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Extensive African Urbanization: The Case of the Mozambican Periphery

Joaquim Miranda Maloa

Abstract

The aim of this article is to analyze African urbanization, looking specifically at the transformations of Mozambican urban peripheries. To do so, conduct a qualitative research of an exploratory nature, using bibliographic, documentary and photographic survey. The most interesting discoveries of this study started in the 1990s, a period marked by the end of “socialism”, civil war, centrally planned economy, which verified the opening of parents in the current Western capitalist world in the growth of foreign investments and financial transactions. Under the effect of market liberalization. At this moment, everything that is traded and the exchange value overlaps the use value and appropriation of space in exchange for money. In this context, as the peripheral urban cities are transformed into multiplying duplexes, elegant houses those call houses, true “Mozambican palaces” and closed condoms. The establishment of these houses will transform these spaces and gradually expel the low-income population that has existed for a long time, to places very far from the central area, this phenomenon is called gentrification. He concluded that the transformation of Mozambican urban peripheries is influenced by the increase in real estate capital, increase in individual income, ease of acquisition of space and construction material (provided by the expansion of the installation for the exhibition that makes it possible or cheaper). This research is important because it makes an important contribution to the empirical studies on the new neoliberal urbanism that is taking place in Mozambican cities. The limits of this research are due to the lack of funding to carry out a systematic survey of new ventures that will emerge in cities and places far from the center of large cities, such as: *Maputo, Beira, Nampula* and *Matola*. It is intended in the future study to demonstrate how to change the socioeconomic structure of the residents of the Mozambican peripheries, characterizing gentrification.

Keywords: extensive urbanization, transformation, urban spaces, periphery, gentrification

1. Introduction

Three geographic objects, among many others, can illustrate the transformations of the built environment of the Mozambican urban peripheries: the duplexes - high-end properties composed of two floors interconnected by stairs [1]; elegant houses, which we call houses, real “Mozambican palaces” and closed condominiums [2]. These urban transformations are influenced by the increase in individual income, ease of acquisition of space and construction material (provided by the expansion

of the establishment for acquisition that makes it cheaper), which change the existing residential landscape and restructure the peripheries, valuing, making it more attractive and promoting its insertion in the urban market, causing negative impacts related to processes of gentrification and socio-spatial segregation [3].

To use the words of Diniz and Silva [3], the ennoblement of the urban periphery occurs through two social substitution processes, linked to urban rehabilitation actions through private investments and culminating in the expulsion of the former residents. The first that goes from 1990 to 2000, when the low-income population left the central areas of the main cities, to the peripheries. These low-income residents sold the keys (a typical Mozambican expression meaning the sale of an apartment or flat), while others rented their houses, with or without contracts, and went to live on the outskirts. In a second moment, since the beginning of the 2000s, the formation and consolidation of the modern real estate market and the civil construction industry accelerate the pace of construction of new housing and commercial areas in the peripheries [4].

It is in this context that a new gentrification arrives in Mozambican cities, first in urban centers, later in urban peripheries, connecting distant points that are points of infrastructures such as highways, which value an appropriation of space.

From this perspective, it is based on the principle that the poor population is the greatest vulnerability in these spaces, in each moment when new ventures are implemented, they are motivated to leave the neighborhood spaces because they verify that a new life does not correspond to their financial capacity, considering as profound social inequalities in urban peripheries, it is possible to anticipate the geographic assessment of changes in the socioeconomic structure of residents of the Mozambican peripheries, characterizing gentrification. In this way, this work starts from some important issues in relation to the transformations of the peripheries of Mozambican cities, but it can also be replicated in other African cities. The first specific objective is to map the types of housing and commercial developments that are emerging in the urban peripheries. The second is to present a spatial distribution of the suburbs in urban cities.

In this way, therefore, this article is divided into three parts: in addition to this introduction, a methodology, with a description of the procedures used for writing that article and analyzing the results.

2. Methodology

To this end, a qualitative research of an exploratory nature was carried out, using bibliographical, documentary and photographic survey to show the dynamics of the transformations of the Mozambican urban peripheries. The hefty data were obtained between, 2012–2020. The researcher had the opportunity to visit the peripheries of the various Mozambican cities, such as: *Maputo, Matola, Xai-Xai, Maxixe, Beira, Chimoio, Tete, Beira, Nampula, Nacala, Lichinga* and other small cities, with a capital, with a view to verifying the changes that may occur in the peripheries, for the closer approximation of the socio-spatial reality that is being investigated. The data were collected in each city through informants who took us to each peripheral neighborhood, arriving there and contacting the secretaries of the neighborhoods that accompanied us in each transforming block and asking for authorization of the requirements to take as photographs of the high and elegant of the neighborhoods. Condominiums. The data were collected through photographs, these data were obtained through a comparison between the peripheries of the cities to reach the conclusion of the transformations of the urban peripheries. These transformations are perceived by the emergence of new elegant buildings and condominiums, which are pushing the poorest people to places further away from these peripheries.

The precision of the data led us to understand the urban gentrification index, through two stages: (i) The selection of variables and definition of indicators, such as the type of housing existing before or after the dimensions; (ii) standardization and weighting of urban indicators, where urban housing types were compared.

For the accuracy of the data, we used two stages: The first stage referred to the search for documents and a consistent bibliography regarding urban studies in Mozambique, which helped in the identification of social conditions that literature in the field of Geography presents as consolidated socio-spatial realities no urban territory in the city. Thus, among a series of works, the study by Muacuveia [5], which evaluated the residential segregation of the city, as well as the work of Maloa [6], in the analysis of exclusion in the urban area, is worth mentioning. Literature on urban dispersion was also observed, with authors such as Maloa and Nascimento [7]. It is also worth mentioning that these literatures directly infer on an extensive urbanization. The second stage of the research sought to standardize the evidence, with some tables, graphs, graphics or visual materials such as photographs from the internet to improve the quality of the article's communication.

3. Results

3.1 The first phase of extensive urbanization the rise of duplexes and elegant houses in the suburbs

The first phase of the process of fostering the urban periphery, here Gutiérrez [8] calls it gentrification, was a phenomenon studied by British society Ruth Glass in his book "London: aspects of change" [9]. The term gentrification is derived from the English noun "gentry", which designates "successful" individuals or groups. The term was created to refer to a process of elitization or "enrichment" of local places in the city, previously characterized as predominantly popular areas. The same author recognizes the class character of social inequalities added to this phenomenon [10].

However, it was the Scottish geographer Neil Smith (1954–2012), based in the United States of America, who analyzed in depth the various processes of promoting poor neighborhoods in New York, with emphasis on the Harlem neighborhoods in Manhattan, one of New York [11].

Gentrification is an urban and social phenomenon, altered by the development of the degraded housing stock of the popular classes through its gradual investment by the middle class [12]. It is also included, as a process of urban restructuring, marked by the economic restructuring characteristic of "late capitalism" and advanced, conditioned by a more flexible subsidiary capital accumulation regime [13].

Since the mid-1990s, as main Mozambican cities such as: Maputo, Matola, Beira, Inhambane, Xai-Xai, Beira, Chimoio, Tete, Quelimane, Nampula, Pemba and Lichinga, are undergoing urban changes that end up renovating or together geographical, social and political relations producing new urbanities [14] and establishing security standards very different from previous periods [15].

At the time, as transformations in the urban peripheries were driven by the country's opening up to the western capitalist world, by the growth of foreign investments and financial transactions under the effect of market liberalization, global dynamics that transform urban spatiality.

The restructuring of the urban space gives rise to new ventures, in addition to the old periphery [16], and emerging functionalities, with the entry of new urban actors, these strategies are influenced by the furniture market and the willingness of residents to build and build a house own.

The first phase of the transformation of peripheral urban spaces has historically been influenced by three movements that, although contradictory, refer to one another and interpenetrate. The first movement concerns the arrival, in the early 1990s, of numerous international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) who came to support Mozambique who have just emerged from a protracted civil war. Its members started to rent apartments and houses, for housing or for transformation into apartments. Payment was made in US dollars. The result that the urban fabric of the central nucleus started to be affected by dollarization. Shopping streets, parks, restaurants, markets, museums, cinemas and all types of residential and commercial properties were valued by dollarization.

We can say that in the 1990s, or at the beginning of the “commercialization of the city” [17], marked by the flow of technicians from different western countries, it generated a speculation harmful to the population of the central area, with emphasis on the numerous civil servants installed there. Many of them then had to rent their houses.

The second movement was fueled by the “neoliberal spirit”, which was strengthened by the end of the civil war, which allowed many Mozambican citizens to start to benefit from the rental income from properties located in central areas. Until this moment, the production of urban life was guided by the survival strategy.

And the third space–time corresponded to the end of the nationalization of the buildings, protected by Decree-Law 5/76. For its part, Decree-Law 2/91 of January 1991, instituted the sale of properties previously nationalized by the State [18]. Article 1 authorizes Mozambicans in a legal situation whose properties are supervised by the Administration of the State Real Estate Park (APIE), to sell, rent, restore, etc. the same, as long as he asked the municipality for authorization [19].

The alienation law increased the profitability of real estate in the main Mozambican cities. High inflation motivated homeowners to rent their properties as a survival mechanism. We can, then, declare that, in the 1990s, it was the decade of organizing the rental of houses, which allowed the fringe of the urban population affected by inflation above the rate of increase in economies, to escape bankruptcy. The “low-income” residents [20] who acquired real estate during the nationalization period from “peripheral neighborhoods”, looking for places where they could build new houses to live and survive with income in the city. The rent of houses becomes a source of family income, especially for those who had waste during the nationalization of buildings in 1976.

Many Mozambicans who were able to buy APIE real estate at the time of the sale in the 1990s, and sell or sell to live on the outskirts, contributed to financial and real estate inflation. The new residents build houses with cement and zinc blocks, while losing space like reed houses that exist [16]. Peripheral spaces are used more hybrids. Elegant houses coexist, reed, cement, zinc sheet, cardboard etc. [21]. In the process of this process, imposing houses and elegant duplex type between conventional dwellings that replaced the precarious ones (**Figures 1, 2 and 3**)¹.

Duplexes and elegant houses are spatial manifestations of globalization, which are reproduced from the process of constituting the new urban society, supported by the expansion of the world market, the selection of borders and the commodification of space. As goods, their main characteristics are produced by private builders [23] influencing planetary styles of real estate consumption. These buildings, driven by the desire for home ownership, a central element of consumption in the contemporary world, transform like urban landscapes of the peripheries,

¹ To see: <https://www.archdaily.com.br/br/country/mocambique>.

Figure 1.
A duplex residence on the outskirts of Maputo. Source: [22].

Figure 2.
A duplex residence with precarious houses on the outskirts of the city of Lichinga. Source: [22].

as they gradually appear in precarious areas. It is incorrect to say that the idea of home ownership reached only the “middle class” population or individuals with average purchasing power. Many high-ranking government officials searched the new suburbs for spaces to build their dream homes.

3.2 Second phase of extensive urbanization: the emergence of condos in peripheral neighborhoods

The private real estate sector with national and international capital started to gain relevance in Mozambique mainly in the 2000s, imposing a new financing model within the constitution of a commercial financial system². As we know, a post-colonial Mozambican urbanization had little accommodative solution to the

² To see: https://viveremmocambique2017.blogspot.com/2018/07/morar-em-mocambique-tete_23.html.

Figure 3.
A duplex residence on the outskirts of the city of Lichinga. Source: [22].

Figure 4.
Transformation of the peripheral urban spaces of the city of Tete (Vale dos Embondeiros Condominium with its wide streets and its various Embondeiros). Source: [24].

housing problem of senior state officials and a group with rising purchasing power³. These have been used since the 2000s, symbols of consumption of the real estate machine. According to **Figures 4, 5 and 6**⁴.

In the 2000s, many civil construction companies, homebuilders, appeared at a time when urbanization was intensifying and the job market with high wages was expanding while many foreign professionals and large corporations entered Mozambique [27]. Ten years after the end of the civil war, the country was becoming safe to attract workers and international capital. In this phase, the transition

³ To see: <http://hikersbay.com/africa/mozambique/hotel/mz/condominio-veloso.html?lang=pt>.

⁴ To see: <https://www.jumia.co.mz/arrenda-se-moradia-t4-no-condominio-khurula-pid6726355>.

Figure 5.
Transformation of the peripheral urban spaces of the city of Nacala. [25].

Figure 6.
Transformation of the peripheral urban spaces of the city of Maputo, Bairro T4, in the Khurula condominium. Source: [26].

from the rentier property model in the urban nucleus to the renterist real estate promotion model, aimed at condominiums in the peripheries, which generate gentrification and dispersion of high-end condominiums and houses (duplexes), which cohabit, takes place. With irregular occupations [28]. The new architectural landscape is influenced by forces of globalization that produce a hegemonic rationality through the pragmatic discourse of the civil construction industry sector in the real estate market, in order to meet the needs of the restricted social segment, gathering the necessary conditions for indebtedness with institutions [29, 30].

The foreign capital flows that enter the real estate circuit of Mozambique, generate questions for social interests and critical thoughts for studies on urbanism and financialization, at a time when the right to urban infrastructure and services faces new challenges with the increase of selected private investment, marked as conditional on real estate financing, such as: a regular salary or income, a low level of performance, with the financing charges; payment of life insurance [19];

among other requirements to optimize capital accumulation and the difficulties of the peripheries in response to universal requirements for urban rights [31].

Law governing the construction of condominiums - Decree of 17/2013 [32], contributes to the increase in the production of real estate, while expanding real estate speculation and its effects, with a stock of land or empty lots waiting to be transformed into goods, as a basis for creating fictitious capital [33]. To use as Marina Fix's words [31], there is a strategy for using empty spaces, a promise of gains in the anticipated future or that can be created on land purchased and imported as obstacles to access infrastructures and urban services of frequent use time [34]. Extent to which closed condominiums have the capacity to install their equipment such as: water pump, transformers and energy generators and other facilities [32], public investment in infrastructure and urban services are discouraged, excluding the needy population. That resides in limited spaces. Therefore, the expansion of condominiums and the luxury duplex is creating a movement of social and housing differentiation in the peripheries [35]. "Capital transforms the spaces it finds in the spaces of production and accumulation (...). It is the only way to produce, destroy and recreate new bases, spaces and conditions for its expansion, construction and expansion of markets and expanded horizons for valorization" [31].

Among the residents who live in high-end condominiums are foreigners of various nationalities. Condominium flows are associated with the need for international capital, if they are captured and accumulated in the real estate circuit [36].

Currently, in urban Mozambique, most luxury residences are located in peripheral neighborhoods, privileged spaces for gentrification and metamorphosis of the landscape that was once dominant, in the caniço [19, 37].

Accelerated urban periphery results partly from the presence of empty spaces, low prices on the ground and irregular development and flexibility in the urban land market that integrates the process of capital accumulation by real estate [13].

A "link between the land market and the capital market is a resource of financial capitalism" [31], p. 3. The gentrification process results in part from the accumulation of capital by real estate agents that meet the specific purpose of the gentifiers ("middle class" and "upper middle class", who are filtering them out - relatively wealthy) at the expense of broad social interest [38].

Final considerations.

As pointed out, in the years before 1990 as peripheries they were places devalued by individuals with high purchasing power [4]. Since then, peripheral spaces have expanded as places covered by these citizens and attract service ventures - stores, banks, ATMs and small businesses, benefits for the interests of new residents that, in turn, justify the growth of public investments in these areas. You can also check in several cities or at florists of equipment such as bus terminals or shopping centers and specific activities that exist only in the central area. Meanwhile, the value of urban land increases with new condominium developments.

Therefore, a real estate construction industry generates in the peripheries a speculation of land that motivates the old residents to sell their land (lots). Therefore, according to Maria Monica Arroyo, as urban peripheries they are configuring mosaics of multiple combinations of temporalities, diversities, opposition, showing many ways of doing, feeling and living [39].

The second phase of the transformation of peripheral urban spaces is being accompanied by the growing role of the private circuit of private capital (national and international), driven by real estate developers and developers interested only in profits. For Atkison and Bridge [40], this reality is the starting point of a new urban colonialism. The increase in habitual high-standard demand in the peripheries, which creates fragmentation and disconnection, is a reflection of the lack of a national housing policy to understand all classes, but also an unremitting pursuit of

profits through the commercial market. The process confirms that urban areas are increasingly attuned to the pace of the globalized world [39].

What is currently happening in Mozambique is a true capitalist production in the cities [41], achieved by the self-financing of those with a high purchasing power, especially for those with variable income between 8 and 15 years old, and can use part of monthly resources in a house in the condominium. This combination between the real estate industry and the neoliberal economy transforms as peripheries and, at the same time, food and gentrification, changes such as social inequalities, urban poverty and urban segregation. This shows an expansion of a real estate market with harmful consequences for a low-income population.

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