The City and the *Barracas*: Urban Change, Spatial Differentiation and Citizenship in Maputo

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Abstract

The paper discusses Maputo municipality's plans for the modernisation of the Mercado do Museu, an iconic informal market located in the high-end Polana neighbourhood, which has long been a place for fervent social encounter among people from different social and economic origins. The Mercado's upgrading plans emerge within the context of Maputo's intensely urban transformation that has led gentrification effects, especially in the city's wealthiest areas. This stems partly from private real estate investment, and also from large infrastructure and housing projects promoted by the Mozambican state. Modernist planning ideals and their ordering impulses shape the way municipal authorities view the city and its spaces of informality, contradicting the urban form produced and lived by the majority of Maputo's inhabitants. While Mercado do Museu has enabled the production of urban social life and the foundations for urban inclusion and citizenship, the modernisation project brings forward "conflicting rationalities" (Watson *Planning Theory and Practice*, 4(4), 395–407, 2003). However as modernist views of cities are broadly shared across Mozambique's urban society, the "conflicting rationalities" being played out are not only situated around urban material form; but rather between material expressions of urbanity and personhood; between urban form and urban citizenship.

Keywords Maputo · Informal markets · Urban upgrading · Modernisation · Conflicting rationalities · Urban citizenship

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Introduction

Arminda pointed her chin to a new high-rise building a few metres away and said “Do you think they will want a market like ours next to that building?” Arminda is the owner of a stall in Barracas do Museu, or Barracas¹, the name by which the Mercado do Museu (Museum Market) is popularly known in Maputo.² We are discussing the Municipal Council’s plans for upgrading Barracas do Museu, and she is telling us about the rumours saying that the old colonial house on the opposite side of Rua José Mateus will be sold in a highly lucrative deal to give space to a new high-rise building. Barracas do Museu is a popular informal market located in an area of the city also known by “Museu”³, in the heart of the high-end Bairro Polana, just a few blocks away from the Polana Shopping Centre and the affluent Julius Nyerere Avenue. The Mercado’s location engenders this stark juxtaposition (Hammar and Millstein 2019) between the informality of its structures and mode of operating and the wealthy highly spatially structured Polana neighbourhood.

The Museu area was until recently formed mainly by houses and small one-storey to two-storey buildings. Similarly to the rest of the city, the neighbourhood has however been undergoing significant transformation. After many years of relative urban neglect (Jenkins 2009, 2012), Maputo has in the last 10–12 years attracted greater attention from the municipal council and national government, and has experienced various initiatives of urban renewal. The Maputo Structure Plan was approved in 2010 and, when the first fieldwork for this article was carried out, in 2014 and 2015, major infrastructure and housing projects were underway. All these projects had a strong impact on Maputo’s social spatial structure and have accelerated gentrification especially in wealthy areas such as the Polana neighbourhood (Morton 2013; Roque et al. 2016).

While some of these infrastructure and housing projects were backed by private investments attracted by Mozambique’s robust economic growth between 2006 and 2016,⁴ several were promoted by the Mozambican state, which was at the time fostering more visibly initiatives of urban transformation and changes on the city’s urban form (Nielsen and Jenkins 2020). The government efforts were (and continue to be) however framed by the modernist ideals that are at the foundation of Mozambique’s state and planning tradition. These ideals strongly shape the way in which the Maputo municipal government sees the city and, in particular, how it deals with areas that it perceives as being informal—that is, urban settings which have not been established through official planning processes. These areas are typically Maputo’s popular markets, such as

¹ According to the *Dicionário de Língua Portuguesa* (Dicionários Editora 2006), the word “barracas” may refer to “a modest house built in precarious materials”; “a temporary construction made generally of wood or canvas”; or to a tent. In Maputo, the word is used to refer to small constructions on the sidewalks, usually made of wood or zinc or other precarious material where drinks and sometimes food are sold. They function as street bars and are at times associated with heavy drinking. Although their owners usually pay some fee to the Municipal Council, they are mostly viewed as informal, and as a temporary structure that will at some point be removed.

² Throughout the text we will be referring to Barracas do Museu or Mercado do Museu, the two names by which the market is known.

³ The name “Museu” comes from the nearby Museu de História Natural (Natural History Museum) and has also become the name by which the whole neighbourhood is known.

⁴ Mozambique’s economy grew by around 7% between 2006 and 2016. In 2016, the surfacing of government-backed loans amounting to more than US\$ 2bn plunged the country into a political and economic crisis which pushed the economic growth rate to below 4%. According to the World Bank, Mozambique’s growth rate in 2018 was 3.5%.

Mercado do Museu, or the areas of the city known as *canico*, *subúrbios* or *bairros* where the majority of Maputo's urban dwellers live.⁵

Informal urban areas tend to be perceived by the municipal government as sites of improper and incomplete urban form—as places that are still to be fully urbanised. This perception is founded on deep historical roots that run through both from pre- and post-independence periods—the colonial administration having associated *subúrbios*, the city of reed, to places of temporary and incomplete urban form awaiting to become planned *cidade* (Morton 2019; Roque 2009), and the post-colonial government having fully embraced modernisation and the evolutionism it entails (Sumich 2005, 2010, 2018; Nielsen 2017). From this history, the *cidade de cimento* emerges as the symbol of proper urban form, which, as we argue, in Mozambique still imprints concepts of what cities are and the form these should adopt.

It is, as we argue, this history and the symbolic system it created which is at the play in the intention to modernise Barracas do Museu and which generates “conflicting rationalities” (Watson 2003; de Satgé and Watson 2018)—that is, a mismatch (and a juxtaposition) between the municipal government's urban visions and plans, and the reality of the urban form produced and lived by the majority of the city's residents.

However, as modernist views of cities are broadly shared across Mozambique's urban society, the “conflicting rationalities” being played out do not originate in the materiality of the juxtaposition that is described here. In reality, as we will show, both the municipal authorities and market's users find themselves in “agreeing rationalities” as to the urban “inadequacy” of Barracas' material form. Barracas have also been a “productive juxtaposition” (Hammar and Millstein 2019). They have provided the everyday spaces where its users can perform the gestures of everyday life that constitute key foundations for building feelings of urban belonging and urban citizenship. As a result, the “conflicting rationalities” are played out not only around urban material form, but rather between material expressions of urbanity and personhood and between urban form and urban citizenship.

The work that led to this article started in 2012 within the project “*The Ethnography of a Divided City*” - *Socio-Politics, Poverty and Gender in Maputo, Mozambique* which produced a series of articles and policy papers.⁶ Fieldwork in Maputo within the larger project lasted for 3 years and most of the collection of information related to this specific article was carried out in 2014 and 2015.⁷ The primary information at the basis

⁵ In a spatial duality common to many cities across Africa, Maputo is often described through two seemingly distinct spatial areas: the *cidade de cimento* (cement city), which broadly corresponds to the colonial city, and the *cidade de caniço* (city of reeds), the city's informal settlements (Mendes 1989; Mendes de Araújo 1999; Frates 2002; Bertelsen et al. 2014). In more recent years, this duality has been described by the use of terms “*cidade*” or “centre”, on the one hand, and *bairro*, *subúrbios* or “periphery” on the other, and continues to express long-lasting, social and economic spatial inequality.

⁶ The project was funded by the Norwegian Research Council, and was carried by Christian Michelsen Institute of Bergen, Norway, together with COWI Mozambique. The project led the publication of several papers and policy briefs (see cmi.com). The study on the Mercado do Museu started as a broader study of spaces of social interaction in Maputo and included at the beginning a few public gardens, such as Jardim dos Madjermanes and Jardim Dona Berta, and gatherings along Avenida 10 de Novembro. The study gradually focused on Mercado do Museu as this site strongly provided the elements of public space social interaction and urban culture formation in which our team was interested. In addition, as this text describes, Mercado do Museu was at the time being threatened by the possibility of evictions, which raised issues of relationships to and inclusion in the urban space which were issues at the origin of our interest in space of social interaction.

⁷ As the article related to Barracas do Museu was not fully finalised in 2015, information continued to be collected through short periods of visits to the Mercado by one or more of the contributors to this article.

of this article was collected through participant observation during long periods of time spent in the market by members of our research team,⁸ various discussions held with vendors and clients of the market and through semi-structured interviews with specific informants.⁹

Barracas Do Museu: Origins and Transformations Within a Changing City

The market Barracas do Museu or Mercado do Museu started at the end of the 1980s. The City's authorities wanted to clear a gathering of informal sellers that had formed on the busy Agostinho Neto Avenue and decided to resettle the sellers on an empty land plot close to Avenida dos Lusíadas. The land was originally planned to be used for a new building to house the Embassy of Brazil (Colaço 2000). However, Mercado do Museu would emerge there instead.

The end of the 1980s was a period of significant change for Mozambique and a critical period for Maputo's urban management (Jenkins 2012). Following the collapse of the country's economy in the mid-1980s, the Mozambican government signed agreements with the IMF and the World Bank, which led to the introduction of structural adjustment and economic liberalisation measures that shook the country's centralised state and economy.¹⁰ The economic liberalisation measures led to the crumbling of the state and state-owned enterprises and to crashing real salaries and unemployment. This was also the end of the socialist period in Mozambique and of the promises of a better life for all it had embodied. At the time, Mozambique's civil war was still raging and displacing an increasing number of people from the countryside to the city. As a result, Maputo expanded rapidly, mostly through informal occupation of the city's semi-rural outskirts (Jenkins 2012). It is during this period of increasing demographic pressure, political and economic breakdown, growing unemployment and of slow opening to private economic initiative that informal vendors and markets emerged on the streets of Maputo's city centre. They used the city's sidewalks and occupied empty land plots across the city.

The sweeping changes at the end of the 1980s took place at a point when Mozambique's capacity for urban administration was particularly debilitated, after a post-independence period which, as will be described below, had seen several initiatives to reverse inherited housing and urban planning inequalities. While the Maputo city government had always suffered from capacity issues, it had become at the time too weak to manage the pressure on urban land resulting from strong in-migration (Jenkins 2012; Andersen et al. 2015a). So, during that period, informal markets like Mercado do Museu grew out of strong demographic pressure, unemployment and incapacity of urban authorities to deal with demand for urban land. Andersen et al.

⁸ We were a team of three researchers—a principal researcher (Sandra Roque) and two research assistants (Nair Noronha and Miguel Mucavele). Nair and Miguel were both from Maputo; Sandra Roque lived permanently in Maputo between 2001 and 2013. We all knew the city very well.

⁹ Our informants have been clients, sellers and workers in the Mercado do Museu whom we met during our long stays at Barracas. We have also spoken to officials in the city municipal government and to architects and urban planners who have worked in Maputo.

¹⁰ For a detailed account and critical analysis of the period, see Pitcher (2002).

(2015b) show how, as a result of the limitations of the state, the so-called informal has been since then the dominant form of urban planning in Maputo, in ways that have gained strong social legitimacy (Ibid: p. 425). The resettlement of the informal sellers in the Museu area was supposed to be a provisional response to pressures on a busy avenue. However, the provisional became permanent and Barracas do Museu were established.

In his novel “A Legítima dor da Dona Sebastião”, Lucílio Manjate (2013) refers to the origin of the Barracas evoking nostalgically that “other time” in the past, alluding to the long relationship that the market had established with the city and the city’s life:

The Barracas are already from another time, from the last twenty years of the twentieth century, when the capital was opening itself to the market. From that time, remained the Saturday afternoon strolls. We walked for the simple pleasure of wandering through the red flamboyants. We would end in the Museu de História Natural and would hear the howl of embalmed lions, the chirp of owls, the hiss of snakes, we would win over the threat of the crocodiles [...]. (p. 5, own translation)

The period to which Manjate refers and during which Barracas do Museu emerged, the first 10–15 years after independence, was also a period of greater blurring of urban social and spatial differentiation (Penvenne 2011; Roque et al. 2016). Under colonial administration, the city had experienced profound social, economic and racial segregation which had been founded in the colonial *Indigenato* legislation.¹¹ Among various dimensions, the *Indigenato* imposed a statutory categorisation of the population into *civilizados* (civilised), *indigenas* (indigenous) and *assimilados* (assimilated, i.e. honorary civilised) which determined, among other restrictions, the right of access to the *cidade de cimento* by those categorised as *indigenas* (Newitt 1995). Although the *Indigenato* ended in 1962, its effects continued to be present in colonial Mozambique and to shape racial access to the urban space (Frates 2002; Penvenne 2011; Bertelsen et al. 2014).

However, Mozambique’s independence in 1975, and the coming to power of Frelimo,¹² brought significant changes to Maputo’s social and economic landscape. One of the city’s major transformations resulted from the departure of most of its residents of Portuguese origin, leaving many houses and apartments in the *cidade de cimento* empty. The nationalisation of property in February 1976 allowed for many residents of the *subúrbios* to start living in the houses and apartments that had been abandoned (Roque et al. 2016; Morton 2013, 2019).¹³ As a result of these political and demographic changes, the city’s racial, social and economic differentiation faded significantly (Penvenne 2011; Raposo et al. 2012; Roque et al. 2016). In the Museu

¹¹ The *Indigenato* legislation was formed by a set of laws and regulations which began to be introduced at the end of the nineteenth century and covered several dimensions of social, economic and political life. It regulated access and obligations to work, access to the urban space, civic rights and determined who was to be considered a citizen.

¹² FRELIMO (Frente de Libertação de Moçambique) is the Mozambique’s political party that proclaimed the country’s independence, in 1975 and which has been in power since then.

¹³ The nationalisation was announced by Samora Machel, Mozambique’s first president, and was explained as a measure to give the *cidade de cimento* “a Mozambican face” (Morton 2019, p. 163).

area, as was the case across the city, many properties were nationalised and became inhabited by people coming from the *subúrbios*.¹⁴ So, when the Mercado do Museu emerged, some of its vendors were already residents of the *cidade de cimento* and lived nearby.¹⁵

However, Maputo's social and economic landscape started changing again after the end of the civil war in 1992, and the adoption of further political and economic liberal approaches. A new housing policy introduced during that period brought the private sector back into the housing market and allowed for the transfer of many nationalised houses and apartments to tenants at highly subsidised prices (Sidaway and Power 1995; Jenkins 2012). Deals around urban land and property became very common in the mid-1990s, in a context of growing demand for housing and rising prices, spurred by the end of the war and the arrival of thousands of foreign aid workers. Taking advantage of the newly commoditised urban property, many owners of houses and apartments in Maputo's *cidade de cimento* started selling or renting their property and moving to the *bairros* (Roque et al. 2016). That period signalled the beginning of urban transformation and gentrification across Maputo, especially in high-end neighbourhoods such as the Museu area (Ibid.; Jorge and Melo 2014). Gentrification was later further fed by various housing projects directed mostly to Maputo upper- and middle-class residents which were sponsored by private investors but also by the state (Nielsen and Jenkins 2020).¹⁶

The changes in the neighbourhood's demographic composition gradually led to growing social and economic differentiation between the neighbourhood's residents and the sellers at the Mercado do Museu. So, while in the 1980s and the 1990s, many of the sellers and clients of the Mercado do Museu were also residents in the area and the neighbourhoods nearby, today this has changed. Gentrification and urban transformation have sent many of Mercado do Museu's clients to live in faraway *subúrbios*.

The Upgrading of Barracas do Museu and the Modernisation of the City

Plans for upgrading several Maputo popular markets, including Mercado do Museu were widely publicised by the press in the mid-2015.¹⁷ In addition to Mercado Museu,

¹⁴ In his book "The Age of concrete: Housing and the shape of aspiration in the capital of Mozambique", Morton (2019) describes in detail the process of nationalisation of housing in Maputo. He points to how, at the beginning of the process, many of the houses and apartments in Maputo's wealthiest neighbourhoods had already been taken by members of Frelimo or the state administration elites. However, after some months, many of the city's apartment blocks would be inhabited by residents of much more modest background coming from the poorer neighbourhoods surrounding the city centre. This is also what we have found in a previous study (Roque et al. 2016).

¹⁵ Two or three of the market vendors whom we have interviewed still lived nearby and spoke of many that had left. Colaço (2000) surveyed owners of the Barracas who lived in the neighbourhood as well.

¹⁶ Some of these projects included the creation of "enclave communities" which are not the object of this article, but contributed to growing social, economic and spatial differentiation across Maputo (see Nielsen and Jenkins 2020; Nielsen et al. 2020).

¹⁷ The news were published on Radio Moçambique on the 27th of July 2015, and other Mozambican media at the time. See for example, articles on Folha de Maputo (2015). According to market sellers and other Maputo residents, modernisation of these markets is talked about by municipal authorities from time to time, but lately modernisation intentions seemed to be stronger.

Location of Barracas do Museu in Maputo

¹⁸ Suspicion of urban residents led to extreme measures. In 1983, Frelimo launched and executed the controversial “Operação Produção” which, according to that political party, aimed at sending “unproductive” urban residents to work in the rural areas, in particular to Niassa. The “rural bias” was experienced by many other African countries in the same period (Pamell and Pieterse 2014).

initiatives were not supported by the central government and the Maputo structure plan was not implemented.

Renewed attention to the city urban planning re-emerged only at the end of the 1990s, with support from the World Bank, which was also later behind the Maputo Municipal Development Program (ProMaputo), implemented by the Maputo Municipal Council between 2007 and 2016. It was also during this period that the process of urban transformation in Maputo accelerated, fuelled by private investments, wishing to take advantage of the Mozambican economic growth, increasing housing demand and real estate speculation, but also stimulated by state-backed urban projects. Urban transformation was quite visible on the city's landscape, through large infrastructure projects, such as the Maputo ring-road and the KaTembe Bridge, and the mushrooming of numerous apartment buildings and various housing projects (Nielsen and Jenkins 2020). Nielsen and Jenkins (2020, p. 14) argue that throughout this process, the Mozambican state, including the Maputo Municipal Council, has explicitly directed its planning efforts to responding to middle-class priorities "away from the socialist inspired programmes of the earlier period". It is within this context that the Maputo City Structure Plan was prepared and approved in 2010 which, despite the context described above, explicitly expressed concerns with the persistent inequality and significant spatial differentiation in the city.

Urban planning in Mozambique has deep roots in modernist concepts of how cities should be spatially structured. Mozambique inherited a legacy of modern master planning from its Portuguese colonial past that has been largely adopted by its post-colonial government (Jenkins 2012; Andersen et al. 2015a). Modern urban planning ideals strongly shape the way in which the Maputo municipal government sees the city and, in particular, how it perceives and deals with its spaces of informality within the *cidade de cimento* or in the surrounding *subúrbios*. Despite the fact that most of the city is in reality produced through "informal" urban planning (Andersen et al. 2015b), those areas tend to be perceived by the municipal government as sites of improper and incomplete urban form. This perception is founded on deep historical roots. During the colonial period, the areas surrounding the *cidade de cimento* were considered land reserves for potential expansion of the *cidade de cimento*. So, *subúrbios*, the "city of reed", were expected to maintain a provisional form and be ready for the *cidade de cimento* to arrive, with ensuing further away relocation of those who had until then resided there. Morton (2019) describes how residents of *subúrbios* in colonial Lourenço Marques used hiding tactics to be able to build houses made of concrete, which were forbidden, as only temporary and precarious materials, such as reed or wood, were permitted to allow for easy demolitions.¹⁹ I argue that this perception of *subúrbios*, as places of temporary form, lingers on and still imprints conceptions of the urban across the Mozambican government and society and shapes, at least partly, attitudes towards informal settlements and buildings. As a result, informally established urban areas are often described as being not fully urban, even though they shelter most of the city's population; and despite the fact that the municipal government does not have the capacity to take charge of urban planning in those areas (Andersen et al. 2015b).

¹⁹ See Roque (2009 and 2011) for a discussion on the colonial historical foundations of present understandings of the urban space in Angola and the impact of colonial urban history on the significance of temporary and permanent construction and housing.

In his book “African cities: Alternative views of urban theory and practice”, Garth Myers (2011, p. 79) refers to a “common tension, one can see and sense in most African cities” between, on the one hand, “modernist ideas of how cities should look and work – the formal city” and, on the other, an “alternative, fluid, ambient informal – city”. In other words, between the city whose form is produced by urban planners and the city resulting from its residents’ own making. As in many urban settings across Africa, the Maputo municipal government has been unable to reconcile their modernist ideals of what cities should be with the reality of urban life and form on the ground. This generates what Vanessa Watson (2003) (see also de Satgé and Watson 2018) has coined as “conflicting rationalities”—that is, a disconnect between the modernist concepts often followed by planning authorities, and the city produced and lived by the majority of African urbanites. A disconnect that strongly impacts urban policy and, as a result, the lives of urban residents.

Modernist views of urban space are very powerful and pervasive. Although they have been challenged by a growing number of scholars, they still underpin the understanding and visions of African cities (Robinson 2006, 2013; Myers 2011; de Satgé and Watson 2018). They are nourished by the legacy of the long-lasting historical associations between Western modernity and urbanity, on the one hand, and between development and urbanisation on the other. These historical associations have linked urbanisation and modern urban form to a hierarchical view of development paths. This has introduced a strong evolutionism to the conceptions of what cities should be, the forms they should take and of the future towards which they should tend. As Western urban forms are perceived as portraying the “proper urban form” to which all cities should aspire, many African cities are still perceived as being not fully urban (Robinson 2006, 2013; de Satgé and Watson 2018).

In Mozambique, these historical associations were introduced through the process of colonial urbanisation. However, they are still well entrenched and produce evolutionist views of urbanisation and urbanity. They found fertile ground in the largely modernising views that have underpinned Frelimo’s ethos (Sumich 2005, 2010, 2018; Nielsen 2017). Frelimo’s approach to Mozambique’s social and economic development was framed by a modernist worldview which believed that Mozambique’s more prosperous and just future needed to be based on a project that would eliminate what was understood as “backward” understandings of society fed by “tradition” (ibid.). So, given the pre- and post-independence histories, it is only natural that, when political attention turned towards cities, this would be framed by modernist understandings of the urban.

Modernist conceptions of cities are not only displayed by the Maputo municipal and national government authorities. These conceptions are also latent in many urban residents’ ideals and aspirations of how urban space should be structured (Bertelsen et al. 2014; Roque et al. 2016). The view of Mercado do Museu as being an abnormality that does not belong to the proper urban space is shared by many urban residents. Colaço (2000, p. 147), for example, refers to Barracas do Museu as “a ‘stain’ in Maputo’s urban landscape (...) in contrast with its urban pattern” (own translation). Even Lucilio Manjate refers to the Mercado as “the periphery in the centre” (Jornal Notícias 2013).

The formal embodiment of these modernist understandings of what the city should be is the urban plan. The urban plan sanctions what is to be considered urban and what

is to be rejected as un-urban. Key arguments put forward by the Maputo municipal government for the modernisation of the market refer to its inability to respond to “official requirements of urban form, sanitation, hygiene and trading regulations”.²⁰ For the municipal government, proper urban form is defined in the formal urban plan. And Barracas do Museu, or any *barraca* for that matter, are not part of the urban plan and are therefore considered not legal. Articles and debates in the media reveal the municipal government’s intention of clamping down on street vendors and of removing all the *barracas* from the city’s sidewalks in the future.²¹

In the use of these arguments, the Mozambican government is not alone as in many African cities, narratives of disorder, dirt and hygiene continue to legitimise “the displacement of those deemed ‘polluting’” (Diouf and Fredericks 2014:7) and to make certain urban dwellers appear “as unfit to belong in the city” (ibid.). Kinshasa’s urban renewal, for example, was accompanied by a clamping down on street vendors and street kids by the city’s authorities (De Boeck 2011, 2012). In Luanda, discourses of informality, illegality and disorder were used to legitimise the city government’s brutal evictions and relocations of whole neighbourhoods from the city centre (Gastrow 2017). These types of arguments are also strikingly similar to those used for urban evictions during the colonial period (Salm and Falola 2005; Coquery-Vodrovitch 2014).

While the pressure on informal traders in Maputo may not be as heavy as in Kinshasa and Luanda, the modernisation of the Mercado do Museu carries also the intention to “discipline” urban dwellers’ use of the city space to correspond to notions of proper use of the urban space and proper urban behaviour, which as we will argue, raises questions of who should dwell in what part of the city and therefore of urban citizenship.

Mercado Do Museu: Claiming Belonging and Citizenship

Although Maputo has several informal markets, Mercado do Museu has a particular reputation which is partly linked to its location. The “Museu area” constitutes a high-reference point for most of Maputo’s residents as it houses one of the main *chapas*,²² terminals of the city’s centre. The area is a point of arrival and departure for numerous residents coming from all over the city and constitutes a key hub of their movements across the city. This central location places Mercado do Museu in the core of the *cidade de cimento*, creating this iconic juxtaposition of what is perceived as an “un-urban” informal market with the “fully urban” high-end Polana neighbourhood. However, what makes Mercado do Museu truly special for many

²⁰ Interview with an urban planning manager in the Maputo Municipal Council in July 2015.

²¹ See for example Jornal Debate (2015). As we finish this article on June 2020, the Maputo Municipal Council has just closed several markets, and demolished numerous *barracas* which were standing on the city’s pavements across the city, as these were considered sanitation hazards within the current context marked by COVID-19. This included a few *barracas* that were standing on the pavement on Rua José Mateus but on the opposite side to the main structures of the Mercado do Museu. The current Municipal Council has also recently announced large upgrading interventions on key Maputo’s popular markets (O País 2020).

²² *Chapas* is the name by which minivans that provide public transport are known. The name comes from the expression “chapa 100” which was used in the 1980s to indicate that a ticket for a ride costed 100 meticaís.

of Maputo's residents lies in the social and economic diversity of the people it attracts and the social life it fosters.

In a newspaper interview, Lucílio Manjate, the author of “A Legítima dor da Dona Sebastião”, refers to Mercado do Museu as “a sort of microcosm” of the Mozambican society, “where everything can be found and anything can happen” (Jornal Notícias 2013, own translation). His book's main characters are a group of young friends who meet daily in a *barraca* in Mercado do Museu to discuss the situation of the country and to talk about their aspirations and frustrations. He tells of how he and many other young people, who were born in the first years after independence, followed the emergence and consolidation of Mercado do Museu while they were growing up. For Lucílio Manjate, the Mercado has been “a place of encounter, a space of interconnection between frustrated youth, successful youth, youth who have lost hope, between the living and the dead” (Ibid. own translation)—a juxtaposition of contrasting lives steering, with more or less ability, through Mozambique's convulsing adoption of a liberal economy.

This social and economic diversity is reflected in the market's structure and the way in which it is organised. Market sellers and users refer to three main sections in the market. First, there is the section on Avenida dos Lusíadas whose clients are usually passers-by or people who are going to take a *chapa*, who stop for a drink or something to eat very quickly. This section of the market is today called “Maluana” by some vendors and clients, referring to a village where there was a terrible attack during the civil war in the 1980s. Like the unfortunate village during the war, that part of the market is considered dangerous—a place where robbers hide, especially when the night falls.

From Avenida dos Lusíadas, a narrow alley opens through the stalls towards the second section in the centre of the market area. There, a few people sell mainly vegetables, but a few small, enclosed *barracas* serve cheap meals and drinks to clients sitting at small, square plastic tables. The clientele is more stable, composed usually by low paid nearby workers and visitors, who choose the cheapest part of the market to have their meals—*chapas*' drivers, construction workers from the building sites nearby, street vendors, students from the close by schools.²³ For many of *Barracas*' clients who work in the Polana neighbourhood, the market helps them to sustain an everyday life in an area of the city where shops, restaurants and bars are becoming more and more out of reach.

A line of *barracas* on Rua José Mateus function as restaurants and bars serving meals and drinks either at the counter or at tables placed on the sidewalk, forming small terrace areas where clients can sit. This is considered the most expensive part of the market and the clientele is better-off—we have met clerks from nearby Ministries and public offices, teachers from the neighbouring schools, young people from the neighbourhood or who used to live in the area before gentrification started to affect the area, journalists, university professors, foreigners who have been living in Maputo...

“This is a place where you will always find people of different social classes, of different races – from the university professor to the brick layer”, says Francisco, a journalist, who is a client of *Barracas* since their establishment. “After the end of the war, in 1992” he adds “even Renamo²⁴ soldiers, who were put up at Hotel Cardoso

²³ Escola Secundária Josina Machel (Secondary School Josina Machel) and Instituto Comercial de Maputo (Commercial Institute of Maputo).

²⁴ RENAMO: Resistência Nacional Moçambicana, the major Mozambican opposition party originating in the movement that fought against the Frelimo-led Government in a long civil war that lasted until the peace agreement signed in October 1992.

[nearby], would come to the Barracas and would mix with people from Frelimo, with soldiers from ONUMOZ...”²⁵ He is convinced that Mercado do Museu contributed to the Mozambican peace process. Luís, in his early 50s told us, “First of all, I come here because the drinks are cheap” and he laughs. “Secondly, I come here because I can talk to all kinds of people. If I just want to drink, chat and laugh, a lot of people come here just for that; if I want to discuss politics, I can find a journalist or talk to retired civil servants... We don’t always agree... But we meet here. Everyone comes here; this is a place of freedom; one of the few that remain in this city”.

As Manjate suggests, Mercado do Museu has provided through its history a place of encounter, of confrontation and negotiation of culture and social practices, a space for “circulation of meanings, styles, vantage points, experiences...” (Simone 2006, p. 360) across social, economic and spatial divides (Hammar and Millstein 2019). “Spatial divides” are understood here as “active and productive juxtaposition of socially contrasting urban forms” (Ibid.)—“divides” that are interactions, urban imbrications (Mbembe and Nuttall 2008), that allow for negotiation of culture and social practices across difference. We would argue that Barracas has been such a juxtaposition which has allowed for the production and emergence of new forms of urban social life and culture, new forms of urbanity, to emerge (Iossifova 2012).

However, Mercado do Museu is also a place under stress, as gentrification intensifies and closes in—this is an increasingly unstable, pressured juxtaposition. One of the “few that remains” as Luís says. In a city that is changing very quickly, pushed by urban physical transformation and by processes of social and spatial restructuring, Barracas still offers, in Luís’s words, this “place of freedom” where social and economic differences seem to be temporally halted. A place that allows differently situated urban residents to contest, through being there and their everyday routine, the growing urban social, economic and spatial divides (Hammar and Millstein 2019) and for affirming ways of being in the city that counter the menacing presence of the mounting new high-rises. “Do you see this construction crate?” Luís asks us. “It will be a big building. Do you see that house? It will be demolished. This city is being destroyed, and we are being replaced by people who have no relationship to this city”.

Urban infrastructure—water pipes, roads, buildings, mobile phone connections, and popular markets for that matter—are intermeshed with, sustain and mediate urban lives (Graham and McFarlane 2015). However, beyond their main instrumental function, city infrastructure and material spaces can generate aggregation but also fragmentation, dynamics of inclusion but also of exclusion (Diouf and Fredericks 2014). Maputo’s buildings and infrastructure have historically been the foundation for the production and the reproduction of urban inequality and social spatial fragmentation. By contrast, Mercado do Museu has functioned as a place of production of ways of being and feeling urban.

This has been particularly true for many of the young people of Lucílio Manjate’s generation whom we met in Mercado do Museu, who had grown up in Maputo’s city centre, but in the last 10–15 years had to move to the *subúrbios*. Joaquim, in his early 40s, is often in the Barracas. He grew up in an apartment nearby, but his parents sold the apartment a few years ago and they have all moved to Zimpeto in the *subúrbios*. He

²⁵ ONUMOZ, the United Nations Operations in Mozambique (UNOMOZ in English) was the UN peace mission to Mozambique which operated in the country between 1992 and 1994.

is at the Barracas frequently, very often with a group of six or seven friends. “I live too far away now, but would like to come back... but it is difficult... one needs a lot of money” he says, “that is why I come here to the Museu... to be here, to be closer to my friends and where things happen”. He wants to continue feeling that he belongs in the centre of urban life—that he has not become ex-centred. In the heart of *cidade de cimento*, Barracas do Museu has generated a space where those who feel gradually pushed out, “othered” by the new Maputo urban developments can still feel they belong—that they belong in the city. As Hermínio added, “this is a place where I come from. I know this cidade.” For him and his friends, Barracas do Museu has offered a place for performing ownership over the *cidade*. It has offered the everyday spaces (Millstein 2017) within which those who are increasingly pushed out of the city centre can perform the gestures of everyday life that constitute key foundations for building inclusion and belonging to urban life.

We argue further that Mercado do Museu offers a site for both sustaining and consolidating urban citizenship. In my work in Angola (Roque 2009, 2011), I have shown that colonial urban history has charged *cidade de cimento* with strong symbolic power that is associated with “proper urban form and development” and “proper urban personhood”. This system of signification still prevails and shapes understandings of urbanity, subtly permeating perceptions of what/who belongs (or not) to the *cidade*. In her study of urban demolitions and citizenship in Angola, Claudia Gastrow (2017) notes how the destruction by government authorities of houses made of concrete (*casas de bloco*)—as opposed to houses made of precarious zinc sheets (*casas de chapa*)—has undone feelings of belonging to the *cidade* and of citizenship. Cities constitute central political terrains and key spaces for “citizenship promise” (Millstein 2017, p. 10). As we argue, Mercado do Museu provides a terrain for contestation and production of urban citizenship.

The modernisation of the Mercado do Museu is put forward by the Municipal Council as a cancelation of the material juxtaposition that results from Barracas do Museu being located within the high-end Polana neighbourhood—it seeks to create material congruence instead of contrasting juxtaposition. We argue however that, while the modernisation of Barracas do Museu, in its explicit intention, is directed to the materiality of Mercado do Museu, it inevitably raises questions as to who is suited to live in the Museu area and *cidade de cimento*, and, thereby, the basis for urban citizenship.

“Conflicting Rationalities”, Agreements and Tensions

Rumours relating to the removal of Mercado do Museu have existed for long time (Colaço 2000). However, Maputo’s rapid transformations over the last few years and strong urban interventions by both municipal and national governments indicate that changes to Barracas do Museu are now more than rumours.²⁶ As described above,

²⁶ As a result of the municipal elections in 2018, the composition of the Maputo Municipal Council has changed, even though it continues to be governed by Frelimo. Under the previous council a contractor had started building some structures on Avenida dos Lusíadas, where vendors were supposed to move to while waiting for the upgrading of the Mercado do Museu. However, those structures were never completed, and the current Municipal Council had them demolished. (Radio Mais Live 2019). The plans to modernise the Mercado do Museu seem to have been halted by the current municipal government, at least for now.

Barracas do Museu have been perceived by the city authorities and by several urban planners as an abnormality within the city's *cidade de cimento*. This view of Barracas do Museu generates “conflicting rationalities” (Watson 2003; Myers 2011; de Satgé and Watson 2018), as it contrasts with the social and economic life that has existed around the Mercado for the last 30 years. As we have shown above, modernist conceptions of cities are however not only displayed by Mozambique's municipal and national government authorities. These conceptions are much more broadly shared across Mozambique's society. As Adriano, one of the cleaners of Barracas do Museu said, “It is true that these Barracas here, so close to all these buildings... it does not look good”. As will be shown below, this stark juxtaposition brings about “conflicting rationalities” that in the end contain several levels of agreement; however, they also enclose, and conceal, historical and fundamental disagreements.

Contrary to city governments such as those of Luanda and Kinshasa described above, Maputo municipal authorities seem, at least in their declared intention, to be looking for ways to deal with these “conflicting rationalities” without resorting to removals and evictions.²⁷ While, on the one hand, the interventions by the municipal government reflect Mozambique's state modernist views, on the other hand, they still carry lingering traces of the state's socialist past and its declared ambition of serving the entirety of the country's population. Eventually, as pointed out by Nielsen (2017, p. 139), Frelimo's legitimacy still derives from activating and mobilising a socialist “political aesthetics”. The Maputo's urban plan wishes, in its declared intentions, to deal with the persistent inequality and significant spatial differentiation in the city. The plan states that priority should be given to “the correction of historical deviations and injustices which the current city structure reflects” (Município de Maputo 2008, p. 12, own translation).

In the same vein, the upgrading of Mercado do Museu, as explained by the municipal government in 2015, would not require the forced relocation of the Barracas' vendors to another part of the town—at least not in the plan. According to Maputo municipal authorities, the upgrading and modernisation of Barracas do Museu and other Maputo markets should be done through public-private partnership (PPP) arrangements. The general idea was to build new buildings for the markets and to have one of these buildings' sections dedicated to market activities and other sections to businesses owned by private investors—for example, through renting to shops and restaurants.²⁸ The municipal government expected, at least in theory, a virtuous combination of the interests of Barracas' sellers and those of private investors that would allow for the transformation of the Mercado do Museu into a “proper” Mercado. However, while the Maputo municipal authorities still explain their intentions within a framework combining broadly accepted modernist views with a vocabulary drawn upon the socialist past, as we have pointed out, the Mozambican government is also intervening on Maputo's landscape in ways that seem to be biased towards the middle-class; with little being done towards the types of citizens who compose most of Barracas' users (Nielsen and Jenkins 2020).

²⁷ This is to be seen, given the current context marked by COVID-19 as described in footnote 1.

²⁸ Interview with a manager within the Maputo Municipality in July 2014. Similar PPP arrangements have been used in the rehabilitation of public gardens and parks.

Barracas' vendors have also shown mixed feelings towards the idea of modernisation of their market. While they welcome some of the signs of greater formalisation, they are also aware of the dangers lurking behind those signs. On the one hand, sellers in Mercado do Museu would be happy with improved structures. As many say, if their stands were better built and the Mercado had better sanitation services, they would be able to attract more customers, including perhaps some among the new residents of the Museu neighbourhood, who do not normally do their shopping in Barracas. So, many market sellers have seen the modernisation of Barracas as an opportunity to strengthen their businesses. In addition, in the type of upgrading proposed by the municipal government, they have also seen an opportunity for formalisation and legalisation of their presence in Mercado do Museu. "It will be like Mercado Central" says Irene, an old vendor in Museu. "They have upgraded it and the vendors continued selling there in a better place."²⁹ Having lived under a socially legitimised informality for so long, they would welcome to move towards a "state-sanctioned formality" (Andersen et al. 2015b).

On the other hand, Barracas' vendors see what is happening to the city, including to other upgraded popular markets. The old Mercado do Peixe, for example, was demolished and replaced by a new modern building built on the Maputo Marginal,³⁰ not far away from where the old Mercado do Peixe was. But many of Mercado do Peixe's vendors complain that their business has gone down. They have not managed to recover the clientele, and, above all, they have to pay a rent that is significantly higher than the one they paid before in the old market. Barracas' vendors are also aware of the property deals going on and the gentrification taking place in the city centre and in the Mercado's affluent neighbourhood. In 2015, sixteen high-rise buildings were under construction on or nearby Julius Nyerere Avenue, the prestigious road cutting across Bairro Polana and located a few hundred metres away from Mercado do Museu. Irene is well aware of that. "So many of us have left... They have all sold their apartments, for money that today is nothing, to rich people who now are the ones living here". She pauses and adds, "Maybe some people will also end up selling their *barracas* here if it becomes too expensive... But I will never do that. And I will also never sell my apartment". So, Mercado's sellers know that the modernisation of their market could hide a threat of relocation, which may not be openly forced by the state but could still be the outcome. While the municipal government may not formally evict them, they may still be pushed out.

The "conflicting rationalities" brought about by the modernisation of Barracas do Museu do not in reality generate in the form of the market—both the municipal government and the market sellers agree that the structures of the Barracas should be improved. Both may even agree with the modernist views behind the project and with the need for congruence of form between the Barracas do Museu and the Polana neighbourhood—for the need to cancel the material juxtaposition. However, what is also implicitly played out in this juxtaposition and is historically tense and still unresolved is what Irene's concern—and determination—expresses: who in the end will be in the Mercado do Museu. These are "conflicting rationalities" not only around understandings of what the cities should be but also for whom they should be.

²⁹ Mercado Central, or Bazar Central, has however existed since 1900, in an iconic building well-known for its design. It is therefore a well-established building within *cidade de cimento*.

³⁰ The avenue running along the beach in Maputo.

Main Conclusions

Located within the core of the *cidade de cimento*, Mercado do Museu in Maputo offers an iconic juxtaposition between the informality of the Barracas do Museu's structures and its mode of operating, and the wealthy highly spatially structured Polana neighbourhood. In this article, we have argued that this juxtaposition not only is a spatial expression of social and economic urban divides but also constitutes a site of urban production (Hammar and Millstein 2019). Throughout its history, Mercado do Museu has been a place of encounter across social and economic difference, and of confrontation and negotiation of urban social and cultural practices. This article has shown that in a city where processes of urban renewal and physical transformation are imposing greater social and spatial differentiation, Mercado do Museu has offered a site of urban imbrication (Mbembe and Nuttall 2008) producing ways of being urban and consolidating a sense of belonging to the city. In a city where historically prevailing systems of signification associate *cidade de cimento* to urbanity and urban belonging, Barracas have provided a platform for participation in the production of forms of urban culture and urban citizenship.

However, the plans for the modernisation of Mercado do Museu make visible the “conflicting rationalities” that underline that juxtaposition (Watson 2003; de Satgé and Watson 2018). These plans seem to highlight the tensions and the contradictions between, on the one hand, modernist urban planning concepts that sustain the urban visions put forward by Maputo's municipal authorities, and, on the other, the reality of the life and experiences of the majority of Maputo's urban residents. But as modernist concept of cities are, in the end, broadly shared across the Mozambican urban society, the discussions around this iconic juxtaposition highlighted by the plans for modernisation of Barracas do Museu show, eventually, “agreeing rationalities” in relation to aspirations and expectations of urban form. What this article shows, however, is that where this juxtaposition may stimulate “conflicting rationalities” to emerge relates to what stems from historically built relationships between material expressions of urbanity and personhood; between urban form and urban citizenship.

While urban infrastructure can enable, facilitate and support the production and negotiation of urban life, and while its use can “go hand in hand” with the production of belonging and citizenship (Diouf and Fredericks 2014, p. 14), urban infrastructure can also be a source of polarisation—it can be “splintering” (Ibid.; Graham and Marvin 2001).

Not only because infrastructure can foster processes of material and spatial differentiation, but also because, as Diouf (Ibid.) suggests it can instil feelings of foreignness and of dislocation of meaning that can make one feel out of place.

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