



City profile

Urban dynamics in Maputo, Mozambique

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyses urban development in Maputo, comparing colonial and post-colonial development in the city. The focus is on the city's dualistic structure, as determined physically, socially and economically by Jenkins (2000a). This structure is identified as consisting of a poor belt (characterised by poverty, the absence of property rights, deficient sanitation conditions and a process of gentrification) and a rich area, in which the architectural resilience that Maputo displays over time is considered. The paper discusses the resilience of this dualistic structure, and policy implications are derived.

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Introduction

This paper analyses urban development in the city of Maputo in Mozambique, comparing its development in the colonial and the post-colonial phases. The city presents a dualistic structure that was common to both periods, and had already been detected by Jenkins (2000a). This dualistic structure can be noted in the picture of the city shown in Fig. 1, where a rich town characterised by tall buildings and a poor town characterised by small houses can be identified. The persistence of this dualistic structure from the colonial to the post-colonial period underlines the city's architectural resilience. Ecologic resilience is defined as “the magnitude of the disturbances that can be absorbed before the system changes its structure” (Holling, 1996, p. 33). Resilience is defined not just how long it takes for the system to bounce back after a shock, but also how much disturbance it can take and remain within critical thresholds, Davoudi (2013). Therefore ecological resilience is “the ability of a system to persist and the ability to adapt, Adger (2000). In Maputo city the change from colonial to post-colonial phase is a major shock exacerbated by the civil war and despite this shock the city absorbed the changes and remains within its traditional thresholds defined by the persistence of architectural tradition in the rich town and the persistence of poor town characterised poverty, the absence of property rights, deficient sanitation conditions. Therefore this paper will describe the disturbances

Maputo faced, prior and post-colonial phases and the persistence of architectural tradition in rich town and the poverty in the poor town.

An analysis is also made of the present-day housing policy, identifying a policy that is reliant on the private market in the rich area of the city and detrimentally impacts upon the urban poor in the city's poverty belt (Araújo, 1999). Furthermore, the absence of property rights in Maputo's poverty belt is analysed, together with the district's deficient sanitation conditions and the gentrification process that is similarly identified. The property rights theory was developed by Coase (1960), with unclear property rights being seen as an obstacle to bargaining, preventing trade and hindering the achievement of market equilibrium; sanitation deficiencies in African cities have already been investigated as part of the impact of colonisation by Njoh and Akiwumi (2011); and the concept of gentrification relates to those neighbourhoods where the ethnic minorities that had previously established themselves there have now been displaced by rich individuals who have since settled in the area (Visser, 2002; Cahill, 2010; Borsdorf and Hidalgo, 2013). Finally, the paper focuses on the architectural resilience that Maputo has displayed over time in the rich area of the city (Lobato, 1970; Mendes, 1985). Architectural resilience is defined as the continuing persistence of major architectural works in the city over the years, during both the colonial and post-colonial period. “Architectural” buildings are those buildings that adhered to the artistic trends that were in fashion when they were built, and which have since become recognised by architects as important references for their own work, while also encouraging a form of architecture-driven tourism in the city. Architectural resilience is

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Fig. 1. Aerial view of the present-day city of Maputo in Mozambique.

an important aspect of the city's culture and is to be noted in particular in the rich area of the city of Maputo.

Research already carried out into the city of Maputo includes the work of [Jenkins \(2000a\)](#), which presents a profile of Maputo after independence. However, he does not limit his analysis solely to Maputo, but also includes the satellite sister city of Matola ([Jenkins, 2000a, 2000b](#)). A major planning problem is identified by [Jenkins \(2000a, 2000b\)](#): a lack of adequate land use policies and appropriate strategic planning has led to acute erosion both in the primary dunes along the sea front and on the coastal escarpments.

More importantly, in the past, Maputo already displayed signs of the dualistic structure mentioned earlier. [Jenkins and Wilkinson \(2002\)](#) compare Maputo with the city of Cape Town in South Africa in terms of contemporary globalised economies, concluding that Maputo has a long history of having a dualistic structure of this nature, not only physically (the inner city defined by tall buildings in the colonial era has been settled by non-Africans and stands side by side with a belt of small houses where Africans have settled), but also socially and economically. Furthermore, the proportion of the urban population living and operating outside the formal economy has grown faster than the city's population, particularly in the most recent latter period of structural adjustment and global economic re-integration. [Oppenheimer and Raposo \(2007\)](#) analyse the suburbs of Luanda and Maputo, looking at the families living there and the growth of the city since colonial times. Research carried out into African cities includes the work of [Myers \(2011\)](#), which presents an alternative view from the one normally found in the literature, offering a complex, nuanced and, above all, hopeful representation of African urban environments. [Jenkins, Robson, and Cain \(2002\)](#) analyse Luanda, the capital city of Angola, concluding that it has had to face extreme challenges in terms of urban development, and that a well-managed and democratic urban development has been lacking in the city. Other papers on African cities include that of [Arecchi \(1985\)](#), who analyses the city of Dakar in Senegal, focusing on the urban infrastructure, colonial domination and international trade. The same author also analyses Mogadishu in Somalia, focusing on the chaotic and uncontrolled growth that has taken place there, caused largely by the immigration of nomadic families hit by famines and wars ([Arecchi, 1984](#)). [Tiepolo \(1996\)](#) analyses the city of Brazzaville in the Republic of the Congo, focusing on the fact that only a small part of the greatly increased public expenditure was used in Brazzaville, the effect of such neglect being to restrict the population's access to much-needed infrastructure and hindering the further extension of

public services. Since urban management and planning have not been improved, the city has also experienced increasing environmental problems. [Romaya and Brown \(1999\)](#) analyse the city of Maseru in Lesotho. [Wilkinson \(2000\)](#) presents a profile of Cape Town in South Africa, focusing on the post-apartheid period and the city's management and governance issues. [Hoyle \(2001\)](#) analyses the revitalisation of the waterfront in Lamu, a seaport in Kenya, while [Visser \(2002\)](#) analyses the effects of gentrification in South African cities. [Kithiia and Dowling \(2010\)](#) analyse the city of Mombasa in Kenya, focusing on the impact of climate change. [Kent and Ikgopoleng \(2011\)](#) present an analysis of Gaborone in Botswana, focusing on the city's characteristics of mass poverty, extensive squatter settlements and recurrent civil strife. From this research, there emerges a plethora of persistent problems resulting from the absence of adequate urban management programmes all over Africa, most notably the scourges of mass poverty and extensive squatter settlements.

The motivation for the present research is as follows: firstly it should be noted that, despite [Jenkins' \(2000a\)](#) analysis of Maputo, the city has undergone major changes since then, thus justifying the present research. The civil war ran from 1976 to 1992, a period during which the rural population fled to the cities in search of greater security ([Newitt, 1981](#)). Therefore, with the end of the civil war, new changes occurred and the city now clearly displays characteristics that were already becoming visible during the colonial period, with suburbs that were growing ever larger ([Oppenheimer & Raposo, 2007](#)). The resilience of this dualistic structure is nowadays characterised by other attributes that need to be analysed. Secondly, the process of national reconciliation that began in 1992 was characterised in Maputo by the many people fleeing from the civil war being housed in traditional African houses that they themselves built on the outskirts of Maputo. These war refugees organised themselves into neighbourhoods founded along ethnic lines, and Maputo's suburbs clearly reflect this pattern. The lack of employment, the lack of education and a municipal housing policy that was reliant on the private market resulted in the development of the city's poverty belt. Thirdly, slums came into being, with a complete disregard for the property rights of the houses built in Maputo's poverty belt, where there were deficient sanitation conditions and where the gentrification process was actively supported by the municipality. Therefore, the dualistic structure results from this city's organisation, as already detected by [Jenkins \(2000a\)](#), and it continues to persist, thus justifying the present research.

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