

UNDERSTANDING *HOME SPACE* IN THE AFRICAN CITY

ETHNOGRAPHIC REPORT

HOME SPACE AS A SOCIAL CONSTRUCT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY¹

The central objective of this ethnographic study was to examine the evolution of living space in the city of Maputo via an in-depth analysis of a small number of families living in and building on this space.

We sought to understand the meaning and importance of *home space*² in the organization of families, and in the perpetuation or transformation of family structures and relations. The way the use of *home space* structures lived experience and influences the way residents create and transform this *home space* was another key objective of our research.

The data we obtained revealed that the situations of the families in terms of economic solvency, composition of households, places of residence and type of dwelling have undergone significant transformation in recent decades, in all their multiple dimensions. These transformations occur in family structures and relations and in physical living space, each influencing the other. This process of change is essentially characterized by multiple articulations and inter-relations between different income- and produce-generating activities, different types and levels of social relations, and different behaviours governed by values which are sometimes contradictory, and it is a defining feature of the modernity and urbanity of the families in the context under analysis.

In the first part of our analysis, we seek to understand the changes occurring in these families, and the way these changes are (and have been in the past) influenced by the economic, social and symbolic relationships which social actors maintain with the

¹ This document draws on the research programme 'Home Space in African Cities', funded by the Danish Research Council for Innovation 2009-2011, under the management of Prof. Jorgen Eskemose Andersen of the School of Architecture, Copenhagen. The programme was based on a conception and research design by Prof. Paul Jenkins of the School of the Built Environment, Heriot-Watt University / Edinburgh School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture. It was implemented in partnership between the above institutions (led by Professors Andersen and Jenkins), the Centre of African Studies at the ISCTE- Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (represented by Dr. Ana Bénard da Costa) the centre for Development of Habitat Studies in the Faculdade de Arquitectura e Planificação Física, Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, Mozambique (represented by Prof. Luís Lage, Prof. Julio Carrilho and Dr. Carlos Trinidade) and the Faculdade de Letras e Ciências Sociais da Universidade Eduardo Mondlane (represented by Dr. Adriano Biza). The fieldwork was undertaken with participation of students of architecture and anthropology from Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, and had key involvement from architect Silje Erøy Sollien and the academic Judite Chipenembe. Generous support from the Mozambican institutions and time donated by Edinburgh and Lisbon institutions for their academics' inputs have been a key aspect of the programme's success.

²This concept – developed in a speculative sense by the research team of the programme "Home Space in African Cities" – refers to the spaces within which the majority of African urban residents dwell - dwelling being both a place and a process. Creating *home spaces* thus involves spatial and social practices, but conceptually *home* is above all else a culturally defined concept

rural and urban worlds; we also examine the perceptions that social actors have of these relations, and how their perceptions condition social representations and practice. Our analysis opens with an examination of the classificatory system via which the *bairros*³, city and countryside are categorized. We examine a series of attributes and characteristics which, on the physical and behavioural levels, were considered simultaneously to be factors of differentiation and rapprochement between bairros, Cement City and the rural milieu. In doing so we shall describe the processes of mobility in which these families have found themselves involved, and discuss some of the opinions expressed with regard to the *ideal place to live*.

The ambivalences and contradictions we observed during our analysis allow us to conclude that although in terms of categorization the *bairros*, Cement City⁴ and countryside are typically framed according to dichotomy-based models of classification, these models do not always convey the same meanings and content.

The *bairros* are sometimes considered as belonging to the city, or as “incomplete cities” – as one informant remarked, “*This here isn't the bush, we could say it's the city, but it isn't exactly the city*” (male aged 20, Polana Caniço A) – depending on the greater or lesser presence of the infrastructure which marks one bairro as more urban than another. The bairros are considered as belonging to the “city” because “*they have energy*” (male aged 47, Polana Caniço A), “*they have public transport, hospital and school nearby*” (male aged 45, Mahotas). But informants also noted that the bairros don't have everything (while the city does) and are therefore “*incomplete*”.

And although Cement City is an aspirational goal in abstract terms, not all informants would actually like to live here:

³ *Bairro* (Portuguese) is translated into English as neighbourhood but the term 'bairro' will be maintained in this study as its use in Maputo implies more than the physical definition of a certain urban area. A *bairro* in Maputo is both an important political - administrative geographic unit which affects inhabitants in many ways and most residents have some sense of belonging to their *bairro*. However, the use of the term ‘*os bairros*’ (which could be translated as 'the neighbourhoods') – as shown in the ethnographic work of the *Home Space* study – is used to describe the urban areas which are ‘in between’ the central city and the ‘rural’ which itself is a socially constructed term with many variations.

⁴ The city of Maputo retains a dualist character which is the legacy of colonialism and which in spatial and architectural terms is expressed in the existence of two urban nuclei: the so-called “Cement City”, formerly the “white *bairros*”, and the “reed *bairros*” where the indigenous population resided during the colonial period. At present, the “reed Bairros” (*bairros de caniço*) are designated simply *bairros* and reed has progressively been replaced by cement blocks. “Cement City” (*cidade de cimento*) is now usually designated the “city”, “the centre” or “downtown”. For more detailed information on the historic evolution of this African capital see Jenkins 2012a.

The difference [compared with Cement City] is that in a flat you've got two bedrooms, a kitchen and a bathroom and there can be seven people living there. Here in the bairro you can build your bedrooms, I don't like flat living" (male aged 45, Mahotas).

The *ideal bairro*, on the contrary, is either the one the informants are currently living in, or a bairro which is further from the city centre, where urban development is a more recent phenomenon and some land parcelling still exists. The fact that for many the ideal place to live is the place they are actually living in explains the enormous investment⁵ they make in their living spaces, into which most of the savings they manage to make are channelled.

We also observed that, for some, access to certain types of consumer goods is a factor which distinguishes the *bairros* from Cement City, although for others (the majority) differences in consumption habits derive more from the economic level of the family than from the place it lives (city, the *bairro* or countryside).

When it comes to classifying behaviours, attitudes and manners, we encounter the same ambivalence of opinion. For example, education (in general terms), the use of the Portuguese language and dress habits were so commonly cited as factors distinctive of life in the countryside, or Cement City that they lost all differentiating power.

The difficulties in arriving at a comprehension of the families in terms of dichotomy-based models are also related with the high degrees of mobility we observed. The large majority of family members live in other *bairros*; some live in Cement City, and nearly every family we studied has members which go there with frequency. A significant number of family members live in South Africa, and some families still have close relatives who send money remittances which are important for the domestic economy. Travel between the *bairro* and the rural milieu is not very frequent. The desire to return to the family's region of origin⁶ is something mentioned only rarely.

⁵ The Physical Study (Andersen 2012) estimated that on average 15,000 USD were invested per plot on the construction of houses. Real expenditure varied between 5,000 USD and 30,000 USD and in most cases stretched over many years.

⁶ This term is used here in a simplistic fashion to designate the place informants themselves consider to be their *region of origin*. It may be their place of birth, or the place of birth of their parents or grandparents, or both. In the case of women (in southern Mozambique), it may be the village of their husband, or of a first husband since deceased, or of a husband they have now separated from. Alternatively, it may be the place of burial of ancestors from several generations back, but where neither the informants nor their close relatives was born in or have inhabited. The cultural diversity of the informants may cause them to give different answers, designating different places as their *region of origin* depending on the question. For

We observed that mobility is also associated with important relations of interdependence (of diverse types) between different residential nuclei of the same family. Although some mention was made of conflict which led to the severance of some of these relationships, remarks emphasizing the importance of lasting family ties were more frequent. This forces us to recognize the importance of family networks and the impossibility of understanding the different dimensions that shape and condition the life strategies of households without taking into account the set of relations (economic, social, symbolic) that they maintain and cultivate with a vast network of relatives.

In part II of our study our attention turns to the dynamics underlying the mechanisms of acquisition, construction and transformation of the *home spaces* of the households we studied. First we examine the different ways of gaining access to and possession of a plot of land. We investigate the daily processes whereby the inhabitants/residents of the *bairros* included in our study gain access to, produce and reproduce space, giving it social and cultural value which gives meaning to their lives. We also examine the practices whereby the possession of land is secured and legitimized. Part II ends with an examination of the dynamics underlying the construction and transformation of the home space, and a discussion of the processes activated by individuals and families in their endeavours to use and transform land according to the plans and purposes they have conceived for it.

One of the conclusions of this part is that the acquisition, construction and transformation of the *home space* are social and cultural processes which gives meaning to the lives of individuals and families: “*Having a house is like having a child, getting married (...) it’s making a dream come true*” (female, aged 37, 3 de Fevereiro).

We observed several co-existing mechanisms for gaining access to space, which essentially involves invoking traditional land transmission rights in combination with an appropriation, reinterpretation and manipulation of the state-prescribed legislation which regulates access to land. This takes place – and gains meaning – in a context where individuals are seeking to exploit the opportunities emerging in the urban property market. This market is increasingly manifest in the expansion of the peri-urban *bairros* and the occupation of the rural space surrounding the city for residential and commercial purposes. All of these processes remain associated with the state’s inability (lack of resources is one reason) to allocate land in an efficient and appropriate manner. In this more or less structured, complex and multifaceted market, in which a large number of

these and other reasons (Geschiere 2000), the question of belonging is a complex one which merits closer examination than we can give it here.

agents are active and whose field of operation is the interface between the legal and the illegal, the formal and the informal, rights of access to and possession of land are transacted with the sale of plots of land – officially parcelled or not – together with their built improvements, via the subdivision of space.

Another conclusion was that various methods exist for securing and legitimizing the possession of space by the individuals and households we studied. In the minds of our informants, security of possession of the plot and the respective right of use and usufruct of the premises are not always contingent on some kind of authorization or recognition by the state authorities. In the cases we studied, the absence of a corroborative document or “paper” did not deprive them of their rights over their lands, plots and houses. Social actors keep the legal process at arm’s length, not only because they are unaware of what procedures are actually involved, but also because they do not see the possession of papers and documents as the only way of ensuring security of possession and the right to use space.

*Yes, I have a document from the former owner of the plot and the bairro secretary
(...) I feel secure because I've never had problems (female aged 44, Albasine).*

One recognized way of securing legitimacy of possession is parcelling. This process secures access to land, for it confers, and secures, practical legitimacy with regard to space/land. Yet this is not the only method, and not all individuals or families attach the same value to it. Other mechanisms also generate feelings of security with regard to the possession of land: living on it for an extended period of time, whether through loan, purchase or birth; mutual recognition in the *bairro* and vicinity; recognition by the *bairro* authorities; the fact that many *bairro* residents are in a similar condition relative to the absence of documents attesting to possession; and the absence of conflicts or problems relative to the land/plots that families possess.

From our analysis of the processes of construction and transformation of *home space* we concluded that for the individuals and families included in our study, building their own house, preferably a permanent and lasting one, is one of the main reasons for acquiring a plot of land. The house is more than a building, a piece of physical infrastructure, with walls, doors and windows; it also embodies the desires and ideals of the family, and its construction is the object of individual and family strategies. In the imaginary of these families, building a house represents the successful collective

trajectory of the family, in a context marked by social and economic adversity. Of the strategies we examined, we observed that building a house is a drawn-out process – one that takes place over the medium or long terms – and is not always guaranteed to reach completion. Houses are subjected to various transformations designed to meet requirements of use of space that change over time, and to respond to changes in composition and size that take place over the life cycles of the households.

In one case, for example, the plot was bought in 2004, whereupon construction of a house – a single-room reed hut with a zinc roof – began. At a later stage, this hut was coupled onto another partition made of cement blocks, with a zinc roof. At present, the cement block partition is used as the main bedroom, while the reed partition is used an extension, for receiving visitors, and as a kitchen at night or when it is raining. Another room is now under construction: a bedroom for the children, who currently sleep with their parents. The family plans to totally replace the reed partition with a larger room in cement blocks that will equally serve as a visitors' room and dining room.

The third part of our study focuses on the internal dynamics of the home space. Our research here was oriented by issues related with shelter, social reproduction of the family, sociability, privacy and sharing.⁷ Our investigations into these issues allowed us to understand the meanings individuals assign to the home space, and the way its use conditions everyday life experiences via the socially-constructed mechanisms that regulate social interaction. Part III also addresses power and gender relations inside the home space, examining the implications of gender relations for property rights and the changes which these relations undergo.

The *home space* is the scene of domestic activities directed at the survival of family members and the family group; of social events that bring together friends, relatives, neighbours and/or church members; and of a wide range of economic activities. These economic activities, which are mutually complementary in a constant struggle to increase family incomes, are examined in the next part of this study. Their goal is not just daily survival but the completion, upkeep, transformation and expansion of the dwelling space.

As we observed, the organization and use of internal and external *home space* is not static. Equally fluid are the size and type of built and unbuilt spaces, and the composition of the families that live in them. However, co-existent with this fluidity we

⁷ The economic activities pursued within the *home space* will be examined in the section dealing with economic questions.

also observed forms of spatial organization in which visible frontiers (material and symbolic) demarcated certain spaces, which were reserved for certain functions. Where certain spaces were used for functions other than those originally intended, this was always seen as something provisional.

My plan is to put a pantry in here and make a kitchen outside the house so we can close my bedroom and the children can't come in and sit on our bed; but without the pantry we can't lock the doors of our room when we go out, because they have to come in to get the food. There has to be discipline in the house, otherwise it's anarchy (male aged 54, Polana Caniço A).

We also observed that the organization of the *home space* is based on hierarchies of gender, age and status, which are socially regulated by degree of parentage. The same norms also govern the rights to use the different internal partitions of the home space. This occurs even when not explicitly acknowledged. These limits mark the dividing line between common and private space and the right of free circulation within the yard and house, and also denote the shared or exclusive status of property. The existence of rules for the use of space does not necessarily mean that they are followed, however, for the size of the family, the dimensions of the house and its partitions do not always permit this.

The current model for the construction of houses, where the different partitions are all located under the same roof, necessarily results in greater physical proximity between the different family members, and this brings about changes in the rules which have customarily dictated the varying degrees of proximity or distance between different family members.

“If I could, I'd like to have a house [i.e. bedroom separate from the rest of the house] just for me and P. I think about having my house with my wife and leaving the children in the other house with their TV and everything”
(male aged 45, Mahotas).

This construction model therefore has implications on the level of family relations and the ways family members socialize with one another. However, constraints

related with the duration of our fieldwork and the amount of time we could spend in the houses of the families prevent us from examining these implications in depth.

With regard to gender and power relations in the home space, the data did not allow us to draw any firm conclusions on changes in the status of women in the urban periphery of Maputo. We can however affirm that these changes exist, and point towards greater autonomy of women with regard to men. But this autonomy has to be reconquered every day, for women continue to be socially valued first and foremost as wives and mothers. In this process of change, women face clear difficulties in their attempts to make their own way in a context fraught with different rationales that co-exist and combine in many different ways.

We also observed the existence of elements which threaten roles which are culturally the preserve of men. These elements include not only the degree of economic power which women have won for themselves but also, and especially, the lack of work and employment prospects for men. As the men themselves remarked, without a job they cannot be respected.

This situation can be summarized as follows. With regard to the way gender relations, the different statuses of different family members, the power relationships which emerge and evolve, and the processes of conflict, negotiation and cooperation which accompany them are expressed, they all depend on bi-dimensional family relationships, where interest and affect are simultaneously expressed, on the different resources available to the family and its individual members, and on a collection of cultural and social norms with which the family identifies and through which it constitutes itself. The multiplicity of cultural norms, and the fact that none of these norms is “pure” but rather the outcome of syncretistic processes and multiple influences, means that they can be interpreted and manipulated in different, but not unlimited, ways.

In the families we studied, the power that different family members have in decisions related to the *home space*, the organization of the different activities that occur in the home space, and the way the space where these activities occur is defined and distributed, depends on the different interpretations which subjects construe of the cultural norms which constitute their frame of reference in the social context under examination, and on the relationships between the members of any given family. These relationships dynamically articulate affects and conflicts, negotiation and cooperation, and they express individual and collective interests, egoism and altruism.

In part IV, we examine the economic activities pursued by family members in their attempts to obtain income and/or products for the acquisition, construction, transformation and upkeep of their *home spaces*. Pluri-activity, the articulation of various sources of income and the dispersion of family members across different sectors of the economy, and sometimes across different geographic areas, is an important feature here. Agricultural activity is especially important, not just in social but also economic terms, for it perpetuates family ties between relatives who do not live in the same dwelling. Other important aspects are exchange and assistance in the form of income, goods and services between family members who do not share the same dwelling. The economic activities pursued within the *home space*, and their implications for the residential structure of the home space, were also examined. We also analysed the economic activities pursued by the women and young people of the families included in our study, their importance for the family budget, their impact in terms of gender and age relations within the family, and the way hierarchical and power relationships are constructed, in our attempt to understand the way families organize and transform their home spaces.

We concluded that in their efforts to obtain resources and to reproduce, family members resort to a plurality of activities which generate income and products. These activities span all sectors of the economy (formal, informal, primary, secondary and tertiary); they take place in different geographic contexts (urban, rural and even other countries); and in most cases no single activity generates income sufficient to meet the needs of the families.

Jafar – N., aged 65, makes his living from biscates⁸, building houses of reed, wood and zinc, with thatched roofs using local materials and cement blocks in the dwellings of those who recruit his services. One of his wives works on a machamba⁹ that “was given [to him] by whites who don’t charge for it” and also operates a stall in his yard, where she sells bread and produce from the machamba. He has two sons who work in South Africa and send money towards the family expenses from time to time. He has a daughter who lives in Xai-Xai, and sometime gives the family “a bit of help”. He raises ducks primarily for domestic consumption, although he occasionally sells one when asked to. Another

⁸ *Biscates* means odd jobs. Someone who does *biscates* is a *biscateiro*

⁹ Any plot of land used for agricultural purposes; the size can vary greatly.

of his wives does some biscates as well as helping on the machamba, providing cleaning services on the land/plots of people who have just purchased them.

Situations like this necessitate constant exchanges and sharing, structured around family relations which extend beyond the nucleus of residents of any individual home space. The social value attributed to the different activities depends not only on the type of activity pursued or the income or products which are the outcome of the activity; essentially, it depends on the status enjoyed by the individual pursuing the activity. We observed that the economic activities pursued by men have a different social value from the activities pursued by children, youths and women. Only where the activities of the latter are pursued as part of formal employment contracts are they actually seen as work.

The internal management of the income and products obtained by the different family members in the activities they pursue depends on numerous factors ranging from power relations to normative codes and individual/collective affects and interests. Another factor is that the income or products resulting from these activities are often unpredictable, and in most cases are not guaranteed in advance. Many such activities require a degree of wheeling and dealing, knowledge of demand and the ability to imagine and anticipate future developments if a minimum amount of success is to be achieved vis-à-vis the competition. Other activities depend on social relations, knowledge and exchanges of favours. Others, like farming, depend on the climate and are founded on ancestral knowledge which includes the awareness of risk and lack of security. Consequently, the unpredictability and lack of security that characterize the urban milieu the families currently inhabit are nothing new. If anything, in fact, the city offers a wider range of possibilities for “playing” on various fronts.

Yet this potential can only be realized by combining different activities and simultaneously cultivating the social relationships on which such activities depend. And in cultivating these social relationships, actors embody behaviours and values which, depending on interests and circumstances, can actually be mutually contradictory.

Therefore, as we have seen, it is these multiple articulations and inter-relations between different income- and produce-generating activities, different types and levels of social relations, and different behaviours governed by values which are sometimes contradictory, which define the modernity and urbanity of the families in the context under analysis.

The conjugation of these apparently dissimilar but inter-dependent attitudes generates contradictions in the discourse of social actors. These contradictions become apparent in the comparison of discourses in which representations of normative ideals from different cultural models are evident (the practices of the actors are often in contradiction with their discourse).

We end part IV with the conclusion that the social and/or economic relations between actors are simultaneously a resource in themselves and a means to obtaining other resources. Some of these resources are given freely, as a means of creating or maintaining dependency, on the basis of which relationships of power and prestige are established within a given family, social group or network. Thus, doing business and the value of what is transacted frequently depend on pre-existing social relationships between the parties, or on relationships which the actors wish (or wish not) to establish.

In the fifth and last part of our study on *home space* as a social construct we examine the processes whereby identities are constructed and re-constructed. Our analysis includes a discussion of the *home space* in its spatial and identity-forming dimensions, and the way these identity-forming processes structure themselves within the confines of home space, family and church, the latter two being key social networks in the universe under examination. We also examine school education and its relationship with the identity-reconstruction processes which generate a greater sense of individualism. Part V ends with an examination of the elements fuelling cohesion and disintegration of social networks and the processes via which social actors manage to articulate these elements.

At the beginning of part V, we argue that the identity-forming and identification processes that bind inhabitants to their houses are not generated by the specific characteristics of these urban spaces. They are the outcome, rather, of pre-existing identity-forming processes which necessarily undergo changes in their transposition to the urban context – but do not originate in the latter. And it is the transposition and transformation of identity-building processes which confers specificity on the spatial and social realities we are examining.

We then proceed to an examination of this transformation of the identity-building process in social actors on the basis of a theoretical perspective which views the formation of identity in individuals, families and social groupings as a dynamic process which changes and adapts over the course of time, interacting with new factors in a complex dialectic. Our investigation first addresses changes in the actors' relationships

with their regions of origin, which via their ancestors and the rituals held in their honour gave spatial expression to their identity in the past, before we examine how this spatial dimension of identity is being transposed to the home spaces they now occupy.

We've held our ceremonies in honour of our ancestors here in Maputo since my parents began living here. Whoever wants to visit the graves in Manhiça can, because my grandparents are buried there. When I die I'd like to be buried here (...) because my parents were buried here in Maputo (female aged 31, Magoanine B).

One of our conclusions is that although it is of less importance nowadays, the region of origin has not “disappeared” as a referent of identity. Another conclusion is that ancestors continue to be fundamental symbols of family identity. The transposition of rituals in their honour from the region of origin to the current place of residence combines with other factors to confer upon the “new” *home space* considerable significance in terms of the affirmation of family identity.

We also observed that the transposition of identity-building processes from the rural to the urban milieu gives rise to changes in identity which accompany changes in family structure. At present, family structures draw on organizing principles from different cultural models: the patrilineal model of the peoples of southern Mozambique, and the modern, Western model. This situation opens up different possibilities where the sense of family belonging and identification is concerned: the same individual may belong to several home spaces (and families) which are not mutually exclusive but don't have the same degree of importance over the course of the individual's life.

Our informants frequently associated the home spaces they currently occupy with sentiments of belonging and security. In regard to the first of these sentiments, belonging, we observed that it was shared not only by all those who are considered part of the same family and live in the same home space, but also by other relatives whom our informants consider as being entitled to live there: such as absent and even dead relatives. *“The house belongs to my deceased father, but it's my responsibility (...) We didn't buy it, we built it a long time ago”* (female aged 43, Mavalane B).

However, this notion of *belonging* to a house and a family does not rule out situations of conflict and the marginalization of certain individuals.

As for *security*, this too was a sentiment cited by all our informants. This stands in apparent contradiction to situations of uncertainty with regard to property title deeds, family conflicts and even questions related with burglary and theft. Our informants argued that the security which possession of their houses transmitted to them could only be understood by reference to past experience (when documents were never necessary for proving property rights), to the current context (where this type of possession is the norm), and to a range of symbolic and identity-giving meanings which their belonging to a given *home space* represents.

The family too is a focus for sentiments of security, even in situations of conflict with other members or branches of the family. We concluded therefore that these situations did not pose a threat to the importance of the family in terms of the identity-building value and security it represents for those who belong to it. None of this precludes the existence of complex relational dynamics and negotiations, however. Obligations, duties and rights operate at different levels vis-à-vis a shifting backdrop of power relations and cultural referents. All of these elements, we observed, contribute to a huge diversity of situations: on the level both of identity reconstruction and the role played by the spatial dimensions which underlie them, and consequently in terms of the security which belonging to a house and a family effectively represents. This diversity of situations can even transform the identity-building spatial referent of the *home space* into its opposite, with the home space seen more as factor of insecurity than one of family and social stability.

We then examine the role of churches as structural factors in the identity-reconstruction process of the social actors addressed by our study. Our research centred on the symbolic equivalence between church and family, and the way churches reflect the spatial dimensions of the identity-forming processes of the social actors.

The church plays a significant protective role for families, as it helps resolve family conflicts deriving from traditional beliefs, and in this way contributes to family cohesion. We observed a significant degree of mobility of believers across the various churches, and concluded that changes of place of residence are one of the reasons for this. The churches are located in the *bairros*; those who frequent the same church see each other as “brothers”, and are, in fact, neighbours. In each of the various creeds, visits to the home spaces of fellow-believers are frequent. For church, *home space* and *bairro*, the frontiers between private and public space are extremely porous. In each instance, public and private intersect, without actually dissolving into one another. And this

happens despite the occasional exception and a growing trend to delimit *home space* in a more rigid manner. Identity takes form via this intersection of spatial dimensions.

We end part V with an examination of the important role the churches play in education. Although our informants acknowledge the importance of schooling in the affirmation of social identity, in practice the prevailing notion is that identity is fundamentally built via processes which allow the creation, survival and reproduction of the family. And yet here too we observed families behaving in different ways in the same context. The decisions they take regarding the education of their children change over time, and are not equal for all. We also saw that education is valued not for itself but for the access it provides to better living conditions – even if achieving these better living conditions sometimes creates disunity in the family.

Family conflict, the ways it is resolved on a local level, and the representations of social actors on the causes of conflict, are also addressed in this final part of our study. In families as well as churches, there co-exist mechanisms which promote family harmony and those which sow discord. For our informants, belonging to a particular family or church is not necessarily a constant phenomenon, and families and churches themselves are not immutable: they intersect, and recreate themselves on a daily basis via a range of practices which renew the social relations which underpin them. And in this re-creation they are transformed, bringing in new members and excluding (or being abandoned by) others.

This is one possible explanation for the importance of these social networks in the identity-building process, despite the conflict they give rise to, which in some cases can lead to the disintegration of the family or the relinquishment of a church or belief.

The social practices pursued by family members require complex articulations of conduct in which contradictory values – loyalty and self-interest – are expressed and interpreted in many ways, and may or may not be socially reprehensible, depending on the point of view. The spatial mobility of actors, the flexibility of family structures and relations, the diversity of churches to which the individual can belong, and the ephemeral nature of many of these relationships of belonging are characteristics which facilitate the “circulation” of the sense of belonging and enable actors to embody contradictory values in their practices.

We also observed that the unpredictability of the social context, in conjunction with an exceptionally wide diversity of social norms, can sometimes polarize contradictions to the point where they become unsustainable, leading to marginalization,

self-destruction or “voluntary” withdrawal from the original group of belonging. In either event, these social actors are stripped (in practice, or formally) of the powers they held with regard to the other members of the group, and excluded from the social positions they occupied. Yet this process is not irreversible: how the situation evolves depends on how the many normative frameworks that govern family and social relations are interpreted in each particular instance.

INTRODUCTION

Abstract

This introduction starts with a brief socio-economic description of the studied families, the *bairros* where they live and aspects related with residential mobility are also mention. The criteria used in the selection of the families, the methodology and issues related with ethnographic fieldwork are also discuss. Problems resulting from analyzing information from a multiplicity of discourses and levels of discourse that are interrelated and are constantly reinterpreted are discussed and clarified in the third part of this introduction. Subsequently we present the main conceptual and theoretical lines that guide the analysis and the introduction ends with a brief summary of the contents of each chapter.

0.1. A brief socio-economic description of the families

For six weeks in May and June 2010, a team of three anthropologists (Ana Bénard da Costa, Adriano Biza and Judite Chipenembe) assisted by three anthropology students from the University of Eduardo Mondlane carried out an ethnographic study of 19 families living in eight different urban *bairros* of the city of Maputo (Polana Caniço A, 3 de Fevereiro, Mahotas, Mavalane B, Hulene B, Magoanine B, Ferroviário, Albasine) and two *bairros* in the district of Marracuene (Guáva and Jafar).

The families studied in these ten *bairros* diversified greatly in their characteristics, and were selected from a total sample of 100 households covered by the housing and socio-economic survey of the *Home Space* project team in December 2009.

The families studied reside in *bairros* whose characteristics vary greatly in terms of history, area, number of inhabitants and population density. At the same time, a general and summary examination of these households, in terms of their economic situation (determined by the type of house they occupy – dimensions and construction materials – the goods they possess and their work/employment situation), number of members, their time of residence in Maputo and the living space they now occupy, revealed a great diversity of conditions.

Comparing the economic situation of the 19 families addressed by the study, we can describe only three families as very poor.¹⁰ A significant number of families (7), of varying compositions and distributed across six of the nine *bairros* included in our study, were classified as poor.¹¹ In the 19 families taken as a whole, most of the members involved in income-generating activity worked on a self-employed basis (minor trading activity, sporadic work in the construction sector, small industry). In only three cases was the principal informant¹² employed on a contractual basis, and two of these were families in the “rich” category. The only household with high economic standing and economically active on a self-employed basis was a couple from *bairro* das Mahotas which ran a *mukhero*¹³ business importing products from South Africa.¹⁴ Most of the *home spaces* included in our study were occupied by families of more than six members and with kinships other than parents and children (11). With regard to mobility, in only one case had migration to Maputo occurred in the previous 10 years (although the head of the household had previously lived in South Africa); most informants (10) has been born in Maputo or had come to live here in their childhood. As to when they arrived in their current *bairro* of residence, around half of the informants (9) had arrived in the previous 10 years; three were natives of their *bairro* of residence. Most (15) households exhibited mobility (of one or more of their members) across different *bairros* of Maputo before coming to live in their current *bairro* and plot of land.

0.2. Selection criteria

The criteria used in the selection of the 19 households were determined in accordance with the objectives of the project:¹⁵ namely, to examine the evolution of living spaces via longitudinal studies. They required that the study include a significant

¹⁰On the classification and distinction of the economic levels of the different cases, see Andersen 2012a.

¹¹ In Andersen’s (2012a) socio-economic study of 100 households, 24 percent were classed as “very poor”, 23 percent as “poor”, 33 percent as “medium”, 15 percent as “rich” and five percent as “very rich”.

¹² “Principal informants” were the family members with whom the researchers talked most, and who showed the most readiness to be interviewed. The principal informants were typically the self-designated head of the family/household or his wife. They were identified in each of the records as “Ego”, and the kinship of each of the remaining family members expressed in relation to him/her.

¹³ This refers to the process of buying products in neighbouring South Africa and re-selling in the south of Mozambique - a well established economic activity. Someone who does this is called a Mukerista.

¹⁴ These data echo the conclusions of the socio-economic study which covered 100 households, in which 80 percent of interviewees or heads of household considered to be “very rich” were in formal employment, while only a minority of those considered to be “poor” or “very poor” were formally employed; most (82%) worked in the informal sector.

¹⁵ See Jenkins 2012a for detailed information on the criteria used for selecting the families included in the study.

number (9) of residents of the *bairros* (Polana Caniço A, 3 de Fevereiro and Mahotas) which had been the subject of previous surveys (1990 and 2000). In these nine cases, about half (5) were living in the same plots of land they had occupied in 1990 and 2000. The remaining four cases had come to live in these plots at a later date. Other selection criteria were related with the desire to understand growth processes in the city of Maputo in terms of occupational density of dwelling spaces, urbanization of new spaces and existing forms of urban planning. There was a need therefore to select households distributed across the different *bairros* where the physical survey and socio-economic study were carried out in accordance with their location (greater or lesser proximity to the urban centre) and the type of urban planning, if any. Questions related with the physical evolution of the dwelling space (types of house, characteristics of the plot of land) and with land access and property rights were also important factors in selection, as were socio-economic aspects (type of family structure and number of members comprising the household at the time of research, economic conditions) and cultural aspects (religion, types of marriage and region of origin).

Taking this diversity of criteria into account, we tried to strike a balance that would make our selection representative of the initial sample of 100 cases, while at the same time enabling ethnographic research which, in obeying specific methodological requirements, demands a relatively long investigation time. We opted to bring our study to bear on 19 families – and not households, for reasons which will be explained – distributed among three anthropologists, basing our methodology on participative observation, non-directive interviews, life stories and family stories.

While our choice of these 19 families was largely determined by criteria related with the objectives of the project, the fact that the team of anthropologists had enjoyed previous contact with the 100 cases examined in the socio-economic survey of December 2009 and February 2010 meant that they already knew some of the family members – this in fact was the primary reason for including the three anthropologists in the survey. Their acquaintances were taken into consideration in the selection of the 19 families addressed by the ethnographic study. Their familiarity with the context enabled the team to start its ethnographic work almost immediately, without the need for preliminaries such as getting to know the subjects of the study, which, depending on the context, can require a considerable amount of time.

In addition to the selection criteria indicated above, and the information the anthropologists already possessed by virtue of their earlier contacts with certain family

members, aspects connected with the feasibility of the research itself had to be taken into account. For example, in our view it was important to work with the families for as much time as possible, even if this involved interruptions of several days' duration or alternating our work between various families. Another important consideration was the possibility of working with several families in the same *bairro*, so that work could continue in the event something unexpected cropped up in one house that prevented the scheduled work from being carried out in this house. The fact that the anthropologists could remain for relatively long periods in the same *bairro* also allowed the members of the team to gain a greater familiarity with the surrounding milieu and to observe social practices in the exterior and in common public spaces.

The diversity of criteria taken into account in the process of selecting which families to study, the hierarchization of these criteria in view of the research objectives and the need to bring as many criteria into play as possible, forced the researchers from the *Home Space* project to reflect on the data obtained during the socio-economic survey. However, it was also necessary to get back in contact with the heads of the selected families at a later stage and to explain once again what they proposed to do, so that they could obtain their consent, without which work could not proceed. Fortunately, all heads of family gave their consent and it was not necessary to make a new selection. To make allowances for unforeseen obstacles, an extra family was selected – in addition to the original 18 families – and this proved to be a sensible precaution, for during our fieldwork it became evident that despite our efforts to obtain as much information as possible on a wide variety of aspects related with the objectives of the study, and to obtain this information from the families, this was not being achieved in every case. In some families the difficulties in obtaining information were significant (illness, death, absence); while in others we succeeded in establishing a degree of intimacy which was conducive to obtaining a good deal of information.

0.3. Methodology and ethnographic fieldwork

After the selection of the 19 families, we created a file for each family indicating the topics relative to the information we wished to obtain, divided into general thematic areas. All the information gathered previously, either in the studies of 1990 and 2000 or the socio-economic survey carried out by the project team, was entered in these files

before they were distributed to the three anthropologists responsible for carrying out the ethnographic research.

Where methodology is concerned, it's also important to note that we decided to punctuate our fieldwork with data entry and team meetings. By systematically recording data in this way we would be able to reflect on our research as we progressed – to determine what we already knew and what we still needed to find out – and by exchanging written information we would be able to critique the work that was being done. At our meetings we fine-tuned our research strategies, debated problems and looked for solutions.

The need for on-going exchange of information between the members of the team led us to opt for the written, not audio, recording of our conversations with the different informants, since audio recording would have involved time-consuming transcriptions at a later point. Responsibility for keeping written records lay principally with the research assistants who accompanied each of the the anthropologists in their fieldwork, although the anthropologists themselves also performed this work in some instances: especially in situations where the interviewee spoke a language the anthropologist did not understand, and therefore required assistance in translation: as the assistant translated, the anthropologist took notes. At a later stage (and as soon as possible) these notes were compared against the memories of the team members involved, and where necessary altered, corrected or, where doubts subsisted, clarified in a later conversation with the informant. In practical terms, this research methodology required fieldwork to be carried out during one part of the day, and records to be drawn up and meetings held during another part.

Briefly put, our fieldwork proceeded as follows. The teams visited the homes of the selected families, whom they had already met to explain the objectives of their work and the methods they proposed to use. During the course of informal conversation with the family members present, one would typically express a willingness to be interviewed. At the end of the first interview, we asked if we could continue the conversation on another day or if another member of the family would be willing to speak. At a later stage, the anthropologist and assistant compared the data they had recorded and observed; the anthropologist then proceeded to an analysis of the data, identifying the topics for which sufficient data had now been obtained, and those which remained to be addressed. The following day, depending on the arrangements made, either we visited the same family again or proceeded as before with a new family. In this

way, each anthropologist worked through the six (in one instance, seven) families assigned to him or her, moving between houses and *bairros* over the course of six weeks.

The reflection triggered by the daily analysis of the information we gathered, and the discussions we held during our meetings, raised new questions which in turn provided a narrative thread for many later conversations we had with different family members. Within this general framework, one unexpected event succeeded another: some scheduled interviews failed to take place, while other interviews occurred almost spontaneously. New family members made themselves known, and new interviews were scheduled. On many occasions our conversations ranged over all sorts of topics while we drank tea and observed domestic routines. Many important topics and relevant facts were addressed/observed as we watched meals being prepared, participated in family festivities or waited for the appearance of someone we had arranged to interview. As mentioned, however, the type of information obtained and the degree of detail were not equal across all families and all informants. While many conversations came to resemble life stories or family stories rather than interviews, there were other cases where the interviewee was more laconic and the interview was more directed, and others where, after a first conversation, unforeseen circumstances prevented their continuation. With certain family members we never succeeded in striking up a conversation.

The qualitative data gathered from this in-depth and micro-level approach, applied to a limited number of families, were systematically cross-referenced with the data (qualitative and quantitative) obtained within the framework of the present project and pertaining to the 100 cases addressed in the physical study and the socio-economic survey, and, before and after, with the quantitative data and available statistics on the context (census data, for example). At the same time, we attempted to relate our analysis with other research conducted by the leader of our team of anthropologists in the same context and to cross-reference data with findings from research conducted by other team members in similar contexts. Our research also took into account the data produced by other authors in the same context and/or on themes related with those addressed by the present project.

Finally, by articulating this research with the ethnographic fieldwork carried out by members of our team, in the same context or on themes similar to those addressed by our team (Costa 2004, 2007; Biza, 2000, 2004; Chipinende, 2001), we could validate our methodology, which was built on the precedent of earlier research and extensive *in situ* experience of the context in which we were conducting our fieldwork. The limitations of

time to which our research was subjected were in this way offset by the previous knowledge of the researchers and their fieldwork experience in the milieu which this project continued to investigate.

It should be emphasized, however, that the “time” factor is not of itself a guarantee of the validity of ethnographic method, and neither does it serve to legitimize anthropological knowledge. This view runs counter to the position defended by anthropologists who see extended fieldwork as the factor which makes them specialists in the social context they are studying (Clifford, 1988). Although “fieldwork” has stood firm against the wave of deconstruction that has battered many of the key concepts of anthropology, there has recently been a recognition that the diversity of the fields in which the anthropologist works not only impedes a single definition of what “fieldwork” actually signifies, but also makes it impossible to define the discipline in terms of fieldwork alone. Many social sciences use this method in the pursuit of their investigations (Lima and Sarro, 2006:19).

Although the *longue durée* is a key element in the ethnographic method, there is an increasing recognition that the scientific validity of the discipline does not derive solely and uniquely from fieldwork or from the number of hours of daily immersion in the culture of the *other* – whether this *other* designates the *primitives* of early anthropology, the poor in the developing countries of the modern world, the rapper in the slums of European cities, or the migrant diaspora. Equally, we are now beginning to recognize that geographic distance is no guarantee of objectivity, just as proximity does not necessarily mean familiarity (Strathern, 1987, Pina Cabral 1991, Lima, 1997).

Yet this does not mean that anthropologists have abandoned their methods or that fieldwork is no longer the major guarantor of the scientific validity of their work. It means only that what is important is not so much time as “taking people seriously” (MacClancy, 2002) and the ability to use the right tools to seize reality in its constant articulation with all that interferes with it (past, present, near, far, micro, macro), including the actual presence of the researcher in the milieu under examination (Meyer and Geschiere, 1999). This is something that is achieved in the doing, and it necessarily derives from a learning of the scientific task whereby the scientist is involved as a full social person, interrogating reality while at the same time allowing him/herself to be impregnated by it (Lima and Sarro, 2006: 27). This is what our team succeeded in achieving via the research methodology it devised, and which we have outlined above – a methodology rooted in earlier field experience in the same context.

0.4. Discourse, notes, translation and interpretation

Our methodology enabled us to assemble a huge amount of data which was entered in the respective records of each family. Much of this data is in the form of verbatim transcriptions of the notes we took during our fieldwork. These notes are not uniform in nature, however. Some are faithful records of the words of the informants (written in the first person), some are in reported speech (written in the third person, “he says...”), some are summaries of the discourse of the informants, some are the translations of this discourse; some notes were taken by the anthropologist, others by the assistant. Other notes recorded the writer’s observations, or were added during the data entry and analysis stage. From the start of our fieldwork, we were careful to indicate in our records which notes were which by the use of codes, a procedure which enabled us in the analysis phase to identify the different types of discourse and the speakers of the words recorded. This was important, as we intended to quote the words of the informants themselves in our analysis. Essentially, the reason for this was that in certain cases only via the words of the social actors was it possible to understand – and thereby conceive/represent/interpret – the reality we were examining. Transcription of the words of social actors often conveys, in a clear and direct form, all the complexity of the context under investigation. Therefore, rather than merely illustrating our analysis they form an essential part of it, as much as the bibliography and the many quotations do.

Despite all the precautions described above with regard to our field notes, transcription did pose problems, especially where the reconstruction of discourse was concerned. As we indicated, many interviews and their respective notes required the intervention of the assistants, who on occasion also acted as interpreters. Sometimes the researcher could speak the native language of the informant while the assistant could not, which had the effect of changing direct into reported speech.¹⁶ It was the notes – in Portuguese – of the anthropologists and their assistants that constituted the core of the

¹⁶ As Olivier de Sardan (1998: 158) writes: “Translation in its fullest sense is not merely the search for a verbal equivalence between one language and another, it is also about the inter-relation of different semantic fields, of different ways of dividing up or conceiving reality” (translation ours). The problem (of translation) can arise, therefore, even among people with the same mother tongue but speaking in different “idioms”. Oliver de Sardan went on to cite the example of the difficulties of communication between (educated) French farmers and agronomists.

information we analysed. These notes are transcribed (and/or translated) in the present text, with the discourse occasionally reworked into the first person.¹⁷

Evidently this solution was not ideal, for it precluded direct access to the way informants interpreted their social reality. What we are analysing is the interpretation that the researchers (or their assistants) made of the translated and/or transcribed discourse. But in this as in any situation, what is told, described or analysed is always the outcome of multiple interpretations. The discourse we interpret is itself the product of interpretation, and the data we analyse the result of the processes of selection (construction) brought to bear by the investigator on the object observed (Casal 1996: 125).

Much of the information analysed in this text was gathered from a multiplicity of discourses and levels of discourse which inter-relate with one another and are constantly re-interpreted: discourse in Portuguese by informants whose mother tongue is not Portuguese (and whose speech in Portuguese is to some extent the result of a translation), whose words and phrases have to be clarified and *decoded* by the investigator;¹⁸ discourse expressed in the mother tongues of the informants and translated/interpreted by the assistants and/or anthropologist (and for most of these informants Portuguese was not their mother tongue, either); and discourse in which all these processes occurred alternately: for instance, an informant who was supposed to speak in Portuguese strikes up a dialogue with the assistant in his native tongue, with the assistant then reporting their conversation to the investigator; or the contrary case where an informant begins speaking in his mother tongue but then directly addresses the investigator in Portuguese. All this overlapping of discourse and interpretations does not invalidate research, however; it merely “implies recognition of the limitations inherent to the observer’s acts of perception” (Casal 1996: 124) (translation ours).

¹⁷ Reworking of discourse (by assistant/anthropologist or informants) into the first person was not the only alteration made during the transcription of oral speech into writing. We also corrected some grammatical errors, such as concordance of gender and number. These options are open to question, and relate to a wider discussion (Michel Cahen 1995) revolving around the problems posed by the transcription of oral discourse into writing, as well as the different ways of speaking Portuguese in the Portuguese-speaking countries.

¹⁸ Olivier de Sardan (1998: 139) writes of “conceptual misunderstandings” (*malentendus notionnels*) in the communication generated during development projects between agents (*développeurs*) and actors (*développés*). Notions which are clear for the former, such as “time”, “space”, “wealth/poverty”, “necessity”, “nutrition”, “participation”, “water” etc. may have very different meanings for the latter, and these differences may generate misunderstandings that are never cleared up because the meanings of these notions are *obvious* for both parties.

In conducting an analysis based on information and observations which are interpretations of reality (discourse, actions, gestures) we are often confronted with contradictory data. In such situations – and also because in many instances it was impossible (or awkward) to determine the *truth* – understanding the reasons for these contradictions can be enlightening. In looking for the meaning behind the contradictions we realise the differences between social representations and practices, which in turn allow us to interpret the behaviour observed or deduced from this discourse.

The need to articulate different orders and levels of discourse was also imposed by the object of the study and the topic under examination. Ultimately, what we are analysing in this report are *articulations*, and therefore we needed to ensure a certain theoretical and analytical openness which would allow us to pick up the social fragmentation, the ambivalence, fluidity, contradictions and paradoxes which the aforementioned *articulations* involve.

In this rapprochement of theoretical and empirical discourse, of descriptive analytic discourse and the discourse of the social actors, we sought to base our analysis of the social context in which we were working, and to assume the interaction of all operations involved in this process of knowledge-gathering: observation, description and interpretation.

0.5. Families in Maputo and processes of social and cultural change

The reasons that led our investigation to centre on families and not households were related with the fact that studies on households do not of themselves enable comprehension of the dynamics fuelling the transformation processes in the *home space*. To understand these dynamics and the associated processes, we need to consider all the members of the family living in a given *home space* as well as all those who occupy other *home spaces* but maintain close relationships of interdependence with the former, and who are of significance in terms of the transformations we propose to examine. These relationships can be identified via observation and the descriptions that informants give of their practices and the interactions they maintain with other members of the family living in other home spaces, in the same *bairro* or in other areas/localities. Thus the real size of the family: “will be finally determined by the reciprocity of obligations that he develops and maintains with a selection of relatives” (Cohen, 1981: 65).

Only a dynamic approach to the family as an entity in constant mutation and not necessarily comprising an exact number of members in a clearly-delimited space allows us to understand and explain the (equally dynamic) way the occupants create, transform and exist within their *home space*. And this *home space* in turn belongs to a context which is undergoing profound and constant alteration.

In the research conducted in December 2009, February 2010 and May-June 2010, many informants mentioned (in different ways and in relation to different topics) the importance of other family members, in addition to those with whom they cohabited, in the creation, transformation and upkeep of their *home space*.

In this sense the family is a circular construction: it exists because the relationships obtaining between its members enable the development of survival and social reproduction strategies (and in this sphere, residential strategies are among the most important) and because these strategies, in being deployed, maintain, develop and create the family ties (and the physical space where such ties are cultivated) that form the basis of their social unit: its essence and its foundation. Yet it is not always possible to identify the many kinds of family ties (and the power relationships they give rise to), and their frequency and importance, that exist between the different members of a family – especially when the family is divided across two or more geographic areas and the family members occupying a given *home space* tend to come and go. For this reason, apparently simple questions like “Who does the house belong to? Who will inherit it? Who provided the resources for building the house? Who decides what to do, and when and how to do it?” do not have easy answers, as our analysis will show. And even when answers to these questions were forthcoming, they tended to change depending on the circumstances in which the question was put, the occasion, or the person providing the answers.

We also attached considerable importance to understanding the meaning that notions such as *ownership* or *belonging* had for the different family members, taking into account that in the social and cultural context of our work there were often fundamental ties of reciprocity between members of the same family residing in different places, based on symbols of family identity (names, place of origin, common ancestors). We also felt it was important to take into account the *presence* of a wide network of ancestors in the daily life of the family (Costa, 2007).

Although our analysis focussed on families and not households, other questions arose nevertheless with regard to theory and analysis, and it is important to mention

these. How were we to classify these families in terms of the co-existing cultural models (traditional, modern, Western, Changana or other) in the context under examination, for example? These questions of classification raise important theoretical issues related with the way social and cultural change and transformation processes operate in the context under analysis, and how these processes are reflected in the dynamics of creation, transformation and upkeep of *home spaces*.

The first thing to point out is that a large majority of the families we are talking about here is comprised exclusively of people who were born in the provinces of southern Mozambique; many are natives of the city of Maputo. The majority of the social groups whose origins lie in this vast region of Mozambique have conventionally been attributed a specific cultural identity: Tsonga. Henri Junod identified this cultural group in the early 20th century, but emphasized:

[...] There is no real national unity among the Tsonga [...] they do not designate it with a common name. [...] another name widely used among the whites to designate the Tsonga is the word Changana. [...] This designation has never been adopted by the Rhonga, who consider it an insult (Junod [1912-13] 1996: 35-3), (translation ours).

Junod adds that the Tsonga are made up of clans, and that some of these clans form groups because they share the same Tsonga dialect. He mentions several groups: the Rhonga, the Dzunga, the n'Walungu, the Hlangano, the Bila and the Hlengwe.

But are the families we are discussing here still Tsonga? Or have the successive processes of change (not least their arrival in the city) undergone by these families definitively transformed the social and cultural characteristics that formerly defined them? And did the Tsonga ever really exist in the first place?

Some controversy does in fact exist in regard to Tsonga identity. Harries (1979:3) argues that the Tsonga may have been “invented” by missionaries and colonial administrators, and perpetuated by colonialist policy. The same author also claims that the customs Junod identified as common to different Tsonga clans were also shared by other, neighbouring – but non-Tsonga – ethnic groups, and that even in linguistic terms the supposed unity of the Tsonga language was called into question by the enormous linguistic differences obtaining across the different “Tsonga” groups (Harries 1979: 7-

8).¹⁹ More recently, other authors have questioned Tsonga identity (Medeiros, 2001; Ngoenha, 1999; Cruz e Silva 2001) in their examinations of the relations between the Tsonga identity, the emergence of a Mozambican political identity and the formation of political consciousness in southern Mozambique. On this subject, Teresa Cruz e Silva concludes that missionaries “*made a substantial contribution to the study of the vernacular, to its use in the early years of colonization and its generalization, and to the development of the concept of ethnicity among the Tsonga*” (Cruz e Silva 2001: 32) (translation ours).

Thus, and despite the controversy, Tsonga identity is a valid reference both for the social actors who presently identify themselves as Changana, Ronga or Matsua, and for those attempting to understand the past and present realities of families in southern Mozambique.

This question raises another: whether Tsonga culture has endured over time through successive processes of change, or whether it is rather just one reference among many in a dynamic and syncretic process that has created essentially different, and even new, identities.

Before answering this question, we have to remember that Tsonga cultural identity never has been and never will be an immutable “canon” of customs, traditions and values (Petiteville 1995: 871), but is rather a complex, open-ended and heterogeneous system which accommodates, on various levels (in practice, social representations, institutions and ideologies) and in an inter-related way, multiple articulations between different frames of references. And it is this dynamic approach that allows us to explain the actions, conducts and attitudes of individuals, taking as reference not just a cultural model but also the various ideological frames of referents immanent to diverse cultural systems co-existing in the context under examination.

Within this theoretical perspective,²⁰ the notion of “traditional Tsonga society” and the concepts of modernity and tradition take on new meanings. In every society

¹⁹ This is not the place to go into this problem, which is not relevant for the purposes of the present investigation. What’s far more important is Junod’s extraordinary descriptive acuity which drew on his in-depth field knowledge and his powers of interpretation, which enable a better understanding of the families included in the study, even when the pasts of these families (like the pasts of all families) is the result of later re-creations and representations: by the families themselves and by those who, at any given time, have written about them and their past as it was described to them.

²⁰ This notion of the intra- and inter-relational dynamics of culture has its origins in the Manchester school and the work of Max Gluckman ([1956] 1991) and Balandier (1963, 1969 and 1971). It was later developed by authors including Olivier de Sardan (1985, 1988 and 1998), Bierschenk (1988), Boiral (1985) and researchers from the team of Norman Long (1992). Such research calls into question not only

there is a permanent and complex articulation between modernity and tradition in the social present. Modernity refers to those elements that are directly related to the innovative aspects of the society, but the perception that social actors have about what is new (modern) is always shaped by the ideological frameworks available to them, and results from lived or transmitted experiences. Neither is tradition something static and intangible, but rather the outcome of dynamic negotiations that allow the permanence of ideological frameworks over time (Amselle 1990: 61). In other words, the persistence of tradition in the present means the updating and re-creating of the ideological frameworks that legitimize this same present through past times that are constantly evoked and reinvented. Values and identities are anchored in these past times, whatever our perspective or level of analysis: individual, household, national, regional, or transnational. It is in the evoking of past times that identities and values are re-created, and it is from this interpretative re-creating that change and innovation (modernity) are born.

Following this line of reasoning – and taking into consideration that the large majority of the families we are studying here ethnically identify themselves as Changana, Ronga or Matsua, and recreate the different aspects of their tradition on the basis of the Tsongan cultural model – we can identify this as one of the fundamental referents in our context.

However, viewing the social facts of the present through traditions and customs is not, as noted by Jean-Loup Amselle (1990: 62), enough to make intelligible the traditional facts that also result from present existing conditions. Likewise, to examine the innovative and modern elements without taking into account the traditional ideological frameworks that shape the perceptions of social actors doesn't allow us to understand the social present.

To understand the rationale, practice and social representations of the families under examination, then, we need to articulate the Tsonga model with others currently co-existing in their frame of referents (namely, the Western model) and with the whole set of dynamics of the social present. Only this theoretical and analytic perspective allows us to evaluate the many rationales which are in play, and understand processes of social and cultural change in the context under examination.

the deterministic outlook on social change upheld by the culturalist perspective but also the linear vision of the modernization paradigm and neo-Marxist structural analysis.

0.6. Summary of subjects under analysis

The data we obtained in our ethnographic work revealed that the situations of the families, in terms of economic solvency, composition of households, places of residence and type of dwelling, have undergone significant transformation in recent decades in all their multiple and complex dimensions.

Understanding the changes that have taken place in these families, the way they are (and have been) influenced by the economic, social and symbolic relations maintained by the social actors with the rural and urban milieus, gauging the perceptions of social actors with regard to these relations, and identifying how these perceptions condition social representations and practice to the point that they profoundly influence life in these *bairros* “*that are a city but not yet exactly a city*” (male aged 20, Polana Caniço A), were some of the objectives we set for ourselves in our research, and are the subject of the first part of this paper.

In the second part, we discuss the processes of acquisition of plots of land and the construction and transformation of buildings (houses). In this part we address the history of the family and the plot of land; the different strategies and practices that individuals and families deploy in their attempt to acquire land and build their own house on it;²¹ the plans, ideas and values that take form in the *home space*; the meaning of, and the importance attached to, the *home space* and the implications of the type of *home space* in the organization of the family, and in the maintenance and transformation of family relations and structures.

The third part of our study focuses on the internal dynamics of the *home space*. Our investigation was guided by questions related with the shelter and social reproduction of the family, sociability, privacy and sharing, which allowed us to understand the meaning that individuals attach to the *home space* and the way the use of this *home space* conditions everyday personal experience via the socially-constructed mechanisms which regulate social interaction. Part three also addresses power and gender relations inside the *home space*, examining the implications of gender relations for property rights and the changes which these relations undergo.

In part IV, we examine the economic activities pursued by family members in their attempts to obtain income and/or products for the acquisition, construction,

²¹ Their *own home* signifies that its occupants built it rather than leased it, and are owners and proprietors of the house, even if they are unable to produce the title deeds.

transformation and upkeep of their *home spaces*. Pluri-activity, the articulation of various sources of income and the dispersion of family members across different sectors of the economy, and sometimes across different geographic areas, is an important feature here. Agricultural activity is especially important, not just in social but also economic terms, for it perpetuates family ties between relatives who do not live in the same dwelling. Other important aspects are exchange and assistance in the form of income, goods and services between family members who do not share the same dwelling. The economic activities pursued within the *home space*, and their implications for the residential structure of the *home space*, were also examined. We also analysed the economic activities pursued by the women and young people of the families included in our study, their importance for the family budget, their impact in terms of gender and age relations within the family, and the way hierarchical and power relationships are constructed, in our attempt to understand the way families organize and transform their *home spaces*.

In the fifth and last part of our study on *home space* as a social construct we examine the processes whereby identities are constructed and re-constructed. Our analysis includes a discussion of the *home space* in its spatial and identity-forming dimensions, and the way these identity-forming processes structure themselves within the confines of home space, family and church, the latter two being key social networks in the universe under examination. We also examine school education and its relationship with the identity-reconstruction processes which generate a greater sense of individualism. Part V ends with an examination of the elements fuelling cohesion and disintegration of social networks and the processes via which social actors manage to articulate these elements.

PART ONE
BAIRROS, CITY AND COUNTRY

Abstract

In the first part of our analysis, we seek to understand the changes occurring in the studied families, and the way these changes are (and have been in the past) influenced by the economic, social and symbolic relationships which social actors maintain with the rural and urban worlds; we also examine the perceptions that social actors have of these relations, and how their perceptions condition social representations and practice. Our analysis opens with an examination of the classificatory system via which bairros, city and countryside are categorized. We examine a series of attributes and characteristics which, on the physical and behavioural levels, were considered simultaneously to be factors of differentiation and rapprochement between bairros, Cement City and the rural milieu. In doing so we shall describe the processes of mobility in which these families have found themselves involved, and discuss some of the opinions expressed with regard to the *ideal place to live*.

1. Relations between *bairros*, city and country

This here isn't the bush, we could say it's the city,

but it isn't exactly the city.

(male aged 20, Polana Caniço A)

The phrase cited above reflects the opinion of all those who were asked whether they considered themselves to be living in the city, regardless of whether their *bairro* of residence was located near Cement City²² (the case of Polana Caniço A) or in outlying

²² The city of Maputo retains a dualist character which is the legacy of colonialism and which in spatial and architectural terms is expressed in the existence of two urban nuclei: the so-called "Cement City", formerly the "white *bairros*", and the "reed *bairros*" where the indigenous population resided during the colonial period. At present, the "reed Bairros" (*bairros de caniço*) are designated simply *bairros* and reed

zones which have been occupied more recently, and where certain features characteristic of the rural milieu are clearly in evidence (Guáva, Jafar). In one sense, the family members considered themselves to be city-dwellers, for the economic activities in which they were involved, and the infrastructures to which they had access, were different from those found in the rural milieu. But in another sense, when urged to reflect on the differences between their *bairro* of residence, Cement City and rural zones, their answers varied, and this variation was observed in all *bairros*. While some viewed these differences as significant and claimed there were few characteristics associated with the city in their place of residence (apartment buildings, good roads, pavements, shops, wealth), others felt there were no significant differences and said the *bairros* had all the elements which characterize the city (electricity, public transport, shops, schools, type of houses). However, ambivalence and contradiction was rife in much of this discourse, especially in regard to the way family members classified the physical features of their *bairros* of residence, the economic, social and cultural conduct of themselves and of their neighbours, and the values associated with such conduct.

In terms of categorization, the *bairros* and Cement City embody a dichotomy-based model which places rural milieu and city in opposition. But these dualist, dichotomy-based classifications (developed city, backward countryside; rich city, poor countryside, and so on) with which city and countryside are labelled are products of history and, although expressed in words or labels which have remained identical over the course of time, do not always necessarily convey the same meanings and content. The objects and practices associated with these categories are fluid, contradictory and ambiguous; they have changed over time and according to the different contexts in which they have been, and are, used (Sahlins, 1985; Roque, 2009). In the same way, on the level of discourse the articulations between the characteristics and values associated with each of these two worlds are evident. These articulations were especially visible when the informants characterized life in their *bairros*, describing them in terms both of an urban ideal which has been symbolically transmitted over time and down the generations, undergoing re-creation and transformation as it does so, and of a rural milieu which has also been symbolically and dynamically idealized over the course of time.

has progressively been replaced by cement blocks. “Cement City” (*cidade de cimento*) is now usually designated the “city”, “the centre” or “downtown”. For more detailed information on the historic evolution of this African capital see Jenkins 2012a.

Since the pioneering study of Jamal and Weeks (1988) on issues related with the vanishing rural-urban gap, these same articulations between the rural and urban worlds in Africa have been observed by other authors (Costa 2007; Bruijn, van Dijk and Foeken 2001; Andersson 2001), in their attempts to move beyond the dualist, dichotomy-bound opposition that the classical categories²³ have assumed.²⁴

In a social, economic and cultural context such as urban Maputo, where transformation processes are occurring at an especially fast pace, the categories in which inhabitants and their dwellings are classified – and the categories they themselves use to classify themselves and their dwellings – conceal as much as they reveal about considerably more complex, fluid and ambivalent realities. These realities have to be decoded. However, searching in empirical reality for the meaning which these categories presently have for the social actors that use them does not mean we have to adopt an undifferentiated perspective on reality. Within the different contexts (Cement City, *bairros*, rural milieu)²⁵ there exist countless differences at various levels, but these differences nevertheless belong to a continuum: there is no unbridgeable chasm between different realities, but rather one reality shades into another and makes itself dynamically felt via multiple elements: persons, products, ideas, images and imaginary, symbols and ideologies (Binsbergen, 2000).

Finally, we should distinguish between perceptions of the inter-relations between different dwelling contexts and their inhabitants as yielded by analysis, and the perceptions that the social actors themselves have of these same realities. It's important therefore, when we discuss social representations, to bear in mind the relevant

²³ These classifications have been decisive in the way the so-called “theories of development” have approached the relations between the rural and urban milieux. Modernization theorists (Smelser 1964, Rostow 1964, Levy Jr. 1967 and Coleman 1968), authors supporting the Dependency Theory (Frank 1967, Dos Santos 1971, Amin 1976), and many studies of poverty have addressed the urban and rural populations of African as if an unbridgeable chasm existed between the two entities, which were taken to be fundamentally different. This is a direct consequence of the dualist, dichotomy-bound analysis which considers these two worlds, and their respective inhabitants, not only as spatially separate entities but as opposed and mutually exclusive categories in terms of their social and cultural characteristics.

²⁴ These authors have sought other concepts and terms to describe more satisfactorily the dynamics of reality as it is lived and experienced every day by social actors in their life strategies and practices. This we have expressions such as *multi-spatial livelihoods*, *travelling cultures*, *mobility of forms* and *ideological representations of mobility* (Bruijn, van Dijk and Foeken 2001: 3).

²⁵ “Until recently, the dichotomy between town and village dominated Africanist anthropology. Today we admit that, considering the constant movement of ideas, goods and people between town and village, and the increasing economic, institutional, political and ideological continuity between the two, the dichotomy has lost much of its explanatory value. Town and village have become complementary, even converging options within the social experience of Africans today; their difference has become gradual, and is no longer absolute” (Binsbergen, 2000: 7).

dichotomies and oppositions that shape families' concepts of their living spaces and their populations. The perceptions that different family members have of their current situation and of the places where they live, their expectations for the future and the strategies which on various levels they deploy in their attempts to make these expectations real, are obviously influenced by the individual and family history of each case, by the way each of these histories was dynamically formed by the different social, economic, political and cultural contexts, and by the way these histories determine, in conjunction with a whole series of conditioning factors relative to macro-structural aspects, the referents which the social actors are capable of mobilizing.

Thus, the referents mobilized in the construction of the current *home space* and the processes of transformation which are operative at various levels in family structures and relations, are intrinsically bound up as much with referents whose roots lie in the different contexts in which they have lived in the past, as with the context in which they now live and the relations established, on various levels, with surrounding contexts.

Mobility, which as we shall see was a factor observed in the large majority of the cases studied, made it impossible to immobilize the families in their spatial context. At the same time, it forced us to bear in mind not so much the oppositions between the different contexts (in this case, Cement City and *bairros*) and the differences which obviously do exist between them, but rather the *continuum* between them that we can detect via the movements and daily experiences of the families. And these experiences erode the oppositions (Cement City/reed *bairros*) in terms of which this African city – like so many others – has been examined in the past.

The principal question raised by this consideration is the applicability of the concepts *urban* and *sub-urban* to the populations living in these Maputo *bairros*. Are families who formerly lived in Cement City or who travel there every day to visit relatives, conduct business or work to be considered as “suburban”? Or should we classify them as “rural” because they cultivate a *machamba* and keep grain in their yards? Is there anything essentially different about these families that confers on them an identity distinct from that of the families who live in Cement City? And how do we conceptualize these differences when their places of residence are sought after by the inhabitants of Cement City, as places where they can build their own houses, on architectural models close to those followed by the residents of the *bairros*?

In the following pages we shall examine a series of attributes and characteristics which, on the physical and behavioural levels, were considered by the informants of this

study simultaneously to be factors of differentiation and rapprochement between *bairros*, Cement City and the rural milieu. In doing so we shall describe the processes of mobility in which these families have found themselves involved, and discuss some of the opinions expressed with regard to the *ideal place to live*.

1.1. - Cleanliness, beauty and organization

Generally speaking, the urban milieu is considered to be cleaner, more organized and more attractive than the rural milieu, and its inhabitants are viewed as cleaner than their country-dwelling counterparts: “*The man who lives in the city all the time is clean and the man who lives in the country isn't clean all the time*” (male aged 42, Mahotas). Between Cement City and the *bairros*, opinions diverge. While some consider that “*the city is cleaner, there are containers to leave the rubbish and there aren't any here*” (female aged, 31, Magoanine B), others affirm that:

The city has problems with pollution, bad smells and flies. The bairro has open spaces and we can breathe clean air there. The city is dirty, while the bairro is clean. We keep the streets and the schools and the churches clean (...) in the bairros people are always cleaning (female aged 45, Jafar).

Organization – defined in terms of availability of space, size of plots of land, existence of clearly-defined communication arteries (roads and streets) and parcelling (official or otherwise), is another aspect associated with the urban milieu, and which is positively appraised in the comparison between *bairros*:

This bairro where I live is better, because it isn't like Xipamanine, Xiquelene or Mafalala, people haven't got it good there, the plots are small, the kitchens and bathrooms are nearby and everything's disorganized” (female aged 36, 3 de Fevereiro).

With regard to *beauty*, opinion is unanimous in considering Cement City to be prettier than the *bairros*, as it lacks the “*reed houses and the yards with thorn bushes*” (female aged 43, 3 de Fevereiro) and “*has pavements and apartment buildings*” (female aged 43, Mavalane B). This is also one of the reasons informants give for having

constructed (or wanting to construct) the cement-block perimeters around their plots of land which are progressively driving out the thorn bushes, for long a characteristic feature of the *bairros*. Cement walls are *more attractive*, while at the same time, in the words of the informants, they prevent people in the street from seeing inside their houses and plot of land, thereby protecting them against burglars and creating a greater feeling of security. But cement block walls are themselves an expression of the economic situation of the families who built them, and function as a kind of showcase which reflects in a particularly visible way what they supposedly wished to conceal: “*When I see a big wall like this one my neighbour has, I think he’s a rich person because he doesn’t want passers-by to see what’s inside the yard*” (male aged 42, Mahotas).

The association of urban features (in this case, cement) with beauty, cleanliness and to some extent wealth (or less poverty at least), and the parallels drawn between rural features (land, plants) and filth and ugliness, is a recurrent element in the discourse of the informants. However, some urban features articulate with other features whose roots lie in the rural world and are positively associated with these *bairros*. Lower population density, for example, is characteristic of rural zones and is viewed as something positive: “*I’d like to have more private space, people here live on top of each other*” (male aged 45, Mahotas).

1.2. Infrastructure, goods and services

In terms of infrastructure and access to goods and services, the *bairros* are considered to belong to the “city” “*because they have energy*” (male aged 47, Polana Caniço A), “*they have public transport, hospital and school nearby*” (male aged 45, Mahotas). But informants also noted that the *bairros* don’t have everything (while the city does) and are therefore “*incomplete*”. Parcelling and the existence of communication arteries and public transport were cited (more frequently than proximity to Cement City) as factors indicative of the degree of urban development of the *bairros*:

The bairro of Guáva is more of a city than here, I’m talking about streets, there’s an organized street layout and here there are no streets. This isn’t the city here (female aged 43, Mavalane B).

While access to certain consumer goods is also mentioned as an element which distinguishes the *bairros* from Cement City, “*in the city they play PlayStation and here we play football*” (male aged 19, Mahotas), most informants consider that in terms of consumer habits “*there is no difference*”, as such habits derive more from the economic levels of individual families than the place where they reside (city, *bairros* or country).

The opportunity to cultivate *machamba*, which in the opinion of some allows them to live without money, was cited as a positive distinguishing factor in country life relative to life in the *bairros* and city. Money was associated with Cement City, and its absence with the country and the *bairros*:

There are differences between the people of the city and the bairro, the people in the city have living conditions, more money; those in the bairro are poorer (female aged 32, Mahotas); *The good life, the really good life, is in the country. In the city, if you haven't got money in your pocket you'll get nowhere. In the country you've got a little machamba with makhofi [cabbage] and salad [lettuce]* (male aged 42, Mahotas).

This idealization of rural life is a recurrent feature in the discourse of the older informants, and many said they preferred life in the country to life in the city: “*You go and gather firewood, you pick your food from the machamba and you get your water from the well, you don't pay for it. In the city you have to buy everything and in the country all you need is rain and life is easier*” (female aged 68, Polana Caniço A).

However, other informants made reference to the changes which have occurred in the rural milieu, and emphasized the fact that country life “*of yesterday*” is not “*the same as it is today, life's almost the same, you have to buy everything and even if people want to show solidarity to others they've no way of doing so*” (female aged 46, Polana Caniço A). With regard to access to land for cultivation, the *bairros* were considered to be closer to the country than to Cement City, and the fact that in some *bairros* it was possible to cultivate a *machamba* is viewed in a positive light: “*This bairro is good, we have no problems and we're satisfied with our lives here. There are people who still have machambas here in the bairro. That doesn't happen in the city*” (male aged 24, 3 de Fevereiro).

1.3. Behaviours and attitudes

When it comes to classifying behaviours, attitudes and education, we encounter the same ambivalence of opinion. Some informants felt that “*in the city the people are civil, well mannered, they don’t interfere with other people’s lives, it’s ‘Good Morning’ and that’s that (...) and in the bairros people like to gossip, stick their noses into other people’s lives*” (female aged 39, Hulene B). Behaviour in the city was positively viewed as preventing “*envy*” (female aged 31, Magoanine B). Other informants saw this reserve, associated with city life, as a negative thing which prevents solidarity and mutual assistance – aspects which they viewed as important and which in their opinion existed among the inhabitants of their *bairros*:

In the bairros (...) it’s unusual for a day to pass without going into a neighbour’s house to ask how they are. That doesn’t happen in the city, where everyone fends for themselves. Even if it’s salt you’re after, you only ask someone you’re very close to. Here [in the bairro] if someone has no chapa²⁶ to go to the hospital, their neighbours accompany them on foot. There’s a lot of love, you can knock on a neighbour’s door at any time and you won’t hear anyone complaining (female aged 37, 3 de Fevereiro).

Among the members of the families surveyed, some, on the contrary, did not see any differences in this regard, and felt that “*a spirit of neighbourliness, getting along and solidarity*” are found equally in the country, the *bairros* and Cement City: “*When someone shouts, there’s always someone who goes to help*” (male aged 54, Polana Caniço A). Similarly, some informants claimed there was no difference in educational terms between country, *bairros* and city: “*When someone lives in Gaza and has the resources, when their children are born they get the same education as we get here, you can still give your children a good education in Gaza*” (female aged 43, Mavalane B).

Use of Portuguese and ways of dressing were other factors cited as marking the difference between life in the country and life in the *bairros*: “*There are no country folk here in the bairro anymore, because they’ve changed their behaviour, the way they speak and dress. The country children spoke Changana, but here they’ve learned to speak Portuguese*” (female aged 36, 3 de Fevereiro). And yet, between the *bairros* and the city,

²⁶ Motorized collective transport.

differences of this kind are longer viewed as significant: “*Before, you noticed the difference in everything, now it’s no longer possible to say where a person’s from just by looking at them*” (female aged 24, Mahotas).

2. Origins and mobility

As noted above, the large majority of families surveyed (15), or their members, had lived in other *bairros* of Maputo before coming to live in their present *bairro* and plot of land.²⁷ Some family members (6) lived in Cement City because their family had a flat there; others, because they were employed there as domestics and lived in their employers’ homes (2). The other families lived in *bairros* of the periphery, and in some cases had moved *bairro* several times, and for various reasons (marriage, separation, living with family members who subsequently found their own homes, living in rented houses), but only one of the principal informants had sold their old house before buying the new one, while another had lost their previous house in flooding. At the same time, in 12 of the 19 families questioned, there were daily or very frequent visits to Cement City, for occupational reasons – because they worked there, or because they bought products there which they later re-sold – or to study or visit family members there.

Contact with the rural milieu and their region of origin was infrequent, although a significant number of families (7) still went there with some degree of regularity. This finding coincides with that of the socio-economic study, which revealed that most informants considered Maputo to be “their city”, although ties with their place of origin still had some importance. The same study concluded that ties with their rural zone of origin no longer required regular visits there, for which one of the reasons cited was that transport was seen as costly. The study showed that, generally speaking, ties with the rural interior are weaker than they used to be. The war was also a factor in this situation, as it displaced people from their native villages, where there was now “no one left to visit” (Andersen 2012a).

²⁷ The socio-economic study revealed that most interviewees were immigrants to the city (59%), while 41% originated from the province or city of Maputo. Most incomers had arrived in search of work or as refugees from the war which ended in 1992. Most were from the southern provinces, especially Gaza and Inhambane (Andersen 2012a). In the Physical Study (Andersen 2012b), 50 percent of interviewees stated that they had moved to their current plot of land between 1990 and 2010. This study concludes that the boom in urban expansion and densification occurred after 1990, a period when urban development happened at a faster pace. This process was driven by individual initiative, with very limited interference from the State.

In the same way, many of the informants in the ethnographic study said they had not been back to their place of origin for over five years, adding that they were “*unable to do so*”. And all informants (those who visited, or wished to visit, their region of origin) cited their relationship with their region of origin and with their ancestors as the principal reason for making the journey. In cases where informants did not visit their region of origin with the frequency they would have desired, ceremonies in honour of their ancestors were now held in their current homes. Others, even if they had not been to their family’s region of origin for several years, said they wished to return:

I don’t have the strength for it now and am thinking of going back to Inhambane for good, because there’s nothing interesting here now. The city’s looking nicer all the time but at my age I’m no use for anything and my place is where my ancestors are buried (male aged 68, 3 de Fevereiro).

In some cases, the absence of contact with their region of origin was due to conflicts with family members still living there, while other informants specifically stated they no longer had any ties:

I don’t identify with Manhiça, where my parents were born, because I grew up in Maputo. We’ve held our ceremonies in honour of our ancestors here in Maputo since my parents began living here. Whoever wants to visit the graves in Manhiça can, because my grandparents are buried there. When I die, I’d like to be buried here, because we’ve no tradition of going back to be buried in our home town (...)
My parents are buried here in Maputo (female aged 31, Magoanine B).

In only one case was the region of origin still the habitual abode of part of the family (mother and children) and the site of their principal dwelling. Its sojourn in Maputo was related with the head of the family’s job: “*The most important place is Guijá because that’s where my life is: I cultivate a machamba there, raise cattle. Here I’ve no machamba, don’t raise any livestock and in the end I’ll go back to Guijá and leave the house [in Maputo] to my children*” (male aged 47, Polana Caniço A).

In addition to mobility processes within the urban area of Maputo and between this area and the rural world, a significant number of family members lived in South Africa.²⁸ Some of these families still have close relatives there, and the remittances they send back to Mozambique are important for the family economies; others travel to the neighbouring country to buy products which they re-sell in Mozambique.

Some of these departed relatives had left their children in the care of the family nucleus resident in Maputo, and for this reason among others (assistance, school, deaths, unemployment) a significant number of the households addressed by our study included other relatives (nephews and nieces, grandchildren, siblings, daughters-in-law) in addition to the couple and their respective offspring.

My sister who lives in South Africa sends money and some products to reinforce the monthly shopping, as a way of helping with the household expenditure. She also sends money to help pay for the schooling costs of her children who live with me (female aged 39, Mavalane B).

The frequency of exchanges of relatives between nuclei of the same family living in different bairros of the city, elsewhere in Mozambique or even abroad (South Africa), the frequency with which relatives visit each other – visits often involving extended sojourns in each other's houses – and the exchange of goods, products and services which these family comings and goings entail, was observed in the present study and reported over and over again by our informants in their life stories. At the same time, some informants also spoke of family conflicts which had led to schisms between different branches of the same family, or between collateral relatives (these conflicts often appeared after the death of a husband, and involved disputes between the family of the deceased and his widow and children over possession of the house and plot of land).

Although these conflicts were not unusual, they were less common in the 19 families comprising the sample group for our study than cases of significant relationships of inter-dependency (of diverse types) between different nuclei of the same family. This forces us to recognize the importance of the family networks and the impossibility of understanding the different dimensions that shape and condition the life

²⁸ 15 of the families questioned answered that certain of their members (father, siblings, nephews and nieces) had lived, or were still living, in South Africa; six families mentioned members (husband, siblings, nephews and nieces) living in South Africa and with whom they were in regular contact; and in two families there were regular trips to South Africa, where family members bought products for re-sale in Mozambique.

strategies of households living at a given moment in a certain place of residence, without taking into account the set of relations (economic, social, symbolic) that they maintain and cultivate with a vast network of relatives.

2.1 The ideal place to live

Although most informants notionally rated Cement City above the *bairros* and the countryside, when questioned on the ideal place to live only a very small minority said they would like to live there. And many of these informants had already lived in this part of the city: *“I’d like to go back to the City, to Alto-Maé where I lived until I was 11, it could be in a flat”* (male aged 19, Hulene B.). Although few informants mentioned Cement City as their ideal place to live, this may be related to the fact that going to live in this part of Maputo was effectively something they considered to be completely out of their reach. When questioned on this aspect, they answered in terms more realistic than idealistic; but in other cases this explanation does not apply, for the informants specifically mentioned the drawbacks of life in Cement City compared with the advantages of life in the *bairros*, which they saw as the better option: *“The difference [with Cement City] is that you’ve got two bedrooms, a kitchen and a bathroom and there can be seven people living there. Here in the bairro you can build your bedrooms, I don’t like flat living”* (male aged 45, Mahotas).

In reinforcement of this idea, some informants mentioned that people who had previously lived in Cement City were now choosing certain of the *bairros* as their place of residence: *“Nowadays there are more educated people who are leaving the City for the Bairro because there isn’t any space there any more”* (female aged 32, 3 Fevereiro). Some comparisons were even drawn between Cement City and the *bairros* furthest from the city centre (Guáva) as zones of residence of the rich: *“The City and Guáva have the same way of life, some rich people leave the City and come here”* (female aged 27, Guáva). Some informants mentioned the economic differences between the inhabitants of the same *bairro*, differences which they drew along the lines of *new* and *long-standing* residents: *“We’ve been here [in the bairro] for a long time, we’re poor, we have nothing, it’s the ones who came from the City who are doing all right. It’s strange for us, because we’d like to be doing all right too. Very few of the people who have lived here for a long time are doing all right”* (male aged 42, Mahotas).

The *bairros* furthest from the city centre, where urban development is a more recent phenomenon (CMC, Jafar, Guáva, Congolote, Zimpeto) and some parcelling exists (and for which reason they are seen as being “more organized”) were recurrently cited in the discourse of the informants as ideal places for living. Many informants gave their ideal place as the *bairros* they currently resided in. This was more frequent among adults, and various reasons were given for this preference, ranging from proximity to workplace to the fact that they had built their homes there, had been born there or positively valued a number of characteristics to be found in the *bairro*:

I like the way I'm close to my work and I've already begun my house, I can't imagine having to start somewhere else (male aged 46, Polana Caniço A); *The ideal place to live is here in Albasine and we chose this bairro because it's near the main road, there's public transport and electricity* (female aged 45, Albasine); *Because I was born here* (male aged 65, Jafar).

The desire to return to their family's home region in the rural milieu was rarely cited (two informants), despite the fact that many families still maintained ties with the rural world. One of the informants who expressed this desire also kept his principal residence there, where his wife spent most of the year tending the *machamba*. He justified his preference as follows: *“The best house is the one from the tradition (the tumbuluku) that's in Gaza (...) it's my house, I have a machamba there, I raise animals and I can't do any of that here”* (male aged 47, Polana Caniço A). Another informant mentioned the fact that he and his wife were now “*getting on a bit*” and that “*the city no longer makes sense to us (...) my wife is coming with me to Jangamo, we're organizing things*”; yet this same informant also said he had no intention of selling his house, which “*will go to my children, who are young*” (male aged 68, 3 de Fevereiro).

The fact that many informants see their own houses as the *ideal place* to live and have no intention of moving explains the enormous investments they have made in their living spaces, into which they have channelled most (if not all) of the savings they have managed to set aside. And yet these investments go hand in hand with the high levels of residential mobility observed in this case study, for in 15 of the families included in the study the principal informants or their spouses mentioned that they had moved house at least once in the course of their adult lives. However, these two phenomena (the stability, permanence and security associated with investment in their current abode, and the

residential mobility we observed) demand analysis in greater depth and in relation with a multiplicity of factors. While mobility is associated with changes intrinsic to family structures and relations (marriage, separation, birth, death) and the processes of transformation which have occurred on multiple levels since independence (the rural exodus caused by the war, and economic transformations, especially in the urban land market), the investments made in these houses and plots of land, which themselves increasingly represent *economic resources*,²⁹ cannot be dissociated from these changes, as we were able to observe in the dynamics of construction and transformation of the home space. These dynamics are analysed in the second part of this paper.

Conclusions

The ambivalences and contradictions we observed during our analysis allow us to conclude that although in terms of categorization the bairros, Cement City and countryside are typically framed according to dichotomy-based models of classification, these models do not always convey the same meanings and content.

The bairros are sometimes considered as belonging to the city, or as “incomplete cities” depending on the greater or lesser presence of the infrastructure which marks one bairro as more urban than another. The bairros are considered as belonging to the “city” because “*they have energy*” (male aged 47, Polana Caniço A), “*they have public transport, hospital and school nearby*” (male aged 45, Mahotas). But informants also noted that the bairros don’t have everything (while the city does) and are therefore “*incomplete*”.

And although Cement City is an aspirational goal in abstract terms, not all informants would actually like to live there. The *ideal* bairro, on the contrary, is either the one the informants are currently living in, or a bairro which is further from the city centre, where urban development is a more recent phenomenon and some land parcelling still exists. The fact that for many the ideal place to live is the place they are actually

²⁹ As we shall see, this happens not only for reasons of the commercial value of the house and plot of land in the event they wished to sell it, but also because it is here that much of the income-generating activity and products which contribute to the sustenance of the family occurs and are produced. The location of the house is also of economic significance, as a house located in a busy spot can be used for the pursuit of commercial activity.

living in explains the enormous investment³⁰ they make in their living spaces, into which most of the savings they manage to make are channelled.

We also observed that, for some, access to certain types of consumer goods is a factor which distinguishes the bairros from Cement City, although for others (the majority) differences in consumption habits derive more from the economic level of the family than from the place it lives (city, bairro or countryside).

When it comes to classifying behaviours, attitudes and manners, we encounter the same ambivalence of opinion. For example, education (in general terms), the use of the Portuguese language and dress habits were so commonly cited as factors distinctive of life in the countryside, bairro or Cement City that they lost all differentiating power.

The difficulties in arriving at a comprehension of the families in terms of dichotomy-based models are also related with the high degrees of mobility we observed. The large majority of family members live in other bairros; some live in Cement City, and nearly every family we studied has members which go there with frequency. A significant number of family members live in South Africa, and some families still have close relatives who send money remittances which are important for the domestic economy. Travel between the bairro and the rural milieu is not very frequent. The desire to return to the family's land of origin is something mentioned only rarely.

We observed that mobility is also associated with important relations of interdependence (of diverse types) between different residential nuclei of the same family. Although some mention was made of conflict which led to the severance of some of these relationships, remarks emphasizing the importance of lasting family ties were more frequent. This forces us to recognize the importance of family networks and the impossibility of understanding the different dimensions that shape and condition the life strategies of households without taking into account the set of relations (economic, social, symbolic) that they maintain and cultivate with a vast network of relatives. The importance of these networks will be demonstrated throughout the following pages when you address the remaining issues related to the social construction of the *home space*.

³⁰ The Physical Study (Andersen 2012) estimated that on average 15,000 USD were invested per plot on the construction of houses. Real expenditure varied between 5,000 USD and 30,000 USD and in most cases stretched over many years.

PART II

ACQUISITION, CONSTRUCTION AND TRANSFORMATION OF THE HOME SPACE

Abstract

In part II of our study our attention turns to the dynamics underlying the mechanisms of acquisition, construction and transformation of the home spaces of the households we studied. First we examine the different ways of gaining access to and possession of a plot of land. We investigate the daily processes whereby the inhabitants/residents of the bairros included in our study gain access to, produce and reproduce space, giving it social and cultural value which gives meaning to their lives. We also examine the practices whereby the possession of land is secured and legitimized. Part II ends with an examination of the dynamics underlying the construction and transformation of the home space, and a discussion of the processes activated by individuals and families in their endeavours to use and transform land according to the plans and purposes they have conceived for it.

1. Modes of access to space

This land was inherited by mother. All this was ours, we divided it up and gave it to the members of our family and the others sold this
(male aged 42, Mahotas).

I sold my plot of land in Hulene as it was small and with the money from the sale I bought this from a gentleman, it was a clear plot with nothing on it and I built all this in one go
(female aged 44, Albasine).

The above extracts from the discourse of two informants reflects some of the dynamics that drive the mechanisms of access to space/plots of land on the level of the households addressed by our research.

In Mozambique, land is officially the property of the state. Access to and possession of it are regulated by the Land Act,³¹ which requires that the acquisition of rights of use and usufruct be effected (i) by direct state allocation in response to authorizations of applications; (ii) by occupation according to customary standards; (iii) by occupation by singular persons of Mozambican nationality who have been using the land in good faith for at least ten years (article 12, chapter III). The legislation also sanctions the transmission of rights via inheritance³² and, indirectly, the transmission of improvements made to the plot of land (article 16). For some authors, this is a system which polarizes a) a collective principle of land as a common asset under the management of the state and b) a principle based on individual property rights, under which land is a good whose allocation depends on the logic of supply and demand. Under this second principle, the state is responsible only for defining and enforcing development plans. This market-based logic is implicit in the transmission of built improvements, which normally occurs in exchange for payment in urban zones (Negrão, 2004: 6).

Evidence reveals that access to land via the customary systems³³ is still common, especially the transmission of possession via family inheritance:

The land was bigger, a big machamba that had belonged to my grandfather... my maternal grandfather was a Mahota chieftain. He divided [it] among his older sons who were already men and gave this land to my mother, then it was parcelled up and they sold a part, the other part went to members of the family (male aged 42, Mahotas).

The house belongs to my deceased father, but I'm the one who's responsible for it. We didn't buy it, we built [on it] a long time ago. I don't remember which year, I

³¹ Law no. 14/97.

³² Neither the Land Act nor its provisions specify the system of inheritance, or who is legally entitled to inherit. Both bodies of legislation make reference to the possibility of occupation by singular persons (men and women) or by the local communities, according to the customary practices and norms, on condition that these do not go against the constitution.

³³ The socio-economic study revealed that 32 percent of informants had moved to the plot of land they now occupied between 2000 and 2010, 32 percent had moved between 1990 and 2000, and the remaining 36 percent had been living on their current plot of land since before 1990 (and half of these since before 1980). Some informants (7%) declared they had always lived where they did. Approximately two thirds of the households included in this study had moved to their current home spaces in the previous two decades. As for the acquisition of plots of land, 58 percent of informants said they had bought their land, 18 percent that the land was awarded to them by fiat of one kind or another, and 10 percent said the land had been transmitted within the family (Andersen 2012b).

know it was before independence, we came here to the bairro when it was still bush and there were no houses (female aged 45, Mavalene).

We've always lived here. The land belonged to my grandfather, except afterwards it was parcelled up, but we lost land due to politics. I ended up with this plot, the adjacent one had a house too but it was separated by a wall along the road (male aged 56, Mahotas).

In addition to this transmission of possession and ownership of land within the context of the rules of kinship, there also persist situations where land and plots are acquired simply by virtue of their occupation over time. But these situations are increasingly rare. Only two informants said they had come into property via this mechanism: one by a gift from a friend and the other via a temporary loan after her spouse had abandoned her, leaving her with nowhere to live: *“I got this plot through a friend who gave me this land when I came back from South Africa. He had lots of land, I asked him and he gave. A friend”* (female aged 65, Jafar).

After my husband ran away I couldn't stay there [in a rented house] because I didn't work and I wouldn't be able to afford the rent, so I came to Guáva. I came with a girl who told me there were houses where you could stay and she found me this house to stay in, there was an old granny here already, the owners said “Stay for now, later we'll see” and I've been here a year now. This house belongs to the daughter of the grandmother, who bought it for her son who's in the city and turns up here from time to time, he just comes to see the house (female aged 27, Guáva).

More than being an act of generosity on the part of the owner of a plot of land who lends it to someone in need of a roof over their head, this case illustrates a strategy whereby individual and families with spaces and plots of land they are not yet occupying of exploiting seek to secure legitimate possession of the space. Between the owner of the plot/land and the person to whom the plot/land has been temporarily lent there is an implicit, and in some cases clear, contract in which each party becomes essential to the other, the first because he preserves his right of possession of the plot and the second because he now has a place to live.

Although there are still clear indications of living space being obtained via the customary mechanisms of access to land, most of the members of the families we studied

said they had “bought” their plots/land from third parties. According to the life stories related to us, these cases of purchase of land began to occur in the late 1970s, for various reasons: the need to have one’s “*own house and not get in the way of the aunts and sisters we lived with*” (Mavalane B); the need to alleviate the financial strain of living in a rented house (Polana Caniço A and Hulene B), the need to obtain a bigger plot of land; the desire to leave the house of one’s parents-in-law (Mahotas, Magoanine); and even reasons related with the floods (3 de Fevereiro). Some of these reasons are evident in the following comments:

I came to this plot of land in 1988 when I bought it. I forget how much I paid for it. I found out about the plot of land from my older brother who was already living in the bairro. It was a big plot that the owner who lived in South Africa sold to different families... When I bought [land] here it was bare ground, there wasn’t a single building (female aged 42, Mavalane).

I bought the land straight away, I didn’t need to think, but I’d bought [land] down there previously but with the floods of 2000 part of the land got flooded. I still hadn’t finished the other part of payment for the land, when the person who sold it to me gave me this plot and I paid a little more money than what I’d paid for the place I was living in (female aged 32, Mahotas).

The land was bought for 2.50 escudos,³⁴ it was a big piece of land, with mango trees, mahogany, and a little machamba with corn, when I became a widow I sold off a few parcels of land bit by bit and used the money to buy the cement blocks I made the house with, now all I have is this little plot of land (female aged 58, Polana Caniço A).

Even if the existence of a real estate market was not publicly or officially acknowledged, the testimonies of the members of the families studied confirmed the existence of a full-blown real estate economy on the urban periphery of Maputo, access to which is determined by the real market for land and which operates in the grey area between legal and illegal, between the formal and the informal. This market deals in

³⁴ The house was bought in 1974, i.e. during the colonial period, when the currency was the escudo.

rights to access to and possession of land with the sale of land/plots officially parcelled³⁵ or not, and improvements made to it, via the subdivision of space. This is a complex, multifaceted and fairly well structured market in which a multiplicity of actors are involved – locally-born citizens, networks of middlemen, municipal functionaries and local authorities. Typically, it is individual or collective perception of opportunity cost which determines which option is chosen.

The way this urban property market operates was described by Nielsen and Jenkins (2001, 2010), who identified different individual and collective strategies which are mobilized locally and based on the recreation of sociocultural values and norms with regard to land management and its adaptation to the new economic order in the context of liberalization. In the still-rural areas surrounding the *bairros*, new opportunities for transacting spaces emerge.

My husband was there on the day of the demarcation and he got the piece of land. He had a plot which is near the main street and I asked them to give us this plot which is deeper inside the bairro. I wasn't keen on the adjacent plot because it was near the road (female aged 31, Magoanine C).

We arrived here in 1990 and we bought the plot for 1000 but now you won't get a plot here for less than 50, 70 thousand meticaís, it's gone up a lot since then (female aged 32, Albazine).

My husband got in touch with some people from here to buy this piece of land, he didn't have anything here, just a shack that we dismantled and returned the material to the owner. I have a declaration from the Bairro that says the house belongs to me (female aged 39, Hulene B).

It was a big machamba that belonged to my grandfather that was divided into parcels and some of them were sold off bit by bit (male aged 42, Mahotas).

As the above comments illustrate, with growing demand for land and fear of future expropriations, individuals born in the *bairros*, acting individually, under state control or

³⁵ The *Home Space* project identifies four categories of access to urban land. These reflect current urban development processes and the role of the state in planning, namely: a) 'unplanned' areas; b) 'reordered' areas c) 'officially planned' areas and d) 'unofficially planned' areas (for a detailed explanation of these categories, see Jenkins 2012a).

in collaboration with local authorities and surveyors or functionaries of the municipal or district council, parcelled land, imitating existing urban regulations and in this way negotiating the transfer of rights to possession of land.

2. Practices for securing and legitimizing possession of space

An analysis of the practices whereby land possession is legitimized is essential if we are to understand the way the residents addressed by our study guaranteed their possession of land. Since the processes of access to, establishment and occupation of space is predominantly non-official, the families did not have the legal document – a DUAT certificate for the use and usufruct of land – which officially confers rights of access to land and plots and the respective legal legitimacy for their usufruct.

Of the 19 families included in the ethnographic phase of our research, seven did not at the time possess any such “piece of paper”. The situations are various: some neither have, nor ever had, the paper (2 cases); some had them in the past but do not know where they are at present (Polana Caniço A); others have no legal document “*since at the time of acquisition legalization of the space was not permitted, since it belonged to the state*” (Polana Caniço A) or because they had submitted the process to the municipal council a long time ago and were still waiting for a reply (Mahotas).

Of the few informants who said they had a document attesting to their possession of their land/plot, most were unable to specify the nature of the document.³⁶ A number of families had declarations certifying to possession issued by the *bairro* authorities, usually the residential quarter leader and the *bairro* secretary. Three households had sale declarations, and of these one did not have a declaration attested and recognized by the *bairro* authorities. The declarations issued by local *bairro* authorities do not confer binding rights on access to and possession of land, but in many situations they are the first documents to be demanded for the legalization of spaces, and for most people they constitute the initial recognition of possession of land.

³⁶ In some cases, informants were telling the truth when they affirmed they had documents confirming their possession of the plot but were unable to specify the nature of these documents, because the speaker was not always the holder of the rights to possession; but in other cases these affirmative responses may have been the politically correct option. In most cases, questions on the existence of property documents were greeted with indignation and informants were hesitant in answering. Even when the objectives of our research were explained to them, they became apprehensive, mistaking our research teams for municipal council functionaries who were drawing up records to subsequently remove or transfer them from their homes/plots.

Although all informants acknowledged the relevance of this process for the formalization and regularization of the possession and occupation of space, some distanced themselves from the process, not only because they were ignorant of the real procedures involved (themselves no less complex and costly), but also because in their view having papers and documents was not the only way of guaranteeing the right to possession and use/usufruct of the space – and its security. A similar conclusion was reached in the study of physical living conditions (Andersen 2012b), where in the great majority of the 102 cases examined, possession was not a question that gave any concern to residents, despite the fact that very few of them (if any at all) had property deeds and many occupied plots for which no title deed existed under current regulations, i.e. non-planned and non-officially planned areas.

As noted above, the fact that some informants had been born in, had inherited, or had been living for a long time and built their houses on, the spaces they currently lived in, was proof of the possession and secure nature of their property rights. For these informants, the absence of a corroborative document or “paper” did not deprive them of their rights over their lands, plots and houses. The following cases illustrate these dynamics:

Example 1 – F., a native of Inhambane, came to the bairro in 1981, living with his brother. In 1982 he bought his own plot from someone. Since then, he has exercised his right of use. He considers himself the owner of, and in charge of, the premises, because whenever a question arrives with regard to the house/plot he’s the one who “answers”. He has no legal document, since legalization of the premises was not possible at the time. He feels secure in his ownership of the house/plot because he has lived there for a long time (Polana Caniço A).

Example 2 – B., a native of Gaza, came to Maputo in search of work and has lived in his plot since 1984, after buying it from “*someone*”. He considers the house and plot to belong to him as the head of his household. He has no documents pertaining to the plot/house. He feels secure in his ownership of the house as he has lived there for a long time. He knows what he has to do to legalize his situation but views the process as expensive (Polana Caniço A).

In the minds of informants, security of possession of the plot and the respective right of use and usufruct of the premises was not always contingent on some kind of

authorization or recognition by the state authorities. As we shall see below, spaces constitute elements of identity which generate feelings of belonging and identification, which are appropriated and reinterpreted by family members.

In addition to questions of identity and feelings of belonging – even where no documents attesting to ownership could be produced – for some interviewees one of the guarantees of legitimacy of possession is the parcelling of land. For families, this process guarantees secure access to their land, as in their view it makes it more difficult to remove them. Parcelling confers practical legitimacy with regard to space/plot. Parcelling gives a token of conformity with state regulations, and is a step towards the future award of the documents attesting to the right of possession in regard to the space/plot. As we noted above, parcelling is not always official and occurs as part of the expansion of the property market in a context where – unlike urban growth, where the land is already parcelled and a minimum of infrastructure exists – land is first occupied and then parcelled, with infrastructure added later. However, it's important to note that not all individuals attach the same value to parcelling. As we shall see, there are other conditions and factors which in the perception of the residents of the *bairros* included in our study also confer validity on the possession of plots of land.

Evidently the absence of such parcelling – even parcelling without official sanction – generates some insecurity in relation to the possession of land. This insecurity manifests itself in a feeling of dissatisfaction mixed with uncertainty among residents, especially in the *bairros* of Polana Caniço and Hulene B, as they have no guarantee against future government or municipal intervention that removes them from their homes and appropriates spaces to make way for government projects or to service private interests. This dissatisfaction is exacerbated by the fact that these *bairros* are close to the *cement city* and the facilities it offers, such as public transport and basic social services such as healthcare. This mainly occurs in *bairros* where there was no official planning, or where parcelling has occurred without official sanction. Where the interests of the state or major private investment projects have prevailed, the resident populations have been removed and relocated to other places. Residents live in a constant dilemma between insecure possession and access to the facilities, infrastructure and services which their proximity to Cement City gives them. It's this dilemma that informs perceptions on the security of possession of space like this one:

I feel secure, but on the other hand I don't, because one of these days they might need the land to build something on and they'll demand deeds and whoever doesn't have one will be considered illegal” (male aged 54, Polana Caniço A).

Another situation which generates a certain insecurity is the fact that the members of the families covered by the study knew that many of the residents of their *bairros* were in a similar situation: they have no papers, but have never had problems.

[Do you feel secure in relation to your plot, and why?] *Yes. Because I live well (female aged 34, Guáva); We never started the legalization process (DUAT) because the land hasn't been parcelled. Yes, I feel secure, we've never had problems with our plot (female aged 42, 3 de Fevereiro); Yes, I'm secure because we bought [it] and we've never had problems (female aged 30, Magoanine C); Yes, I have a document from the former owner of the plot and the bairro secretary... yes, I feel secure because I've never had problems (female aged 44, Albasine).*

Even if many people had no documents attesting to their property rights, and even where land was not parcelled, our informants reported only a few cases of conflict over land, expropriation of plots, or other situations generating insecurity in relation to possession.³⁷ Various factors act as mechanisms which generate feelings of security in households with regard to their possession of the land they live on: long-term residence on the plot, knowing and being known by neighbours and *bairro*, recognition by *bairro* authorities, and the absence of conflicts or problems in relation to space.

Example 1 - V. does not feel secure about possession because he does not have documents and the *bairro* is not parcelled. V. does not see this insecurity as total, however, because “*nobody has papers in this bairro*” and “*if there are problems, the people on the block know you've been here a long time. They know there was nothing here, just bush, when you built here*” (Mavalane B).

Example 2 - C. bought a plot from neighbours. At present he has no documents. He had some papers (documents) but does not know where they are at present. He

³⁷ This situation was verified by the Physical Study (Andersen 2012b), where 75 percent of informants said they felt secure about their status as owners of the plots they inhabited; very few cases of conflict over land rights were recorded. This is surprising, given that insecurity about property is generally cited as a reason for residents not investing in their homes.

feels secure, however, because there have never been problems with the plot (Mavalane B).

Example 3 -T. has been a widow for 19 years and has no documents at present, as she lost them. She feels secure about possession of her house/plot, because no one can take them away from her, because of “*the government, you know*”. She says that after the death of her husband, his family tried to appropriate the house so it could sell it, but the bairro authorities intervened on her behalf (Polana Caniço A).

As these situations show, it is not just formal documentation which confers legitimacy on the possession of land. Other mechanisms exist, and these too generate perceptions of security among residents. Social and neighbourly ties are at the centre of this legitimization process. Daily interaction among residents, mutual prior knowledge of the dynamics of acquisition and occupation of space, the trajectories and life stories of each of the families, and affective investments made by residents in each other and in the *bairro* authorities are significant assets, to which people feel they can appeal where necessary for proving their possession and secure their rights with regard to the space. Therefore, and as we shall see in the following chapter, families invest their savings in their home spaces. This investment is not only an expression of their feeling of security relative to their rights to the space, but also a way of giving this security deeper roots.

3. Construction and transformation dynamics in the home space

3.1 From reed hut to cement block house: histories, plans and strategies

Of all the *bairros* included in our study, those of Ferroviário, Mahotas, Magoanine B, Guáva, Jafar and Albasine are those where the construction of houses is at its most dynamic. Enormous residential investment is visible in these *bairros*, in the form of a variegated series of activities underway inside the plots. In every block are yards and impromptu workshops dedicated to the production, sale and hire of construction materials used in the erection, renovation and extension of residences. These are *bairros* undergoing urban expansion, where the availability of space is greater, and which are considered as “organized” because they are relatively well ordered and parcelled, or

because they occupy an urban periphery where it is still possible to occupy the remaining rural spaces.

As for strategies for the construction of houses, we observed not one single pattern but several practices which in most instances are contingent upon the socio-economic standing of the household and the ability of the head of the household, often with significant contributions from other members of the household and family, to procure additional income and set it aside for buying materials for building, extending and renovating the house. Most families either bought ready-made cement blocks from third parties, made their own blocks in their back yards, or combined the two options. Which option they choose depends on many factors, as the following interview extracts show:

Once my husband came back from holidays, we bought size 15 blocks for the foundation and the size 10 blocks were made by a relative (female aged 36, 3 de Fevereiro); We bought the blocks for building the house because there's a lack of water in the zone so we couldn't make our own blocks. The wall blocks were made here. We hired wheelbarrows with jerry cans of water (female aged 31, Magoanine C); I bought the blocks in Benfica and hired two wheelbarrows to bring them here. Other blocks were made right here and I found someone in the T3 bairro to come and build the house (female aged 43, Mavalane B); In the first phase we made size 10 blocks and in the second phase we bought size 10 and size 15 blocks (female aged 50, 3 de Fevereiro).

The stories related by our informants also revealed that the construction process is a gradual one, a family project implemented over the intermediate and long terms. In most cases, construction begins with a makeshift reed house³⁸ which is replaced by a permanent house made of durable materials:

³⁸ The Physical Study (Andersen 2012b) revealed that the process whereby most older houses made of perishable materials were undergoing replacement (a process already visible in the 2000 study) was now over. Reed and other perishable construction materials which had been common 20 years previously were only rarely seen in the 2010 survey. The few reed houses still existing had mainly been built as temporary structures, providing accommodation for the watchmen who looked after the pieces of land. In a similar vein, 23 percent of the informants of the same survey said they had replaced a house made of perishable materials with a house made of durable materials. This evidence suggests that these processes are much more consolidated now than they were during previous studies, but remain totally informal, with little or no state involvement in land transaction processes (i.e. state actors are only involved on an informal level).

First we built a small reed house (...) We built the house little by little while we were living there and we only moved once we'd finished the house (female aged 36, 3 de Fevereiro); I began by building a reed house. At the time I'd made a reed wall. I began to build the cement block house in 1997. I began by building the house where I sleep (female aged 43, Mavalane B); We began construction with a reed house when we bought the land in 2004. The cement block house was begun in 2006 (male aged 47, PCA).

The decision to build derives not only from the fact that a cement block house represents the ideal dwelling in an urban context, but also from practical reasons related with the fact that such a house is conducive to a more peaceful life, with no need for the constant rebuilding and renovation that reed requires, owing to its degradation over time.

Few informants were the original occupants and residents of the land they lived on. They had gradually converted *machambas* and makeshift dwellings (reed houses and shacks) into permanent dwellings. Only in one case had the current resident bought the land with a house already built on it. Some informants who had begun with a reed house stated they had decided to make the change to cement blocks because “*reed isn't development*” (male aged 42, Mahotas), or because reed houses require reconstruction which is financially unsustainable:

I decided [to build a cement block house] because the reed house was falling apart and during rebuilding I saw I wouldn't take it if I had to build a new house every year. And so I decided to start a cement block house” (female aged 42, Mavalane B);

Another reason given was that with a cement block house “*there's no need to buy more materials, it's just the once, while reed can go rotten and bring more expenditure*” (female aged 32, Mahotas).

Additionally, as family histories on the use of land/plots showed, the reason the first house to be built is of reed is that such a house can be built relatively quickly and therefore permits a quick claim on the legitimacy of possession in the eyes of neighbours, community and even local authorities. Reed houses also function as a stepping stone which allows families to set savings aside little by little for the subsequent purchase of enough construction materials to permit work to begin on the construction of a cement block house: the permanent house which the family has set its sights upon.

Other models exist in parallel with the reed-to-cement paradigm. Of the 19 cases we examined, the exceptions belonged to a house which had evolved from the reconstruction of a house made of wood and zinc (Mavalane B) and two dwellings which had evolved from outhouses made from conventional building materials³⁹ (3 de Fevereiro and Polana Caniço A). The dwelling initially made of wood and zinc is typical of houses built during the colonial period and for some time after independence; in the case of the outhouses, this is an option which affords the possibility exists of living elsewhere during the initial phases of construction.

The evolution from a perishable reed house to a durable cement block house is neither linear nor uniform from one family to another. In some instances, the same building had some partitions made of makeshift materials (reed, wood, piles and zinc) and others of conventional materials: evidence that different building materials are not always mutually exclusive, although their coexistence is temporary, pending the completion of the permanent dwelling.

One case in the *bairro* of Polana Caniço A illustrates how local construction materials and techniques can co-exist with their modern equivalents: the plot was bought in 2004, whereupon construction of a house – a single-room reed hut with zinc roof – began. At a later stage this hut was coupled on to another partition made of cement blocks, with a zinc sheet roof. At present, the cement block partition is used as the main bedroom, while the reed partition is used an extension, for receiving visitors and as a kitchen at night or when it is raining. Another room is now under construction: a bedroom for the children, who sleep with their parents at present. The family plans to totally replace the reed partition with a larger room in cement blocks that will equally serve as a visitors' room and dining room.

Our research recorded cases of poorer households which, due to the difficulties they faced in purchasing building materials to make a start on work on a permanent house, had lived for long periods in one reed house after another, and had been forced to sell off parts of their plots to raise the funds necessary for building a permanent house, as the following testimony illustrates:

³⁹ In Maputo, this term designates the construction materials used in so-called permanent dwellings – normally cement blocks with zinc sheet roofs, in opposition to the construction materials of so-called perishable dwellings (i.e. built of reed).

T. is a fisherwoman. She is 58 and has been a widow for 19 years. She has five children, three of whom live with her. She has lived in the bairro of Polana Caniço A for over 20 years, since she and her husband arrived here and purchased a plot of land. They began living in a reed house with two bedrooms and a living room. When T.'s husband died, the house collapsed from disrepair and the absence of someone to renovate it. T. then had another reed house built, with the help of her neighbours. They subsequently built another three small reed houses which deteriorated little by little, until in 2003 they decided to sell part of their land to build a cement block house. T. and her children began building their cement block house in the same year, but it was not completed because they were also using the money to cover household expenditure. The unfinished house has two bedrooms, one for T. and her daughter, the other for her two young sons. T. has no prospects for finishing the house, and hopes that one day her children will be able to carry on with the work (Polana Caniço A).

This plot was very big. I sold it off a little at a time because I needed the money. It was with the money from the sale of the land that I built this cement block house (male aged 65, Jafar).

The experiences and life stories related to us show that different construction techniques co-exist in the building of houses, from local and traditional techniques to mixed techniques incorporating new elements to houses built entirely using modern techniques; and they also show that building one's own house is an "enormous battlefield" strewn with failures, successes and hopes (Salvador, 2004: 6). These experiences also show that the dynamics of development in the city of Maputo involve multiple house building processes in which the histories and trajectories of the families can be traced.

3.2. Building a house: the actors involved; time, plans and phases of construction

In most of the cases we studied, houses were built by a bricklayer, normally working with helpers, specially contracted for the purpose; only in one of the 19 cases was the owner of the house also its builder (Polana Caniço A), and even in this instance

this was only true for certain phases of construction: for others he still had to resort to professionals and tradesmen.

In the peripheral *bairros* of the city, and especially in areas undergoing urban expansion, a growing number of (predominantly) young people are learning the skills of numerous building trades – masonry, metalwork, carpentry, plumbing and electricity – while employed in building projects. These learning processes are indicative of the opportunities offered by the growing demand for the construction of permanent, cement block houses.

When I arrived, this was a reed house and it was built on later. When I began making blocks, I started by buying cement and every month I bought four bags to mix blocks. I knew how to mix blocks but I didn't have time and I found some kids. When they mixed a bag they got 55 blocks and each bag paid 25 meticaís, and the kids mixed 2 bags. The kids were between 16 and 18. I know them and I'd seen them mixing blocks in other houses before. The blocks were/are aggregated with sand that I got out of a hole, that afterwards I used to make a septic tank for the bathroom (male aged 45, Mahotas).

For the large majority of urban youth, the only possibility for social ascent is work, and for the youth of Maputo jobs are very difficult to find. This forces them into the informal employment market which dominates, by a long way, the Mozambican economy (OIT, 2006).

The experiences of our informants suggest that even in a thriving housing construction market which is driving accelerated transformation in the *bairros* of the city, family ties, neighbours, prior acquaintance and employment networks play an important role in finding and selecting personnel for building houses.

In other words, labour is recruited within the family: “*The builder who made the house is a relative who received a symbolic payment*” (female aged 36, 3 de Fevereiro).

The man who built the house is my stepfather, he came to build this part, he's been a builder for a long time, he's done a lot of this work. I only gave my stepfather a token payment but he didn't charge me, I only gave him... A builder I don't know, I have to pay more so the other part of the house it was another builder who did that, because my stepfather is in Zandamela. He works for a building contractor, and lives here in Mahotas, up there (male aged 45, Mahotas).

The networks of acquaintances of relatives are another source of labour (builders): *It was my son-in-law who found the builders and it was he who paid them* (female aged 45, Albasine); *My brother who's a civil engineer made the plans for the house and got his builders to build it* (female aged 37, 3 de Fevereiro).

And then there are friends and neighbours:

When I was working as a street vendor downtown I met people that put me in touch with this builder, he was a Matswa (female aged 33, Mavalane B); *The house was built by hired labourers, some of them neighbours; the contracts were in stages* (male aged 48, Polana Caniço A).

These networks of prior acquaintances which structure the operation of the housing construction market (Morten, 2010) help protect the client and his/her investment. Construction of a house is an investment whose social and symbolic relevance is so great that it is always necessary to have (or create) a relationship of trust with the builder. Social proximity to the builder, and a relationship of trust (always with a certain reserve, however) supposedly neutralize the risk of deviant conduct such as theft of building materials, which is viewed as common practice in this field and has damaging consequences for the management and execution of individual construction plans:

The builder left, he abandoned the job halfway through before the last beam was in place. He got money to go and buy material for the beam and he left, never came back and I had to get another builder to finish it. Last year I had to make the ceiling higher because it was very hot and I had to find another builder (female aged 43, Mavalane B).

Our research also sought to determine how much time people took to build the houses they wanted to build, and what their preferences in terms of layout (i.e. number of rooms) and the respective conditioning factors were. With regard to the former, many informants remembered the year they began building their house but not how long construction lasted. This situation does not reflect a lack of knowledge but rather the fact that, on many occasions, informants referred to major life or natural events (births, matrimonial alliances, death, floods) as their chronological landmarks.

Cross reference of their various indications allowed us to determine that individual and family home construction projects last between one year, in the case of smaller houses (normally one or two rooms plus living room), to 10 years or more in the case of larger houses (frequently with three rooms).

I can't remember exactly how much time it took us to build this house. I know we began in 2000 and it took us a while, maybe two years. (male aged 36, 3 de Fevereiro); This house didn't take a year to build, I began building one room and living room and began sleeping there and afterwards I added another room and this food store out here (Mavalane B); It took us three years to build the outhouse and we took our time, it was just to please my mother because for us our lives were in the city (case 32, 3 de Fevereiro); It took me a long time to build this house. At the time I was doing business in Swaziland. I used to buy second-hand clothes there and sell them here. I began by building one room, then another, then another and the living room (3 de Fevereiro).

Building a house is a long-term project whose design and execution are carefully planned by the families over the course of years, and the project does not always materialize. The economic difficulties in finding construction materials are frequently mentioned as the principal conditioning factor, informing considerations such as “*the work will never be finished*” (female aged 36, 3 de Fevereiro) or “*the house is changeable, it can be altered to meet needs*” (male aged 47, Polana Caniço A).

In most cases, houses were not built according to architectural designs or plans which specified factors such as number, dimensions and purpose of partitions. Of the 19 families included in our study, only two lived in a house whose design they had conceived (Albasine) or which was built from plans (3 de Fevereiro). This situation illustrates how, generally speaking, families build the house they *can*, not the house they want or dream of.

In the most common scenario, there were building designs without floor plans but with a rough drawing: “*When I began building I had no plans on paper... the floor plan was in my head*” (male aged 68, 3 de Fevereiro).

We didn't have plans. We made it up in our heads. My husband drew what he wanted in the sand and the builders made it. We made two bedrooms, a living room and a veranda at first. We added another room and a kitchen later. But I don't

know what we were thinking of, because for example the living room's very small, all that fits is the couch and centre table. There's no room for the bookcase or the dining table. My room's small too, my suitcase doesn't fit in it, I had to put it in another room (female aged 31, Magoanine C).

We didn't have construction plans, just a drawing on paper. My husband did the drawing and when it was built the house was just like it was in the drawing (female aged 36, 3 de Fevereiro).

In these circumstances, the final appearance of the house is the outcome of a process of negotiation, articulation and balancing of the intentions and ideas of the head of household, his/her family, and the ability of the builder. In another scenario, an architectural design or plan does exist but is not followed; or changes are made to the design once building is underway. In some cases, these changes are dictated by imperatives of space; and in many instances changes to the original floor plan are determined by changes in the family structure which generate extra demand for space: *“There are plans, but the house wasn't built like them. The plot is small and that didn't help much, and I added the kitchen and two rooms myself”* (female aged 42, 3 de Fevereiro).

There are plans for the house but they were changed. It was to have had a veranda but we had to cut back and make more space for rooms because the family is enormous. I asked a designer colleague to do the plans for me and it was this colleague who found me the builder who came to make the foundations and build the rest (male aged 54, Polana Caniço A).

3.3. Type of house and its influence on family organization

As we have seen, the families built their houses in phases. The discourse of our informants showed that the size of their houses, the shape they acquire over time and the modifications made to them tend to reflect the need for infrastructure to respond to and accommodate the changes which occur in the organization of the family during its life cycle.

Houses tend to evolve from smaller to larger, from few rooms to more rooms, from simple to more complex. Construction of a house may begin with a room and living

room, to which another two rooms are later added (two cases); or it may comprise two rooms, living room and veranda, with another room and a kitchen added at a later stage (one case in Magoanine C); or it may begin as sleeping partitions and living room and later grow to encompass the bathroom and kitchen which were initially built as self-contained annexes (one case in Hulene B). In this process of gradual construction, as soon as a new section is completed⁴⁰ it is immediately occupied and used in accordance with the needs of the household. One case in Polana Caniço A is a good illustration of these dynamics:

F. acquired the plot of land in 1982 and began building a cement block house on it in the same year. The house was built in phases, as resources for buying building materials allowed. There was never a plan specifying the partitions or the model of the desired house. At first, F. planned to build two rooms and a living room. This was done, and the initial phase of construction ended in 1995. Then they needed another room. When this room was ready it was occupied. With a growing family, F. later added another two rooms for his children, a kitchen in the back yard, and five other rooms which he rents out.

The size of the house and the dimensions of its rooms is one of the principal concerns of the families. Few informants (three cases) considered their houses to have enough space to accommodate the resident members and the visitors they frequently receive. In general, they think their houses are too small and fail to meet the needs of their families. Various events – the birth of a child, the growth of one child and the marriage of another, the arrival of visitors for long-term stays, the need to look after a niece or nephew, separation/divorce and the resulting return home of adult offspring – impose additional demands on space, and in many cases the only solution is to make the house bigger.

All these factors drive families on the one hand to improvise the use of space in an attempt to respond to immediate needs, and on the other to constantly devise new plans for enlarging living space in anticipation of future needs: a situation which lends weight to the idea that “*the house is always under construction*” and is “*a work in progress*”.

One case in the *bairro* of Polana Caniço A illustrates these dynamics. The house has four rooms and a living room and was, essentially, built according to plan, although

⁴⁰ And what “completed” means can vary enormously.

without the originally-planned veranda. The older, married son sleeps in one room with his wife and son. The head of the household sleeps in the other (main) bedroom with his wife and their younger children. In the third and smallest bedroom sleep two boys (a son and a nephew, the son of the head of household's brother). Although according to the head of the household the five girls were supposed to sleep in another bedroom, but they actually sleep in the living room because the room originally intended for them is used as a kitchen. In the light of the current situation the family now plans to build another room, separate from the house, to serve as a kitchen and thereby liberate the other bedroom for use by the girls. In the words of the head of the household:

I'd like to build another bedroom, a kitchen and a pantry, so the living room really is a living room (...) so the girls can use their room which is the kitchen (...), so the food can be kept in the pantry and I can lock my bedroom. Just now we can't lock our bedroom because that's where the food is, the kids go in there. Sometimes I get back from work to find them sitting on the bed, and they shouldn't be. With the house in the situation it's in now, my children don't know the difference between bedroom and living room (male aged 54, Polana Caniço A).

Excepting those cases where the need to enlarge the house derives from the need to create space for income-generating activities, the need to ensure privacy, modernization and enlargement to accommodate the changing needs of the resident household are all elements which shape the aspirations of the families with regard to the future of their houses:

What I'd like to do if I had money is get rid of this [lemon] tree and build another room to rent out, because that's what would help me. Even if I don't build a room I can make a barraca⁴¹ to sell things from, as I'm looking onto the street and I might catch some custom (female aged 42, Mavalane B).

The first thing I want to do is cement the house and buy some armchairs and they told me it's three bags of cement that cost 700 meticais in all and the armchair is important to be seated properly. As for the windows, I can put them in one by one and the armchairs I have to buy all at once. There are no windows in the rooms.

⁴¹ *Barracas* are booths or cubicles (normally made of cement blocks) built onto the house, with a small opening that functions as a shop counter.

The most important thing for me is comfort, safety is necessary but... (male aged 45, Mahotas).

I have plans to put in a suspended ceiling. We're thinking of modernizing the house, making little improvements like paintwork, putting in a suspended ceiling. I'd like to have a house with spacious living room and bedrooms (female aged 31, Magoanine C).

I have plans to build another two bedrooms in the house, that way we'll have one just for the girls, one for the boys, one for me and my wife and one for visitors (male aged 45, Mahotas).

As we can see, the plans for the future (“dreams” was the word used by informants) of their houses embody an aspiration to modernity, the search for status and, above all, a greater identification with the city and its ways of life. Common elements in these “dreams” are paint (renewal or ex novo), installation of plumbing, alterations to the format and number of partitions in the house, installation of a suspended ceiling, construction of a veranda, improvements to kitchen and bathroom and their incorporation into the house (they are generally located in the yard) and improvements to the electrical installation.

Conclusions

One of the major conclusions of this part is that the acquisition, construction and transformation of the *home space* are social and cultural processes which gives meaning to the lives of individuals and families.

We observed several co-existing mechanisms for gaining access to space, which essentially involves invoking traditional land transmission rights in combination with an appropriation, reinterpretation and manipulation of the state-prescribed legislation which regulates access to land. This takes place – and gains meaning – in a context where individuals are seeking to exploit the opportunities emerging in the urban property market. This market is increasingly manifest in the expansion of the peri-urban bairros and the occupation of the rural space surrounding the city for residential and commercial purposes. All of these processes remain associated with the state’s inability (lack of resources is one reason) to allocate land in an efficient and appropriate manner. In this

more or less structured, complex and multifaceted market, in which a large number of agents are active and whose field of operation is the interface between the legal and the illegal, the formal and the informal, rights of access to and possession of land are transacted with the sale of plots of land – officially parcelled or not – together with their built improvements, via the subdivision of space.

Another conclusion was that various methods exist for securing and legitimizing the possession of space by the individuals and households we studied. In the minds of our informants, security of possession of the plot and the respective right of use and usufruct of the premises are not always contingent on some kind of authorization or recognition by the state authorities. In the cases we studied, the absence of a corroborative document or “paper” did not deprive them of their rights over their lands, plots and houses. Social actors keep the legal process at arm’s length, not only because they are unaware of what procedures are actually involved, but also because they do not see the possession of papers and documents as the only way of ensuring security of possession and the right to use space.

One recognized way of securing legitimacy of possession is parcelling. This process secures access to land, for it confers, and secures, practical legitimacy with regard to space/land. Yet this is not the only method, and not all individuals or families attach the same value to it. Other mechanisms also generate feelings of security with regard to the possession of land: living on it for an extended period of time, whether through loan, purchase or birth; mutual recognition in the bairro and vicinity; recognition by the bairro authorities; the fact that many bairro residents are in a similar condition relative to the absence of documents attesting to possession; and the absence of conflicts or problems relative to the land/plots that families possess.

From our analysis of the processes of construction and transformation of *home space* we concluded that for the individuals and families included in our study, building their own house, preferably a permanent and lasting one, is one of the main reasons for acquiring a plot of land. The house is more than a building, a piece of physical infrastructure, with walls, doors and windows; it also embodies the desires and ideals of the family, and its construction is the object of individual and family strategies. In the imaginary of these families, building a house represents the successful collective trajectory of the family, in a context marked by social and economic adversity. Of the strategies we examined, we observed that building a house is a drawn-out process – one that takes place over the medium or long terms – and is not always guaranteed to reach

completion. Houses are subjected to various transformations designed to meet requirements of use of space that change over time, and to respond to changes in composition and size that take place over the life cycles of the households.

PART III
**THE HOME SPACE: USES AND ORGANIZATION,
GENDER AND POWER RELATIONS**

Abstract

The third part of our study focuses on the internal dynamics of the *home space*. It begins by examining the use and organization of space in the house/plot, in an attempt to understand how the different dimensions are structured, how the space available for these functions is distributed, and how space is *shared* among the different family members to allow the co-existence of common and private areas. Our research was oriented by issues related with shelter, social reproduction of the family, sociability, privacy and sharing. This analysis allows us to understand the importance people attach to their *home space* and the way the use of this space conditions everyday experience via socially constructed mechanisms which regulate interaction, and the way space – house and plot – is shared by family members.

Finally, we turn our attention to gender and power relations in the *home space*. We do this by addressing the implications of gender relations on property rights and changes to these relations. We investigate how gender and power relations are expressed within the *home space*, and how these relations are reproduced, shaped and transformed: via everyday practice and in accordance with different ideological frameworks and cultural models.

1. Use and organization of the *home space*

An examination of the dynamics of use of home and plot allows us not only to understand the significance and importance people attach to *home space* but also the way the use of *home space* structures the life experiences of those who live there and conditions the way they create, transform and experience the *home space*.

Despite the physical and contextual differences between the *bairros* covered by our study, and between individual home spaces, certain patterns in the use of *home space* could be observed in all the families studied.

The *home space* is seen as a place where people can live and rest, and simultaneously as a place where they can pursue a range of domestic, income-generating, productive⁴² and social activities. These activities are frequently pursued in an inter-related manner, in the different places that constitute the *home space* (house and plot).

Therefore the *home space* is fundamentally a place where family relations involving many dimensions and complex power games are structured and enacted. In these relations and power games, where age and gender are structural elements, the use of space and the individual and collective rights that the different family members hold with regard to the space are simultaneously imposed by the normative referents embodied in the different ideological frames of reference, and deriving from the everyday practices that physical structures and available space enable. These assemblages of space are also the outcome of models and ideals constructed from the finite range of possibilities that the material and economic conditions of the families allow.

1.1. *Home space* as a place of shelter and social reproduction

The *home space* is primarily seen as a dwelling and a shelter for the members of the family, as a place of accommodation and social reproduction whose domestic activities are directed at the upkeep of the members of the family and the family group.

To understand how *home space* works as a place of shelter for the family members, we first have to understand how it is conceived and organized. Based on our observations, nearly all the dwellings, whether erected on a temporary or permanent basis, finished or unfinished, have closed interior spaces whose subdivisions follow structural patterns based on the classification of partitions into bedrooms, kitchens, visitor rooms, living rooms and bathrooms.

The ways in which the *home space* is used and managed as a place of shelter and accommodation depends on the composition of the family, the dimensions of the house and the nature of the relationships existing between the different members of the family. Of the 18 families we studied, seven live in houses with three bedrooms, six in houses with two bedrooms, three with four bedrooms and three with one bedroom.

⁴² Activities in the *home space* generating income and produce are examined in the next chapter, as part of an analysis of the economic activities of the different family members.

The dimensions of the house reflect not only the aspirations of the family in terms of its ideal house and the needs of the family, but also the state of evolution in which the house currently finds itself. As we noted above, in terms of their construction, dwellings grow over time in accordance with the needs of the family and the availability of resources; as the house takes shape, temporary dwellings (often outhouses or reed houses) are occupied.

As places of shelter, houses are managed in diversified fashion. With families living in houses of type one (one bedroom) and type two (two bedrooms)⁴³ houses, and whose composition varies from nuclear families of parents and children (and occasionally one or more relatives) to single-person families or single-parent families (one parent and offspring), managing the use of space is a less complex task. In type one houses, the members of the family shared the bedroom. In type two houses, the use and management of space (i.e. bedrooms) tended to fall into one of the following patterns: (i) the head of the family sleeps in one bedroom, the tenants in the other (Mavalane B); (ii) the head of the family shares one of the bedrooms with his/her children while the other relatives (sister and grandmother) sleep in the other room (two cases in Mavalane B); (iii) the head of the family shares one of the bedrooms with some of his/her children while the oldest son sleeps in the other bedroom (one case in Polana Caniço A); while in (iv), the only instance of a polygamous family, the man sleeps in one wife's bedroom or the other's, while the other dependents sleep in the living room (one case in Jafar).

In houses with a greater number of rooms (types three and four), families are more complex in their composition and in many instances include other closer or more distant relatives as well as live-in employees. At the same time the management and use of these places as *shelter* is also complex, as the following examples show: (i) one bedroom for the head of the family, spouse and/or younger children, another for older children and another for close relatives of the head of the family, namely sister/brother, cousin or mother (cases 23, 73 and 86); (ii) one bedroom for the head of the family and spouse, one bedroom each for sons and daughters respectively, and another for close relatives of the head of family (mother, sibling or cousin) (cases 30, 32 and 92).

In some situations, rooms are not used for the purposes they were originally intended. One example, in the *bairro* of Polana Caniço A, illustrates this. The dwelling in question has four bedrooms and is home to 12 people: in the first bedroom sleep the

⁴³ In Mozambique, houses are typically classed by the number of bedrooms they have: thus a type one house has one bedroom, a type two house has two bedrooms, and so on.

oldest son with his wife and child; in the second (main) bedroom sleeps the head of the family, his wife and younger children; in the third bedroom sleep the (older) sons and nephews; while the five girls, daughters and nieces sleep in the living room because the fourth bedroom is being used as a kitchen.

This organization and use of space is not static but subject to alteration, especially when the families receive visitors. Just how flexible the use of space (i.e. bedrooms) is depends on who exactly is visiting and how long they plan to stay, while the allocation of space also depends on the sex, age and status of the visitor. In some families, longer visitor sojourns tend to alter the way space is distributed for use by members of the family, and to modify usage patterns to meet the new accommodation requirements:

When a visitor comes, the treatment varies according to sex; if the visitor is a woman she sleeps in the main house with my wife and I go and sleep with my cousin outside; if the visitor is a man, it also depends how many, if it's just one he sleeps with my cousin and if there are several they sleep in the main house and it's the women who move out (male aged 47, Polana Caniço A).

If we get visitors it depends on the sex of the person, if it's a man I leave the room and give it to the visitor and sleep in the living room and if it's a woman, we sleep together (female aged 43, Mavalane B).

Our sleeping arrangements change when we have a visitor; if the visitor is a woman, my daughter sleeps in the house of the neighbour opposite, who has a room just for the girls, and F. goes and sleeps with his older brother. When the visitor's a man, I let him have my room, I go and sleep in the living room, F.L. goes and sleeps at the neighbour's and F. goes and sleeps with his brother. But it's rare we get a visitor and I have to move out (female aged 58, Polana Caniço A).

When we get visitors who stay here, the children sleep in the living room [...], we can't tell the family we haven't enough room for them. When a family comes here to stay they let us know beforehand but sometimes there are surprises, people turn up whom we weren't expecting (male aged 45, Mahotas).

The size of the house and the composition of the family play an essential role in the way families use and organize their space. Where necessary, patterns of organization

and interaction based on hierarchies of gender, age and status which are socially regulated by kinship are modified and adjusted to meet the family's needs for space, and this leads to the formation of heuristic approaches to the everyday social interactions which occur in the *home space*.

The way families use their house and plot of land is indicative of a functional relationship between interdependent internal and external spaces. The use of built space is often related with the dimensions of unbuilt space (the yard), the number and type of partitions (is there a living room, for example?), the size of these partitions, and the furniture they possess.

In cases where the principal structure – the house – has only two bedrooms, it is mainly used at night. During the day, any family members on the premises normally stay outside, which is where they perform much of the domestic work (cooking, washing clothes) and take their meals. Visitors are entertained outside, and social activities take place here too. “Inside” is where things are kept, and for sleeping at night.

Where there is a living room in the house, it is shared by all family members during the day, although in some cases certain conditions are imposed on the children so they won't “make a mess” and other family members (daughters-in-law⁴⁴) enjoy only limited use of it. Depending on the type of visitors, they may be received inside the house, or outside in the yard.⁴⁵ The fact that the television is located in the living room tends to “open” this room to visitors. As one informant put it, “when we have visitors they often stay in there to watch [television]” (female aged 32, Albasine).

In all cases, however, we observed that the area outside the house is used for domestic and everyday activities – washing clothes and dishes, cooking – and this is also where the bathroom (or one of them at least) is located. Daily meals are also taken outside the house (except when it rains), and most visitors are received here. When there is an indoors kitchen, this is used when it is raining, or for making quick meals. Vegetable patches and *machambas*, fruit trees and holes in the ground for depositing refuse are also occasionally found outside houses. The external space is also used for parking the car (where one is owned) and for productive/income-generating activities.

⁴⁴ Daughters-in-law traditionally occupy a lowly rank in the house of their husband's family.

⁴⁵ We observed different situations in this regard: some very poor families were very reluctant to let researchers enter their houses, but others threw open their doors to us; then there were wealthier families living in relatively large houses who rarely opened their doors to us, and others who always invited us into their living room.

1.2. The *home space* and social interaction

House and plot are places of social interaction on festive, ritual and ceremonial (typically related with a death in the family) occasions. These social events bring friends, relatives, neighbours and members of the same church together in the same home space. The festive events held to mark key moments in the life cycle of the families (births, anniversaries, weaning, engagements) are held both inside and outside the house, and are opportunities for establishing, strengthening and consolidating social ties.

Since our parents died, we've never held a feast or ceremony. The last feast was held here in the house, in the yard, it was organized by my sister who lives in South Africa for her twin daughters who were turning five. We hired tables and benches from the church and put them in the yard. Inside the house was for dancing. It was a special event, as it brought together many family members and neighbours in a single day (female aged 39, 3 de Fevereiro).

We hold our feasts in the yard outside the house. When there are many guests, we hire a marquee and we also use the house next door, where the family members and church people are put. For the child's weaning feast and anniversaries for example, I invite people from the local congregation, and if I have money I also invite people from other churches, and we exchange gifts. It all depends on the money available (male aged 46, Polana Caniço A).

We hold feasts, but only very rarely. Circumstances don't allow it. The last feast we had was for a child's baptism. Feasts are held outside the main house, on the terrace where I normally meet visitors (male aged 48, Polana Caniço A).

Death is another social event/circumstance where social interaction occurs in the bereaved family. A death in the family gives rise to solidarity and reciprocity in the house of the deceased. On the death of one of its members, the family receives visits from relatives and neighbours, who often stay for prolonged periods in the house of the bereaved family. Participation in the mourning ceremonies and ceremonies held in evocation of ancestors (often designated "masses") is a social obligation of enormous importance in the context under examination: attendance is a mark of respect and above all a community duty through which solidarity is shown.

We've never held a feast on the plot. We held a ceremony for the first anniversary of the death of my mother, which happened in November 2008. For this ceremony we put a table in the centre of the yard, chairs for the men and rush mats for the women. Not a lot of people came, just family members, neighbours and members of the church. I got the table from my older brother, who lives nearby (female aged 43, Mavalane B).

Ceremonies are held in the yard, except in 2003 when we went to Jangamo for a ceremony organized by my father's brother, uncle R. These ceremonies are held in memory of our ancestors (male aged 29, 3 de Fevereiro).

We had a mass in honour of our deceased son not long ago. We held it in the yard outside the house. We held ceremonies, the women sit on one side and the men on the other. To close the period of mourning, my husband's family bought a shirt for him and a capulana⁴⁶ for me. The family contributed with money and food (female aged 45, Jafar).

Ceremonies held to mark a death or to commemorate ancestors (near or remote) are attended by family members from other towns (the family's region of origin, for example), and these relatives can sleep in the house or yard. In these periods (especially when the occasion is on account of a recent death), visitors share meals, and perform domestic tasks such as preparing meals, cleaning the house and yard, and fetching water where necessary. The ceremonies include prayers, and donations from friends, neighbours and allies. These donations reinforce and revive the social ties and bonds of reciprocity which are cultivated between family members living in the city and the country. The prayers offered by the bereaved family constitute one of the principal moments of interaction and comfort. On most occasions prayers are held by groups of faithful and members of the community/*bairro* (neighbours and others) who organize themselves to provide spiritual support to those who have lost a family member. The number of people participating in the ceremony and the number of gifts offered reflects the prestige of the deceased, his social status, the size of his lineage and the quality and importance of his relations with others.

⁴⁶ A capulana is a length of material that can be used as a wrap-around skirt, a baby carrier on the back or can have other uses and has important symbolic meanings.

1.3. *Home space – sharing and privacy*

In this section we examine how the different parts of house and yard are used by the different family members as a function of their notions of *sharing* and *privacy*. We will attempt to understand how gradual changes in the structure of the house reflect, and impose, changes in family relationships and structures.

Traditionally, the houses of families on the periphery of Maputo have tended to follow spatial organization paradigms that broadly reflect the traditional dwellings of the rural area. Thus the yard outside the dwelling tends to be spacious and unencumbered by buildings. This area is subdivided (more or less visibly) into zones with specific functions (preparation of meals, bodily hygiene, washing clothes and utensils, meals, family socializing, socializing with visitors, growing vegetables, rearing poultry, deposit of refuse, W.C.). These different zones, and their demarcation and location, vary enormously from one family to another, and even within the same family over the course of time. The yard typically contains makeshift constructions (the number varies enormously) and while some of these may be used as a kitchen or WC, most are used as bedrooms. Normally there is one for the couple (or for each wife, in the case of polygamous families), one for the boys and one for the girls. If there are older, married children in the household, they too have their bedroom. These independent structures, distributed among family members by sex, age and status, facilitates observance of a range of norms of intra-family relationships of proximity/distance and define which spaces are shared and which are private.

Now, however, since most houses contain under the one roof all bedrooms and, in many cases, a living room where the family meets and socializes at various times of the day, the way family members interact is different. Yet although the traditional model of organization of residential space (which afforded family members greater privacy) has been abandoned, something of it persists in ideal terms, as the words of this informant illustrate:

If I could, I'd like to have a house [i.e. bedroom separate from the rest of the house] just for me and P. I think about having my house with my wife and leaving the children in the other house with their TV and everything” (male aged 45, Mahotas).

As we have seen, though, external space continues to be used, and most of the everyday activities of the families still take place there, even when this space is very cramped.

The first point to emerge from our analysis is that when questioned on privacy and restrictions on the use of space, a significant proportion of family members affirmed that this only happened in relation to strangers (i.e. tenants and/or visitors): not in relation to the other members of their family. All family members were free to circulate everywhere in the house. In subsequent conversations during our field work, however (these were conversations on different themes), we were able to observe that in many cases there did exist material and/or symbolic frontiers which had arisen as a result of the adaptation of traditional rules of conduct to the current residential context and the structure of the family living in it. These norms of conduct regulate degrees of access to certain areas of the house by certain family members. However, the likelihood of compliance with these norms depends to a large extent on how many partitions the house has, its internal layout, the number of family members living there and the respective age, sex and status of each.

When first asked about this topic, our informants only admitted to the existence of frontiers, limits and prohibitions with regard to access to certain parts of house and plot in situations where these were shared by different households, especially where one household – the “secondary” household – comprised tenants who rented rooms/constructions on the plot of the proprietor household. Talking about some tenants who occupied a room separate from the main household and plot owners, one informant noted:

Here at home there are no private spaces and there are no prohibitions on entering certain parts of the house, except for the tenants. They [the tenants] use the two bathrooms out there in the yard, one for washing and the other as a latrine, their space is outside (female aged 39, Hulene B).

The big frontier is between the members of the main household and the tenants who rent rooms built on the plot. The main household has its space and the tenants have theirs. The tenants have their space: bedrooms and bathroom (male aged 54, Polana Caniço A).

When the tenants come home with their friends they don't sit inside in the living room, they can only go to their rooms or stay outside in the yard. I've already told them I don't want any comings and goings inside the house, no sitting around drinking, I don't want noise, they can make that outside. So far they've listened and obeyed (female aged 43, Mavalane B).

Even where the house itself is shared (i.e. the family rents rooms to outsiders) there are spatial boundaries and defined limits which regulate social gatherings and everyday interaction between house “insiders” and resident outsiders. These limits include the definition of space considered as “convenient” for the different social practices, definition of which areas of the house and plot are open to visitors, and restrictions on the use of certain goods and utensils belonging to the family which owns the house:

The tenants have their crockery and their goods, but they ask to use the cooker because they don't have one of their own. As they're not undisciplined I lend it to them, but it's not normal for them to use my things, they have to have their own things (female aged 43, Mavalane B).

At the intra-family level, over the course of our fieldwork we had occasion to observe – and contrary to what some informants claimed at first – that restrictions and norms regulating access by different family members to different areas of the house *are* commonly imposed. These norms are hierarchized, and it is the “main bedroom”⁴⁷ and living room which are subject to the most visible restrictions, for not all family members have the freedom to enter, remain or receive people in these areas. For example, in one case we observed that when the researcher was in the living room with the rest of the family, one family member, the daughter-in-law, remained standing while everyone else occupied armchairs. Yet these norms cannot always be observed, for various reasons and as the excerpt below illustrates.

The most restricted part of the house is the main bedroom where I sleep with my husband. The children don't go in there unless they're sent to fetch something by

⁴⁷ The main bedroom is where the oldest member of the family sleeps. Typically it belongs to the head of the family and his spouse.

the grown-ups. The living room is the other place that's forbidden but it's very busy because that's where the fridge is, that's where the pots and pans and food are kept, among other things we need to use on a daily basis (female aged 34, Polana Caniço A).

The parents' bedroom is for the parents and the children have to ask permission to enter –in the rest of the house, the children's bedroom, living room and yard everyone comes and goes as they please (female aged 32, Mahotas).

People here at home go everywhere, but my children have to ask to go into my bedroom. There's nowhere they don't go or aren't allowed to go. Their only obligation is to knock on the door before they go into someone's room (male aged 68, 3 de Fevereiro).

As the above extracts illustrate, families have norms that regulate the movement and circulation of their members within their houses, and that define which spaces are common and which are private. These norms are typically embodied in the architectural layout of the indoors space: the number of rooms, the partitions separating them (walls and doors) and the type of movement that the layout of the rooms permits.

But these restrictions on access to and movement through different parts of the house are not fixed. On the one hand they take shape as the house itself does – and as we have seen, nearly all of the houses included in our study are *works in progress* – while on the other, the uses to which rooms are put are subject to change (rooms intended as kitchens, lounges or bathrooms, for instance, may instead be used as bedrooms – additionally or exclusively) for various reasons – building work, lease of rooms, visiting residents, increase to the number of family members or changes in their status. And new space can be created via barriers not embodied in the layout of the house. Using various materials and objects (for instance cloths/*capulanas*, carpets, furniture), some of the families we studied create, subdivide, transform and fence off space, giving (or attempting to give) material expression to frontiers that allow zones of privacy to exist.

These frontiers are especially visible in bedrooms (isolated from the rest of the house by walls, doors and curtains), but they can also exist in symbolic form, via norms which restrict access by certain family members to certain areas of the house, even where these areas are by definition common areas, such as the living room. For example,

in many of the families we studied, children had only limited access to the living room: they were allowed here only in the evening and at night, after taking a bath and once “clean”. The purpose: to watch television. And while older family members can receive visitors and friends, this right does not extend to the younger members.

There are no specific rules because the children belong to this house, they stay in the living room to watch [TV]. It's us who say how long they can stay. The yard is the only place the children can play, to avoid untidiness inside the house (female aged 39, Mavalane B).

There is a limit on how long the children can stay inside the house. The children play in the yard because inside they make a mess and get up on the armchairs (female aged 27, Polana Caniço A).

As we have seen, the presence of the television set in the living room “opens up” this room to all members of the family and to visitors, and this promotes approximation between different generations of the family and between the family and outsiders. This approximation is relative, however, for it is the television which mediates the social relations.

In many of the houses we visited, we also noticed that in terms of cleanliness and decoration the living room is given preferential treatment over the other rooms (e.g. kitchens, bedrooms, verandas). More than any other common area, the living room was the most visible manifestation of the imaginary of the family that lived in the house, its aspirations and dreams – the living room reflects not only the family itself, but also the image which the family wishes to convey to others. For this reason, the living room is not only a common area for the family (albeit with restrictions on its use at different times of day and by different members of the family) but also the place where more distinguished visitors and closer friends are received – a kind of public space within the domestic space. The information we gathered illustrates that, depending on the type of visitor (social status, reason for visit, connection to family), he or she may or may not be shown into the living room:

When they're guests they stay a long time in there, in the living room, because I can't leave them outside. The ones who are just visiting for a minute we attend to them out here (female aged 49, Hulene B).

When we have guests staying, they go wherever the head of the house goes. As for friends, sometimes I receive them in the living room and sometimes out here, depending on the person and the reason for the visit: anyone who comes unannounced or for no reason or is just making a quick visit sits outside; but then if they have something to tell, or if they have a problem, there I have to find space inside to listen to them" (female aged 38, Polana Caniço A).

The definition of restricted spaces and the determination of limits on movement are also associated with questions of the security of individual and collective belongings. Security was one of the fundamental concerns of the families in the *bairros* we visited, and helped define frontiers and restrict movement inside their houses:

Nobody goes into my room, and all the more so when there are a lot of people around; someone can go into your room and take the money you've left there. I don't like people who go into other people's rooms (female aged 45, Mavalane B).

There are no boundaries in the house, the only thing I don't like is when my husband's other wife goes into my room because if they find money they take it to go drinking and I'm left with nothing to feed my grandchildren (female aged 45, Jafar).

They [the tenants] don't go into my room. You can't trust anyone these days. Even when they're at home I lock the door when I go out. I've more trust in a couple that rents the room because they come with their belongings, you can't trust the unmarried ones when they rent a room. They can take your phone and go away and never come back, that trick of leaving clothes lying about is nothing, they can buy more wherever they're going (female aged 43, Mavalane B).

In some cases, although the will existed to establish norms regulating access to certain parts of the house, in practice the objective conditions for their implementation did not exist. Such norms do exist ideally, however, as do plans to make changes to the

house to enable them to be put into practice. The following comment exemplifies this situation:

My plan is to put a pantry in here and make a kitchen outside the house so we can close my bedroom and the children can't come in and sit on our bed; but without the pantry we can't lock the doors of our room when we go out, because they have to come in to get the food. There has to be discipline in the house, otherwise it's anarchy (male aged 54, Polana Caniço A).

2. Home space: gender and power relations

Any analysis seeking to understand the social processes and internal dynamics which give shape to the *home space* on a micro, individual family level, necessarily involves in-depth reflection on gender and power relations. Research must attempt to throw light on the dynamics inherent to the social processes and representations which inform these relations and which are at the base of the creation, maintenance and transformation of the home space, and thereby give it social meaning.

In our analysis, we investigated how gender and power relations are expressed within the home space, and how these relations are reproduced, shaped and transformed: via everyday practice and in accordance with different ideological frameworks and cultural models. The central objectives of this part of our analysis were to understand how groups of people united by ties of blood and affiliation organize themselves to acquire, construct, transform and maintain their home spaces, the allocation by gender of the responsibilities, duties and obligations inherent to all these processes, and how these processes are managed.

2.1 Gender relations and property rights: being a homeowner

Before we proceed to a presentation of the field data on which our analysis will be based, we must remember that our study is addressing a social and cultural context which is undergoing profound transformation and where several different ideological frameworks coexist. Although they are at odds with each other in many essential aspects, none of these frameworks calls into question the predominance of male over female or profound imbalances in gender relations. In traditional patrilocal and patrilinear Tsonga

culture as in local Western-styled cultural referents, men are considered the “natural” heads of the household, the “masters” of the home space, “lawful proprietors”⁴⁸ and in charge of the family: “*The house is mine but it belongs to the whole family that lives here, but as father/husband I’m the one in charge and when there’s anything to do with the house/plot I’m the one who’s responsible*” (male aged 48, Polana Caniço A).

Of the 19 cases we studied, most (12) conformed to the above pattern: men consider themselves (and the remaining members of the family, their neighbours and the *bairro* authorities consider them also) the owners and masters of their houses and plots of land, the ones in charge, the heads of families. The other seven cases concerned women who did not cohabit with their husbands, companions or boyfriends, or were widows, were separated, or maintained relationships with men without living with them.⁴⁹ Of these seven women, however, only one declared herself (and another was considered⁵⁰) to be the sole owner of her *home space*. When questioned on issues relating to the ownership of their *home spaces*, the remaining companion-less women mentioned in addition to themselves a male with effective and/or symbolic rights over the house and the plot of land where they live:

As she has no educational qualifications or papers, the rights to the plot have been held by her son since this year. Before him it was she who held the rights, and before her, her husband, who died 19 years ago (Polana Caniço A); The plot of land belonged to my father. He’s the one who bought it. And now it belongs to all of us (female aged 37, 3 de Fevereiro); As her companion hasn’t done anything yet [i.e. introduce himself] she considers her house still to belong to the Khossas, the surname of her deceased husband with whom she made the lobolo⁵¹, and not the Sumbane [the surname of the companion] (Mavalane B); The house belongs to my late father, but I’m in charge of it (female aged 45, Mavalane B); This house is the

⁴⁸ As we saw earlier, the question of the legal ownership of land and buildings is a complex one. The expression we use here, “lawful owners”, indicates merely that the documents attesting to possession of the *home space* (with or without legal validity), where these exist, normally bear a male’s name, as we shall see.

⁴⁹ Of all the cases we studied, only one household contained a “single father” who had no conjugal relationship.

⁵⁰ The woman who owned this plot of land did not live here: it is on loan to a 27-year-old woman who lives there with her infant child. This woman has no family connection with the female owner of the *home space* she occupies.

⁵¹ Bride price represents a 'traditional' institution of marriage which involves a series of ceremonies centred on payments which can take place over time, but which take on wider social and cultural significance due to their importance as integral part of reciprocity in socio-economic relations and related solidarity networks.

patrimony of my children, I'm living here because I have custody of them (female aged 39, Hulene B).

Since they share the property rights with other members of the family because the house had belonged to their father, or since they do not think they can be owners because they are still part of the family of their deceased husband, or because they don't have papers or because the house belongs "by right" to their children, these women do not view themselves as sole owners of the *home spaces* they live in. This holds true even in cases where the women themselves bought the plots of land and were in charge of the construction of the buildings existing there (Mavalane B).

The fact that most heads of household are men, and the minority of households headed by women (INE 2007) are effectively in an economically disadvantaged position (Tvedten, 2008) and are socially inferior, is one of the explanations for the tendency of women to mention a male member of the family when questioned on issues related with the possession of the *home space* and the leadership of the household or family. Mentioning the male's name gives her security, by identifying the woman with a certain family (as daughter of one man and widow or ex-partner of another) and assigning herself a function, as mother or guardian of a house which belongs, and will continue to belong, to her adult male offspring. This need for women to associate themselves with a male family member is therefore related with the social representations of power in the context under analysis: essentially a male-governed context where women are assigned inferior roles inseparable from the family. A woman with no family is socially marginalized, for marriage and maternity are factors with significant cultural and social weight.

And yet this ideal representation of power, which denies women existence outside the family and conjugal union which identify her, is and always has been exactly that: an "ideal" representation. There have always been women who have managed to live with some degree of autonomy outside the structures of marriage, family and even maternity. But these women wield a power which does not belong to them "naturally", for the powers they hold are essentially masculine: they are not more powerful because they are women, but more powerful because they simultaneously discharge masculine and feminine functions. For this reason, all the women we contacted in this and earlier studies (Costa, 2005; 2007) and who for one reason or another had more power or

independence relative to the norm, referred to themselves as dual beings: the phrase “*I’m mother and father to my children*” (female aged 39, Hulene B) reflects this duality.

Another factor to be taken into account is the way the social identity of individuals is constructed in the context under analysis – a context that permits many spirits to co-exist in the same person. Women who consider themselves to hold power over the spirits that inhabit them, and whose power is socially acknowledged, are “dual beings”, simultaneously male and female. The male spirits that inhabit them give them the power to assert their autonomy in a way that is recognized and valued (and/or feared) socially (one case in Albasine).

Then again, women who are not in a conjugal relationship in the *home spaces* they live in find it difficult to express their power in individual terms, and where this power is asserted it often results from family conflicts that were settled with the intervention of the *bairro* authorities and in reference to legal and ideological frameworks which are alien to traditional norms. For example, one widow told us that when her husband died, his family wanted to sell off the house and plot and take her and her children to live in their village, but “*the government [i.e. bairro authorities] intervened on my behalf*” (female aged 58, Polana Caniço A). This widow’s son told the story as follows: “*My aunt and uncle wanted to take our mum and us to live in Vilanculos, our mum refused and she hid us in the neighbour’s house. After a few years, they came to strip the zinc sheets and off they went*” (male aged 20, Polana Caniço A).

At the same time, in our conversations with women on property rights and the *home space*, we observed that although these women were in some way aware of their “legal” rights, they were also aware of the practical difficulties involved in invoking these rights. We also learned that the awareness of these legal rights and the fight for their recognition coexist with the traditional rules that define the rights of possession that men and women hold (or do not hold) with regard to their dwelling places.

Marriage is important because it gives security, if I separated now I might end up with nothing because I’m not married [she has not made the lobolo and was not officially married], the house would go to Gabriel [the husband] (...) If we die the house goes to all our children but as the girls will get married and move into their husbands’ houses the boy will be the head of the family, it’s automatic (female aged 32, Mahotas).

With the death of my parents, my brother put the documents for the flat in bairro Central in his name. (...) He got the house because he's an adult son, he's the principal heir. He's rented the house, I get a part of the rent because he wants to give it to me (female aged 39, Hulene B).

For the first of the informants quoted above, the fate of her daughters is to leave home and go and live in their husbands' homes, and therefore the "natural" heir of the *home space* is the son. The second informant accepted that her parents' house would go to her brother. This informant, a widow, said something similar when she remarked that if she re-married she would go and live in her husband's house and would not accept him coming to live in a house that was built during her marriage with another man. On the subject of her rights to the *home space* she inhabits:

Not even my husband's brothers dared to claim the house, they know I have the law on my side, if they tried I'd report them to the League of Human Rights and they'd rule in favour of the woman right away. If it goes to court it's the woman who stays in the house until a decision is made. (...) The League works very well and they're very quick, they have an office there just for attending to women and I could write a petition and deliver it there. In court it would take 10 years or more (female aged 39, Hulene B).

Thus, even though women know that "legally" they have rights of "possession"⁵² over their home spaces, in most cases they continue to associate these rights with a range of family duties they have to fulfil – in a sense, these rights are only theirs "on loan".⁵³ And this awareness has no direct reflection on the way questions of inheritance are weighed up with regard to female and male descendants, in terms of the different rights which one gender and the other may have over their parent's dwelling place.

Not only does power, in general terms, over the house and the family that lives in it lie "by right", with the "father" of the family (regardless of whether he is present or absent), the father also holds (in theory or in practice) specific powers over many of the decisions on matters related to the acquisition, construction, transformation and decoration of the house, and highly specific powers over the lives and relationships of

⁵² These property rights are not evident either for women or for men. As we have seen, most occupants do not hold a DUAT certificate – the legal document conferring rights of usufruct over a property.

⁵³ Curiously, when the women referred to their houses they rarely used possessive pronouns: "at home", "go home", but never "my home".

the family members with whom he shares a home or exercises authority (wife, children, nephews, grandchildren, daughters-in-law).

The social representation of this male power exists, even in cases where the necessary resources for the construction or renovation of the house were not obtained exclusively (or even in their majority) by the man, and even in cases where this power is not effectively exercised in social practice. Yet here as in other aspects, interference between different standards and ideologies make analysis more difficult when it comes to comparing the observed practice of social actors with their discourse on these same practices. On the level of general discourse, power is generally attributed to the man; but many men and women said this power was shared by the couple and that decisions were taken jointly. In practice, however, we observed that the man's opinion prevails: even where this is not acknowledged in the discourse.

2.2. Home space and changes in gender relations

The empirical data gathered during the course of research does not permit us to arrive at definitive conclusions with regard to changes in the status of women on the urban periphery of Maputo. We can safely assert that changes are happening, however, and that these changes point to the greater independence of women from men. Which is not to say this autonomy is a reality, or that it does not have to be won anew every day, for the de facto social status of women continues to be gauged in terms of their conditions as wives and mothers.

What our observations revealed and our analysis bore out was that in relation to the power women exercised (or not) in the residential space they inhabit, and over the people they live with, questions touching on "autonomy", "independence", "control" and "power relations" are extremely complex and have to be seen in their full context. Understanding these questions requires an integrated analysis which draws upon diverse meanings and interpretations: the meaning which a researcher gives to these concepts influences the interpretations he or she makes of the social reality being analysed, and the different and often contradictory meanings which these questions and concepts have in the social and cultural context under examination. In the latter case, we must also take into account not just the multiple referents which are present but also the differences between cultural values and social representations, on the one hand, and actual practice, on the other; and then there is the discourse on this practice.

Analysis of power and gender issues is essentially a relational analysis. In the specific instance of our families, what we are fundamentally examining are the social relations between the male and female members of each family. It makes no sense, therefore, to speak of power or autonomy without contextualizing them in this relational dynamic (Medick and Sabean 1988: 18). Power relations have to be understood in terms of evaluation of the capacity for controlling material and human resources on the part of the men and women of the family, on the level of the social and cultural representations in the context in question (how society shapes the roles and conduct of both sexes), and in terms of how family members perceive the power they wield or to which they submit. Similarly, the multidimensional essence of family relations means that these relations articulate different types and levels which may not coincide with one another but are dynamic, and constantly changing under the pressure of many factors. As Hans Medick and David Sabean note:

Roles within the family, then, are not to be analyzed out of context in terms of a universal set of judgments. Rather, in fulfilling roles, in carrying on family activities, individuals are carrying on a series of transactions or exchanges, which may involve inequality in one level, with a reversal of inequality at another, with more power or respect or consideration flowing to one member at one time and to another at another time, or with systematic inequality considered by sex, age, or rank. Part of the problem lies in the sociological concept of 'role', which is radically individualizing and deceptively quantifiable, and fails to pose the problem of family roles in their relational context and as ongoing process (1988: 18).

Our empirical research revealed a great diversity of situations. To understand the position of women in terms of their autonomy, power and status we have to inter-relate a bewildering number of variables. To cite just some of these variables: family structure (type of family, number of family members and distribution by sex); the position occupied by the woman within this structure; the work she performs and the relative importance of the resulting income as part of the family budget; the affective and emotional bond with her spouse or, in his absence, with other male members of the family; the employment/income situation of the man; availability of material resources; and the ability of the woman to mobilize these resources to her own benefit.

The value attached to the role of women does not depend on the degree of autonomy they effectively hold, but on the recognition and social evaluation of this

autonomy relative to the social evaluation of the roles assigned to them in reference to the family, i.e. their roles as wives and mothers. Analysis of a set of discourses in which the changing roles of women are emphasized and the couple recognizes the importance of a certain sharing of responsibilities allows us to conclude, for this case study, that the role played by women in the family really is changing, and that on the levels both of discourse and practice the sharing of responsibilities is a reality: but the contradictions we observed were numerous. The same informant might assert that decisions are taken jointly, only to say later that it's her husband who makes the decisions; she might feel it's important for her daughters to study and be independent, but at the same time feel the "natural" destiny of her daughters to be marriage, and play down the importance of school relative to the domestic chores it is their duty to perform. The opinions of husband and wife may diverge in relation to questions of power and the sharing of responsibilities, as the following testimonies show:

The wife does the domestic work, when she isn't there, it's the children (...) the household expenses are jointly planned with the wife and she has given her ideas for the enlargement work on the house" (male aged 48, Polana Caniço A); I did my part with my pay: I bought dishes, pots, curtains and as he was a man he bought the furniture after we decided on it together. (...) It was my husband who bought these paintings that are on the wall (female aged 39, Hulene B); My husband decided to buy this plot(...) The responsibility for the house lies with us both. There's a good relationship between us (female aged 31, Magoanine C); So we divide tasks: I cook, wash and do the ironing and I also do the cleaning inside the house (...) My daughter of 11 sometimes washes the clothes herself, my husband has his jobs, he likes his machamba, the plants, and sometimes he does the ironing, he doesn't like washing his clothes (female aged 32, Albasine); I had a house near here. But when I was run over in the street my husband called me to come and live here. Then I sold my plot and gave the money to my husband. I don't know what he did with the money (female, Jafar). The responsibility for the house is ours, mine and my wife's (male aged 65, Jafar).

School education,⁵⁴ the exercise of a profession, income from various activities, the affirmation of individual interests and the abilities (and courage) of some women in

⁵⁴ Although there is no information on the levels of education of all the heads of household and their spouses, the data available to us suggests that these levels are low, for men and for women. However, the

some cases make it possible for them to break from the time-honoured loyalties that have oppressed them. And this may effectively translate into a relative increase in female power relative to the masculine. However, these “conquests” only acquire “value” when they have meaning and social recognition in the context in which they occur. Not only is this context profoundly marked by gender relations which subordinate the social role of the woman to that of the man, it is also full of contradictions, articulating “traditional” values, “modern” interests and representations of modernity in a complex fashion. In this complex interplay of values, and given the available alternatives, caution is required when attempting to draw conclusions on changes in gender relations. And it is difficult to see where these changes are headed.

The contradictions are illustrated by the discourse of one informant, an “emancipated” widow who lives with her daughters, sharing the plot with a sister who lives in a separate house.

My oldest daughter works and in the evenings she attends a psychology course at the UEM. To make her life easier I bought a car. I got plenty of criticism from the family because in their view the man should have more spending power than the woman. She might have a boyfriend who doesn't have a car and that will make him feel bad (female aged 43, 3 de Fevereiro).

In other words, socially, the fact that a young woman has a car jeopardizes her chances of acceding to the ideal status, that of wife. By owning a car she demonstrates spending power in excess of the average spending power of the men who are her potential husbands, and calls into question the standard which defines the roles to be played by the sexes – where the woman occupies the inferior position. The concerns

educational qualifications of women are slightly lower than those of men, and there are more women who have never been to school, despite the fact that they are younger than the men, on average.

Table 1. Levels of education

Sex	M	F
Age	40 - 68	27-58
Did not attend school	2	4
Primary school or basic literacy	1	4
5th year	1	4
8th and 9th year (cycle)	2	2
Technical courses	2	-

expressed by the family of this informant show that in the context under analysis, the “conquests” of women can actually penalize them socially, and that openly asserting such conquests poses a threat to social norms, bringing new variables to an equation that now subverts the norm and whose results are viewed as negative: i.e. they depreciate the value of women, which is inseparable from their place in the family as wives and mothers. When she acquires autonomy from men, a woman not only transforms the role society has given her, she also transforms, ipso facto, the role assigned to the man, jeopardizing the “balance” of a gender relation based on... imbalance. Her family does not want this young woman to have a car because this will have repercussions for the status of any hypothetical suitor, placing him in a position of inferiority which “*will make him feel bad*”. All this represents a potential threat to the hypothetical relationship of a hypothetical couple, and puts the young lady’s future, and her ideal destiny as a wife and mother, at risk.

And yet the young woman’s mother *does* act against the will of the family. From her own experience of life, she knows that independence has its advantages for her daughter: even if she also affirms that marriage is essential because “*people judge people who aren’t married. So it’s important for people to get married if they’re to be respected.*” She also recognizes that marriage can put an end to education, and that education is important: “*School is important because people have to have an education. I only got educated when I became a widow. When I got married I had to stop my studies and at that time I was in the 12th year of school. It’s not easy for a person to study when they’re married.*” So she took “the risk” of buying her daughter a car, and in taking this risk she has joined many other women who each in her own way are helping change, in the sense of greater autonomy of women from men, gain a foothold in present-day Maputo.

How these changes are viewed by men, and by society in general, lies outside the scope of this study. One male informant did however refer to this question:

Marriages don't last long because the women are ahead of the men and the men can't take it. If you give her a slap a woman goes and complains to the police and the man is to blame (...) When a man doesn't slap his wife about, they say he doesn't like her, you have to slap her about (...) Now the women have jobs and the men have nothing (male aged 42, Mahotas).

In the views of this informant, male power is threatened by the situation of unemployment many men find themselves in, and by the fact that the women *do* have jobs. Without work, a man is not respected – “A *person who works is respected, whatever their job*” (male aged 68, 3 Fevereiro) – and depends on the help of relatives to provide sustenance to his family. While this dependency is accepted and does not pose a threat to his authority where it merely involves supplements in terms of produce and income from the *machamba*, or obtained via the activities of women which are not considered as “work”, the same cannot be said of a situation in which the man accepts regular monetary contributions from women who have obtained these earnings in activities considered as “work” or “employment” and which involve a degree of regular payment and an employment contract of some type. The reason for the difference, and the fact that some work poses a threat to male domination and some doesn't, is that women have traditionally been responsible for providing their family's basic nutrition through the work they perform on the *machamba*, and this work belongs to the domestic and family orbit. But this kind of female responsibility, in the urban as well as rural milieu, is no challenge to male supremacy in the household: the head of the family is a man and the work he performs has a symbolic value very different from the work performed by the woman, regardless of the actual nature of the work and the amounts each contributes to the family budget. Female responsibility only constitutes a threat if the woman has a job and the man is unemployed. But in the last analysis, what is and isn't a job depends on the value that the couple, and society at large, attach to the activities they exercise – not the type of activity. In other words, while the agricultural activity of women, the sales of produce they make and the business deals in which they have a stake are not in most cases considered to be work, the business deals and *biscates* of men are: “*I'm thinking of leaving the job I do with my wife [going to South Africa to buy things to sell in Maputo] to dedicate myself fully to the church*” (male aged 56, Mahotas); “*I'm a biscoiteiro in the building trade (...) I work with the foreman*” (male aged 42, Mahotas).

In many of the excerpts from discourse transcribed in this chapter, the ambivalence and contradictions are patent. The discourse also demonstrates that the choices available to women are not easy to make. In a complex context where a multiplicity of rationales intersect, where the possible degrees and levels of combination are enormous, women have to articulate their strategies with a good deal of dexterity in view of the alternatives open to them, if they are not to end up being even more penalized. The last part of this

chapter also illustrated how certain elements threaten the roles which are culturally the preserve of men. These threats come from the economic power of women, but what men really feel is a threat to their masculinity is not so much the autonomy of women but the lack of employment prospects – for without work, as our male informants readily acknowledged, they cannot be respected.

Conclusions

The *home space* is the scene of domestic activities directed at the survival of family members and the family group; of social events that bring together friends, relatives, neighbours and/or church members; and of a wide range of economic activities. These economic activities, which are mutually complementary in a constant struggle to increase family incomes, are examined in the next part of this study. Their goal is not just daily survival but the completion, upkeep, transformation and expansion of the dwelling space.

As we observed, the organization and use of internal and external *home space* is not static. Equally fluid are the size and type of built and unbuilt spaces, and the composition of the families that live in them. However, co-existent with this fluidity we also observed forms of spatial organization in which visible frontiers (material and symbolic) demarcated certain spaces, which were reserved for certain functions. Where certain spaces were used for functions other than those originally intended, this was always seen as something provisional.

We also observed that the organization of the *home space* is based on hierarchies of gender, age and status, which are socially regulated by degree of parentage. The same norms also govern the rights to use the different internal partitions of the home space. This occurs even when not explicitly acknowledged. These limits mark the dividing line between common and private space and the right of free circulation within the yard and house, and also denote the shared or exclusive status of property. The existence of rules for the use of space does not necessarily mean that they are followed, however, for the size of the family, the dimensions of the house and its partitions do not always permit this.

The current model for the construction of houses, where the different partitions are all located under the same roof, necessarily results in greater physical proximity between the different family members, and this brings about changes in the rules which have

customarily dictated the varying degrees of proximity or distance between different family members.

This construction model therefore has implications on the level of family relations and the ways family members socialize with one another. However, constraints related with the duration of our fieldwork and the amount of time we could spend in the houses of the families prevent us from examining these implications in depth.

With regard to gender and power relations in the home space, the data did not allow us to draw any firm conclusions on changes in the status of women in the urban periphery of Maputo. We can however affirm that these changes exist, and point towards greater autonomy of women with regard to men. But this autonomy has to be reconquered every day, for women continue to be socially valued first and foremost as wives and mothers. In this process of change, women face clear difficulties in their attempts to make their own way in a context fraught with different rationales that co-exist and combine in many different ways.

We also observed the existence of elements which threaten roles which are culturally the preserve of men. These elements include not only the degree of economic power which women have won for themselves but also, and especially, the lack of work and employment prospects for men. As the men themselves remarked, without a job they cannot be respected. This situation can be summarized as follows. With regard to the way gender relations, the different statuses of different family members, the power relationships which emerge and evolve, and the processes of conflict, negotiation and cooperation which accompany them are expressed, they all depend on bi-dimensional family relationships, where interest and affect are simultaneously expressed, on the different resources available to the family and its individual members, and on a collection of cultural and social norms with which the family identifies and through which it constitutes itself. The multiplicity of cultural norms, and the fact that none of these norms is "pure" but rather the outcome of syncretistic processes and multiple influences, means that they can be interpreted and manipulated in different, but not unlimited, ways.

In the families we studied, the power that different family members have in decisions related to the home space, the organization of the different activities that occur in the home space, and the way the space where these activities occur is defined and distributed, depends on the different interpretations which subjects construe of the cultural norms which constitute their frame of reference in the social context under

examination, and on the relationships between the members of any given family. These relationships dynamically articulate affects and conflicts, negotiation and cooperation, and they express individual and collective interests, egoism and altruism (Folbre 1986: 251).

PART IV
HOME SPACE AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

Abstract

In part IV, we examine the economic activities pursued by family members in their attempts to obtain income and/or products for the acquisition, construction, transformation and upkeep of their home spaces. Pluri-activity, the articulation of various sources of income and the dispersion of family members across different sectors of the economy, and sometimes across different geographic areas, is an important feature here. Agricultural activity is especially important, not just in social but also in economic terms, for it perpetuates family ties between relatives who do not live in the same dwelling. Other important aspects are exchange and assistance in the form of income, goods and services between family members who do not share the same dwelling. The economic activities pursued within the home space, and their implications for the residential structure of the home space, are also examined. We also analyze the economic activities pursued by the women and young people of the families included in our study, their importance for the family budget, their impact in terms of gender and age relations within the family, and the way hierarchical and power relationships are constructed, in our attempt to understand the way families organize and transform their home spaces.

1. Economic strategies

In our analysis of the economy of the family, we sought to identify which economic resources families and their members can draw upon to acquire, construct, modify and maintain their *home spaces*. Analysis of these mechanisms involves understanding the practices whereby families and their members obtain the income and produce necessary for their sustenance.

The empirical data at our disposal show that the economic resources available to each family included in the study varied according to the diversity of sources and the ways these resources are mobilized. Recent research on work and economic strategies of

families on the periphery of Maputo (Costa, 2007) explain this diversity in terms of the characteristics of the families themselves (size, composition, type, stage of domestic cycle) and other characteristics related with the resources available (within the family and external to it) and with the ability to mobilize, defend, maintain and transform these resources into income, dignity, power and sustainability (see Bebbington 1999: 2022 and 2028-29). This process is closely related with family connections – and these can only be understood by extending the scope of analysis to encompass the different dimensions which structure the families (on the material, affective, symbolic, identity and value levels) – and with the different trajectories and consequently the different frames of reference within which the families mobilize their resources (Costa, 2007: 123).

Economic conditions are acknowledged as structural factors in the options followed by families in their economic strategies. As Loforte noted, families are permanently attempting to adjust to an uncertain social and economic context, and constantly recasting their life strategies in an attempt to respond in an articulated manner to changes in the socio-economic context. These changes are visible in the broader sphere of the national economy and employment market (exogenous factors); and in transformations within the family (endogenous factors). Both exogenous and endogenous factors have implications for the potential of families to generate resources enabling their survival and reproduction (Loforte, 2000: 137-138).

The empirical study observed a wide diversity of situations allowing families to generate economic resources that enable their social reproduction and allow them to materialize their ideas and plans for the construction, transformation, organization and use of their *home space*. These practices involve and articulate many dimensions (social, economic and symbolic) and many types of resources (human, social, cultural and natural) (Costa, 2007: 123).

Generally speaking, strategies and practices for gaining access to economic resources are activated at the interface between the so-called formal and informal economies.⁵⁵ The families we studied, and their members, structure their *home space*

⁵⁵ The “informal” sector of the economy has been defined as the set of “*activities which generate income not subject to state regulation, in contexts where similar activities are subject to state regulation*” (Roberts, 1994:6). Another author (Navalha, 2000) adds to this definition activities which are not included in the official statistics of the country in question. More recently, the ILO (2002: 25) broadened the scope of this concept to include “*a dual dimension, on the levels of entrepreneurs and workers, and views the informal economy from the perspective of the characteristics of the job, a methodology which permits us to identify the different segments which constitute [the informal economy]*” (translation ours) (Lopes, 2008: 134). The bibliography on the informal economy and its relations with the “formal” economy (AlSayaad and Roy, 2004; Chen, M. 2003; Grassi 2003; Hansen, K. and Vaa., 2004; Hugon 1999; Maldonado, 1995;

economies by participating in an articulated manner in economic activities and occupations which span both sectors, although it is the informal sector which tends to predominate.⁵⁶

In the formal economy, there are different occupational trajectories that determine different ways of obtaining resources, saving and investing, and family reproduction strategies. Of the 19 families we studied, six heads of family work in the formal sector of the economy, although one of these is not a permanent resident of his *bairro* as he works as a miner in South Africa. The occupations of the other five heads of family are: clerk; contracted building worker; senior clerk at Eduardo Mondlane University; civil servant with the Ministry of the Interior; and administrator in a state bureau.

The remaining families obtain the income and produce they need from a wide range of “informal” economic activities. These activities range from services (lease of rooms, traditional healer, treatment of “traditional” illnesses, domestic employees, hairdresser, guards) to commerce (carried out in or outside the home, or as street vendors) and agriculture (cultivation of small vegetable patches on home premises, or on larger plots at a nearer or greater remove from the *bairro*), minor industry and carpentry / metal workshops manufacturing the goods, raw materials and technology necessary for the growing construction market in the *bairros* (doors, windows, frames, grilles) and basic domestic utensils (cookers, pots and pans) and the hire of construction materials (timber, shuttering) and, finally, income obtained via membership of a savings group or *xitique*.⁵⁷

Economic activities pursued on personal initiative and without involving any kind of contract, occasionally practised on a non-permanent basis (the so-called *biscates*) are predominant (these activities constitute the principal source of income for 11 families).

Navalha 2000; Roberts 1994; Yusuff, 2011) is extensive, and illustrates the diversity of ways of economic organization encompassed by the term, as well as the many ways formal and informal can interact (Hansen, K. and Vaa., 2004; Lopes 2007, 2008). Some authors argue that this concept “remains inadequate to explain the dynamism of the informal economy in developing countries from its origin, causes and persistence” (Yusuff, 2011:634) and that its complexity eludes the various theoretical approaches (modernization, dependency, neo-liberal and structuralist) that attempt to define it (Yusuff, 2011). In the absence of an alternative definition and acknowledging the difficulties in avoiding this term (and its corollary, “formal”), and since an in-depth examination of the meaning(s) of the concept of the “informal” economy lies outside the scope of the present study, we use the term “informal economy” in the awareness that none of the proposed definitions fully encompasses the diversity of the economic situations they aim to address.

⁵⁶ As mentioned in the previous footnote, this distinction (formal/informal) does not reveal the structural logic of the mechanisms used for obtaining economic resources. In the discourse of most interviewees, and in the practices we observed, the reality that emerged was a complex one, characterized by a set of inter-related situations which occasionally reflected profound contradictions and which allowed families and their members to obtain economic resources for the satisfaction of their material needs.

⁵⁷ The local term in Maputo for a rotating savings associations.

In nearly all the families (15), economic income and/or available produce (for consumption and/or sale) derive from a combination of different activities exercised by various family members. The same family member may exercise more than one activity (in eight families there is at least one person involved in more than one economic activity).⁵⁸ These sources of income may also be complemented by the lease of rooms (3), remissions from family members living in South Africa (2) or (in one family only) a pension. Some informants (7) mentioned that they received assistance in the form of money or produce from family members living elsewhere. In some cases these contributions are regular, and considered as their principal source of income by some informants; in other cases they are occasional, and are considered merely as “a bit of help”.

The way these different means of securing money and produce are organized in each family obviously depends on a lot of factors, of which the most important are the number of members and their respective ages, and their connections with relatives living elsewhere. Below we look at the examples of three families. Note the complementarity of the economic activities pursued by the resident members in their contribution towards the domestic budget, and the importance of help from relatives living elsewhere:

Albasine – M., aged 44, has been a traditional healer for 27 years and cites this activity as his principal livelihood. He has a kiosk or *barraca* on the front of his house, where he sells a variety of food products. He has a son who helps him in the *barraca* and who contributes to the family budget with part of the income he obtains from his biscates in the construction sector, where he works as a foreman: “*I help with the barraca but also when I earn a bit of money from building I give some to my mother. I earn between three and five thousand meticaïs as a foreman.*” This informant also receives “a bit of help” from another son who works as a construction foreman in Quelimane, where he is a salaried employee of the Portuguese construction firm Teixeira da Costa.

⁵⁸ Recourse to economic activities which combine complementarity of activities with pluriactivity, and in many instances entail the geographic dispersion of the family’s members, has been observed in other studies in the same or similar contexts (Andrade, 1998; Costa, 2007 and Loforte, 2000). However, the articulation of diversified sources of income is not a strategy exclusive to the families living on the periphery of Maputo, nor even of families living in urban and rural milieux in sub-Saharan Africa, or other “developing” regions (Creed 2000). It also occurs in the “developed” world (Barlett 1993, Lima 1992). Creed relates the emergence of this strategy not only with situations of economic crisis but also with the flexibility of the global economy (2000:9).

Jafar – N., aged 65, makes his living from *biscates*, building houses of reed, wood and zinc, thatched roofs using local materials and cement blocks in the dwellings of those who recruit his services. One of his wives works in a *machamba* that “was given [to him] by whites who don’t charge for it” and also runs a stall in his yard, where she sells bread and produce from the *machamba*. He has two sons who work in South Africa and send money towards the family expenses from time to time. He has a daughter who lives in Xai-Xai, and sometimes gives the family “*a bit of help*”. He raises ducks, primarily for domestic consumption, although he occasionally sells one when asked to. Another of his wives does some *biscates* as well as helping on the *machamba*, providing cleaning services on the land/plots of people who have just purchased them.

3 de Fevereiro – R., aged 68, is a guard in a school. His son, aged 29, lives in the house and is unemployed, but make some money from *biscates* as a motor mechanic. This son learned mechanics in a workshop where he was employed as an apprentice for around seven months. Other members of the household contribute income to the domestic economy: another son (aged 24) works in the warehouse of a commercial establishment, where he earns 2,500 meticaís per month (\approx 80 USD) for stowing products; a nephew, the son of his wife’s sister, is employed and makes occasional contribution to the food budget. These revenue streams are combined with and complemented by his wife’s work as a street vendor (she sells coconuts from a stall in front of the house). She also buys coconuts and then re-sells them in the larger markets of Hulene and Xiquelene.

The social value attributed to these income- and produce-generating activities varies enormously, and this value does not stand in direct proportion to the resources gained by them. As we will see below, different values are attributed to activities depending on whether they are performed by men or women, adults or children, and on the nature of the activity itself. Some activities are not considered as work; others are. The two examples we give below of families living in extreme poverty and where only two people occupy the *home space* (an adult and a child) illustrate this.

C. is aged 27, and lives with her daughter, a baby just a few months old, in a borrowed house in the *bairro* of Guáva.⁵⁹ “*I live here with a female cousin from the*

⁵⁹ As mentioned elsewhere, this type of house loan is common practice in the context we are analysing, and occurs in exchange for services.

church who is sometimes in her mother's house and sometimes here with me. She's coming to stay here because I was ill, her mother sent her to be here with me." C. was born in Beira. Her own mother is dead and at present she has practically no contact with her family of origin. She was widowed by her first husband, with whom she had a daughter now living with her paternal grandmother, and had her new baby by a man she is now separated from. In C.'s own view she does "nothing", but in fact she lives on monetary assistance and produce she receives from neighbours in exchange for small domestic services she performs in their houses (brushing the yard and washing clothes): "The neighbours give a bit of rice, I'm a beggar". She also receives assistance from her brothers in the church, who give her clothes for her baby. She grows cassava on a small patch in the yard of the house where she lives: "I pull out the weeds and eat the cassava (...) The owners asked me to look after it."

D. (male aged 42, Mahotas) describes himself as a *biscateiro* in the construction sector. This was his job from 1991 to 2007, when he found a job in the autopsy room of the Central Hospital of Maputo: "I worked there for a year, it was a very hard job. I got a salary, bonuses and overtime (...) I worked as a cleaner in the room, I got the job because they needed brave people there [he had served in the army]. I got the sack and the work was hard (...) I had no contract so I went back to biscates in the building sector, which is what I still do now. I work with the foreman [a friend] and depending on the work I get paid daily, weekly or monthly. I'm an assistant labourer because I'm still learning and I'm not a trained builder because I'm asthmatic and I can't handle heavy work. What I earn depends on what they pay the boss. [...] I've got a little machamba down there beyond the railway line, and I go there once a week, today I woke up early to go and water the plants [...] I grow lettuce, cabbage, that's what grows there. This area is only good for sweet potato, onion and tomato [...] for my own consumption and when I need some I go and get it [...] I don't buy onion, or tomato, or cabbage when it's in season, because you can't grow it all year round. [...] It's very important to have the machamba because when cabbage or lettuce are in season. I don't buy them and the neighbour women, when I don't have any, give me some. When I'm not busy with biscates, I can go there in the mornings, and when I do biscates in the mornings and sometimes I go there in the early evening to do things."

In all of these examples, social and/or family connections are crucial for obtaining the income and produce necessary for the survival of the family.

In the first example – the greatest case of isolation we observed during our fieldwork, in terms of absence of family support networks – survival is possible thanks to the support of *brothers in the church* and neighbours. In the second case, the opposite scenario where family support is concerned, for the informant lives in the same place his relatives have always lived and he mentioned on various occasions the various types of help they gave him, connections of friendship are also cited as essential in the pursuit of income-generating activities. In both cases we can see a combination of income-generating activities: and the importance of agriculture seems to far outstrip its effective contribution to the family budget.

The importance of agriculture in the economic activities pursued by Maputo families (Sheldon, 1999, 2002, 2003) is borne out by the fact that it is mentioned in most (12) cases. And the fact that everyone who practises some form of agriculture emphasizes its importance to the domestic economy (regardless of quantity, variety, regularity or value) attests to the continuing preponderance of rural activities in the economies of urban families, in this study at least. Even those who no longer practise agriculture have practised it in the recent past, citing various reasons for giving it up. Some, for instance, sold their *machamba* to get what they needed to build the house they now live in; others left agriculture because they only practised it when young, when living in their parents' house; for others, the *machamba* was a long way from their home and they lacked the money to get there.

In cases where the resources obtained from agricultural work are mentioned, the cultivation plots are located in the yards of the informants' home spaces (in one case, the members of a family cultivated the plot next door to their home space, as the plot belonged to a family member living abroad) and are small vegetable patches, or agricultural plots in the *bairro* of residence. These plots are considered to belong to the family, although agricultural work is mainly performed by women, as the discourse reproduced below illustrates:

I have a machamba right here in the bairro of Jafar. I've had this machamba for a long time now, it's the land that belonged to my parents, where I was born. The land was divided between me and my brothers when my parents died. They sold the land but I have my bit of half a hectare where I make my machamba. I have a

machamba where I produce lettuce, cassava and sugar cane (male aged 65, Jafar); My husband's third wife is very lazy and doesn't like going to the machamba. Here in the house I'm the only person who goes to the machamba (female aged 45, Jafar).

Some families own agricultural land in other areas or more rural *bairros* (normally low-lying land), in locations outside the city or even outside the province of Maputo. In the latter cases, family members either go there regularly to work the land (cases 43, 104, 40) or live there permanently. Then there are some families who have loaned or leased their *machambas*:

I didn't go this year, I'm resting the hoe a little. I loaned my machamba to a person from the church. If she has curry sometimes she gives me some but there's no obligation" (female aged 33, Guáva); and others who are tenants of the land they cultivate:

I have a machamba in Boane.⁶⁰ The machamba is rented and we pay 200 meticais (≈6 USD) to the owner. I heard about the machamba from a woman friend, a neighbour. It was at the wedding of a neighbour, I talked about it and a neighbour took me there to Boane and she said there was a machamba for lease. It's a big and fertile machamba, only it's far away, the first year I got a lot of maize, the peanuts didn't work though. When I began to work the machamba I worked alone, later I asked people to help me work the machamba and I'd pay them in return (female aged 43, Mavalane B).

As the above example shows, there are still cases where work on the *machambas* is by specially contracted labour. The *machambas* are often located well outside the city, but as we shall explain below they are still associated with the *home space*, for not only are they a relatively important resource for the survival of the family, they also have performative effects on the organization of domestic life.

Work on the *machamba* is often performed by different members of the same family, not necessarily living in the same *home space* or belonging to the same household. This demonstrates the persistence and importance of family connections across diverse nuclei of the same family, and also reveals a series of social dynamics

⁶⁰ Approximately 30 km from the capital city.

which, though based on agriculture, are structured and maintained in the urban milieu. Agriculture is pursued not only for strictly economic reasons, but also, and perhaps essentially, because it perpetuates (albeit in combination with other factors) the family and social ties which are essential for the survival and reproduction of the family in the urban milieu. The following comment exemplify this statement:

Work on the machamba has helped, because even my mother's sisters have been going there at the weekends, because they work in the city. (...) I was given this machamba, it belonged to my mother. When she died it was her machamba, just that it got divided up. I think it's important to have a machamba (male aged 42, Mahotas).

In the life stories related to us by the informants we observed that many of the strategic options in the search for economic resources are shaped and influenced by past experiences and skills, both personal and occupational. These are present-moment situations that take shape in a constantly ambiguous and contradictory dialogue between the ideal and the possible. A significant proportion of our interviewees (most of them with irregular incomes) made reference to the growing discrepancy between their everyday reality and their socio-economic aspirations and expectations.

As we can see, one of the characteristics of family economies is the exchange of goods and services between members of the same family, who may or may not share the same home space. These exchanges – “a bit of help” as our informants described them – are part of the mutual rights and obligations established via practices of reciprocity rooted in traditional kinship rules. However, observance of these practices is now limited to a narrower group of relatives (and even then they are not always observed) with closer ties of kinship (fathers, sons, brothers, nephews). This family network of exchange, mutual assistance, duties and responsibilities is one of the most important ways of facing up to the economic constraints to which the families are subjected. This system – whereby a family member feels *obliged* to provide assistance, or to which he or she resorts when necessary – helps each family secure the financial means and/or consumer goods necessary for meeting their basic requirements, while it may also make additional resources available.

2. The *home space* and economic activity

In the context we are examining, the *home space* is not only a place of shelter, privacy, social reproduction and the cultivation of wider social ties involving neighbours, friends, distant relatives and – as we shall see in due course – “brothers in the church”, but also (as we saw in our analysis of the importance of agriculture in the family budget) economic production. This last point is of fundamental importance and merits closer attention.

In only a few of the families we studied (5) was the *home space* merely a place of residence and social reproduction. Most (14) also pursue economic activity in their *home space*; in some cases this activity is complementary to other activities pursued outside the *home space*, while in others it actually constitutes the principal source of income and involves one or more family members, working part- or full-time.⁶¹ In addition to requiring changes to the spatial configuration of the house, these activities provide monetary resources and/or foodstuffs that are considered important for the domestic economy, although just how important varies according to the type of activity and the volume of production.

In addition to growing vegetables on small patches in their yards, some families have modified parts of their *home spaces* to accommodate other types of income-generating activity. These include vending (7 cases), craft industry (2 cases) and services (5 cases). To facilitate their vending activities, families build *barracas* in or at the front of their plots,⁶² small takeaways or groceries where they mainly sell food and drinks, and *banças* – stalls set out on the street adjacent to their plots – where household members, mainly women and children, sell small kits of various basic products:

My wife does a bit of business, she has that little barraca in front of the house where she sells basic necessities: coconuts, tangerines and oranges (male aged 68, 3 de Fevereiro); We have this banca here in the yard and a few ducks. The banca belongs to my wife” (male aged 65, Jafar); I have a barraca in front of the house where I sell basic products and I raise chickens for my own consumption. (female aged 36, 3 de Fevereiro); There’s a barraca in the yard of the house where we sell

⁶¹ The Physical Study (Andersen 2012) observed that economic activities were pursued in the *home space* in almost 60 percent of cases.

⁶² The part of the yard beyond its perimeter but running immediately alongside it is considered to belong to the home space, as other research in the same context has verified (Costa 2007).

basic products such as rice, matches, oil, salt, flour, soap, biscuits, juices etc.
(female aged 45, Albasine).

In the cases of a blacksmith, a carpenter and a traditional healer, their places of work are within the *home space*, which they have built and/or modified to serve their purposes: and this implies the separation of work and living zones, with common areas in which both clients and family members can circulate: the yard or patio. In other cases, where the income-generating activity is sporadic (an example is a woman who treats children with traditional remedies) or the *home space* is used for storing products that are sold outside (cases 40 and 86), economic activity does not entail structural modifications: but it does nevertheless interfere with the domestic space (clients coming and going, products stacked in bedrooms etc.).

Lease of rooms in the main house or annexes/outhouses (3 cases) is another activity which provides the families with income,⁶³ and which also entails some reorganization of the domestic space, as the following examples illustrate:

Example 1 – C., aged 43, is a widow by her first marriage but has remarried in a polygamous marriage. Her husband's main house is in Magoanine, another bairro of Maputo. C. is the owner of the house she lives in, and which she built in the 1990s. C. lives alone and has never had children. Her current partner is a guard. C. says she doesn't work but tends a *machamba* in an area 30 km outside Maputo. She says she used to work as a vendor of medicines and cleaning products but gave up this activity after being involved in a road accident. She then sold foodstuffs and bran outside her house but ran out of money to replenish supplies. At present, she rents out one of the two bedrooms in the main house, charging her tenants 600 meticaís per month (≈19 USD). These tenants are two young men from Chibuto (200 km from the capital) in Gaza province, who work in a street market, the Estrela Vermelha, as vendors of imported alcoholic beverages. This *home space* also includes an outhouse which C. has also rented out in the past, but which at present is unoccupied because "*it's not in good condition*". With the rent money she receives, C. hopes to make improvements to the outhouse so she can rent it out in the future. Leasing rooms is neither an ideal nor a comfortable solution in her view, but she has no alternative.

⁶³ In the 109 cases addressed by the socio-economic and physical survey (Andersen 2012a and 2012b), only seven cases of leased living space were recorded. The survey did however suggest the emergence of a market for room rental.

Example 2 – F. is 47 and came to Maputo as a war refugee in 1979. He at first lived with his brother in the bairro of Malhangalene, and moved to the bairro where he currently lives, Polana Caniço A, in 1982. He lets five rooms in an outhouse on his plot of land. At the time we were gathering data, some of the tenants were university students from other parts of the country. For the household, the income from these tenants constitutes an additional revenue stream. It is a complement to the metalwork that F. performs with the help of one of his sons. There is also a vending booth in the yard, but this is closed.

T. (female aged 39, Hulene B) declares: *“The kitchen used to be outside but I’m renting it out to a couple who asked me, I let them use it because I know their family, that little hut I can let but not my house because of my children (...) They [the tenants] use the two bathrooms out there in the yard, one for washing and the other as a latrine, their space is outside [...] It doesn’t bring in all the money I asked for, I said 800 meticaïs, the tenants begged me and they pay a rent of 650 meticaïs [...] I live off the rent from my kitchen out there and the rent from my parents’ house”.*

As we can see, the *home space* is simultaneously a place of economic production, where families combine different production-oriented activities with domestic activities in an on-going struggle to increase their income.

In many of these “battles”, buying or enlarging a house is one of the principal objectives of these activities, alongside mere sustenance. The first case is instructive: a diversified revenue stream enabled the head of the family to improve his house. The expansion and completion of the house – which initially had two rooms and a living room, and now has four rooms, a living room and a bathroom, as well as an annex for lease – could not have happened without these economic ventures and activities in the *home space*.

Analysis of the facts reveals not only a symbiosis between domestic activities and the generation of income which erodes the traditional spatial distinctions between reproduction (non-economic activities) and production (economic activities); it also, and above all, shows that the balance in the use of space between residence and workplace varies according to income, aspirations of the household, the nature of the economic

activities pursued, and the alternative income-generation opportunities which emerge, among other variables.

It was also shown that the performance of the different activities in the *home space* entails multiple and complex combinations of human, material, symbolic and spatial resources, which are not always managed in harmonious fashion by the different family members.

3. Economy and power relations in the home space

3.1. Economic activity and gender relations

Economic activities pursued in the *home space* – observed in 14 of the cases we studied – were mainly the responsibility of women (11), who occasionally mentioned the assistance of other family members (7). This assistance came from their husbands on a sporadic basis (3), more frequently from their children and in one instance from brothers – although we observed much implicit assistance, for even if they do not actually perform these activities the other family members always help out one way or another. A significant number of the economic activities pursued at home are considered to be the family's principal source of sustenance (6), but only three of these activities were unequivocally considered to be *work* (a man who has a metal workshop at home, a couple in which the wife does *mukera*⁶⁴, and a traditional healer).

In addition to the relatively diverse range of economic activities pursued in the *home space*, another income-generating activity is of a financial nature, and rotates around the homes of its members: *xitique*. In most cases only women take part in a *xitique* scheme, although one case involving a couple was observed. Besides belonging to the same *xitique* group, this couple are also partners in the income-generating activity which is their home space's principal livelihood.

Their household comprises themselves and their three children. The income-generating activities of this couple are complementary: she buys bed and table linen in the city, which he then sells in the provinces. Yet the husband does not view this activity as *work*:

⁶⁴ This refers to the process of buying products in neighbouring South Africa and re-selling in the south of Mozambique - a well established economic activity. Someone who does this is called a Mukerista

The goods here at home belong to me and my wife, maybe when we're both working there is a division, the wife buys one thing and the husband buys another but when only one has money they do things together" (male aged 45, Mahotas).

To boost their income, both participate in the same *xitique* group, which has 15 member couples each contributing 1500 meticaïs every month on behalf of the beneficiary family. This couple had already received the money once, and at the end of our fieldwork received a second payout. Over the course of our fieldwork we had various conversations with this couple on how they intended to spend the money. There were several things they wanted to do with it. The wife mainly mentioned things she wanted to buy for the house – a “*sideboard,⁶⁵ armchairs*”, and said that with the money from the last *xitique* she had bought a “*bed, mattress, large cooking pots, freezer and amplifier*”: but the final decision on what to do with the money from the forthcoming *xitique* would lie with them both: “*We'll talk about it.*” The husband mentioned that he had bought zinc sheets to cover one of the rooms with the first payout. As for the next payout, he declared: “*The first thing I want to do is cement the house and buy armchairs.*” When the money arrived, he did in fact cement the room he had been talking about, but the armchairs his wife also wanted were not bought. Instead, he decided to build one more room (possibly a unilateral decision which went against his wife's wishes).

In all the cases we studied where the head of household was a man, when questioned on all the decisions relating to the obtaining and allocating of the material resources necessary for the acquisition, construction, upkeep and transformation of the *home space*, the responses of family members – including the head of household himself – suggested that the decisions had been taken by men. These decisions often involved complex choices, given the limited resources. Deciding whether to channel investments and savings into home improvements (and what kind), or the education of the children, or even to formalize the conjugal union, involves choices which attend to the different needs and priorities of the various male and female members of the family. Normally, the man's will prevails and his power of decision is not (openly, at least) contested, for this power lies with him *naturally*:

⁶⁵ An item of furniture with glass doors, containing objects considered to be pretty and/or valuable. Large pots and pans are frequently placed inside or on top of these sideboards.

I want to get married, but as we planned to build the house I couldn't. Building costs money and so does getting married. I had to drop one thing and do the other. Maybe now that work on the house has progressed he'll talk about it. I never pressure him, I think one day he'll decide (...) It was my husband and his brothers who chose this bairro, I don't know what they saw in it (female aged 36, 3 de Fevereiro).

My husband decided to buy this plot(...) he drew what he wanted in the sand and the builders made it (...) he's the one who's responsible for the decoration and it's the beauty that counts, he saw the brickwork in my mother-in-law's old house, he saw the same in South Africa and he bought it (female aged 31, Magoanine C).

In my case it's my husband who's in charge but sometimes we share our opinions, I'm almost his secretary (...) When there's football on the television and my husband's home, he stays to watch it and we get annoyed because we want to watch something else but it's always him that wins... he's the boss (female aged 32, Albasine).

However, in the case of another couple (from the *bairro* of Mahotas), the woman's role as the principal breadwinner was repeatedly made clear. In this family, the husband is unemployed but says that he works with his wife in her business activities. Their daughter says: *"It's my mum who does the accounts and who is head of the business (...) she's the one who buys in all the things and leaves them in the house"* (female aged 24). But it is the husband who makes the decisions about building work: *"It was my dad who made the plan for this house"* (female aged 24). The husband is also the head of the family and master of the home space. In all other cases where a *home space* was occupied by a couple, the man/husband was always considered to be the one in charge of the family, although there was occasional mention of assistance from the other family members living in the same house (wife, sons and daughters, nephews).

It is no easy task to analyse this assistance in terms of the power relations it embodies, or to determine whether it is given on a regular basis, whether it is freely given or imposed upon the weaker by the stronger, whether failure to give it entails punishment, what kind of management underlies it, or who exercises it and in relation to what kind of expenditure. It would also require more fieldwork than we were able to conduct. Nevertheless, in several cases we obtained information from different family

members on the way individual contributions to the collective good are processed, and these allow us to make some tentative guesses on the management of income in the home space.

The first factor to consider is that the person seen as in charge of the *home space* is always the head of the household, whether male or female. Everyone else who contributes funds, regardless of amount or frequency, are seen as *helpers*. Although in practice they are also responsible for the upkeep of the family, the women who were the partners of the heads of household also saw themselves, in most cases, as “helpers”.

All the other activities which they may pursue (vending⁶⁶, agriculture) and from which they derive income or produce are not seen as *work*, regardless of the importance of the resources thereby obtained for the upkeep of the family. “*My husband doesn't let me work. The only thing he permits is [me] selling from the booth here in the house*” (female aged 36, 3 de Fevereiro). Another informant, who works on a *machamba* which she says “*helps a lot because when there's no money we can pick the cassava*” (female aged 32, Albasine), declares:

At the moment I'm doing nothing but I did domestic work last year, I've only been at home a year. Sometimes I sell gold chains to other women, someone comes here with the chains (they buy them in South Africa) and I go and sell them.

The men on the contrary, even when unemployed or doing sporadic work (*biscates*) and earning wages insufficient to sustain their families, are always seen as the ones in charge, even where they recognize that they are unable fully to exercise this function due to lack of resources. At the same time, in all the cases observed, the women pursue some kind of activity (on a more or less regular basis) that generates income and/or produce.

However, the fact that women are involved in income-generating activity does not of itself qualify them for an improvement in their status. For as we have seen, such activities are not seen as *work*, and to pursue them women need the authorization of their husbands – which is not always given. In one case, for example, the husband declared:

⁶⁶ As observed in an earlier study (Costa, 2007), vending activities are not seen as work.

“The one who pays all the expenses of my family is me, I’m the one who works (...) I have a machamba in Guijá but it’s my wife who works it, not me.” His wife adds:

I don't work, my husband doesn't let me work, I don't sell anything either. At home, in Guijá, I started selling but my husband doesn't like it. (...) Before that I made and sold locally-made alcoholic drinks at home but my husband stopped me. I transferred the business to my brother's house but I gave it up in the end because my husband just wouldn't put up with it.

The fact that women often pursue income-generating activities inside the *home space* or in family-owned *machambas*⁶⁷ which, regardless of how close they are to the houses they live in, they have always considered as part of their family space, has important implications. On the one hand these activities *belong* to the domestic space, where the woman has always exercised a degree of control and power. Therefore it is socially acceptable for them to pursue these activities: but by the same token, such activities are not considered to be *work*. Yet many of them involve contact with the outside world (clients) and as such require the authorization of the husband. Where economic activity in the home is pursued at the initiative of the man, however,⁶⁸ it is considered to be work.

Economic activities pursued by women and associated, in practice or symbolically, with the domestic orbit do not, for this reason, entail changes to their status, which continues to be related to the family and to their roles as wives and mothers. And while their access to the financial resources which their activity procures is something new relative to the old practices in the rural milieu, this does not of itself bring about any change in gender relations, in terms of or increased autonomy and power, or less inequality, with regard to men. The roles traditionally assigned to women remain the same. They are the ones who are responsible for the domestic chores:

The boys don't do any work at home, because the things to be done are woman's work – washing up, cleaning the house and grinding cassava – and they're at

⁶⁷ The importance of agriculture was also verified in the Physical Study (Andersen 2012b), which found that 36 percent of the households included in the sample had a *machamba* in the green areas or another location remote from the plot of land they lived on. In most cases (75%), the *machamba* yielded only enough for consumption by the family. Only one *machamba* in four produced a surplus for market, thereby contributing to the family income.

⁶⁸ This ethnographic study records only one such instance, but data from the socio-economic study (and from other studies too) carried out as part of the same project confirm this observation.

home, all they do is biscates (female aged 17, Polana Caniço A); The activities at home are my wife's responsibility. She knows what's what (male aged 68, 3 Fevereiro); I tidy the yard and cook when I've no one here to do it, but when she's here she won't let me cook because it looks bad, a woman at home and the man doing these things" (male aged 58, Polana Caniço A).

Domestic work may be performed by the boys or the men, where there is no woman in the house. And in many of the cases we studied, the males did perform certain tasks: they washed their clothes, swept the floor, sometimes cooked. This distribution of tasks by gender depends on the relative proportions of males and females in the house, and their ages; but the mother, whenever she is present, is the one who is ultimately responsible for them. Just as she is responsible for the education of the children:

While my husband buys school materials, I take care of the children so they don't go dirty to school, school's my affair (female aged 32, Albasine); I have the duty of checking the school tests of my son, keeping his uniform clean and looking after the house (female aged 36, 3 de Fevereiro).

Thus, and as this study⁶⁹ shows, the fact that women exercise activities which bring them monetary income does not necessarily signify – as some authors (Tripp, 1989; Loforte, 2003) suggest – that they have access to certain positions of power, or can gain a certain visibility at *bairro* level which can positively influence their status inside and outside their families. These activities do not of themselves contribute to an increase in their self-esteem, to greater control over their own lives or to more bargaining power vis-à-vis men. In fact, they may even end up penalizing women more than benefitting them (Caplan, 1995, Campbell, 1995; Rocha and Grinspun, 2001), for they entail a greater workload than in the rural milieu.

3.2. Economic activity and relations between the generations

Children and young people often contribute to the family budget too. The form of these contributions, and the extent to which they are made freely or coercively, largely

⁶⁹ Confirmed in other studies: see Costa 2007, 2005; Caplan 1995; Campbell 1995; Rocha and Grinspun 2001.

depend on the type and structure of the family to which they belong (number of resident members, age distribution, the economic situation of the family and the types of income-generating activities on which it depends), the social representations of the different family members with regard to the duties and responsibilities allocated to different generations, and the different places and social roles played by each member of the family. These social representations are not uniform across the age groups, in each particular age group, or even at individual level. There are always different ways of interpreting the norms embodied in the cultural models which co-exist in the context we are examining, and this can generate conflict between family members – conflict that tends to become more acute the tighter the economic straits the family finds itself in.

The economic contributions of children and young people to their family budgets can be either direct or indirect. Direct contributions derive from activities which yield income or produce. The monetary gains resulting from these activities are totally or partially incorporated in the family budget, while in other cases the activities may be pursued as part of family businesses or ventures (helping out at vending stalls, in family-based industry, working on the *machamba*), with the income from these activities managed by the family member(s) responsible. Indirect contributions occur in instances where children and young people perform all kinds of domestic tasks (cooking, looking after younger children, cleaning the house, washing clothes, fetching water) which release the older family members from these responsibilities and enable them to exercise income-generating activities.

Direct contributions are more frequent among older children (sons and daughters) and those who are no longer in education. In some cases, older sons already have children of their own and live with their wives in their parents' home. They feel – or *are* – obliged to make some kind of contribution, but as one informant put it:

The children have to work and help their parents but now we're getting over the hard times and the children don't obey (...) There's no question here of the parents throwing their children out because they're already grown up and don't help out around the house, but the parents have to find a way to make a living and in some cases they help their children. But there are few cases where the children help (...) We have to be prepared (...) Some of them [the children] have a little revenue but don't help their parents, these are sensitive cases (male aged 56, Mahotas).

In one case, that of a female traditional healer who lives without a husband/companion, when questioned on this subject she (the mother) and one of her sons (aged 24) replied as follows:

I'm in charge of the family. My duty is to guarantee education, health and nutrition for my children. I maintain the house with the profits from the barraca and the reed house. Although there are no queues of customers at the reed house and sometimes I go a day or two without a customer, what I earn is enough for the upkeep of the family (...) My children also help with the money they earn from their biscates (female aged 44, Albasine); My mother is in charge of the house. I help with the barraca but also when I earn a bit of money from building I give some to my mother (male aged 24).

In other cases the question of the division of expenses is framed in the following terms:

There is no budget for expenses. As the head of the family he's the one who pays the bills. The biscates that the son did were more for him to organize his life, but as the cost of living has gone up he told his son to help him as much as possible; My sister-in-law works in a place that does fingernails and has a salon in her parents' house, my brother gets money at the end of the week to buy something to cook, but he also helps during the week. My father and mother do the monthly shopping (female aged 16, Polana Caniço A).

I'm responsible for everyone who lives in this house. But my children and my wife help me with the expenses because my pay is not nearly enough. I have a nephew aged 25, the son of my wife's sister, who lives here in the house. He works and has been contributing to the food expenses. He's been a big help. He lives here because he has nowhere else to go. He had problems with his family and we took him in (male aged 68). The food is the responsibility of everyone who works: me, my cousin (the son of my wife's sister) and my father (...) I'm responsible for buying school materials and clothes for my daughter. Although we're separated, the mother of my daughter also helps, because she has a business. I don't live with my daughter's mother because our relationship ended, it was just a fling but my daughter was born from it. I didn't want to marry her and accepted the responsibility for bringing up my daughter (male aged 29, 3 Fevereiro).

This obligation to help may extend to children who have already left home, and in four cases mention was made of non-resident children who contribute to the upkeep of their parents' *home space*. And as we saw, in another three cases other non-resident relatives (brother and sisters) provide help too.

In similar fashion to what occurs with activities that yield income and/or produce and are exercised by the women of the family, however, receiving "a bit of help" (regardless of how much, and with what frequency) does not call into question the supremacy of the head of the family over the other members of the household. Where there is a couple in the household, it is the man who is in charge, for he *works* while the others do *biscates*; and in the case of the women and younger members of the family, the activities they pursue are only considered to be *work* if they are regular, and remunerated in the form of a salary which presupposes some kind of employment contract.⁷⁰

Conclusions

In their efforts to obtain resources and to reproduce, family members resort to a plurality of activities which generate income and products. These activities span all sectors of the economy (formal, informal, primary, secondary and tertiary); they take place in different geographic contexts (urban, rural and even other countries); and in most cases no single activity generates income sufficient to meet the needs of the families. Situations like this necessitate constant exchanges and sharing, structured around family relations which extend beyond the nucleus of residents of any individual home space. The social value attributed to the different activities depends not only on the type of activity pursued or the income or products which are the outcome of the activity; essentially, it depends on the status enjoyed by the individual pursuing the activity. We observed that the economic activities pursued by men have a different social value from the activities pursued by children, youths and women. Only where the activities of the latter are pursued as part of formal employment contracts are they actually seen as work.

The internal management of the income and products obtained by the different family members in the activities they pursue depends on numerous factors ranging from power relations to normative codes and individual/collective affects and

⁷⁰ This was observed in only one instance in this study. The only exception was that of the traditional healer, for reasons already given.

interests. Another factor is that the income or products resulting from these activities are often unpredictable, and in most cases are not guaranteed in advance. Many such activities require a degree of wheeling and dealing, knowledge of demand and the ability to imagine and anticipate future developments if a minimum amount of success is to be achieved vis-à-vis the competition. Other activities depend on social relations, knowledge and exchanges of favours. Others, like farming, depend on the climate and are founded on ancestral knowledge which includes the awareness of risk and lack of security. Consequently, the unpredictability and lack of security that characterize the urban milieu the families currently inhabit are nothing new. If anything, in fact, the city offers a wider range of possibilities for “playing” on various fronts.

Yet this potential can only be realized by combining different activities and simultaneously cultivating the social relationships on which such activities depend. And in cultivating these social relationships, actors embody behaviours and values which, depending on interests and circumstances, can actually be mutually contradictory.

Therefore, as we have seen, it is these multiple articulations and inter-relations between different income- and produce-generating activities, different types and levels of social relations, and different behaviours governed by values which are sometimes contradictory, which define the modernity and urbanity of the families in the context under analysis.

The conjugation of these apparently dissimilar but inter-dependent attitudes generates contradictions in the discourse of social actors. These contradictions become apparent in the comparison of discourses in which representations of normative ideals from different cultural models are evident (the practices of the actors are often in contradiction with their discourse).

We conclude from this part of the study that the social and/or economic relations between actors are simultaneously a resource in themselves and a means to obtaining other resources. Some of these resources are given freely, as a means of creating or maintaining dependency, on the basis of which relationships of power and prestige are established within a given family, social group or network. Thus, doing business and the value of what is transacted frequently depend on pre-existing social relationships between the parties, or on relationships which the actors wish (or wish not) to establish.

PART V

IDENTITY, FAMILY NETWORKS AND SOCIAL NETWORKS

Abstract

In the fifth and last part of our study on *home space* as a social construct we examine the processes whereby identities are constructed and re-constructed. Our analysis includes a discussion of the *home space* in its spatial and identity-forming dimensions, and the way these identity-forming processes structure themselves within the confines of *home space*, family and church, the latter two being key social networks in the universe under examination. We also examine school education and its relationship with the identity-reconstruction processes which generate a greater sense of individualism. Part V ends with an examination of the elements fuelling cohesion and disintegration of social networks and the processes via which social actors manage to articulate these elements.

1. Reconstruction of identities and reconfiguration of space

Home is the same as family, in my language it's munti, kaya (...)
it's important because it's where you live, it means my whole life to me
(male aged 47, 3 de Fevereiro).

Having a house is like having a child, getting married... it's making a dream come true
(female aged 37, 3 de Fevereiro).

Family is everything to me because without it I'm nothing
(female aged 17, 3 de Fevereiro).

The above quotations illustrate our conclusions so far. In other words, our analysis until now has enabled us to draw some conclusions on the multiple and complex inter-relations existing between the individuals, families and the houses they inhabit in the *bairros* of Maputo, and which create feelings of identification and shared identity between different social and materials realities: the individual, the family and the home (Tucker, 1994). These inter-relations mould and transform the individual and collective

(family) identities of the social actors which are structured via different dimensions and symbolic systems.

The fundamental relations existing between homes and their inhabitants in the *bairros* of Maputo are obviously not specific to the social context in analysis. There is a vast bibliography,⁷¹ on diverse cultural contexts and historical periods, where these same relations are shown to be important. Nevertheless, the fact that the relationship between individuals, families and the houses they live in is of universal importance does not mean these relations remain the same, or are of the same type, in the different contexts. On the contrary: so variable are relationships on various levels that each case is a specific one – even if similarities in certain general characteristics exist in certain contexts.

In our context, the fact that the houses are permanently under construction reflects the transformations occurring within the families, as we saw earlier. The way built space is occupied also dictates significant changes in family relations. One female informant, for example, complained of having to sleep in the same room as her 20-year-old son:

He's growing up and he's going to need a girlfriend, and he won't be able to do it in his mum's room, he might make someone pregnant somewhere else, he won't have anywhere to take her" (female aged 58).

The expression “*make someone pregnant somewhere else*” (i.e. not at home/in the family) is indicative of the importance attached, in a context marked by patrilinear kinship structures, to children being born in the house of the family of the male parent. Only in this way can they be considered as belonging to his family.⁷² This informant's comments throw much light on the significant changes, in terms of the social

⁷¹ Shelley (2004) provides an interesting and extremely comprehensive critical review of the literature on the home, covering works produced by authors from various disciplines (anthropology, sociology, architecture, psychology, history, human geography and philosophy) in which the complex relations between individual, house, family home and household are addressed. Anthropological studies of the material culture of the home in the 1960s and 70s were mainly founded on structuralist and symbolic perspectives. In the 80s and 90s new studies addressed the house as a place of consumption, plus domestic life and the home. The house was now seen as a mode of expression, a means via which people build their ideologies (Miller 2001:10; Atfield and Kirkham 1989, Putnam and Newton 1990). More recently, these perspectives have drawn criticism for the contradictions and complexity of their findings, especially the disparities on the level of the relations between inhabitants and their houses (Miller, 2010; Clark, 2010).

⁷² Nowadays, children are often born in hospital; but daughters-in-law are ideally expected to stay in the house of their husband's family before they give birth, and the new-born baby to stay there for the first months of its life, if they are to be considered as members of the male parent's family (Costa, 2007, Feliciano, 1989, Junod, (1912/13) 1996).

reproduction of the family, that the internal organization and division of a house can entail.

There also exists a near-symbiosis between the house and its inhabitants, the former adapting to the latter and vice versa, each simultaneously cause and effect in successive processes of transformation of identity.

It's important, therefore, to examine the identity-forming and identification processes which unite inhabitants with their houses – where the latter are not merely expressions of a social identity but integral parts of the same process by which identity is created and transformed – if we are to understand whether these processes are generated by the characteristics of these urban spaces, or whether on the contrary they are the result of pre-existing identity-forming processes which, on being transposed to the urban context, are necessarily transformed by – but do not originate in – this context. And it is the transposition and transformation of identity-forming processes which confers specificity on the spatial and social realities we are examining.

The theoretical perspective underlying our analysis addresses the identity-forming processes of individuals, families and social groups as dynamics which change and adapt over time, interacting with new “others” creatively and according to complex dialectics. As Pina Cabral observed: “*All formation of identity is a transformation of identity*” (2002:22).

If we are to understand the dynamics which drive the transformation of the identity-forming processes of the social actors in our context, therefore, we have to take the past into account: for it is in the recreation of the past, and in the mobilization of referents anchored in the past, that social identities are formed, legitimized and recreated. In our context, this past takes us back to the Tsonga culture of southern Mozambique,⁷³ where individual and social identity has always been structured vis-à-vis the family and a certain place, the region of origin, the place where the ancestors are buried.

Earlier studies (Costa, 2007) noted that these identity symbols persist, and that family identity⁷⁴ is structured, via a set of elements to which are associated symbolic

⁷³ For an in-depth examination of the persistence and transformation of the Tsonga cultural model in the urban context in southern Mozambique, see Costa (2007), especially pp. 31-4.

⁷⁴ On this subject, José Feliciano notes that in Tsonga society “the whole identity of groups is structured relative to lines of descent from dead ancestors. Ancestors located in the past (dead) were in this way symbols of living groups, and this is why the belief in / cult of the spirits is so important in this society [...] Ancestors, the identity referents of the groups, enforce solidarity, because this solidarity is seen as a blessing and any weakening of solidarity as a deviation from the models of behaviour with one's relatives, and is penalized as a corrective measure” (translation ours) (1989: 297).

moments and processes (for example, ceremonies in honour of ancestors and burials) which tend to generate feelings of belonging and identification and are appropriated by the family members in a very broad acceptance, giving them a dynamism and malleability in the on-going process of transformation of family identity.

In this study we observed that the symbolic moments and processes associated with the region of origin and the ancestor cult, which have traditionally and ideally required the performance of ceremonies in their honour in the place in question of the burial of family members there, have been undergoing transformation but, as we will see, this transformation has not signified a reduction in the importance of these symbols as structural elements of individual, collective and family identity.

The structural role of the region of origin and the ancestor cult observed there had changed, for movement to the city entails a decrease, or even an interruption, in communication with these places (see Part one). This can be observed in the discourse of the informants, and is especially revelatory in three aspects: the frequency of visits to the region of origin has fallen substantially, as we saw above, the place where the ancestor cult is observed and where the more recent family dead are buried, and the place where the informants themselves want to be buried.

Of a total of 23 people from outside Maputo who mentioned burial places and ceremonies held in honour of their ancestors (not all informants addressed both topics), only three explicitly mentioned that they wanted to be buried in their region of origin, although nine said their ancestors were buried there.

We've held our ceremonies in honour of our ancestors here in Maputo since my parents began living here. Whoever wants to visit the graves in Manhiça can, because my grandparents are buried there. When I die I'd like to be buried here (...) because my parents were buried here in Maputo (female aged 31, Magoanine B).

I'd like to be buried in a cemetery near here and he [the informant's husband] doesn't want to be far away either, otherwise it will take our sons a lot of effort to get there and they'll end up forgetting you as you're so far away (female aged 32, Albasine).

My ancestors are buried there. My father was buried in Macia, but my mother was buried here in Maputo, in the cemetery of Lhanguene. We go there and tend the

graves regularly. My mother's wish was to be buried in Macia but there was no way to do that, because at the time my older brother wasn't working (female aged 43, Mavalane B).

Only one informant said he had recently been to his region of origin to hold a ceremony in honour of his ancestors, and in this case this was where his main residence is located. The other five who mentioned that they had held such ceremonies in their region of origin said they had only done so on one occasion, and many years previously: *"I went to Manhiça once for the ceremony with my husband and my children"* (female aged 32, Mahotas).

The head of a family from the 3 de Fevereiro, a 68-year-old male who has been living in Maputo since 1955, made the following comments on the ancestor ceremony:

My ancestors are buried in Jangamo, where I was born. The last time I went there to hold the ceremony in honour of the dead was a long time ago, I can't remember when, I think it was in 2000. I'm thinking of going back to Jangamo, it's my village and I'd like to be buried there. We used to hold ceremonies for our ancestors every five years. But sometimes we let it lapse because we have no money. The traditional ceremonies cost money because we have to organize a feast and call traditional healers to communicate with the spirits (male aged 68, 3 de Fevereiro).

His son, however, affirmed:

Our ancestors were buried in Jangamo. Only our grandmother who died here was buried here, maybe because there was no money (...) I'd like to be buried where I'm living, it can be here in Maputo or anywhere else I go to live (male aged 29, 3 de Fevereiro).

Six informants said they held the ceremonies in honour of their ancestors in the houses they now live in, while four said they held no ceremonies because the church they attend does not permit it:

I don't hold traditional funeral ceremonies because my religion doesn't allow it. Any ceremony has to be in the church (female aged 36, 3 de Fevereiro); [to commemorate our ancestors] we only say prayers, no tradition, we don't do that,

people who are born now don't want that, even in the church we don't do that, it's just prayer (female aged 45, Mavalane B).

Several informants said the ceremony (often designated “mass”) in honour of their ancestors or family members who had died more recently was held in their homes, with the help of their “brothers” from the church. Some held two types of ceremony, one in accordance with the traditional rite and the other sanctioned by the church.

We had a mass in honour of our deceased son not long ago. We told the pastors of the church and they sent the mamas (women) to come and say the prayers. (...) We also hold non-church ceremonies to have good fortune in life. We call traditional healers here to the house (male aged 65, Jafar).

Either because they have no money to make the journey to their region of origin and cover the expenses involved in holding ceremonies and burials, or because they have no wish to do so, many informants have severed their ties with their ancestral identity-forming spatial referents, or no longer observe this custom as assiduously as before. But this does not mean their region of origin has completely lost its standing as a referent of identity – many informants still think it is here the ceremonies in honour of their ancestors *should* be held, and would like to hold them “one day”. Others continue to hold them, making the journey to their region of origin occasionally, or whenever they can. And neither does it mean that ancestors are no longer symbols of family identity or that ceremonies held in their honour, following the traditional rite or otherwise, are no longer fundamental events in the affirmation of this family identity.

The transposition of ancestor rituals from the region of origin to the current place of residence confers important meaning on this “new” space in terms of the affirmation of family identity, and as such the identity-forming and identification process which unites inhabitants with their houses is the result of a transposition of existing identity-forming processes to the new urban environment of the family. It is in this transposition that they acquire their specific character, for this necessarily entails transformations which accompany changes in family structure.

Family identities which are affirmed in relation to (although not exclusively) this urban *home space* embody types of families which in the vast majority no longer observe, in terms of their structure and forms of organization, hierarchies and norms

based on the Tsonga kinship model.⁷⁵ Although this model still prevails as a referent, it now works in conjunction with other referents which look to Western culture and the values of modernity.

This conjugation of different referents, and the contradictions deriving from it, shines through in the different ideals of family on which the practice and behaviour of individuals is normatively judged; it also shines through in the *home space* – existing, planned and idealized – and its daily use, and can be detected in changing attitudes to traditional ceremonies, and in the different dimensions which structure the individual, family and social identities of the actors: most importantly, the spatial dimension.

This conjugation of referents is also reflected in different cultural models of the family, and namely the Western-type nuclear family – “*The ideal family comprises father, mother and child*” (female aged 39, Hulene B.); “*The family is right when it’s the couple and their children*” (female aged 32, Albasine) – in opposition to the traditional extended-family model:

For me the family is all people with the same lineage or origin or degree of kinship, for example I’ve got here my children and my nephews, the children of my brother who’s in South Africa, and they’re my children now too. I used to live with my brothers, the one who’s in South Africa and the one who lives in Casas Brancas (male aged 54, Polana Caniço A).

A single line of kinship (the patrilinear line,⁷⁶ in the case of social groupings in southern Mozambique) delimiting the frontiers between *Us* (the people in the same

⁷⁵ As various authors have observed (e.g. Junod [1912-13] 1996, Feliciano 1989 and Loforte 1996), the Tsonga kinship model was characterized by the existence of domestic groups designated *muti*, which were “patrilinear and patrilocal, comprised of men of the same lineage, belonging to different generations [...] and by their wives belonging to other lineages, also patrilinear, and their respective sons and daughters” (translation ours) (Feliciano 1989a: 145). These lineages were spatially extensive, covering a dispersed habitat, but normally the nearest neighbours were also close relatives – and where they weren’t they acquired this status – and between these neighbours/relatives there existed connections which fomented mutual assistance, participation in rituals and ceremonies and the constant coming and going of persons and goods (Feliciano 1989a). This model has been undergoing change for some time now. Colonialism brought taxation, salaried labour and the gradual monetization of the economy; and while workers at first continued to observe traditional customs by handing over part or all of their salaries to their elders, who in theory would then redistribute the money, buying the prestige goods necessary for the young to fulfil their matrimonial obligations (the *lobolo*), this custom quickly fell into disuse and the elders gradually lost control over their dependents (Feliciano 1989: 279). The young were now able to escape the guardianship of the “father” at an earlier age, and form their own domestic grouping. According to Feliciano, these domestic groupings are increasingly undergoing “nuclearization”, and it is the kinship system, with its rules, rights, duties and obligations, which is changing (1989: 280).

family) and *Them* (people from other families) no longer exists exclusively as it did in the past; instead there are numerous possibilities for delimiting the frontiers of identity, which, depending on a whole raft of circumstances, can be arranged into different hierarchies. What this means is that the same individual can belong to various *home spaces*, for example the place where he or she was born, the place where his or her ancestors are buried, the place where he or she built a house and where they now live, and other places where relatives with whom they have close symbolic ties (a paternal uncle, for instance) live. Women may separate from their husbands, and on re-marrying go and join another family space. Family and social identity is often constructed, therefore, relative to different *home spaces* which are not mutually exclusive but which obviously do not have the same importance over the course of an individual's life.⁷⁷

This fact is not new in itself – the region of origin has never been the sole and exclusive spatial referent of identity. What *is* new is the reduced weight carried by the region of origin in the assemblage of spaces which structure social identity. Equally recent is the relative equivalence which other spaces come to acquire, and the fact that these spaces are no longer associated with the presence of family cemeteries, although this does not entail the “absence” of the ancestors from the living spaces and daily lives of their families.⁷⁸

Ancestors continue to be fundamental referents of family identity, and this holds true not only for families who observe the rituals in their honour, in accordance with the prescribed norms, and/or continue to give their descendants traditional names⁷⁹ –

⁷⁶ This model continues to be the predominant one, however.

⁷⁷ “Home is located in space, but it is not necessarily a fixed space (...) Home starts by bringing some space under control” (Douglas, 1991:289).

⁷⁸ On this subject, and in reference to the same context, another study drew the following conclusions: “The dynamic process whereby family identities are structured in the universe under examination is especially visible in the contradictory attitudes held by the social actors in regard to their ancestors and in regard to a whole range of symbolic elements, moments and processes in which these ancestors are evoked, and which tend to generate feelings of belonging and identity. But the contradictory and ambivalent attitudes of the social actors towards these symbols of family identity do not detract from their meaning or importance. On the contrary, the presence or absence of the ancestors in the everyday lives of the families remains a factor full of significance, and it is in reference to these ancestors (greater proximity or distance) that situations acquire much of their meaning, especially adverse situations” (translation ours) (Costa 2004:20).

⁷⁹ The traditional name (as it was designated by the informants) is a second name given to a child (or young person) and is the name of an ancestor. As I was informed, “in the past” people had *only* this traditional name: they were later obliged or pressured to take a “registry” (i.e. Western) name too. The traditional name may be given by the family (and requires a ceremony which may be held at a later date) or by a traditional healer, who decides which name to give to a child after a ceremony in which the traditional healer identifies the spirit of the ancestor that is living in the child. In this latter case, the ceremony may be held at the request of the family, typically in response to a collective or individual crisis (the child falls ill, begins act strangely, or causes problems in the family; or the whole family is in crisis)”

“Another way of remembering my ancestors is giving their names to my children (...) It’s a way of paying homage to my family and my wife’s family” (male aged 54, Polana Caniço A) – but also for those who continue to hold ceremonies in their name but do so with the assistance of their “brothers in the church”, and for those who no longer hold any celebration of their ancestors because the church they belong to does not permit this (interestingly, no one said they didn’t hold these ceremonies because they didn’t *believe* in them), and/or because they believe it can bring disgrace on the family, and our of “fear of the spirits”: *“We’ve never held ceremonies in Gaza because my brothers are afraid of the spirits”* (female aged 45, Albasine).

Regardless of how many spaces an individual can feel a sense of belonging to, we observed that for most informants the place where they were living at the time of our research, and which they designated as their homes, was the place with which they associated feelings of security and belonging. Below, in our examination of the discourse in which these terms appear, we will discuss the roles played by the *home space* in the reconstruction of the identities of the social actors.

2. The home space: belonging and security

2.1. Belonging

The house is important because it represents my effort (...) because it belongs to me, I no longer need paying tenants to live here like I used to do in another block
(male aged 48, Polana Caniço A).

The feeling of *belonging* expressed in the above quotation locates individuals in the family group and in a certain (but not unique) residential space, and this feeling is shared by all those who are considered to be part of this social unit and live there.

(Costa, 2004:5). In seven of the 19 families studied, traditional names had been given to the children of the couple occupying the *home space*. In one such *home space* there lived a woman who had no children but whose traditional name “was given to me by my father (...) It’s a way of keeping the family together”. In another case, the question was not raised. In cases where the children had no traditional name, their “registry” names were in many instances given by a *xará* (in Changana *Màb’izweni*) or namesake (Siteo 1996: 101.). “On many occasions, the godfather or godmother (or those chosen to give a name to a child) give their godchild their own name, and that makes them namesakes. By extension, “godfather” and “namesake” sometimes crop up in discourse as synonyms, even where the names in question are not the same. To be somebody’s “namesake” carries a certain significance, as there is an identification between name and person. To share the same first name, even in the absence of family or compaternity ties between the people in question, is always to share an identity” (translation ours) (Costa, 2004:5-6).

As we shall see, our informants associate this notion of *belonging* with a number of meanings (and interpretations), and we can only understand this diversity in the light of many overlapping ideological referents rooted in different normative systems and distinct cultural models.

So on the one hand the collective/community notions of owning and possessing certain spaces persist, and are legally recognized. This recognition is enshrined in the Land Act,⁸⁰ via which the government of Mozambique seeks to guarantee and preserve communities' possession of land by rights of custom. On the other hand, however, the Mozambican legal system is based on the legislation introduced during the colonial period, and under which individual property is a fundamental principle. Furthermore, land ownership laws in Mozambique date from the post-independence socialist era, and therefore all land belongs to the State, and cannot be sold but only temporarily ceded. There are different ways of interpreting all these systems of legislation, with regard both to property rights and to rights of transmission and inheritance. While some of these interpretations of rights of the ownership, possession, use, inheritance and property (individual or collective) of the houses and the plots of land on which they stand are enshrined in law, others are socially accepted if not legally recognized. At the same time, the co-existence of these different systems enables them to be manipulated in different ways, and in the last analysis, in the event of conflicts over property rights, this situation tends to benefit those who hold most power and resources. When the interests of major economic groups and their investments are at stake, for instance, the "modern" face of the law tends to prevail. Yet there are also cases, as we shall see, where this "modern" face prevails over the rules of custom *to the benefit of* family members who would otherwise be excluded from their property rights.

The perceptions of informants on the rights of possession they hold with regard to their *home space* are therefore shaped by ancestral frames of reference under which property is a collective (i.e. family) notion, and also by frames of reference based on the modern system, with its emphasis on individual property. This normative plurality makes possible the co-existence of collective and individual notions of property, as the following excerpts from our informants' discourse attest:

The house is mine but it belongs to the whole family that lives here (male aged 48, Polana Caniço A); *The house belongs to my husband who bought it but it's the*

⁸⁰ Law no. 14/97.

whole family's (...) I hope to leave it to my children in the future (female, Polana Caniço A); *The house belongs to the both of us, but it's in my husband's name* (female aged 36, 3 de Fevereiro); *The house belongs to my sons, I built it for them and my grandchildren* (male aged 68, 3 de Fevereiro).

But the house does not just belong to the family members who live in it. Other relatives have the right to live there too:

I have nephews who live in my house (...) they work, they don't pay anything because they're my brother's children, they're at home here too (male aged 58, Polana Caniço A); *I think a big house is important because it has to have room for my married sisters in case of divorce* (male aged 20, Polana Caniço A).

The house may also belong to family members who have died or are absent abroad, as is the case of these two sisters:

The house belongs to my deceased father, but it's my responsibility (...) We didn't buy it, we built it a long time ago (female aged 43). *[The informant's younger sister who lives in South Africa] is responsible for everything that happens in the house, because she was the one who looked after the house when I got married and made big improvements to it like putting in windows and new furniture* (female aged 39, Mavalane B).

In addition to family members with rights to the house, there are others with the right to “come and visit” and if necessary, as we have seen, those living in the house have to move places to make way for the visiting relatives.

This notion of *belonging* to a house and a family does not rule out situations of conflict and the marginalization of certain individuals. Those who are most penalized are women, who under the traditional norms live in houses which only belong to them because they are married, but who lose this right of belonging if their conjugal situation changes: for these spaces *belong*, first and foremost, to the husband, and in the case of widowed women to the families⁸¹ of their deceased husbands and/or his children. On this

⁸¹ According to the Tsonga cultural model, women who are married and for whom the *lobolo* has been paid belong to the husband's family. If widowed, they are expected to marry one of their dead husband's brothers. If they do not accept this union, they are expelled from the house of their husband's family and left with nothing. In the case of separation or divorce, the *lobolo* which the bride's family received must be

topic and on the contradictions generated by the co-existence of different legal systems, the following comments, by a widow with two young children talking about the fate of the house where she lives in the event that she re-marry, are instructive:

This house is the property of my children, I'm living here because they're in my custody. Not even my husband's brothers dared to claim the house, they know I have the law on my side, if they tried I'd report them to the League of Human Rights and they'd rule in favour of the woman right away (...) if it goes to court it's the woman who lives in the house until the decision. If I re-marry one day my husband will have to take me to live in his house, he has to show machismo, he can't go around laying down the law in a house that doesn't belong to him. I can't sacrifice the life of my children (female aged 39, Hulene B).

This widow knows the law of Mozambique, and therefore she knows she is entitled to the house that belonged to her husband when he was alive and where they both lived. But, in accordance with traditional cultural norms, she considers that the house does not belong to her and that a new marriage would mean her having to join a new family and move to the house of her new husband or his relatives.

This association of husband, his family, and the house (or houses) of his family is given articulation in the expressions commonly used of a woman who has married under the *lobolo* system, such as *going home* and *being at home*. Such expressions exemplify the close relationship between *family* and *house* which we have been examining in the course of this paper. *Estar no lar* (“being in the home”) essentially means belonging to a family, and this notion of belonging finds material expression in the physical space of the house: for belonging to a family is belonging to the space it inhabits.

2.2. Security

When questioned on the feelings that the ownership or possession of a certain *home space* gave them, informants repeatedly used the word *security*. Equally, in conversations on the reasons which make them like or dislike the *bairro* they live in, or

returned to the groom's family. In all of the above scenarios, the children from the marriage belong to the family of the father, and according to the custom the separated or divorced woman has no rights over her children. This model is clearly a patrilinear and patrilocal one, although in practice it has never been followed to the letter (Costa, 2007:61).

other *bairros* of Maputo, the words *security* and *insecurity* cropped up repeatedly, in reference to the greater or lesser incidence of assault and crime in the different parts of the city. Thus the term *security* here refers to feelings of security or insecurity in connection with the possession and ownership of certain *home spaces*, and to the more specific dimension of security commonly designated *citizen security* (Goldstein, 2010:496).⁸²

Thus, belonging to a certain physical space, and “property rights” over a certain plot of land and the buildings existing on it now and in the future, are associated with feelings of *security*.

The house is important because it's all I have, it's my property (...) It gives the family security because when I die my children will have somewhere to stay. That's not the same for people in rented accommodation, because they can be thrown out at any moment (female aged 45, Jafar).

These feelings of security persist even in cases where family ownership and possession of the *home space* is not clearly defined, as we can see in the account given by a widow, now in a relationship with a married man, of her conjugal situation and the issues related with the ownership of the house where she lives:

I'm not known by the principal wife in that house, but when there's something like a death I've gone there and taken advantage of the fact that she doesn't know me (...) it's him who doesn't want to formalize our relationship, I do and I've talked to him but he said the time wasn't right (...) It would be better if we knew each other because since he's been coming to sleep here in the house, one day he might get ill and I won't know what to do (...) I'm known by his family, by his brothers, and his mum, who died, knew me (...) As he hasn't done anything yet [i.e. the formalities

⁸² The word “security” can be used in a variety of contexts (military, food hygiene, environment, citizens, personal, national, economy etc.), and the new urgency that questions of security have acquired in the world since 9/11, with the terrorist threat, the media fascination with fear and insecurity, and the growing feeling of insecurity which inequalities generated by neo-liberal policies (before 9/11) have created in many countries (Goldstein 2010: 490-493) would seem to require a more extensive approach to this vast subject than we are able to provide here. In terms of anthropological theory, this approach is also hampered by the fact that, as Goldstein notes: “anthropology of the non-Western world, even when concerned with issues that might be considered within a broader ‘security’ rubric, has generally not been framed in these terms (...) the analysis of a truly global reality played out in local context (...) has not benefited from sustained anthropological attention and (...) the insights drawn from ethnographic research have not been systematically brought to bear on the theorization of security” (2010:488).

that the lobolo system requires] my house still belongs to the Khossas [the surname of her deceased husband on whose behalf the lobolo was paid] and not the Sumbane [the surname of her current companion] (...) I was working and managed to buy this munti (it's the house, the building is the yindlu, it's when you live in that house). The house has been mine since 1988. I have some papers but I don't know where they are (...) I feel secure. The importance of having a house is having somewhere to sleep and somewhere to go when it's raining.

A lot of people come here looking for a room to rent because they have no house of their own. If I didn't have a house where would I sleep, now I have no money for renting a room? The house is important. Even today people come looking for a room to rent because they've no house (female aged 43, Mavalane B).

In a situation marked by uncertainty at every level (family, and with reference to space), this informant feels *secure* because she has a roof over her head and doesn't have to “rent”.

Belonging to a family; having or being part of a house; *being at home*: these are fundamental requirements for the affirmation of the social identity of the individuals addressed by this study. The chances for individuals to assert their identity outside the family was in some cases, as we shall see, expressed in discourse and associated with processes of individualization involving formal education and career success. Yet this often remains on the plane of unattainable ideals, and existing social practice continues to articulate the notion that *to be is to belong* to a family and the house the family lives in.

But these requirements of identity – *having*, *being* and *belonging* – and the way they inter-relate are not manifested in identical fashion or with the same degree of internal cohesion from one individual to another, and not all of them reflect (in their *home spaces*) positive images for themselves and of themselves in material manifestations of social identity. Only one informant, however, explicitly stated that she did not like her house, and that this house was not secure (referring to the possibility of her house being burgled) and not as big as she would have liked:

The house isn't secure. We've thought about selling this house and going to live in the Ferroviário bairro (...) The living room is very small, there's only room for the armchair and table, there's no room for shelves or dining table. My room's small

too, my suitcase doesn't fit in it, I had to put it in another room. I'd like to have a house with spacious living room and bedrooms (female aged 31, Magoanine B).

Another female informant – the only one in this study who said she lived in a borrowed house – said she would like to go back to Beira where she originally came from, but also mentioned that she liked living where she does, and that she would be sorry to leave.

The remaining informants, even those who lived in very small or run-down houses, affirmed that they liked their houses, although all of them spoke of the improvements they planned, or would like, to make. Nearly all the informants who owned or belonged to a *home space* expressed in one way or another their pride in this fact. The *security* they feel in relation to their *home space* has nothing to do with the type of enclosures/walls or other barriers, or with the quality, refinement or architectural style of the house, or with the type of documents they hold as proof of their ownership of a given space. The security that possession of a house gives can only be understood in regard to situations experienced in the past, in the rural milieu or the urban periphery, where documents have never been necessary for proving property rights. It also applies to the current context, where as we have seen this type of possession is the rule, not the exception. But above all it is bound up with a set of symbolic and identity-forming meanings which the belonging to a given *home space* generates, and which are related with more than the material and objective reality of the house or plot of land. It is through these meanings that social representations on the notions of property and belonging are constructed – meanings which themselves take shape over the course of time, and which need to be analysed in their relationship to past and future elements (the ideal house) and the way these elements are evolving within a social context undergoing rapid change. In this sense the *home space* is much more than what it *is* at the present moment. As Clarke (2001) observes, the *home space* contains discrepancies between what exists in the present, what existed in the past, and a whole set of aspirations which inform notions of the *ideal house*. And this *ideal house* – which in a certain form already exists in the present-day house (as imagined, or under construction) – is the result of a complex set of referents “*generated out of much wider ideals that a household might have for itself*” (Clarke, 2001, cit. in Miller, 2001:7).

Positive feelings about the security that the family gives were also evident in discourse on the family: “*Family is everything for me. I don't have a definition but I'm*

nothing without the family” (male aged 24, 3 de Fevereiro); “For me, joy is my family, the understanding I have with my family, being in my place]” (female aged 32, Albasine).

The family is the most important thing I have. We are eleven brothers and sisters including the child my father had by another woman. We’re very close, we try to understand each other (...) We have an older brother who’s unemployed. He worked in the mines in South Africa and is getting on a bit. We help him by providing food. We have a rotating system, every month a different person makes a contribution (...) It was easy because we’d already done that with my parents when they were alive. We have an obligation to help each other in my family. So when one of us lacks something, we contribute. We’re a very close-knit family (female aged 32, 3 de Fevereiro).

In the same way, even in situations of conflict between members or branches of the family, reference was still made to the importance of those considered to be family, and many of the social practices which involve the circulation of different family members around their various *home spaces*, and the different types of assistance they provide each other with, persist. We observed, for instance, that nephews and grandchildren often lived in different *home spaces* from their parents.

This circulation of children around the different family nuclei has been observed in other studies (Costa, 2004, 2007). It occurs as a strategy for the generation of family cohesion which reveals the processes via which identities are built and shared within families. The child does not belong to his mother, or to his parents, but to the family. And the creation and development of emotional ties between people of different generations sometimes involves more or less prolonged sojourns with family members other than the parents. In cases where three generations live in one home space, the grandparents (and especially the grandmother) take a good deal of responsibility for bringing up the child; the power of the mother (i.e. daughter-in-law) over her children, and over all other aspects related with the family, is severely limited.⁸³

⁸³ In one case, where three generations lived together in the same *home space*, we observed that the daughter-in-law was constantly busy with domestic tasks, and that when all the other family members sat down to converse with our team, the daughter-in-law remained standing, in the background.

I've been living with my parents-in-law since April, I came here a few days before my son was born (...) They came to get me, I didn't want to. My mother didn't want me to come and live here, I didn't want to either because I wanted a house just for the two of us (...) I thought I could live alone with the child's father because he drove a bus, only the bus broke down and now he works for his mother (...) We're building our house right here on the land of my parents-in-law, it has three rooms but I've never been to see how things are going up close (...) Now I never leave the house to go for a walk because my mother-in-law doesn't let me, she says I can't because I have a baby. The baby sometimes sleeps with its grandmother because it cries with me (female aged 24, Mahotas).

This process, which begins in infancy when the child is just months or one or two years old (after weaning), in conjunction with the fact that the child shares a name, and consequently an identity, with another family member (living or dead) (see foot-note 79 and Costa, 2004), has far-reaching implications for the formation of the child's personality. Hence the importance of this subject for the analysis of the interdependencies obtaining between different nuclei of the same family, and the notions of family and identity which social actors have in the context under examination (Costa, 2004:350-351).

Below we reproduce a number of excerpts in which informants talk of conflicts and mutual assistance, on the one hand showing that these two situations can co-exist, and on the other that this co-existence does not threaten the importance of the family in the context under examination, in terms of the structure of identity and of the security – material and affective – which the family gives to its members.

The family is very important. I have six brothers and sisters and one of them has been helping me in my business because my parents are dead. I have another brother who sells cars and he's helped me too (female aged 31, Magoanine B).

Another advantage [of the house I live in] is that it's far from the family. When I was in Hulene I was always at loggerheads with my uncle. My relatives wanted to keep me poor [had there been an exchange of relatives in the family?] For example one of my youngest daughters lives with my oldest daughter, the one who's married. (...) But I have the obligation to bring up and feed my children until they leave and go home. I also have the obligation to help my sisters when they need me.

My children have been going to my relatives' house to help out with things (female aged 45, Abasine).

Not everyone is equal in the Mozambican family, some brothers are better off, they could find work for their brothers but they don't (...) They see their brother suffering and they laugh (...) and say: "When I went to school you were playing around." People in Maputo, you have to see it, really, even people from the same family, helping each other out? No way! (...) There are rich people [i.e. the older brother] in the family but they won't help anyone. I've never asked him for work and I don't need to, he's never helped me (male aged 42, Mahotas).

For the last while my family is just my children. I have a nephew, my brother's son, living here in the house because he asked me and he rented the outhouse. He helps with the expenses as much as he can (...) Building, the type of house, the decoration, the appearance of the house, the plan of the house shows what kind of people live in it. People with money flaunt it to humiliate the lower classes, they don't greet their neighbours, they don't speak to people in a disadvantaged situation, there are cases like that in families, people who don't speak to each other because one has money and the other doesn't (female aged 39, Hulene B).

The fact that the social identity of individuals is intrinsically related to family identity and to the individual's belonging to a family space, and that both (families and spaces) are plural, enables complex relational dynamics and negotiations where obligations, duties and rights interact on different levels and against a shifting backdrop of power relations. All this occurs in a context of scarcity of resources and acute insecurity in terms of the outcomes of social practices and action. And this context is also fraught with contradictions between the normative principles of different cultural systems.

All these elements contribute to a wide diversity of situations in terms of the processes whereby identities are re-constructed and the role of the spatial dimension in these processes, and the security which belonging to a family and a house effectively brings.

The relative importance of the different *home spaces* individuals identify with varies not just as a function of the specific history of each individual and each family, but also according to the particular moment in the individual's life and – obviously – the

relationships between the individual and the other people living in the *home space*. These relationships are not necessarily pacific, and the rights to this or that *home space* which are invoked by various people give rise to family disputes which can sometimes lead to a breakdown of relations. For example, two sisters from the same family had different views on property rights to the house they lived in. While one stated: “*My father bought the house for me. When I was studying in Brazil I sent money and he bought it*”, the other had a different story: “*The plot of land belonged to my father. He’s the one who bought it. Now it belongs to all of us*” (3 de Fevereiro).

The different possible interpretations of rights of possession and ownership of a given *home space*, and the disputes which inevitably arise, can transform this spatial referent of identity into its opposite, a factor of insecurity – a disintegrative force, in other words – rather than a factor of social and family stability.⁸⁴

As an example, we can quote one informant’s words on disputes on family and rights to space:

There was another plot of land that belonged to my family and I didn’t sell it, my suggestion was that regardless of whether the girls [his sisters’ daughters] were lucky or not [i.e. whether they married or not] they would have somewhere to live. But that plot doesn’t belong to my sister, it belongs to the Mavotas [the paternal family surname]. My sister had a child with another man and that plot couldn’t go to that man’s child. I have a sister who should be protecting our family and she isn’t protecting it. If the nephew [the son of the man who is not from the Mavotas family and did not marry the informant’s sister under the lobolo system] wants to sell he will ask the residential quarter leader for the plot and the documents (...). At one point I decided to build a chicken run there so as not to lose the plot, so I spoke to my sister and began building but she spoke to the residential quarter leader and gave an incentive [money] and so I lost the 10 thousand [from the construction of

⁸⁴ These and many other contradictions mentioned throughout this study arise from the multiple and contradictory meaning which social actors, at different times and in different contexts, attach to what they see as their *home space*. As Shelley (2004:84) notes, “the term *home* functions as a repository for complex, inter-related and at times contradictory socio-cultural ideas about people’s relationship with one another, especially family, and with places, spaces, and things. It can be a dwelling place or a lived space of interaction between people, places, things; or perhaps both. The boundaries of home can be permeable and/or impermeable. Home can be singular and/or plural, alienable and/or inalienable, fixed and stable and/or mobile and changing. It can be associated with feelings of comfort, ease intimacy, relaxation and security and/or oppression, tyranny and persecution (...) It can be a crucial site for examining relations of production and consumption, globalisation and nationalism, citizenship and human rights, and the role of government and governmentality. Equally it can provide a context for analysing ideas and practices about intimacy, family, kinship, gender, ethnicity, class, age and sexuality. Such ideas can be inflected in domestic architecture and interior and urban design”.

the chicken run] out of malice and they forced me out. The residential quarter leader was hungry and I think he got something (...) Since it's a family thing I wouldn't like to take it to court (male aged 56, Mahotas).

These comments reveal different notions of the family and a range of norms relative to the “rights” of property of a given space. They also reflect the conflict that can arise as a consequence, throwing into relief different interpretations of *belonging* (to a family and a certain space) and *security*, and the spatial dimensions which structure the identity reconstruction processes in the context under examination.

To judge by the words of the informant, keeping possession of the land in “his” family would give *security* to members of the family (women) who for reasons of separation might otherwise find themselves without a roof over their heads. Yet it was these same family members (women) who infringed this principle by selling the land outside the family which had traditionally held the rights of possession over it. They appropriated the land in favour of a member of “their” family (a son) who would have rights to the land under the formal legislation. During the dispute, both parties made monetary investments to secure their possession of the plot (one side made improvements and the other paid the residential quarter leader); but only one party (the informant’s sister) attained her objective. Despite feeling he was a victim of “malice”, the informant, the representative and head of family that owned the land, refused to take court action against members of his own family (although obviously he may have had other reasons for not doing so).

Looking at the situation from the informant’s point of view, this dispute has contributed to the de-structuring of *his* family, the Mavotas, deprived of a space which, under the rules of patrilinear descent, belonged to it. From his sister’s point of view, however, things look rather different. The sister appropriated the space on behalf of her son who, under the same rules of patrilinear descent, was not a member of the Mavotas family and could not inherit the property of this family. And so in appropriating the space the sister, in the words of the informant, stopped acting in the interests of “her family” to instead protect her son. In this way she begins the construction of a new family.

3. Spatial dimensions of identity: religion, church and family

As we saw above, the degree of importance attached to *home space* and family in terms of the identity structuring process in the context under examination is not uniform. A fundamental counterbalance – and in some cases a substitute – is religion: traditional (animist) beliefs and the so-called “book” religions of Christianity and Islam, all the churches, confessions and congregations (Catholic, Protestant or Protestant-derived), and the “brothers” of the churches.

The religious dimension and the importance of the church in the urban milieu in African has been addressed by numerous authors (Costa 2007, 2008; Seibert, 2001, Agadjanian, 1999; Kiernan, 1992) who have emphasized its importance in the daily practices of social actors, and particularly in their family relations. The tendency for the different members of the same family to belong to the same church, regardless of whether they do so because they want to or are forced to – *“I began going to the Assembly of God when I was a child, out of imposition of my older brother who worshipped there. I was living with him at the time, he made us go to church and he even beat us”* (female aged 37, 3 de Fevereiro) – helps cement family relations (Costa, 2008). The church also provides material support, and operates funds from offertories and other contributions from the faithful (Seibert, 2001) which are used for helping them in their moments of greatest need, especially funerals or illness. This was mentioned by many informants over the course of our fieldwork. In addition to this material support, the churches also provide spiritual, social, moral and therapeutic assistance. They look after the soul and body of their followers and are present at moments of affliction, uncertainty and anguish. In nearly every church there are groups – of youths, or men, but predominantly of women – who meet regularly to pray and talk. These churches offer another advantage too: they are relatively well organized. There are specific days for specific meetings, where specific groups debate specific questions. This level of organization requires the faithful to devote their time to the church, and their reward for this is support of various types, as well as the “certainty” that the religious leaders and their many acolytes can offer – and which believers don't find in their everyday lives. These groups try to resolve marital problems or problems with the education of churchgoers' children, and advice is given on the best ways of managing the conflicts arising between different members of the same family. In this way the churches help reinforce family cohesion. Finally, the churches also provide a network of social

solidarity that is wider than any one family can offer, and are vectors for insertion in other important social networks (Costa, 2008). For example, as one informant noted, the church can help its members find a job:

There's a special service every week for unemployed people, the church has agreements with companies and people who need workers and the church passes the word on (...) If something goes wrong the church is responsible, they only send people who can be trusted (female aged 39, Hulene B).

This part of our text analyses the role of the churches in the identity re-construction process of the social actors in the universe under examination. Our analysis centres on the symbolic equivalence that informants draw between church and family, and the way churches reflect the spatial dimensions of the identity-forming process of the social actors.

Analysis of the data we obtained in our fieldwork reveals the protective role that the church plays in the eyes of these families – “[It helps to] combat the grievous tradition that creates disputes and accusations in homes and families. Entering the church means you have to leave the rest (male aged 48, Polana Caniço A) – in helping combat the family conflicts resulting from traditional beliefs, especially those related with accusations of witchcraft. The church promotes family cohesion as a principle, strengthening feelings of belonging and identity. But just as people can belong to two different families, there are also cases of people belonging to two churches. And when the members of a family living in the same *home space* frequent different churches, this in itself can give rise to conflict, and the positive, conciliatory side of the church enters into contradiction with the de-structuring effects of religion on family cohesion (Costa 2007, 2008):

My father was a Catholic, but my sister belongs to the Assembly of God and tried to persuade us not to hold mass on the seventh day after his death. On the second anniversary of his death, I had a terrible battle to get the mass held (female aged 43, 3 de Fevereiro); When I lived with my parents-in-law I went to the church of Velhos Apóstolos. But as my father-in-law didn't go to church, he used to make a row when we went and he'd say church wasn't a good thing. Because of him we had to stop going to church (female aged 36, 3 de Fevereiro).

Another aspect we frequently encountered during our fieldwork was the change of religion and/or church over the course of our informants' lives. We were told of many cases in which this happened (there was only one exception). This does not seem to pose a problem: "*It's OK to change church because there's only one God*" (female aged 27, Guáva). And this religious mobility was often explained, by women especially, by the fact that they had married and had switched to the religion or church of their husbands. Another explanation for this religious mobility⁸⁵ was change of residence, either from the rural milieu to Maputo, or from one bairro to another within the city.

F. attends the Church of Zion and says all his family goes to this church. He says he began to pray in this church after coming to Maputo in 1990, and that in his region of origin he prayed in the Catholic church because at that time he wanted to study and church had a school. When he arrived in Maputo and started a family, he began to feel the need to go to church. He says he tried various churches and "*was not influenced*". He prayed in the 12 Apóstolos and the Assembly of God "*and it was no use*" (male aged 48, Polana Caniço A).

Which religious persuasion one belongs to therefore has a spatial dimension: our informants go to churches in their areas of residence and pray with their neighbours, who are their "brothers in the church". This allows the social actors to strengthen their ties of friendship and trust within the *bairro* they live in, a process which also strengthens their sense of belonging to this place.

In many instances this social contact between the members of a single church occurs several times a week or even daily, either in the church or in the home space:

I go to church every day. On Wednesdays there's a women's meeting for discussing family matters and learning how to look after the house, respect our husbands, have just one companion, take a bath, cut our nails, and be more hygienic. On that day we do cleaning in the house of a sister in the church and we teach how to clean the house. On Mondays the men are taught how to respect their wives and to have good relations with the other men of the church (female aged 45, Jafar).

The fact that members of the same church make frequent visits to one another's *home spaces* and mingle with the families of their fellow church members in their *home*

⁸⁵ This religious mobility has been observed in other research in the same context (Costa 2007; 2008) .

spaces, sharing not only in a whole range of rituals connected to moments of joy and sadness but also in domestic and everyday tasks, and the fact that some faithful go and live temporarily in the church to cure themselves of certain illnesses, reinforce the symbolic association between family and religious identities and brings into relief the spatial dimension of the church, via which social identity, in the context we are analysing, is also structured. It also invites reflection on the porosity of the frontiers between private (*home space*) and public⁸⁶ space (church) which the circulation of social actors between each creates.

People circulate in their *bairros* between multiple *home spaces* and churches, and often the physical space where worship or ritual occurs is the *home space* of the pastor or the traditional healer; and the erosion of the barriers between domestic space and public space is manifest in many other dimensions of daily life.⁸⁷ The porosity between the frontiers delimiting private and public spaces extends to the whole *bairro*, which in this sense can be considered an extension of the different home spaces, just as these are an extension of the *bairro*: for in both spaces we find private and public spaces which intersect without interpenetrating. And thus the spatial dimension of identity extends beyond the *home space* to take in public spaces, churches and the *bairro*, this last understood in the integrity of its private and public spaces. This porosity of frontiers between private and public space was observed in all the *bairros* we worked in, and although we also observed a growing tendency towards a more rigid delimitation of *home spaces*,⁸⁸ (in the type of enclosures now being built, for example), they remain relatively open to the exterior and to the social actors exogenous to the family that inhabits them, especially in comparison to most *home spaces* in the so-called developing countries (Miller 2001).

⁸⁶ For analysis of the private/public dichotomy in homes and domestic space, see for example Sennett (1976) and Attfield (2000). For an analysis of the intersection of public and private and the relational complexity involved, see Clarke (2001).

⁸⁷ Many of the economic activities performed in the domestic space (some of them of a religious nature) involve opening the *home space* to external elements (clients); domestic activities are often performed outside the house, in view of the neighbours; family ceremonies include the participation of neighbours, who also take part in the organization of these ceremonies on various levels (preparing food, accommodating members of the family holding the ceremony); and children and youths spend most of their free time outdoors socializing with their peers. Outdoors, too, is a fundamental referent in their identity construction process (Sebba, 1991).

⁸⁸ In the *Bairros* where we conducted our fieldwork there are some *home spaces* surrounded by high, insurmountable walls, and it is possible that their inhabitants do not participate in this circulation: but none of these *home spaces* was included in our study. Some of the *home spaces* which were included were more walled off from the exterior than others. Access to *home spaces* by fellow congregation members and neighbours was more relaxed in some cases than in others, and not all informants made reference to it.

To be is to belong – to a family and a church and a religion. And yet as we saw above, this belonging is not necessarily exclusive. The same individual may belong to various families, follow different creeds and frequent more than one church, and so more than one belonging structures his or her identity. But families and churches exist in reference to particular spaces of belonging which, in their turn, are part of wider contexts to which *everyone* belongs (the *bairros*). Church members and family members circulate in the same spaces of belonging – the places where worship takes place, the *home space*, and sometimes both these places at once – and share their sorrows and anxieties, beliefs and needs, finding support, solidarity and specific kinds of assistance. This strengthens the symbolic association between two social units and the respective spaces which give them structure (*home space* and religious building). In this way, social actors' feelings of belonging to (identifying with) family and church are mutually reinforced by the sharing of space, and are renewed by the dealings that each individual maintains and develops with those who share such identities. Religions and churches – understood both as physical spaces for the practice of services and rituals and as the congregation of believers/followers, and, by association, families – function as “anchors”, as one of the fundamental “vectors” enabling everyone to identify themselves by relation to others, in a complex network of belonging (not always exclusive) where hierarchies, rights, duties, obligations and responsibilities are simultaneously defined, renewed and manipulated.

Another function attributed to the church is education – moral, religious, and intellectual. Many informants mentioned how they considered the church to play an important role here. In relation to the importance of church for education, here we must remember the role it – the Catholic church too, but mainly Protestant – played in the education of the Mozambicans during the colonial period, and how this contributed to the birth of a national identity in close articulation with the pro-independence movements (Cruz e Silva, 2001). At present, access to basic education in public schools is universal, but older informants still made frequent reference to the church when talking of their schooling. The fact that certain churches provide education was also mentioned by some informants as an explanation for their having changed religion during the course of their lives.

4. Reconstructing identity, schooling and individualization processes

The role played by the church in education also affects the processes of social identity construction we are analysing here. Like schooling proper, moral and religious education (in churches as in secular schools) are considered essential for people to be “*more of a person*”, “*more human*” (female aged 39, Hulene B), “*so they can be someone tomorrow*” (male aged 54, Polana Caniço A), to help “*a person to grow*” (male aged 68, 3 de Fevereiro). This acknowledgement that the affirmation of social identity also involves moral and intellectual education provided outside the family environment and independently of family reproduction processes, stands in opposition to most existing practice, where the notion that social identity is built and affirmed via family-related processes (creation, upkeep, reproduction) still prevails.

Although all of our informants said school education⁸⁹ was fundamental, social practice did not always reflect the discourse. The case of P. illustrates this contradiction:

It's more important for a person to study and fulfil themselves than to make a good marriage (...) They have to study until they're 25 without being in a hurry to get married, rushing into a marriage is nothing (...) If I could go back in time, I would go back to my studies, children are a headache (female aged 32, Mahotas). And yet this informant's oldest daughter, aged 15, did not go to school. When asked why not, her mother said: “She isn't even worth it, she failed and she's not going.” The informant also mentioned that her daughter had enrolled at school but had given up because she didn't like it. Her daughter acknowledged she had given up her studies but said she regretted it: “It was good to give up, to learn my lesson.” She said she was going to resume her studies the following year.

Regardless of the reasons, the fact is that this girl does not attend school and performs all the domestic tasks in the house (she washes clothes, looks after her younger siblings, cooks etc.), and although her parents say it's important to study, they accept, and benefit from, the situation.

Similarly, although they felt school was important, older informants said it also involved expenditure that they were unable to support because they had so many

⁸⁹ See Table 1 for the educational qualifications of the informants.

children. But all were proud of the number of children they had, saying their children were an asset:

I'd like to have had more children but God only gave me four and one of them has died already (...) Even today having children is an asset (...) I'm happy with the number of children because they're the ones God gave me (male aged 68, 3 de Fevereiro); School is important because it prepares a person for having a decent job and prevents conflicts. I have many children and I don't earn much, I can't afford to send them all to school. It prepares a man for living a better life in the future, to help himself and society (...) Our children should go to school so they can be someone tomorrow, but with a big family you can't guarantee that education (male aged 54, Polana Caniço A).

Between the two options – having many children and not being able to pay the expenses involved in their school education, or having fewer children and guaranteeing them an education – they prefer the first, which more than a job or a profession is still the option which better guarantees the social reproduction of the family. And as we have repeatedly seen by now, it is essentially via the family that individuals structure their social identities.

Persistently high birth rates in Mozambique,⁹⁰ including the city of Maputo (where birth rates are only slightly lower), confirm this thesis, as do the data we obtained during our ethnographic research,⁹¹ where the average number of children was equal to the fertility rate for Maputo (3).

Our sample was small and not statistically representative: more important was the information conveyed in the discourse of our informants on the number of children they would *like* to have. There is no great difference here between the answers of the older

⁹⁰ Demographic change in Mozambique is occurring at a slower rate than the world average, with high birth rates and a predominantly young population. According to the Mozambican bureau of statistics (INE), between 1997 and 2011 the overall fertility rate remained fairly constant, with just a slight decrease from 5.9 children per woman to 5.6. In Maputo the variation in the fertility rate between these two years is more accentuated: 4.2 to 3.0 (INE 2007). But the data for the city of Maputo does not include all of the *Bairros* addressed by this study, and in which there was greater demographic growth in the period under review. On the high fertility rate in Mozambique and demographic change in this country in general, see Francisco (2011). This author points out the decisive role played by demographic mechanisms and family and community networks in social protection in Mozambique, concluding: "Having many children continues to be the best way of social protection available to the majority of the population of Mozambique" (translations ours), (2011: 232:233).

⁹¹ In nine cases, the couples or women we spoke to had between zero and two children; in seven cases there were between three and five children; and in four cases there were more than five children.

generation (aged 40 and over) and the younger, except in what they understand “many”⁹² children to mean; and even here there is no great uniformity of answer between the generations:

I have only six children. But I'd like to have had more. Things just happened without me planning them. I never thought about the ideal number of children, for me having children is a blessing from God. I had three children with my first husband, then I had the others from other relationships (female aged 45, Albasine); The number of children depends on the couple, but not to escape the African tradition of having many children I'd like to have four children, more than that is too many (female aged 39, Hulene B); I'd like to have six children like my mother did, but it's difficult because things get more difficult with time and I'm thinking of having only three. With favourable economic conditions, I would have six (female aged 21, Polana Caniço A); I'd like to have three or four children. No more than that, because feeding three or four is difficult enough (female aged 17, 3 de Fevereiro).

All mentioned the importance of having children, and all except one of their children were currently attending school or had done in the past. Some were in their final years of secondary education, but several cases were mentioned of children dropping out of school and of girls who quit their education because they “went home” (i.e. got married). We heard of only one instance of a youth attending university. At the other extreme, we heard of only one youth who dropped out after his fourth year of schooling, and of a handicapped girl aged six who did not attend school.

Members of the younger generation have received more years of education than their parents, and although it is difficult to assess how much these parents have invested in the education of their children (Costa, 2009) owing to the contradictions between practice and discourse, we can safely assert that education has identity-forming value on the level of social representation. Our informants acknowledged, and in some of the excerpts we have cited this acknowledgement was explicit, that education makes it

⁹² António Francisco asks “How many children are too many? And what is the level of demographic loss of the current population of Mozambique?” (2011: 234). He summarizes the answers as follows: “Considering that the average Mozambican woman has 5.7 children (...) and since the reproductive success of the population depends on the number of children that actually survive through to reproductive age (...) the number of children necessary to guarantee replacement is (...) 3.9 children (...) This means that with the current mortality rate in Mozambique, the reproductive inefficiency of the population of Mozambique is around two children per woman, representing a demographic loss (2011:259) (translation ours).

possible to find work – and a good job is one where “*every day I wake up, go to work, and get my pay*” (male aged 20, Polana Caniço A) – and work provides access to identity reconstruction mechanisms involving processes external to the family, in which a greater sense of the individual is inherent.

Put another way, we can “be someone” when we have a job that provides satisfactory economic conditions. At the same time, an employee whose income allows him to be economically independent may sever certain family ties and break with the whole system of exchange, contribution and redistribution that these family ties involve. For this reason, some of our informants pointed to the better living conditions of certain relatives as the cause of family disunity, mentioning uncles and brothers who were “*doing well*” but no longer paid any attention to their family.

When you've nothing and the others attach no value to you, they don't help. It's every one for himself and God for all. My mother is poor but her sisters are well off but they ignore my mother because they have more money (female aged 32, Albasine).

In addition to the contradictions between practices and social representations, our fieldwork also allowed us to conclude that families in the same context did not act the same way in regard to investment in the education of their offspring. The decisions they take regarding the education of their children change over time, and are not equal for all. Differences can even be observed within the same family, with some children attending school until completion of the primary level and others pursuing their studies into secondary level or even beyond. Attitudes diverge, and are shaped by numerous factors, including: gender – according to the census figures, girls have fewer years of schooling than boys; the number of children in the family and their distribution by sex; the income- and produce-generating activities performed by the family and the labour each activity requires (and this too can vary over time); family structure and organization; and the personal characteristics of those who make the decisions in the family, and of the young people themselves.

The attitudes to education within a family are not always coherent, either: children may go to school on an empty stomach, tired from the excess of domestic work they are obliged to do; they may have no time to study, or they may be obliged to miss classes. In these situations, although the family may formally acknowledge the importance of

education, in practice it pays it little heed and does not transmit to its children and young the incentives necessary for them to pursue their education.

Finally, education is valued not as an end in itself, but as a means of access to better living conditions, and that, for our informants, means getting a proper job. Unemployment rates in Maputo are high, even among those who have attended secondary school, and while this fact runs counter to the strategy of education as a means of finding work, it was not evident in the discourse of most informants (it was mentioned only in one case). Yet an acknowledgement of this fact is implicitly present in the strategies pursued with regard to education, for in addition to attending school young people also acquire other types of know-how in the various income-and produce-generating activities they are involved in from a very young age.

At the same time, education and the proper employment that it ideally gives access to are not the only way to improve one's living conditions and win a certain degree of autonomy from the family, with the development of identity-forming processes which place a greater emphasis on the individual which accompanies this autonomy. A minority of informants (2 cases) pursued activities which did not require any kind of formal education but which nevertheless afforded them satisfactory economic conditions above average conditions, in fact, for the cases we studied. In one such case (that of a traditional healer), her relative affluence enabled her to be independent from certain members of her family:

Coming to this house was a positive thing, because I left the bairro of Hulene, where I lived before, because of my uncle who was always in conflict with me. When I got pregnant with my last daughter he beat me, because he thought I should be married, but I've a right to have a boyfriend too (...) Another advantage [of the house I live in] is that it's far from the family. When I was in Hulene I was always at loggerheads with my uncle. My relatives wanted me to be poor (female aged 45, Albasine).

5. Social networks: cohesion and conflict

Frequent references were made to envy and conflict in the family. The reasons for these situations are many, as we have seen, ranging from questions related with property rights to the problems arising after the separation of a couple or the death of a husband.

Many of these conflicts arise from the interpretations which the different family members (or those entrusted by the latter to make these interpretations, such as the traditional healer or pastor) make of the causes thought to be at the root of all kinds of problems (physical or spiritual illness, sterility, loss of job, poor performance at school etc.). The reasons and causes are normally imputed to a group insider, who is labelled (even if they do not know it) as the source of all evils. Normally this insider is a more vulnerable family member (a widow, daughter-in-law or child), and resolution of the problem involves either expulsion from the group or “treatment” via exorcisms performed according to the rites of traditional religion or by the pastors of the church. But the latter, as we have seen, see the relinquishment of traditional rituals as an essential condition for cure, and often prohibit members of their congregation from performing these rituals:

The church does not accept traditional healers because they may create conflict between family members and neighbours. If you go to a traditional healer he'll always tell you it was such-and-such a member of your family or a neighbour, and that creates conflict” (female aged 43, Mavalane B.).

Like the ancestral forms of worship, the various syncretic cults are more or less explicit in their belief that the cause of “evil” lies in the close relatives of the believer. These relatives, since they do not follow the religion in question, are vulnerable to the temptations of the devil, and evil spreads readily by contagion. Only by converting and exorcizing these family members (or member) can the “evil” be fought. If the relative(s) in question refuse to share the same faith, the possible outcome is crisis, conflict and breakdown of family ties. In many instances the solution (or the attempted solution) to these crises involves a circular process: the churches (or their competitors) create the conflict, and then try to solve them. In all forms of religion present in the daily lives of these families there co-exist mechanisms which promote family harmony and those which generate conflict.

Yet the profusion of religions, confessional “churn” and the degrees of dissidence observed among officiants in other research (Costa, 2007; 2008) do not diminish, in our social context, the importance of the churches as networks of social solidarity. On the contrary: church enables the development of multiple reciprocities which extend dynamically and discontinuously over time, and which underpin the existence of these

different forms of religiosity which, as with other social networks like families, are neither rigid nor impermeable, and do not develop in linear fashion.

Embracing this dynamic vision and setting aside a linear, non-porous conception of solidarity networks makes it easier to apprehend the complex relationships that unite social actors with different forms of religiosity and even with their families, and the articulations between the different rationales and ideologies present in everyday life, which many observers have viewed as opposed and contradictory: individualism and communitarianism, traditional and modern, market and gift, mercantile exchange and redistribution (Costa, 2007; Casal, 2001). It also makes it easier to understand the efficiency of these solidarity networks, founded as they are on a set of relations which are dynamic and in a certain sense “atemporal”. Only this dynamism can explain their enduring nature and simultaneously guarantee the flexibility necessary for adapting to context.

In other words, social networks such as family and church, and the relations of solidarity which take form via shared practices in a given religion or church, are not necessarily constant in any given group of individuals: and neither is the group itself an unchanging entity. The relations of an individual or individuals with a specific form of religiosity may arise, at a precise moment, as a way of solving concrete problems, and subsequently persist in “latent” mode, waiting to be reactivated if necessary.

The case of N. exemplifies these situations:

N. affirms he worships in the Church of Zion, but also considers himself a Catholic, having been baptized with the name of Benedito. When he came to Maputo he continued attending Catholic church, but in 1997 his wife fell ill. They went to hospital but his wife failed to get better, until a lady from the family came who took them to another lady from the Church of Zion, who cured his wife. Since then he has worshipped in the Church of Zion. But he maintains that his religion of choice is Catholicism and that he belongs to the Church of Zion only for reasons of health (male aged 54, Polana Caniço A).

Social networks, whether based on church, family, the *bairro* or friends, intersect and interpenetrate and are regenerated every day via practices which develop and renew the relationships of which they are formed. In this regeneration they change, with new members joining and others leaving or being excluded. Their efficiency depends on a

pre-established trust (which in turn is related with multiple factors, with duration one of the principal factors but not the only one) which is subjected to constant re-evaluation and reaffirmation. Nothing is guaranteed; the church or the family (or specific family members) that yesterday offered protection may tomorrow be seen as the source of “evil”: and vice versa. Everything depends on the prevalent needs, interests and social relations at any given moment; and everything also depends on the flexibility of the families, churches and religions, which have to be capable of adapting to changes in the context while remaining places where trust and reciprocity can prosper.

This religious “flexibility” is best illustrated by an example. In the following excerpt, from a female traditional healer, religious antagonism and the various ways of overcoming it are evident:

I go to the church of the Assembly of God, when I was small I was in the Church of the Nazarene but I ended up leaving it because of my current profession. The Nazarenes wanted me to burn or give up the spirits. I couldn't give up the spirits because I worked hard to get to where I am now. At present I go to the Catholic church, through the influence of my sister, because I felt isolated not going to church. I was baptized in the Church of the Nazarene and I haven't been baptized in the Catholic church yet because I still have a lot of things to finish with regard to my profession (...) The church helps me cure my patients. The work I do depends not just on my spirits but on God too. It's a pity that the churches prohibit this thing I do. It's because they don't recognize this type of work. I'm not giving it up because I'm afraid of falling ill (...) And I don't get too close [to the church] because they might try to destroy my work. The Catholic church prohibits it too but because they don't check up on people they don't know I do this kind of work. For that reason, I don't participate actively in the life of the church. I only go to mass on Sundays (...) Church is important because it helps in cases of deaths, feasts, because we always need a pastor's blessing and the most important thing is divine strength. Even in my work of curing people, everything depends on the strength of God (female aged 45, Albasine).

The importance of family and church in people's lives, which is reflected in so much of the discourse we have reproduced here, stands in partial contradiction to the family conflicts and disunity we have examined, and the mobility of believers between one religious congregation and another. These facts have been observed in earlier

research (Costa, 2007), and the explanations advanced then are still applicable now. These explanations help us understand the importance of social networks in the identity-forming processes of social actors, despite the countless conflicts which in some cases can lead to the disintegration of the family or the relinquishment of a church or belief.

One of the explanations for this apparent contradiction lies in the fact that the social practices pursued by family members involve a complex articulation of behaviours which embody contradictory values – “loyalties” against “interests”. This contradiction is part of every human being, but it is especially evident in a social and economic context characterized by the scarcity of “formal” employment and the absence of state-provided social support structures. In such a context, the individual needs social connections to survive; yet can only survive if he or she cultivates attitudes that are “selfish” and informed by “purely material interest”. This entire process is articulated in a complex, dynamic and often ambiguous way by its protagonists. It is socially accepted and, obviously, capable of being put into practice.

The social acceptance of this contradiction between antagonistic practices does not mean we are confronted with an “amoral” social context (Martin, 1991: 332). It means only that for most of the population interacting in this context, it is “legitimate” for actors, faced with certain opportunities, circumstances, individuals, groups or networks of social connections, to behave in a way that in other situations or vis-à-vis other interlocutors this same population would consider as “immoral”. It also means that such behaviour can be interpreted in different ways, according to the different social and cultural representations which the context permits. Whether it is socially reprehensible depends on the representation. In view of this “moral pluralism”, the nature of the social relations between individuals or groups is a fundamental factor in the evaluation of social actions and behaviours.

The social acceptance of this contradiction also derives from a sense of its being “normal” and “necessary”. In other words, most actors are faced with the same difficulties and cultivate different kinds of relations, of variable duration (today’s “allies” may be tomorrow’s “enemies”) with others, in which the aforementioned contradictions find expression. And it is these relations and behaviours which give them the opportunity, as they themselves say, to “get by”, overcoming everyday obstacles to survive. The implementation of these practices is possible because of the countless networks of social connections (among which are church and family) in which actors can operate and circulate. The spatial mobility of actors, the flexibility of family structures,

the diversity of groups to which the individual can belong, and the ephemeral nature of many of these relationships of belonging are characteristics which facilitate circulation and enable the actors to embody contradictory values in their practices.

Other outcomes of the social practices of actors whose conduct is dictated by everyday circumstances are unpredictability, insecurity and social complexity. Similarly, in their livelihood-oriented practices and strategies within a given social unit, network or group, these actors cultivate controversial attitudes which oscillate between the consolidation and maintenance of old alliances, based on “ancestral” normative codes, and “innovative” practices, which may or may not be socially acceptable: and where they are, they require the co-existence of different normative codes and/or the transformation of ancestral codes. Both scenarios are a reality, and with them comes social change.

Within the family, “normative” change enables a certain freedom and versatility of behaviour, which emerges during – or creates – the unpredictable situations which are part of everyday life. In the latter case, the roles played by each family member may change, and the articulations between old loyalties and new interests become subject to new stresses which lay bare unexpected power relations.

Paradoxically, it is the latter attitude (creation and innovation) which often provides security; for it is through innovation that the family, and each of its members, effectively survives and reproduces socially. But the security of the group – in this case the family – only exists when supported by “plural norms” which underpin innovative practices.

Conflict between loyalty and interest is part of the daily life of every human being. But the unpredictable nature of the social context, in conjunction with an exceptional plurality of norms, can occasionally take this conflict to uncontrollable extremes. In such extreme cases, the normative frameworks which enable innovative and dynamic attitudes to exist no longer make sense, and the “loyalties” they embody break down. And when these ties are severed, the social efficacy of innovative attitudes is rendered useless. The protagonists are either marginalized by the group, which leaves them to their fate, or they marginalize themselves by leaving the group, joining other groups if possible or entering a process of self-destruction (excessive consumption of alcohol or drugs, madness). Another option for these individuals is to leave their social context and develop new social relations and/or “individualization” processes in another place.

In either event, these social actors are stripped (in practice, or formally) of the powers they held with regard to the other members of the group, and excluded from the social position they occupied. But this process may be subject to setbacks, for in the last analysis its evolution always depends on the interpretation that individuals make of their own attitudes, of the attitudes of the other members of the group, and the way they interpret the many normative frameworks that govern family relations.

Conclusions

At the beginning of this part V, we argue that the identity-forming and identification processes that bind inhabitants to their houses are not generated by the specific characteristics of these urban spaces. They are the outcome, rather, of pre-existing identity-forming processes which necessarily undergo changes in their transposition to the urban context – but do not originate in the latter. And it is the transposition and transformation of identity-building processes which confers specificity on the spatial and social realities we are examining.

On the basis of a theoretical perspective which views the formation of identity in individuals, families and social groupings as a dynamic process which changes and adapts over the course of time, interacting with new factors in a complex dialectic way, we proceed to an examination of this transformation of the identity-building process in social actors. Our investigation first addresses changes in the actors' relationships with their regions of origin, which via their ancestors and the rituals held in their honour gave spatial expression to their identity in the past, before we examine how this spatial dimension of identity is being transposed to the home spaces they now occupy.

One of our conclusions is that although it is of less importance nowadays, the region of origin has not “disappeared” as a referent of identity. Another conclusion is that ancestors continue to be fundamental symbols of family identity. The transposition of rituals in their honour from the region of origin to the current place of residence combines with other factors to confer upon the “new” *home space* considerable significance in terms of the affirmation of family identity.

We also observed that the transposition of identity-building processes from the rural to the urban milieu gives rise to changes in identity which accompany changes in family structure. At present, family structures draw on organizing principles from different cultural models: the patrilineal model of the peoples of southern Mozambique,

and the modern, Western model. This situation opens up different possibilities where the sense of family belonging and identification is concerned: the same individual may belong to several home spaces (and families) which are not mutually exclusive but don't have the same degree of importance over the course of the individual's life.

Our informants frequently associated the home spaces they currently occupy with sentiments of belonging and security. In regard to the first of these sentiments, belonging, we observed that it was shared not only by all those who are considered part of the same family and live in the same home space, but also by other relatives whom our informants consider as being entitled to live there: However, this notion of *belonging* to a house and a family does not rule out situations of conflict and the marginalization of certain individuals.

As for *security*, this too was a sentiment cited by all our informants. This stands in apparent contradiction to situations of uncertainty with regard to property title deeds, family conflicts and even questions related with burglary and theft. The security which possession of their houses transmitted to our informants could only be understood by reference to past experience (when documents were never necessary for proving property rights), to the current context (where this type of possession is the norm), and to a range of symbolic and identity-giving meanings which their belonging to a given *home space* represents.

The family too is a focus for sentiments of security, even in situations of conflict with other members or branches of the family. We concluded therefore that these situations did not pose a threat to the importance of the family in terms of the identity-building value and security it represents for those who belong to it. None of this precludes the existence of complex relational dynamics and negotiations, however. Obligations, duties and rights operate at different levels vis-à-vis a shifting backdrop of power relations and cultural referents. All of these elements, we observed, contribute to a huge diversity of situations: on the level both of identity reconstruction and the role played by the spatial dimensions which underlie them, and consequently in terms of the security which belonging to a house and a family effectively represents. This diversity of situations can even transform the identity-building spatial referent of the *home space* into its opposite, with the *home space* seen more as factor of insecurity than one of family and social stability.

We then examine the role of churches as structural factors in the identity-reconstruction process of the social actors addressed by our study. Our research centred

on the symbolic equivalence between church and family, and the way churches reflect the spatial dimensions of the identity-forming processes of the social actors.

The church plays a significant protective role for families, as it helps resolve family conflicts deriving from traditional beliefs, and in this way contributes to family cohesion. We observed a significant degree of mobility of believers across the various churches, and concluded that changes of place of residence are one of the reasons for this. The churches are located in the bairros; those who frequent the same church see each other as “brothers”, and are, in fact, neighbours. In each of the various creeds, visits to the home spaces of fellow-believers are frequent. For church, *home space* and bairro, the frontiers between private and public space are extremely porous. In each instance, public and private intersect, without actually dissolving into one another. And this happens despite the occasional exception and a growing trend to delimit *home space* in a more rigid manner. Identity takes form via this intersection of spatial dimensions.

We end this part V with an examination of the important role the churches play in education. Although our informants acknowledge the importance of schooling in the affirmation of social identity, in practice the prevailing notion is that identity is fundamentally built via processes which allow the creation, survival and reproduction of the family. And yet here too we observed families behaving in different ways in the same context. The decisions they take regarding the education of their children change over time, and are not equal for all. We also saw that education is valued not for itself but for the access it provides to better living conditions – even if achieving these better living conditions sometimes creates disunity in the family.

Family conflict, the ways it is resolved on a local level, and the representations of social actors on the causes of conflict, are also addressed in this final part of our study. In families as well as churches, there co-exist mechanisms which promote family harmony and those which sow discord. For our informants, belonging to a particular family or church is not necessarily a constant phenomenon, and families and churches themselves are not immutable: they intersect, and recreate themselves on a daily basis via a range of practices which renew the social relations which underpin them. And in this re-creation they are transformed, bringing in new members and excluding (or being abandoned by) others.

This is one possible explanation for the importance of these social networks in the identity-building process, despite the conflict they give rise to, which in some cases can lead to the disintegration of the family or the relinquishment of a church or belief.

The social practices pursued by family members require complex articulations of conduct in which contradictory values – loyalty and self-interest – are expressed and interpreted in many ways, and may or may not be socially reprehensible, depending on the point of view. The spatial mobility of actors, the flexibility of family structures and relations, the diversity of churches to which the individual can belong, and the ephemeral nature of many of these relationships of belonging are characteristics which facilitate the “circulation” of the sense of belonging and enable actors to embody contradictory values in their practices.

We also observed that the unpredictability of the social context, in conjunction with an exceptionally wide diversity of social norms, can sometimes polarize contradictions to the point where they become unsustainable, leading to marginalization, self-destruction or “voluntary” withdrawal from the original group of belonging. In either event, these social actors are stripped (in practice, or formally) of the powers they held with regard to the other members of the group, and excluded from the social positions they occupied. Yet this process is not irreversible: how the situation evolves depends on how the many normative frameworks that govern family and social relations are interpreted in each particular instance.

FINAL CONCLUSIONS

The central objective of this ethnographic study was to examine the evolution of living space in the city of Maputo via an in-depth analysis of a small number of families living in and building on this space.

We sought to understand the meaning and importance of *home space* in the organization of families, and in the perpetuation or transformation of family structures and relations. The way the use of *home space* structures lived experience and influences the way residents create and transform this *home space* was another key objective of our research.

The data we obtained revealed that the situations of the families in terms of economic solvency, composition of households, places of residence and type of dwelling have undergone significant transformation in recent decades, in all their multiple dimensions. These transformations occur in family structures and relations and in physical living space, each influencing the other. This process of change is essentially characterized by multiple articulations and inter-relations between different income- and produce-generating activities, different types and levels of social relations, and different behaviours governed by values which are sometimes contradictory. Being all of this is a defining feature of the modernity and urbanity of the families in the context under analysis.

In the first part of our analysis, we seek to understand the changes occurring in the studied families, and the way these changes are (and have been in the past) influenced by the economic, social and symbolic relationships which social actors maintain with the rural and urban worlds; we also examine the perceptions that social actors have of these relations, and how their perceptions condition social representations and practice. The ambivalences and contradictions we observed during our analysis allow us to conclude that although in terms of categorization the *bairros*, Cement City and countryside are typically framed according to dichotomy-based models of classification, these models do not always convey the same meanings and content.

The *bairros* are sometimes considered as belonging to the city, or as “incomplete cities” depending on the greater or lesser presence of the infrastructure which marks one *bairro* as more urban than another. The *bairros* are considered as belonging to the “city”

because “*they have energy*” (male aged 47, Polana Caniço A), “*they have public transport, hospital and school nearby*” (male aged 45, Mahotas). But informants also noted that the *bairros* don’t have everything (while the city does) and are therefore “*incomplete*”.

And although Cement City is an aspirational goal in abstract terms, not all informants would actually like to live there. The *ideal bairro*, on the contrary, is either the one the informants are currently living in, or a *bairro* which is further from the city centre, where urban development is a more recent phenomenon and some land parcelling exists. The fact that for many the *ideal place to live* is the place they are actually living in explains the enormous investment they make in their living spaces, into which most of the savings they manage to make are channelled.

We also observed that, for some, access to certain types of consumer goods is a factor which distinguishes the *bairros* from Cement City, although for others (the majority) differences in consumption habits derive more from the economic level of the family than from the place it lives (city, *bairro* or countryside).

When it comes to classifying behaviours, attitudes and manners, we encounter the same ambivalence of opinion. For example, education (in general terms), the use of the Portuguese language and dress habits were so commonly cited as factors distinctive of life in the countryside, in the *bairro* or in the Cement City that they lost all differentiating power.

The difficulties in arriving at a comprehension of the families in terms of dichotomy-based models are also related with the high degrees of mobility we observed. The large majority of family members live in other *bairros*; some live in Cement City, and nearly every family we studied has members which go there with frequency. A significant number of family members live in South Africa, and some families still have close relatives who send money remittances which are important for the domestic economy. Travel between the *bairro* and the rural milieu is not very frequent. The desire to return to the family’s land of origin is something mentioned only rarely.

We observed that mobility is also associated with important relations of interdependence (of diverse types) between different residential nuclei of the same family. Although some mention was made of conflict which led to the severance of some of these relationships, remarks emphasizing the importance of lasting family ties were more frequent. This forces us to recognize the importance of family networks and the impossibility of understanding the different dimensions that shape and condition the life

strategies of households without taking into account the set of relations (economic, social, symbolic) that they maintain and cultivate with a vast network of relatives. The importance of these networks was demonstrated throughout the study when addressing issues related to the social construction of the *home space*.

In the II part of this report our study our attention turns to the dynamics underlying the mechanisms of acquisition, construction and transformation of the *home spaces* of the families we studied and of the major conclusions of this part is that the acquisition, construction and transformation of the *home space* are social and cultural processes which gives meaning to the lives of individuals and families.

We observed several co-existing mechanisms for gaining access to space, which essentially involves invoking traditional land transmission rights in combination with an appropriation, reinterpretation and manipulation of the state-prescribed legislation which regulates access to land. This takes place – and gains meaning – in a context where individuals are seeking to exploit the opportunities emerging in the urban property market. This market is increasingly manifest in the expansion of the peri-urban *bairros* and the occupation of the rural space surrounding the city for residential and commercial purposes. All of these processes remain associated with the state's inability (lack of resources is one reason) to allocate land in an efficient and appropriate manner. In this more or less structured, complex and multifaceted market, in which a large number of agents are active and whose field of operation is the interface between the legal and the illegal, the formal and the informal, rights of access to and possession of land are transacted with the sale of plots of land – officially parcelled or not – together with their built improvements, via the subdivision of space.

Another conclusion was that various methods exist for securing and legitimizing the possession of space by the individuals and households we studied. In the minds of our informants, security of possession of the plot and the respective right of use and usufruct of the premises are not always contingent on some kind of authorization or recognition by the state authorities. In the cases we studied, the absence of a corroborative document or *paper* did not deprive them of their rights over their lands, plots and houses. Social actors keep the legal process at arm's length, not only because they are unaware of what procedures are actually involved, but also because they do not see the possession of papers and documents as the only way of ensuring security of possession and the right to use space.

One recognized way of securing legitimacy of possession is parcelling. This process secures access to land, for it confers, and secures, practical legitimacy with regard to space/land. Yet this is not the only method, and not all individuals or families attach the same value to it. Other mechanisms also generate feelings of security with regard to the possession of land: living on it for an extended period of time, whether through loan, purchase or birth; mutual recognition in the *bairro* and vicinity; recognition by the *bairro* authorities; the fact that many *bairro* residents are in a similar condition relative to the absence of documents attesting to possession; and the absence of conflicts or problems relative to the land/plots that families possess.

From our analysis of the processes of construction and transformation of *home space* we concluded that for the individuals and families included in our study, building their own house, preferably a permanent and lasting one, is one of the main reasons for acquiring a plot of land. The house is more than a building, a piece of physical infrastructure, with walls, doors and windows; it also embodies the desires and ideals of the family, and its construction is the object of individual and family strategies. In the imaginary of these families, building a house represents the successful collective trajectory of the family, in a context marked by social and economic adversity. Of the strategies we examined, we observed that building a house is a drawn-out process – one that takes place over the medium or long terms – and is not always guaranteed to reach completion. Houses are subjected to various transformations designed to meet requirements of use of space that change over time, and to respond to changes in composition and size that take place over the life cycles of the households.

The third part of our study focuses on the internal dynamics of the *home space*. It begins by examining the use and organization of space in the house/plot, in an attempt to understand how the different dimensions are structured, how the space available for these functions is distributed, and how space is shared among the different family members to allow the co-existence of common and private areas. Our research was oriented by issues related with shelter, social reproduction of the family, sociability, privacy and sharing. This analysis allows us to understand the importance people attach to their *home space* and the way the use of this space conditions everyday experience via socially constructed mechanisms which regulate interaction, and the way space – house and plot – is shared by family members. In this part we also turn our attention to gender and power relations in the home space. We do this by addressing the implications of gender relations on property rights and changes to these relations.

This study focuses on the internal dynamics of the *home space* allows to conclude that the *home space* is simultaneously a place of shelter, a place of the social reproduction of the family, a place of sociability and place of economic productivity.

The *home space* is the scene of domestic activities directed at the survival of family members and the family group; of social events that bring together friends, relatives, neighbours and/or church members; and of a wide range of economic activities. These economic activities, which are mutually complementary in a constant struggle to increase family incomes, are examined in the next part of this study. Their goal is not just daily survival but the completion, upkeep, transformation and expansion of the dwelling space.

As we observed, the organization and use of internal and external *home space* is not static. Equally fluid are the size and type of built and unbuilt spaces, and the composition of the families that live in them. However, co-existent with this fluidity we also observed forms of spatial organization in which visible frontiers (material and symbolic) demarcated certain spaces, which were reserved for certain functions. Where certain spaces were used for functions other than those originally intended, this was always seen as something provisional.

We also observed that the organization of the *home space* is based on hierarchies of gender, age and status, which are socially regulated by degree of parentage. The same norms also govern the rights to use the different internal partitions of the *home space*. This occurs even when not explicitly acknowledged. These limits mark the dividing line between common and private space and the right of free circulation within the yard and house, and also denote the shared or exclusive status of property. The existence of rules for the use of space does not necessarily mean that they are followed, however, for the size of the family, the dimensions of the house and its partitions do not always permit this.

The current model for the construction of houses, where the different partitions are all located under the same roof, necessarily results in greater physical proximity between the different family members, and this brings about changes in the rules which have customarily dictated the varying degrees of proximity or distance between different family members.

This construction model therefore has implications on the level of family relations and the ways family members socialize with one another. However, constraints

related with the duration of our fieldwork and the amount of time we could spend in the houses of the families prevent us from examining these implications in depth.

With regard to gender and power relations in the *home space*, the data did not allow us to draw any firm conclusions on changes in the status of women in the urban periphery of Maputo. We can however affirm that these changes exist, and point towards greater autonomy of women with regard to men. But this autonomy has to be reconquered every day, for women continue to be socially valued first and foremost as wives and mothers. In this process of change, women face clear difficulties in their attempts to make their own way in a context fraught with different rationales that co-exist and combine in many different ways.

We also observed the existence of elements which threaten roles which are culturally the preserve of men. These elements include not only the degree of economic power which women have won for themselves but also, and especially, the lack of work and employment prospects for men. As the men themselves remarked, without a job they cannot be respected.

This situation can be summarized as follows. With regard to the way gender relations, the different statuses of different family members, the power relationships which emerge and evolve, and the processes of conflict, negotiation and cooperation which accompany them are expressed, they all depend on bi-dimensional family relationships, where interest and affect are simultaneously expressed, on the different resources available to the family and its individual members, and on a collection of cultural and social norms with which the family identifies and through which it constitutes itself. The multiplicity of cultural norms, and the fact that none of these norms is “pure” but rather the outcome of syncretistic processes and multiple influences, means that they can be interpreted and manipulated in different, but not unlimited, ways.

In the families we studied, the power that different family members have in decisions related to the *home space*, the organization of the different activities that occur in the *home space*, and the way the space where these activities occur is defined and distributed, depends on the different interpretations which social actors construe of the cultural norms which constitute their frame of reference in the context under examination, and on the relationships between the members of any given family. These relationships dynamically articulate affects and conflicts, negotiation and cooperation, and they express individual and collective interests, egoism and altruism.

In part IV, we examine the economic activities pursued by family members in their attempts to obtain income and/or products for the acquisition, construction, transformation and upkeep of their *home spaces*. Pluri-activity, the articulation of various sources of income and the dispersion of family members across different sectors of the economy, and sometimes across different geographic areas, is an important feature here.

This study confirms what other studies have concluded (Costa, 2007) regarding the economic activities of Maputo families. That is, in order to obtain resources and to reproduce, family members resort to a plurality of activities which generate income and products. These activities span all sectors of the economy (formal, informal, primary, secondary and tertiary); they take place in different geographic contexts (urban, rural and even other countries); and in most cases no single activity generates income sufficient to meet the needs of the families. Situations like this necessitate constant exchanges and sharing, structured around family relations which extend beyond the nucleus of residents of any individual *home space*. The social value attributed to the different activities depends not only on the type of activity pursued or the income or products which are the outcome of the activity; essentially, it depends on the status enjoyed by the individual pursuing the activity. We observed that the economic activities pursued by men have a different social value from the activities pursued by children, youths and women. Only where the activities of the latter are pursued as part of formal employment contracts are they actually seen as work.

The internal management of the income and products obtained by the different family members in the activities they pursue depends on numerous factors ranging from power relations to normative codes and individual/collective affects and interests. Another factor is that the income or products resulting from these activities are often unpredictable, and in most cases are not guaranteed in advance. Many such activities require a degree of wheeling and dealing, knowledge of demand and the ability to imagine and anticipate future developments if a minimum amount of success is to be achieved vis-à-vis the competition. Other activities depend on social relations, knowledge and exchanges of favours. Others, like farming, depend on the climate and are founded on ancestral knowledge which includes the awareness of risk and lack of security. Consequently, the unpredictability and lack of security that characterize the urban milieu the families currently inhabit are nothing new. If anything, in fact, the city offers a wider range of possibilities for “playing” on various fronts. Yet this potential can

only be realized by combining different activities and simultaneously cultivating the social relationships on which such activities depend. And in cultivating these social relationships, actors embody behaviours and values which, depending on interests and circumstances, can actually be mutually contradictory.

Therefore, as we have seen, it is these multiple articulations and inter-relationships between different income- and produce-generating activities, different types and levels of social relations, and different behaviours governed by values which are sometimes contradictory, which define the modernity and urbanity of the families in the context under analysis.

The conjugation of these apparently dissimilar but inter-dependent attitudes generates contradictions in the discourse of social actors. These contradictions become apparent in the comparison of discourses in which representations of normative ideals from different cultural models are evident (the practices of the actors are often in contradiction with their discourse).

We conclude from this part of the study that the social and/or economic relations between actors are simultaneously a resource in themselves and a means to obtaining other resources. Some of these resources are given freely, as a means of creating or maintaining dependency, on the basis of which relationships of power and prestige are established within a given family, social group or network. Thus, doing business and the value of what is transacted frequently depend on pre-existing social relationships between the parties, or on relationships which the actors wish (or wish not) to establish.

In the fifth and last part of our study on *home space* as a social construct we examine the processes whereby identities are constructed and re-constructed. We argue that the identity-forming and identification processes that bind inhabitants to their houses are not generated by the specific characteristics of these urban spaces. They are the outcome, rather, of pre-existing identity-forming processes which necessarily undergo changes in their transposition to the urban context – but do not originate in the latter. And it is the transposition and transformation of identity-building processes which confers specificity on the spatial and social realities we are examining.

On the basis of a theoretical perspective which views the formation of identity in individuals, families and social groupings as a dynamic process which changes and adapts over the course of time, interacting with new factors in a complex dialectic way, we proceed to an examination of this transformation of the identity-building process in social actors. Our investigation first addresses changes in the actors' relationships with

their regions of origin, which via their ancestors and the rituals held in their honour gave spatial expression to their identity in the past, before we examine how this spatial dimension of identity is being transposed to the *home spaces* they now occupy.

One of our conclusions is that although it is of less importance nowadays, the region of origin has not “disappeared” as a referent of identity. Another conclusion is that ancestors continue to be fundamental symbols of family identity. The transposition of rituals in their honour from the region of origin to the current place of residence combines with other factors to confer upon the “new” *home space* considerable significance in terms of the affirmation of family identity.

We also observed that the transposition of identity-building processes from the rural to the urban milieu gives rise to changes in identity which accompany changes in family structure. At present, family structures draw on organizing principles from different cultural models: the patrilineal model of the peoples of southern Mozambique, and the modern, Western model. This situation opens up different possibilities where the sense of family belonging and identification is concerned: the same individual may belong to several *home spaces* (and families) which are not mutually exclusive but don't have the same degree of importance over the course of the individual's life.

Our informants frequently associated the home spaces they currently occupy with sentiments of *belonging* and *security*. In regard to the first of these sentiments, *belonging*, we observed that it was shared not only by all those who are considered part of the same family and live in the same home space, but also by other relatives whom our informants consider as being entitled to live there: such as absent and even dead relatives. However, this notion of *belonging* to a house and a family does not rule out situations of conflict and the marginalization of certain individuals.

As for *security*, this too was a sentiment cited by all our informants. This stands in apparent contradiction to situations of uncertainty with regard to property title deeds, family conflicts and even questions related with burglary and theft. The security the possession of their houses transmitted to our informants could only be understood by reference to their past experience (when documents were never necessary for proving property rights), to the current context (where this type of possession is the norm), and to a range of symbolic and identity-giving meanings which their *belonging* to a given *home space* represents.

The family too is a focus for sentiments of *security*, even in situations of conflict with other members or branches of the family. We concluded therefore that these

situations did not pose a threat to the importance of the family in terms of the identity-building value and *security* it represents for those who belong to it. None of this precludes the existence of complex relational dynamics and negotiations, however. Obligations, duties and rights operate at different levels vis-à-vis a shifting backdrop of power relations and cultural referents. All of these elements, we observed, contribute to a huge diversity of situations: on the level both of identity reconstruction and the role played by the spatial dimensions which underlie them, and consequently in terms of the *security* which *belonging* to a house and a family effectively represents. This diversity of situations can even transform the identity-building spatial referent of the *home space* into its opposite, with the *home space* seen more as factor of insecurity than one of family and social stability.

We then examine the role of churches as structural factors in the identity-reconstruction process of the social actors addressed by our study. Our research centred on the symbolic equivalence between church and family, and the way churches reflect the spatial dimensions of the identity-forming processes of the social actors.

The church plays a significant protective role for families, as it helps resolve family conflicts deriving from traditional beliefs, and in this way contributes to family cohesion. We observed a significant degree of mobility of believers across the various churches, and concluded that changes of place of residence are one of the reasons for this. The churches are located in the *bairros*; those who frequent the same church see each other as “brothers”, and are, in fact, neighbours. In each of the various creeds, visits to the *home spaces* of fellow-believers are frequent. For church, *home space* and the *bairro*, the frontiers between private and public space are extremely porous. In each instance, public and private intersect, without actually dissolving into one another. And this happens despite the occasional exception and a growing trend to delimit *home space* in a more rigid manner. Identity takes form via this intersection of spatial dimensions.

We end this part V with an examination of the important role the churches play in education. Although our informants acknowledge the importance of schooling in the affirmation of social identity, in practice the prevailing notion is that identity is fundamentally built via processes which allow the creation, survival and reproduction of the family. And yet here too we observed families behaving in different ways in the same context. The decisions they take regarding the education of their children change over time, and are not equal for all. We also saw that education is valued not for itself

but for the access it provides to better living conditions – even if achieving these better living conditions sometimes creates disunity in the family.

Family conflict, the ways it is resolved on a local level, and the representations of social actors on the causes of conflict, are also addressed in this final part of our study. In families as well as churches, there co-exist mechanisms which promote family harmony and those which sow discord. For our informants, belonging to a particular family or church is not necessarily a constant phenomenon, and families and churches themselves are not immutable: they intersect, and recreate themselves on a daily basis via a range of practices which renew the social relations which underpin them. And in this re-creation they are transformed, bringing in new members and excluding (or being abandoned by) others.

This is one possible explanation for the importance of these social networks in the identity-building process, despite the conflict they give rise to, which in some cases can lead to the disintegration of the family or the relinquishment of a church or belief. The social practices pursued by family members require complex articulations of conduct in which contradictory values – loyalty and self-interest – are expressed and interpreted in many ways, and may or may not be socially reprehensible, depending on the point of view. The spatial mobility of actors, the flexibility of family structures and relations, the diversity of churches to which the individual can belong, and the ephemeral nature of many of these relationships of belonging are characteristics which facilitate the “circulation” of the sense of belonging and enable actors to embody contradictory values in their practices.

We also observed that the unpredictability of the social context, in conjunction with an exceptionally wide diversity of social norms, can sometimes polarize contradictions to the point where they become unsustainable, leading to marginalization, self-destruction or “voluntary” withdrawal from the original group of belonging. In either event, these social actors are stripped (in practice, or formally) of the powers they held with regard to the other members of the group, and excluded from the social positions they occupied. Yet this process is not irreversible: how the situation evolves depends on how the many normative frameworks that govern family and social relations are interpreted in each particular instance.

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