Case Studies: Southern Africa

“(1) Portuguese Mozambique”
Wars of Liberation and Ideology

Why Study Mozambique?

- ‘Portuguese’ policy of ‘decolonization’ (or lack thereof…) leading to...

- extended battle to militarily ‘win’ independence

- example of strong ideology (socialism) shaping, supporting war of liberation which in turn…

- attracted, influenced international intervention
Wars of Liberation and Ideology

- example of ‘liberation war itself’ shaping social political societies in post-colonial state

- example of post-independence civil war (occurred in all former Portuguese territories, also others like Nigeria, Algeria)

- another example of how and why newly independent states were caught up in Cold War politics
- Importantly: example of how struggles for decolonization in Africa fundamentally affected domestic (European) politics

- only Algeria (French) comparable with impact liberation wars of Angola, Guinea Bissau and Mozambique had on colonizing state itself (Portugal)
Mozambique:

- like other Portuguese colonies (Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde Islands, Angola), Mozambique considered an ‘overseas province’

- knew several migrations ‘new settlers’: large group in post WWII era
Algeria and Mozambique

- while other Colonial powers (Belgium excepted) began planning/negotiating for some form of decolonization in post-war era: Portugal dug in for duration

- had support of West

- armed struggles began in territories, including Mozambique, between 1961 and 1963

- closely tied to war in Rhodesia late 1960s

[‘Case Study ‘Rhodesia-to-Zimbabwe’, Mar. 24-26]
“The Colonizer c. 1950”:

- poor and underdeveloped

- 40% of the population was illiterate, result of over twenty years of fascist dictatorship

- regime could not afford to be flexible but…

- did not have power to force compromise from African nationalists.
Mozambique & Portugal c. 1950
Portugal: Fascism and the Church

Regime had Nazi-like Youth movement, to which Church closely allied through State.
Mozambique & Portugal c. 1950

Portuguese policy Post-WWII opposite to decolonization everywhere (except South Africa – even Belgian Congo talked about ‘independence’ in a generation…):

- colonial policies intensified

- large post-war emigration movement encouraged

- settlers provided with land through program land alienation (as had happened generation earlier in Rhodesia, Kenya)
Groups affected:

- African peasants (lost land)

- local *mulattoes* and *assimilados*:

  *Mulattoes*: descendants generations of Portuguese-African ‘mixed’ marriages

  *Assimilados*: Africans adopting Catholicism, speaking Portuguese, moving into middle social ranks
Groups affected:

- older ‘settlers’, new elite both lost social, economic position vis-à-vis newest settlers

- new ‘settler regime’ created: looked more like neighbouring regimes (Rhodesia, South Africa) than ‘traditional’ Portuguese social ‘mixing’

- held mid-twentieth century racist views reflecting Europe’s fascist regimes (i.e. Germany): enacted repressive policies
Reborn, Renewed Racism

Picture from 1960s could have been taken 30 or even 40 years earlier!
Economy:

- forced labour continued to underpin economy of new settlers through 1950s

- Not until early 1970s was system reformed (remembering both Belgians and French formally abandoned ‘forced labour’ in post war years).
Forced Labour
Resistance to be expected:

- Africans being ‘re-colonized’

- local settler society ‘displaced’ and disadvantaged

Between 1961-63, struggle became armed warfare (not only in Mozambique but Portugal’s other colonies Angola and Guinea Bissau)
Video:

“Samora Machel”

[YouTube 5:30 min; in ‘Add’l Readings’]
Liberation forces FRELIMO:
- central issue: how to unify?
- Mozambique large, comprised many ethnic groups, languages
- central divide: Zambesi River (created north and south)
- Leader Eduardo Mondelane: used Socialist ideology, Portuguese language (ironically) to address divisions
Mozambique and FRELIMO

Portuguese reactions:

- colonial power infiltrated liberation groups with informers

- 1969: Mondelano assassinated

- revealed and exacerbated internal FRELIMO ‘divisions’
Mozambicans not all in favour of independence won by war:
- death of Mondelano: FRELIMO almost split definitively
- right wing: work with Portuguese, seek more opportunities [group dealt with in video]
- left wing: full-scale social revolution, anti-colonial war

Left wing emerged predominant: Samora Machel new FRELIMO leader
FRELIMO Struggle (1963)

Battle against Colonialism, not ‘whites’ *per se*. Battle for Independence and ‘new society’.
Mozambique and FRELIMO

FRELIMO strength principally in south, heavily rural areas

- (mostly) opposed in north

- taking large northern province of Tete, major victory
Mozambique and FRELIMO

- allowed FRELIMO to cross Zambesi

- position also allowed for attacks on critical Beira railroad:
  - railroad led to Rhodesia
  - transported materials for Cabora Bassa Dam
Wars of Liberation and Ideology

Map of Mozambique highlighting the region around Beira.
Mozambique and FRELIMO

Cabora Bassa Dam:

- project funded by South Africa, various European countries

- aim: to provide electricity to South African gold mines

- huge international significance
Mozambique and FRELIMO

Cabora Bassa Dam:

- project employed many 1000s Africans

- target (symbolic and real) of FRELIMO’s struggle

- FRELIMO strategies effective
Discrimination at Work

Cabora Bassa Dam: workers in the canteen.

Differences between African service (top) and ‘Whites’ (below) 
evidence of new racism. Whites paid up to 6X more than Blacks.
Beira Railroad Targeted

FRELIMO successful bombing, derailing trains on Beira railroad.

Disrupted delivery supplies to Cabora Bassa Dam; Rhodesia.
‘Derailing the Dam’
FRELIMO in pictures: challenges, goals reflected in photos
- taken by Canadian journalist ‘on the ground’

- publicized in Canada and West more generally

*Important not just as historical evidence but as insight into what was influencing international campaign at the time*
Supplies had to be carried overland; it took weeks to transport needed goods to the Front lines.
FRELIMO: Preparing Ambush

Tactics: basic guerilla warfare
‘Liberated Areas’: collective agricultural projects undertaken for subsistence and export.
In all ‘Liberated Territories’ schools educated those ‘cheated by colonialism’.
Education Central to Liberation
Liberation Armies developed own textbooks.
Hospitals Part of War
Impact on Portugal

Impact on Metropole:

- Portugal drained by costs of war
- early 1970s, almost half national budget spent on colonial wars in Africa
- no development taking place in Portugal itself
- young men migrating to France (and elsewhere) in search of work
Impact on Portugal

Portuguese Military:

- national military often seen as ‘way out’ for poor with no education, few skills, no future

- Portuguese army no exception

- but… war affecting recruitment of young men who had any other choice’ (including out-migration to France): problem

- draft (military conscription) enacted
Many appalled by reality of wars in Africa:

- in 1970s, pictures (like following) distributed internationally [part of same series by Canadian journalist cited above]

- tactics of guerilla war when seen ‘up close in photos’ put new image on argument of ‘protecting overseas provinces’

Not only military recruitment but army ‘on-the-ground’ desertions became major problem.
Portuguese Soldiers: Africa is Hell
Portuguese Atrocities
Portuguese Atrocities
Portugal faced other problems:

- rural population tended to support FRELIMO, helped compensate for logistical difficulties of transporting supplies

- “Liberated Zones” with schools [see earlier photo ‘Education in Liberated Territories], agricultural projects, hospitals desirable – therefore, protected

- attracted even those who initially opposed FRELIMO
Challenge: how to ‘compete’?

- Portuguese tried to convince people there were more opportunities to be gained by supporting them as they controlled resources

- ‘winning of hearts and mind’s (and pocketbooks) approach
The ‘winning hearts and minds’ approach, backed up with offering ‘opportunities’. It sometimes worked.
Portuguese Tactics

Challenge: how to ‘compete’?

- also threatened them with retaliation if they supported liberation forces (and followed through enough to be ‘convincing’)
“DO NOT let ‘the enemy’ cross the river.

Anyone on river may be the enemy.

Therefore, DO NOT CROSS THE RIVER OR YOU WILL BE KILLED!
Portuguese Tactics...

Challenge: how to ‘compete’?

- perhaps most effective: established militarily guarded ‘resettlement camps’ which contained 100,000s

[same policy established in Angola]
Resettlement Camps
Resettlement Camps
Impact on Portugal

Portugal: some government reforms
- reduced forced labour (cited by ILO in 1972 for contravening Geneva Accord against use of forced labour)

- abolished the status of *assimilado*

- opened up Angola to non-Portuguese investment: aim to give West bigger stake in overall Portuguese victory

Not Enough!
Plane given by the US (see “US Air Force on the nose). Note Portuguese symbol on Tail: “Cross of Christ”
Impact on Portugal

1974:
- Armed Forces Movement seized power in military coup
- supported African Liberation Movements
- men sympathetic to decolonization put into influential offices

1975:
- FRELIMO recognized as government in Mozambique
Most other colonial powers resolved issues arising from decolonization intact:

- closest comparison, Algeria: France survived War of Liberation with scars but ‘more or less’ intact

- Portugal unique in that its wars in Africa, including Mozambique, actually led to collapse of state itself!
Independence!

Video
Basil Davidson
“Africa: Rise of Nationalism -- Mozambique”

(YouTube, including interview with Samora Machel, Additional Readings)
FRELIMO controlled Mozambique enjoyed only two years of ‘semi’ peace (1975-1977): 

- RENAMO (Resistência Nacional Moçambicana): white Rhodesian officers seeking to keep Mozambique from supporting black guerrillas trying to overthrow white regime in Rhodesia
Independence!

- backed by Ian Smith

- backed by South African Government

- purpose: destabilize Mozambique, retain control Southern Africa for ‘White’ regimes

- noted for their kidnapping, use of 1000s children: porters, soldiers, ‘wives’
1984:

- Nkomati Accord negotiations: failed

- RENAMO fought against FRELIMO government until 1992
Independence!

1986:

- President of Mozambique (Samora Machel) killed in mysterious plane crash, South African side Mozambique border

- South Africa accused of sabotage

See: “Death of a President (Samora Machel)”
[YouTube Video 22 min., ‘Additional Readings’]

[Also ‘Death of Samora Machel’, Resources]
1990-1994:

- 1992 Peace Accord signed between FRELIMO and RENAMO
1994:

- democratic elections

- FRELIMO in Mozambique [53%]
  (RENAMO [33%])

- ‘victory’ decisive but …importantly, faced ‘opposition’ of over 30% from former ‘enemy’ with whom relations had been violent
Domestic Healing

Post-1994:

- government faced with ‘working with the enemy’
- population faced with ‘living with the enemy’
- issues of reparations, restitution
- forgive? forget?
- how?
Past is Present:

- question of how to reintegrate those who fought against the winning ‘side’ back into society after years (sometimes decades) of war:
  - soldiers (same issue as faced FRELIMO immediately following independence)

- this time included children, many of whom grew up as child soldiers and ‘sex-slaves’ in RENAMO army
Huge Issue for Re-building Society:

Video:

“Stolen Children”

[YouTube 5:45, Additional Readings]
“For sixteen years the African country of Mozambique was turned inside out by bloody civil war. Sixteen years of government forces versus rebel forces, sixteen years of neighbours killing neighbours, brothers killing brothers. Peace was reached but at an awful price--more than one million people dead.”

Despite the wounds inflicted on its citizens by decades of war, the country has not adopted any formal mechanism to bring about reconciliation – no truth commission or attempt to prosecute those involved in atrocities. …
Instead, they are using traditional healing practices and grass roots measures to try to reintegrate those who participated in the war on both sides, especially child soldiers.

So far these methods seem to be working.

[Important to consider in comparison with South Africa.]

The Price of War

“Snapshots”

The Mail & Guardian

Johannesburg,

South Africa
Traditional religion banned by FRELIMO Government:

- Led many to oppose government, join RENAMO

- Many looked to traditional practices to deal with the upheaval of the war

- In aftermath of war, traditional religion again has role
“At sunrise, Chief Nchiri invokes the ancestors. Sitting with the chief around a sacred pakassa tree are seven men, barefoot and bare-chested. Nchiri has a white cloth draped around his waist.

Nchiri explains to the ancestors that builders from Beira want to demolish the ruined houses of Maringuè. Many people died there during the [civil] war. Permission must be sought from the spirits.”
The workers from Beira, urban but Sena [ethnic group], have no doubts about Nchiri's ceremony. They have heard footsteps at night among the ruins. Equipment didn't work. In a previous job at Mafambisse, the mixer and generator stalled until a ceremony was performed.” (June 1998)
“Nchiri's powers are legendary here. It is said that last year, when the minister of agriculture was about to leave, Nchiri asked him for a packet of cigarettes. "You people are always asking for money," said the minister haughtily, and walked away. His plane had problems. The delegation had to sleep in Casa Banana, where ants bit them. Whether this is true or not is not important; people's belief is.

Nchiri complains that locals do not see any benefits out of the frenzied building. There are no jobs, except for a few servants to clean and fetch water; no local materials are used. Yet he is not against it.
"War ended through an agreement. With the same spirit, we can welcome changes," he says. The government can build expensive houses. Cultural memory that survived a brutal war and grinding poverty builds bridges of understanding."
“The former child soldiers of Renamo confront their own families ....

The boys, adolescents now, were the child soldiers of the former rebel movement Renamo. They had been kidnapped, brutalized, and forced to kill in a campaign by the apartheid South Africa-backed Renamo to control Ilha Josina Machel, a strategic island in the Nkomati river, around 100km from the capital Maputo. The children were Renamo's shock troops. Lost to their families and culture, they were responsible for some of the worst atrocities of a bitter war.”

[reference ‘Video: Stolen Children’, Additional Readings]

(April, 1999)
Another man, who was used by Renamo as a porter and twice escaped, also works with RE in the community. He still sees some of the children who held him captive and on one occasion urged that he be killed. Reconstruindo a Esperança [Portuguese, ‘rebuilding hope’] has two other programs in Nampula and Gaza provinces helping not just Renamo ex-soldiers but children who were in government militias, and the anti-Renamo and traditionally-based Naparema forces - as well as abused girls. …thousands more children in Mozambique … continue to live with the trauma and memories of the war unaddressed.

(April 1999)
“One of the key aspects of RE's work is that it cooperates closely with traditional healers and religious leaders. All the children that returned to Ilha Josina Machel went through cleansing rituals "to clean their mind's of what they saw," the local 'Bishop' of the African church on the island said. "We clean so that they can forget," which in turn allows the community to forgive, he added.” …
The 'Bishop', who himself was shot by Renamo, had his son kidnapped and did not know he was alive until he returned in 1994. "When I see a child and know he was a soldier I'm not meant to hate him because I know he was forced to do all that," he told IRIN. "I don't want to talk about the war but our recovery," which with flooding this year, and little money in the area, is perilous enough."
“The Mozambican people believed that if people hold hoes instead of weapons, peace could be maintained, agricultural development could be promoted.

Symbolically, the flag of Mozambique illustrates this possibility with the image of hoes and guns."
The South African Chamber for the Development of Agriculture in Africa (Sacada) seeks to resettle Afrikaans farmers in African countries (1997):

- Small groups emigrated to Zambia, Congo

- Litmus test is project in Mozambique's northern Niassa province
Post-Scripts: the new ‘Great Trek’

- South African (white-owned) agribusiness will increase food production, food security

- create jobs, stem illegal immigration to South Africa.
From a social perspective, there is a fear that the settlers will reproduce the system of tenant labour prevalent in KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga …

Asked about the pansies growing nearby, Ina [a new Afrikaner settler] explains the secret of her budding garden:
"I tell 'my black' where to plant and water."

Whether planting pansies or felling trees, Mozambican labourers do the hard work
(August 1997)
“... the government has suddenly decided to spend a fortune on buildings in Maringuè ... Maringuè, stronghold of rebel group Renamo during Mozambique's 16-year civil war, was strategically well chosen. It lies in central Sofala province, linked to the north and south of the country. ...And it can be reached by air, as South African planes did, landing on a bit of tarred road the Portuguese were building at the time of independence in 1975. Maringuè is the last area Renamo surrendered to government administration after the 1994 elections.”

(June 1998)
So why does Renamo have a shot at winning Parliament [2000 elections]? Cherinda blames ethnicity.

"The speech of a lot of Renamo people is tribalist. They say this man is not from their region, why is he in Parliament as a representative of the region? This works with uneducated people," he says.

But there is also a lingering anger at Frelimo's authoritarian past, particularly in some rural areas badly affected by its collectivization of agriculture during the 1980s.
The prospect of an organization that was created by Ian Smith's Rhodesia and funded by PW Botha winning control of Parliament horrifies some Mozambicans.

(December 1999)
“A call for Mozambicans abroad to register for military service has raised fears that the opposition former rebel Renamo party intends to go back to war. Political analysts say the exercise may be a response to threats by former rebel Mozambique National Resistance (Renamo) to forcibly take over regions in Mozambique it believes it took in general elections held last year.
Post-war politics

Renamo claims that the ruling Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (Frelimo) rigged the elections, whose results were, however, declared legitimate by international observers.”

[Riots followed RENAMO protests; 40 killed.]

(February 2000)
Post-Script: Marriage

Gracia Machel, Nelson Mandela (July 18, 1998)