSTP, so that the latter would emerge as the only symbol of liberation from colonial rule. This was not unconnected to the way in which São Tomé and Príncipe had gained independence, without resorting to armed struggle. The legitimacy of the MLSTP and its leaders rested mainly on two axes. On the one hand, there was the symbolic association between the CLSTP/MLSTP leaders and the figure-archetype of the guerrilla "with no weapons at hand" but who was also a freedom fighter, as the national anthem "*Independência Total*" (Full Independence) proclaims. On the other hand, there were the legendary founding narratives constructed around the duality of heroism and sacrifice which were considered the precursors of the archipelago's anticolonial resistance, such as the 1953 Batepá massacre, celebrated as the catalyst for Santomean nationalism.[28] The first official celebration of 3 February, the date which marks the start of these events, known at the time as "Martyrs of Colonialism Day", took place in 1976, one year after the islands became independent. Over time, the political performance of this historic event assumed a rhetoric of bonding and reconciliation, based on promoting a spirit of national unity and reinforcing the idea of a people proud of their history of struggle. This is clear from the actual name chosen for the day, for example: whereas the initial title "Martyrs of Colonialism Day" focussed on the suffering of the Santomeans as victims of colonial oppression, in 1980, when it was renamed "Liberation Heroes Day", the emphasis shifted to the courage and determination of the population who fought to conquer independence. The reproduction of models of suffering and bravery in this and other commemorations, especially those organised by the ruling elite, anchored the project for the political legitimation of the MLSTP in the territory, associating its leaders, many of whom were descendants of the victims of the massacre, with a lineage of perseverance and opposition to Portuguese colonialism.[29]

Assimilating the events of 1953 into a nationalist narrative of resistance, unity, and heroism is an option that seeks to reinforce the communitarian sense of Santomean society after independence. In fact, the years of the single-party regime corresponded to a phase of national reconstruction, a process which, amid great socioeconomic and political difficulties, implied the affirmation and valorisation of a collective and shared identity. However, given the insularity, the size of the territory and the "personalisation" of politics, among other factors, this attempt to produce a uniform concept of the nation was always surrounded by disputes on various levels, whether ideological, political, cultural, or generational, to name but a few.[30]

With the transition to multiparty democracy and the defeat of the MLSTP in the 1991 elections, some of the former members of the *Associação Cívica* and other dissidents from the liberation party returned to join the ranks of the new ruling party. A process of negotiating the anticolonial legacies and social positions of the (former) exiled leaders of the MLSTP – regarded as the historic combatants in the struggle – began, holding them responsible for the economic instability on the islands. However, the figure of the most distant and virtually undisputed heroes

remained, including Amador, the leader of a slave revolt in the sixteenth century, nowadays considered a key figure in the archipelago's resistance against colonial oppression. His image has featured on the Santomean *dobra* since 1977,[31] a public holiday was declared in his honour (4 January, "Amador Day") in 2004,[32] his bust stands in the gardens of the National Historical Archive, and in some schools, he is regarded as a "hero who fought for independence".[33] In November 2018, a statue of Amador, roughly three metres high, was erected in the centre of the capital, commissioned by the then Minister of Culture who, on the day it was unveiled, stressed the former's pioneering role in the struggle for liberation and the duty of all Santomeans to continue on the path set by their ancestors.[34]

It is through this developing path that the discussion and recognition of the role of the *Associação Cívica* during the anticolonial struggle has found space to resurface in recent years, coinciding with the return of its protagonists to the political arena. Hence, a set of conditions can be identified which are more favourable to the emergence of a renewed interest in the issues of the struggle, national independence and, consequentially, the problematisation of its history and actors, evident in the dissemination of documentaries, essays, poems, memoirs and principally interviews, mainly in online newspapers. This new phase in the country, which has a greater focus on development and overcoming economic difficulties on the archipelago, has coincided with the inclusion and involvement of agents who had previously been rendered invisible in the process of remembering the liberation struggle.

In 2005, accompanying the re-emergence, in public space, of memories of the role played by the *Associação Cívica* in the liberation struggle, the legal text creating the Statute of the Liberation Struggle Combatant, previously omitted from Santomean legislation, was ratified for the first time. It explicitly refers to the reason for deciding to formalise a specific statute after so many years of independence: to correct the omissions and injustice to which the former combatants had been condemned, many of whom were living without dignity, in poverty, and had remained unknown to younger generations of Santomeans.[35] Unlike its counterpart in Cape Verde, this statute does not stipulate a starting point for engaging in the struggle, although it does provide a hierarchical typology of three categories of eligible combatants, corresponding to different benefits, defined in descending order of importance: the founders and leaders of the ex-CLSTP and MLSTP, the leaders of the *Cívica*, and citizens who had proved, on a local level, to have played an outstanding role in mobilising the population to achieve the objectives of the struggle for national independence.

While, on the one hand, for the former members of the *Associação Cívica* the law restores the symbolic role they had played in the struggle, which they had demanded should be recognised, on the other hand, the text itself materially and symbolically distinguishes between the roles of the protagonists in this process, providing three scales for remunerations that configure different hierarchies of value and fail to provide the same benefits for all, thus producing what can be considered "minor combatants". Moreover, this official recognition does not cover the survivors of the Batepá massacre, who publicly expressed their displeasure at not

being considered for the same benefits granted to the CLSTP/MLSTP and *Cívica* members, justifying this by their symbolic and moral evocation as "combatants" and "heroes" and by the imaginary of the massacre as a driving force behind the anticolonial struggle.[36] This claim expresses, among other things, a desire to see their experiences of suffering and resistance recognised as just as valid as those of the nationalists and, in some sense, the recovery of a particular identity (or status) associated with bravery and sacrifice, which they consider merits greater recognition by the political powers.

Conclusion

The evolution of legislation and public representations of the combatant in Cape Verde and São Tomé and Príncipe reflects the political, social, and economic changes in the two countries and reveals the narrative centrality of this figure in both archipelagos. Since there was no pre-colonial past to return to, the legitimacy of the first governments in the two countries would initially be based on the anticolonial origins of the independent state and its protagonists. Later, in particular, after the processes of transition to multiparty systems in the 1990s and the significant defeats of the liberation parties in the elections, the notion of the combatant would not only encompass a broader combination of the various forms of participation in the anticolonial struggle, but would also become associated with those who had faced what is considered to have been the autocratic and oppressive measures of the single-party regimes.

In more recent years the concept has acquired an even broader meaning, seeking to establish a consensus on the various biographical landmarks of the nation and on what may be considered contributions to national history, first and foremost in relation to those who resisted Portuguese colonialism and daily adversities *before* and *beyond* the struggle for liberation. While, on one hand, this shapes a narrative of the nation which foregrounds the ideas of "struggle" and "combatant", this attempt to introduce a semantic and moral equivalence for the anticolonial combatants, the agents involved in the processes of democratisation and, to a more, or less, abstract degree those who resisted the actions of the coloniser over time, would appear to shift the national narrative away from the specific framework of the liberation struggle and the figure of the LSC, thus decontextualising and depoliticising it.

In this sense, the state has established itself as one of the key actors in the creation and maintenance of the "combatant" and the "struggle", as well as the category of "national hero", subject to different hierarchies.[37] Naturally, an analysis of the role of the state and political-institutional space cannot be separated from the most diverse and multifaceted dynamics of appropriation and remembrance of this past, driven by a wide range of factors. They are primarily related to a search for legitimacy on the part of new governments, but also to the financial and symbolic claims presented by different associations and collectives for benefits equivalent to those granted to combatants. In addition to the resignification of the notions of the "combatant" and the "struggle" arising within a specific economic and political agenda, historical, and identitarian questions must also be taken into

consideration. We would tentatively identify these as the following: the inexistence of armed fronts during the struggle (and its consequent destabilising effects) within both archipelagos; the fact that these are small island nations in which the political scenarios are highly fragmented and polarised; a certain post-colonial disillusionment with the unrealised promises of the struggle, which makes it easier to tone down the anticolonial foundations of the figure of the combatant. Although the idea of the "combatant" is still the moral compass used to evaluate and recognise contributions to the national history of the two countries, it is no longer defined solely within the strict chronology of the liberation struggle, but is used operatively with the aim of recognising the entire past and present of the struggles experienced by the people of Cape Verde and S. Tomé and Príncipe as equally relevant. It is within the performative power of the concept – which intervenes in the social processes of constructing post-colonial political subjectivities and acts on notions of suffering and resistance – that the mnemonic potential of the "combatant" resides.

Notes

1 Part of the argument in this chapter was developed in Miguel Cardina and Inês Nascimento Rodrigues, *Remembering the Liberation Struggles in Cape Verde. A Mnemohistory* (London and New York: Routledge, 2022), and in Inês Nascimento Rodrigues, "As múltiplas vidas de Batepá: memórias de um massacre colonial em São Tomé e Príncipe (1953-2018)," *Estudos Ibero-Americanos* 45, no. 2 (2019): 4–15.

2 Elizabeth G. Traube, "Unpaid Wages: Local Narratives and the Imagination of the Nation," *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 8, no. 1 (2007): 10. See also Lia Kent and Rui Graça Feijó, eds., *The Dead as Ancestors, Martyrs, and Heroes in East Timor* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2021).

3 Heike Becker, "Commemorating Heroes in Windhoek and Eenhana: Memory, Culture and Nationalism in Namibia, 1990–2010," *Africa* 81, no. 4 (2011): 520, and Lalli Metsola, "The Struggle Continues? The Spectre of Liberation, Memory Politics and 'War Veterans' in Namibia," *Development and Change* 41, no. 4 (2010): 589–613.

4 See Muchativugwa Liberty Hove, "Strugglers and Stragglers: Imagining the 'War Veteran' from the 1890s to the Present in Zimbabwean Literary Discourse," *Journal of Literary Studies* 27, no. 2 (2011): 30; Sabine Marschall, "Commemorating 'Struggle Heroes': Constructing a Genealogy for the New South Africa," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 12, no. 2 (2006): 176–93; the chapter by Natália Bueno and Bruno Sena Martins in this volume; Nikkie Wiegink, "The Good, the Bad, and the Awkward. The Making of War Veterans in Postindependence Mozambique," *Conflict and Society: Advances in Research* 5 (2019): 150–67; Vasco Martins and Miguel Cardina, "A Memory of Concrete: Politics of Representation and Silence in the Agostinho Neto Memorial," *Kronos: Southern African Histories* 45, no. 1 (2019): 46–64.

5 Ângela Benoliel Coutinho, *Os Dirigentes do PAIGC. Da fundação à rutura. 1956–1980* (Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra, 2017), and José Vicente Lopes, *Cabo Verde. Os Bastidores da Independência* (Praia: Spleen Edições, 1996).

6 Cláudio Alves Furtado, *Génese e (Re)produção da Classe Dirigente em Cape Verde* (Praia: Instituto Caboverdeano do Livro e do Disco, 1997), 119.

7 Lopes, *Cabo Verde*, 391.

8 António Correia e Silva, "O Nascimento do Leviatã Crioulo: esboços de uma sociologia política," *Cadernos de Estudos Africanos* 1 (2001): 56 and Coutinho, *Os Dirigentes*, 50–51.

9 José Carlos Gomes dos Anjo, *Intelectuais, Literatura e Poder em Cabo Verde. Lutas de Definição da Identidade Nacional* (Porto Alegre/Praia: UFRGS/NIPC, 2002), 219.

10 The expression "Combatentes da Liberdade da Pátria" can be translated literally as "Combatants for the Freedom of the Fatherland". However, for ease of reading, we have chosen to use only "Liberation Struggle combatant".
11 Law 46/III/89, *Boletim Oficial da República de Cabo Verde* (hereinafter B.O.), no. 27, July 13.
12 Law 15/IV/91, B.O. no. 52, December 30.
13 See Chapter 6 of this book.
14 "5 de julho. Foi há 19 anos," *Novo Jornal de Cabo Verde*, no. 161, July 5, 1994.
15 E.g., "Acabar com o PAICV e fazer justiça," *Voz di Povo*, no. 1091, May 18, 1991; "O PAICV e a lei de Parkinson," *Voz di Povo*, no. 1108, June 27, 1991; "PAIGC/PAICV na agonia," *Voz di Povo*, no. 1216, March 21, 1992; "MpD – Modelo da Liberdade em Cabo Verde," *Novo Jornal de Cabo Verde*, no. 16, April 21, 1993; "Cape Verde vive agora nova era histórica," *Novo Jornal de Cabo Verde*, no. 42, July 21, 1993.
16 An expression with negative connotations frequently used to describe PAIGC leaders who had spent several years in Guinea (when it was under Portuguese rule) or Guinea-Conakry, very often intended to suggest that they were out of touch with the reality of the islands.
17 Cláudio Furtado, "Cape Verde e as quatro décadas da independência: dissonâncias, múltiplos discursos, reverberações e lutas por imposição de sentido à sua história recente," *Estudos Ibero-Americanos* 42, no. 3 (2016): 879–82.
18 Law 59/VIII/2014, B.O. no. 20, March 18.
19 "Discurso de o Presidente da República Jorge Carlos Fonseca, na Cerimónia de Homenagem aos Combatentes da Liberdade da Pátria," *Presidência da República de Cabo Verde*, January 23, 2018, http://presidencia.cv/arquivo/1649.
20 Law 67/IX/2019, B.O. no. 94, September 6.
21 By July 2020, a list of victims had been approved, which included 51 who were eligible for the pension or pension supplement in São Vicente and Santo Antão. Cf. B.O. no. 12, January 31, 2020, 2–3, and B.O. no. 81, July 9, 2020, 1642.
22 "Jorge Carlos Fonseca: 'Somos um país com um processo democrático irreversível'," *Expresso das Ilhas*, no. 685, January 14, 2015.
23 Constitution of the Republic, published in the *Diário da República* (D. R.) no. 39, December 15, 1975. See also, Gerhard Seibert, "A política num micro-estado. São Tomé e Príncipe, ou os conflitos pessoais e políticos na génese dos partidos políticos," *Lusotopie* 2 (1995): 239–50.
24 Augusto Nascimento, "A construção de São Tomé e Príncipe: achegas sobre a (eventual) valia do conhecimento histórico," in *Como fazer ciências sociais e humanas em África*, eds., Teresa Cruz e Silva, João Paulo Borges Coelho and Amélia Neves de Souto. (Dakar: Codesria, 2012), 171–94.
25 Augusto Nascimento, "A inelutável independência ou os (in)esperados ventos de mudança em São Tomé e Príncipe", in *O Adeus ao Império. 40 anos de descolonização portuguesa*, eds. Fernando Rosas, Mário Machaqueiro, and Pedro Aires Oliveira (Lisboa: Nova Vega, 2015), 175–90.
26 Seibert, "A política num micro-estado", 239–50.
27 Nascimento, "A inelutável independência", 187.
28 The events that started on 3 February 1953, nowadays celebrated as a national holiday on the archipelago, were responsible, on the orders of the Portuguese governor Carlos de Sousa Gorgulho, for the deaths of an unknown number of *forros*, the main ethnocultural group on the islands, who had refused to work as contract labourers on the coffee and cocoa plantations as they were not bound by the *Estatuto do Indigenato* (Indigenous Statute). The history of Santomean nationalism considers the massacre to be its starting point or, in other words, the event that legitimised the formation of the CLSTP in 1960 by an exiled *forro* elite, later renamed the MLSTP in 1972. Cf. Seibert, "A política num micro-estado," 239–50. On the political and cultural mobilisation of the memory of the massacre over time, see Inês Nascimento Rodrigues, *Espectros de Batepá. Memórias e*

narrativas do «Massacre de 1953» em São Tomé and Príncipe (Porto: Afrontamento, 2018).

29 Gerhard Seibert, *Camaradas, Clientes e Compadres. Colonialismo, Socialismo e Democratização em São Tomé and Príncipe* (Lisboa: Vega, 2002).

30 Seibert, "A política num micro-estado," 239–50.

31 Cf. Decree Law 27/77, D.R. no. 38, September 22, 1977 and Decree-Law 18/97, D. R. no 6, August 4, 1997.

32 Law 6/2004, D.R. no. 10, October 8.

33 Gerhard Seibert, "Tenreiro, Amador e os angolares ou a reinvenção da história da ilha de São Tomé," *REALIS* 2, no. 2 (2012): 21–40, and Nascimento, "A construção de São Tomé," 179, 190.

34 "Presidente inaugura estátua do Rei Amador, a figura emblemática da história são-tomense", *Agência STP-Press*, November 2, 2018.

35 Law 6/2005, D. R. no. 17, August 1, 2005.

36 "Sobreviventes do Massacre de Batepá recebem apenas 300 mil dobras por ano cerca de 14 euros," *Téla Nón*, February 4, 2009, and "Pensão mensal para dignificar os mártires da liberdade," *Téla Nón*, February 4, 2020.

37 However, it is important to note that legislative gestures do not always materialise in practice – either because they extend no further than the paper they are written on or because the entitlements of the potential beneficiaries are conditioned by a set of circumstances that cannot be covered in detail here.

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12 The subaltern pasts of the Portuguese colonial war and the liberation struggles

Memories in search of a homeland

Bruno Sena Martins

Precarious memories

The subtitle which sets the tone for the reflections produced in this text – *memories in search of a homeland* – is inspired by the sense of abandonment I found expressed in the life stories of veterans of the colonial war/liberation struggles, with whom my research into the armed conflict began. The historical centrality of the war, in which the Portuguese armed forces confronted the liberation movements in Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique, is underscored by the crucial role it would play in the transition to democracy, established in Portugal by the 25 Abril Revolution in 1974, and in the independence of the former colonies which had been under Portuguese rule (Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and São Tomé e Príncipe).

Between 2010 and 2013, I had the opportunity to set out on a path in search of the memories and life stories of former combatants from the Portuguese colonial war and the liberation struggles. Following talks in Portugal with the Association for the Disabled of the Armed Forces (ADFA), in 2010 I was able to establish ongoing contact in Portugal with a social group organised on the basis of the biographical scars imposed by the colonial war (impairments of various kinds and post-traumatic stress disorders). A little later, in 2012, I was engaged in fieldwork in Mozambique, where I first interviewed disabled Mozambican veterans who had fought for the Portuguese army and still had links with the Maputo branch of the ADFA. Afterwards, with the institutional support of the ACLLN,[1] I interviewed disabled FRELIMO veterans, most of whom lived in Nangade in Cabo Delgado, in a village reserved after the war to accommodate men and women who had been wounded in action, fighting against the Portuguese armed forces.[2]

Considering the paths and personal reflections I was able to explore within this research framework, linking war, disability and biographical reflections, it is the striking diversity of the coordinates within each individual journey which stands out, connecting the past of the front lines of battle to the lives which have survived it. However, drawing together the implications of the many different life stories, it is possible to identify memory disjunction as a common element. This disjunction occurs between, on the one hand, the crucial descriptive force of the war in defining

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personal narrative and, on the other hand, a specific feeling of non-recognition in the context of social frameworks unwilling to incorporate memories of the war – depending on the context, it may refer to the non-inclusion of the war in a general sense or, more specifically, to the particular wars of the disabled veterans. It is a matter of having identified an abandonment of memories which I describe here as *precarious memories*. They are precarious not so much because they refer to facts whose truth may be questionable or because they have not been validated by historiography, but because they are constitutive of subjects whose paths and identities are not well known in their respective societies. It is important to recognise that the precarious nature of these memories is mitigated, in contextual terms, by the existence of collective veterans' organisations whose demands are associated with the inclusion of the war disabled in agendas for claims addressed to nation states. Hence, these organisations campaign for recognition of the lasting after-effects of war on a plethora of anonymous fighters, resulting in an agency that develops grammars of hospitality for pasts which, remain alienated within the societies that have emerged out of the war.

Later, as a member of the CROME[3] project team, I was able to extend and densify the analysis and collection of testimonies to the memory of the colonial war and the liberation struggles. This expansion refers to the countries in which the research was carried out, with interviews being held in Portugal, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique. It also concerns the diversity of the experiences and accounts of the armed conflict, involving disabled veterans, but also civilian victims of war, former prisoners of war and former combatants in the broader sense, speaking from different positions of power and intervening in different arenas within their societies as "memory agents".[4] This led to the belief that a critical perspective informed by the experiences of the war disabled enables us to analyse, on the one hand, the specific nature of the lived experience and the collective mobilisations defined by an "excess of memory" or an "irredeemable memory".[5] These memories are linked to what we will call here an *ontological injunction*. However, I would argue that this critical perspective also sheds light on the way in which the experience of the colonial war and the liberation struggles leads us to a whole range of subalternised memories that are inscribed in a discursive marginality defined by memories which are rarely shared and difficult to share. These memories are linked to what we will call here the *political injunction*. In this sense, the war-disability nexus represents a particular case of violent pasts that maintain a position of exteriority and/or subalternity in relation to the dominant public representations of the war.

I believe it is possible to cross-reference subaltern memories from different locations involved in the colonial war far beyond any symmetry that disregards the lasting iniquities supported by colonialism. To a certain extent, the cross-referencing of memories without a homeland proposed here seeks to counter a Eurocentric description of the past which renders colonial violence and the forms of resistance which confronted it invisible. In any case, recognising the paths and dimensions of experience that are linked to these rarely shared memories of

war necessarily implies a situated analysis of representations which have been enshrined as dominant in each context.

Silencing and glorification

The war was an "intertwined" phenomenon to the extent that it involved interconnections of various kinds between movements and nations in different continents, giving rise to transnational alliances and clashes experienced at close quarters on the front lines of battle. However, the memories of war summoned up in the writing of each nation state involved separate processes. We are therefore faced with what Edward Said termed "discrepant experiences",[6] readings and interpretative frameworks that engender histories and social contexts that do not communicate with each other. To paraphrase Said, with reference to the colonial war/liberation wars, we are faced with the force of what we would call *discrepant memories*. Discrepant memories in the sense that they were separated by the rigours of the national imagination and by the self-referential nature of Eurocentrism, thus engendering political memories that resist any juxtaposition or confrontation with viewpoints that have the potential to create new knowledge and perspectives.

Transcending discrepant memories, understood here on the basis of Said's work, leads us to some relevant theorisation in the field of memory studies. It concerns a set of proposals that aim to recognise and foster porosities and explorations of meanings involving, on the one hand, different political communities and also – perhaps to a lesser extent – overcoming a Eurocentrism which, within memory studies, tends to produce hegemonic repertoires associated with the Holocaust and the experience of Europe and the global North. Jie-Hyun Lim and Eve Rosenhaft, for example, link their proposed concept of "mnemonic solidarity[7] to a conceptual genealogy which recognises the validity of concepts, such as "multidirectional memory",[8] transcultural memory or "travelling memory".[9] In the words of the authors:

> Acknowledging the agency and eliciting the voices of subaltern and marginalized historical actors, irrespective of where they were positioned in moments of historical trauma (whether as "victims," "perpetrators," or "bystanders"), are essential to the democratization of both narratives and resources that is part of the mnemonic solidarity.[10]

Said, for his part, focusing on the "discrepant power established by imperialism and prolonged in the colonial encounter", had already proposed the notion of "intertwined histories",[11] an epistemological and methodological proposal for re-engaging with pasts by addressing the way in which colonialism constituted metropolitan societies and colonial societies as "discrepant but related entities"[12]:

> If I have insisted on integration and connections between the past and the present, between imperializer and imperialized, between culture and imperialism, I have done so not to level or reduce differences, but rather to convey

> a more urgent sense of the interdependence between things. So vast and yet so detailed is imperialism as an experience with crucial cultural dimensions, that we must speak of overlapping territories, intertwined histories common to men and women, whites and non-whites, dwellers in the metropolis and on the peripheries, past as well as present and future.[13]

In this sense, I consider it important to discuss subaltern or non-communicating enunciations in the light of the statement by Frantz Fanon, which is as controversial as it is famous, namely that "decolonisation is always a violent phenomenon".[14] The violence-decolonisation nexus would certainly seem apt to account for the repercussions of the prolonged conflict between the Portuguese armed forces and the African liberation movements between 1961 and 1974. Rather than a celebration of violence, Fanon's affirmation seeks to highlight what the author understood to be an inevitability determined by various orders of reason. The first concerns the idea that colonialism is established through a form of violence that is understood to be primordial, or violence in its pure state, whose eradication is unthinkable without another form of violence to counter it. Secondly, it was an inevitability defined by the disruptive nature of a radical transformation from a reality governed by colonizers to a new order governed by the colonised: "decolonization is quite simply the substitution of one species of mankind by another".[15]

Thirdly, it stems from the potentially disruptive legacies which the colonial order leaves behind for the colonised populations. These legacies result from the wounds inflicted by the dehumanisation of racism, from the internalised inferiority, convincingly and violently reiterated by the colonial system – whose correlate may be the desire to emulate European representations and models.[16] These disruptive legacies also result from the subaltern inscription of new national realities ("underdeveloped countries") within a capitalist economy that favours co-opting the local bourgeoisie: the "native bourgeoisie which comes to power uses its class aggressiveness to corner the positions formerly kept for foreigners".[17]

Fourthly, the inevitability of violent decolonisation results from dispossession and the reluctance to accept loss which decolonisation imposes on *colonists* and their countries of origin: "the possibility of this change is equally experienced in the form of a terrifying future in the consciousness of another 'species' of men and women: the colonizers". Fanon's understanding of decolonisation as a violent process is expressed as the evidence of someone who knew the violence of a colonial system, had fought in the anticolonial struggle and understood the roots of the violent tensions that would survive the colonial occupation. However, it is crucial to interpret uprisings that originate in the colonial order on the basis of the contexts and historical realities that define the terms of the different decolonisations. As Fanon himself argued:

> Decolonization, we know, is an historical process: In other words, it can only be understood, it can only find its significance and become self-coherent

> insofar as we can discern the history-making movement which gives it form and substance.[18]

The historical movement which in this case led to Portuguese decolonisation in Africa assumed form and substance as the liberation wars waged against the intransigence of the *Estado Novo*. In fact, the impact of the liberation struggles defines the successive presents of Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, São Tomé e Príncipe and Mozambique to such a great extent that, long after they became independent, the social and political realities of these post-colonial states cannot be minimally understood without the considering the imprints left by the armed insurgence. In the same way, the fact that the end of Portuguese colonialism materialised in the form of a long war that mobilised significant resources and contingents of troops makes the colonial war a singular case study in how the emergence of a post-imperial nation, coinciding with the establishment of a democratic regime, was generated from a colonial war. In moving from the past to the different presents, the colonial war and the liberation struggles, crucial as they were to the decolonisation process, the independence of the African countries and the transition to democracy in Portugal, founded new political realities in the six-nation states by means of armed violence. In moving from these different presents to the past, it is within the political communities defined by these states that the grammars of intelligibility, social solidarity and conflict of the violence of war are structured. In other words, the violence of decolonisation defined the frameworks of meaning from which the reverberating memories of this violence are constituted and apprehended.

It is beyond the scope of this text to review the processes involved in constructing a dominant public memory of the war in each of the national contexts. However, in order to consider the dissonant reverberations of the colonial war and the liberation struggles, whether as an ontological or a political injunction, it would appear to me fundamental to establish a dialogue with the contraposition forged elsewhere between the "politics of silence" and the "politics of exaltation".[19] Firstly, in Portugal, this is a distinction which captures a dominant memory of the past which, almost 50 years after the end of the war, has never granted colonial war a place in the public memory that reflects its social and political impact. Secondly, it analyses the way in which the different representations of the liberation struggle in the African countries challenge the glorification of the war as a constituent element in the founding narrative of the nation states that emerged from the anticolonial independence.

Referring to the "politics of silence" to explain the place of the colonial war in the Portuguese public memory does not mean assuming that the subject of social representations of the past has been ignored. This would represent a profoundly uninformed perspective on the different incursions of the legacy of war within Portuguese society, via political collectives organised around the issue of the war (such as the aforementioned case of the ADFA), the social spaces run by groups of former combatants, the vast *monumentalia* constructed throughout the country to

pay tribute to the soldiers who lost their lives in the war, the production of literary narratives, important works of journalism, and the recent public controversies that have been gaining visibility.[20] Nevertheless, acknowledging the different ways in which the colonial war has erupted into Portuguese society does not in any sense undermine the belief that its memory has failed to find effective public validation within the dominant representations that have defined the democratic and post-imperial reconstruction of Portuguese society. As Jay Winter observes, one of the ways of producing a silence on the past is the mere absence of any performativity on the part of nations in relation to events that are considered inglorious or out of step with their cherished self-representations:

> [c]ommemoration is the collective representation of a shared view of a past worth recalling. As such, it is performative; it selects elements of a narrative and necessarily suppresses other sides of the story. It is difficult for any nation to commemorate inglorious events or acts committed in its name. Military disasters and war crimes fall into this category.[21]

In Portugal, the contrast between the unavoidable social and historical impact of the war and its limited representation is evident from the outset in the disbelief and indignation reported by many former combatants who have experienced the ghostly status of the war within Portuguese society. As a very specific framework within the vast experience of the former combatants, my work in Portugal with the DFA (the disabled of the armed forces) has made the "loneliness of memory" very clear. Undoubtedly intensified by the scars of physical disability or memories of trauma, the post-war experience of the DFA presents us with an obvious struggle against the unsustainable individualisation of the memory of war. It involves continuous resistance, at times operating through a strategic distancing in search of possible forgetfulness compatible with a return to everyday life away from the front, and at other times voicing demands that expose the inescapable permanence of wounds that remain unhealed. In recent times the memory work undertaken by the DFA in recording the colonial war has been echoed in other enunciations that have increasingly been challenging the permeability of the "politics of silence". I am referring here in particular to the way in which the relationship between forms of racism, colonial legacies and the social struggles of racially subalternised populations is being included in the postcolonial debate on a transnational level, with a significant increase in the visible mobilisation of black and Afro-descendent peoples' organisations in Portugal to denounce colonialism and colonial violence.

The colonial war still constitutes what I would call a "rarely shared memory" in Portugal, kept alive through subaltern memorialisations that include the private spaces of personal and family memories, veterans' organisations, works of art and academic research, journalism and occasional public controversies. As detailed elsewhere,[22] the deep reasons within Portuguese society for the systemic denial of the colonial war are linked to the hegemonic narratives of exaltation associated with the construction of the Portuguese national identity,[23] the way in which the war defined the conditions and the protagonists in the transition to democracy, and

the hegemony of a Eurocentrism common to nations that were formerly metropoles, which accommodates the benign idea of a "civilisational Europe" that is completely irreconcilable with full recognition of the overseas violence of European colonialism.

For its part, the "politics of exaltation" refers to the way in which the liberation struggles, in the form of war and clandestine resistance, constitute the key element in the founding narratives of the nation states of Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and São Tomé e Príncipe. In these contexts, the liberation struggles were crucial in terms of the creation of the independent nation states formed from the Portuguese colonies[24] and also in conferring political power on the nationalist movements, as representatives of the people, that had ensured their legitimacy through the anticolonial struggle: the MPLA (People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola) in Angola; FRELIMO (the Mozambique Liberation Front) in Mozambique; the PAIGC (African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde)[25] in Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau; the MLSTP (Movement for the Liberation of São Tomé and Príncipe).[26] In referring earlier to the frameworks of meaning within which the violence of war unfolds, it is important to recognise, from the outset, the profound implications of the fact that the anticolonial struggle was a nationalist struggle on behalf of nation states. The founding of nation states whose independence had been affirmed in opposition to colonial rule produces a context defined by the colonial legacy, which not only results in the form of the modern state, but also the way in which this political formation establishes particular shared meanings and practises within the political community: borders, the flag, the anthem, legislation, political and administrative hierarchies, languages and identities. As Mahmood Mamdani observes:

> On the one hand, the modern state enforces particular group identities through its legal project; on the other, it gives depth to these same identities through a history-writing project. It is by giving group identities both a past and a future that the modern state tries to stand up to time.[27]

The anticolonial liberation movements defined nationalist agendas in opposition to Portuguese colonial rule and identified the first principle of political legitimacy within the new nation states in the anticolonial struggle. Although this legitimacy was initially claimed within the framework of the single-party systems and mobilisation in the context of civil war (in the case of Angola and Mozambique), later, under the multiparty system and economic liberalisation, the anticolonial struggle still provided crucial political capital for the parties that had emerged from the liberation movements. Despite political disputes over the status of the liberation struggle, whether involving claims related to the true heroes of the struggle or the inclusion of other key symbols of legitimacy,[28] or even in confronting post-colonial disenchantment in the face of the hardships of present-day life, the anticolonial fight remained central in the different contexts, as an essential mainstay of the national narrative. Hence, the recapitulation of the many episodes from the liberation wars and the evocation of the forms of violence that survived them necessarily

challenge the closure produced by the public memory via the "grand narrative" of the liberation struggle. As João Paulo Borges Coelho observes, in relation to the situation in Mozambique:

> when the version gains enough voice to become a grand narrative or public memory for the nation, it starts to exert great pressure and is not restricted to subaltern (individual, community, etc.) memories. We can find various examples of disturbances to the coexistence between subaltern memories and the political memory, including when former combatants unintentionally contradict the canonical narrative.[29]

The "politics of exaltation" of the liberation struggle constitutes a different form of denial from the one produced by the "politics of silence" previously analysed. On the one hand, this is because the liberation struggles are nowadays widely recognised in the international arena as a worthy cause, a "just war" for the self-determination of the African peoples waged against the structures of colonialism and racism. On the other hand, since there is no social embargo or organised de-memorisation of the war, it is also glorified and invoked exhaustively in the commemorative symbology of the nation and the pantheons of national heroes. It may be said that the "politics of exaltation" creates a community memory that selectively invites certain kinds of violence[30] into the heart of the national liberation narrative, while relegating others to the status of mere threats, improbabilities or insignificant events.

Memorial subalternity and the ontological injunction

Martinho Mendes[31] was born on 20 August 1960 in the Cacheu region of Guinea-Bissau. His life first collided with the colonial war/liberation struggle in 1967 when the "*tabanca*" (village) where he lived was abandoned by his family and the rest of the community. He went to live in the "*zona das matas*" (forest), an area less exposed to clashes between the troops and the PAIGC guerrillas. He recalls that one morning in 1969 he heard the sound of Portuguese planes and the family began to fear an attack, which soon materialised. He remembers the exact place where he was lying in the flimsy straw-roofed house he lived in when the shooting began, and where his father was sitting, and his stepmother, two brothers and two sisters. His father was hit in the chest and one of his brothers in the head. They both died immediately. Another brother was shot in the arm and it was only when Martinho stood up that he realised he had been hit in the leg. He was rescued by PAIGC guerrillas who took them to the "*barracas*" (barracks) and provided first aid. He was then taken on a long journey to Senegal, always travelling by night and arriving there two weeks later.

In Senegal, he received treatment at the PAIGC medical centre in Ziguinchor, where his leg was amputated. One year later he was taken to Conakry (in Guinea-Conakry), where the PAIGC base was located. He lived in a home in Conakry and

remembers the last time he saw Amílcar Cabral,[32] in 1972, just before he was sent to study in Cuba, where he remained for 15 years and graduated with a degree in economics. He returned to Guinea in 1987 where, as one of the qualified cadres trained by the PAIGC, he was given a position in the Guinean civil service. In 1996 he founded the Guinea-Bissau Association of Disabled Veterans of the National Liberation Struggle (ADELLIN – *Associação dos Deficientes da Luta da Libertação Nacional*), which had its headquarters in Martinho Mendes' own house. The association, inspired and supported by the ADFA in Portugal, was created with the aim of forging international links that would enable its members to obtain material support, namely protheses for amputees.

Martinho's narrative combines several elements that I consider significant to reflections on subaltern memories of the war. Firstly, there is the deeply personal nature of the memories he entrusted to us, which are difficult to convey. Certain experiences are difficult to share because they affect the body-memory in such disturbing ways that they can only be communicated tentatively. Martinho told us that he cried every night in Conakry because he had lost his father and brother and had to live in a home without his family, conveying only a minute notion of the devasting impact of this loss. In the same way, it is not easy to convey the physical pain, functional difficulties and exclusions resulting from having a leg amputated at the age of nine. Before the interview, which took place in his house, he showed us his vast collection of old prostheses, providing a glimpse of how the war has made itself corporeally present throughout his life.

Secondly, the fact that Martinho was not a former combatant brings us closer to a perspective on subaltern or rarely shared memories, given that it draws attention to the many forms of violence associated with the war which affected anonymous civilian populations in Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique. Civilian victims constitute a group which is absent from the narratives of the anticolonial struggle (with the possible exception of the victims of the massacres included in the narrative). Thirdly, there is the way in which the war made Martinho a witness to the violence directed against others. Even if he had not been hit, as he first thought, it may be supposed that the fact that he had witnessed the very violent deaths of members of his family would have been enough to ensure that the experience of war would remain with him for life, in terms that do not translate easily into a political memory of the nation. The impact of violence against others affects many former combatants and civilians who, although not wounded themselves or suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, are burdened with aspects of this irredeemable memory.

The fact that Martinho Mendes founded an association that brings together people who were wounded in the war reveals the strong links between war imprinted in biography and the politics of memory as the imperative that gives meaning to experiences that have little representation in the public memory. Thus, Martinho's narrative resonates with many of the stories I gathered from disabled Portuguese veterans, via the ADFA. As I have been able to analyse, the DFA still maintain a biographical link to the war through the impairments inscribed in their bodies and present in the terrors and shock, the wheelchairs, the prosthetic arms and legs, the white canes, the ringing in the ears and the incessant pain. He also maintains

a political link with the organisation that was being created prior to 1974 at the Lisbon Military Hospital and which, in campaigning for compensation for its members, is the organised political voice within Portuguese democracy that has long challenged the "politics of silence" surrounding the colonial war.

At one point in his life story, Martinho Mendes told us how he and other Guineans in the student residence in Cuba were devastated to hear the news of the assassination of Amílcar Cabral. This echoes an interview with Pedro Martins[33] in which he gave an account of how he and other prisoners incarcerated in the Tarrafal concentration camp on the island of Santiago in Cape Verde spread the news that saddened them all: "They [the guards] came to give us the news to crush us. (…) Amílcar Cabral was the only leader we knew and trusted".[34] Pedro Martins was taken prisoner at the age of 19 and was released after 25 April, having spent four years in jail without trial. The news of the death of Amílcar Cabral, added to the very strong memories of the privations and violence of prison life, calls on us to consider the multiple geographies and forms of militancy far away from the front line, where the agonies of war were experienced and accumulated.

On the same day that we interviewed Martinho Mendes in his home, we also interviewed three more members of ADELLIN. One of them was Makemba Sila, who was born in the Tite region in 1968. Her impairment is the result of shrapnel that lodged in her foot during the course of a bombing raid, when she was trying to flee the "tabanca" to seek refuge in the PAIGC "barracas". The story of Makemba Sia alerts us to a very strong element of subalternity associated with the experiences of women during the war. As well as the female guerrillas, civilian victims of the violence of war, and providers of essential logistical support for the war effort, women were also indirectly affected by the mobilisation of their husbands, sons and fathers. The case of Luísa Eduarda Mulhovo[35] provides a particularly harrowing example of this. Her Mozambican husband had been recruited locally to fight for the Portuguese armed forces in the war in Mozambique and been wounded.[36] In order to claim his DFA pension he had to travel to Portugal, where he died before the process was completed. Luísa continues to fight to ensure that the pension her husband had been claiming will remain for their children and grandchildren. The death of her husband plunged the family into a situation of deep economic vulnerability. This is one example of how, so many decades after the war ended, abandonment still exists, created in the search for compensation for wartime damages.

We have embarked on a cross-referencing of precarious memories instigated by the way in which ontological damage very often acts as a catalyst for the subaltern agents of war memories. These subaltern agents often intervene to counter a selective performativity of the past. We are dealing with minority discourses, in a similar sense to the way in which Bhaba describes them here:

> Minority discourse acknowledges the status of national culture – and the people – as a contentious, performative space of the perplexity of the living in the midst of the pedagogical representations of the fullness of life. Now there is no reason to believe that such marks of difference cannot inscribe a

> 'history' of the people or become the gathering points of political solidarity. They will not, however, celebrate the monumentality of historicist memory, the sociological totality of society, or the homogeneity of cultural experience.

Minority discourses expressed through memories without a homeland have an obvious potential to open up the past to communities in which the endlessly recapitulated violence can be more easily accommodated. Whether discussing the "politics of silence" or the "politics of exaltation", we recognise the massive amount of war experiences that find no place in national political memories and bring us closer to the challenge embodied in the question presented by Homi Bhaba: "How does one encounter the past as an anteriority that continually introduces an otherness or alterity into the present?" A greater porosity of national narratives can enable a democratisation of the present by recognising the wide-ranging repercussions of war that concern subjects, discourses and aspects of experiences that cannot be accommodated within the monumentality of a national culture.

In a radio broadcast to the Portuguese people in 1966, Amílcar Cabral recalled the existence of a common struggle to be waged by different peoples against the Portuguese *Estado Novo* regime:

> We consider that ours is a common struggle. By fighting in Cape Verde, in Guinea and in other Portuguese colonies we are making a serious contribution to the development of your struggle. And as your struggle develops, it will help us to speedily defeat these tremendous enemies of our peoples who are the Portuguese colonial fascists.[37]

Almost five decades after the end of the war which led to independence for the African countries and the establishment of a democratic regime in Portugal, the challenge of summoning the voices that convey the memory of war and colonial violence revives Cabral's exhortation, directing it towards another common struggle that also appears to make perfect sense: the postcolonial struggle against the structures of Eurocentrism and the dememorisation organised within each nation state.

Notes

1 Association of Veterans of the National Liberation Struggle – Mozambique.
2 See Chapter 3 in this book.
3 *Crossed Memories, Politics of Silence: The Colonial-Liberation Wars in Postcolonial Time (2017–2023)*, coordinated by Miguel Cardina.
4 Jay Winter, "The Performance of the Past: Memory, History, Identity," in *Performing the Past: Memory, History, and Identity in Modern Europe*, eds. Karin Tilmans, Frank van Vree, and Jay Winter (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 25.
5 Bruno Sena Martins, "Violência Colonial e Testemunho," *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais* 106 (2015): 105–26.
6 Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 31–42.

7 Jie-Hyun Lim and Eve Rosenhaft, "Introduction: Mnemonic Solidarity – Global Interventions," in *Mnemonic Solidarity: Global Interventions* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021).
8 Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009).
9 Astrid Erll, "Travelling Memory," *Parallax* 17, no. 4 (2011): 4–18.
10 Lim and Rosenhaft, "Introduction," 11.
11 Said, *Culture and Imperialism*.
12 Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 278.
13 Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 61.
14 Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 35.
15 Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 1.
16 In the words of Fanon, "Come, then, comrades, the European game has finally ended; we must find something different. We today can do everything, so long as we do not imitate Europe, so long as we are not obsessed by the desire to catch up with Europe". Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 312.
17 Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 153.
18 Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 2.
19 Miguel Cardina and Bruno Sena Martins, "Memorias cruzadas de la guerra colonial portuguesa y las luchas de liberación africanas: del imperio a los estados poscoloniales," *Endoxa* 44 (2019): 113–34.
20 See Chapter 1 of this book.
21 Jay Winter, "The Performance of the Past," 20.
22 Cardina and Martins, "Memorias Cruzadas."
23 In some ways, the "politics of silence" associated with the colonial war is related to the power of the politics of exaltation associated with the Discoveries and the Lusotropicalist narrative of an intercontinental nation.
24 Known as the Overseas Provinces by the Portuguese administration from 1951.
25 From 1980, following the split between the branches in the two countries, in Cape Verde the PAIGC became known as the PAICV.
26 The MLSTP is a special case, as it was not directly involved in the armed struggle against the Portuguese armed forces.
27 Mahmood Mamdani, "Making Sense of Political Violence in Postcolonial Africa," in *War and Peace in the 20th Century and Beyond*, eds. Geir Lundestad and Olav Njolstad (River Edge: World Scientific, 2002).
28 For an informative case study on the subject, see: Miguel Cardina and Inês Nascimento Rodrigues, *Remembering the Liberation Struggles in Cape Verde: A Mnemohistory* (New York and London: Routledge, 2022).
29 João Paulo Borges Coelho, "Abrir a Fábula: Questões Da Política Do Passado Em Moçambique," *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais* 105 (2015): 153–66.
30 Referring, of course, to what Fanon terms "counterviolence," which confronts colonial violence, but also to the colonial violence heavily emphasised, in almost all contexts, in the public visibility of the "founding massacres".
31 Interview by Bruno Sena Martins and Diana Andringa, Bissau (Guinea-Bissau), September 2018.
32 The founder and leader of the PAIGC, assassinated on 20 January 1973.
33 Interview by Bruno Sena Martins, Praia (Cape Verde), January 2020.
34 Idem.
35 Interview by Bruno Sena Martins and Miguel Cardina, Maputo (Mozambique), April 2022.
36 As Carlos Matos Gomes notes, at the end of the colonial war, "around 83,000 of the approximately 170,000 men serving in the Portuguese forces in the three theatres of war had been recruited locally, representing approximately 48%" of the total – Carlos de

Matos Gomes, "A africanização na guerra colonial e as suas sequelas. Tropas locais – os vilões nos ventos da história," in *As Guerras De Libertação E Os Sonhos Coloniais: Alianças Secretas, Mapas Imaginados*, eds. Maria Paula Meneses and Bruno Sena Martins (Coimbra: Almedina, 2013), 127.

37 Message broadcast by the Portuguese Resistance radio station "A voz da liberdade" in Algiers (Algeria), 2 July 1966. Printed in Amílcar Cabral, *A Luta Criou Raízes* (Praia: Fundação Amílcar Cabral, 2018), 198.

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