

6 THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE MOZAMBIQUE CHRISTIAN COUNCIL TO PEACE AND RECONCILIATION IN MOZAMBIQUE

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INTRODUCTION

In recent times, it has been common for the church to participate in many activities that involve the state. Emphatically, it is perceptible that the church's participation in various matters involving politics is essential, especially in conflict resolution. In several African countries, including Mozambique, the achievement of independence, instead of establishing a moment of peace and permanent euphoria, saw the outbreak of political violence explained by prolonged civil wars, frequent coups d'état and other manifestations.

In Mozambique, the euphoric cloud of independence in 1975 cleared with the outbreak of the Civil War in 1976 between the Government of Mozambique, led by the one-party regime of Frelimo² (Mozambique Liberation Front) and the rebel movement at the time, Renamo (Mozambique National Resistance).³ The war is known locally in different ways; some know it as "16 years war" due to its duration, others as the "Civil War" and some academics refer to it as the "War of Destabilisation".⁴ The literature on this period emphasises the pronounced role of the Roman Catholic Church in the mediation process that culminated in the Signature of Peace in 1992 that ended the war, but the Mozambique Christian Council, better known as Christian Council of Mozambique (CCM), also played a primary role in establishing the first contacts between the belligerents. In the

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2 The use of the term "Frelimo" in lowercase is explained by the fact that it was considered at this time to be a party. There were two phases of this movement/party: (1) as the Liberation Movement from 1962 to 1977, when the term that came to be used was "FRELIMO" in capital letters and (2) after its III Congress in 1977, it was transformed from a Liberation Movement to a Political Party, and thus, the proper term for this transformation came to be "Frelimo" in lower case.

3 The same explanation as in the previous footnote can be used in this case, that is, we can place this movement in two phases: (1) the phase of this as a Guerrilla Movement between 1976 and 1992, where the proper term was "RENAMO" with capital letters and (2) from 1992 to the present day as "Renamo" due to its transformation into a political party.

4 The world of academia started using this term because of the government at the time of the outbreak of the war, which used the context of the Cold War and imperialism in the southern African region to justify the way in which Ian Smith's regime engaged against Mozambique. For more information, see Souza U. 2017. *Entre palavras e armas literatura e guerra civil em Moçambique*. [Between Words and Weapons: Literature and Civil War in Mozambique]. São Bernardo do Campo: EdUFABC.

words of Jan Nico Scholten, a Dutch politician and president of the Association of European Parliamentarians with Africa (AWEPA), “Mozambique is seen around the world as having had a successful peace process, but not much attention is paid to the factors that made Mozambique unique.”⁵

This explores how one of the reasons for this success was the quick mobilisation of the CCM in search of mechanisms that connected the parties involved in this war to build peace. The CCM, a central body that currently brings together six of the country’s Protestant congregations, worked hard to make RENAMO willing to participate in the negotiations.⁶ The CCM early took an active role in peace work – working towards reconciliation and bringing the two warring parts into negotiations. They were the first to openly call for peace.⁷ The purpose of the present research is to analyse the contribution of the CCM to peace and reconciliation in Mozambique.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF RELIGION IN MOZAMBIQUE

In Mozambique, there are two main groups of religions: traditional native religions and foreign religions. The second group, which makes up the majority, refers to the arrival of the main religions professed in the country, Islam and Christianity. Traditional religion in Mozambique also began to change with the arrival of Arab merchants on the coasts of northern Mozambique.

The first communities of hunters and gatherers, based on their writings in caves, talked to the gods as a way of demonstrating their beliefs.⁸ With the arrival of the Bantu peoples, a community of farmers and shepherds, traditional religion gained greater expression through ancestor worship, which became a central aspect of local religious beliefs and practices.⁹ From the seventh century CE onwards, a new religious dynamic took hold on the East African coast, of which Mozambique was a

- 5 Van den Bergh L. 2009. *Porque prevaleceu a paz?: Moçambicanos respondem*. [Why did peace prevail?: Mozambicans respond] Amsterdam/Maputo: AWEPA, 5.
- 6 Marujo A. 2021. “Igrejas cristãs de Moçambique Sobem de tom nas críticas ao governo e querem fim da violência” [Christian Churches In Mozambique Raise Them In Criticism Of The Government And Want An End To Violence], 7Margens.com, 28 April.
- 7 Fransson K. 2008. “Failure versus Success: An Analysis of Angola’s and Mozambique’s Peace Outcomes”. Unpublished Master’s Thesis, Lund University, 18.
- 8 Nhumaio R. 2017. “Arte rupestre e caçadores e recolectores em Manica: Pesquisa e Arqueologia da estação de Chinhamonhoró” [Rock art and hunters and gatherers in Manica: Research and Archeology of the Chinhamonhoró station]. PhD Diss, Eduardo Mondlane University, 18-19.
- 9 Santos GM. 2015. “Religiosidades de matriz africana tradição Bantu: A composição de uma tríade possível” [Religiosities of African origin Bantu tradition: The composition of a possible triad], *Anais Dos Simpósios Da ABHR 2* [Proceedings of the ABHR Symposia 2] Associação Brasileira de História das Religiões, Simpósio Nordeste: Gênero e Religião: Diversidades e (in)tolerâncias nas mídias [Brazilian Association for the History of Religions Northeast Symposium: Gender and Religion: Diversities and (in)tolerance in the media].

part. The studies of scholars such as Eduardo Medeiros,¹⁰ Lorenzo Macagno¹¹ and Francisco Garcia¹² are in agreement that the spread of Islam in the coastal areas of Mozambique was largely due to this Arab commercial expansion, which was established through trading posts and various trade networks.

When Christianity entered the scene in the fifteenth century with the arrival of Vasco da Gama's caravans on the Mozambican coast,¹³ Islam was already established within communities in the interior of northern Mozambique, with religious alliances between local chiefs and the Arabs.¹⁴ In his master dissertation, Eusébio Pedro outlines every moment of the penetration of Christianity in Mozambique,¹⁵ including that of the Jesuit Order, which attempted to penetrate the interior of the Mwenemutapas¹⁶ in order to compete with the Arabs and their culture.¹⁷ The work of historian David Hedges shows that the expansion of Christianity through the Catholic Church also went hand in hand with the growth of Protestant missions that became separate from the teaching of the Portuguese Catholic missions.¹⁸ As Protestantism expanded, it played an increasingly influential role in promoting

10 Medeiros E 2011. "O Islão e a construção do espaço cultural e social Macua" [Islam and the construction of the Macua cultural and social space], *Representações de África e dos africanos na história e cultura – Séculos XV a XXI* [Representations of Africa and Africans in history and culture – 15th to 21st centuries]. Lisbon: Centro de História de Além-Mar, 195-280.

11 Macagno L. 2006. *Outros Muçulmanos: Islão e Narrativas Coloniais* [Other Muslims: Islam and Colonial Narratives]. Lisboa: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais.

12 Garcia F. 2003. "O islão na África Subsariana: Guiné-bissau e Moçambique, uma análise comparativa" [Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa: Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique, a comparative analysis] *Africana Studia*, [Africana Studies] (6):65-96.

13 For more details on the arrival of the Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama in Inhambane and his settlement on the island of Mozambique in an attempt to reach India, see Arnaut L. (n.d.). "O desenvolvimento do nacionalismo em Moçambique (1964)" [The development of nationalism in Mozambique]. Belo Horizonte: Federal University of Minas Gerais.

14 Medeiros, *O Islão e a construção do espaço cultural e social Macua*, 213.

15 Pedro E. 2013. *A Missionaç o Jesu ta em Mo ambique: As Rela  es Com a Sociedade e com o Poder Pol tico em Tete, 1941-2011* [The Jesuit Mission in Mozambique: Relations with Society and Political Power in Tete, 1941-2011], PhD Dissertation, Universidade do Porto.

16 The Mwenemutapa empire, also called "Monomotapa" (depending on the spelling) was one of the major centres of power and population agglomeration in the pre-colonial era of the Southern African region. This empire was formed between 1440 and 1450, when Nhantsimba Mutota, a Shona warrior invaded Greater Zimbabwe and founded his empire. At its peak between the 15th and 18th centuries, it stretched from Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Zambia, occupying the Zambezi valley. Due to its intense trade (especially gold) it began to face its decline due to European occupation. For more, see Serra C. 2000. *Hist ria de Mo ambique*. [History of Mozambique], vol 1. Maputo: Livraria Universit ria, 49.

17 The Jesuit Order is one of the most well-known religious orders of the Catholic Church, which also includes the Franciscans, Dominicans and Benedictines. For more details of its origins and expansion, see Fleck E and Amantino M (eds). 2023. *Franciscanos, jesu tas e beneditinos na Am rica colonial, s culos XVI-XVIII* [Franciscans, Jesuits and Benedictines in colonial America, 16th-18th centuries]. S o Leopoldo: Editora Oikos Ltda.

18 Hedges D (ed). 1999. *Mo ambique no Auge do Colonialismo, 1930-1961* [Mozambique at the height of colonialism, 1930-1961], vol 2. Maputo: Livraria Universit ria.

education among indigenous populations, overcoming in certain respects the influence of the Catholic Church, due to its emphasis on direct reading of the Bible and empowerment of individuals.¹⁹

This apparatus changed radically with the rise of authoritarian fascist regime in Portugal, and particular with the rise of the Estado Novo in 1926, which became better known as Salazarism or Salazar's Economic Nationalism under the long-time Portuguese prime minister and dictator Antonio de Oliveira Salazar.²⁰ Salazarism signed an agreement with the Vatican establishing Catholicism as the official religion of the Portuguese government and the only mechanism for civilizing the colonies.²¹ Thus, Catholicism went hand in hand with colonialism, and this situation meant that during the time of the awakening of nationalism, many nationalists came from Protestant missions. Scholars have argued, in the same vein, that one of the ways in which nationalism opposed the religious doctrine of colonialism was through the education implemented in the areas liberated from FRELIMO. This thinking created a feeling of revolt and distancing from religion and the state in the post-independence period until the start of the civil war.²²

19 Among the many Mozambicans who graduated from Protestant missions that taught a different kind of education, we can mention the case of Colombo Kamba Simango who, after graduating from the American Board Mission, was taken to the USA where he became an anthropologist and a friend of Franz Boas, Booker Washington, Henry-Phillipe Junod, etc. For more information, see Macagno L. 2022. "From Mozambique to New York: The Cosmopolitan Pathways of Kamba Simango, African Disciple of Franz Boas", *Bérose-Encyclopédie internationale des histoires de l'anthropologie*. Paris: BÉROSE. Another well-known case is Eduardo Chivambo Mondlane, who, after leaving the Swiss Mission, had the opportunity to study in South Africa, then Portugal and finally the USA, where he became a doctor of anthropology and sociology, and then a United Nations official and then a professor at the University of Syracuse, before joining the national liberation movement. For more information, see Negrão S. 2022. "A vida, a luta e o assassinato de Eduardo Mondlane" [The Life, Struggle and Murder of Eduardo Mondlane], <https://setentaquatro.pt> 4 February.

20 Wuyts M. 1980. "Economia política do colonialismo português em Moçambique", *Estudos Moçambicanos* [Mozambican Studies] (1):10.

21 Among the various studies that address this issue, it is worth reading the following authors: Carvalho R. 2009. *A concordata de Salazar Portugal-Santa Sé 1940* [The Salazar Portugal-Holy See Concordat of 1940]. PhD Thesis, New University of Lisbon; Sousa S and Pinto V. 2021. "A construção ideológica educacional no período colonial em Moçambique" [The educational ideological construction in the colonial period in Mozambique], in *Revista HISTEDBR On-line*, 21:1-14; Santos I. 2021. "A educação em Moçambique durante o regime ditatorial Salazarista: Projetos políticos e identidades coletivas (1926-1974)" [Education in Mozambique during the Salazar dictatorial regime: Political projects and collective identities (1926-1974)], PhD Diss, Federal University of Minas Gerais.

22 See Marrime B. 2017. "Breve retrospectiva ao historial de relacionamento entre a Igreja Católica e o Estado em Moçambique" [Brief retrospective of the history of the relationship between the Catholic Church and the State in Mozambique]. Intervenção na V Conferência Internacional do IESE, sobre Desafios da Investigação Social em tempos de crise [Intervention at the 5th International Conference of IESE, on Challenges of Social Research in Times of Crisis], Maputo..

In the historiography of the end of the war and the peace process, there are many scholars who credit the involvement of the Catholic Church as the cause of reconciliation.²³ These studies have reinforced this argument, which is not entirely wrong, but also not entirely true. This chapter studies the role of the CCM in ending the war, an involvement that has been the focus of some studies,²⁴ but which has not yet come to the fore in academic circles. Thus, the focus of the present study is to bring the role of the CCM in Mozambican reconciliation to greater prominence.

ORIGINS OF THE CHRISTIAN COUNCIL OF MOZAMBIQUE AND THE BEGINNING OF THE CIVIL WAR

When the first Protestant missions arrived in Mozambique, they found that the Catholic Church had already been installed there since the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. More than that, they found the church allied with the colonial state apparatus.²⁵ Many Protestant sects, unlike the Catholic orders, were introduced into the country by Africans. This was the case with the Mhalamhala brothers,²⁶ who

23 Bolinhas I. 2005. "Das causas da guerra às razões da paz: A mediação da Comunidade de Santo Egídio no conflito moçambicano" [From the causes of war to the reasons for peace: The mediation of the Community of Sant'Egidio in the Mozambican conflict], in *Revista Militar* [Military Magazine] (2439):1-19; Pereira Q. 2006. *O papel da Igreja Católica no processo de desenvolvimento em Moçambique* [The role of the Catholic Church in the development process in Mozambique], PhD Diss, Technical University of Lisbon; Gujamo R. 2016. *A Transição Democrática e a Manutenção da Paz em Moçambique entre 1992 e 2004* [The Democratic Transition and Peacekeeping in Mozambique between 1992 and 2004], PhD Thesis, Lisbon University; Resende M and Almeida C. 2018. "O papel da Igreja Católica na democratização pós-guerra em Angola e Moçambique" [The role of the Catholic Church in post-war democratisation in Angola and Mozambique], *Relações Internacionais* [International Relations] (59):43-63; Júnior A. 2018. *A família: Uma maneira de ser igreja em Moçambique: O Papel da Igreja moçambicana na promoção da Paz e da Justiça* [The family: A way of being a church in Mozambique: The Role of the Mozambican Church in promoting Peace and Justice], PhD Diss, University of Porto.

24 Sengulane DS and Gonçalves JP. 1998. "A Calling for Peace: Christian Leaders and the Quest for Reconciliation in Mozambique", in Armon J, Hendrickson D and Vines A (eds.). *The Mozambican Peace Process in Perspective*. London: Conciliation Resources, 26-33; Silva FC. 2015. "The Role of The Christian Council of Mozambique in the Colonial War (1964-1974) and in Civil Wars (1977-2014): Christians in Colonial Wars", *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* 41(1):105-121.

25 Gaspar DG. 2006. "'É dando que se recebe': A Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus e o negócio da fé em Moçambique" ["It is in giving that we receive": The Universal Church of the Kingdom of God and the business of faith in Mozambique], PhD Diss, Bahia Federal University, 60.

26 The literature consulted only mentions the Mozambican missionary Yosefa Mhalamhala and his sister, without mentioning her name. The work of this missionary is seen as one of the foundations of the constitution of what is now called the Presbyterian Church of Mozambique. For more details, see Felicidade C and Tlharihani B. 2017. "Reflections on Yosefa Mhalamhala's involvement in the formation of the Igreja Presbyteriana de Moçambique", *Missionalia* 45(2):117-126.

were extremely influential in the arrival and establishment of the Swiss Mission.²⁷ Only in the last decades of the nineteenth century did the Protestant missionary presence itself make felt in Mozambique,

In 1879, the American Mission Board is installed in Gaza; followed by the Episcopal Methodist in 1883, and by the Free Methodist in 1885, both in Inhambane. In the province of Maputo, the Swiss Mission began its efforts to establish itself in 1881 and in 1883, it founded the first school, in Rikatla, and in 1891 in the city of Lourenço Marques – current Maputo. Two years later, the Anglican Mission came into operation.²⁸ The Methodist Mission of South Africa was established in Mozambique – 1885; the Swiss Mission of Lourenço Marques–1887; the Seventh-day Adventist Mission – 1935 and the Scandinavian Baptist Mission – 1937.²⁹

According to the historian Dowyvan Gaspar,³⁰ the exact chronological demarcation of the entry of Protestantism is difficult to determine. Protestant churches provided Africans with an education that gave them a critical look at the situation in which they lived, and one of the ways in which Mozambican nationalism manifested, was through the rejection of Catholicism.³¹

The evolution of the political situation and the need for the Protestant Churches to unite to face the barriers created by colonialism led them very early, in 1920, to interdenominational cooperation. In 1948, the Christian Council of Mozambique (CCM) was created, born from the experience of the evangelical missionary association, active since 1930.³² In a remarkable display of unity, the Presbyterian seminary in Rikatla underwent a transformation in 1958, evolving into an interdenominational institution. It embraced Episcopal Methodists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and members of the Church of Christ from the provinces

27 Macamo E. 1998. “A influência da religião na formação de identidades sociais no sul de Moçambique” [The influence of religion on the formation of social identities in southern Mozambique], in Serra C (eds). *Identidade, Moçambicanidade, Moçambicanização* [Identity, Mozambicanity, Mozambicanisation]. Maputo: Livraria Universitária, 50.

28 Zamparoni V. 1998. “Entre Narros & Mulungos: Colonialismo e paisagem social em Lourenço Marques, 1890-1940” [Entre Narros & Mulungos: Colonialism and social landscape in Lourenço Marques, 1890-1940], PhD Thesis, University of São Paulo, 426-427.

29 Gonçalves JJ. 1960. “Breve apontamento sobre o actual panorama religioso moçambicano” [Brief note on the current Mozambican religious panorama], in, *Protestantismo em África: Contribuição para o estudo do protestantismo na África Portuguesa* [Protestantism in Africa: Contribution to the study of Protestantism in Portuguese Africa, 2(39):120.

30 Gaspar, “‘É dando que se recebe’”, 62.

31 Mourier-Genoud E. 1998. “Y a-t-il une spécificité protestant au Mozambique? Discours du pouvoir post colonial et estruture des Églises chrétiennes”, in Cahen M. (ed.). *Des protestantismes en lusophonie catholique*. Paris: Karthala, 407.

32 Cruz e Silva T. 1998. “Educação, identidades e consciência política: A Missão Suiça no Sul de Moçambique (1930-1975)” [Education, identities and political consciousness: The Swiss Mission in Southern Mozambique (1930-1975)], *Lusotopie, Des protestantismes en lusophonie catholique* [Lusotopia, Protestantism in Catholic Lusophonia] (5):403.

of Manica and Sofala, fostering collaboration and cooperation among diverse religious communities.³³

The Portuguese colonial regime's distrust of the Protestant churches and missions deepened in the 1960s, due to the fact that several young believers in the Swiss and United Methodist Mission fled the country and joined FRELIMO in Tanzania.³⁴ Nationalist movements tended to take refuge within Protestant churches.³⁵ It can be understood that this recruitment process took place because of the presence of Protestant missions in remote locations and also because of the ideas of social justice and equality that Protestants propagated, which were in line with the aims of nationalism. In this sense, it seems that the greatest benefit that these churches brought to Mozambique was the political awareness of Mozambicans.³⁶ This awareness strengthened the bonds of national unity, culminating in the organisation of Frelimo and, consequently, in the liberation of the country from the colonial yoke.³⁷

After the country's independence, with the signing of the Lusaka Accords,³⁸ Frelimo took power and set in motion a socialist economic programme and a single-party political system, and with that it did not take long for the Civil War to begin in 1976. There are two main explanations for the causes of the war, and they are ideologically opposed to one another.³⁹ The first cause defends an externalist view

33 Helgesson A. 1994. Church, State and People in Mozambique: An historical Study with Special Emphasis on Methodist Developments in the Inhambane Region, PhD Thesis, Uppsala University, 279 (citing Cruz e Silva, "Educação, identidades e consciência política", 403).

34 Gaspar, "É dando que se recebe", 65.

35 Mourier-Genoud, *Y a-t-il une spécificité protestant au Mozambique?*, 407.

36 Gaspar, "É dando que se recebe", 66.

37 Cruz e Silva T. 2004. "Identidade religiosa e construção da democracia em Moçambique: O caso da Igreja Metodista Unida de Moçambique" [Religious identity and the construction of democracy in Mozambique: The case of the United Methodist Church of Mozambique], *Revista de Ciências Sociais e Humanas em língua portuguesa* [Journal of Social and Human Sciences in Portuguese] (4/5):226.

38 Lusaka Accords signed on 7 September 1974 in Zambia, which ended the armed struggle for the national liberation of the Portuguese Colonial War that began in Mozambique in 1964.

39 The first emphasises that the war was an externally sponsored destabilisation project against the Frelimo government, in the context of the "total strategy" of the apartheid regime in South Africa for the southern region of the continent. The growing Western concern around a government inspired by Marxist-Leninist ideology was an argument that was widely used by the government. In this perspective, Renamo is seen as an externally maintained puppet force with no real political programme or governing intent and no domestic power base. (See Hanlon J. 1984. *Mozambique: The Revolution under Fire*. London: Zed Press; Hanlon J. 1989. *Mozambique: Who Calls the Shots?* London: Zed Press). The second explanation asserts that the causes of the war were mainly internal, a product of Frelimo's failed socialist experience and particularly the alienation of support to rural farmers, the disrespect for traditional authorities, religious or otherwise, the imposition of state-owned agricultural companies and cooperatives, villages communal structures and new power structures that sought to replace the traditional social order, characteristic of

of the war, claiming that it began in the context of the cold war in the southern African region, and the second cause sees the war as a product of the population's internal discontent with the government's policies.

The civil war was divided into three periods: (1) the first, known as the Rhodesian Period lasted from 1976 to 1980;⁴⁰ (2) the second was the South African Period, which extended from 1980-1984; and (3) the third, known as the Post-Nkomati Period, started with the signing of the Nkomati Agreement of 1984 between Mozambique and South Africa and ended with the General Agreement of Peace of 1992.⁴¹ As a liberation movement, Frelimo had been helped by the independent government of Tanzania, after achieving power as the government of Mozambique, and the movement wanted to help neighboring countries by supporting the liberation movements, namely, ZANU in Rhodesia and ANC in South Africa. Unsurprisingly, this was seen as a threat by white minority governments in these countries.⁴²

Within the philosophy of war, the objective of Renamo and South Africa was to cut all access roads and railways.⁴³ With the application, from 1977 onwards, of the "total strategy", carrying out economic and military actions against neighboring countries, including cutting and sabotaging their access routes to the sea, became the central objective of the white minority regime of the region.⁴⁴ As the anthropologist Iraê Lundin wrote:

the attempt to eliminate all traces of "obscurantism" and to forge "O Homem Novo – a New Man" in the Mozambican revolution. For more, see Cardoso I. 2009. "O Papel de um empreendimento privado agrícola no reassentamento de população deslocada de guerra: O caso de Chibonzane em Moçambique" [The role of a private agricultural enterprise in the resettlement of a war-displaced population: The case of Chibonzane in Mozambique], PhD Diss, Technical University of Lisbon, 48.

40 Rhodesia received a significant number of Portuguese settlers who left Mozambique after independence, they were: traders, small landowners, groups of soldiers demobilised from special units of the colonial army and from the private militias of large landowners. Despite forming such a heterogeneous group, they shared hatred against the new regime that governed Mozambique. This group, together with members of the Portuguese secret police, Frelimo deserters and aided by the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) of Rhodesia formed the Mozambican National Resistance (MNR). Its first commander was André Matsangaissa, a former member of the Frelimo army. See Silva CN. 2022. "Cultura de paz em tempos de guerra: Memórias de religiosos sobre o início das negociações pela paz em Moçambique, 1982-1994" [Culture of peace in times of war: Memories of religious people about the beginning of peace negotiations in Mozambique, 1982-1994], *Boletim GeoÁfrica* [GeoAfrica Bulletin] 1(4):26.

41 Agreement signed on 16 March 1984 by Presidents Samora Machel and Pieter Botha. South Africa signed the Nkomati agreement as a result of international pressure and not as a result of endogenous motivation and will, see Minter W. 1994. *Apartheid's Contrasts: An Inquiry into the Roots of War in Angola and Mozambique*. London and New Jersey: Zed Books, 42.

42 Van den Bergh, *Porque prevaleceu a paz?*, 17.

43 Van den Bergh, *Porque prevaleceu a paz?*, 17.

44 Bellucci B. 2007. *Economia Contemporânea em Moçambique: Sociedade linhageira, colonialismo, socialismo, liberalismo*. [Contemporary Economic in Mozambique, Lineage Society, Colonialism, Socialism, Liberalism]. Rio de Janeiro: Educam, 214.

Establishing a basis for negotiations between the government and RENAMO was one of the most difficult tasks and a challenge for anyone in Mozambique, particularly in the late 1980s. RENAMO, although somewhat isolated politically at the international level by the achievements of FRELIMO in the same political environment, still received clandestine help from South African military elements. The movement was thus increasingly self-sufficient and continued to inflict heavy damage on the Mozambican economy. The “war economy” approach adopted by the government was also unable to support the war effort against RENAMO.⁴⁵

The Mozambican government saw Renamo as an instrument of foreign interests, while Renamo said that, was fighting against Marxism.⁴⁶ As development expert Jeremy Armon and colleagues have observed, the war between Mozambicans was inextricably linked to conflicts with and between neighbouring states and the Cold War.⁴⁷ Efforts to resolve differences between the government and Renamo were severely limited, as external factors continued to influence the local dynamics of the war. However, as external military support for both sides reduced in the context of the global shift towards neoliberal economics and democratisation, the parts had little choice but to negotiate. According to the historian Fernando Caldeiro da Silva,⁴⁸ CCM has become a respected civil organisation, working to help needy populations by minimizing their suffering and also carrying out activities related to emergency aid in the context of war and in refugee camps.

CHRISTIAN COUNCIL OF MOZAMBIQUE (CCM) AS A PEACE CONNECTOR

With the proclamation of National Independence in 1975, the tension between the churches and the state deteriorated with the policy of nationalisation,⁴⁹ as the government began to take the reins even of the spaces that belonged to the churches, thus preventing them from carrying out their activities in a normal way.⁵⁰ According to Anglican Bishop Dinis Sengulane, it all started when “I saw

45 Lundin IB. 2004. “The Peace Process and the Construction of Reconciliation Post Conflict: The Experience of Mozambique”. Paper Presented in Barcelona under the International Seminar “Experiences of Penal Alternatives in Peace Processes”, Barcelona, 27-28 February, 9.

46 Van den Bergh, *Porque prevaleceu a paz?*, 27.

47 Armon, Hendrickson and Vines, *The Mozambican Peace Process in Perspective*, 7.

48 Silva FC da. 2015. “The Role of the Christian Council of Mozambique in the Colonial War (1964-1974) and in Civil Wars (1977C-2014): Christians in Colonial Wars”, *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* 41(1):109.

49 On 3 February 1976, the government announced the change of name of the capital, which became Cidade de Maputo (Maputo City). They then proceeded with the nationalisation of houses abandoned by foreigners, buildings and rent houses that were at the service of real estate speculation. These infrastructures along with urban land, became state property. The Decreto-Lei n° 5/76 of 5 February became one of the main political-legal instruments with which the government nationalised housing and established both the principles for extending the right to housing and the procedures for satisfying this social need.

50 About the tension between the government and the church in Mozambique, see Bertelsen BE. 2016. *Violent becomings: state formation, sociality and power in Mozambique*. New York:

the suffering of Mozambicans, due to the war that was felt throughout the national territory.”⁵¹ People were attacked and forced to abandon their origins, prompting Sengulane to observe, “I noticed that the problem was serious because, in addition to what was heard in churches, the media also reported the atrocities that happened. In this context, citizens asked religious denominations for help.”⁵² The holding of a meeting in 1982 that brought together several religious congregations and the government, it marked a turning point in terms of the relations of involved parties.⁵³ Thus, the tension that characterised relations between religious institutions and the state in the post-independence period came to an end, and those who participated in the meeting suggested that it was necessary to find a peaceful way to end the devastating war.⁵⁴ Other denominations were contacted until 1984, when the churches that comprised the CCM came to the conclusion that it was urgent to bring the government and RENAMO together at the dialogue table.⁵⁵ It was a long and winding process, because they only knew how to locate the President of the Republic.⁵⁶

In comparison to the Catholic Church, CCM had a relatively limited, predominantly local reach, while the Catholic Church enjoyed a wider presence and influence, including internationally. It is important to note that some prominent members of the Mozambican government after independence were brought up in Protestant traditions. This religious background may have influenced their perspectives and relations. CCM wanted to exploit this dynamic and created, in 1984, a Commission for Peace and Reconciliation.⁵⁷ Members of the commission were of the United Methodist, Free Methodist, Wesleyan Methodist, Anglican, Church of Christ in Manica and Sofala, Baptist Union and Church of the Nazarene denominations.⁵⁸

Analysis by Bishops Dinis Sengulane and Jaime Gonçalves in their book on the role of religious leaders in the Mozambican reconciliation, reveals that the CCM undertook significant efforts to establish dialogue with the government between 1984 and 1986, with the aim of facilitating contact and communication between the parties involved in the armed conflict in Mozambique.⁵⁹ However, during this period, no tangible progress was made in these mediation efforts. A notable point of interest is that the CCM began to receive responses and recognition for its efforts

Berghahn Books.

51 *Jornal Domingo*. Edition n. 2093, 2 October 2022, 2.

52 *Jornal Domingo*. Edition n. 2093, 2 October 2022, 2.

53 Gujamo R. 2016. *A transição democrática e a manutenção da paz em Moçambique entre 1992 e 2004*. [The Democratic Transition and Peacekeeping in Mozambique between 1992 and 2004]. Doctoral Thesis, University of Lisbon, 131.

54 Sengulane and Gonçalves, “A Calling for Peace”, 28.

55 *Jornal Domingo*. Edition n. 2093, 2 October 2022, 2.

56 *Jornal Domingo*. Edition n. 2093, 2 October 2022, 2.

57 See Van den Bergh, *Porque prevaleceu a paz?*, 27.

58 *Jornal Domingo*. Edition n. 2093, 2 October 2022, 2.

59 Sengulane and Gonçalves, “A Calling for Peace”, 29.

from 1986 onwards.⁶⁰ This suggests a possible correlation between the recognition of the CCM's efforts and a change in the political context following the death of the ruling leader of the time. One of the objectives advocated by the Council was in the voice of Bishop Sengulane, who observed

that Mozambicans stop killing each other ... because whoever said that apartheid was the policy that was being defended by RENAMO, the word Apartheid is untranslatable into our languages. And whoever said that he fought the FRELIMO government because he was a communist, the word communist is not translatable into our languages. They were two concepts coming from outside.... is not able to translate "AKM or AK-47" into Changana⁶¹ for me, nor is it able to translate "Makarov" into Changana for me. So, the weapons also used were a foreign thing, the concept and the weapons.⁶²

The perspective of Sengulane, who was leader of the CCM at the time, reveals a fundamental interpretation of the nature and origins of the armed conflict in Mozambique. It is evident from Singulane's observations recounted above that the conception and maintenance of the war was not intrinsically domestic, nor was it linked to the genuine interests of the Mozambican population. Instead, Singulane argues that many of the ideological bases and motives for the war were imported from outside the country.

By pointing to the inadequacy of terms like "apartheid" and "communism" to describe the motivations and objectives of the conflicting groups in Mozambique, Sengulane highlights the influence of foreign ideologies and geopolitical agendas on the dynamics of the conflict. In addition, he points out that the very weapons used in the conflict were foreign products and concepts, highlighting the non-indigenous nature of the war. This analysis suggests that the solution to the conflict in Mozambique could not be found solely through external interventions or the imposition of foreign ideologies, but by recognizing and addressing the country's internal problems and interests. Thus, Sengulane emphasises the need for Mozambicans to resolve their differences and seek internal solutions in order to achieve peace and reconciliation.

Sengulane's speech was not in vain. Shortly after Sengulane made the speech, though its direct influence on the Mozambican government cannot be shown, the

⁶⁰ "Onde mora a verdade sobre a morte de Samora Machel?", *O País*, 19 October 2011; *Jornal Domingo*, Edition n. 2093, 1 October 2022, 2.

⁶¹ Language mostly used in southern Mozambique.

⁶² Interview with Bishop Dinis Sengulane, transcript donated by the Project "Mozambique, from War and Peace" carried out by Promarte, 2017. "Mozambique, from War and Peace", was a project funded by the European Union to research and digitise all aspects of the civil war in Mozambique, produced by Promarte. The interview in question was conducted by the Director of Promarte, Sol de Carvalho, who is a renowned Mozambican filmmaker and actor, known for his significant contributions to African cinema.

government did take steps in some countries to find people linked to Renamo.⁶³ One of the countries to which this demand was issued was the United States, “in order to identify someone who was linked to someone who was close to someone from RENAMO”.⁶⁴ As mentioned earlier, even with its limited reach, the CCM managed to locate individuals linked to the guerrilla movement. As a result, according to investigator Alex Vines, in 1987, the Council “became actively involved in the peace process”.⁶⁵

In 1987, the CCM made it clear to the president of Mozambique, that it would contact RENAMO.⁶⁶ As President Joaquim Chissano reported at the time, “it took a long time, so much so that it was only in 1988 that searches began to locate the leadership of RENAMO”.⁶⁷ The recognition of the CCM’s neutrality was fundamental in facilitating the start of negotiations. This perception allowed the Council to play the role of impartial mediator, providing a space for dialogue between the parties. The CCM’s credibility as a neutral intermediary increased the legitimacy of the negotiations and mobilised support for peace efforts in Mozambique.⁶⁸ The Catholic Church also entered the arena of peace at this time. As Sengulane and Gonçalves emphasise, “the Catholic Church was also known to share the desire for Peace, [and] the CCM felt it was time to join forces to bring the government and the rebels closer together.”⁶⁹ As a result, they note, “The Government, whose relationship with the Catholic Church was improving, approved this change.”⁷⁰

The Catholics had access to Renamo, and the CCM had ties to the Government, as result of the “coincidence that FRELIMO’s leadership was mostly Anglican and that of RENAMO was mostly Catholic”.⁷¹ From this point, it is reported that the “CCM established ties with the Archbishop of Maputo, [...] Alexandre dos Santos and both Catholics and Protestants tried to persuade both sides that talks were needed”.⁷²

63 Van den Bergh, *Porque prevaleceu a paz?*, 29.

64 Interview with Bishop Dinís Sengulane.

65 Vines A. 1996. *RENAMO – From Terrorism to Democracy in Mozambique?* London: James Currey, 120.

66 In late 1987, a decisive change in its military fortunes caused a change of heart within the Mozambican government, and a CCM delegation was finally received by Chissano in December. At this meeting, the president expressed his appreciation for the CCM initiative, making it clear that the steps towards dialogue would not be interpreted negatively. See Sengulane and Gonçalves, “A Calling for Peace”, 29.

67 *Jornal Domingo*, Edition n. 2093, 2 October 2022, 2.

68 Fransson, *Failure versus Success*, 21.

69 Sengulane and Gonçalves, “A Calling for Peace”, 29.

70 Sengulane and Gonçalves, “A Calling for Peace”, 29.

71 Branco C. 2011. “As Organizações Não governamentais na mediação de conflitos intra-estaduais violentos: O confronto entre a teoria e a prática no processo de Paz Moçambicano” [Non-Governmental Organisations in the Mediation Of Violent Intra-State Conflict: The Confrontation Between Theory and Practice in the Mozambican Peace Process], *e-Journal of International Relations* 2(2):95.

72 Van den Bergh, *Porque prevaleceu a paz?*, 28.

The search for common ground between the two parts showed in the process of direct engagement that, although both sides had a strong interest in peace, each remained highly “distrustful of the other and could not accept the other’s claim to legitimacy”.⁷³ They agreed that they could talk, however, and there was a heated debate regarding where the parts could be at ease and on a neutral ground until the Catholic Church appeared to offer the Community of Sant’Egidio⁷⁴ to host the talks.⁷⁵

Despite having a more local operation extension, the CCM managed to establish primary negotiations between the two parties. It is noticeable that the entrance of the Catholic Church through the person of Jaime Gonçalves took the conversations to an international level that the CCM had not yet achieved at that time. Another point to be considered is that from this moment on, when the conversations began to rise internationally and where the involvement of Catholics pointed to Rome as the place of the last negotiation, the CCM was practically left on the side. It was as if the Catholic Church said, “We will take over from here.”

From this perspective, the CCM chose to direct its energies towards initiatives taking place within the communities themselves. It is no coincidence that, near the end of the negotiations in Rome, the most crucial point of agreement on the agenda of the meeting between the parties involved was highlighted. This strategy highlights the priority of strengthening the local grassroots and consolidating the participation and support of communities in the ongoing processes.⁷⁶ There were efforts to influence public opinion through public services, during which the message that would be sent to Rome and to the negotiators. Therefore, CCM visited the provinces of the country as a way of implementing a programme called PPP – “Preparation of the People for Peace”, which would culminate in the project “Transformation of Weapons into Hoes”.⁷⁷

On 4 October of 1992, the General Peace Agreement (GPA) was signed between Joaquim Alberto Chissano (president of Mozambique) and Afonso Macacheo Marceta Dhlakama (leader of Renamo) in Rome.⁷⁸ In less than twenty-four hours, “all hostilities ceased, both in the most remote areas and in the urban areas. Thus,

73 Boutros-Ghali B, UN Department of Public Information, UN Secretary-General. 1995. *The United Nations: Mozambique 1992-1995*. [ST/DPI/1675. New York: UNDPI, 15.

74 The Community of Sant’Egidio is a Catholic organisation founded in 1968 by Andrea Riccardi in the Trastevere district of Rome. Italy was a great choice, reducing the influence of the United States and giving the negotiations a more Mozambican character. See Van Den Bergh, *Porque prevaleceu a paz?*, 34.

75 *Jornal Domingo*, Edition n. 2093, 2 October 2022,3.

76 Interview with Bishop Dinis Sengulane, transcript donated by the Project “Mozambique, from War and Peace” carried out by Promarte, 2017.

77 Interview with Bishop Dinis Sengulane, transcript donated by the Project “Mozambique, from War and Peace” carried out by Promarte, 2017.

78 Taimo JU. 2010. *Ensino Superior em Moçambique: História, Política e Gestão* [Higher Education in Mozambique: History, Politics and Management]. Thesis, Methodist University of Piracicaba, 154.

Bishop Sengulane stated that “we can say that God was smiling when the GPA was signed in Rome and we were part of that smile of God”.⁷⁹ Even after the end of the war in 1992 and with the GPA in force, sporadic cases of political violence continued to take place, including riots stemming from the increase in food prices, political assassinations and other incidents.⁸⁰ For Sengulane, this situation could be explained by the simple fact that the Government and Renamo talked, but they were not reconciled, because “after the armed conflict, they did not sit down to define what their agenda was for to the nation”.⁸¹

CONCLUSION

This study does not seek to introduce a new theme in the context of the perception of the participation of the Church. as a whole, in the negotiation process for the establishment of peace in Mozambique. Rather, it aims to emphasise the active and significant participation of Protestants towards the end of the Civil War and to show that the involvement of the Catholic Church was, in a way, the result of an initiative of the CCM in wanting to join forces in order to make significant advances.

Religious denominations that work institutionally to restore a way of life interrupted during armed conflict constitute one of the most successful examples of reconciliation involving all members of society.⁸² The intervention of the CCM as a local actor in this process of construction for the peace process was necessary, for as political scientist Karin Fransson has observed from her studies of Mozambique, “if the local actors are involved, they will support the peace work because they will feel that it is their peace”.⁸³

The CCM, as a local community organiser, had a greater deep understanding of the war situation than the international community. Based on this, it is noticeable that the first and most uncomfortable initiatives were taken in this process out of deep understanding of the situation. The linkage of conflicting parts, specifically the contact between the government and Renamo, was an invaluable resource for peacebuilding. The involvement of the CCM did not proceed without creating divisions within the religious leadership. However, the view that prevailed was that the search for peace was a task of the church prevailed and one that opened ways for the General Peace Agreement.

79 Interview with Bishop Dinís Sengulane, transcript donated by the Project “Mozambique, from War and Peace” carried out by Promarte, 2017.

80 Darch C. 2018. *Uma História de Sucesso que Correu Mal?: O Conflito Moçambicano e o Processo de Paz numa Perspectiva Histórica*. [A Success Story Gone Wrong?: The Mozambican Conflict and the Peace Process in Historical Perspective]. Maputo: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 7.

81 *Jornal Domingo*, Edition n. 2093, 2 October 2022, 3.

82 Lundin, “The Peace Process and the Construction of Reconciliation Post Conflict”, 18.

83 Fransson, *Failure versus Success*, 11.