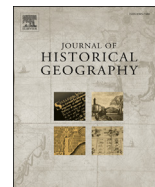


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Portuguese tropical geography and decolonization in Africa: the case of Mozambique



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ABSTRACT

Portuguese decolonization involved the formal dissolution of an authoritarian regime which had maintained through law that all its colonies – euphemistically named ‘overseas provinces’ after 1951 – were integral parts of Portuguese territory. Dissolution came after a thirteen-year war (1961–1974) with three fronts, culminating in the bloodless Carnation Revolution of April 1974. Decolonization of Portugal's colonial empire precipitated the emergence of newly independent countries, including five in Africa alone. From the late 1940s through to the early 1970s, a small group of Portuguese geographers researched their country's overseas possessions within an authoritarian political and social context and with a concern for tropical conditions. After 1974 everything changed, and most geographers who were conducting fieldwork or had been stationed overseas returned to Lisbon. This paper considers the politics and practices of Portuguese geographical scholarship as it intersected with late colonialism and decolonization in Africa, and in terms of its concern with tropical geography. It seeks to contextualize Portuguese tropical geography in Africa by outlining the development of the Lisbon School of Geography. It also examines the late development of the university geography degrees in Mozambique and Angola. In particular, the paper engages with the intellectual biographies of three geographers who were deeply involved in the geography degrees created in Lourenço Marques (presently Maputo, Mozambique), and how their lives intersected with late colonial and post-independence Mozambique. The final sections discuss how the 1974 revolution, the transitional governments, independence and later the civil wars in Angola and Mozambique impacted on Portuguese geographical research and how these developments were bound up with the abrupt end of Portuguese tropical geography.

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From the late 1940s to the mid 1970s a small group of Portuguese geographers researched their country's overseas possessions. They worked within a particular authoritarian context, and in Portuguese colonial territories – euphemistically named ‘overseas provinces’ after 1951 – which were primarily in the tropics. From 1974 everything changed. After a thirteen-year war (1961–1974) with three fronts, Portugal's authoritarian regime dissolved and decolonization spawned newly independent countries, including five in Africa alone.¹ Significantly, most other African countries were already independent by this time, and the Cold War was at its height. Most Portuguese geographers who were conducting fieldwork in the colonies, or had been stationed overseas, returned to Lisbon, meaning that their careers were decisively shaped by

decolonization. Some still had to write up and publish their work on Africa, but Portuguese geographical research there effectively ended. The civil wars that followed independence in Angola and Mozambique prevented further research, and Portuguese geographers' interest in the tropics faded.

This paper considers the politics and practices of Portuguese geographical scholarship, particularly work on tropical geography, as it intersected with late colonialism and decolonization in Portuguese Africa.² With just a few significant exceptions, Portuguese geography has been largely sidelined in the literature on geography and empire, although, in turn, that literature says remarkably little

² While this paper focuses on Africa, it is important to acknowledge that the first phase of post-war Portuguese decolonization came in late 1961 when Portugal lost control of Portuguese India (*Estado da Índia Portuguesa*) following India's independence in 1947 and the failure of diplomatic negotiations between the two countries during the late 1950s. This loss, in the same year war started in Angola, was a severe blow to the Portuguese empire.

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¹ The wars were in Angola and Guinea Bissau from 1961, and Mozambique from 1964.

about decolonization.³ Also with a few exceptions, work on the history of geography in Portugal has neglected its complicity with empire and its colonial legacies.⁴ Books, theses and articles testifying to and chronicling this entanglement, chiefly in relation to tropical geography, are mostly in Portuguese and not readily available outside Portugal, either in translation or online. Due to this gap in the literature, I seek in what follows to contextualize Portuguese tropical geography in post-war Africa by first outlining the development of the Lisbon School of Geography, which was the only geography department in the country with an explicit tropical geography focus, before analyzing some salient themes in the liaison between this school and Portuguese decolonization. I then aim to advance understanding of the ways in which geography was conceived and undertaken in universities in the Portuguese colonies before and after decolonisation by considering the late development of geography degrees in Angola, and especially Mozambique, during the 1970s. It was symptomatic of the disorientation of the Portuguese Estado Novo that it was only after the war had started in northern Angola in 1961 that two new universities were hastily created.⁵ Adriano Moreira became the overseas minister in that year and was responsible for the creation of the *Estudos Gerais Universitários* in Angola and Mozambique in 1962, which by 1968 were fully established as universities.⁶

Inspired by Trevor Barnes' biographical approach to the history of geography, this paper draws on interviews with three geographers who were deeply involved in the geography degrees created in Lourenço Marques (presently Maputo, Mozambique). Barnes draws a distinction between 'lives lived' and 'lives told'.⁷ The former concern focuses on using evidence from geographers' final research products to understand their contribution to the field, while the latter seeks to illuminate the personal and institutional processes and inflections that infused and shaped these 'lived' narratives of research publication. This fosters an appreciation of how ideas travel and are perceived, remembered from different vantage points, and often in discrepant ways. A 'lives told' approach can include testimony collected conversationally (Barnes has interviews chiefly in mind) and through correspondence. It also promotes closer examination of wider, and changing, social, cultural and institutional contexts in which geographers move. In this regard it is also useful to think through colonial and post-colonial 'careerings' along the lines proposed by Ruth Craggs and Hannah Neate – the professional trajectories that connect ideas, practices and places.⁸ Of course, as Barnes warns, lives told are always a

mélange of fact and fiction. However, this approach seems appropriate here since there are hardly any studies focusing on the processes which influenced the production of Portuguese tropical geography and the mobility of ideas, people and knowledge that this involved. Yet there is a wealth of information available in the narratives of those who were direct protagonists in these processes.

The paper starts by introducing the circumstances within which Portuguese tropical geography began in the late 1940s. It briefly reviews the roles and actions of the principal figures involved, and their work in the contexts of colonialism, dictatorship, and the wars from 1961. It then focuses on a neglected facet of this story: the establishment, in 1969, of geography degrees in Angola and Mozambique.⁹ It provides a picture of late 1960s Mozambique and discusses the intellectual biographies of Maria Eugénia Moreira, Celeste Coelho and Maria Clara Mendes, and how they intersected with late colonial and post-independence Mozambique. The final sections discuss how the 1974 revolution, the transitional governments, independence and later the civil wars in Angola and Mozambique, impacted on Portuguese geographical research, and how these developments were bound up with the abrupt end of Portuguese tropical geography.

Portuguese tropical geography

The study of tropical geography in Portuguese colonies can be traced back to the early twentieth century. Yet, as Ilídio do Amaral notes, this orientation was not given an institutional or intellectual focus until the late 1940s, within the Lisbon School of Geography and in the context of the authoritarian Estado Novo.¹⁰ In 1946 the geographer Orlando Ribeiro was appointed as a member of the Council of Overseas Research (*Junta de Investigações Científicas do Ultramar*), which opened new doors to geographical research overseas within an institution concerned mainly with cartography, geodesy, geology and anthropology.¹¹ Indeed, Suzanne Daveau dates the start of Portuguese tropical geography to 1947, the year that the Second West African Conference was held in Bissau, which prompted the Council of Overseas Research to fund a geographical research mission to Guinea led by Ribeiro. With a tight budget, this was almost a solo mission, and one linked to the geology mission led by Carrington da Costa.¹² In 1949 Ribeiro advanced some ideas about the remit, organization and essence of this ostensibly colonial mission, not least as a starting point for a Portuguese contribution to the study of tropical regions, an area of study that was also taking off in France, chiefly under the intellectual leadership of Pierre Gourou, with whom Ribeiro formed a close bond.¹³

Ribeiro's ambitious tropical geography research programme focused on humanised landscapes, and human-environment interaction, a focus strongly influenced by Gourou.¹⁴ Especially in his early publications, the young Ribeiro aligned this approach with

³ J. Sidaway, Iberian geopolitics, in: K. Dodds and D. Atkinson (Eds), *Geopolitical Traditions: A Century of Political Thought*, London, 2000, 118–149; B. Feldman-Bianco, Colonialism as a continuing project: the Portuguese experience, *Identities* 8 (2001) 477–482; M. Power and J. Sidaway, Deconstructing twinned towers: Lisbon's Expo '98 and the occluded geographies of discovery, *Social & Cultural Geography* 6 (2005) 865–883; J. Sidaway and M. Power, 'The tears of Portugal': empire, identity, 'race', and destiny in Portuguese geopolitical narratives, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 23 (2005) 527–544; J.R. Pimenta, J. Sarmiento and A.F. Azevedo, Lusotropicalism: tropical geography under dictatorship, 1926–1974, *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 32 (2011) 220–235.

⁴ Pimenta, Sarmiento and Azevedo, Lusotropicalism; S. Daveau, Orlando Ribeiro (1911–1997), in: H. Lorimer and C.W.J. Withers (Eds), *Geographers Biobibliographical Studies* 31 (2011) 30–55.

⁵ Estado Novo (1924–1974), or the second republic, was a right-wing dictatorship ruled by António de Oliveira Salazar (1889–1970) from 1928 to 1968.

⁶ J.C. Paulo, Da 'Educação Colonial Portuguesa' ao Ensino no Ultramar, in: C. Bettencourt and K. Chaudhuri (Eds), *História da Expansão Portuguesa*, Lisbon, 1999, 304–333.

⁷ T.J. Barnes, Lives lived and lives told: biographies of geography's quantitative revolution, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 19 (2001) 409–429.

⁸ R. Craggs and H. Neate, Post-colonial careerings and urban policy mobility: between Britain and Nigeria, 1945–1990, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 42 (2017) 44–57.

⁹ Coincidentally, while my work was being carried out, this topic was also being studied by a group of Portuguese and Brazilian scholars. A special issue of the Portuguese journal *Iberografias* 13 (2017) was published covering the birth and development of Geography as an academic discipline in Mozambique's university, which included interesting testimonies and material which intersects with the aims of this paper. Read at a late stage of this research, their work is used and cited here sparingly.

¹⁰ I. Amaral, *A 'Escola Geográfica de Lisboa' e a sua contribuição para o conhecimento geográfico das Regiões Tropicais*, Lisbon, 1979.

¹¹ The council was created in 1936 under the Ministry of the Colonies.

¹² Daveau, Orlando Ribeiro; P.J. Havik and S. Daveau, *Orlando Ribeiro – Guiné 1947. Cadernos de Campo*, Famalicão, 2011.

¹³ O. Ribeiro, Missão de Geografia à Guiné em 1947, *Anais da Junta de Investigações Coloniais* V 3 (1950) 3–23.

¹⁴ O. Ribeiro, La pensée géographique de Pierre Gourou, *Annales de Géographie* 82 (1973) 1–7.

the idea of Lusotropicalism, a theory positing the distinctive character of Portuguese overseas expansion into tropical lands which was developed by the Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre.¹⁵ Lusotropicalism was conveniently and selectively appropriated as an imperial narrative by the Estado Novo as a means of highlighting the idea that the Portuguese had a special ability to relate to ‘other’ cultures.¹⁶ This is perhaps seen nowhere more clearly than in one of Ribeiro’s early publications: ‘O Brasil’. Written in 1939, it underscored the specious links in Lusotropicalism between geography, culture and race. Ribeiro claimed that ‘it is undeniable that the Portuguese have, more than any other Europeans, the gift of acclimatization in the tropics, remaining strong where and while other [European] peoples hardly settle’. Ribeiro defended an ‘ecological colonization’, whereby a cultural transplantation from the Mediterranean to the tropics would take place, followed by a tropicalization of Europeans.¹⁷ Daveau argues that for Ribeiro – and many intellectuals at this time, I would add – European colonization was a given.¹⁸ Yet Ribeiro was not deceived by the political rhetoric of Portuguese superiority. As he argued, ‘a country with a poor and fragile farming economy cannot transpose to its colonies procedures of land exploitation which the metropole is a long way from practicing’.¹⁹ Indeed, Ribeiro’s attachment to Freyre’s idea of a ‘sweeter slavery’ in Brazil quickly disappeared as he confronted the tropics. This is conveyed strongly in his studies of Cape Verde during the 1950s, and also his work in Goa.²⁰

For almost thirty years, Ribeiro and his collaborators were extremely active, publishing and conducting fieldwork in Brazil, Guinea Bissau, São Tomé and Príncipe, Angola, Mozambique, Portuguese India (especially Goa) and East Timor. The funding and resources for much of this research came from various state-sponsored scientific missions: to Guinea as mentioned, Cape Verde in 1952–1953, Goa in 1956, and for all colonial territories, especially Angola and Mozambique, within the Physical and Human Geography Overseas Mission, 1960–1974. On the one hand, Portuguese tropical geography was an institutional phenomenon. It was a way of framing geographical studies; a field shaped by Ribeiro and strongly influenced by Gourou’s central concern with ‘civilisations’: the interplay between people, environments and what he called ‘techniques d’encadrement’ – ways of producing and molding landscapes.²¹ On the other hand, it was also a reflex of authoritarianism, playing a modest role in the wider project of Lusotropicalism and complicit in the attempt to legitimize Portuguese colonialization.

Notwithstanding the number of missions and publications, the number of geographers associated with the Lisbon School was quite small, and spanned just two generations (see Table 1). Furthermore, and perhaps signalling Ribeiro’s intellectual programme, it was an extremely diverse group. A first generation included Ribeiro, Mariano Feio, Francisco Tenreiro, Raquel Soeiro de Brito and Ilídio

do Amaral. Feio (1914–2001) was Ribeiro’s first collaborator, who, after taking a degree in civil engineering and then studying geology, palaeontology and geomorphology in Berlin and Munich, completed a PhD in Geography in 1952. After two years teaching in Brazil, and research conducted in Angola, he withdrew from academia to devote himself to managing a large estate in South Portugal. Tenreiro (1921–1963) was born in São Tomé, although his whole life was spent in Portugal. A geographer and a poet, he was one of the key figures in negritude in Portugal, and wrote several academic texts on his native island, including his PhD, which he defended in 1961. He was also a deputy in the Portuguese National Assembly. Brito (1925–) joined the group as a young geography student. After completing a PhD thesis on São Miguel, in the Azores, in 1955, she was involved in many of the group’s missions. Finally, Amaral (1926–2017), born and raised in Luanda from Angolan parents of an old mestizo family, moved to Lisbon in 1943 to complete secondary school. His graduation dissertation, from 1956, focused on Luanda, and his PhD was on Santiago Island, in Cape Verde.

In 1965 the French geographer Daveau joined the group, and some years later a younger generation, comprised of Carlos Alberto Medeiros, Isabel Marques Medeiros, Maria Eugénia Moreira, Clara Mendes and Celeste Coelho played a critical role, especially in establishing the geography degrees in Angola and Mozambique. However, as Jean-Pierre Raison argues, ‘tropicalism’ was too broad and eclectic an approach to be pursued solely by geographers.²² As a result, a number of non-geographers played important roles in Lisbon’s Centre for Geographical Studies too.²³ In contrast, at Coimbra, the only other Portuguese university with a geography department, tropical geography research outputs were meagre, despite it having a strong presence in the curriculum, especially in the teaching of Alfredo Fernandes Martins (1916–1982).²⁴ He undertook fieldwork in Angola and Mozambique in 1962 and 1964–1966, and also used Gourou’s work extensively.²⁵ It is within this small and diverse group of people led by Ribeiro that we find the seeds of the geography degrees that would be established in Angola and Mozambique in the late 1960s.

Late colonialism and the creation of a geography degree in Mozambique

In the summer of 1962, just before embarking for Angola to undertake fieldwork with Gourou, Ribeiro published a piece in the leading Lisbon newspaper *Diário de Notícias* arguing that ‘Only when primarily whites and blacks, Indian and Chinese, Christians, Muslims and Hindus, or beyond their races and creeds, men of good will raised from different civilizations, participate in the university, will a “multiracial society”, which our history and society has prepared for and supports, be created’.²⁶ He had already defended

¹⁵ Pimenta, Sarmiento and Azevedo, Lusotropicalism; C. Castelo, ‘O Modo Português de estar no Mundo’ – o luso-tropicalismo e a ideologia colonial portuguesa (1933–1961), Porto, 1998.

¹⁶ Sarmiento Rodrigues (1899–1979) and Adriano Moreira (1922–) were key to the institutional introduction of the idea of Lusotropicalism from the 1950s. The former also had a key influence on Ribeiro’s career as governor of Guinea (1946–1949) and Mozambique (1961–1964) during Ribeiro’s missions.

¹⁷ O. Ribeiro, O Brasil: A Terra e o Homem, *Revista Brasília* (1942) 386.

¹⁸ S. Daveau, *Universidade, Ciência, Cidadania*, Lisbon, 2013, 60.

¹⁹ Ribeiro quoted in Daveau, *Universidade, Ciência, Cidadania*, 60.

²⁰ See G. Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves: Casa-Grande and Senzala*, New York, 1964; O. Ribeiro, *A Ilha do Fogo e as suas erupções*, Lisboa, 1998 [originally published in 1954].

²¹ I am following the English translation of this important term in the work of Gourou and Ribeiro given in G. Bowd and D. Clayton, *Impure and Worldly Geography: Pierre Gourou and Tropicality*, Abingdon, 2019, 27.

²² J.-P. Raison, ‘Tropicalism’ in French geography: reality, illusion or ideal?, *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 26 (2005) 323–338.

²³ For example, Manuel Monteiro Marques (Geology) and Manuel Viegas Guerreiro (Ethnology).

²⁴ Portuguese Colonial Geography was taught in the fourth year in the 1930 curriculum and Geography of Tropical Regions I and II in the fourth and fifth years in the 1957 curricula. While it was still being taught in the fourth year of the 1978 curriculum, it had vanished by the 1992 curriculum, see A.C. Almeida, A. Gama, F. Cravidão, L. Cunha and R. Jacinto, *Fragmentos de um retrato inacabado. A Geografia de Coimbra e as metamorfoses de um país*, Coimbra, 2003.

²⁵ Gourou’s *La Terre et l’Homme en Extrême Orient* (1940) and *Les Pays tropicaux, les principes d’une géographie humaine et économique* (1947) were the key readings for Martins’ course on Tropical Geography, see A. Gama, *Geografia e Geógrafos: institucionalização e consolidação da Geografia na Universidade de Coimbra, Biblos IX* (2011) 217–246.

²⁶ O. Ribeiro, *Destinos do Ultramar*, Lisbon, 1975, 95.

Table 1
Portuguese topographical geographers, 1940s–1970s. Information from Amaral, A 'Escola Geográfica de Lisboa'.

Name	Dates	Number of PTG Publications	Research Topics (Geographical Areas)	Subject of PhD Thesis (date)	When active in PTG
Orlando Ribeiro	1911–1997	51	Cultural, Historical, Regional (Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde, Brazil, Goa, São Tomé and Príncipe, Angola, Mozambique)	Arrábida, Portugal (1936)	1940s–1970s
Mariano Feio	1914–2001	14	Geomorphology (Brazil, Angola, Goa)	Alentejo, Portugal (1952)	1950s–1960s
Francisco Tenreiro	1921–1963	23	Population, Colonization (Guinea Bissau, São Tomé and Príncipe, Angola)	São Tomé Island (1961)	1950s–1960s
Suzanne Daveau	1925–	20	Geomorphology, Nature and Societies, History (West Africa)	Bandiagara, Mali (1957)	1950s–1970s
Raquel Soeiro de Brito	1925–	17	Population, Settlement (Brazil, São Tomé and Príncipe, Angola, Mozambique, Goa, Macau, East Timor)	São Miguel, Azores (1955)	1960s–1970s
Ilídio do Amaral	1926–2017	36	Urban, Population, Colonization, Historical, Geomorphology (Angola, Cape Verde, Goa, Brazil)	Santiago Island, Cape Verde (1964)	1960s–1970s
Isabel Marques Medeiros	1939–	2	Fisheries (Macau and Angola)	Fisheries, South Angola (not completed)	1970s
Carlos Alberto Medeiros	1942–	9	Population, Historical (French Caribbean, Angola)	Huíla, Angola (1976)	1970s
Maria Eugénia Moreira	1945–	7	Climate, Geomorphology (Mozambique)	Umbeluzi, Mozambique (1979)	1970s
Maria Clara Mendes	1947–	4	Urban (Angola, Mozambique)	Maputo, Mozambique (1979)	1970s

the necessity of higher education in the 'overseas provinces', first in the Arts Faculty of the University of Lisbon in 1958, and then in two lectures he gave in Angola and Mozambique in 1960.²⁷ The latter were part of the first university summer course, a multidisciplinary programme which anticipated university studies in both countries. Some years later, Ribeiro also argued that a high school and polytechnic institute should be opened in Guinea, and a university in Goa, perhaps under an arrangement with the Indian government.²⁸

Ribeiro's newspaper article explained the two perspectives on the development of higher education within the Portuguese empire. On the one hand, some understood it as an attempt to speed up the education of local elites 'of all races', and thus as a project that should be delayed as it could accelerate calls for independence. On the other hand, and this was the dominant view, it was thought that universities would be natural homes for colonizers and their employees (many of them mestizo) in the wake of independence and avert the need for them and their children to return to Portugal for their education.²⁹ Thus, above all, universities were deemed places for whites and mestizos. Black Africans still did not have the same prospects, and due to their economic status and poor mastery of Portuguese few of them even attended school.

By 1969 three-year geography bachelor's degrees were established at the universities in Sá da Bandeira (presently Lubango), Angola, and Lourenço Marques, Mozambique. *Licenciatura* (the five-year undergraduate degree common at this time) would have to be completed either in Lisbon or Coimbra.³⁰ Young geographers teaching these degrees started their academic careers in Africa at a time when intensive counter-insurgency measures were in place, and when most African countries were already independent (Fig. 1).³¹ Amaral and Ribeiro oversaw the running of both courses.

Daveau was not involved, and, as she explained, 'I knew little of the situation and was French, and on top of that I was coming from Senegal, independent from about 1965. I urged myself not to interfere in these problems. I was more of an observer, knowledgeable about decolonization which, at the time, seemed to have gone well (in Western Africa at least, although not in Algeria)'.³²

Amaral and Ribeiro were thus key to the colonial career of several young geographers.³³ Their former students Carlos Alberto Medeiros and Isabel Marques Medeiros were also involved, and were joined by the ethnologist Joaquim Lino da Silva. Isabel Medeiros started to research the fisheries in the south of Angola, but never completed her thesis.³⁴ Carlos Alberto Medeiros, who had already completed a *Thèse de troisième cycle* in Bordeaux on the recent evolution of sugar cane plantations in Guadeloupe, started his PhD on the colonization of Angola's Huíla highlands and was quite critical of the idea that settlers could create there 'a true white nation, a second Brazil, or even better, a third Portugal'.³⁵

In Angola the university was located in three different cities. In 1970, the bachelors of medicine, engineering (five different degrees) and sciences (including part of the mathematics degree, along with physics, chemistry and biology) were taught in Luanda; the degrees in agronomy and forestry, and veterinary science, were located in Nova Lisboa (presently Huambo); and the rest of the mathematics degrees, along with geographical engineering, and the arts (including bachelors in philology, history, geography and the pedagogical sciences) were taught in Sá da Bandeira. Ribeiro strongly opposed the decision to locate the Arts Faculty in this remote colonial town in the Huíla highlands, away from faculties of science and medicine in Luanda. In the capital, he argued, students might not all be European. In contrast, Sá da Bandeira was a 'white' city. In 1970 there were 13,000 white people there (forty-two

²⁷ O. Ribeiro, Problemas humanos de África, in: Junta de Investigações do Ultramar, *Colóquios sobre Problemas Humanos nas Regiões Tropicais*, Lisbon, 1961, 1–24.

²⁸ Ribeiro, *Destinos do Ultramar*.

²⁹ Ribeiro, *Destinos do Ultramar*, 94.

³⁰ In Porto, the Arts Faculty was closed from 1928 to 1962, and the Geography Department was only established in October 1972, see R.F.M. Silva, Curso de Geografia na Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto – 1972/88, *Revista da Faculdade de Letras – Geografia 1* (1988) 5–13. The *licenciatura* was a four- or five-year degree, depending on the faculty, and included a final year research thesis (often a monograph in the case of geography) called the *dissertação*.

³¹ P. Chabal (Ed), *A History of Postcolonial Lusophone Africa*, Bloomington, 2002.

³² S. Daveau, personal communication, July 2017.

³³ D. Lambert and A. Lester (Eds), *Colonial Lives Across the British Empire: Imperial Career in the Long Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge, 2006.

³⁴ I.M. Medeiros, Apontamentos sobre a pesca e a evolução da indústria piscatória em Angola, *Finisterra 13* (1972) 29–45.

³⁵ C.A. Medeiros, A colonização das terras altas da Huíla, Angola, unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Lisbon, 1976, 272–273. C.A. Medeiros, L'Évolution récente de la sucrerie Beaupt (Guadeloupe). Étude de géographie humaine (1970) was directed by Louis Papy, a geographer who was close to Gourou and founded Les Cahiers d'Outre-Mer in 1948.

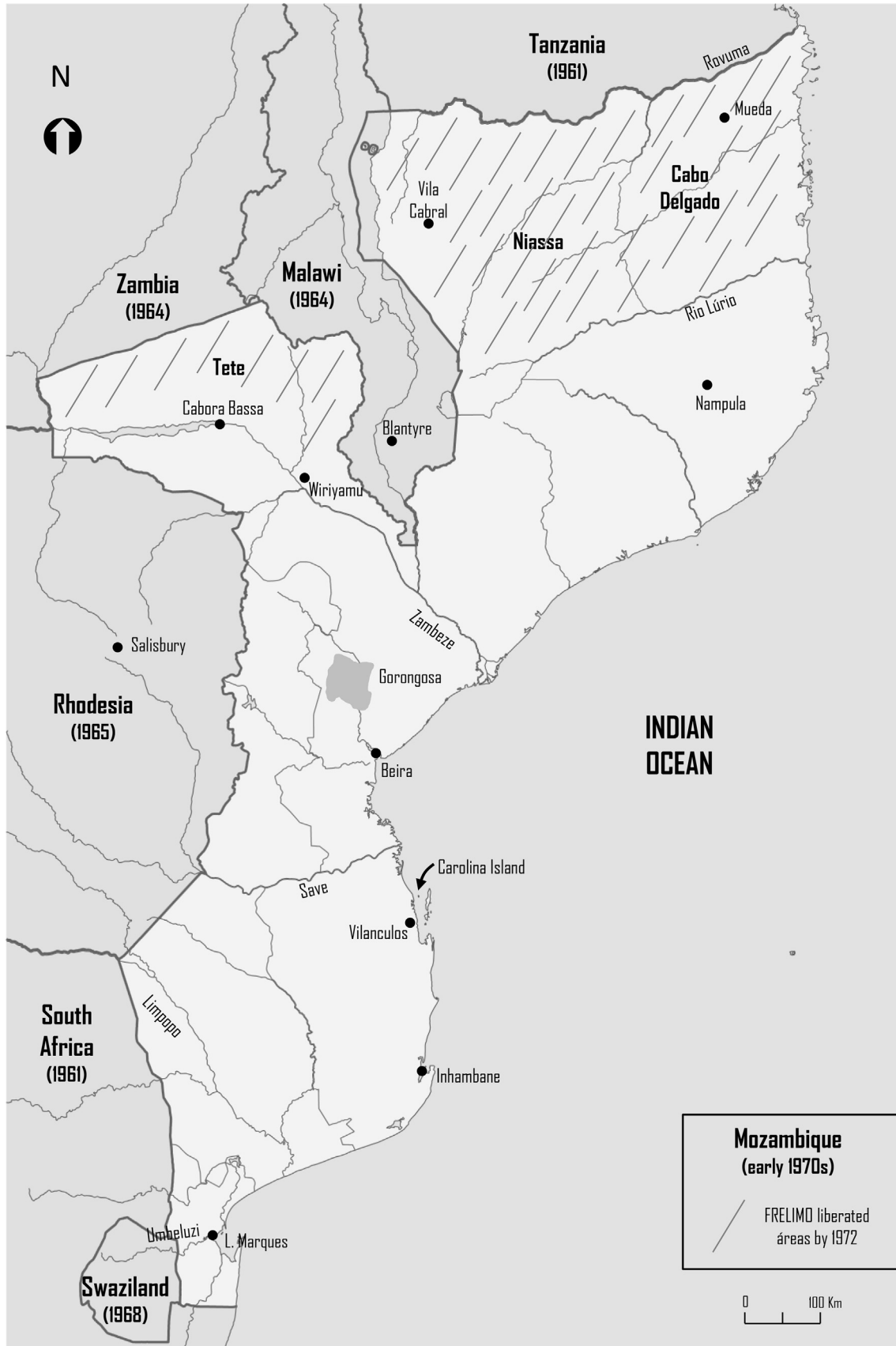


Fig. 1. Mozambique in the early 1970s.

percent of the total population), and, as Ribeiro argued, ‘in cafes and beer houses, walking in the gardens at sunset, one could only see white people of all ages’.³⁶ Mirroring in part the location of the geography department, three of the lecturers concentrated their research in the south of the country. Like the Medeiros, Lino da Silva’s ethnologic studies concerned the Maculab people in Chela and, some years earlier, Ilídio do Amaral changed his PhD topic from northern Angola, which had been part of the war since 1961, to Cape Verde.³⁷

At this time, three young women in their mid twenties started their academic careers in Mozambique. Maria Eugénia Moreira (1945–) graduated in Geography from Coimbra in 1970. Originally from São Miguel in the Azores, her dissertation thesis focused on the morphology and seismic activity of the nearby island of São Jorge. Her work was some of the first to be published in the journal of the University of Lourenço Marques, created in 1968.³⁸ Celeste Coelho (1944–) also graduated in Geography in 1970, but from Lisbon. Her dissertation thesis focused on the geomorphology and soils of Alentejo, in southern Portugal. Maria Clara Mendes (1947–) was another 1970 Geography graduate from Lisbon. Her dissertation, supervised by Ilídio do Amaral, focused on Gabela, in Angola, and was partially published in 1974.³⁹ These women’s individual career paths encapsulate some of the developments in Portuguese tropical geography during this period and are framed within larger issues connecting women and the wars in Africa, since many women accompanied their military husbands to Guinea, Angola and Mozambique. The novelist Lídia Jorge reported what the military told her on her arrival in Beira, Mozambique: ‘only the Carthaginians took women to war – and now the Portuguese’.⁴⁰ These were mostly young women who travelled with children under ten years of age, had diverse social and economic backgrounds, and rarely went to live in rural areas. They are key to reaffirming that war is not a masculine affair at all, and, in the Portuguese experience, the travels of these women must be understood within the larger state policy that promoted white settlement in Africa, even during military conflicts.

Throughout the 1960s various norms were established for military families to settle in Africa, and from 1969 additional incentives were given. Margarida Calafate Ribeiro concludes that for many of these accompanying women, ‘war’ was mainly experienced through childbirth, breastfeeding and child rearing. Yet, many also did remarkable social work, contributed to health services, engaged in administrative work for the army or for private companies and, key here, taught at various educational levels. By going to Africa they kept families together, raised children while having job opportunities, and found an environment that fostered emancipation, which could hardly be experienced in the metropolis. Consciously aware or not, they inevitably played a part in the promotion of a supposedly normal environment in times of war.⁴¹

In different ways, family issues were critical to the decisions that Moreira, Coelho and Mendes took to move to Africa. Celeste

Coelho’s husband was placed in Lourenço Marques as a veterinary doctor, and she sent her CV to the university in an attempt to join him.⁴² Moreira’s husband was about to be mobilized to the military – which could mean being stationed in Guinea, ‘the place no one wanted to go’ – so accepting Veiga Simão’s invitation to move to Lourenço Marques was attractive.⁴³ Things were different for Clara Mendes, since going to Mozambique heralded a return to Africa. Born in Gabela, Angola, she was eighteen when she moved from the high school in Sá da Bandeira (a little over six hundred kilometres from Gabela) to Lisbon to study at the university. Still, she made regular family visits to Angola and returned to Gabela to conduct fieldwork for her geography dissertation. Surprisingly, she was ‘invited by Amaral to join the tropical group of lecturers in Mozambique’.⁴⁴

Moreira travelled in late 1969, and Coelho followed soon after. By September 1970 they were starting their lecturing careers. Clara Mendes joined the group in the 1972–1973 academic year. The group was completed by Esmeralda Ferreira, a secondary school geography teacher who collaborated with the experienced geologist Gaspar Soares de Carvalho (1920–2016), who had been involved in the geological missions to Guinea Bissau (1959), Goa (1960) and Angola (1960). Carvalho, who was head of the Earth Science Department of the Mozambique Institute for Scientific Research (1970–1975), and director of the Institute for Scientific Research of Mozambique (1975–1976), was key to the functioning of the new geography degree, and ‘helped in the supervision of individual research projects’. In fact, according to Moreira, the archaeology and geography students benefited from the resources of the Earth Science Department.⁴⁵

Before continuing with these ‘lives told’, more needs to be said about Mozambique in 1969, and the political environment in which the geography degree was created. While spatially divided and socially segregated – a city of concrete and a city of reeds – Lourenço Marques was at the same time a modern and vibrant African city with a 1960s and 1970s ‘modern, straightforward, creative and bold architecture’.⁴⁶ Social life for the white elites rivalled that of Lisbon, and the war seemed remote. From 1964 there were isolated insurgencies, especially in the north of the country, but urban centres were relatively unaffected. Earlier that year, Eduardo Mondlane, in honour of whom the university was later renamed, was assassinated in Tanzania, allegedly by the PIDE (Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado), the Portuguese secret police that had been created in 1945.⁴⁷ The first president of the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO), Mondlane was also the first Mozambican to earn a doctoral degree.⁴⁸ From 1969 to 1972 FRELIMO extended the war zone, and guerrilla forces pushed their

³⁶ O. Ribeiro, *A Colonização de Angola e o seu Fracasso*, Lisboa, 2014 [originally published in 1981], 97.

³⁷ I. Amaral, *Santiago de Cabo Verde: a terra e os homens*, Lisbon, 1964.

³⁸ M.E.S.A. Moreira-Lopes, A Ilha de São Jorge do Arquipélago dos Açores. Contribuição para o estudo da sua morfologia e actividade vulcânica, *Revista de Ciências do Homem da Universidade de Lourenço Marques* 3 (1970) 279–378.

³⁹ M.C. Mendes, Gabela. Estudo Geográfico de uma pequena cidade de Angola, *Garcia de Orta* 2 (1974) 29–60.

⁴⁰ M.C. Ribeiro, África no feminino: As mulheres portuguesas e a Guerra Colonial, *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais* 68 (2004) 7–29.

⁴¹ These norms established the procedures for military families’ travel. As the war dragged on, decree-law 49,107 from 1969 entitled families to health care and accommodation, for which the eligibility period was twelve months minimum, see Ribeiro, *África no Feminino*.

⁴² C. Coelho, personal communication, Esmoriz, July 2017.

⁴³ Veiga Simão (1929–2014), a professor from Coimbra, was the first rector of the University of Mozambique, from 1962 to 1970. In 1970 he became Minister for Education.

⁴⁴ M.C. Mendes, personal communication by email, July 2017.

⁴⁵ M.E.S.A. Moreira, Memórias (ou lembranças?) do curso de geografia da Universidade de Lourenço-Marques (1969–1975), *Iberografias* 13 (2017) 12.

⁴⁶ M.C. Mendes, Maputo antes da independência. Geografia de uma cidade colonial, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Lisbon, 1979; J.M. Fernandes, *Arquitectura e Urbanismo no Espaço Ultramarino Português*, in: Bethencourt and Chaudhuri (Eds), *História da Expansão Portuguesa*, 334–383.

⁴⁷ A. Isaacman and B. Isaacman, *Mozambique: From Colonialism to Revolution, 1900 to 1982*, Colorado, 1983.

⁴⁸ Mondlane completed his thesis in sociology at Northwestern University, Chicago, in 1960. The Front for the Liberation of Mozambique was founded in exile in 1962 as a broad nationalist front and started a decade-long guerrilla war against Portuguese colonial rule. After 1974 it was involved in the transitional government (September 1974 to June 1975), and was the ruling party after independence in 1975.

operations into Tete province and ‘began making significant inroads in the southern half of the country’.⁴⁹ While propaganda continued to proclaim that everything was calm, travelling ‘in convoy became greater and greater as Frelimo spread farther and farther south ... [and] many lorries were blown up by landmines’.⁵⁰ Ribeiro’s safe and apparently tranquil travels throughout Mozambique in the early 1960s were long gone.⁵¹ Furthermore, the important studies conducted in the north of the country in the 1950s by the ethnologists Jorge Dias, Margot Dias and Ribeiro’s collaborator Viegas Guerreiro, could not be continued. As in Angola, Portuguese researchers increasingly concentrated on the south of the country.

It was also in 1969 that Kaúlza de Arriaga arrived as the commander in chief of the Portuguese armed forces in Mozambique. Instructed to intensify the war, from June 1970 to January 1971 he commanded the successful ‘Gordian Knot’ military operation, which targeted permanent insurgent camps in the north of the country and attempted to stop infiltration routes from Tanzania. Eight thousand paratroopers were airdropped in this single operation. Even before this concentration of troops in the north, FRELIMO shifted its focus to central Mozambique. At the same time, the initiation, also in 1969, of the construction of one of the largest dams in the world – Cabora Bassa (now Cahora Bassa), in Tete Province – not only demonstrated a long-term colonial commitment and the persistence of imperial propaganda highlighting progress, but also created a new and attractive counterinsurgency spot. Surrounded by independent African states, Tete was particularly vulnerable to incursions. A significant mobilization of the military to defend the dam during the period of its construction (which lasted until December 1974) drained troops from other areas. This military strategy exposed new territories into which FRELIMO advanced. Yet, as noted above, in the early 1970s life in Lourenço Marques was in some ways far removed from the military action in the north, and geographers could move somewhat more easily in the south. Yet, as Coelho noted, ‘people talked of the massacres in the north, and on a daily basis I had uncomfortable encounters with racial, social and economic inequalities’.⁵²

Unfortunately, there is very little testimony regarding the relationship between researchers, in this case geographers, and the military in Portugal’s crumbling colonies. One of the very few pieces of evidence refers to a different context – Guinea Bissau – and the work of Paula Ribeiro, the only student from Coimbra who wrote a dissertation on that colony.⁵³ For her, conducting fieldwork on agriculture in the various *tabancas* (villages) of the northeast in the early 1970s was only possible with the support of the military. In fact, at this time there were over 85,000 Portuguese troops in Guinea, and by 1973 the guerrillas had obtained control of eighty percent of the territory.⁵⁴ Ribeiro describes how one or two combat groups would escort her when travelling through the villages, and how they would participate in some of the research. They administered and translated questionnaires, dug trenches for the purposes of soil study and, at a time when the Portuguese still dominated the air, transported her by helicopter for reconnaissance of the study area, and allowed her to take aerial photographs. While it was not typical for geographers to describe, analyze or write about these situations, emotions and research practices, fortunately

she did.

There is some testimony from others too. One of the most traumatic stories arising from these experiences – and which shows, on the one hand, the tense environment of late colonialism, and, on the other, that researchers and students could easily be drawn into politics – was recalled by Celeste Coelho. In 1972–1973 she led a successful fieldtrip with her students to Nampula, and then onwards to Beira and Gorongosa, travelling by aeroplane from Lourenço Marques. In the following academic year, when a similar fieldtrip was being organized, Coelho was informed by the director of the faculty that there was a recommendation that, after Nampula, the group should visit Mueda, in the north of the country. Concerned about taking a group of students to what had become, by 1972, one of the most problematic regions, Coelho immediately canceled the fieldtrip.⁵⁵ The 1972 massacre at Wiriyaumu was known in Lourenço Marques, and there was talk of the violence in the north.⁵⁶ However, to her surprise she was promptly ordered to meet General Kaúlza de Arriaga at her house, where she was questioned about why she had cancelled the fieldtrip. In the general’s view, Mueda was a safe place to which young students might travel. From that moment onwards, her husband, who was in the army, was subject to reprisals and the family was watched closely, and possibly identified as subversive.⁵⁷

In the same academic year, Esmeralda Ferreira, one of the lecturers at Lourenço Marques, held an in-class discussion of Josué de Castro’s book *Geografia da Fome* (1946).⁵⁸ This examined hunger in Brazil, and had the potential to question and destabilize colonial relations elsewhere. It certainly brushed against the grain of Gilberto Freyre’s writings and their myth of Brazilian racial harmony and democracy. As Isabel Boura, a student between 1971 and 1974, recalled, ‘I talked openly and shared my ideas on hunger, poverty and inequalities, not paying attention to an older man, in his forties, who had entered the class. At the end of seminar, Esmeralda called me aside and explained that he was a PIDE agent, who had been around the university in the past weeks, and that I should be cautious with my words’.⁵⁹ The relaxed academic environment of Lourenço Marques, where students read poetry and sang Zeca Afonso – a key revolutionary musician and artist – was circled by an intrusive and effective state surveillance apparatus in urban Portuguese Africa.⁶⁰ Furthermore, racial issues were never absent. Boura remembers how, when the manager of the hotel where they were staying during a fieldtrip led by Moreira to Carolina Island sometime in 1973 decided to bar Aniceto dos Muchangos, the only black student, the whole group of students left the establishment in protest.⁶¹

Highlighting the disconnection between Portuguese policy and what was happening on the ground, Orlando Ribeiro noted that the universities in Angola and Mozambique were ‘very Portuguese in style, with “hood and mortarboard”, parades and speeches, and almost uprooted from local conditions’.⁶² The centralized authoritarianism of the Overseas Ministry presupposed a certain unity of

⁴⁹ Isaacman and Isaacman, *Mozambique*, 99.

⁵⁰ J. Paul, *Mozambique: Memoirs of a Revolution*, Harmondsworth, 1975, 162.

⁵¹ J. Sarmiento and E.B. Henriques, *Orlando Ribeiro – Moçambique 1960–1963. Cadernos de Campo*, Famalicão, 2013.

⁵² Coelho, personal communication.

⁵³ P. Ribeiro in Almeida, Gama, Cravidão, Cunha and Jacinto, *Fragmentos de um retrato inacabado*.

⁵⁴ J.S. Saul, The revolution in Portugal’s African colonies: a review essay, *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 9 (1975) 315–336.

⁵⁵ Saul, The revolution in Portugal’s African colonies, 328, argues that by 1972, ‘except for a few posts, towns and concentration of strategic hamlets’, the provinces of Cabo Delgado and Niassa were liberated areas.

⁵⁶ B.C. Reis and P.A. Oliveira, Cutting heads or winning hearts: late colonial Portuguese counterinsurgency and the Wiriyaumu massacre of 1972, *Civil Wars* 14 (2012) 80–113.

⁵⁷ Coelho, personal communication.

⁵⁸ First translated into English in 1956 as *The Geography of Hunger*, Boston.

⁵⁹ I. Boura, personal communication by telephone, December 2017.

⁶⁰ L. Jorge, *A Costa dos Murmúrios*, Lisbon, 1979.

⁶¹ Boura, personal communication.

⁶² Ribeiro, *Destinos do Ultramar*, 88.

national education.⁶³ As Coelho underlined, in Mozambique 'the geography syllabus was almost identical to the ones in Lisbon and Coimbra', and regional geography, dominant in the Portuguese syllabus, travelled to Sá da Bandeira and Lourenço Marques.⁶⁴ While completing three years in one of the African universities would officially amount to the same as graduating from a Western or Portuguese university, what was learned would have been very different. As Barnes and Abrahamsson suggest, 'ideas come into contact with other ideas en route, [they] are interpreted differently at different points along their circulation, and are put to diverse uses at the various sites to which they travel'.⁶⁵ Place is a critical component in the construction of knowledge, and the context and location of Lourenço Marques, and the youth of the three geographers discussed here, opened up different possibilities for them, as well as setting particular constraints.

For example, as Moreira argues, the academic year ended with interdisciplinary fieldwork training, closely following what the South Africans did at the University of Witwatersrand. She further notes that this fieldwork, based on a cross-curricular teaching model, facilitated contact with both neighbouring countries and beyond.⁶⁶ As a result, Moreira, Coelho and Mendes established strong ties with South African universities – especially Durban and Witwatersrand – and, through them, with Anglo-American geography. Coelho remembers how she bought Alan H. Strahler's book the first time she visited South Africa, and in her first year in Mozambique Moreira decided to enrol in a postgraduate course at Witwatersrand.⁶⁷ Moreira also affectionately remembers how one of the most influential geomorphologists of the twentieth century, Lester King (1907–1989), explained 'his' concept of parallel scarp retreat 'from the porch of his house in Durban'.⁶⁸

It is interesting to note that the influence of Anglo-American geography on Portuguese geography – particularly the arrival of quantitative geography – can be seen in Mendes' PhD thesis on Mozambique. Her work signals a change that was occurring in Portuguese geography, and it is notable that 106 out of the 214 references in her thesis are in English, and only twenty-three are in French.⁶⁹ Mendes worked closely with the Gabinete de Urbanização e Habitação da Região de Lourenço Marques [Office for Urban Planning of the Lourenço Marques Region], where she engaged with housing policy and various architects from the municipality and the military. She was also influenced by Pancho Guedes, a well-known modernist architect who was living and working in the city and in Johannesburg at the time. Later, in the academic year 1973–1974, Mendes was invited to replace Jorge Gaspar at the School of Architecture of the Fine Arts Faculty in Lisbon, when he joined the Geography Department at the same university.⁷⁰ Gaspar (along with the architect Costa Lobo) was her thesis supervisor, and while Lobo had experience in Africa, Gaspar was a pioneer of Portuguese quantitative geography, having arrived from Lund, Sweden (a northern European crucible of spatial analysis), not long before. Mendes' study of Lourenço Marques/Maputo is an interesting example of the circulation of ideas and knowledge; of the various links forged with South Africa, with Portugal, and with spatial analysis.

Revolution and the transition year

Later than most other empires, Portuguese colonialism crumbled after the 1974 bloodless coup which brought an end to right-wing domination and Portugal's military withdrawal from its remaining African colonial territories. After 1975 only Macau remained under Portuguese administration. Yet in Mozambique the Portuguese authorities were deeply divided over their decolonization policy: whether they should create space for the formation of moderate political movements (which was the will of President António Spínola), or fraternize with FRELIMO (which was more the lines along which the Portuguese army thought).⁷¹ Over 500,000 people arrived in Portugal from its dissolving empire within a year of the revolution and the onset of rapid decolonization. Between May and November 1975, 170,000 Portuguese citizens were airlifted from Africa. From late 1975 all the former Portuguese colonies, acting as newly independent African countries, established close relations with socialist states, especially the USSR, and their constitutional systems were remade along Marxist-Leninist lines.⁷²

Throughout the early 1970s tension had mounted in Lourenço Marques, and by 1974 the notion that dramatic change was looming was very real as violent demonstrations, bombings and shootings became commonplace.⁷³ During the period of control by the colony's transitional government – from September 1974 to May 1975 – Coelho, who had three small children, left for Aberdeen, Scotland, to do a PhD with a scholarship from the University of Mozambique. During 1974, as the then student António Sobrinho relates, FRELIMO representatives had become involved in restructuring the geography degree to ensure that its contents were in tune with the needs of the new nation. 'Political Education' (*Formação Política*) became a compulsory course in all three years.⁷⁴ In 1975, at a Gulbenkian Foundation colloquium, Daveau highlighted her concern about the links between the older generation of geographers – Ribeiro, Amaral and herself – and the younger geographers who had been conducting fieldwork overseas and now needed to complete their theses in Portugal.⁷⁵ By returning to Lisbon or Coimbra they would put the continuation of their teaching in Angola and Mozambique at risk.

As Moreira recalls, it became increasingly difficult to conduct fieldwork in Mozambique.⁷⁶ Her PhD, supervised by Amaral and Daveau, focused on the Umbeluzi basin in the south of the country, and she did extensive fieldwork along the Mozambican coast from 1970 to 1975.⁷⁷ During the transitional period, from June 1974 to June 1975, she was escorted by two Portuguese soldiers. She soon realized that this was problematic. Neither she, who drove, nor the soldiers protecting her, could speak the local dialects, and their passes, written in Portuguese, could not be understood at checkpoints. In order to move around the country Moreira changed the group to include guards from FRELIMO. But this was disastrous, as 'they [the Portuguese troops and FRELIMO fighters] were trained to

⁷¹ M. Newitt, Mozambique, in: Chabal (Ed), *A History of Postcolonial Lusophone Africa*, 185–235.

⁷² Chabal (Ed), *A History of Postcolonial Lusophone Africa*.

⁷³ Chabal (Ed), *A History of Postcolonial Lusophone Africa*; M. Power, Aquil Lourenço Marques!! Radio colonization and cultural identity in colonial Mozambique, 1932–74, *Journal of Historical Geography* 26 (2000) 605–628.

⁷⁴ A.S. Sobrinho, O "meu" curso de Geografia na Universidade de Lourenço Marques (1972/73–1974/75), *Iberografias* 13 (2017) 21–28.

⁷⁵ See Gulbenkian Foundation, *Colloquium on Education and Human Sciences in Lusophone Africa*, 20–22 January 1975, Lisbon, 1979, 123.

⁷⁶ Moreira, personal communication, Lisbon, May 2017.

⁷⁷ M.E.S.A. Moreira, A Bacia do Rio Umbelúzi (Moçambique). Esboço Geográfico, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Lisbon, 1979; M.E.S.A. Moreira, A Dinâmica dos sistemas litorais do Sul de Moçambique nos últimos 30 anos, *Finiesterra* 79 (2005) 121–135.

⁶³ Paulo, Da 'Educação Colonial Portuguesa'.

⁶⁴ Coelho, personal communication.

⁶⁵ T. Barnes and C. Abrahamsson, The imprecise wanderings of a precise idea: the travels of spatial analysis, in: H. Jons, P. Meusburger and M. Heffernan (Eds), *Mobilities of Knowledge*, New York, 2017, 109.

⁶⁶ Moreira, Memórias (ou Lembranças), 12.

⁶⁷ Strahler published *Introducing Physical Geography* in 1970.

⁶⁸ Moreira, Memórias (ou Lembranças), 15.

⁶⁹ Mendes, Maputo antes da independência.

⁷⁰ Mendes, personal communication.

kill each other'.⁷⁸ In her view, the Portuguese soldiers who arrived after 1975 were too young and inexperienced to achieve much in military terms. In contrast, the FRELIMO soldiers, who were from the north of the country and from Tanzania, were efficient and reliable: 'in the jeep they had their Kalashnikovs in their lap, ready to pull the trigger I am grateful to these people who allowed me to finish my fieldwork'. Yet, as Moreira noted, by May 1975 'most academics had left [Mozambique], for Portugal, Australia, Canada, and South Africa'. Her post-colonial career could have developed in Montreal, Canada, but, as a mother of three small children, she decided to return to Lisbon.⁷⁹

Just after the revolution, Ribeiro published eight short articles about decolonization in *Diário de Notícias*. These were later collected and published as a book entitled *The Destiny of the Portuguese Overseas*. Reaching a wide audience at a particular time in Portugal's history, when 'fast and spectacular transformations' were taking place, Ribeiro pointed to significant aspects of Portuguese colonialism. He defended the notion that the multiracial and plural religious societies of the new independent nations could foster mutual toleration and create cultural centres dedicated to the study and understanding of different civilizations and values. With censorship now dead, Ribeiro stressed that the rural colonization of Angola had been driven by the appropriation of land and dispossession of indigenous people, and that in East Timor 'the colonial exploitation was brutal and thoughtless'. Providing an example from Mozambique, he argued that 'the incomprehension of indigenous life takes on forms of utter stupidity: official statistics assume that even all those who can read and write the Arab alphabet, are illiterate ...'.⁸⁰

Independence

Coelho was contractually obliged to return to Mozambique, so in late 1977 she returned to the newly named University Eduardo Mondlane. The environment there had changed dramatically. Between 1975 and 1978 student numbers fell from 2433 to 740, and by 1978 there were only ten lecturers in total.⁸¹ The geography degree, 'now run by a Bulgarian professor with a deeply archaic view of what geography ought to be', had people from Chile and Russia contributing to the teaching programme, as well as 'a whole bunch of cooperating partners who had backed up FRELIMO'.⁸² These were from both the Communist Bloc, normally under state cooperation, and from western democracies and South American countries, either coming to Mozambique through individual initiatives or through left-wing networks, notably communist parties.⁸³ These *cooperantes* (cooperative partners and assistants) made up for the lack of staff. Mendes also remembers that by 1978 Mozambican institutions were full of Nordic cooperation partners, and noted that 'I normally say that I spent more time helping the

Nordic *cooperantes* than doing my own research'.⁸⁴ Ben Wisner, the American radical geographer who had previously taught at the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, also joined the group in Maputo. In Coelho's words, he was a 'breath of fresh air'.⁸⁵

It is in this revolutionary context that FRELIMO's Marxism-Leninism led to historical and dialectical materialism becoming more central to the syllabus.⁸⁶ With a grin on her face, Coelho recalled that 'even the evolution of a river, from its source to its mouth should be explained in these terms!'.⁸⁷ In fact, as Manuel Araújo explains, a faculty of Marxism-Leninism was even established at that time, partly a demand from the German Democratic Republic.⁸⁸ Teaching loads were high and lecturers were frequently requested to attend party meetings and to take part in communal civic tasks. Suspicion was present in many situations, and lecturers were closely monitored, a 'situation which was unbearable', Coelho observed.⁸⁹ After roughly a year, in early 1979, Coelho returned to Portugal to lecture at the Geography Department of the University of Porto and soon after at the University of Aveiro. Although she had extensive experience of Mozambique and of teaching in the tropics, her post-colonial career path drifted away from tropical geography.

Mendes also returned to Mozambique, travelling there for a month in late 1974. However, instability made research almost impossible. In 1978, she travelled again to Maputo to gather more information for her thesis. While the civil war prevented surveys north of the districts of Tete, Niassa and Cabo Delgado, this period allowed her to examine the city a few years after independence.⁹⁰ In fact, the last twenty-five pages of her thesis are devoted to an analysis of the political and social changes after independence: the nationalization of property; the state administration of housing; and the occupation by the black population of the empty houses left by the whites, Chinese and Indians. Just as regional geography was concerned with exceptionalism, Portuguese tropical geography was concerned with showing that Portuguese colonialism was different from other European colonialisms. Mendes' work is of critical importance in this regard. It is the clearest example of a body of work with a tropical focus that was not aligned with the regional paradigm. Mendes used spatial analysis to focus on the location of economic and social activities and their areas of influence. She attempted to understand spatial organization, and used statistics and mathematical models. Mendes' post-colonial career in the architecture faculty in Lisbon was heavily influenced by her experiences in Africa and she continued to work on the tropical world, on colonial planning and urbanism. She supervised several architecture PhD theses and other research projects on these themes.⁹¹

The University of Mozambique continued to function throughout the civil war. As Moreira notes, 'three Mozambican students who completed the three-year course in Lourenço Marques, continued their studies abroad and went on to complete PhDs'.⁹² Like various other Mozambican and African academics who enrolled in foreign universities, notably in the Eastern Bloc, Muchangos completed a PhD in geography at Halle, in the German

⁷⁸ Moreira, personal communication by email, July 2017.

⁷⁹ Moreira, personal communication.

⁸⁰ Ribeiro, *Destinos do Ultramar*, 13, 54, 68, 38 and 88.

⁸¹ T.H. Mota, A Universidade Eduardo Mondlane no projeto pós-colonial de educação em Moçambique, 1976–1993, *Afro-Ásia* 54 (2016) 189–226.

⁸² Coelho, personal communication.

⁸³ Mota, A Universidade Eduardo Mondlane. By the late 1970s many Chilean exiles, fleeing from Pinochet's military dictatorship, were also granted asylum in Mozambique. They were the largest group of Latin Americans, with possibly as many as three hundred families resident in Maputo, see S. Henighan, The Cuban fulcrum and the search for a transatlantic revolutionary culture in Angola, Mozambique and Chile, 1965–2008, *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 7 (2009) 233–248.

⁸⁴ Mendes, personal communication. Nordic cooperation projects had been in place in Kenya and Tanzania since the 1960s. A large regional agriculture project started in Mozambique in 1978 and was supported until 1989.

⁸⁵ Coelho, personal communication. See B. Wisner, Famine relief and people's war, *Review of African Political Economy* 3 (1975) 77–83.

⁸⁶ A. Dinerman, *Revolution, Counter-Revolution and Revisionism in Postcolonial Africa: The Case of Mozambique, 1975–1994*, London, 2006.

⁸⁷ Coelho, personal communication.

⁸⁸ In Mota, A Universidade Eduardo Mondlane.

⁸⁹ Coelho, personal communication.

⁹⁰ Mendes, Maputo antes da independência, 39.

⁹¹ See, for example, the research project on *Colonial Urbanism: Urbanization Plans in Old Overseas Provinces, 1934–74*, POCTI/AUR/42,710/2001, which ran from 2003 to 2006.

⁹² Moreira, personal communication.

Democratic Republic.⁹³ In 2009 he became a full professor at the University Eduardo Mondlane. Araújo, who completed his degree in Lisbon in 1974, also earned his PhD there in 1988, after having become president of the Arts Faculty of the University Eduardo Mondlane in the late 1970s.⁹⁴ Supervised by Carlos Medeiros, his fieldwork was conducted during the civil war, in harsh conditions and in an ever-changing environment. His colleague Rachael Thompson completed a PhD at the Pedagogical University of Dresden, and in 1990 she became the third Mozambican woman to hold a doctorate.⁹⁵ These three were the key figures in the continuation of geography as an academic discipline in postcolonial Mozambique.

The death knell of Portuguese tropical geography was sounded by the start of the civil wars in Angola and Mozambique in the mid 1970s. Back in Portugal after the revolution, tropical geography was perceived as colonial geography, and funding for research in Africa became scarce. Indeed, Ribeiro began to signal the end of the project in his own work. In a 1978 letter to Gourou he wrote that 'yesterday I have finished my book *The colonization of Angola and its failure*. Now I shall reread everything and delete repetitions'.⁹⁶ The book, first published in 1981, presented an important survey of Angola, and Ribeiro followed Gourou in arguing that the failed process of miscegenation in Africa foretold the failure of Portuguese colonization.⁹⁷ Symptomatically, this book did not set an agenda for future research in the tropics, and upon his retirement, in the same year, Ribeiro redirected his research energies towards the Mediterranean and the Atlantic islands. Indeed, there is a strong case to be made that Portuguese tropical geography ended in the year that Ribeiro retired. Two annual courses on tropical geography were introduced to the University of Porto syllabus in 1957, and these continued to be taught between 1972 and 1974. But they were both removed in a 1974 restructuring. One course was subsequently reinstated in 1978, but teaching in this area ended for good in 1987.⁹⁸

By the 1980s geographers were both recycling and reinterpreting data and ideas from the 1960s and 1970s. Amaral's 1983 text on the demographics and evolution of Luanda's *musseques* – informal settlements around the city – is a good example of this. He revisits the idea that in the 1960s segregation was the result of economic machinations rather than a political and legal process with a racial dimension – one imposed by the authorities.⁹⁹ But he also attempted to provide an up-to-date picture of the city by interpreting two articles published in the Angolan journal *Novembro*, and Luandino Vieira's book *Luanda*, which had earned its author twelve years in Cape Verde's Tarrafal concentration camp.¹⁰⁰ Indeed, it was only in 1983 that Amaral mentioned the 1961

massacres in the *musseques*.

At the same time, during the 1970s and early 1980s geography as an academic discipline started to follow a different path in Portugal. In the mid 1970s the theoretical changes occurring more widely in the discipline brought quantitative geography to the fore, as was shown above with Mendes' work. Explaining what was happening when he replaced Ribeiro in Lisbon in the key year of 1974–1975, the young German geographer Bodo Freund recalls that the introduction of texts by Richard Morrill, Kevin Cox and Abler, Adams and Gould was 'revolutionary'.¹⁰¹ Africa was no longer the focus of new research, and a concern with spatial organization had suddenly arrived in Portuguese geography departments.¹⁰² The descriptive regional geography paradigm of yesteryear, with its interplay of physical and human factors – exemplified by Ribeiro's (1945) *Portugal, O Mediterrâneo e o Atlântico* – had dominated until at least the late 1970s, and Portuguese tropical geography had been cast in its mold. Portuguese geography was reoriented, and to some extent became more introverted, after the national revolution of 1974 and geography's quantitative revolution. Portuguese geographers increasingly considered acquiring a more analytical perspective, and using new quantitative methods. Interestingly, with the exception of Mendes, the 'obscure and uneasy relationship' of 1960s and 1970s spatial science with decolonization never really happened in Portugal.¹⁰³

The 1979 report of the Centre for Geographical Studies gives a snapshot of Portuguese geography in the University of Lisbon at this point. It describes six research directions: Regional and Urban Planning; Human Geography; Physical Geography (now focused solely on Portugal); Portuguese Popular Literature Collection and Analysis (a research group with strong ethnographic interests); Tropical Geography; and, finally, the study of the Mediterranean and the Atlantic Islands (directed by Orlando Ribeiro). After four years in Angola and a PhD on the Huíla highlands, Carlos A. Medeiros decided to leave the tropical geography research group headed by Amaral, of which he was a member from 1976 to 1978. He established a new group working on Human and Regional Geography, and focused on Portugal. The difficulty of conducting fieldwork, and the weak role of Portuguese institutions in African countries, were partly behind the decision.¹⁰⁴ As the French tropical historian René Pélissier eloquently noted a year earlier, despite conducting clear and original research on the colonization of Angola, Medeiros' work was immediately 'reduced to being of mere archaeological value' and touched by 'a bitter taste of ashes' by decolonisation.¹⁰⁵

Looking at the post-colonial career of the three women who are central to this paper – Moreira, Coelho and Mendes – it is clear that many ideas travelled back to Portugal with them and others, including the Anglo-American influences which, in different ways, they gained while in Lourenço Marques. Yet Ribeiro's tropical geography program, embedded in a culturalist approach to humanized landscapes, did not find fertile ground in Lisbon, Coimbra or

⁹³ A. dos Muchangos, *Die Nutzung und Veränderung der natur in einer tropisch-afrikanischen Grossstadt – dargestellt am Beispiel von Maputo, Volksrepublik Mocambique*, unpublished PhD thesis, Martin-Luther Universität, Halle, Germany, 1983.

⁹⁴ M. Araújo, *O sistema das aldeias comunais em Moçambique: transformações na organização do espaço residencial e produtivo*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Lisbon, 1988.

⁹⁵ R. Thompson, *Die Behandlung Moçambiques im Geographieunterricht der 5. Klasse der moçambiquanischen Schule: ein Beitrag zur 22 Lehrplanstruktur und Lehrbuchgestaltung im Hinblick auf den Unterrichtsprozess*, unpublished PhD thesis, Pädagogische Hochschule Karl Wander, Dresden, Germany, 1990.

⁹⁶ O. Ribeiro to P. Gourou, 8th September 1978, National Library of Portugal, Lisbon, Orlando Ribeiro Archive, box 12.

⁹⁷ P. Gourou, *L' Afrique*, Paris, 1970.

⁹⁸ Silva, *Curso de Geografia na Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto*.

⁹⁹ Amaral, *A 'Escola Geográfica de Lisboa'*; I. Amaral, *Luanda e os seus 'Muceques' problemas de geografia urbana*, *Finisterra* XVII (1983) 293–325.

¹⁰⁰ L. Vieira, *Luanda*, Lisbon, 1963.

¹⁰¹ B. Freund, *Cinquenta anos de visitas a Portugal – cinquenta anos de laços amigáveis com Suzanne Daveau*, in: M.F. Alegria (Ed), *Geografias de Suzanne Daveau*, Lisbon, 2015, 161.

¹⁰² Nevertheless, it should be noted that since the 1960s American 'spatial scientists' had used Africa as a test case for their models. Among others, see E.J. Taaffe, R.L. Morrill and P.R. Gould, *Transport development in underdeveloped countries: a comparative analysis*, *Geographical Review* 53 (1963) 503–529; E.W. Soja, *The Geography of Modernization in Kenya: A Spatial Analysis of Social, Economic and Political Change*, Syracuse, 1968.

¹⁰³ See Dan Clayton's introduction to this special issue.

¹⁰⁴ I.M. Medeiros, Carlos Alberto Medeiros. *Apontamento Curricular*, *Finisterra* 79 (2005) 11–26.

¹⁰⁵ R. Pélissier, *A Colonização das Terras Altas da Huíla (Angola) por Carlos Alberto Medeiros*, *Revue Française d'Etudes Politiques Africaines* 147 (1978) 69.

Porto. This was partly due to larger geopolitical issues, as well as to the descriptive hue of tropical geography. In both 1979 and 1983 Amaral published two lists of works of Portuguese tropical geography.¹⁰⁶ Looking at the new publications included in the 1983 list, it is clear they refer mostly to the conclusion of work done in the 1970s and to the syntheses that resulted, and not to new research. Amaral, more than any other Portuguese geographer, continued to work on tropical regions, publishing various texts, but no longer conducting fieldwork.¹⁰⁷ During this period he was also very busy with administrative roles: as the last president of the Institute of Higher Culture (1975–1977) – an institute under the Ministry for Education responsible for the scientific policy and the diffusion of Portuguese language and culture; as rector of the University of Lisbon (1977–1979); as vice-president of the Council of Overseas Research (1979–1980); and, from 1984 to 2000, as director of the Geography Centre of the Tropical Scientific Research Institute. Since the mid 1990s, various Portuguese geographers have conducted studies in the tropical world, and in the former African colonies in particular, and there are a growing number of collaborations and institutional connections between geographers and geography departments in Portuguese and lusophone universities. Yet such exchanges do not amount to a coherent, planned and structured research programme similar to that which Ribeiro envisioned and sought to implement in the 1950s, and which came to an abrupt end with decolonization.

Conclusion

The establishment of higher education – and geography degrees in particular – in Angola and Mozambique points to the extemporary way in which Portuguese colonialism worked. Young geographers who were starting their research careers were sent to a continent that was experiencing colonial dissolution and attaining independence. Their work collided with colonial or liberation wars, the revolutionary period in Portugal, the transitional governments, and with the start of the civil wars in Africa, which made it increasingly difficult to conduct research. Inspired no doubt by what he had learned from Daveau, Ribeiro pointed to the disparity between the Portuguese universities overseas and the British and French ones in Dakar, Senegal, and Ibadan, Nigeria, where French and English lecturers were engaged in educating geographers, and thus had a more direct influence over the decolonization process by training African geographers to take up key ministerial posts and advisory roles in their countries.¹⁰⁸ At the same time, unlike British or French post-colonial careering, which for some started or continued in the recently established universities of newly independent countries, decolonization and then the civil wars in Angola and Mozambique resulted in the repatriation of most Portuguese academics. Within geography they were all integrated into Portuguese universities, and Portuguese tropical geography soon withered as a result.

As mentioned, in January 1975 the Gulbenkian Foundation organized a three-day colloquium in Lisbon to discuss ‘Education and the Human Sciences in Lusophone Africa’. Three geographers – Orlando Ribeiro, Ilídio do Amaral and Suzanne Daveau – together with other Portuguese and foreign academics and intellectuals with long experience in Africa (Gerald Bender, Yves Person, Douglas

Wheeler and René Pélissier among them), compared education and decolonization processes in that continent. The language(s) of education in lusophone Africa, the lack of African Studies in lusophone African universities, the small numbers of staff and the material shortages faced by libraries and archives, were among the central talking points. The speeches and question and answer sessions were recorded and remain one of the few public records of Portuguese attempts to adapt, restructure and renew education in the era of decolonization.¹⁰⁹ Apart from an academic from Daomé (present Benin) and one from Angola, no representatives from African education institutions were involved in the colloquium. This restructuring was still set up as a Portuguese affair. Furthermore, nobody from the Eastern Bloc was present, countries which at the time were welcoming many African students – who would later become lecturers in their home countries – and were already sending numerous lecturers to Africa through government exchange agreements. At one point in the record of this colloquium there was talk of a ‘new conception of empire grounded on cooperation or cultural communion through language’.¹¹⁰ Yet, the anachronistic nature of such statements was insightfully tackled by Daveau, who remarked that ‘I think we must not lose sight of the fact that it is not at all the Portuguese government that will probably shape the curriculum of the new universities but, in a transitional phase, the Provisional Government and then the independent states’.¹¹¹ Daveau also lucidly noted to the other participants that restructuring was already happening in Mozambique, with the participation of FRELIMO. All they could do was to make proposals to the Gulbenkian Foundation, in the hope that the foundation would initiate a dialogue with political and academic institutions in Africa.

As this paper has argued, Barnes’ ‘lives told’ approach is a useful addition to science studies and work on the history of geography, which has proved valuable as a way of exploring the specificity and late development of geography higher education in Portuguese Africa. This approach has been mobilized through interviews and conversations with geographers who experienced decolonization in Mozambique and moved between Portugal and Africa during a difficult period, both for them personally and for Portuguese tropical geography as a research programme. It is through their personal and professional trajectories that we can grasp part of the fascinating and complex events and processes that shaped how Portuguese geography and geographers were entangled with decolonization.

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¹⁰⁶ I. Amaral, *Estudos de Geografia das Regiões Tropicais (Contribuições da escola Geográfica de Lisboa)*, *Garcia de Orta* 8 (1983) 1–44.

¹⁰⁷ See A. Amaral, *Ilídio do Amaral. Bibliografia Científica*, Lisboa, 2016, for a list of his publications up to this date.

¹⁰⁸ Ribeiro, *Destinos do Ultramar*.

¹⁰⁹ Gulbenkian Foundation, *Colloquium on Education*. R. Ramos, ‘O Império que nunca existiu’: a cultura da descolonização em Portugal: c.1960–c.1980, *Revista de Historia das Ideias* 28 (2007) 429–478 illustrates how the end of empire was largely ignored by intellectuals and the society at large, as if the empire had never existed.

¹¹⁰ Ramos, ‘O Império que nunca existiu’, 476.

¹¹¹ Daveau in Gulbenkian Foundation, *Colloquium on Education*, 216–217 (original in French).