The Curse of Coal Mining

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The Curse of Coal Mining

Residents' Resistance to Industrial Coal Mining in Moatize District, Mozambique

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Abstract
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This thesis explores the dynamics and everyday practices of resistance in response to a large-scale coal mining project in Mozambique's Moatize District. The district underwent a significant territorial transformation after the Mozambican government granted the first coal mining concession to the Brazilian multinational mining company Vale in 2007. This concession encompassed vast areas of land traditionally used by local communities, who were subsequently displaced to make way for coal mining.

The thesis is based on twelve months of anthropological fieldwork conducted in Moatize District. In this area, the mining company's operations significantly affected local residents' daily lives and means of subsistence. Most interlocutors were subsistence farmers and brickmakers who had been resettled by Vale in the 25 de Setembro neighbourhood within the Municipality of Moatize, as well as in the localities of Benga, Cateme and Mualádzi. The research also focused on traditional chiefs, traditional healers, state officials, informal traders, members of civil society organisations, and former CARBOMOC and CCM employees.

Drawing on James Scott's theoretical framework of everyday resistance, this thesis demonstrates how residents of Moatize adopted discreet, infrapolitical tactics to resist Vale's mining practices and repression by state authorities. Using the limited resources at their disposal, they confronted a powerful corporation backed by the state. To expose the harmful effects of coal mining, residents shared images of mine explosions near their homes on social media, while protecting the identity of those who captured them. They also accessed forested areas on Vale's land to gather resources essential for their livelihoods. In some cases, acts of resistance included invoking ancestral spirits through traditional healers to halt the tractors extracting coal from the mines. Overall, the thesis demonstrates that, despite seemingly powerless, the residents of Moatize asserted their agency by resisting the mining practices of the powerful multinational company Vale, which was backed by the central state.

Keywords: Coal mining industry, everyday resistance, infrapolitics, displacement, Moatize, Vale, Mozambique, anthropology.

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To Nélia, Sasha and Mezelina

Contents

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AGP	*Acordo Geral de Paz de Roma* (Rome Peace Accords)
AMETRAMO	*Associação dos Médicos Tradicionais de Moçambique* (Mozambican Association of Traditional Healers)
ANC	African National Congress
AHM	*Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique* (Mozambique Historical Archive)
BNDS	Brazilian National Development Bank
CCM	*Companhia Carbonífera de Moçambique* (Para-statal Mozambican Coal Company)
CFM	*Caminhos de Ferros de Moçambique* (Mozambique Railway Company)
CARBOMOC	*Empresa Estatal Carbonífera de Moçambique* (State-owned Mozambique Coal Company)
CIP	*Centro de Integridade Pública* (Public Integrity Center)
CPAC	*Comissão Provincial de aldeias Comunais* (Provincial Commission of Communal Villages)
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CVRD	Brazilian company Vale do Rio Doce
DIDR	Development-Induced Displacement and Resettlement
DNTF	*Direcção Nacional de Terras e Florestas de Moçambique* (National Directorate of Lands and Forests of Mozambique)
DUAT	*Direito de Uso e Aproveitamento de Terra* (Right to Use and Enjoy Land)
EDM	*Electricidade de Moçambique* (Mozambique's Electricity Company)
EN1	*Estrada Nacional Número 1* (National Road 1)
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FLCS	*Faculdade de Letras e Ciências Sociais* (Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences)

FIPAG	*Fundo de Investimento e Património do Abastecimento de Água* (Investment Fund for Water Supply)
FIR	*Força de Intervenção Rápida* (Fast Intervention Force)
FRELIMO	*Frente de Libertação de Moçambique e Movimento Revolucionário* (Mozambique Liberation Front and Revolutionary Movement)
Frelimo	*Frente de Libertação de Moçambique e Partido Político* (Mozambique Liberation Front and Political Party)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDR	German Democratic Republic
GPS	Global Positioning System
GNP	Gross National Product
HDI	Human Development Index
IESE	*Instituto de Estudos Sociais e* Econômicos (Institute for Social and Economic Studies)
ISPT	*Instituto Superior Politécnico de Tete* (Tete Higher Polytechnic Institute)
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ICVL	Indian state-owned International Coal Ventures
INE	*Instituto Nacional de Estatística* (National Institute of Statistics)
LEO	*Lei do Orçamento do Estado* (State Budget Law)
LOLE	*Lei dos Órgãos Locais do Estado* (Law of Local State Organs)
MAE	*Ministério de Administração Estatal* (Ministry of State Administration)
MANU	Mozambique African National Union
MDM	*Movimento Democrático de Moçambique* (Mozambique's Democratic Movement)
MIDR	Mining-Induced Displacement and Resettlement
MIREME	*Ministério de Recursos Minerais e Energia* (Ministry of Mineral Resources and Energy)
MEF Economy	*Ministério de Economia e Finanças* (Ministry of the and Finance)
MPF	*Ministério de Planificação e Finanças* (Ministry of Planning and Finance)
MNR	Mozambican National Resistance

MPD	*Ministério de Planificação e Desenvolvimento* (Ministry of Planning and Development)
OAM Lawyers'	*Ordem de Advogados de Moçambique* (Mozambican Association)
OJM	*Organização da Juventude Moçambicana* (Organisation of Mozambican Youth)
OMM	*Organização da Mulher Moçambicana* (Organisation of Mozambican Women)
OTM	*Organização dos Trabalhadores de Moçambique* (Organisation of Mozambican Workers)
ONP	*Organização Nacional dos Professores* (National Teachers' Organisation)
PRE	*Programa de Reabilitação Económica* (Economic Rehabilitation Programme)
PRES and	*Programa de Reabilitação Económica e Social* (Economic Social Rehabilitation Program)
PREVI	Pension Fund of Banco de Brazil
RAMBOG	*Rede da Associações de Moatize para a Boa Governação* (Network of the Moatize Associations for Good Governance)
RENAMO	*Resistência Nacional Moçambicana* (Mozambican National Resistance)
SASOL	South African Coal, Oil and Gas Company
SDPI	*Serviço Distrital de Planejamento e Infraestrutura* (District Planning and Infrastructure Service)
SPGC	*Serviço Provincial de Geografia e Cadastro* (Provincial Mapping and Land Registry Service)
SNS	*Sistema Nacional de Saúde* (National Health System)
UDENAMO	*União Democrática Nacional de Moçambique* (National Democratic Union of Mozambique)
UNAMI	*União Nacional Africana de Moçambique Independente* (National African Union of Independent Mozambique)
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WHO	World Health Organisation
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army

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33/2006. Establishes the framework for the transfer of functions and powers from State organs to local autarchies.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

As a Mozambican citizen living in the capital, Maputo, I had followed the mineral boom and the granting of mining concessions by the Mozambican state to multinational companies in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Because of the economic projections made by the Mozambican government about the positive impact these mining projects would have on the country, and the way their inception was reported in the media, I, along with many other Mozambicans, expected the country's economic and social development to be driven by the boom in mineral resources. Expectations were even higher in the regions where these mega-mining projects were located.

The path opened for mega-mining projects in Mozambique when the civil war that began in 1976 ended in 1992. Faced with a devastated economy, the Mozambican post-colonial state passed its first reform of the Land Law in 1997 and the Mining Law in 2002, allowing it to turn to the exploitation of its natural resources and to begin to attract and receive Foreign direct investment (FDI). As the discourses of national development and their socialist hegemonic projects transformed, the state thought of development in terms of territory, accumulation, and sovereignty. Mozambique became one of the countries of the Global South where the practice of sovereignty has been inherently caught up in the logic and operation of markets, money, business, and capitalist accumulation, making the coupling between nation and development less stable (Sidaway 2007:345–350). According to De Sousa Santos (2006), the Western partners from which the country needed assistance after leaving the planned socialist economy demanded the implementation of the neo-liberal capitalist model of structural adjustment and democratisation with the introduction of multiparty elections.

Mozambique began to be characterised by economic reforms, in which the language of economic liberalisation and private investment became commonplace. Pitcher (2002) argues that the discourse of the market supplanted the one of Marxism. In the same vein, Pitcher (2006:88–89) argues that the language of economic liberalisation and private investment found a place because of the "emerging black middle class," which ignored the socialist period in order to erase the past and build a new national identity around the key constructs of neoliberalism. Pitcher (2006) notes that this was part of what he calls

"organised forgetting," a discursive and institutional strategy adopted by the ruling party, Frelimo,[1] to manage the transition from socialism to neoliberalism. The same strategy aimed at revising the country's ideological orientation, building new coalitions of support among national and international investors, and restoring the legitimacy of the ruling party after the abandonment of socialism. The actions of the ruling Frelimo party allowed it to engage in what Pitcher calls "transformative preservation" (*preservação transformadora*), through which the ruling party remained in power after democratisation and structural adjustment, but remade itself in the process. According to Sumich (2010), the party began to restructure itself, providing a layered form of social stratification within the nation and becoming one of the main routes of social mobility available to many Mozambicans.

Mozambique joined the list of African countries that received the most foreign investment in 1998, when the MOZAL aluminium smelter was installed with a total investment of US$2.68 billion. In 2003, the South African Coal, Oil, and Gas Company (SASOL) was granted permission to explore and install its gas pipeline in Inhambane Province in southern Mozambique, which began in 2004. In 2006, the Australian company Riversdale Mining Ltd. began operations in Tete, and in 2011, the Brazilian multinational Vale do Rio Doce began exploring for coal in Moatize, Tete Province, after being granted permission in 2004. In 2015, the Italian company ENI launched the Rovuma Basin gas exploration project in northern Mozambique (Anderson 2001; Castel-Branco 2008; Mosca and Selemane 2011; Reuters 2015).

All multinational mining projects in the country have been accompanied by the rhetoric that they will bring progress and development. Indeed, between 2000 and 2014, mega-projects in the mining sector were responsible for the growth of Mozambique's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Monié and Carvalho 2019). Between 2002 and 2014, Foreign direct investment (FDI) increased from US$347.3 million to US$4.9 billion. Despite being an important source of financing for the Mozambican economy, the FDI does not generate

[1] The Frelimo political party has been in power in Mozambique since the country gained independence in 1975. According to Paredes (2014:132–133), the merger of three nationalist movements formed FRELIMO (Front for the Liberation of Mozambique): UDENAMU, MANU, and UNAMI. Eduardo Mondlane, who was elected president on 25 June 1962, was responsible for the merger. In 1977, at its third congress, FRELIMO was transformed from a liberation front into a revolutionary political party with a Marxist-Leninist orientation, so there is a distinction between the acronym FRELIMO as a revolutionary movement (written in block capital letters) and Frelimo as a political party (written with standard capitalisation). Throughout the thesis I refer to it as a front (capital letters) from 1964 until the third congress in 1977 and as a party (lowercase) from the third congress until today.

wealth for the national economy. This is because it is concentrated in the extractive sector, which does not generate jobs and has little connection with the national economy (Mucanze and Correa 2017:19). Castel-Branco (2014) and Orre and Rønning (2017) argue that although the new mining projects soon led to increased GDP, social inequality and extreme poverty in the country became even more pronounced following their implementation.

Castel-Branco (2014:31) notes that the contribution of mega mining projects to total government tax revenues between 2008 and 2012 was less than 2%. Their combined tax contribution (corporate tax, workers' income tax, surface tax on the land used, and royalties) represents 3% of the total value of their sales. The tax contribution of mega mining projects to the national economy is almost zero and has no impact on citizens' investment, employment, production, and trade, as profits from company sales have been exported back to the countries of origin of the mining companies (cf. Castel-Branco 2008). As Castel-Branco further argues, the Mozambican economy retains and absorbs only a part of the production and sales value of these companies. In the same vein, Macuane et al. (2018:419) argue that despite increasing investment in natural resources, Mozambique is still experiencing so-called growth without change, with resettlement issues, low contributions to GDP, and poor linkages between mega-projects and other sectors of the economy.

Mozambique was ranked 182th out of 193 countries in the world in terms of human development, according to the 2023 Human Development Index (HDI) (UNDP 2025). As Orre and Rønning (2017) point out, even in the period 2010–2015, when the country's GDP grew because of FDI from mining megaprojects, Mozambique's HDI performance was only slightly better than the average of the other 40 countries with low human development. For Orre and Rønning (2017), these facts confirm the popular notion that mega mining projects in Mozambique have brought more social inequality than development. The Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) statistics (2016) showed that although the number of poor people has decreased from 54.1% in 2003 to 49.2% in 2015, Mozambique remained one of the poorest countries in the world. The high levels of poverty can also be explained by the lack of long-term priority given to the majority of the population by the mining sector, namely small-scale farmers in areas where mining projects are implemented (cf. Orre and Rønning 2017).

In this thesis, I use ethnographic material produced during a twelve-month anthropological fieldwork to analyse the relationship between the coal mining practices of the Brazilian multinational company Vale and local people in the Moatize district, Tete province, in central Mozambique, where the Mozambican state has granted the company 22,096 hectares of land on which many

local people, including small-scale farmers, used to farm (Filipe and Norfolk 2017). The Moatize district is also one of the largest unexplored coal reserves in the world, estimated to contain over 23 billion tonnes of coal (Kirschner and Power 2015), a fact that also attracted my attention as a site for ethnographic research. In February 2019, I began ethnographic fieldwork in Moatize, naively assuming that its residents would have welcomed Vale, one of the world's top four mining company[2], given that it was intended to stimulate socio-economic development. Instead, the locals described coal mining as a curse, pointing to enormous social problems. such as pollution and social inequalities, that were exacerbated by the practice of coal mining.

At Moatize, the Brazilian multinational Vale do Rio Doce[3] (CVRD) operated through its subsidiary Vale Moçambique Ltda. CVRD was founded in 1942 as a state-owned company (Cezne and Hönke 2022:3). In 1997, following a series of neo-liberal policies adopted by the Brazilian government, the company was privatised, but it remains linked to the state through an ongoing relationship. As Cezne and Hönke (2022) argue, the Brazilian government owns a number of shares in Vale's shareholder structure, giving it veto rights over the company's strategic affairs. The state-owned Brazilian National Development Bank (BNDES), through its equity investment arm BNDES-Par, is also among the company's shareholders. In 2022, 15 years after being granted the concession for the Moatize coal mine by the Mozambican state, Vale abandoned the mine and sold its assets to Vulcan Resources, an Indian multinational company. The reasons that led Vale to abandon its projects in Moatize were not clear to Mozambique's civil society organisations (CSO), and more generally to the people of Moatize.

I did not set out to investigate residents' resistance to Vale's mining practices at the start of my PhD project or at the outset of my ethnographic research in Moatize. While initially my research focus was related to health landscapes and coal mining practices, my focus shifted during fieldwork due to emerging conflicts between the local people and the mining company, a tremendously important aspect of the mining industry. At the start of my fieldwork in 2019, it became clear that the conflicts involved local residents and the company, as well as the local state administration. In the Bagamoio neighbourhood of Moatize, next to the mining site, I witnessed situations of residents cutting through the fence to enter the forest in the area owned by Vale. The local people, realising that Vale's coal mining projects did not

[2] According to MacDiarmid et al. (2018:17), over the 10-year period 2006–2015, the Anglo-American, BHP Billiton, CVRD-Vale and the Anglo-Australian Rio Tinto all remained within the top four revenue earners of global mining companies.
[3] Throughout the thesis, I use the name Vale as it is commonly known.

benefit them and instead degraded their lives by taking away their subsistence mechanisms, such as land and water resources, began to confront the multinational company.

In Moatize, as I was able to understand through the ethnographic fieldwork, people have a history of resistance to the various development projects that have opposed or been hostile to their rural economic models. A 68-year-old smallholder farmer, whom I call Aniceto,[4] described the hostility of the development projects carried out in Moatize. I found Aniceto in the morning in the brick house where he lived with his six children. Aniceto was on his way to his field, where he grows food, mostly maize. His harvest could be seen in the backyard of his house, spread out in sacks on the ground to dry:

> I remember that before Frelimo came to Moatize, the white Portuguese controlled our movements and did not let us go to other places in Tete province. They told us it was safe to stay here. After independence, Frelimo tried to destroy these types of colonial villages, put us in communal villages, and subject us to collective farms, which we were not used to, and they did not allow us to go to our *machambas*.[5] I and other small farmers always resisted and did not go to the collective farms.

Other small farmers described how the political authorities, during both the colonial period and the post-independence period, carried out development projects that were detrimental to the local economic structure. Their stories echoed Aniceto's description. One small farmer told me: "We rejected the projects because we, as the communities that would benefit from them, we were not given the opportunity to express our thoughts and opinions." For these small farmers, the new ruling FRELIMO authorities were convinced that they were right and that the villages and scattered settlements that characterised Moatize should indeed be developed and set on the path of progress through the FRELIMO regime's new political and economic programme. In fact, the development programme followed a model that FRELIMO had used in the liberated territories during the national liberation struggle against Portuguese colonialism. This ideological and political programme was compulsory and focused on communal villages, state collective farms and cooperatives, despite the historical and economic context of rural Moatize (see Coelho 1998). According to Meynes (1981:42), the progress of the liberation struggle in Mozambique between 1964 and 1974 was not solely dependent on

[4] Most names used in this thesis have been anonymised, except for the Administrator, the Mayor and, Queen of Moatize, who are public figures and are described as participating in public acts or events in Moatize.

[5] The word *machamba* has entered the Portuguese vocabulary (the official language of Mozambique) and translates as agricultural field, or the part of the land where small-scale farmers carry out agricultural activities.

FRELIMO's military successes, but was fundamentally linked to the establishment and consolidation of liberated zones where political control had largely escaped the colonial administration's grasp. In these zones, particularly in the northern provinces of Cabo Delgado and Niassa, FRELIMO and its liberation army's guerrilla units began to lay the foundations for new forms of economic production, social services, political administration, and self-defence. It was in these zones that values based on the collective efforts of peasant farmers and liberation force cadres were developed, as a result of an intense ideological process led by FRELIMO. At its first Congress in 1962, FRELIMO had already established its position in favour of improving the material living conditions of the predominantly peasant population. However, as Meynes (1981:49–50) points out, this issue was not initially considered important in the national liberation struggle. Consequently, there were signs of stagnation in the guerrilla war in 1966. It was only when the importance of close association with the popular masses was recognised, and steps were taken to put this into practice, that new advances were made. FRELIMO began to refer to the armed struggle as a people's war to characterise this development. At the third Congress, held in 1977 after independence, FRELIMO issued the economic and social directive, which was based on communal villages and collective farms as fundamental to the development of Mozambique, drawing on experience gained in the liberated areas.

The Moatize residents said that since their survival was based on family farming, any development model the state wanted to implement would have to fit into their logic of family production. However, as Casal (1991) and Coelho (1998) note, FRELIMO, with its new development plan drawn up immediately after independence, fought against what it called *áreas atrasadas, subdesenvolvidas em termos de desenvolvimento* (backward, underdeveloped, and developmentally backward areas), which would therefore have to adapt to forms of socialist production characterised by cooperatives and settlements in communal villages.

Small farmers of Moatize resisted the introduction of communal villages when state farms and cooperatives replaced the practice of household subsistence agriculture, their main survival mechanism. However, as Coelho (1998) has shown, the Frelimo government's gigantic plan to transform the rural economy into socialist forms of production collapsed. Natural disasters, such as floods and droughts, affected the province, and the civil war waged by

RENAMO[6] (Mozambican National Resistance) against the Frelimo government between 1976 and 1992 worsened the socio-economic conditions of the small farmers in Tete, who relied on household subsistence agriculture.

What is certain is that the destabilisation by RENAMO during the civil war coincided with the time when small farmers in Tete were dissatisfied with the development model implemented by Frelimo. Residents of Moatize recall traumatic experiences from the civil war that further disrupted forms of subsistence agricultural production. Ricardina, a 64-year-old woman who lived in a hut and wore a *capulana*[7] and a scarf on her head, was working in her maize field in Moatize when I spoke to her on a very hot day. She explained the impact of the civil war on her life when, in 1983, her family was forced to leave their extensive land in fertile areas near the river to join the communal villages. These villages were attacked by RENAMO troops in the same year. After the civil war ended in 1992, Ricardina describes what happened next:

[6] According to Young (1990), the movement was initially called the MNR – the Mozambican National Resistance. Young (1990:493–495) further argues that MNR originated from the anti-colonial conflicts that occurred in Mozambique and Zimbabwe during the 1960s and 1970s. Until 1974, the Rhodesian government and the Portuguese colonial authorities were confronted with well-equipped and organised insurgencies by the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and FRELIMO. Southern Rhodesia and Mozambique share an 800 km border, and both governments considered military cooperation against their respective insurgent movements. This need intensified for the Rhodesians in 1968, when FRELIMO began operating in Tete Province, and even more so when they began operating south of the Zambezi. While the Portuguese authorities had agreed to allow Rhodesian troops to operate in Tete as required (i.e., in "hot pursuit" operations), the Central Intelligence Organisation (led by Ken Flower) also recognised the need to establish a clandestine movement within Mozambique. By mid-1976, a number of factors had come together to encourage the Rhodesians to develop a strategy in support of the MNR. In March, the Frelimo government closed the border, imposing considerable economic costs on the Rhodesians – about a third of Rhodesia's foreign trade passed through Mozambique – and providing ZANU with greater capabilities in their fight against Ian Smith's minority white government. They enlisted the help of resentful and frustrated Portuguese colonial émigrés, with whom they recruited, organised, and trained a mercenary force composed mainly of former Mozambican soldiers who had been demobilised from the colonial army and had also emigrated to Rhodesia. Geffray (1991:12) states that the Rhodesians unleashed increasing aggression against Mozambique, including the use of the air force to destroy the already fragile Mozambican infrastructure. This was intended to destabilise the new Marxist-Leninist regime that was threatening their economic interests. However, ZANU, the party supported by the Frelimo government, achieved independence in 1980. From then on, the MNR was supported by the apartheid regime of South Africa, and the destabilisation of the country continued.

[7] A fabric that women tie around their bodies. *Capulanas* are usually part of women's clothing, and the material is also used to make dresses, skirts, etc. Recently, in Moatize and other areas of the country, men have also begun using *capulana* to make shirts, trousers, and T-shirts.

> My late parents, my older brother, and I were refugees in Malawi, where we had relatives. When the war ended, we returned to Moatize, but other people had already occupied our land. I was given another piece of land here in Moatize, but my brother preferred to return to Malawi where he already had a wife and children.

The consequences of the civil war in Moatize, as reported by the residents, point to a destabilisation that caused displacement and death, creating a social rupture by separating many families and leaving them with the trauma, which they live with it to this day.

Another problem cited by the residents of Moatize in relation to Vale's coal mining practices was the environmental damage caused by these mining practices, which destroyed their green fields but which the compensation did not restore. The field of cassava leaves and maize belonging to Leia, a 59-year-old resident of the Bagamoio neighbourhood, is in the area now owned by Vale, where the coal is extracted. I first met Leia on a very hot day as she walked with a group of barefoot women carrying firewood on their heads, all on their way home. Leia told me that she collected firewood in the area that Vale owned. She said that she entered Vale's land because she did not have the money to buy firewood or coal to cook with. The only place she could find it was in Vale's land. There was still a small forest there, where she could collect green leaves used for medicinal purposes.

The Moatize case is not the only one in Mozambique in which communities surrounding mega mining projects have come into conflict with the company over environmental resources or pollution. In Beloluane, situated in the Matola district of southern Mozambique, Mozambique Aluminum (MOZAL), the first FDI mega mining project in Mozambique's neoliberal economy, has clashed with the communities surrounding the project, its workers, and several civil society organisations over the immense environmental damage it has caused. Four MOZAL workers I spoke with reported that they were usually dismissed after three years of service to avoid health problems caused by exposure to high temperatures in the aluminium production area. Meanwhile, residents living near the company's facilities, with whom I also spoke with, reported that they suffered greatly from air pollution caused by the company.

In 2010, MOZAL decided to carry out a bypass, a process of releasing gases directly into the atmosphere without filters, which occurred during the rehabilitation of its two smoke treatment centres. MOZAL had obtained a permit to release its emissions into the air without filters for six months, with the serious possibility of harming human health (Bussoti 2014). According to Mosanblog (2011), the process of emitting unfiltered gases ended four months after the bypass began, causing environmental pollution for the surrounding communities. This process was widely criticised by environmental and public

health organisations, since analyses carried out at the time showed that the region already had very high levels of pollution before the bypass, above the maximum established by the World Health Organisation (WHO). Criticism has also been levelled at opposition political parties with seats in Parliament, where RENAMO[8] and Mozambique Democratic Movement (MDM)[9] deputies wore masks in one of the sessions of the National Assembly in 2010 as a form of protest against Mozal's aluminium project (Mosanblog 2010).

When I spoke to 45-year-old Santos, a street vendor in the informal market of Compone in Maputo, he said that he lived near the South African Coal, Oil, and Gas Company (SASOL), a multinational company operating in Pande, Inhambane province in southern Mozambique. He said that the company has not improved employment in the area. According to Santos, SASOL's problem with the community is that it did not employ the local people of Pande, preferring to hire workers from South Africa, the company's country of origin. Santos said that he was frustrated with the company, explaining that he also expected to be employed but was not. As a result, he was eventually forced to migrate to Maputo in search of better living conditions. Deutsche Welle Africa (21/4/2017) reported that local communities have not benefited from the promises SASOL made in 2004, the year it began exploring for natural gas in

[8] The transformation of RENAMO from an armed movement into a political party was first made possible by the 1991 constitutional amendment that paved the way for a multi-party system in Mozambique. Tavuyanago (2011:45) refers to the provisions of the *Acordo Geral de Paz de Roma* (Rome Peace Accords), which was signed in Rome on 4 October 1992 by Joaquim Chissano, who was then the president of Frelimo and the Republic of Mozambique, and Afonso Dhlakama, the leader of RENAMO. The agreement included the dissolution of RENAMO's armed forces and several government securities forces, all of which were to be integrated into the United National Army. This meant that RENAMO had to transform itself from a guerrilla movement into a legitimate political party and participate in the first general elections in 1994. Nilson (2023: 113–134) described RENAMO as a hybrid armed political party because, between 2012 and 2018, its leader, Afonso Dhlakama, led the party from Santujira in the Gorongosa Mountains, where RENAMO's military headquarters were located. Despite RENAMO's official transformation into a political party and Dlhakama's transformation into its leader, he never relinquished his position as leader of RENAMO's armed forces. He maintained a private armed security force, which was provisioned for in the 1992 Rome peace agreement. This meant that RENAMO was still structured around the same armed organisation as before, with Dlhakama as its leader. After losing the 2014 General Election, Dlhakama claimed there had been fraud and began directing military attacks, primarily in the central part of the country, from his headquarters in Gorongosa. This caused the country to return to a military crisis following the signing of the Rome Peace Accords in 1992. Interestingly, while Dlhakama was directing military operations in the bush, he was also leading his party in Parliament. In March 2015, RENAMO deputies submitted a bill to Parliament to discuss local self-government in a democratic environment and to allow a parliamentary vote to achieve this. However, the bill was rejected by the Frelimo parliamentary majority, who claimed that amending the Constitution of the Republic would be necessary to achieve this.

[9] MDM was founded by one of the sons of Urias Simango, who was also one of the founders of FRELIMO. Urias Simango went on to become vice-president of FRELIMO.

Pande. According to Deutsche Welle Africa, promises such as the installation of a borehole for water and support for vulnerable elderly people have not materialised. Deutsche Welle Africa (27/7/2021) also reported on a situation in which young Mozambicans blocked the EN1 national road in protest against the multinational SASOL, but the authorities responded by tear-gassing the demonstrators.

Some residents of the mineral-rich areas of Cabo Delgado in northern Mozambique with whom I spoke to, who had fled to Maputo because of the conflict, said that they had lost their land, which was immediately occupied by people who began to illegally exploit resources in the area. Bruno, a 48-year-old resident of Cabo Delgado who migrated to Maputo, said: "This was a strange conflict, as our areas had been depopulated and the illegal exploitation of resources had begun." He described himself as a victim of the exploitation of the various mining resources in his area of origin. Multinational giants such as Anadarko Petroleum and Italy's ENI have established their presence in the northern province of Cabo Delgado (Reuters 2015). In 2015, these multinationals agreed to begin developing adjacent gas fields off the coast of Mozambique, which was seeking to become a major global supplier of liquefied natural gas (LNG). Total Energies (2019) later agreed to acquire Anadarko's stake in Mozambique LNG in 2019. Residents I spoke to said they were victims of attacks by a terrorist group claiming to defend the principles of Islam. Sitoe (2021) argues that the arrival of large Western investments may have been the immediate cause of the attraction of Islamic radicals to the province.

Morier-Genoud (2020) claims that the insurgent group in Cabo Delgado belongs to an Islamic sect that began a decade earlier and turned to armed jihadism in the mid-2010s. The fact is that the Cabo Delgado gas project is the largest in Mozambique's history – and the one that has created the most public security problems and challenged the country's sovereignty. In August 2020 the terrorist group occupied Mocimboa da Praia, one of Cabo Delgado's districts, to disrupt the project and cut the area off from the international market by controlling its port (Sitoe 2021). In order to protect the huge project and prevent it from failing, the Mozambican state asked for military support from the Southern African Development Community (SADC), which sent a military contingent. Rwanda has also sent a large military contingent to ensure the project does not fail (Njelezi 2023), while the multinational Total Energies points out that it will not return to Cabo Delgado until the security problems are resolved (Total Energies 2025).

Although Mozambique's mega-mining projects are sources of conflict and targets of resistance from surrounding communities, the Mozambican state legitimates them because of their contribution to the country's gross domestic product growth. However, Monié and Carvalho (2019:182) argue that the development model of mega-mining projects in Mozambique raises questions about their low contribution to the national budget and their growing influence on the organisation of the national territory. As the authors further add, these projects have encouraged a loss of economic complexity due to the lack of diversification of the productive fabric. Agriculture, as one of the key sectors of the Mozambican economy and the basis of development and survival for more than 50% of the Mozambican population, has not been stimulated by the mega-mining projects. This led Phiri (2012) to suggest that rapid growth in resource extraction in the country would lead to a resource curse, where resources leave the country while the domestic economy stagnates.

In Moatize, the practice of coal mining by the new global player in the coal industry, Vale, was in contradiction with their expectations of progress and development. Fernando, a 48-year-old brick maker who worked in a brickyard where his bricks were in high demand, expressed his dissatisfaction with the industrial practices of coal mining in Moatize in the following terms:

> The coal industry has not only expropriated our land and subjected us to poor living conditions, but it also transports around six trips of 120 wagons of coal a day out of the district via the Moatize railway lines, without giving us any financial compensation. Even the brickwork that supports me, I have heard that it will be demolished to make way for the expansion of Vale's activities.

The residents of Moatize, like Fernando, believe that their resources are being exploited and robbed by the mining industry. This discontent extended to small farmers, cattle breeders, and traditional healers, who I describe in this thesis as the main opponents of the multinational coal industry in Moatize. They resisted Vale's mining practices because these threatened their livelihoods by taking away their means of survival, including the land on which they farmed, made bricks, grazed their cattle, and gathered medicinal plants used to cure various ailments. As the residents said, and as I observed, they used every available mechanism to resist Vale's mining practices. These ranged from invasions of Vale's property to protest, to the paralysis of the company's activities at some point. The type of resistance analysed in this thesis initially took organised forms and challenged the land rights granted to Vale by the Mozambican state. However, such resistance was reprimanded by the state police, forcing its protagonists to opt for the path of covert acts of

resistance, which Scott (1990) describes as everyday resistance or infrapolitics, where the resisters are concerned with immediate gains against the institution they are resisting.

1.1 Purpose and aims

This is an ethnographic study of the dynamics and everyday practice of resistance against a large-scale coal-mining project in the Moatize district of Mozambique. It is situated in a context where the state, within a contextualised neoliberal agenda, has become the facilitator of Foreign direct investment (FDI), touted as capable of creating jobs and bringing development. It examines the interaction of the local people of Moatize with the practices of coal exploitation by the multinational mining company and the Mozambican state, as well as the forms of resistance to these practices. It shows how local people have experienced the changes in their livelihoods brought about by industrial mining, with a particular focus on their access to mining revenues, land, water, health, and work. The thesis focuses both on the impacts of mining and land sector reforms on residents' living conditions and on the attempts of the people of this Mozambican mining town to reclaim their homes and livelihoods. Thus, this thesis analyses how the discourses and practices of industrial coal mining have affected the livelihoods of the residents in the Moatize district.

The thesis aims to contribute to scholarly discussions of how people living in the Global South are shaped by the neoliberal model of development implemented by a mining multinational company with state facilitation. The present study's relevance is heightened at a time when new mineral exploitation and mining projects are proliferating in the country, particularly in places far from the central power of the state. The thesis asks the following research questions: First, how do the multinational corporation and the Mozambican state that follow neoliberal principles affect local peoples and their spaces, especially those in the vicinity of mining operations? Second, in what ways do local people respond to being deprived of their land and excluded from exercising their rights? Third, how do local people strategically resist the impacts of coal mining, such as displacement to new resettlement areas and reduced access to land and mining resources?

Inspired by political scientist and anthropologist James Scott's theoretical framework on the resistance of subaltern people to political power, this thesis examines how resistance to coal mining in the Moatize district was carried out by the so-called everyday forms of resistance, when the state police repressed open popular demonstrations against mining practices. One of the meanings

of everyday resistance, often discussed in anthropological literature, emphasises the fact that the entity being resisted is not aware of being resisted. This resistance is often anonymous, and the resisters' goal of meeting urgent needs such as physical security, food, land, or income in relative safety is achieved simply by following the line of least resistance (Scott 1985:35). For Scott, the practices of everyday resistance precede riots, social movements, and political parties. However, invisible and individual resistance can develop into more visible, organised, and large-scale forms.

This thesis contributes to anthropological debates on the forms of resistance that people affected by neoliberal mega-projects initiate and the mechanisms of resistance available to them. Until the late 1950s anthropology's initial approach to resistance fell within the dominant political anthropology of the time which emphasised the maintenance of social order and avoided questions of oppression and conflict. In the light of this approach, anthropologists who analysed points of friction tended to describe them as the temporary release of social tensions. In this period, resistance was largely not analysed as a challenge to power or domination (Wright 2023). The subaltern studies school of thought, from which I also draw inspiration for the analysis of my ethnographic material, suggested that much of the ethnographic record and early anthropological theorising about resistance relied too heavily on colonial and elite knowledge. This failed to take into account the vast majority of the world's ordinary colonised people – the subalterns – and the ways in which they were not represented in most studies. Subaltern studies have attempted to explore the resistance of groups such as peasants and the ways in which hegemony was never complete in colonial societies (Wright 2023:4).

The ethnographic approach to resistance when it comes to coal mining practices in Moatize is a case in point to understand the political agency of local residents, who demanded their land rights and compensation in a political context of state repression. My ethnographic account of Moatize resistance thus also fits into what Fortun (2012) calls the ethnography of late industrialism, a historical period characterised by degraded infrastructure, exhausted paradigms, and the incessant chatter of new media. Fortun (2012:449–450) argues that ethnographic resources are useful for understanding the late industrial world; such resources can be considered technical and elaborate means of making things possible, extracting their meanings, and encouraging critical reflection. Pandey (2015) argues that late industrial ethnographies depict interactions between mining operations and surrounding communities, emphasising the protests and struggles of local populations as they strive to protect their land rights and secure compensation for their losses. Pandey (2015) also

demonstrates that late industrial ethnographies differ from those of the industrial era in that the latter assumed that mining projects would transform the lives of people in low-income countries by driving industrial growth through mining.

By studying the resistance of Moatize residents to Vale's coal-mining practices, I am studying the response of these residents to the dominance of economic and political power structures that exacerbate the socio-economic inequality in their region. The residents' resistance to mining practices is a way to challenge and undermine the same political and economic ideologies through alternative discourses and practices of the agency of the marginalised groups. In this way, this study contributes to the understanding of the agency of a local people, who, with the resources at their disposal, confronted a powerful multinational company backed by the state in the implementation of a project promising development that never arrived. López (2021:67–143) demonstrates how the lands of Sami reindeer herders in Kiruna became unavailable due to extractive industries based on capitalist and colonial models transforming space and society, and how the herders responded to this. This had serious implications for their reindeer-herding ecology. I refer to this capacity for response as agency, encompassing the activation of rural social relations in urban spaces, the formation of political organisations, and the creation of architectures that reject the colonial dichotomy of "settled" versus "nomadic." Agency, as Vorhölter (2024) states, is broadly defined as the socio-culturally mediated capacity to act. Classically, the concept is used to analyse how people attempt to influence or change their life-worlds and how they act within or even resist powerful structures.

1.2 Local context

The district of Moatize[10] is located in the central province of Tete, northwest of the province's capital city – also called Tete, and bordered to the north by the districts of Tsangano and Chiúta. To the south, Moatize is bordered by the district of Mutarara and the province of Manica (Guro and Tambara), to the east by the Republic of Malawi, and to the west by the district of Changara and the city of Tete (MAE 2014). According to some elders I interacted with, the name Moatize is related to the local environment, which was characterised by constant conflicts and wars in the pre-colonial era. In Moatize, the Nyungwe is the main ethnic group. The elders knew from their ancestors' oral

[10] In Mozambique, according to Law 8/2003, the district is the main territorial unit of the local organisation of the state. Law 8/2003 establishes the principles and norms for the organisation, competence, and functioning of the state bodies (LOLE) in Mozambique, including the district.

histories that the word Moatize comes from the Nyungwe word *watiza*, which means to run away from wars. Ramos, a 74-year-old small farmer and resident of the Liberdade neighbourhood, told me that he had seen the town of Moatize grow since his childhood. He also mentioned that his great-grandfather had told him stories about conflicts, mainly about the occupation of land, which gave Moatize the name of *Watiza*. The people of Moatize, especially the elderly, believe that the Portuguese settlers changed *Watiza* to Moatize when they arrived in the region because it was easier for them to understand and pronounce. The Portuguese, according to Newitt (1995:42), arrived in the Tete region in the 16th century to pursue commercial interests in a region that, prior to their arrival, had been an important Swahili-Arab trading centre.

The district of Moatize covers an area of about 8,500 km^2 and has a population of about 344,000. The vast majority of the population is rural, around 78%, and their main source of livelihood is agriculture and trade in agricultural surpluses and fishing (MAE 2014; INE 2018). Three administrative posts divide the Moatize district: Kambulatsitsi, Zóbue, and Moatize. The administrative post of Kambulatsitsi has two localities, Kambulatsitsi-sede (headquarters of Kambulatsistsi) and Mecungas. The Zóbue administrative post consists of the localities of Zóbue-sede (Zóbue headquarters), Capirindzane, and Nkodedzi. The administrative post of Moatize comprises the locality of Moatize Sede (the headquarters of Moatize), the town of Moatize, and the localities of Benga, M'phanzu, and Msungo (MAE 2014).

Figure 1: Map of Mozambique. Drawn by Paulo Covele, Geography Department, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FLCS), Eduardo Mondlane University (UEM).

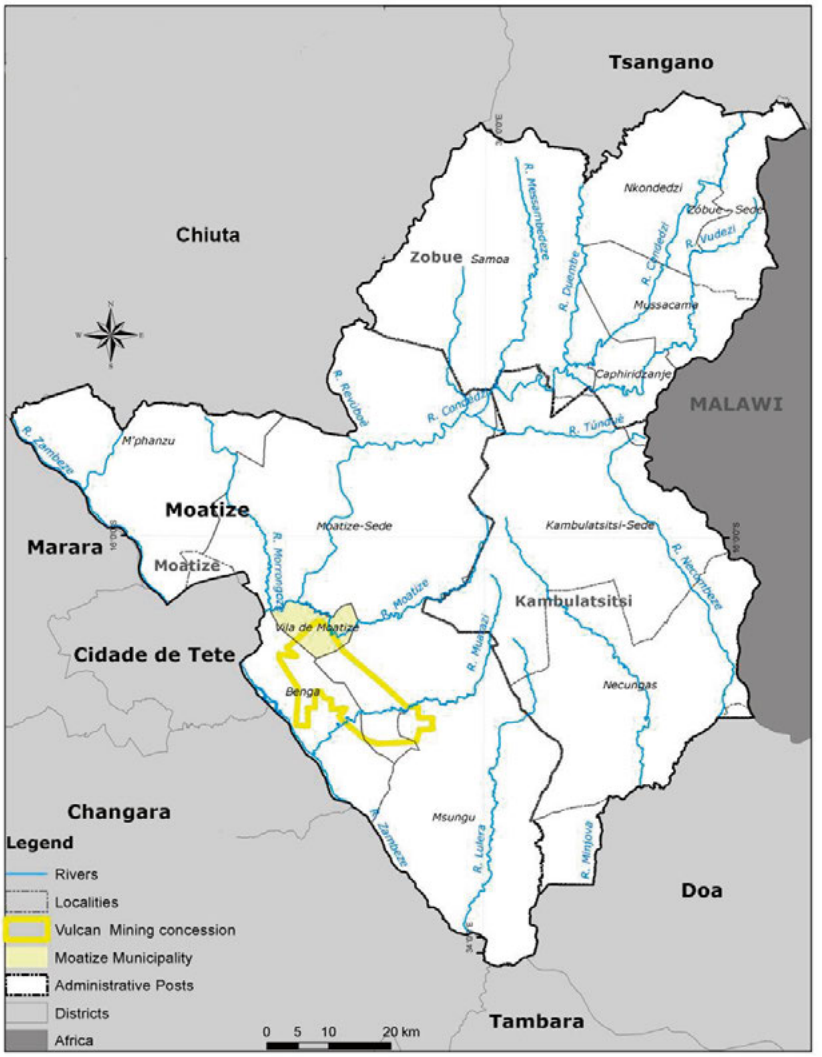

Figure 2: Map of the district of Moatize. Drawn by Paulo Covele. Geography Department, FLCS, UEM.

The city[11] of Moatize is developed along two major axes: the N7 road – the main link to Tete, which serves as a connection to the administrative posts of

[11] The city of Moatize coincides with the municipality of the same name, which was granted city status by Resolution 17/2020 on 5 March. However, its residents refer to it as a town in their daily lives. In this thesis, I will refer to Moatize interchangeably as either a city or a town.

Kambulatsisi, Zóbue, the district of Tsangano, and Malawi – and the railway infrastructure. A network of passenger transport called *chapas* (minibuses) with 16 seats operates regularly between Moatize and Tete and between Moatize and Zóbue. Another form of transport considered flexible by the people of Moatize is the motorcycle taxi. Motorcycle taxis can be found in all areas of the municipality of Moatize, and due to their flexibility and ease of ownership compared to vehicles or *chapas*, many young Moatize people use them as a means of business and livelihood.

There is steady flow of lorries carrying various goods along the busy N7 road, mainly those belonging to the Indian mining company Jindal, which transports coal to its deposits in the so-called Bairro Primeiro de Maio,[12] en route to the former *Empresa Estatal Carbonífera de Moçambique* (CARBOMOC, the former parastatal Mozambique Coal Company). Lorries carrying fuel from the port of Beira in Mozambique's central province of Sofala to supply neighbouring Malawi also use the N7 road. Economically, this road is essential for the flow and supply of agricultural products to Moatize. At the same time, traders of agricultural products in trucks contribute to the income of the municipality by paying fees for doing business locally. Trucks carrying food products such as maize and beans from the districts of Angónia and Tsangano also supply the city of Tete. The N7 is also a migration route, with buses carrying passengers from Malawi to Maputo in search of better living conditions in South Africa.

The socio-economic life of Moatize revolves around agriculture, brickmaking, cattle-rearing, and sales in informal markets. In Moatize, *machambas* (agricultural fields) are vital also for those who are not small farmers but might rely on several different sources of livelihood. In the Municipal area, small farmers and people who consider themselves *oleiros*[13] – "potters" who produce clay bricks, one of the main economic and income-generating activities in Moatize – were displaced from their customary lands.

Coal mining has influenced the spatial configuration of the city of Moatize, with its four different residential areas built following the development of coal mining activities. These residential areas have different characteristics, particularly the centre of Moatize, which benefits from the infrastructure built in

[12] *Bairro Primeiro de Maio* (Portuguese) means First of May Neighbourhood and is a tribute to the day labourers. The celebration of Workers' Day in Moatize is usually organised by the District Administration, where workers from different public and private companies, as well as citizens from different neighbourhoods of Moatize, go to the *Praça dos Heróis* – Heroes Square – in Moatize town to lay flowers to mark the date.

[13] *Oleiro* (Portuguese) means potter. However, in their daily activities, these Moatize *oleiros* only produce clay bricks.

colonial times by the *Caminhos de Ferro de Moçambique* (CFM, the Mozambique Railway Company). It is also the location of the city's main infrastructure, including sports facilities, such as the Moatize football pitch, and the municipal pitch of 25 de Setembro built by Vale as part of its social responsibility. Vulcan, the company that replaced Vale, now owns a large tract of land within the municipality, granted by the Mozambican state, which has become the focus of daily disputes with Moatize residents, particularly small farmers, brick makers, traditional healers, and cattle breeders.

The central area of Moatize is also home to the CFM Health Centre (a public hospital), the passenger terminal of the Mozambican Railways, the headquarters of the Moatize District Administration, and the headquarters of the Municipality. The main access roads to the Municipality are also located in this area. According to elderly residents, the Primeiro de Maio neighbourhood is one of the main areas in the city of Moatize. It emerged when industrial coal mining began in the 20th century. It is characterised by the infrastructure of the former state company CARBOMOC and the houses built for its workers. The CARBOMOC Health Centre, the first and largest health centre in the Moatize district, built during the Portuguese colonial period, is also located in this area. The road leading from this health centre to the centre of Moatize was rehabilitated by the 2.75%[14] Mining Fund (cf. Vale Moçambique 2009).

The most important Moatize neighbourhood where I carried out fieldwork is Bairro 25 de Setembro, the date on which the national liberation war against Portuguese colonialism began in Mozambique, and was named in honour of these former fighters. Its emergence is linked to the civil war (1976–1992), which caused many people to leave other neighbourhoods of Moatize for the administrative centre, allegedly in search of safer places after the sabotage of the railway line in 1982 (Pantie 2006). The emergence of this neighbourhood predates the mining boom of the 2010s in Moatize, but my interlocutors pointed out that the area expanded because of Vale's mining activities. The neighbourhood benefited more from the social infrastructure such as a health centre, a market, and a small primary school, built alongside new houses for the resettlement of people displaced from the mining areas. The construction of these infrastructures and other mining related services also accelerated its growth.

[14] The 2.75% is the mining revenue fund that the central government, through the Ministry of Finance in Maputo, shares with the communities affected by the mining problem (cf. Law 1/2013, which approved the 2013 Mozambique State Budget). In Mozambique, Law 15/2017 amends Law 28/2014 in order to establish a specific tax regime and benefits system for mining activities. According to Article 39, numbers 1 and 4, gains resulting from mining activities in Mozambican territory are classified as capital gains and are subject to the standard tax rate of 32%.

The 25 de Setembro neighbourhood is an important area in the city, its infrastructure having have led to remarkable development, but because the buildings are not maintained, they are in a state of degradation. The inside of the market is also not used by vendors because, according to the Municipal authorities, the conditions for the vendors to carry out their activities are not yet fully in place. At the same time, the municipal market, the main market in the city centre, does not have enough space to accommodate all the vendors, some of whom do not have stalls and sell their wares on the floor.

A privileged social group has emerged in the 25 de Setembro neighbourhood, living in gated communities. This group is an exception in Moatize, wealthier than the majority who live in poor neighbourhoods and are deprived of drinking water, electricity, and other important amenities. The local elite in the 25 de Setembro neighbourhood own luxury apartments and have invested in real estate. This trend became widespread after the establishment of the mining companies, as residents who owned land and other property in the coal mining areas were able to sell them to the mining companies for huge sums and invested in real estate. Although this wealthy group created local economic inequalities, they also invested in the provision of essential goods and services, such as water. At present, the 25 de Setembro neighbourhood offers a range of economic and housing opportunities for the working class, including rental houses for mining company workers and jobs in the tourist areas and in the miners' houses as night watchmen. These opportunities have brought in different people from both outside and inside Moatize.

I also carried out fieldwork in other neighbourhoods, including Chithatha, Bagamoio, and Liberdade. Located on the banks of the Revúbue River, Chithatha lacks concrete activities to promote its development, and unlike the 25 de Setembro neighbourhood, it is characterised by precarious housing and a lack of relevant infrastructure. Most of the migrant poor of Moatize town live in the Chithatha neighbourhood. Like Chithatha, Bagamoio and Liberdade are areas negatively affected by coal mining. In these neighbourhoods, the environmental impact of open-cast mining was more evident because of their proximity to the mining areas, with the daily drama of mining activities, such as dust and noise pollution, characterising these neighbourhoods. The residents of these neighbourhoods did not benefit, at least not directly, from the mining activity in Moatize.

Ethnographic material from Moatize shows a process of gentrification through which different residential areas have experienced varying social gains from coal mining. While some areas have seen more infrastructural development and greater affluence among residents, other neighbourhoods have been negatively affected by mining. It is in these negatively affected areas that

tensions are concentrated and acts of resistance against the mining company take place.

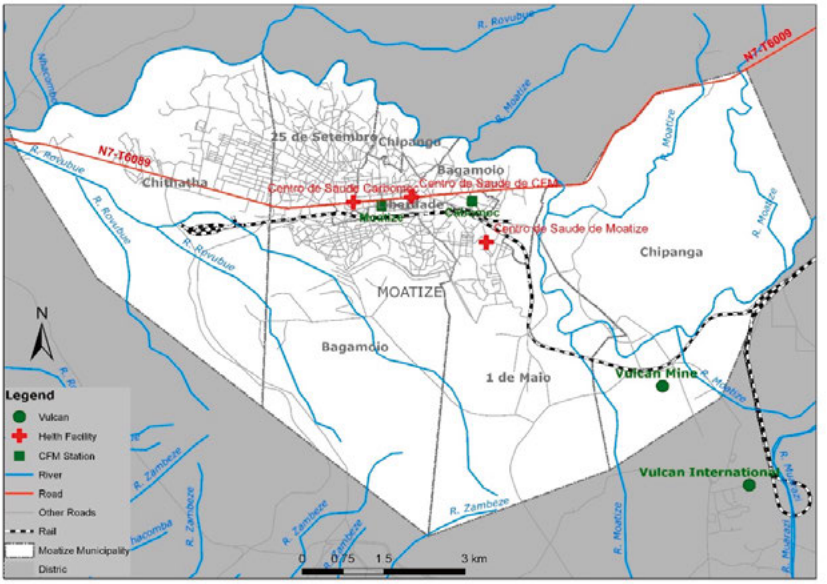

Figure 3: Map of the Municipality of Moatize. Drawn by Paulo Covele. Geography Department, UEM, FLCS.

A crucial aspect of my ethnographic fieldwork was the language I used to communicate with my interlocutors. I speak the national language: Portuguese. This is also the official language of my interlocutors in Moatize. However, the residents of Moatize often use the local Nyungwe language in their daily interactions, especially in informal settings such as their homes, *machambas*, cattle pastures, and brickworks. During my interactions with them in these settings, my field guide, who assisted in translating and interpreting the ethnographic material, always accompanied me. To ensure that the accounts of my interlocutors were fully understood, I always used field guides who were fluent in both Nyungwe and Portuguese. This allowed me to communicate with Nyungwe speakers who struggled with Portuguese.

Despite the cultural differences between the Nyungwe and my background in southern Mozambique's Changana culture, I found commonalities that helped me to connect with them. This facilitated my understanding of the lived experience of the Moatize residents. An example of these common cultural aspects can be seen in food preferences. There are also cultural similarities in

the practice of agriculture as a primary means of survival as well as in traditional housing styles. The ethnographic fieldwork consisted of interacting with my interviewees and observing their actions, which I then compared with the interviews and other ethnographic material I collected.

What I may have missed in Nyungwe was captured by my observations and understanding of their practices during the 12 months I lived in Moatize. I acknowledge that communicating in a second language, such as Portuguese, may have resulted in some interlocutors not being able to express themselves accurately. However, this does not mean that my ethnographic fieldwork was undermined, as I collected ethnographic material from multiple sources.

A mayor, elected in the municipal elections, governs the Municipality of Moatize. Although Law 2/1997 on decentralisation in Mozambique (*Lei de descentralização*) refers that local authorities enjoy administrative, financial, and patrimonial autonomy, they are subject to administrative and financial supervision by the state. A district administrator, who is appointed by the president of the Mozambique, represents the central state in Moatize. The Moatize District Administration is organised into several district services. In the thesis, emphasis is placed on the District Administration and the District Planning and Infrastructure Service Unit (SDPI), which has been involved in resettlement planning in the district as well as in channelling state mining funds to compensate communities affected by mining-related issues.

Law 8/2003 on Local State Organs (*Lei dos órgãos Locais de Estado* – LOLE) stipulates that districts are a higher-level state administrative body with more power than municipalities. However, much of the legislation enacted by the state in Mozambique has overlapped with that enacted at the municipal level, as I will show in the case of Moatize. Throughout the thesis, I will refer to the public municipal authority as the Municipal Administration and the district authority as the District Administration, or central state deconcentration body. As I have observed, although the District Administration was established first and has more power than the Municipal Administration, residents refer to the Municipal Administration as the body that governs their daily lives.

1.3 Ethnographic research in Moatize

This thesis is based on 12 months of ethnographic field research in the district of Moatize, focusing on the urban area of Moatize Municipality and some localities of the district. I divided my ethnographic fieldwork into four phases: the first lasted one month and took place in February – March 2019; the second also lasted one month and took place in November – December 2020; the third

lasted eight months and took place between April and December 2021; and the fourth and final phase lasted two months and took place in January and March 2023.

I also carried out archival studies on the Tete region and mining practices in the Moatize district at the *Arquivo Histórico de Mocambique* (AHM, Mozambique Historical Archive) in Maputo. I used Mozambique's newspapers, such as *Jornal Notícias, Jornal Verdade*, *Savana,* and *Canal de Moçambique* as sources of information on mining practices in Moatize. Information broadcast by Mozambican television stations, such as *Soico Televisão* (STV), also served as sources of information on community demands around Vale's coal mining project in Moatize. Social media platforms also proved useful for gathering information; on Whatsapp and Facebook, I received several videos from people showing different coal mining practices that endangered the health of the citizens of Moatize.

The fieldwork consisted of participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and formal and informal conversations. In my interaction with the residents of Moatize, I held semi-structures interviews with 105 people between 2019 and 2023. Most of my interlocutors were subsistence farmers and brickmakers who had been resettled by Vale to the 25 de Setembro neighbourhood in the city of Moatize, as well as to the rural areas of Cateme and Mualádzi (Kambulatsistsi), located 30–40 km from the city of Moatize. Since 2019, I have interviewed and spoken informally with some 50 small farmers and brickmakers.

The ethnographic study was carried out in areas under the jurisdiction of the Municipal Administration (the Municipality of Moatize) and in rural areas under the jurisdiction of the District Administration, such as Benga, Cateme, and Mualádzi. My emphasis, however, was on the municipality and its council (a decentralized and elected body) because it was in this area that the mining company was established and had the greatest impact on local residents. In addition to small farmers, brickmakers, cattle breeders, and traditional healers opposing Vale's mining activities, my interlocutors also included street vendors, members of local Consultative Councils, former *Companhia Carbonífera de Moçambique* (CCM) workers employed during the colonial period, and former CARBOMOC employees from after the country's independence in 1975. In the municipal area, I included civil servants of the District Administration and elected representatives of the Municipality, including the Mayor, and the councillors of the RENAMO bench in the Moatize Municipal Council. I also included the representative of traditional chieftaincy, the Queen of Moatize. Members of four civil society organisations and some Vale miners I met outside the company's facilities also participated as interlocutors.

In Mozambique, a person who practice agriculture is called *camponês*, which in English translates as peasant. The term *camponês* is accepted and used by the peasants themselves, and in the literature on the subject in Mozambique, the peasants are commonly referred to as *campesinato* (peasantry). Bernstein (2010:3) argues that the term peasant typically refers to household farming organised for simple reproduction, specifically to provide one's own food, known as subsistence. However, the term in Mozambique is a political category that was imposed by Frelimo after independence. The idea of a uniform and undifferentiated peasantry in the Mozambican context arose from the Frelimo project of rural socialisation, or forms of collective production. Although most people in this category are involved in subsistence production, it is also true that, due to the economic context of need in which they live, they use their production as a means of economic gain in informal environments, as I found in the district of Moatize. I therefore use the analytical terms "small farmers" or "smallholders" when referring to agricultural producers in Moatize, and "peasants" when Frelimo refers to them as an undifferentiated group, even though those in Moatize produced goods for sale on a small scale in order to purchase products that they did not grow themselves.

I also observed the daily life of Moatize, which was characterised by the demands of the small farmers and brickmakers at the Vale and then Vulcan company headquarters – demands for the compensation that Vale/Vulcan and the District Administration failed to pay after displacing them from the land where they lived, practised subsistence agriculture, and made bricks. I also directly observed coal extraction from Vale's mine, in the Moatize river valley, a place where people cut the fence to access the water and its resources. I interacted with cattle breeders who grazed their livestock in the grassland around the Moatize's river.

Because the mining context of Moatize is a contested space where groups of small farmers, brickmakers, cattle breeders, and traditional healers confronted the multinational company, I decided to enter the field through cases and events, following and analysing the discourses and practices of different stakeholders. Kapferer (2010) states that the exploration of events and situations through case studies has long been at the focus of anthropological ethnographic description. Events of conflict or tension effectively constitute what the Manchester School (and, before them, the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute in Zambia) defined as significant events or practices likely to reveal the social and political forces engaged in the production of social life. The events that broke the apparent calm or routine of everyday life were the focus of Manchester anthropologists such as Max Gluckman (Kapferer 2010:2). They viewed conflict or events that manifested social and political tension not as

dysfunctional or pathological, but as being vital in the definition and reproduction of social and political relations. The state event described in Chapter 8, involving the residents, the Mayor, and the District Administrator, provides an insight into the political tensions surrounding decentralisation in Moatize.

As the opposition of the local people to both the multinational company and the Moatize District Administration became clear, I decided to approach the field from the perspective of resistance. The cases and events I followed showed situations of people's frustration leading them to open and semi-open acts of resistance against Vale and the District Administration, which, according to my interlocutors, supported coal mining in its activities. The cases analysed were those of local people, mainly the poor, who illicitly entered the company's property on a daily basis in search of food, medicinal products, and other forms of subsistence. My interactions and informal conversations with the various interlocutors were as important as being able to understand what was at stake when people protested and sabotaged Vale's areas in Moatize.

Many cases were crucial for this thesis: the accounts of the traditional chief and the traditional healers of AMETRAMO; the ceremony in honour of the Mozambican heroes; the stories of the small farmers and the brickmakers, the Consultative Councils and the civil society organisations (CSOs); and the case of António, whose daughter fell ill and died. These cases allowed me to understand how Moatize people interacted with mining practices and how everyday acts of resistance against Vale developed in the Moatize District. I proceeded to investigate the interactions of the local people with various company actors, listening to and analysing their accounts. The accounts and practices of these actors made it possible to understand what is at stake when interacting or not interacting with the multinational company that shapes them in the time of Mozambican neoliberalism.

Although Vale Ltd did not allow me to carry out research in their facilities, I was nevertheless able to interact with three miners who worked for the company. I became their friend, and one of them became my research guide and main informant.

Because the Moatize context is also characterised by informal trade, I sought to understand how street vendors experienced interaction with Vale. I also interacted with some street vendors in the Bagamoio neighbourhood and outside the community market, where informal trade was practised.

My starting point for fieldwork in Moatize was the neighbourhood of Bagamoio, even when I settled in the neighbourhood of 25 de Setembro. This was due to the visibility of the conflicts in Bagamoio between local people and the company. The residents argued that the Vale area's resources belonged to

them, and that the fence preventing them from entering was unfairly erected. From the Bagamoio neighbourhood, I extended fieldwork to other neighbourhoods of Moatize, including Chithatha and the centre of Moatize.

Upon my arrival in Moatize in February 2019, I presented myself to the authorities at the provincial level. My first ethnographic access to Moatize was made possible with the help of a person who identified as Nyungwe, the firstcomers in Moatize, whom I had met during my first day of research. I asked him for the location of the municipality headquarters, and he directed me there and then to the District Administration. Because he was the first person, I met in Moatize, I asked to visit his home, where he introduced his family. After a week of him showing me around Moatize, we had developed a trusting relationship, and he became my field guide. And because he was knowledgeable about certain aspects of my research, such as traditional healers' practices and the history of mining-related displacement and resettlement, he also became one of my interlocutors.

When I returned to Moatize for the second phase of my fieldwork, I presented myself to the municipal authorities for subsequent authorisation to carry out my research. The Mayor of Moatize checked my fieldwork request and told the officials that he needed to meet me in person. Once I met with the Mayor, he allowed me to start the fieldwork, telling me that in the past, it was common for people to come to the area to collect information and then "defame" the Municipality. As I understood it, the suspicious Mayor wanted my research to portray the Moatize Municipality in a positive light, describing it as a place with a promising future thanks to coal mining. However, before I met him, I had already heard that the local people were exposed to the negative effects of mining, which worsened with the arrival of the multinational mining companies.

In my interactions with the small farmers and brickmakers, I found that some of them saw me as someone who would solve the compensation problems they had with Vale. But it was also a fact that other residents suspected me of being a Vale agent who wanted to register their details for another resettlement process without compensation. This group of residents did everything they could to avoid giving any information. According to some of the residents, from the moment they realised that Vale would not paying the compensation it owed them, they began to mistrust anyone who came to their neighbourhoods to carry out any kind of registration of their land, even if that person was carrying out academic research, as was the case with me. Although the Moatize authorities allowed me to conduct ethnographic research, it took two to three weeks for the locals to accept me as a researcher genuinely interested in them. However, I later understood the reasons for this suspicion when

I visited the new areas that Vale wanted to open up in Block II of the mining expansion areas, where the representative of the small farmers and cattle breeders refused to interact with me. He claimed that this could only be done in the presence of all the small farmers and cattle breeders whose *machambas* and cattle were inside the zone. This area had previously been fenced off by Vale, but the small farmers and cattle breeders refused to leave.

During this fieldwork phase, I also met Armando, a 53-year-old resident of the Bagamoio neighbourhood, located near the coal mines. Armando provided me with extensive information about how he and his community in the Bagamoio neighbourhood experienced the consequences of coal mining activities on a daily basis. He was a smallholder farmer, but he was also a mechanic and had a driving licence that allowed him to take his old vehicle to the neighbouring districts of Moatize, where he grew food on his *machambas* to feed his family. His house was about 200 to 300 metres from the fence that Vale had erected to separate the mining area from the residential areas. As a result, he said that his house, a precarious structure made of reed and cement, suffered from the explosions in Vale's mines.

However, it was not until the third phase of fieldwork in 2021 that I made contact with my key interlocutor, who was also a member of one of the civil society organisations (CSOs) working in Moatize. Through this interlocutor, who also became my fieldwork guide, I had access to spaces related to governance in Moatize, such as the Municipal and District Administrations, the traditional chieftaincy, and the Consultative Councils, as well as various CSOs.

In 2021, when the Covid-19 pandemic was at its peak, I resorted to working in the field using respiratory protection and hand sanitiser to protect myself, even though most people in Moatize were not concerned about wearing masks or otherwise protecting themselves from the disease. This made me uneasy, as there were some situations where I had to take my mask off. During this third phase, from April to December 2021, I experienced the drama of water scarcity. In Mozambique, there are two seasons: the rainy season, which typically lasts from November to April, and the dry season, which lasts from May to October. From September to December 2021, the apartment building in which I lived, in the 25 de Setembro neighbourhood, was supplied with water by a national public institution, the *Fundo de Investimento e Património para o Abastecimento de Água* (FIPAG, Investment Fund for Water Supply), which had enormous difficulties providing its services.

In Tete Province, the temperature remains relatively stable throughout the year, with only a few degrees' difference between the seasons or between day and night. When I arrived, the dry season was approaching, with maximum

temperatures ranging from 24°C to 26°C and minimum temperatures hovering around 15°C. It is worth noting that the province of Tete is the hottest in the country, and at the time of my research, mainly between the months of September and December, daily temperatures reached 40°C. This time, due to scarcity of drinking water, the alternatives were water from (polluted) rivers or from private suppliers who delivered water in the early hours of the morning, requiring people to form long queues to receive the minimum amount of water for consumption. In daily conversations, local residents mentioned that the water shortage in Moatize was caused by the mining company's excessive use of water to control the dust generated by coal mining. In addition, I observed the residents' access to water in the Municipality of Moatize and their reaction in the Primeiro de Maio neighbourhood to the expropriation of part of the Moatize River by Vale.

In the third phase of fieldwork, I also followed the illness and passing of a daughter of António, one of my interlocutors. The daughter perished after her father's multiple attempts to cure her using traditional medicine as well as biomedical services. I describe her case in Chapter 7 as a way of understanding how perceptions of traditional medicine influence how people seek treatment in cases of illness where the biomedical services do not help. One of my interlocutors took me to the headquarters of *Associação dos Médicos Tradicionais de Moçambique* (AMETRAMO, Association of Traditional Healers of Mozambique). The traditional healers at AMETRAMO introduced me to the world of traditional medicine and explained how their association interacted with Vale on a daily base. As the practice of traditional medicine was both very common and respected in Moatize, I became a frequent visitor to their headquarters in Moatize. The group of traditional healers at the AMETRAMO headquarters were enthusiastic and willing to share their knowledge with me. Unlike my interactions with public authorities, where access required the assistance of someone well-known in Moatize, it was easy to reach out to AMETRAMO. They were keen to demonstrate the importance of their services and skill, which were often misunderstood by certain groups in society who considered their practice as *atrasado* (backward) and *supersticioso* (superstitious).

1.4 Outline of the thesis

Following this introduction, which provides background information and outlines the objectives of the study, Chapter 2 presents the analytical framework used to analyse the ethnographic material on residents' resistance to Vale's mining practices in Moatize.

In Chapter 3, I examine how state reform of land rights has affected power relations in Moatize. I consider residents' perspectives on traditional land tenure, followed by an analysis of chieftaincy as a political structure that Moatize residence legitimised for its role in interpreting customary land rights claims. The chapter also analyses the power relations that developed after the arrival of Vale, which in turn influenced the demand for land in Moatize and were linked to various tactics used by residents to obtain formal land titles.

Chapter 4 analyses coal mining practices in the district of Moatize, focusing on residents' perspectives about the former company CCM, which operated in Moatize during the colonial period and the first years of Mozambican independence and was later nationalised and managed by the Mozambican state. This is followed by an examination of perspectives on the state mining company CARBOMOC during the period of socialist rule and on the practices of foreign coal multinationals—particularly on the Brazilian company Vale—whose activities created social inequalities and human rights issues that prompted the local population to protest both openly and covertly.

Chapter 5 focuses on the experiences of the resettled groups, such as small farmers and brickmakers. In this chapter, I also discuss the mining company's discourses, or rhetoric of development, used to achieve the peaceful displacement of people from their homes, and the *machambas* and brickworks that served as their means of survival. I then analyse the relations that have developed between the residents of Moatize, the Vale company, and the Moatize District Administration – relations that grown tense due to unfulfilled promises made during Vale's project development.

Chapter 6 examines how residents mobilised over mining and land resources in Moatize. It analyses forms of mobilisation that escalated into violence and were subsequently suppressed by the police, raising the issue of human rights violations in the area. It also describes how the residents, represented by their Consultative Councils in the Municipality of Moatize and the localities of Benga, Mualádzi, and Cateme, demanded that their development needs be respected and that the 2.75% mining revenue fund be used to build or purchase infrastructure for them.

Chapter 7 explores the interaction between traditional medicine practitioners, the state, and the mining company in Moatize. It demonstrates that the practice of traditional medicine is a contested space in Moatize due to a lack of full recognition by groups who consider themselves modernised. The chapter provides insights into how the traditional healers of AMETRAMO oppose the mining activity that displaced of their members from the sacred lands once used for medicinal plants and spiritual rituals. The mining industry has also affected local health practices, forcing traditional healers to find innovative

solutions to address newly created social vulnerabilities. The mobilisation of ancestor spirits to combat bad coal mining practices is one such solution.

Chapter 8 examines the conflict of interest between the two public authorities in Moatize over the transfer of the 2.75% mining revenue fund to the Moatize District Administration. It discusses the conflict as a struggle for mining resources and power between Moatize's Administrator and Mayor, with the latter using various tactics to gain recognition for his full administration of the Municipality, including the management of mining revenues transferred by the central state to the District Administration. The chapter also examines the annual state ceremony on 3 February to honour Mozambican heroes, which revealed the same conflict of interests between the two authorities. From this conflict, the chapter shows that local citizens seek a governance model aligned with their aspirations. The chapter also examines how the RENAMO party resists bad mining practices in the Moatize Municipal Council and seek a more open environment of political participation.

Chapter 9 brings the analysis of the entire ethnographic material to the fore and concludes the study by combining various empirical and thematic findings. It offers a general analysis of local resistance and opposition to coal mining in the Moatize district, presenting the study's principal findings and reflecting on broader patterns of infrapolitical resistance to Vale's neoliberal ventures amidst economic and political exclusion in Moatize.

Chapter 2. Analytical Framework

To understand the ways in which the residents of Moatize resisted the mining practices of a powerful multinational corporation whose actions were facilitated by the state, I draw on the theoretical approach of everyday resistance developed by anthropologist and political scientist James Scott. In his approach, Scott (1990:33) argues that the everyday resistance of subaltern[15] groups is a form of political action appropriate to their subaltern status. Scott goes on to say that, under certain conditions, subaltern groups are likely to use less violent forms of political action, such as petitioning, rallying, peaceful marches, protest votes, strikes, and boycotts, rather than more violent forms of political action, such as riots, rebellions, and revolutionary movements. In 2012, for the first time, Moatize's residents displaced from their land by the mining company Vale staged open protests that led to the shutdown of Vale's operations. The police responded violently, killing some of the protesters (Human Rights Watch 2013).

However, due to their immediate need for environmental resources, Moatize residents decided to violate Vale's land rights by entering its allocated land to access the natural resources they had before Vale's arrival, without attracting the attention of the guards or police. In this way, they unsystematically opted for mechanisms of struggle that did not involve direct confrontation with the company. Vale's practices, which the locals say have harmed them, have become public knowledge, but critics who advocated violent action against the company have been reluctant to identify themselves for fear of reprisals by the police. The residents' struggle against the mining project has taken this direction since the beginning of the police repression.

According to Scott (1990:44), social structures, state systems, cultural values, and historical practices help shape political action. Everyday forms of resistance are common in state-socialist forms of agriculture because such systems allow little else in the way of opposition. Through direct control of the means of coercion, this type of state typically precludes open protest. In

[15] In his studies of peasants facing hierarchical oppression, Scott describes them as either subordinates or subalterns. In this thesis, I use the term "subaltern" as it carries a more specific connotation tied to postcolonial theory. This highlights the voicelessness and resistance of marginalised people to power structures (see Spivak 2005).

Moatize, for example, informal, unrecognised smallholder associations led the political struggle against the expropriation of smallholders' land and the lack of compensation. Because the District Administration did not officially recognise these associations, they were often not given the importance they deserved, and their concerns were not addressed.

According to Mozambique's Republican Constitution, all Mozambican citizens, including those in Moatize, have political freedom and the right to form associations. However, there are risks and difficulties in putting this into practice due to the political regimes in power (cf. Scott 1990). The case of Moatize falls under the category of semi-authoritarian regimes, as described by Ottaway (2003:3–5). Such regimes combine rhetorical acceptance of democracy, the existence of some formal democratic institutions, and respect for a limited range of civil and political liberties. However, they essentially exhibit illiberal or even authoritarian characteristics. These conditions, which are unfavourable to both genuine democracy and overt authoritarianism, increase the prospects for the spread of semi-authoritarianism. The fact that Moatize's political authority has these characteristics meant that its residents could not find space for open demonstration against the mining practices that threatened their survival; the political authority denied residents their political right to demonstrate or strike in accordance with the law.

2.1 Everyday resistance

Residents of Moatize pointed out that open protest movements were usually not tolerated when organised by informal groups over which the local government had no control. However, the District Administration allowed open protests if organised by officially registered organisations. This included some national NGOs that have not been outspoken in their criticism of extractive practices harming local people. Scott (1990:51) argues that everyday forms of resistance are marginal practices, not openly declared in the usual sense of politics. These practices are unsystematic and individual, opportunistic and self-indulgent; they have no revolutionary consequences, and their logic is accommodation to the structure of domination. Some residents of Moatize said they were forced to take this form of resistance because open forms of resistance were repressed by the police and Vale's security guards.

Because of poor political relations between the residents and the state, which facilitated Vale's mining practices through police repression of open acts of resistance, much of the political life of the subaltern groups in Moatize was not found in open forms of resistance, nor in compliance with the acts of mining exploitation imposed by Vale. Resistance was sometimes found in

overt forms of resistance but more often in covert forms of resistance (cf. Scott 1990:36).

Scott (1985) shows how although people from below engage in practices of resistance not necessarily recognised as political expression, their actions can still undermine political power when these unrecognised acts develop into an overt form of protest (cf. Johansson Vinthagen 2020). Despite being powerless against the Vale multinational company, the people of Moatize resisted displacement from their customary lands and forest resources through less violent means, organizing meetings with Vale and the District Administration to discuss unresolved compensation issues and circulating messages from unknown people criticising Vale's negative environmental practices. They also sent letters to various government authorities denouncing the pollution in Moatize, and they cut border fences to secretly access to Vale's land to gather resources such as medicinal plants and firewood.

Much of the ordinary politics of subaltern groups have historically been a politics of dissimulation, in which both the symbols and practices of resistance have been veiled (Scott 1990:198). Such forms of struggle are best suited to those areas of conflict where problems of control and surveillance by the authorities are greatest (Scott 1989:52–53). Scott (1990:53–55) suggests that perhaps the most striking feature of ordinary resistance by oppressed groups is the pervasive use of disguise. Those who engage in everyday resistance find the claim or demand they are resisting unjust, and yet they are intimidated by the fear of retaliation from any open, public protest against that injustice. Scott goes on to argue that it is the sense of injustice that is responsible for the tacit cooperation that develops among the resisters. Because everyday forms of resistance take place in dangerous circumstances, resisters hope that their actions will go unnoticed or be overlooked. In Moatize, residents described their practices as a way to express their discontent without making their voices heard in public or resorting to open protest, which would be immediately repressed by the police. At least, as the residents said, by entering Vale's land, they could meet their daily needs. Those who entered this land, especially during the day, usually did so individually so as to evade the guards, and if they went in groups, they did so scattered.

Scott (1985:32–33) notes that the claims of subaltern people in their practices of everyday forms of resistance are about immediate, factual gains. Indeed, the residents of Moatize have shown that their struggle with Vale and the local state administration was more about survival. The immediate benefits for locals in Moatize were, for example, the ability to obtain firewood and essential green leaves when they entered the Vale's land without being caught. Scott argues that the everyday practices of subaltern groups, such as evasion

or theft, are not always what they seem but point to something deeper: they are acts of resistance. Subaltern people, subjected to a process of systematic dispossession, act to undermine this dispossession through evasion or covert theft. In these actions, resisters rarely intended to start a revolution, and their actions do not openly challenge existing power structures. It is also very rare that the perpetrators of these petty acts seek to draw attention to themselves. Their safety lies in their anonymity (Scott 1990:51).

The form of resistance depends on the form of power, Scott (1989:51) argues, because power relations are crucial in limiting the forms of resistance available to powerless groups. In the case of Moatize, it is necessary to highlight the repressive nature of the police authorities, who prevent any form of resident self-organisation that would formally confront the multinational mining company about its practices. It is therefore convenient, as Scott (1989:34) argues, for subaltern groups to opt for everyday practices of resistance rather than more open forms of political conflict. He gives an example where one sphere is the silent and fragmented process by which peasant squatters or poachers raid plantations and state forest land; the other is a public invasion of property that openly challenges property relations. Each action aims to redistribute control over property; the first seeks tacit and de facto gains, the second formal and de jure recognition of these gains. The peasants and poachers opt for the silent, fragmented invasion process because they know that a public or open invasion is likely to be met with armed force and bloodshed.

Vinthagen and Johansson (2013) expand Scott's understanding to demonstrate that resistance involves specific actions in particular contexts. They argue that, like any other acts, resistance acts are performed by someone – all acts have actors and depend on some form of agency (Vinthagen and Johansson 2013:36). Resistance is not an inherent attribute of the subaltern subject; instead of originating within the subject, it arises from the combination of subjectivity, context, and interaction.

As Johansson and Vinthagen (2020:28) argue, everyday resistance can occur before, during, or after dramatic resistance events. It is also carried out in situations and contexts where open resistance is not an option, yet resistance to power is still perceived as motivated. Furthermore, everyday resistance can oppose multiple powers simultaneously (Johansson and Vinthagen, 2020:70–71).

The perspectives of Vinthagen and Johansson (2013) and Johansson and Vinthagen (2020) enable me to analyse the additional levels of resistance that have emerged in the context of political decentralisation in the Municipality of Moatize. On the one hand, there is RENAMO, which as a political party has fought against the fact that Frelimo, the ruling party, governs as if it were

the only party in the Municipal Council. On the other hand, the Municipal Administration is against the District Administration having too much power within the municipal jurisdiction area. Driven on the one hand by its political agency, which has been challenged by the District Administration, the Municipality has tried to assert its power by not complying with the norms established by the decentralisation law. The daily discourse of the residents, who believed that the municipal governance suited their everyday problems, fuelled the Municipal Administration's opposition to the District Administration. On the other hand, through its political agency, RENAMO sought both to participate in resolving problems caused by mining practices within the Municipal Council and to influence legislation protecting residents from bad mining practices.

2.2 Everyday resistance as infrapolitics

In his works (1985, 1989, 1990), Scott analyses informal and unorganised resistance, which he also calls infrapolitics (or invisible politics). Scott thus refers to all of the abovementioned forms of everyday resistance as infrapolitics. The concept itself, as Scott (1990:183–184) points out, seems an appropriate shorthand to convey the idea of a low-profile area of political struggle. Infrapolitics refers to a wide variety of subtle, almost imperceptible forms of grassroots resistance, which are nevertheless significant for political life. Infrapolitics is thus one way of doing politics in a society where open demonstratations are prohibited by the dominant political power.

Scott (1990:xii) argues that all subaltern groups create from their ordeal a hidden transcript that represents a critique of power spoken behind its back. Scott distinguishes between hidden and public transcripts, describing the public transcript as an open interaction between subaltern people and the dominant power (Scott 1990:2). In Moatize, for example, when the District Administration met with officials to discuss mining issues, they showed deference to their superiors when speaking about mining practices. However, in private settings, outside the domain of their bosses, public and private employees tended to criticise mining practices, admitting they were harmful to the people of Moatize. Hidden transcripts (Scott 1990:136), on the other hand, are discourses that take place "off stage," beyond the direct observation of those in power. They consist of those grumblings, rumours, gossip, disguises, linguistic tricks, metaphors, euphemisms, folk tales, ritual gestures, anonymity gestures, and practices that confirm, contradict, or inflect what appears in the public transcript. Moatize residents, as well as some state workers restricted from speaking out due to direct observation by their superiors, found private

spaces where they could express their dissatisfaction with mining practices. The same discourses also occurred between people who knew and trusted each other, often in the form of gossip for fear that others might reveal to their superiors what was said

Hidden transcripts may in turn be divided into those that disguise the message and those that disguise the messenger, who thus avoids retaliation by those in power (Scott 1990: 4–5, 136–140). In Moatize's environment of police repression, there have been various examples of hidden transcripts, of residents not publicly disagreeing with the dominant political discourse for fear of reprisals. But in their daily lives, they took actions that demonstrated that they were not, in fact, in favour of Vale's mining practices. For example, residents pointed to the role of social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp, on which many videos circulated showing Vale's mines near their homes and the pollution they cause. However, there was a concern that the person who first recorded and circulated the images should not be identified.

In Scott's (1990:199–201) argument, infrapolitics is essentially the strategic form that the resistance of subjects must assume under conditions of great peril. It serves to some extent as a means of constant pressure, testing and probing the limits of the permissible. Infrapolitics is the building block for more elaborate institutionalised political action, which could not exist without it. Infrapolitics follows a logic of concealment that extends to its organisation as well as its content. The organisational form of infrapolitics is as much a product of political necessity as of political choice. In Moatize, since overt political activity was largely prohibited, infrapolitical resistance was confined to informal networks of relatives, neighbours, friends, and community (cf. Scott 1990:201). This cooperation was evident in the fact that the people who lived nearby did not denounce those who entered Vale's land. In this way, nearby residents had a kind of tacit cooperation with others who violated Vale's land rights.

In situations where the guards or police became aware that Vale's trespassers had left traces of their presence, the first people to be questioned were those from the nearest communities – but they never knew who the trespassers were. This is compatible with what Scott (1990:200–201) argues when he says that in infrapolitical resistance, there are no leaders to encircle, no membership lists to investigate, no manifestos to denounce, no public activities to draw attention to. Infrapolitical acts of resistance can be seen as more elementary forms of political life on which more elaborate, overt institutional forms can be built. Each of the forms of disguised resistance, of infrapolitics, is the silent partner of a loud form of public resistance. Thus, piecemeal squatting is the

infrapolitical equivalent of an open land invasion: both are aimed at resisting the appropriation of land.

Infrapolitical resistance in Moatize was also carried out by practitioners of traditional medicine, who claimed to use invisible ancestral spirits to attack and paralyse miners who operated excavators in areas once important for traditional practices. Scott (1990:138–140) argues that subaltern groups have also developed a large arsenal of spirit world techniques that serve to protect their identity while facilitating open criticism, threats, and attacks. Scott (1990:141) further argues that the weaponisation of the spirit world is common in many societies, where it represents an almost clandestine form of protest by marginalised and oppressed groups for whom any open protest would be extremely dangerous. Witchcraft is in many ways the classic recourse of vulnerable subaltern groups with little or no safe or open means of challenging a form of domination that irritates them (Scott 1990:144).

A comparison can be made between Scott's idea of everyday resistance tactics and the idea of tactics as developed by de Certeau. While Scott describes hidden transcripts and infrapolitics from an anthropological and political science perspective, de Certeau looks at creative practices of tactics in liberal-democratic contexts from a cultural studies perspective (Johansson and Vinthagen 2020:33). De Certeau (1984:37–55) describes how "a tactic is an art of the weak, determined by the absence of a proper locus as a maneuver 'within the enemy's field of vision." As Johansson and Vinthagen (2020) point out, de Certeau solves one of Scott's main problems – that of his privileged (class antagonistic) intention – by focusing on tactics as a practical, creative way of acting.

In this thesis, the concept of tactics is employed to synthesise the perspectives of Scott and de Certeau, who both argue that everyday resistance involves the small scale, less visible actions of subaltern groups (Johansson and Vinthagen 2020:33). The resistance of Moatize's residents shows their creativity in inventing tactics used as mechanisms of infrapolitical resistance against a powerful state-backed mining company. Examples ranged from residents circumventing Vale's land expropriation strategies – using tactics for economic gain on disputed land by exploiting loopholes in *Lei de Terra 19/1997* – Land Law 19/1997 – to the mayor and his supporters employing resistance tactics to assert full municipal control over the mining resources managed by the District Administration.

2.3 Conclusion

The residents of Moatize used infrapolitical means to fight the political and economic order that dispossessed them of their livelihood and marginalised them. With the advent of the new hegemonic order of the market economy, characterised by mining development projects, further social inequalities were produced. The residents' use of infrapolitical means to fight against the powerful Vale company was favoured by Mozambican state, which supported Vale's mining practices and employed repressive measures to enforce them.

Key concepts such as tactics as the weapon of the weak (Scott 1985, 1990) and tactics as the art of the weak (de Certeau 1984) support an understanding of how the people of Moatize have confronted the Vale mining company and the District Administration without resorting to formal political action against them. The concept of tactics in the thesis shows how, in a context of coercion and repression that limits open protest, subaltern groups can exercise their agency and assert their interests in relation to powerful actors. The same tactics reflected the creativity of the residents themselves, exercised in response to the strategies of a multinational coal company primarily interested in economic gains, while the residents cried out against the degradation of their socio-economic life.

Scott's approach to everyday resistance offers a framework for analysing the practices and discourses of Moatize residents as they took low-profile political action against Vale and the District Administration. Because the residents confronted powerful actors who relied on the police and private guards to prevent overt acts of resistance, the residents resisted through a variety of tactics designed to disguise the actors and protect the practitioners and organisers from identification. In this way, the people of Moatize relied on the means at their disposal to fight powerful private and public bodies. The use of these low-profile forms of political resistance (infrapolitics) does not mean that the residents were unfamiliar with classic forms of political struggle, but rather that only the camouflaged forms of resistance could bring material gains. The power relations and the nature of the political regime in Moatize conditioned overt resistance, pushing the residents towards the infrapolitical forms of resistance that Scott (1985, 1989 and 1990) describes. Because overt resistance was dangerous and subsequently not an option, local people demonstrated their creativity to develop tactics that allowed them to make gains in the dangerous terrain of resistance that characterised Moatize.

The field of everyday, infrapolitical resistance developed by Scott makes it possible to explain how, in a context of police repression, people still manage to express discontent that could not otherwise be made public through open

protests. In this way, the residents of Moatize used their agency, through powerless means, to fight against a hegemonic political power, which they believed was responsible for their exclusion from the sharing of mining resources and the dispossession of their customary lands.

Chapter 3. State, Chieftaincy, and Land Tenure in Moatize

In this chapter, I examine how state reforms and land rights legislation have affected power relations in Moatize, influencing the residents' struggle with the mining industry over land. I begin with a focus on customary land tenure and how residents produced discourses related to this model to legitimise their land tenure. Customary land rights are commonplace and legitimised in practice by residents because their land was acquired under the customary tenure system. In the chapter a relationship is established between the traditional form of land tenure and the model in which the state granted land to foreign investors, such as the mining company Vale, and how foreign investors have come to influence local patterns of access to land. The implementation of Vale's mining project, which involved the displacement and resettlement of the residents of Moatize, ended up depriving them of the power to control their customary lands. As I will show, these same people have resisted some of the investors' land expropriation practices, using tactics that have worked to their advantage both on the ground and in court through loopholes created by the new Land Law 19/1997, which also allowed Vale to usurp customary land.

In order to demonstrate the relationship between the state, chieftaincy, and land tenure, and how this relationship has influenced the power relations between Moatize residents, I begin by describing the customary land tenure practices of Moatize and how these were reinforced by the chieftaincy, the traditional landowner of Moatize. I then offer an analysis of how land tenure and chieftaincy have changed because of the state's interest in foreign mining investment, which has led it to reform land and mining laws. I go on to analyse attempts to incorporate the traditional chieftaincy into the Municipal Administration of Moatize to contain open resistance of the residents backed by the traditional chieftaincy. Finally, I discuss how the relationship between customary land, postcolonial land laws, and coal mining practices have given power to Vale mining company in Moatize.

3.1 Customary tenure practices

Accounts and practices of customary land tenure in Moatize show how residents' land rights were linked to the chieftaincy. Having acquired land from the chief, residents developed a territorial identity symbolised by the different artefacts and biodiversity it contained. They described land tenure as traditionally linked to the control of communal land resources, which did not exclude private interests. Traditional land tenure in Moatize took on specific characteristics during the colonial management system. The elders of Moatize in particular were able to describe and explain the origins of traditional land tenure as well as the role of the chieftaincy in land governance. Their descriptions show how residents occupied their territories according to customary land rights and explains how they see formal land titling as a way of dispossessing them from their customary land.

Zacarias, an elderly 81-year-old with several *machambas* was born in Moatize. He told me how he gained his land, noting that any transfer had to be followed by traditional ceremonies. He put it this way:

> I was born here in Tete Province in the 1940s and moved to Moatize District in the 1960s. When I arrived here, the local chiefs gave me the land, and I did not have to pay a penny. What grew in the forests was for the benefit of all, and access to the goods that the forests gave us was not denied. Today I see with great sadness how I am prevented from entering forests that were ours and are being sold to others.

Accounts like Zacarias's are very common in Moatize. Local people often talked about the past as a time when they had access to the forests, resulting in fewer conflicts over environmental resources. In Moatize, the once-public assets of coal, forests, and water resources were privatised, primarily benefiting Vale. The case of Moatize shows that the creation of enclosures in public areas for the benefit of mining exploitation deprived the local population of access to common goods, and that capitalist interests in private property deprived citizens of the right to use them. To gain access to these places, which were important for their survival, residents used tactics that allowed them to access and benefit from their resources. This is a demonstration of resistance against the expropriation of their customary lands and environmental resources by private interests (cf. Scott 1990).

I interacted frequently with Xavier, an elder of 71-years-old, born and still living in Moatize. Xavier lived during the colonial period and was knowledgeable about Moatize history and Nyungwe culture, and I was able to use much of his knowledge to understand Moatize socio-cultural life during the colonial and post-independence periods. Interactions with him always took place at the headquarters of the Moatize neighbourhoods, which is also the headquarters

of several Moatize civil society organisations. Xavier was a pastor in a Protestant church in the Moatize city; as a child during the colonial period, he completed fourth grade, the highest level of education that *indigenous* Africans like him could achieve. Xavier told me that his birth was registered by *régulo* (chief) Spanela, who was the traditional chief of the Moatize lands during the colonial period between 1950 and 1965. Xavier said that after completing fourth grade in the 1970s, he got a job as a mechanic with the former Mozambican Coal Company (CCM). After independence, he continued to work for the same company, which was nationalised and became CARBOMOC (the state-owned Mozambican Coal Company). His relationship with CARBOMOC ended in the 1990s when the company closed due to the civil war that ravaged the district of Moatize. For the termination of his job, he received compensation.

The power of the *régulo* Spanela in Moatize cannot be seen in isolation. It must be seen in the context of Portuguese colonisation, which established a system of rural administration to regulate the imposition of colonial rule in Mozambique, and the integration of the local peasantry into the world market as producers of staple commodities for colonial industry (Isaacman et al. 1980; O'Laughlin 2002). According to Xavier, *régulo* Spanela protected the population of Moatize from the lion spirits that possessed him. Spanela worked closely with the Portuguese local authorities, and he had the role of registering the locals to obtain the *caderneta do indígena* (the indigenous identification document) for them. When people from outside Moatize wanted to settle in the lands of Moatize, they had to ask *régulo* Spanela. He, in turn, informed the *espíritos de leã*o (lion spirits) that there was a new person requesting land and residence in Moatize. As a rule, the land given to the new member already had a local holder, but because *régulo* Spanela was in charge, locals would always agree to receive newcomers to Moatize.

After this process, the *régulo* Spanela, through the spirit of the lion, gave the newcomer a piece of land to live on and a *machamba* to cultivate, with the guarantee of protection in the community. The allotment of land to live on and to practice agriculture did not involve any financial cost for the newcomer, but once he had settled and reaped his first harvest in the lands of the *régulo* Spanela, he was obliged to make a drink called *pombe*, *malamba,* or *mapira* (sorghum). The newcomer would then organise a *Malombo* ritual where the *pombe* drink was consumed. The ritual involved the *régulo*, the lion spirits embodied in him, and the members of the community to give thanks for the granting of land in that area. The person who gave the land to the newcomer, was also given the pombe drink as a show of gratitude. From the moment that the newcomer performed the ritual, he or she belonged to the community, and

it was considered his home. In the Nyungwe tradition, not only lion spirits but also monkey and leopard spirits were included. The animal spirits involved in the *Malombo* ritual were sacred and were not to be killed, unlike animals such as the hyena, which was considered demonic.

The attendance of the sacred animals played a key role when community members migrated on foot to neighbouring countries, such as Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, in search of better living conditions. During these migrations, the sacred animals protected the migrants. First, it was compulsory for migrants to say goodbye to the *régulo* and to buy something to offer to him as chief of the land, such as tobacco. He then protected the migrants by sending with them the spirits of the lion, monkey, and leopard, which were the main animals the migrants encountered in the bush. The company of these spirits protected them from attack by other animals on their journey.

Xavier told me how, during the journeys of the migrants, there were situations in which animals such as gazelles passed in front of the migrants. This was seen to be the *régulo* Spanela himself, or the spirits of the protective animals that accompanied the migrants. When the spirits crossed paths with other similar animals, such as the lion, the latter was informed by the lion spirit that the migrants should not be attacked. The migrants, when they returned to their lands in Moatize, also had to visit the *régulo* to thank him with an offering of a white cloth and tobacco, which was rubbed into the eyes of the *régulo*. Symbolising the power of the lion, white cloth was also used in the *Malombo* ceremony, when the person possessed by the lion spirits wore white clothes and used traditional tobacco. Therefore, any kind of thanks given to the *régulo* Spanela and his lion spirits included white cloth. The white cloth was only used by those possessed by the spirits during ceremonies and was taken off as soon as the ceremony was over. The tobacco, when rubbed in the eyes of the *régulo*, allowed him to foresee what would happen in any matter involving lion spirits. The model of land management described above allowed the residents of Moatize to continue using the land in a traditional way in the midst of the bifurcated colonial systems of governance, with citizens governed by law in urban areas and by custom in rural areas (Mamdani 1996; Buur and Kyed 2007).

At present, land is no longer allocated in the way Xavier described above because the state has interfered with the traditional model of land tenure through the State Land Law. The land authorities in Moatize usually give out DUAT[16] plots of land 15 metres long and 30 metres wide (450 square metres). However, residents have *machambas* within their customary land that are not demarcated, meaning these *machambas* can be smaller or larger than 450

[16] DUAT is the issuance of a Land Right Use Title – *Direito de Uso e Aproveitamento de Terra.*

square metres. Land Law 19/1997 states that all citizens in Mozambique, regardless of gender, have the right to access land, but the case of Moatize shows that due to aspects related to patrilineal society, women's land rights depend on men's rights. I found many cases in Moatize where women had inherited DUAT tittles from their parents or deceased husbands. But I also found situations where they managed to negotiate with customary holders to transfer DUAT titles to them.

Residents reported that there was no land in Moatize that did not have a holder who was linked to traditional tenure system. Francisca, a 65-year-old smallholder, told me the following:

> Here in Tete today, it is very important to know the *régulos* of certain regions, as they are the ones who know the traditional landholders. According to tradition, the *régulo* is the person who is in charge of the land of the ancestors. Even if a *régulo* is dead, it is necessary to know who his "living representatives" are (sons and daughters, grandchildren, nephews…).

In practice, there is no land in Moatize that does not have a holder, as these holders are the spirits of the ancestors who are linked to the land through the *régulo*. Anyone working the land must first be accountable to the spirits by making offerings and sacrifices to satisfy them and obtain permission to work the land. This is done through ceremonies led by those in charge of the land (*régulo*, elders, and direct relatives of the spiritual holders). Negotiations are necessary every time a piece of land is transferred to another holder, as the residents say that expropriating the land without paying the spirits their due will bring great misfortune, which can lead to death. Whether one is planting or building, permission must first be obtained from the spirits who own the land.

However, in the case of land management, where the customary tenure system and the legal system of the state prevail in the management of the forests, it is because, as the residents of Moatize said, of the material need for the resources that exist there and that guarantee their survival. Although the state, through *Lei 17/2023 de protecção, conservação e uso dos recursos naturais*, Law 17/2023 on the protection, conservation and use of natural resources (article 6, affirms that the natural and forest resources present throughout the national territory are its property, in Moatize these forests are imbued with socio-cultural meanings linked to a spiritual world that cannot be neglected.

For example, *Lei 10/99 dos recursos florestais e faunísticos* – Law 10/99 on forest and wildlife resources, which established the basic principles and standards for the protection, conservation, and sustainable use of forest resources, and which has since been repealed, stated in article 13 that forest and

wildlife resources in their areas could be used in accordance with the customary practices of the respective communities. This is a clear indication that customary law and state legislation once co-existed and gave importance to the customary system of forest management. It was under Law 10/99 that the multinational Vale established itself and began operating in Moatize, where it had to respect the same model of forest management. While Law 10/99 was still in use, the state-owned areas became the private property of foreign coal multinationals, with Vale at the forefront.

The creation of enclosures in once-forested areas for the purpose of mining exploitation has deprived the local population of their livelihoods and generated resentment. This is seen as one of the reasons why the local population is resisting the company's mining practices. Noticeably, in the larger district of Moatize, the model of unrestricted access to forests where people collect resources such as firewood and medicinal plants still prevails outside the mining areas.

3.2 Chieftaincy in change

After Mozambique gained independence in 1975, the state delegitimised chieftaincy because it had collaborated with the Portuguese colonial system through the *régulos*, who administered the rural population. The chieftaincy was also viewed as outdated and anti-modern by Mozambique's new state, which aimed to rapidly build a modern socialist society (Buur and Kyed 2007:109).

The Frelimo government passed a new land law, *Lei de terra 6/1979* – Law 6/1979 the first of its kind in post-colonial Mozambique. This law recognised that land belonged to the state and, above all, to the workers and peasants under a form of government based on the principles of socialism. It defined the conditions for land use in Mozambique and gave concrete form to the constitutional principle that land is the property of the state, which citizens have the right to use and benefit from it. However, it limited private ownership of land in the country. Land Law 6/1979 also served the interests of the new socialist Frelimo government, as it supported the implementation plan of a socialist society based on the *socialização de campo* (socialisation of the countryside) and *aldeias comunais* (communal villages). The Frelimo government created the *grupos dinamizadores* (dynamising groups) in the gap left by the traditional authorities. These took over many of the functions previously performed by the traditional authorities, such as managing social issues, mediating conflicts, policing, administering, and regulating. Created with the aim

of consistently supporting Frelimo in the implementation of its socialist governance plan (Meneses 2009:26), the dynamising groups led to a change in the power dynamics of the community after the delegitimisation of traditional authorities. Peasants and chiefs in the rural areas of Mozambique were confronted with a new form of territory of communal villages that have remained in their traditional lands. However, the chieftaincy system reinvented itself and survived despite its delegitimisation. In rural areas where people were dissatisfied with Frelimo's policies and where the state administration did not reach, the chieftaincy continued its model of political governance.

During the civil war, RENAMO capitalised on the dissatisfaction of the country's traditional authorities, using the traditional institution as an ally in both rhetoric and practice. RENAMO's military strategy was also designed to rely on the role of supernatural powers and the use of traditional religious symbols to attract local populations (Honwana 2002). RENAMO formed alliances with the traditional authorities, known as *régulos*, and with traditional religious authorities, including diviners, traditional medicine practitioners, spiritual mediums, and prophets, who were consulted for important decisions, including military matters. The traditional authorities provided spiritual protection to RENAMO camps against government army incursions, rendering them "invisible" to Frelimo soldiers. RENAMO fighters were also given guidance on the location of government troops, as well as on where they should and should not fight, in order to avoid disturbing spirits and sacred places. The traditional medicine practitioners also led the fighters on long walks through the forest and performed rituals to boost their morale and make them bulletproof (Honwana 2002:189).

My ethnographic material suggests that although RENAMO is blamed for the destruction of much of the economic infrastructure during the civil war, it has always had the support of traditional leaders, even after the war ended. Although RENAMO was established as a political party and became part of the democratic process in Moatize, with political representation in the Municipal Council, it did not have a clear political agenda when it was created. According to Tavuyanago (2011), the primary goal of RENAMO's civil war, particularly from 1981 onwards, when its supporters shifted their allegiance from Ian Smith's Southern Rhodesia to South Africa's apartheid regime, was to weaken the Mozambican economy and erode public support for the Frelimo government. Tavuyanago (2011:43–44) also states that the movement increased its activity levels by extending its operational areas from the central provinces of Tete, Sofala, and Manica to the traditional Frelimo strongholds of Gaza and Zambezia. The movement focused on economic and social destabilisation, which included destroying transport networks, schools, and health

facilities and disrupting people's lives in general. The conflict turned into a brutal civil war with devastating consequences and involved the rape, murder, and mutilation of both the living and the dead. Both sides participated in the killings, with RENAMO employing brutal tactics and the Frelimo government resorting to using youth militias to attack RENAMO supporters.

Daniel, a 70-year-old retired teacher who lived in Primeiro de Maio neighbourhood, explained the following:

> During the civil war between Frelimo and RENAMO, RENAMO soldiers kidnapped me along with the traditional chiefs who called themselves the chiefs of our lands. In the military bases, while ordinary girls or young people not linked to traditional power were forced to marry or have sexual relations with RENAMO soldiers, traditional leaders were protected and seen as allies, providing vital information to RENAMO structures.

Because the chieftaincy as a traditional power structure enjoyed a great deal of popular support in Moatize, it also influenced the local population as a support base for RENAMO. The law's recognition of traditional authorities and their integration into the local administration system was intended to reduce this influence of RENAMO.

In the transition from a socialist to a multi-party political system, the Frelimo government reinstated the chieftaincy as a strategy to regulate and control the rural areas and landscapes under its jurisdiction. The *Decreto 15/2000 sobre a articulação dos órgãos locais do Estado com as autoridades comunitárias* – Decree 15/2000 on the coordination of local government organs with community authorities – was the first post-war decentralisation policy for rural areas and is part of a wider project of post-conflict nation-state formation (Kyed and Buur 2006). When the Frelimo government again recognised the power of these authorities, they were expected to function as both community representatives and assistants of the state, while the Mozambican state recognised them under the term "community authorities" (Buur and Kyed 2007).

Contrary to the expectations of modernist theorists who argued that the traditional chieftaincy would disappear and be replaced by modern institutions of governance, chieftaincy has once again dominated the process of political participation (cf. Kleist 2011). It has not presented an obstacle to development (or an obstacle to build a modernised society) and, when its potential is harnessed, it has become compatible with the development agenda in a democratic context. As a post-colonial political institution, chieftaincy, even after being delegitimised by the new post-independence powers, has resisted and

demonstrated its relevance in the field of governance and has been reintegrated into the governance process of the modern state. This shows how a traditional leadership structure can reinvent itself into the governance model of the modern state. In Moatize, chieftaincy has played a dominant role in the socio-political life of the residents, with the current Queen Ana Paula Spanela acting both as a "traditional" chief and as a "Frelimo representative."

3.3 Changing customary tenure practices

In reformulating land tenure rights, the newly adopted Land Law 19/1997still emphasised the importance of customary law as one of the principles to be taken into account for the right to use land in Mozambique. The land law came about because the Mozambican state was aware that the majority of Mozambicans living in rural areas had acquired the right to use land through customary law.

In Moatize, local people and the local state administration legitimise the chieftaincy and customary land tenure, although land is legally owned by the state. Residents highlighted the role of the *régulo* in granting Moatize land to newcomers, even in the current era of neoliberalism and industrial mining. Felícia, a 72-year-old resident whose yard contains several huts used by traditional healers, also confirmed that the first ceremony that takes place when someone is granted land is still the traditional *Malombo* ritual, in which the ancestors are summoned and informed of the arrival of a new occupant of the land. She told me how the process of obtaining the formal title of DUAT is preceded by this ceremony, which is legitimised by the residents and recognised by the state authorities. Although the District Administration recognises and defends the traditional occupation of the land and legitimises its occupants, it is more aligned with the discourse of the DUAT as a legal document that proves the right to use the land. Even at the ceremony where land in Moatize was handed over to Vale for mining, the District Administration relied on Queen Ana Paula Spanela to represent the chieftaincy.

Customary forms of land tenure continue to exist alongside the state's formal ones. Boone (2014:20) demonstrates that the regimes of smallholder land tenure in Africa are primarily defined as authority-based property regimes, rather than predominantly market-based. In most African countries, very little rural land is governed by private property regimes that individualize ownership and allow land to be traded in open markets. The customary land tenure system in Moatize is also consistent with Boone's argument that it emerged in response to economic changes brought about by the colonial system as well as the political alliances established by the colonial administration.

3.4 Land and mining laws

Mozambique's Land Law 6/1979 and *Lei de Minas 2/1986* – Mining Law 2/1986, implemented shortly after independence, have been reformed to allow new foreign and private mining investment. According to Geffray (1991) and Honwana (2002), the civil war between the Frelimo government and RENAMO destabilised the country and prevented the consolidation of state power in Mozambique. It created an environment of insecurity and paralysed economic activity, leading to the Frelimo-led state losing control over many areas of the country. The Mozambican state began a series of transformations in the country due to the need for external support, mainly from the Western bloc, as I mentioned earlier. The same transformations began to be introduced following the holding of the fourth Frelimo congress in 1983, culminating in the new land and mining code 2/1986. In 1984, Mozambique joined the Bretton Woods institutions as part of a Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), which led to quick economic and political change. In 1987, a year after the death of Samora Machel,[17] the *Programa de Reabilitação Económica* (PRE, Economic Rehabilitation Programme) was launched.

The economic and political reforms had a fundamental impact on access to and control over land resources. However, prior to the reform of Land Law 6/1979, the Frelimo government approved a new mining law. The legislation governing the exploration of mines dated from 1905 and 1906. The new mining law passed in 1986 repealed the old legislation, which no longer fit the country's new economic reality (Matos and Medeiros 2017:288). The fact that the Portuguese colonial regime did not develop more ambitious mining legislation could perhaps indicate a lack of interest in exploiting the immense mining wealth that the country possessed. Yet, according to Vasconcelos (1995), this seems more related to the country's economic weakness and lack of appropriate technology. The coal deposits in Moatize were the exception, being the only mining area that the Portuguese colonial regime exploited to any meaningful extent (Matos and Medeiros 2017).

When Mining Law 2/1986 was passed, Mozambique was undergoing economic and political change but was still largely protected by the interests of the state and the communities located around the mining operations. According to Matos and Medeiros (2017:288–289), Law 2/1986 took into account the

[17] Samora Machel was the first president of the People's Republic of Mozambique. He fiercely defended the ideas of socialist government and the land belonging to *operários* (workers) and *camponeses* (peasants). Although economic and political change in Mozambique began during his government, economic and political reforms accelerated after his death in a plane crash on 19 October 1986.

interests of the families that could be affected by mining activities by stipulating that these interests should be included in the development plans. Matos and Medeiros (2017:289) also argue that the socialist government wanted a mining sector that would help the state increase its export and tax revenues, as well as provide raw materials for national industrial development. Mining Law 2/1986, unlike subsequent mining laws, sought to promote mining in the interest of the country's economy, stating that mining companies would only be authorised if they demonstrated the benefits of their activities to the national economy. As a result, in 1987, legislation prohibited mining in protected areas, urban centres, communal villages, and cemeteries. Mining could only be carried out in these areas with the written authorisation of the public authority responsible for the administration of the area in question (Matos and Medeiros 2017:289).

In 1990, the government approved a new Constitution, which allowed the beginning of political reforms, including the emergence of political parties and the right of association. Most importantly, the new Constitution recognised RENAMO as a legal political party, even while the civil war between Frelimo and RENAMO ravaged Mozambique, and transformed the People's Republic into a liberal democratic republic (see Hall and Young 1991). However, when the Constitution of 1990 declared that Mozambique was no longer a "People's Republic," it soon became clear that the people's interests in land and mines, which had been taken into account during the era of socialist rule, would not be defended in the same way (Matos and Medeiros 2017). In 1992, two years after the adoption of Mozambique's new Constitution, a peace agreement was signed – the Rome Peace Accords – between Mozambique's Frelimo government and RENAMO. The first multi-party elections were held in 1994, and Frelimo won.

In 1995, prior to the adoption of the new land law, the government of Mozambique adopted the National Land Policy and the Strategy for its implementation (DNTF 2012:12). The number 18 of the chapter four of the Resolution 10/1995 (*Resolução 10/1995*), which approved de National Land Policy in Mozambique, defined a guiding principle for land legislation in the country, making it possible to secure the rights of the Mozambican people to land and other natural resources, as well as to promote investment and the sustainable and equitable use of resources. This policy also guided the recognition of customary land rights as the basis for legislation outlining the process of formalising land rights. Article 3 of Land Law 19/1997 clarified that all land in Mozambique is owned by the state. However, it also balanced customary land rights, held by the majority of people in Mozambique, with those linked to private interests through written applications. The law established that formal

rights to land should be recognised through the issuance of a Land Right Use title (DUAT) – *Direito de Uso e Aproveitamento de Terra*. This can be acquired in three different ways: traditional or customary occupation, "good faith" occupation, or a written application.

Hélder, a 49-year-old resident of the Bagamoio neighbourhood, told me about various conflicts between Vale and small farmers. His land was close to the fence separating Vale's land from the rest of Moatize, and on the day we met – a very hot day – he wore shorts, flip-flops, and no shirt. Although he was not on his way to Vale's property, he expressed himself in the following terms:

> My family and I were simply told that the District Administration and Vale had agreed that my land and farms, like those of other residents in the neighbourhood, already belonged to the mining company and that we would have to leave. However, these lands belong to me because I inherited them from my parents, who in turn inherited them from my grandparents. When the District Administration and Vale administrations come here and say that the only valid document to prove that I own this land is the formal DUAT, they are going against the rules of tradition and are usurping our land.

From Hélder's account, like those of many other Moatize residents, I could see that the acquisition of the formal DUAT document had come to supersede the customary rights already acquired and legitimised by Land Law 19/1997. Investors such as Vale, who were able to submit a written application for land, were able to override the traditional land rights of residents, including small farmers, as set out in Land Law 19/1997. This has meant that the oral testimony of many small farmers, traditional healers, and brickmakers, to which Article 17 of the Land Law gives the same weight as documentary evidence to prove land rights, has not been taken into account in Moatize. In many cases of land disputes between Vale and residents, as mentioned by the latter, documentary evidence of land rights superseded oral testimony. What made the residents particularly angry about this approach was that, according to them, their oral testimonies about the traditional land rights on a particular piece of land were ignored because precedence was given to those who formally applied and paid money to usurp their land.

Residents also reported that land disputes between communities and mining investors were often resolved through the intervention of local state authorities, who frequently sided with the mining company in their efforts to secure land concessions. This was the case in June 2021, when Vale announced that it would start the second phase of mining and open Pit 2. Some small farmers mentioned that the company had already demarcated land along the N7 road, an area in which they had their *machambas* and grazed their cattle. They said

that the designated area belonged to them and that they did not know who had authorised the company to demarcate the area. This contradicts the way in which DUATs are supposed to be granted to investors, which involves informing local communities of investors' interest in community land.

The right to use land through occupation by individuals and local communities in accordance with customary norms and practices that do not contradict the Constitution created a break with legislative practice in Mozambique and many other African countries. The model itself allowed for the recognition of a number of uncodified popular land occupation practices (Negrão 2008:90). However, as I show in the mining context of Moatize, this did not necessarily mean that customary rights were respected in practice. In Moatize, there was intense demand for land. Mining investors and political elites took advantage of the lack of formal land titles held by local small farmers to expropriate their land, as I demonstrate below.

Land rights based on "good faith" occupation are very common in Moatize, with many citizens having occupied and lived on land for more than a decade without applying for a DUAT title. Law 19/1997 stipulates that this type of occupation apply to Mozambicans who have used the land they occupy in "good faith" for at least 10 years. In Moatize, people who were not affected by Vale's displacement carried out this type of land occupation. However, as the residents told me, they did not have the respective formal DUAT title. They understood the law as already protecting them, so they did not need a formal title. Inês, a 55-year-old small farmer and widow, lived in a brick house and had a small *machamba* in her yard on which she grew maize that she sold to survive:

> Recently I have heard that because of the demand for land here in Moatize, I have to collect documents to get a title to my land. However, they did not tell me this when my husband was alive, which I find strange. I even want to formalise my land, but the problem is that it is a long process, which requires a lot of money that I do not have.

Although Inês described the difficulties she faced in obtaining the title to her land, she, like other Moatize resident, felt a growing need to secure formal rights to land. However, the financial and bureaucratic obstacles Inês mentioned, combined with a lack of knowledge of the process and the fact that residents were aware that they already had some rights to their land, were all barriers to registering for a formal DUAT title. According to Article 17 of Land Law 19/1997, DUATs based on "good faith" occupation and customary norms and practices are not subject to a time limit when acquired for private housing. To facilitate the process, the government, through the local land authorities, organises collective DUAT issuance campaigns in which, once the

relevant fees have been paid, a technical team is sent to the area in question to demarcate it, a process that involves placing cement markers at reference points around the perimeter, followed by the issuance of the title, according to the National Directorate of Lands and Forests of Mozambique (DNTF 2012). DNTF (2012) still encourages communities and individuals holding "good faith" DUATs to formally register their rights by documenting them and demarcating their DUAT areas, both on the ground and in the national land registry.

The establishment of Law 19/1997 made it possible to submit a written[18] request to the state to obtain formal rights to use the land. This was intended to open the way for foreign private investment, as happened with the granting of large tracts of land in Moatize to Vale. This way of land granting was an attempt to acknowledge the need for a simple system that guaranteed the rights of most Mozambicans to the land they occupied while simultaneously creating a modern land title system that was seen as necessary for investment (Hanlon 2011; Walker 2021). However, granting land use rights by through a written request process created an imbalance of power between the residents and outside investors, such as Vale. Mosca (2011) argues that with economic and political liberalization policies, large tracts of land were allocated to private companies and farmers with the capacity to produce on a large scale. These allocations increased existing social inequalities and favoured a small group of domestic elites and former colonizers. Mozambican power-holders were thus able to take advantage of privatisation to acquire the largest plots of the best land. The point is that Law 19/1997, which protects the traditional land rights has always protected communities and residents. The issuance of written land titles was not their main concern, and they did not seek to understand the legal problems of not having a written DUAT or the procedures of how to acquire one. Vale was prepared to provide this document, which it used to prove its

[18] The government authorizes land use in this way to national and/or foreign individuals or companies on a concessionary basis under state leasehold occupancy agreements. This concession, according to Article 17 of Land Law 19/1997, is granted for periods of up to 50 years, with the possibility of renewal for a subsequent period of 50 years. The provincial governor grants the DUAT in non-urbanised areas up to 1,000 hectares, while areas between 1,000 and 10,000 hectares require the approval of the Minister of Agriculture. Applications for DUATs for areas of 10,000 hectares or more must be approved by the government. In other words, the size of the leasehold determines which authority is responsible for granting the right (Article 18 of Land Law 19/1997). Any individual or company wishing to occupy land in this format in Mozambique must submit an application to the *Serviço Provincial de Geografia e Cadastro* (SPGC, Provincial Mapping and Land Registry Service) (DNTF 2012). Individuals interested in this type of land occupation must include a development plan and/or investment project as part of their application. There must also be consultation with the local community to confirm that the land is free and has no occupants. A provisional licence is granted for five years for Mozambican companies and individuals and two years for foreigners. The development plan must be implemented within this period.

right to the land in situations involving disputes with the people of Moatize. Many residents lost their land to Vale because they were unable to prove their disputed land rights in a formal DUAT document. Therefore, I would argue that there was an imbalance of power and legal knowledge between the residents and the outside investors in Moatize. Vale had more access to legal knowledge, to the detriment of the residents, who knew only that Law 19/1997 protected their customary model of land use – and this kept them from applying for land titles.

The people of Moatize pointed out that Vale's foreign investment has negatively impacted on their social and economic life; their main means of survival, land, has been expropriated, leaving them poorer and more vulnerable than before Vale arrived. Surez, a 50-year-old smallholder farmer who spoke to me on several occasions, had two wives and seven children, all of whom lived in a large brick house. Each day, Surez took his three youngest children to his *machamba* while the others worked as street vendors in the informal market in Bagamoyo. He said this about the allocation of residents' land for private investment in Moatize:

> It hurts me to know that a foreign company that does not benefit me in any way in terms of my social well-being is now using the place where I used to produce food to feed my family. With my land, which was given to Vale, I produced my own food and did not go hungry as I do now. If I could go back, others and I would not have accepted Vale's investment in our land.

Although Hanlon (2011) argues that the current way in which the state owns land discourages further investment, it is necessary in the case of Moatize to examine who benefited from land investment. It is no coincidence that both the many small farmers I worked with and the *União Nacional de Camponeses* (UNAC, Peasant Union), based in the Tete city, opposed land privatisation because of its negative impact on communities. Hanlon (2011) mentions that even the highest levels of Frelimo do not support land privatisation, which could result in Mozambicans losing the most valuable resource they have. Hanlon (2011:23) further argues that in 2011, the US Millennium Challenge Account made the transferability of DUATs a condition for further aid to Mozambique, but the government continued to resist amending Land Law 19/1997. The state feared losing control of its territory to foreign interests. The experience of private mining investment in Moatize and the local resistance to it confirms the state's fear of privatising land in the country.

3.5 The Chief and the Municipal Governance

The importance of the chieftaincy in the local government structure was already provided for in Law 2/1997 on the decentralisation of power in Mozambique. However, it was the *Decreto 11/2005 sobre a regulamentação da governação dos órgãos locais* – Decree 11/2005 on the regulation of the governance of local organs that mentioned the cooperation of local state organs with different local entities, including the chieftaincy.

According to local customs, the current chief of land in Moatize is Queen Ana Paula Spanela. She belongs to the third generation in her family to wield traditional authority. In the political organisation of the traditional chieftaincy, the Queen is a traditional leader of the first rank, and she has engaged with the Local Administration at both the District and Municipal levels. Article 8 of the *Decreto 35/2012 sobre formas de articulacao dos órgãos locais do Estado com as autoridades comunitárias* – Decree 35/2012 on forms of articulation between local state organs and community authorities outlines the traditional hierarchical power structure that should be followed, consisting of three levels, each with its own set of tasks. In this hierarchical structure, the *régulo* is the leader of the first rank, while the leaders of the second rank are the advisors to the *régulo* or Queen. The third level includes local chiefs, heads of extended families, people in positions of traditional responsibility such as traditional healers, and those recognised for their social authority. The position of Queen corresponds to that of *régulo*, the title when a man holds the position. In Moatize, the society is patrilineal[19] and patriarchal, which means that men usually hold traditional political power. Mateus, a 65-year-old traditional healer who demonstrated a good understanding of the traditional leadership hierarchy in Moatize, spoke to me in his traditional hut in the 25 de Setembro neighbourhood where he received users seeking his services. He pointed out that Ana Paula Spanela became Queen of the Moatize lands because "the spirits that give power to the leadership of the Moatize lands are transmitted through blood kinship in the paternal line." Ana, the only daughter of Spanela, took over the position after her brother's resignation.[20]

[19] The residents of Moatize with whom I spoke belong to a patrilineal system in which an individual's family membership is derived from and recorded through the father's lineage. It generally involves the inheritance of property, rights, names, or titles by persons related through male kinship. At the time of traditional marriage, the man's kinship group pays the woman's family a *lobolo* (a kind of bride price paid by the man to the woman's family as a reward for raising his future wife).

[20] According to Queen Ana Paula Spanela, her brother resigned as a traditional leader after the wife of the then President, Armando Guebuza, stayed at her home in Moatize and offered him a scholarship. As the sole heir, Ana Paula took over the position while her brother, thanks to the scholarship continued his studies in the northern province of Nampula.

The Queen of Moatize, as a traditional leader of the first rank, has a reserved seat in the Moatize Municipal Council. In Moatize, the municipal governance structure follows this order: 1) The Municipal Council chaired by the Mayor, 2) heads of localities, 3) neighbourhood secretaries, and 4) block head. The Queen is ranked at the same level as the neighbourhood secretary. With her position already secured, she is distinguished from the other members of the Municipal Council, who are all nominated by the Council elected in the municipal election. Buur and Kyed (2007) argue that traditional community authorities serve as a means of articulation with state authorities and that they were integrated into the system as such.

Drawing on the Ghanaian context, Kleist (2011) suggests that rather than thinking about the inclusion of chieftaincy in political life in the context of democratic transition, it is necessary to think about the place of chieftaincy in the new democratic space. Many studies on Mozambique analyse the current relevance of chieftaincy in rural areas (Gonçalves 2006; Buur and Kyed 2007). This perspective is based on the modern-traditional dichotomy, one of the structuring dichotomous variables of the contemporary state, in which the traditional is associated with rural contexts as spaces of the persistence of pre-colonial power structures (Meneses 2009). However, as I observed in Moatize, the chieftaincy is particularly relevant in the urban areas, where it supported residents in resisting Vale's mining practices.

Placing the traditional chief of Moatize, the Queen, at the same level as neighbourhood secretaries effectively demoted her, meaning she dealt with issues addressed at the neighbourhood level. This also meant that her role in municipal governance became less relevant than her role in the traditional hierarchical structure. To understand why the Queen of Moatize was not given the recognition she deserved, I scrutinized the legislation on coordination between traditional authorities and local state bodies. Decree 35/2012 states the following in Points 1 and 2 of Article 11:

> 1. If legitimised in a given local community, the traditional chief and the neighbourhood secretary are responsible for the same local community to indicate their respective precedence.
> 2. The community authority that takes precedence will represent the local community before the state authorities.

An analysis of these points in Decree 35/2012 shows that the higher rank of the *régulo* in the traditional hierarchical structure does not guarantee that he or she will automatically be considered a community authority above the neighbourhood secretary in the new government structure. Furthermore, the Decree does not explain why the *régulo* is ranked at the same level as the

neighbourhood secretary. It can also be inferred that the Decree intends to reduce the power and influence of traditional authorities. As I will argue below, traditional power had previously been beyond the control of the Frelimo state, supporting the political opposition RENAMO during the 16-year civil war.

Although the Queen did not explicitly state this, I understood that, as the chief of the Moatize land, she did not feel comfortable being given the same weight as the neighbourhood secretary in the Municipality's governance structure. According to Decree 35/2012, the Queen/*Régulo* is the highest rank within the traditional hierarchical structure. The position of *régulo* is also recognised and highly respected by the communities in Moatize. The Queen mentioned that neighbourhood secretaries govern lands in the neighbourhoods in Moatize, where she is traditionally the chief. This has created discontent among traditional leaders such as her. Explaining that the "Municipal Council created a fixed position for me within its governance structure," she added that she knew of some *régulos* in other localities who had lost their position in the community because the legislation allowed the community to decide who was more legitimate, the *régulo* or the neighbourhood secretary. Although she was consulted on issuing residence declarations, as I observed, this task was actually the responsibility of the neighbourhood secretary, with whom she cooperates. Some residents who support the traditional chieftaincy also feel that she does not receive the respect she deserves from the state and that this should be addressed.

In Moatize, the state has strategically contained the power of the chief by incorporating her into the municipal governance structure, where she was controlled and guaranteed to work for the government's interests, while the District Administration of Moatize used the state police to repress those residents who opposed the problems caused by mining. By integrating the Queen into the municipal governance, the state weakened the ability of traditional authority to resist bad mining practices. Although she was part of Moatize's municipal governance structure, however, she continued to argue in favour of the marginalised people affected by mining activities. This demonstrates how, when political power sought to limit her ability to resist on behalf of the residents, she exploited other mechanisms available to her to protect residents from harmful mining practices.

The Queen was also involved in mobilising the community for civic education and other interests of the local state. Her role as chief overseeing mining and land issues of the resettled people in Moatize is one example of how the modern state, following neoliberal principles, used chieftaincy to maximise its interests. Because she is believed to possess spiritual power inherited from the

ancestors – power that protects the living – she holds an important role as guardian of tradition by directing traditional religious ceremonies. As she said:

> The state invites me to its events and to the inauguration of state buildings, such as schools and health infrastructures. At these events, I am called upon to invoke the spirits of the ancestors, as I am in contact with them because I come from the lineage of the *régulos* who control the spirits in Moatize.

Although some residents believed in spirits and their effect on everyday life, one reason the state cooperated with the chieftaincy was because of its influence on the communities of Moatize. The Frelimo state has attempted to harness the chiefs' spiritual power and reduce RENAMO's influence over them – an influence dating back to the civil war, when RENAMO used the chiefs' cultural and ritual knowledge as well as their traditional healers to defeat Frelimo. Parts of Tete had been under RENAMO control during the civil war, and the strategy to control the groups outside Frelimo's jurisdiction was to incorporate them into the new governance structure. One way of integrating them was to give them uniforms. The Frelimo government distributed these uniforms to all three levels of traditional community authorities: chiefs (*régulos*), advisers to the *régulo*, and third-tier leaders at the national level. Manjate (2022:227–228), in his study in Marracuene, points out that these uniforms differ according to the level of traditional hierarchical structure. For example, traditional chiefs have certain objects as symbols of power. The *régulos* also have three stars, wear capes, and have the right to wear insignia and to fly the national flag in their homes. Possession of a uniform is essential for visibility and the exercise of power. As a symbol of authority, the uniform commands respect from the population, and local authorities are aware that having uniforms gives them power – they look like police officers who, once in uniform, are the incarnation of the state and can act on behalf of the state. In Moatize, despite Frelimo's attempts to integrate the chieftaincy into municipal governance, some traditional authorities have indicated that they maintain strong links with RENAMO.

State officials in Moatize believe that the spirits will not protect the state's projects unless the Queen invokes them and informs them of any new construction on their land. Some state officials have pointed out that they respect traditional power because they believe that the Queen had the ability to communicate with the ancestors and influence the course of events in the world of the living. Nevertheless, not all state officials held this view. Some criticised traditional chieftaincy, describing this form of power as "backward and obscurantist." West (2008) gave an example of ambiguity in the treatment of chieftaincy in Mozambique, demonstrating how the treatment of traditional

authorities occurred across the country. He found that in the areas under RENAMO influence, Frelimo officials made substantial overtures to former chiefs, particularly when they believed this would alienate the supporters of RENAMO, while elsewhere Frelimo cadres expressed serious concerns that traditional authorities were not necessarily qualified to carry out the tasks of modern state administration.

The discourse on chieftaincy also shows that the political leaders in Moatize Municipality, as in other areas of the district, were afraid of the power of traditional authorities over which they had no control. Local chiefs increasingly became more important in the eyes of the state because of their mobilising power in rural and urban Moatize, which was maximised by Frelimo's power structures.

Queen Spanela lived in one of Moatize's suburbs. Her house was very similar to other brick houses in Moatize, with the difference that it had a wall covered in national symbols, including the flag. She usually wore her first-level traditional leader uniform when actively representing the traditional authorities of Moatize. If she did not wear her uniform and someone did not recognise her as the Queen of Moatize, it would be hard to tell her rank unless she or someone else revealed her position.

Queen Spanela was often invited to represent the traditional authorities in Moatize at important events, such as visits by high-ranking representatives of the Mozambican state. She also told me that, unofficially, she had been given the title of "mother" of the people of Moatize because important people often visited her house. She said that as the main traditional political figure, she had a responsibility to look after visitors who came to Moatize. When there were important visits, such as that of the son of the President of the Republic of Mozambique, the Frelimo party and the District Administration brought food and supplies to her home to ensure his stay was comfortable. She said, "They brought Frelimo flags and T-shirts bearing the party logo, and my house was filled to capacity. This meant that the president's son would receive all my honours, both as Queen and from the District Administration."

3.6 Customary tenure, postcolonial land laws, and coal mining practices

In Nyungwe language, the notion of land rights – *udindo dwa pansi* – contrasts in meaning with the land right use as advocated in Mozambique's Land Law 19/1997. For the local people, *udindo dwa pansi* means the right to property because it is *tatanbira pa nakolo yathu* (inherited from their ancestors). This difference between the concept of land property by the people and the concept

of land ownership by the state frames the conflicts that have arisen in Moatize between Vale and the local people. Vale's coal mining took place on land that was considered customary, land for which the residents had already acquired rights in the traditional way during the colonial period and under Land Laws 6/1979 and 19/1997. After the displaced residents fought for their lost land rights, they produced discourses on customary rights to the land; meanwhile, Vale produced discourses on formal land titles, which carried more weight in determining the right to use land in Moatize. The fact is that Vale's possession of mining and land titles in Moatize overlapped with the customary land rights of local people.

The people with whom I interacted, namely small farmers, brickmakers, traditional healers, and cattle breeders, did not have formal DUAT titles when Vale displaced them from their customary land. For them, the fact that they had customary rights, enshrined in Land Law 19/1997, was enough to protect their interests as holders of the land rather than as users, as the law advocates. When the land dispute with Vale arose, the authorities asked the residents to present their DUATs, but they could not – they had none.

The loss of land to make way for Vale's mining operations is linked to *Lei de Minas 14/2002* – Mining Law 14/2002. It includes an article stating that priority would be given to mining investments if the economic and social benefits of mining in a given area are higher, meaning that residents of the same area could be displaced with compensation. This had a significant impact in Moatize, as land rights previously acquired by citizens could be cancelled after fair and reasonable compensation had been paid to the holder of these rights. In practice, according to the residents, this caused the communities around mining projects to lose their land to investors who were able "to manipulate" the law by using local land authorities to acquire formal titles to land that communities still had the right to occupy under customary norms. The financial compensation for the displaced residents of Moatize provided for in Law 14/2002 was the main issue driving the conflict between the residents and Vale, as I will show in Chapter 5. The people of Moatize said that this legislation opened the way for the Vale to usurp their land, a process in which they claimed the state was complicit.

Walker (2021:319) argues that although land laws in Mozambique do not leave customary land rights undefined, the recognition of these rights is altered in many cases to benefit the state and private interests aligned with it. Land conflicts, particularly in rural areas, highlight the tension between securing land rights and promoting investment, making land recognition a contentious issue. The residents of Moatize had expected support from the local District

Administration because of the expropriation of their land. However, the District Administration accused the residents of lying in order to benefit from the land compensation they had already received.

Residents cited the formal DUAT title, issued by the state authorities, as the reason behind the land transactions in Moatize. They claimed that Vale officials and other influential individuals had obtained these titles through corruption. One of the small farmers who lost his land was Antanásio, 46, who lived in his parents' house in the Chithatha neighbourhood, an area that lacks basic public services such as water and sanitation. Antanásio said that he once had a piece of land in the Bagamoio neighbourhood, but in the conflicts that followed Vale's arrival in Moatize, he lost his land because he did not have the DUAT title. This is how he explained land titles in Moatize:

> The titles appeared with individuals who claimed the right to use the land belonging to single users**.** The occupation of communal land requires that the communities are first consulted about this intention, and public consultations are held for this purpose. The communities then confirm whether they actually wish to transfer their land to a particular investor. In the case of the single land user, this process is not needed, and the transfer of the customary DUAT with the formal DUAT title takes place between the interested investor and the holder of the customary DUAT.

According to the residents, disputes over the demarcation of the land for new investors have always resulted from cases of land transfer from a single land user. They attributed this to situations in which neither they nor the community authorities knew the investor, who had not expressed an interest in obtaining a formal DUAT title for a customary land. When these land conflicts arose, it was possible that the customary DUAT holder had entered into an agreement to transfer his DUAT to the investor. However, there have been situations where investors appeared with formal DUAT titles, claiming the right to use land belonging to individual land users in the communities without any agreement for the transfer of the customary DUAT. To resolve these land transfer issues, the Moatize land authorities have consistently cited Land Law 19/1997, which states that land belongs to the state and cannot be sold. The purchaser of the land thus knows that any individual involved in the transfer of land for cash will lose the case if it is taken to court. On a very hot afternoon in December 2020, I spoke to Firoza, a 55-year-old teacher and resident of the 25 de Setembro neighbourhood, who was sitting on the bench under the avocado tree at her resettlement house:

> Soon after Vale began building its offices here in Moatize in 2007, demand for land increased significantly. I met some people who owned land and profited greatly from it by exchanging their customary DUAT titles for money with different people if the first person to obtain the land did not build infrastructure on it.

As Firoza and other residents explained, after Moatize received large-scale investment from Vale, it began to attract many people who saw opportunities to improve their lives locally. However, pressure began to mount from those who sought to acquire DUAT titles for various development projects. In this process, some customary and formal DUAT holders took advantage of the situation, illicitly earning money through illegal land transactions. However, according to some residents, the authorities in Moatize always indicated that such transactions were illegal. With this in mind, the sellers, knowing that the land could not be sold, engaged in monetary transactions and then moved to other areas, either within or outside Moatize so as not to be found. If they were found, they were at risk of reprisals from the buyers or, ultimately, legal action. However, court cases involving land transactions have never ruled in favour of the purchaser, since Land Law 19/1997 clarifies that land belongs to the state and can never be sold. Thus, residents who had sold the land would be unlikely to confirm so in court. In light of the loopholes in Land Law 19/1997 regarding the transfer of land use rights, I observed that some residents in Moatize, aware of these gaps, exploited them to profit illegally from the high demand for land driven by the multinational coal industry.

3.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I examined customary land tenure practices in relation to the increasing demand for land among residents of Moatize, caused by the establishment of Vale's coal mining operation in the area. I have shown how state reform of land rights has undermined the customary land rights of the Moatize people. Unequal power relations have further undermined residents' struggle for land. Although the customary model remained the route to land use rights for the majority of Moatize residents, the model of granting land for investment, which involved the issuance of the formal DUAT title, as was the case with Vale, was superimposed on the customary rights that Moatize residents had already acquired locally. The arrival of Vale has increased the demand for land. National and foreign investors have influenced the models by which land is traded, using a process that some local people have also exploited to profit financially from illegal land transactions due to loopholes in land legislation. The case of Moatize also shows an imbalance of power and legal knowledge between residents and investors. While Vale had access to legal expertise that

enabled it to obtain formal DUAT titles, the residents relied on the customary method of land allocation set out in Law 19/1997. However, this customary land use mechanism was unable to protect their land rights in disputes with Vale, as the formal DUAT document was legally more credible.

In order to limit resistance from marginalised Moatize residents displaced from their customary land, the Municipality used its political power to incorporate the Queen into the Municipal Administration. Given that the residents, especially the marginalised, legitimised the traditional leadership of the Queen, her inclusion in the municipal governance structure was intended to ensure that situations of protest or organised resistance would not gain support of traditional power. The Municipal Administration sought to limit the resistance's weak weapons against the powerful Vale's bad mining practices by integrating the Queen into the governing structure and thus weakening traditional power. However, chieftaincy is a dynamic traditional institution that has adapted both to the interests of marginalised people and to shifting political power across different historical periods, including the pre-colonial and post-colonial periods in Moatize. Its delegitimisation in the socialist regime in Moatize demonstrated its power and contradicted the expectations of its demise in the face of modern governance of the neoliberal era. The resilience of the chieftaincy was based on the maintenance of traditional lifestyles and customary land models that reify it as a political structure. The traditional power structure in Moatize shows that although the legislation gives it the same weight as the neighbourhood secretaries, with cases of these secretaries replacing it, it still has the support of residents who view traditional leadership as a mechanism of resistance against bad mining practices. Because the state is dependent on the economic benefits of coal mining, its strategies in Moatize aim to guarantee and implement Vale's mining practices. However, local people consider these practices to be problematic. They therefore not only developed resistance tactics but also offered their perspectives on mining's negative social, environmental, and economic impacts. The mining practices associated with the coal industry – from colonial Mozambique to the period of economic neoliberalism in which Vale was allowed to operate – and the associated practices and perspectives of resistance are analysed in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4. Industrial Mining Practices in Moatize

In this chapter, I examine coal mining practices in the Moatize district, focusing on residents' perspectives about these practices during Moatize's colonial period, the period of socialist governance, and the period after the arrival of Brazilian multinational company Vale. This chapter will highlight how residents of Moatize experienced these practices in different ways, both then and now. Tracing industrial coal mining practices in the two preceding periods is important for understanding how the Moatize context has been shaped by coal mining activities over many decades.

In Moatize, residents' accounts of contemporary coal mining practices and social relations were shaped by the Vale's corporate practices, which exacerbated existing social inequalities among the residents. This chapter analyses the residents' views, which point to the dissatisfaction that later led them to mobilise and protest against Vale. This chapter describes practices of everyday resistance not only in present-day Moatize but also during the period when the Portuguese administered the former *Companhia Carbonífera de Moçambique* (CCM, Mozambique Carboniferous Company). As the chapter will describe, this period was marked by sabotage of the company's coal mines due to poor working conditions and frequent workplace accidents, leading to open protests by workers during a period of political tension shortly after independence and resulting in the deaths of some Portuguese managers.

In this chapter, I will first examine Moatize's mining industry in its historical context. This will cover the Portuguese colonial period and the Frelimo socialist government, during which the industry was closed due to war. Second, I will describe the entry of the foreign multinational Vale into Mozambique's market economy after its liberalisation. Third, I will focus on the local perspectives of the mining practices of the parastatal company CARBOMOC and the global company Vale. Fourth, I will present the residents' accounts of Vale's withdrawal from coal mining in Moatize. Last, I will analyse how Vale uses its power to carry out control activities specifically related to the state, including the creation of exclusive territories that resulted from changes in legislation.

4.1 The mining industry in the Moatize district

The coal-rich area of Moatize saw the establishment of its first coal company during the Portuguese colonial period. After the Second World War, the company was founded under the name *Companhia Carbonífera de Moçambique* (CCM) (Vasconcelos 1995:7). Miguel (2009) notes that the migration of many Portuguese settlers to Moatize was driven by the attraction of better living conditions. This led to an increase in inhabited space, which created jobs and revenue for the Portuguese colonial state. Andrade (2016) argues that during the colonial period, the coal industry created numerous employment opportunities for the local population. In addition, many were employed in Portuguese households and businesses that sprang up to support the region's new white colony. Vieira (2019:57), in turn, argues that the activities of the CCM covered a period in which black men were legally forced to work through the *Lei de Indigenato* (Law on "indigenous" peoples). All black Africans or their descendants were "indigenous," and their education was for disciplinary work. As Vieira notes (2009:69), in the CCM during the colonial regime, there was an asymmetrical relationship between positions; certain functions were reserved for whites or assimilated blacks, while blacks considered "indigenous" were given the most difficult and explicitly forced jobs in a process of labour discipline and expropriation. Rafael, an 80-year-old former worker of the CCM, who, incidentally, has a good socio-economic situation, lived in the centre of the town of Moatize. Although he is old and has some health problems, Rafael seemed to remember very well what he experienced during the colonial period, especially at the CCM. He told me the following:

> During the colonial period, not all "indigenous" people worked at the CCM. I was lucky because I managed to study a bit and I spoke Portuguese, but all the black people worked in the underground mines, in the coal-mining area. Usually, the white Portuguese did the office work in the company. Working in the underground mines meant staying underground for several hours at a time and was very physically exhausting.

Rafael mentioned that at that time, although it was said that working in the underground mines was *xibalo* (forced labour), the company paid the minimum wage that would at least allow the worker to support himself and his family. However, the best working conditions were reserved for white Portuguese settlers. Vieira (2019:179–180) reports that from the beginning of its activity, the CCM was concerned with the retention of its white workers, employees, managers, and administrators, and this was characterised by extending care to the workers' family structures. The aim was to attract workers by providing decent minimum living conditions, especially in the construction of

housing. The company also offered free medical care, good hygiene conditions, schools, hospitals, and other social and technical infrastructures that resulted from its settlement policy. Vieira also recounts (2019:68) that it was in Bairro 9 (Neighbourhood 9), now called the Primeiro de Maio neighbourhood or CARBOMOC area, that the main infrastructures built by CCM were located, including Casa Quinze (House No. 15), where the Company's General Manager lived. She describes the current Primeiro de Maio neighbourhood as an area where well-preserved houses reflect the old architectural style. These houses were part of CCM's retention policy, to the detriment of the houses in other neighbourhoods and compounds where the company's black miners lived, materialising the value dissociation of the period.

CCM was nationalised after the country gained political independence from Portugal in 1975. Its nationalisation was linked to the adoption of the socialist model of government, whereby the state controlled the economy. Decree 11/78 of the Council of Ministers established CARBOMOC (Mozambique State Coal Company) on 11 May 1978. According to Pantie (2006), the decision to nationalise CCM was a concretisation of the economic and social guidelines drawn up by the third Frelimo Congress, which aimed to consolidate the central control of the economy that had begun shortly after independence. The nationalisation of CCM, like other companies, was aimed at increasing production and preventing sabotage. Pantie (2006:54) describes that in the year of independence, CCM produced around 576,000 tonnes of coal, the largest production since its creation in 1948, something that CARBOMOC was unable to achieve – its largest production was around 534,000 tonnes in 1981. CARBOMOC's production fell in the following years due to the civil war, which later led to its closure (Pantie 2006). In Moatize, however, residents recalled numerous underground mining accidents that occurred sometime after independence and before the nationalisation of CCM.

Adelino, a 69-year-old former CARBOMOC worker, told me that after retiring from CARBOMOC, he became a pastor of an evangelical church. I spoke with Adelino several times at the civil society organisations headquarters in Moatize. A very friendly man, always willing to share his knowledge, he described how, before the nationalisation of CCM, there were serious accidents in the underground mines of Moatize:

> In 1977, an accident resulted in the death of over 40 miners, leading other miners to go on strike to demand improved working conditions. As a result of this series of accidents, President Samora Machel sent a delegation led by Armando Guebuza [President of Mozambique 2005–2014] and Marcelino dos Santos [President of the Republic Assembly 1977–1994] to the Moatize mines. This delegation and the local miners concluded that the Portuguese managers were sabotaging the work in the mines and that this was

> the reason for many accidents, culminating in mass deaths. After the Machel delegation's visit to the Moatize underground mines, President Machel visited East Germany to negotiate cooperation and the visit of specialist mining technicians to Mozambique's mines. The mining technicians arrived at the Moatize mines in the early 1980s, and under their management, the number of accidents fell dramatically.

Under the socialist government of Samora Machel, coal was mined underground at CARBOMOC. As Adelino confirmed, there was only one open-cast mine at CARBOMOC, which was located far from residential areas because President Machel did not want the local population to be affected by mining activities. For several former CARBOMOC miners, the biggest problem was the increasing number of miners who died while extracting coal. The tragic accident described by Adelino above was, according to Castanheira (2011) caused by a firedamp explosion, which meant it was not possible to determine whether it was sabotage or not. The explosion occurred on 2 August 1977 in the Portuguese-managed Chipanga 3 mine in Moatize. As Catanheira (2011) describes, the Chipanga 3 mine, according to one of its Portuguese directors, was very dangerous due to the enormous concentration of firedamp. Castanheira (2011:46) points out that after the explosion, a considerable crowd gathered at the CCM offices, including miners from the remaining shifts and from other Chipangas, family members of the workers who lived in the so-called mining camp, and people passing by on the adjacent road, all of whom were attracted by the ground movement and smoke. The explosion killed 73 miners, all Mozambican, and those who gathered at the offices were driven by feelings of immense pain and fear, impatience and despair, revolt and anger, rage and desire for revenge. This was followed by the massacre of the entire management team of CCM, where the general director was murdered with pickaxes, along with eight other Europeans, including all the engineers. The police and military contingent sent by the governor of Tete Province, as well as the police of CCM, were unable to contain the anger of the population. It was only by sending in 80 men armed with six Soviet tanks, who fired four shots, that officials were able to stop the massacre of the Portuguese who ran CCM as well as those who lived in the town of Moatize.

The events of August 1977 in the Moatize mines led to the nationalisation of CCM in 1978. The massacre, perpetrated by the workers of the Moatize mines against the Portuguese, was fuelled by the deep racial stratification in the working area of the mines. Mozambique was simultaneously experiencing a revolution brought about by independence in 1975 and a growing anti-colonial discourse, particularly in Moatize (Castanheira 2011). The case of Moatize corroborates Scott's (1989:58) suggestion that open forms of resistance emerge after the small practices of everyday resistance.

The memory of the accident in the underground mines in 1977 is still strong among the residents of Moatize, as well as among many former CCM workers. Because of this accident, many Moatize residents were reluctant to seek employment in the production area of the underground mines. Although workplace safety improved following the accident due to the transfer of safety knowledge by technicians from the East German, coal production and export did not return to levels seen in the previous period of CCM nationalisation.

The civil war between the new Frelimo government and RENAMO devastated Moatize and caused social upheaval that prevented any form of economic investment. CARBOMOC stopped transporting coal in 1986 when RENAMO troops destroyed the Sena railway, cutting off coal transport to the port of Beira (Sofala Province) and beyond to overseas markets. According to Pantie (2006), coal's contribution to the economy fell to 21% of total mineral production and 0.5% of total exports. In 1993, CARBOMOC stopped mining coal because its underground mines were no longer profitable. With the closure of CARBOMOC's underground mines, former miners and other company workers received compensation in a process that did not end until 1998 (Castanheira 2011).

Pantie (2006:14–19) explains that CARBOMOC, limited in its ability to transport coal due to the destruction of the Sena railway line, was forced to reduce mining production and close a handful of mines in order to prevent significant quantities of coal from being left behind indefinitely. As a first step, CARBOMOC reassigned miners from the deliberately closed mines to other areas of the company's operations, with the majority joining the paramilitary force known as the Protection Force for the Defence of CARBOMOC's Infrastructures. CARBOMOC also suspended some of its development projects due to the financial crisis.

CARBOMOC's economic and financial crisis also had an impact on the size of the company's workforce. Former CARBOMOC workers in Moatize additionally spoke of the effects of drought and famine in the early 1980s, which exacerbated an already difficult situation. Arsénio, a 65-year-old former mechanic at CARBOMOC, joined the company in 1980 and has closely followed the successive crises that Moatize has experienced, especially since independence. Arsénio told me that he was helped by his two married daughters to pay his household expenses, but that he also did business by selling food products such as rice, beans, and sugar from a stall he built in front of his house. Arsénio described one of the worst droughts to hit Moatize as follows:

> When the drought hit the province of Tete in 1983, despite the more or less good salaries we received at the CARBOMOC company, there were colleagues who left the sector because of the hunger that was setting in. I remember that the situation got worse because we could not produce anything on our small farms, and people tried everything to find food in other places. When some colleagues returned, they went to the company to ask to be reinstated, but the company had already terminated their contracts because they had abandoned their work.

Arsénio's dismissal, along with that of colleagues dismissed amid hunger-related struggles, had a lasting impact on their lives. The fact that the work on the small farms they started was precarious and weather-dependent made their socio-economic situation even more precarious. That they were unemployed and had not yet found an income-generating activity contributed to their marginalisation. As most of my interlocutors made clear, the economic problems resulting from their dismissal from the company affected their families' environment and contributed to their social exclusion.

An important point raised by Pantie (2006) is the fact that the coal mining crisis at CARBOMOC began in 1982, when the RENAMO military incursions destroyed the Sena railway line used to transport coal, but that the process of contractually severing ties with its workers, primarily the miners, lasted until 1998. Pantie explains that the company's behaviour was not because it lacked the funds to pay the miners. The funds were available and provided by the state, which had taken on the role of compensating all workers of public companies that had gone bankrupt because of the new neoliberal economic order, as was the case with CARBOMOC. CARBOMOC retained a number of miners because it had the prospect of resuming coal mining following the Rome Peace Accords signed in 1992, which marked the end of the war. But, as I describe below, this revitalisation of CARBOMOC did not take place.

In 2006, the Mozambican government dissolved CARBOMOC (Castanheira 2011), having previously granted a mining licence to Vale in 2004. Vale was granted 22,096 hectares of land to carry out industrial mining (see Filipe and Norfolk 2017). The multinational company operationalised its coal exploitation activities on the site of an abandoned shaft mine previously operated by CARBOMOC in 2007 (Gerety 2013). Gerety (2013) reports that the Mozambican state's offer of the former CARBOMOC concessions to Vale made headlines in investor reports and trade journals around the world. With coal prices near historic highs, the entry of a global player into a previously unknown mining region was big news. Vale planned to export coal to markets in China, India, and the Gulf States, and to build a 300 MW coal-fired power

station on site to supply excess electricity to the national grid. The multinational spent around US$2 billion in Mozambique during the first phase of its operations in Moatize.

The Mozambican state saw mining in Moatize as a way of boosting the country's economy. Vale was the first foreign multinational to enter Moatize, acquiring large tracts of land and starting to build its infrastructure in 2007 (Monié and Carvalho 2019). The arrival of Vale in Mozambique was directly linked to the country's highest power elite, who employed the rhetoric of development in the Tete region and across Mozambique as a whole through new South-South cooperation in the mining sector (Monié and Carvalho 2019; Cezne and Hönke 2022).

The government's industrial mining strategy was to accelerate economic growth and create jobs in provinces with low levels of economic and human development. Part of the land granted was used by many small farming families as a place to live and a source of livelihood through food production (Filipe and Norfolk 2017). Between 2001 and 2011, investment in Mozambique's mining sector grew from $20 million to more than $1 billion a year, helping to make Mozambique one of the world's fastest growing economies. This trend was part of a wider commodities boom fuelled by rising demand and dwindling resources in India and China (Gerety 2013). Frei (2022:107) argues that the incorporation of Mozambique into the international flows of accumulation of capital is contradictory because it was imposed by the state and the international economy through "accumulation spoliation." In this process, mining megaprojects and excessive reproduction of capital transform territories into sources of profitability. Indeed, the case of Topuito in northern Nampula Province, where the Irish mining company Kenmare Resource is exploring the heavy sands, illustrates the huge difference between what is agreed and what happens on the ground. Overall, in negotiations with mining companies, the state has favoured corporate interests through legislation that facilitates their operations, while local communities bear the consequences of mining practices. As Frei (2016) describes, mining projects are in a winning position, while the communities lose out. The Mozambican state, for example, passes on its responsibility for education, health, employment programmes, and infrastructure development – including water, electricity, housing, and roads – to the companies operating in a given community. As a result, the community's way of life comes to depend on the goodwill of the mining company rather than on the state. Castel-Branco (2008) has also shown that the Mozambican economy retains and absorbs only a small portion of the production and

sales value of these companies, which means that the profits from mining operations contribute little to the country, while the companies' home countries benefit from the transfer of those profits abroad.

The Mozambican government also granted mining rights to other foreign multinationals in Tete. In 2008, when a group of geologists visiting Tete discovered that the coal deposit below Moatize was part of the largest undeveloped coal basin in the world, it sparked the interest of the world's largest mining companies (Gerety 2013; Kirshner and Power 2015). At the time, it was estimated that the basin and surrounding districts contained more than 23 billion tonnes of coal, enough to supply all the coal-fired power plants in the USA for 25 years. As Gerety (2013) points out, in the years following the discovery of this immense natural resource, fortune hunters from all over the world descended on Tete Province to exploit the region's coal as quickly as possible. Chinese and Indian investors, South African hydraulic engineers and geologists, Portuguese construction companies, Australian drillers, British crane operators, and American salesmen specialising in giant trucks and excavators all descended on Tete.

According to Gerety (2013), Rio Tinto – an Anglo-Australian mining company and the third largest mining company in the world – became the second largest company to invest in coal mining in Moatize. Rio Tinto bought the Australian company Riversdale and its three coal concessions in Tete for US$3.7 billion in 2011. However, according to Antonioli and Regan (2014), Rio Tinto ended its ill-fated venture in Mozambique's coal sector by agreeing to sell the coal assets it bought from Riversdale in 2011 for just US$50 million to an Indian joint venture. The sale of Rio Tinto Coal Mozambique to International Coal Ventures Private Limited (ICVL) includes the Benga coal mine and other projects in Tete province, assets valued at US$71 million according to Rio's financial records as of 31 March.

Schubert (2020:546) notes that the arrival of big multinational corporate investors changed the rules of the game and that state institutions and infrastructures, such as transport and power generation, were, in their current form, ill-equipped to deal with the requirements of globalised capital. Schubert (2020) also refers to the logistical shortcomings in the transport of Moatize coal. He examines how private industry and civil society engaged in deliberate entanglements to improve the Mozambican state's capacity to manage the country's nascent extractive industry sector through the Moatize coal sector, involving *The Ministério dos Recursos Minerais e Energia* (MIREME, Ministry of Mineral Resources and Energy). Although the logistical problems of transporting coal were minimised by the construction of the Nacala logistics corridor, Mozambique continued to face serious difficulties in transporting

and exporting mined coal. Due to these challenges hindering the growth of extractive industries in Tete, Rio Tinto cancelled billions of dollars' worth of investments in Mozambique in 2013.

Vale's coal extraction and export phase began in 2011. The Brazilian company was granted mining rights for 25 years, renewable for an additional 25 years, to explore Blocks I and II of the Moatize Basin, considered the largest on the African continent and the fourth largest in the world (Monié and Carvalho 2019).[21] The opening of Block II was scheduled for 2021, but by then, Vale had already announced its intention to leave Moatize, a complex decision driven by financial, environmental, market, and strategic factors (Jamasmie 2021). However, in a series of public consultations held in preparation for the opening of Block II, the company was heavily criticised by CSOs, which called on the company to repair the damage it had caused in Moatize.

4.1.1 The parastatal CARBOMOC

The former state-owned company CARBOMOC sold coal to neighbouring countries, boosting the Mozambican national economy. In contrast, Vale worked with other locations around the world and was almost completely disconnected from the local realities. According to Arsénio, one of the former workers of the company, CARBOMOC provided social rights to its workers and their families, ranging from medical and pharmaceutical assistance to housing, transport, and education. The company also owned houses where the workers lived and a secondary school offering grades 6 to 10, which was exclusively for the company's workers' children, who could attend the school free of charge. Arsénio mentioned also that when CARBOMOC operated in Moatize, the company organised technical training for new miners. The minimum requirement was a fourth-grade education, a qualification necessary for the company to enroll new recruits in technical schools in Tete or Maputo. During the training period, which could last up to a year, the company also paid their salaries. In addition, they received medical care at the CARBOMOC health centre.

[21] According to Monié and Carvalho (2019:185), phase I of the project mobilised approximately US$1.6 billion, allowing operations to begin in 2011 with a production capacity of 11 million tonnes of ore per year. This includes 8.5 million tonnes of coke for the metallurgical industry and 2.5 million tonnes of thermal coal for electricity generation. The project covers a greenfield exploration area and has been divided into three phases: (a) implementation of infrastructure between 2007 and 2010; (b) open-pit mining of coal from 2011; and (c) closure of mining activities with a projected life of 35 years (ibid.:186). According to Human Right Watch (2013), the total investment for each phase is US$1.9 billion, US$2 billion, and US$4 billion respectively.

An interesting point mentioned by former CARBOMOC workers in Moatize is that working for this company was synonymous with social well-being; no similar company offered such good economic conditions. For example, Arsénio emphasised that the development of infrastructure in Moatize was mainly due to CARBOMOC. I spoke to Rafaela, a 68-year-old former cook at CARBOMOC, several times at her stall in the centre of Moatize, where she sold food. Rafaela, like the other women I interacted with in Moatize, liked to wear a *capulana* and a scarf on her head, which she sometimes turned into an apron. She told me about the difficulties she experienced after leaving her job at CARBOMOC, before starting her own business:

> Due to the fact that I was admitted to the company with the minimum level, which was fourth grade, when I was dismissed from the company, I had numerous difficulties getting employed at another company, and the only solution I had was to use the money I received as compensation to open a small business in informal trade.

Testimonies of former CARBOMOC workers in Moatize reveal that the impact of their dismissal varied depending on the compensation they received and their technical level, which may have hindered or facilitated their employability in other companies. Some were able to use their compensation to build a house, alleviating the fact that they had to give up their previous home when their employment ended. Others, like Rafaela, could not be employed in other companies because they did not have the technical qualifications to be hired. Those who did have higher education in technical fields were more likely to find jobs in other companies, either in Moatize, in the city of Tete, or in other regions of the country.

From the perspective of residents like Rafaela, negative discourses against Vale's mining practices were also driven by the company's failure to offer formal employment opportunities to former CARBOMOC workers and other locals. People like Rafaela, who previously held formal jobs at the former state-owned company but were unable to find work at Vale, were common in Moatize. Many former workers from CARBOMOC thought that Vale would offer them jobs, given their experience at the now-defunct state coal company. But, as Arsénio said, Vale refused to hire many CARBOMOC miners because they lacked the skills necessary for the advanced open-pit mining technologies that Vale had invested in – technologies that differed from the underground mining practices of the former parastatal company (Monié and Carvalho 2019). The majority of Moatize residents, including miners from CARBOMOC, were brickmakers, an activity that residents reported learning from their parents, passed on from generation to generation. Generally, former CARBO-

MOC miners and other locals said that Vale has not taken on the social responsibility that a company of its size should. The miners described CARBOMOC as an extension of state services, providing many essential public services to the community, but Vale refused to assume this role.

In our discussions of CARBOMOC, I felt more enthusiasm from the mine workers, who were able to maintain a good standard of living during the company's tenure. Another group of residents took a more cautious approach when referring to this period during which CARBOMOC operated under the socialist government. Lourinda, a 77-year-old widow who lived in the 25 de Setembro neighbourhood, was retired from the health sector and had dedicated herself to her church, where she held a position. In her house, I found other women of her age rehearsing songs that they were going to sing on the following Sunday. When I asked her about her source of income, she talked about how both her sons and the church helped her, but she also had a *machamba* where her sons drove her during harvest time, as she could no longer walk long distances. This is what she had to say about living conditions in Moatize in the 1980s:

> At that time, not everyone had good living conditions because not everyone worked in the mining company. I remember that in 1983 there was a famine here in Moatize. Our *machambas* were not producing food because of the drought that had hit the region. At that time, people even had money, but they had nothing to buy because the shops were empty and very little food was imported from other countries. I do not think the idea that we lived well at that time is certain.

Something I sensed from many of my interlocutors was that immediately after Mozambique's political independence, people were very excited about the Frelimo government's new national project. I also understood that when former CARBOMOC workers reminisced about the good times, it was because they used to have jobs. When Vale arrived, they were marginalised, ignored by a company that used a different technology to extract coal. CARBOMOC represented a good moment in the past, providing jobs and the minimum income necessary to live on, but the situation as a whole was not good because of both natural and man-made crises, such as those described by Lourinda.

4.1.2 Vale mining practices in Moatize

Rodrigues (2015) describes the Vale's Moatize coal project as a capital-intensive mega-project aimed at exporting raw coal. Throughout the implementation phase, Vale's main partner was Odebrecht, a Brazilian multinational construction company, but it also worked with several other companies, including

those that focused on socio-economic, environmental, and geological studies. Moatize residents informed me that the construction company Odebrecht was responsible for the construction of the low-quality resettlement houses, which later led to popular mobilisations against the company and the Moatize Administration (see Chapter 6).

Although Vale's development projections in Moatize were designed to export of coal to the international market, the multinational coal industry brought little positive change to the residents of Moatize. According to many former workers of CARBOMOC, discontent arose among them when Vale introduced open-pit mining with new technologies different from those used in underground mining. They were also unhappy about the large number of labourers brought in from Mozambique and abroad because they originally thought they would be included in the company's recruitment process. The dismissal of thousands of local workers represented a greater challenge in terms of social management of unemployment for local authorities faced with the permanence of unemployed workers in the city (Monié and Carvalho 2019:193). According to Andrade (2016:315), during the initial construction phase of the mine – the period with the highest employment opportunities for the people of Moatize – Vale employed around 8,000 workers through subcontractors. By the time production began, however, the company employed only 1,100 workers, of whom only 394 were natives of Tete Province, where Moatize is located. The reduced need for workers was due to the high level of specialisation among Brazilian employees and the company's investment in cutting-edge technology.

People of Moatize shared their frustration that they were not considered for the company's jobs. They also told me that there should be a quota for locals when competing for jobs. According to them, they were not employed because the company instead offered jobs to people from the capital city Maputo, jobs they felt should have been theirs. Although they also criticised the presence of foreign workers, their anger was primarily directed at those from Maputo, who had been able to receive the required technical education in the capital. Despite obvious frustration about outsiders, however, the arrival of these newcomers also created business opportunities for local young entrepreneurs.

When the young people of Moatize lost their jobs after constructing and installing Vale's infrastructure, they did not return to their rural areas. Instead, they chose to stay in the city of Moatize in search of other employment opportunities, worked as guards in the houses of Vale employees. Others worked as domestic servants, enabling them to send money each month to family members who remained in the countryside and depended on agricultural work.

Younger people in Moatize were more involved in the dynamics of an emerging consumer society and were not interested in agricultural work and or returning to their villages of origin.

Residents, such as former miners of CARBOMOC, small farmers, and brickmakers, described Vale as uprooting their means of survival and creating social inequalities within Moatize. Former CARBOMOC miners in Moatize were victims of labour market segmentation, meaning that they were excluded from the Vale labour market, which preferred to hire qualified workers from its own countries. The phenomenon of labour market segmentation is linked to the specificities of labour market institutions, such as contractual arrangements (permanent or temporary employment contracts), lack of enforcement (segmentation along formal/informal lines), and the types of workers concerned (such as migrant and non-migrant workers). This seems to corroborate the findings of Rubbers (2020:1564–1565), who shows that the liberalisation of the mining sector and the influx of foreign investments in the early 2000s led to a resurgence in the demand for expatriate workers in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

According to Rubbers (2020), mining companies do not normally employ unskilled labourers, who instead work in artisanal mining. These local workers had precarious contracts compared to foreign workers (Rubbers 2020). This is similar to the case of Moatize, where former miners from the state-owned company CARBOMOC reported to me that they had only short-term contracts with Vale during the infrastructure construction phase and were no longer employed in the coal exploitation phase because they did not possess the requisite skills. The company had not only expatriated qualified workers from Brazil and various parts of the world but also hired others from within Mozambique, leaving former CARBOMOC miners as unskilled labourers at the bottom of the hierarchy. This is the opposite of what happened with CARBOMOC, which, according to locals (former CARBOMOC employees), gave them jobs, invested in their training, and provided them and their relatives with health assistance. In general, the ethnographic material I gathered from the people of Moatize concerns the regression of workers' socio-economic conditions. This happened in two parts. First, CARBOMOC went bankrupt and was closed down, which meant that the workers lost the social rights they had in the company. Second, because of the transition from a centralised economy to economic neoliberalism, the entry of Vale as the new coal mining company did not bring benefits to former CARBOMOC workers, although there may have been some workers who did get job in the multinational. This

demonstrates the process of marginalisation that occurred, placing many former workers outside the socio-economic benefits they had previously received from coal production in Moatize.

4.1.3 Vale's practice of corporate social responsibility in Moatize

For Le Meur (2015), the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) mechanism contributes to the production of "bottom-up" public policies while working as a tool for self-regulation of the mining sector at a global level. At the same time, as Jacka (2018:239) argues, CSR is not an opposition to corporate capitalism. Vale's CSR strategy in Moatize has led to an increase in the number of public infrastructures, some mentioned above and others described below. With the arrival of a multinational coal company, which brought with it financial investments adapted to new needs, a series of modern public infrastructures began to emerge in Moatize. Vale has maintained in its discourses that coal mining has created opportunities for development, transforming Moatize into a productive, modernised landscape and bringing new infrastructure such as roads, private clinics, and a public health centre. However, the local people, especially those who were resettled, did not share this view. For them, the mining projects destroyed their lands and caused environmental problems that the company was unable to minimise. Some residents, instead of talking about Vale's corporate social responsibility, talked about its irresponsibility, because it caused them hardship, especially in the new resettlement areas.

In Moatize, residents of the 25 de Setembro neighbourhood said that Vale's construction of the 25 de Setembro Health Centre and the 25 de Setembro Market were part of its corporate social responsibility. I spoke to Sara, a 43-year-old nurse, at the 25 de Setembro Health Centre after meeting her through a friend from Maputo who worked with her. Sara was dressed in her nurse's uniform, and I took notes as we talked, leading some people at the health centre to later say they thought I was a journalist. Sara, who knew the area well because she also lived nearby, had this to say about the health centre:

> Vale had to build a reference hospital for us here in the neighbourhood of 25 de Setembro. We also had a hospital in the Chipanga neighbourhood where we lived, and the company did no more than its duty. In addition to the hospital, we also had a local market. It is true that the conditions in terms of infrastructure were not the best there, as they are here in the 25 de Setembro neighbourhood.

Typically, CSR programmes in mining areas seek to reduce the negative impacts associated with mining and to reduce poverty (Campbell 2012). It turns out that many of the social action programmes my interlocutors referred to

occurred after residents had mobilised to contest the social and environmental consequences of mining as well as the poor quality of the company's infrastructure in the resettlement areas of 25 de Setembro and Mualádzi. This fact shows how the priorities of Vale's CSR programmes have been shaped by the demands of the resettled people, who have seen their socio-economic life regress because of the multinational's coal mining activities. A series of social actions, such as the renovation of houses built by the Brazilian construction company Oldebrecht, were taken after resettled residents mobilised against the company in 2012. These houses developed cracks after they were built, and water seeped in through the zinc sheets. As a Vale worker explained, these actions, as well as the compensation paid to people displaced from their original areas, were included in Vale's CSR actions.

Machanguana and Sardinha (2021), in their study of Vale's CSR, state that rural families working in the agricultural sector were trained in crop management and the use of irrigation systems. Some students and teachers were trained (in basic education) in Moatize Municipality and in the village of Cateme. The chicken production value chain, developed through the construction of 58 aviaries for families in Cateme and 25 de Setembro, also included producer training. Residents mentioned that when Vale first arrived in Moatize, it provided some technical training to young people who were later employed in the construction of the company's infrastructure. However, with the start of the coal production phase, they lost their jobs and, because they were not given any opportunity to train in coal production, they could not be re-employed. As mentioned above, these young people returned to the precarious situation they were in before the company came to Moatize.

Vale also sought to replace green spaces – but not to the extent that public discourse suggested it would. This programme was only implemented in communities where Vale resettled people. Vale also donated fruit tree seedlings for planting in people's gardens, in schools, and in the neighbouring communities of Cateme, with the aim of improving the nutrition of the local population (Machanguana and Sardinha 2021).

Although Machanguana and Sardinha (2021) refer to a social responsibility programme implemented in the Moatize district, Flávio, a 52-year-old resident of Cateme who was sitting on a mat in one of Vale's resettlement houses, told me that the problem was that the areas to which they had been resettled and the *machambas* to which they had been reallocated were barren. Nothing would grow. They needed land like they had in Chipanga, which was suitable for farming. As he said, "The Vale projects, although full of good intentions, were not what we wanted because they took away the basis of our survival, the *machambas*."

The *Jornal Notícias* (4/3/2021), in its advertising section, highlighted Vale's commitment to the sustainability of its operations. It highlighted that Vale had produced around 60,000 seedlings of 30 forest species, based on 650 kilos of seeds collected in 2020. Vale also stated on the same page that around 5,000 seedlings of fruit trees and native species were distributed to communities and Vale employees to plant around their homes. The newspaper also reported that the company had monitored and measured air quality, noise vibration, surface water quality, groundwater quality, and tributaries. According to the announcement in *Jornal Notícias*, the above actions were supported by 14 existing programmes. The most notable of these are the Noise and Vibration Management Programme, the Water Resources Management Programme, the Flora Monitoring Programme, the Waste Management Programme, and the Environmental Education Programme. It is interesting to note that Vale's publicity took place during a year in which it had already announced its intention to withdraw from Moatize. Even so, the publicity had public benefit because many residents did not know about the existence of these programmes.

4.1.4 The exit of Vale in Moatize

In the midst of the many negative socio-economic and environmental impacts described by residents, Vale decided to withdraw from coal mining in Moatize. Although the Vulcan company now mines the coal in present-day Moatize, discourses about the residents' relationship with the coal industry point to the Vale company as responsible for the deterioration of their living conditions. When I began my ethnographic fieldwork in 2019, Vale was still operating. During this time, I heard complaints from marginalised groups, such as small farmers and brickmakers, about the company's harmful mining practices and ongoing human rights violations. In 2019, 2020, and 2021, I also witnessed protests in Moatize by small farmers and brickmakers over the non-payment of their *machambas* and compensation for the brickworks (see Chapter 5). In 2019, Mozambican Lawyers' Association (OAM) decided to file a lawsuit against Vale in the Administrative Court of Mozambique. According to OAM as well as several civil society organisations, Vale needed to be held accountable for the damage it caused (OAM 2023).

The fact is that Vale left Moatize while the local economy, which has historically been neglected and suffered from disinvestment, has not improved. According to Moatize residents, the economy had stagnated and social conditions deteriorated further. The economic benefits of mining in Moatize were unequally distributed, tilted toward the mining company with larger stakes in the same exploitation company. In 2022, Vale sold the Moatize mine to Vulcan Minerals, an Indian mining company, amidst protests by its workers and

ongoing socio-environmental problems affecting the people of Moatize. According to Deutsche Welle Africa (18/05/2022), through its correspondent Jovenaldo Ngovene, Vulcan did not inform Vale's workers of its acquisition of the mine, prompting them to go on strike. The miners criticised both Vale and the Mozambican government for not informing them of the change in ownership. They also claimed that Vale was selling them out like the company itself. Not knowing the terms of the agreement between Vale and the new company, they feared for their jobs. In practice, however, even after Vulcan took over the Moatize mine, the Moatize's residents continued to see coal being transported by train every day, while their agriculture-based economy was destroyed. They also witnessed the destruction of brickmaking, cattle breeding and farming activities that had previously provided them with a livelihood. They stated that they opposed the mining practices because they wanted the state to distribute the economic resources extracted from the mine fairly. Their livelihoods had been destroyed, causing widespread resentment and discontent.

In addition to the environmental issues that Vale cited as reasons for selling the Moatize mine, Jamasmie (2021) refers to operational and financial challenges that influenced Vale's exit. The Moatize mine had been a loss-making venture, plagued by operational issues and substantial financial impairments, including a US$2.4 billion charge in 2016 and a full impairment in 2019. Additionally, the broader industry trend of divesting from coal due to increasing pressure from investors to adopt greener practices further pushed Vale to restructure its business portfolio. For Ns Energy (2021), the online energy division of Progressive Media International that provides news and information about the global energy industry, Vale's decision to exit the Moatize coal mine was part of a broader strategy to transition away from coal and focus on more sustainable business activities. The challenges of profitability, environmental, and social responsibilities, along with declining global demand for coal and the need for strategic realignment, collectively influenced Vale's decision. This move can be associated with the broader trends in the global mining industry, where companies are increasingly prioritizing sustainability and resilience in response to changing market dynamics and societal expectations.

4.2 Population, state, and multinational corporate practices

Following the start of Vale's mining operations, the district increased in population due to newcomers from other Mozambican regions, as well as neighbouring countries, who sought employment opportunities in the mining sector. Moatize District has undergone profound changes since the arrival of the major global mining company, whose functional and territorial strategies have

restructured the geographical space at different scales. The extractive boom and associated rapid urbanisation have drastically changed the face of Tete's urban geography, with dramatic land use and demographic changes in the Tete city centre and its outskirts and the significant displacement and resettlement of local communities due to coal operations (Kirshner and Power 2015:69).

According to Monié and Carvalho (2019:197), the growing population and economic centrality led to the political-administrative emancipation of the town of Moatize, which was elevated to city status in February 2020. The population of Moatize doubled between 1997 and 2007, from around 109,000 inhabitants in 1997 to almost 218,000 in 2007 (INE 2007). Ten years after the start of Vale's mining operations, the local population reached around 344,000 inhabitants (INE 2018). However, Kirshner and Power (2015) and Lesutis (2019:116) have observed that the resource boom in Tete Province has created exclusionary spaces of natural resource extraction that has integrated small groups into global commodity circuits, while at the same time imposing hardship on local populations. Moatize residents characterised the Vale mining as a curse – their lives were shaped by corporate practices, and their environment was exploited and degraded in the name of development (cf. Gilberthorpe and Rajak 2017; Jacka 2018). Residents also described the emergence of spaces, such as residential enclaves, that have exacerbated social inequalities.

Gilberthorpe and Rajak (2017) argue that mining companies reduce the power of the state over mining issues that transcend, circumvent, or usurp the authority of the state. Mining companies also materialise their operations through the free trade environment, bypassing domestic opposition to their activities (Anaf et al. 2019), but the role of local political elites in the materialisation of foreign investment contracts is very important. The power of Mozambican elites, at both national and local levels, is consolidated through the extractive accumulation. In Mozambique, the favouritism of the country's domestic elite began with the start of the structural adjustment programs imposed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Most of the privatisation packages of public companies remained in the hands of Frelimo politicians, who became the largest shareholders in many formerly state-owned companies (Langa 2023).

The Mozambican state welcomed extractive industries to escape donor dependency and to strengthen the economic and political position of (certain) state actors, but corporate power simultaneously strengthened and weakened the legitimate authority of the state. In Moatize, the beneficiaries of the multinational mining operation included the Mozambican political elite, who facilitated the operations of the subsidiary Vale Mozambique Ltd., as well as

local subcontractors such as Odebrecht, a Brazilian construction and engineering conglomerate, which was tasked with building the resettlement infrastructure (cf. Langa 2023).

According to Marshall (2016), transnational companies today exercise their global power through horizontal flows rather than the vertical concepts of nation states. The enclaves of the extractive sector, far from promoting national development, tend to disorganise national economic spaces by creating horizontal global flows of supply chains and self-sufficient operational networks that link various continents through supra-national trade and banking institutions. Corporations have their own hierarchies, norms, and boundaries. These qualities are reflected in the various dimensions of corporate sovereignty that come to the fore, sometimes as a single actor in the coal mining area. Diphoorn and Wiegink (2022:422–424), who study the corporate power of multinationals such as the mining giants Vale and Rio Tinto in Mozambique, characterise "corporate sovereignty" as performative claim to power made by individuals acting on behalf of profit-driven corporate entities, operating within state-sanctioned spaces. This contrasts with the claims of other non-state actors who operate in permissive spaces, such as local non-government organisations that regularly lack this legally grounded relationship with the state.

According to Schubert et al. (2018:167), when extractive industries come into contact with the realities of developing countries, they can trigger a crisis of legitimacy for the state, given the potential difficulty of reconciling competing interests that are constitutive of the state. For Diphoorn and Wiegink (2022:425–426), mining companies create both political communities – through social control and everyday security practices – and the mechanisms for developing these communities, such as corporate social responsibility. As both the state and those in power profit from the activities of mining companies, the state legitimises corporate sovereignty (Diphoorn and Wiegink 2022:426–427). Because the state is a beneficiary, Monié and Carvalho (2019:186) argue that it has created an institutional, fiscal, and regulatory framework that is particularly favourable to investors, including legislation that allows for the mitigation of the social and environmental impacts of mining.

In Moatize, for example, Vale has built a gated community where only Brazilians and the company's miners live. These enclaves exist within areas formally under the jurisdiction of the Mozambican state, which means that some state control is effectively ceded to the mining company. Vale has also built new resettlement areas that include water infrastructure, schools, and a health centre as part of its corporate social responsibility. In doing so, Vale has not

only subjected the local population to new forms of territorial organisation by relocating them but has also exercised a power normally reserved for the state.

Vale's gated community in the 25 de Setembro neighbourhood is managed directly by the company, which has erected an electrified fence around the area and employs private security guards. The luxury enclave has unlimited access to water from Vale's pipeline and a generator system in the event of a power cut. The houses also have air conditioning to help residents cope with Moatize's high summer temperatures. Inside the gated community, infrastructure includes a football pitch, a basketball court, and other sporting facilities that non-mining residents do not have in their neighbourhoods or have access to. The residents I spoke to said they should be able to use these sports facilities too. More than just football pitches are missing from the non-mining neighbourhoods of Moatize, however, which frequently suffer water and electricity cuts during the week, daily security problems – including robberies and assaults – and inadequate water access due to the inability of the Investment Fund for Water Supply (FIPAG) to deliver water to residents.

The Moatize case is comparable to Lemanski's (2006) study on the South African gated communities, which shows how poorer neighbourhoods are physically close to their wealthier neighbours but socially and functionally isolated. This pattern also applies in Moatize, where areas belonging to the mining community exist alongside poorer, non-mining neighbourhoods. The gated community of the 25 de Setembro neighbourhood not only created social inequalities and spatial segregation but also provoked the anger of the Moatize residents. Indeed, the gated community became one of the sources of daily resistance among the marginalised people of Moatize.

When I visited one of the gated communities, known locally as *condomínio*, I found gardens and leisure areas for children. Unlike the dirt roads of Moatize's regular neighbourhoods, the internal roads of the gated community were paved. In order to gain entrance to the *condomínio*, visitors must first pass a guard standing by a gate out front. The guard communicates by telephone with the person to be visited. If the person confirms that he or she is expecting a visit, the visitor is allowed to enter and directed to the house in question. Internal recreation areas, including the gym and the children's playground, are solely for the workers and their children. As my interlocutors said, these *condomínios* are exclusive and represent a distinct type of territory separate from where most residents live. For the regular inhabitants of Moatize, having well-equipped housing reserved only for Vale workers amounts to social exclusion.

The mining company manages the *condomínios* and pays property taxes on them to the Municipality of Moatize. Residents of the gated community

share spaces with other residents of Moatize only during neighbourhood meetings or censuses. Raúl, a 41-year-old resident of the 25 de Setembro neighbourhood who lives in a Vale resettlement house, said that some displaced residents who received resettlement houses as compensation rented them out to other Vale workers who were unable to secure housing in the *condomínios*. I met Raúl because he lived close to me in the resettlement area of 25 de Setembro, where I had rented a house during my third fieldwork visit in 2021. Raúl worked for Vale and was very helpful in introducing me to his friends who lived in Vale's gated communities, which gave me the opportunity to better understand how these exclusive areas in Moatize are organised. Raúl had this to say when I asked him about the *condomínios*:

> The existence of these spaces here in Moatize is a source of dissatisfaction for many of the resettled people, who have been put in houses where water seeps in and where there are many cracks related to the quality of Vale's work. The construction of well-equipped apartments for Vale workers shows that they had the means to do so for the resettled people. But the resettled people were disenfranchised because they were poor and unimportant. One thing I also noticed is that the Vale workers, because they live in this privileged space, think they are superior to others who live in poor neighbourhoods.

In fact, Vale workers in Moatize belong to a different social class. They are able to shop for food and other products in supermarkets in the town of Moatize and in the city of Tete, and their children attend private schools and benefit from the round-trip school transport. When I spoke to Elias, a 43-years-old Vale worker and one of the residents of the gated community, I observed that he had two cars in his garage, a Toyota Hilux double cab and a Toyota Terios. Elias explained that many Vale workers bought cars with the loans the company gave them at the start of their contracts, loans intended to help them purchase essential goods. Elias also confirmed that Vale workers living in the gated communities own most of the public transport in Moatize, serving as the main investors and owners of many of the minibuses, known as *chapas*. The socio-economic conditions they enjoy clearly demonstrate the social inequalities that mining has created in Moatize, privileging its workers to the detriment of the local population, especially those who were resettled. As many residents of 25 de Setembro mentioned in their daily conversations, one of the reasons that led them to publicly oppose Vale's mining in Moatize was their poor living conditions, in contrast to the luxury communities where Vale's miners lived. In light of Scott's theoretical framework of everyday resistance and the above ethnographic material, I argue that new, powerful actors linked to mining emerged in Moatize, whereas the majority of residents were marginalised by mining practices. The gated communities reserved for

company workers, and the resulting social inequalities, explain residents' discontent and negative views about mining practices, as well as their limited ability (weak weapons) to counter them.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter examines how coal mining practices have been described and analysed differently by the residents of Moatize and the mine workers since the period of transition from the colonial state to the new post-colonial Frelimo regime. Former workers of the *Companhia Carbonífera de Mocambique*, (CCM) which operated during colonial times, describe the same perspectives on industrial mining practices in their testimonies. The chapter show that company workers carried out acts of covert resistance during the Portuguese administration because underground coal mining took place in a segregated environment, where only Mozambicans went underground and suffered work accidents that resulted in many deaths. But it was only in the new post-colonial state – in which numerous accidents led to the mass deaths of workers – that the workers began practising overt acts of resistance. They took advantage of the moment of political change in the regime to develop an open form of protest, characterised by a rebellion that later led to the nationalisation of CCM by the Mozambican state.

However, the perspectives of the residents of Moatize, especially the former workers, describe a parastatal company, CARBOMOC, as the entity that took care of their socio-economic needs and granted them social rights that most Moatize residents did not have at the time. These workers highlight that the multinational company Vale, which later started operating in Moatize, marginalised them by not hiring them, choosing instead to invest in a more qualified workforce adapted to the new type of opencast mining it was introducing. Descriptions of Vale's marginalisation extend to the social inequalities exacerbated by the Brazilian multinational's mining practices. In these descriptions, residents point out that the company has created exclusive neighbourhoods for those directly involved in or connected to the multinational coal industry. Vale is also singled out for having had a negative impact on the social life of the displaced locals, moving them into poor quality housing while the company's workers live in luxury communities. In the process of creating social inequalities, Vale also created a gated community, where exercised social control and everyday security practices. In doing so, they also counted on support from the state and other powers that benefit from the activities of mining companies, thus legitimising corporate sovereignty. However, the chapter

shows that the multinational company has negatively affected the local population, with its corporate social responsibility practices failing to resolve resettlement issues while the state has also failed to provide adequate housing and security for the resettled people.

The residents' negative descriptions of Vale's practices show that mining activity caused feelings of dissatisfaction, frustration, and a loss of dignity among the people of Moatize. These residents had limited means to change their situation, which I refer to as weak weapons, to paraphrase Scott (1985). In the next chapter, I discuss the Vale's practices and strategies for displacement and resettlement alongside the experiences and discourses of Moatize residents. These highlight the project's problematic nature, which included brutal police repression and the residents' subsequent response in the form of open protests.

Chapter 5. Experiences of Displacement and Resettlement

The multinational company Vale and the state, who together instigated the displacement and resettlement of the Moatize people, made an array of promises before the coal mining project was implemented. According to my interlocutors, these promises have not been kept, making life difficult for the resettled people. One of Vale's practices, facilitated by the District Administration representing the Mozambican central government, was the displacement of people from potential coal mining areas. In this chapter, I examine how local people experienced the displacement from their customary lands to the new areas offered by Vale and the District Administration.

The focus is on the experiences of the resettled people. I begin by discussing the mining company's discourses used to achieve the peaceful displacement of people from their homes, *machambas*, and the brickworks that served as their means of survival. Next, I present the experiences of displaced small farmers and brickmakers, which were characterised by violations of their land and human rights.

In addition, there were heated discussions between the company and the residents about pollution and water supply in the new residential areas. These discussions led to conflicts between the company and the local people, who saw their lives deteriorating due to unsustainable mining practices. In this chapter, I show how residents engaged in a kind of everyday resistance using the mechanisms at their disposal. Because they feared police repression, residents were unable to take a visible political stance, preferring to use a range of low-political resistance practices (Scott 1990:183–184). Their acts of resistance were not limited to the multinational coal industry but indeed challenged the District Administration of Moatize, which they saw as an accomplice in the implementation of the company's plans.

5.1 Vale's promises to Moatize residents

Behind the promises made to the people of Moatize at the start of Vale's project was the logic of a mining industry capable of bringing significant economic growth to Moatize. However, for Sassen (2014:29–213), the world's major corporations contributed to a phase marked by the displacement of people from their own life projects and livelihoods, from the social contract at the heart of liberal democracy. There has been a rapid growth in corporate profits, alongside a rapid growth in government budget deficits, leading to an increase in displaced populations in the Global South. Today, corporate institutions are increasingly designed to serve corporate economic growth. This is the new systemic logic, a logic of exclusion characterised by expulsion. Multinational mining projects are also associated with what Comaroff and Comaroff (2001) called the triumph of capitalism in the new millennium, a concept that raises questions about conflict and social exclusion in different capitalist contexts.

Forced resettlements epitomise the social exclusion of certain groups of people. Cernea (2000:7–8) argues that the majority of involuntary resettlements worldwide have been unsuccessful, characterised by inequitable distribution of the gains and pains of development. The author presents a model for avoiding the risks of landlessness, unemployment, homelessness, marginalisation, food insecurity and increased morbidity, loss of access to common property resources, and community disarticulation for resettlement programmes (Cernea 2000:14). The model has a dual focus on risks to be prevented and recovery strategies to be implemented, facilitating its operational use as a guide to action. However, like other models, its components can be influenced and "manipulated" through informed planning to reduce the impact of one or more components as conditions require or allow. This requires considering these variables as a system of interrelationships rather than as a set of separate elements (Cernea 2000:15).

Vanclay (2017:5–6) asserts that resettlement as a process of planning and moving people, families, and communities from one place to another for a specific reason must include compensation for loss of property and resources as well as assistance in restoring and improving livelihoods. It must also restore and enhance social networks and improve the social functioning of the community. The World Bank (2004:05) points out that the simplest way to minimise the negative impacts of involuntary resettlement is to design projects that minimise land acquisition and the number of people affected by loss of land, physical displacement, or disruption of income-generating activities. The authorities responsible for the displacement should consult and offer technically and economically feasible resettlement alternatives to displaced peo-

ple. Resettled people must have equal or better opportunities to engage in productive activities in their new location, thus ensuring their self-sufficiency and avoiding a cycle of dependency.

In Moatize, Vale established an agreement with small farmers and brickmakers that they would receive cash compensation and land to continue their agricultural activities or develop other income-generating activities. Small farmers would receive what they called seed compensation for the crops grown in their *machambas*, the value of which would depend on the size of the *machamba* and the crops grown on it. Each small farmer would also receive two hectares of land inside or outside Moatize, with one hectare being compensated at a value of 119,000 MT equivalent to US$2,000. Yet the *machambas* that were uncultivated at the time were excluded from the compensation process. For the displacement of the brickmakers, Vale would compensate each with a *machamba* and a sum of 119,000 MT. If they had also had brickworks where they produced clay bricks, they would receive 60,000 MT, equivalent to US$1,000 US dollars.

According to Selma, a 53-year-old small farmer living in the 25 de Setembro neighbourhood, many residents felt excitement about Vale's arrival in Moatize, including her, and many mobilised to support the project. When I visited at Selma's house in 2021, I experienced what felt like a small earthquake for a few seconds. But there was no earthquake. Rather, she reassured me, it was just a Vale mine being detonated, something that happened frequently. Selma said that in public consultations with local people, Vale promised jobs and welfare. It also promised that the resettlement areas would be in new, modern neighbourhoods with essential infrastructure. During the consultations, District Administration officials and local leaders, such as neighbourhood secretaries, who facilitated the resettlement process, accompanied Vale. In order to convince residents that what the company officials promised would actually happen, the company invited locals to meetings at a hotel, where it showed them on giant screens the best living conditions that awaited them in the resettlement areas. It showed the modern houses they would have, the paved roads, the gardens, the schools, the water sources 300 metres away, and the buses taking uniformed people to their jobs. The huge, alluring pictures impressed the residents and made it easier to persuade them to move to the resettlement areas.

At the end of these presentations, the company prepared banquets, which included a variety of dishes that Moatize people enjoyed. After these parties, my interlocutors added, people could even take home the leftover food. Vale also gave residents the right to use the names of their original neighbourhoods

in the resettlement areas. Maps of the new neighbourhoods were made available in advance, and people indicated where they would like to live in the resettlement areas. Small farmers and brickmakers described a harmonious process of public consultation in which interactions between them and the company were peaceful; what the multinational promised was in line with their own development aspirations. All these precautions made residents willing to be resettled without objection. Using the rhetoric of community development with the support of District Administration officials, Vale thus succeeded in its attempts to displace Moatize residents who lived in the coal-rich areas.

5.1.1 The list as a point of contention

To put its resettlement plan into practice, Vale hired the consultancy firm *Diagonal Urbano* from 2005 to 2006, which carried out a numerical survey of the houses to be demolished and rebuilt as part of the resettlement. It also calculated the number of brickworks and *machambas* that would have to be paid for.

However, a gap between promises and outcomes soon emerged – a gap described by Moatize residents, especially small farmers and brickmakers, who were most affected by Vale's displacement. The gap between promises and results also led to a conflict between Vale and the residents, which arose over compensation. According to my interlocutors, the company drew up a list of people eligible for compensation, with input from district officials and local leaders. However, the registration of their *machambas* and brickworks was inaccurate: Vale officials did not register the correct number of properties.

Faced with the problems of unpaid compensation, the small farmers and brickmakers formed their own committees to represent them against Vale and the District Administration. According to the representative of the small farmers' commission, Vale paid compensation to 1,141 families when it began operations in Moatize, but other small farmers did not receive compensation because their names were excluded from the list during the registration process. The brickmakers representative similarly said that the company only registered and compensated 847 brickmakers in a process through which 3,000 brick manufacturers should have been registered.

In addition, the list of beneficiaries of the compensation grew sharply due to corruption, leading the company to refuse to pay. One brickmaker said that the list had been corrupted with the complicity of certain Vale employees, Moatize district officials, and representatives from the District Services for Economic Activities and the District Service for Planning and Infrastructure (SDPI). According to the testimonies from brickmakers and small farmers,

these various individuals had jointly corrupted the registration process. Messias, a 50-year-old resident of the Primeiro de Maio neighbourhood, said that he had met many people living in Moatize who had gotten themselves put on the compensation list as displaced brickmakers. Messias said:

> When residents heard that Vale would pay them compensation, they did not hesitate to pay some money to get on the list. The list was under the control of the brickmakers, but some Vale officials who assured them that the company would pay everyone incited them.

The list thus became a point of contention between the Vale and the brickmakers and small farmers. On the one hand, the list of small farmers and brickmakers included names of people who were neither small farmers nor brickmakers. On the other hand, this list excluded some of the real beneficiaries, thus escalating the conflict. In this list Vale was supposed to pay only to those who had been displaced from their brickworks and *machambas*, but Vale officials reported that the brickmakers had registered names of people who had not been displaced from the brickworks or *machambas*.

Reginaldo, a 46-year-old member of a civil society organisation in Moatize, with whom I spoke at the CSO's headquarters, had this to say about the compensation list:

> The list of compensation beneficiaries became a point of contention with Vale from the moment the company directed the process of registering the beneficiaries, but at a certain point, some were not registered, although they met the requirements to appear on the list and receive the corresponding compensation.

Small farmers and brickmakers negotiated their case first with Vale and then with Vulcan.[22] In the negotiations with Vale, the company advised these groups to take their claims to the District Administration, to which Vale had already handed over the compensation funds. However, the District Administration accused the small farmers and brickmakers of adding extra names in order to obtain unjustified financial compensation. The District Administration acted as a mediator in the negotiations with Vale, but the list of compensation for the brickmakers remained contested. According to the brickmakers representative, "the company failed to register more than 3,000 brickmakers."

Following objections from the brickmakers, who claimed that many had not received the compensation they were owed, the company gave their repre-

[22] All the responsibilities that Vale had before selling the Moatize mine to Vulcan have been transferred to Vulcan, according to local residents.

sentative the authority to identify and register those who had been inadvertently left out. When I spoke to this representative, he told me that a group of brickmakers and other citizens of Moatize had threatened him, forcing him to put their names on the list. Ultimately, the list grew to 11,000 brickmakers. From one perspective, the brickmakers practice could be seen as a tactic to illegally benefit from mining compensation, reflecting the broader issue of the unfair distribution of the economic resources produced by coal mining. However, the list case also shows that some brickmakers were victims because they did not receive the compensation they were entitled to. The corruption of the list harmed them. This fact caused even more discontent among the real beneficiaries, who described coal mining in Moatize as a real curse on their lives.

The brickmakers' representative confirmed that he had included as beneficiaries extra brickmakers from the Ncatanga area, the Liberdade neighbourhood, and the village of Ncatete, which are part of the Moatize District, because he had witnessed their forced displacement without any compensation. His decision to manipulate the list in order to add the names of people who, in his opinion, were also entitled to compensation can be analysed as a lie or a tactic that contrasts with the norms. De Certeau (1984: xix) argues that the tactic depends on the game it introduces into the bases of power and the opportunities that the power creates. De Certeau (1984:37–39) defines tactics as the art of the weak, used by those lacking formalised spaces or institutional support, who find and exploit opportunities within systems created by the dominant structures.

In this way, the tactics of the brickmakers' representative show that he and the other brickmakers were capable of challenging and subverting dominant strategies. It is also an example of individual resistance with collective interests. Lilja (2022:212) states that such individual acts of resistance are constitutive of collective dissent that goes beyond mere every day or individual expressions. These acts of resistance are often carried out by individuals who are connected to other individuals because of perceived common interests or grievances, or because they share the same identity positions. She goes on to argue that individual, small-scale practices are not necessarily hidden and that there are different forms of resistance, some of which include mobilisations that involve both collective action and individual, everyday resistance.

As a way of solving the compensation problem, the company decided to implement an interview process, but the brickmakers' commission did not agree with this solution because there were too many brickmakers to interview. The interview process was seen by the brickmakers as a way to waste their time and make them give up their demands.

5.1.2 Small farmers' experiences of displacement and resettlement

Selemane (2010) points out that in order to make its coal mining project viable, Vale resettled approximately 1,313 families in Moatize, of which 717 were considered "rural" (small farmers, cattle breeders, and the "unemployed," according to the company's classification) and resettled in the village of Cateme, 35 km from the Municipality of Moatize. The remaining 596 families, considered "urban," consisted mainly of families of bricklayers, traders, mechanics, electricians, merchants, and other professionals. Of the group of families with urban characteristics, approximately 288 families were resettled in the 25 de Setembro neighbourhood, within the Municipality of Moatize, and 308 families did not accept Vale's categorisation and opted for assisted compensation. This assisted compensation, as the resettled people in Moatize told me, consisted of calculating the value of all their assets to receive cash compensation and then finding housing for themselves because they did not want to move to the 25 de Setembro neighbourhood.

The experiences of displacement and resettlement of the rural population in Tete province are not new; small farmers have already been subjected to ambitious resettlement plans as part of the Frelimo government's centralisation and rural socialisation project. As part of the overall development strategy in Tete, cooperatives, communal villages, and state farms led the rural economy and society in the transition to socialism (Coelho 1998:83–85). Household agriculture, which received no state investment throughout the period, was seen as doomed to disappear, characterised by negative and backward political, economic, social, and cultural values. This increased the difficulties faced by families who, despite living in communal villages, continued to use their agricultural lands. As Coelho (1998:67–68) further explains, the Frelimo government aimed to create 14 villages of 5,000 people per year in Tete, reaching a total of 111 new villages for almost 450,000 people by 1985, and to villagise the entire population of Tete by 1990. However, of the 783,893 people living in Tete in 1982, only 86,804 lived in communal villages. Almost 90 per cent remained outside the villages, with most of these people dispersed throughout the territory. In short, in the Province of Tete, the new post-independence settlement pattern consisted mainly of so-called informal villages and scattered rural properties.

The resettlement of people in Tete to communal villages included those displaced by natural disasters, such as droughts and floods, which frequently affect the province. However, in this type of resettlement, people were harmed by being moved from fertile land to non-fertile areas, which they then chose to abandon. Although they were aware of the risk of flooding in the riverine areas, they preferred to return because the agricultural production possible

there allowed them to survive (Coelho 1998:69–70). Coelho goes on to argue that forcing people to leave their fertile land along the Zambezi and move to less fertile areas provoked resistance from small farmers who feared they would be unable to produce food and would consequently face starvation. As a result, people tended to leave the emergency camps and return to their old areas along the river as soon as the water level receded. Government officials responsible for implementing these new villages, when faced with peasant resistance to the implementation of communal villages for resettlement of flood-affected people, explained that this was mainly due to the hidden influence of former rulers and religious leaders. However, the reasons for the small farmers' resistance to resettlement in new communal villages were also linked to their memories of the old Portuguese colonial villages where they were controlled and exploited. In contrast, the residents of Tete, especially those affected by natural disasters, were against being forced to live in politically designed communal villages. The intention was not to exploit them, but rather to control them under the new Frelimo regime. One reason for the failure of this model of resettlement was that it did not take into account the economic and social logic of the people being resettled.

Isaacman and Isaacman (2013) also describe how smallholder farmers in the Zambezi Valley, in the district of Cahora Bassa, northwest of Tete, have evoked memories of being forcibly displaced from their farmland during the construction of the largest hydroelectric dam in Mozambique's history. The construction of the dam was motivated by the economic benefits it would bring to Tete, and the country as a whole, through the influx of foreign currency generated by supplying electricity to countries in the region, mainly South Africa. However, local communities closely connected to the Zambezi River were affected by the construction of the dam, which devastated their physical and social world and resulted in their relocation to resettlement camps. Water releases also destroyed their crops and flooded their resettlement camps.

Ethnographic examples from Moatize during Vale's tenure show that the displacement of small farmers from their *machambas* followed acts of police repression. One example is Alexandre, a 48-year-old small farmer. Whenever I saw him in the Primeiro de Maio neighbourhood where he lived, I always found him wearing boots and carrying a machete in his hand, going to or coming from the nearby forest where he collected firewood and fruit. Alexandre said that the reason for the disagreement that led him to refuse to leave the land for which Vale had already obtained mining rights was that he had five *machambas*, but for the purposes of the count, his area was counted as only

one *machamba*. He had refused to leave his land unless he received registration and compensation for five *machambas*. Instead, as a way of removing him and other small farmers, Vale built a road through the middle of *machambas* still under dispute.

According to Land Law 19/1997, small farmers have the right to use these *machambas*, which legally belong to the state. The residents who lost large areas of their *machambas* to Vale's mining operations demanded compensation not only for the lost lands but also for their crops.

An analysis of the Moatize case shows that although there were national and international standards governing the process of displacement and resettlement, Vale used prerogatives of power to support its own interests and development discourses to drive a resettlement process that ended up being unsustainable for local people. This is what Kaushal (2009) refers to when he writes that displacement and resettlement reflect the relative power of different groups involved, in particular the power of politically, economically, and socially strong groups to impose harsh sacrifices on weak and unprivileged groups.

5.1.3 Brickmakers' experiences of displacement

José, a 49-year-old brickmaker and former CARBOMOC worker, told me that Vale had carried out a survey that identified his neighbourhood brickworks as a potential coal area in Moatize. It also found large quantities of coal in the neighbourhoods of Bagamoio, Chipanga, and Primeiro de Maio, where many other brickmakers had their homes and businesses.

According to José, he and his colleagues "taught their sons how to make bricks from coal." Despite brickmaking being considered one of the main economic and income-generating activities in Moatize, Vale displaced brickmakers to make way for large-scale coal mining. This displacement had to do with discourses of legitimised mining practices, in which the dominant discourse of political power defends large-scale mining as capable of bringing development, as Engles (2024) described, drawing on the case of Burkina Faso. Many of the brickmakers forced out of their brickworks were miners with both the colonial-era CCM and the state-owned CARBOMOC under the socialist Frelimo government. People who lost their jobs at these companies continued to mine in the area, firing bricks by using the coal as fuel from the abandoned mines of the former state mining company. Talking to José at his brickyard in Moatize one morning, I realised the conditions under which the bricks were made, including the fact that a lot of smoke was emitted during the production process. I also learned that due to the high temperatures in Moatize, brickmakers do not wear shirts during the production process. On other occasions, I met

with José in more informal settings, particularly on weekends when he was not working. These encounters, often over a beer, created a relaxed atmosphere that facilitated open conversation. While I took part socially, my primary role remained that of an observer.

Prior to the arrival and operation of large-scale mining projects such as Vale's in 2007, the only legislation regulating the process of human resettlement in Mozambique was *Lei de Ordenamento do* Território 19/2007 – Law 19/2007 on land use planning. Curiously, *Decreto 31/2012 sobre o processo de reassentamento resultante da actividade económica* – Decree 31/2012 approved the regulation on the process of resettlement resulting from economic activities. This decree was based on Law 19/2007, which was the only legal instrument available that mentioned the expropriation of citizens' property in the context of spatial planning. Decree 31/2012 came at a time when tensions between Vale and the residents of Moatize had reached alarming levels, with police cracking down on small farmers and brickmakers who refused to leave their *machambas* or brickworks. The brickmakers described their process of displacement as having begun in 2012. The first area from which the company removed brickmakers was the Chipanga neighbourhood. According to the brickmakers representative, in 2012 a group of 137 brickmakers who had to close their brickworks, were displaced, and then received compensation. Company officials, accompanied by District Administration officials, went to the Primeiro de Maio neighbourhood between 2015 and 2016, according to brickmakers' representatives, where they removed a group of 596 brickmakers, the same group being compensated and their brickworks geographically registered on GPS.

5.1.4 Protestations and court cases

Deutsch Welle Africa (20/7/2017), through its correspondent Fernando Amós, reported that a dispute over land between mining company Vale and the community of Nhanchere resulted in the death of a 25-year-old man on 13 July 2017. The young man was allegedly shot near the site of a protest organised by residents of Nhanchere on the outskirts of the municipality. The protest was demanding access to the interior of the area granted to Vale, where the residents collected firewood and grazed their cattle. As Deutsch Welle Africa (20/7/2017) reported, the confusion began when a company subcontracted by Vale wanted to close the only route into Vale's concession area. When the locals learned of this decision, made without their input, locals began to protest. According to the report, a police force was mobilised to put down the resistance and was forced to open fire because of the people's response. "As the people fled the police shooting, a man who had come to observe the strike

was shot dead." Vale has denied responsibility for the young man's death, reiterating that the sealing of mining exploration areas is a legal requirement and that Vale has been sealing the large area where the incident occurred since 2013. The company added that "one of its values is to put life first. It also believes that sealing the area is essential to ensure the safety of the people themselves" (Deutsche Welle Africa 20/7/2017).

Sérgio, the 47-year-old brickmakers' representative, described how Vale had evicted brickmakers from their brickworks, their sole source of survival. In 2020, Vale went to Ncatanga, in Moatize, where additional brickmakers and small farmers were based. In this area, Sérgio said, only the small farmers received seed compensation. The brickmakers demanded payment of their compensation before they would leave, but the company officials told them to complain to the District Administration because the company had transferred the compensation there. Eventually the police intervened and removed the brickmakers. According to their representative, Sérgio, the company was supposed to carry out a GPS registration of their area, as had been done in the Chipanga and Primeiro de Maio neighbourhoods, so that they could be identified and given the compensation owed to them. However, this procedure was not followed. According to Sérgio, in order to disperse them when they refused to leave, the police fired in the air, hitting one woman in the foot. Vale security guards and police were then used against the brickmakers and others who insisted on entering the area. Vale also hired another company to go to the site with trucks to remove the bricks that had been made, as well as the ovens used to make the bricks. Sérgio said that one of the arguments Vale used to remove the brickmakers was that some of the brickmaking areas were in coal mining areas and were at risk of accidents during Vale's coal mining activities.

Sérgio recounted how in the end of the removal of the brickmakers and their brickworks, they had ended under the Moatize bridge, where a significant number of brickmakers had already been removed by the company. The Moatize river area was rich in crushed stone, necessary for the production of bricks, and brickmakers described how the river's shore was the only existing alternative location to produce their bricks.

The District Administration's discourse about the compensation issue, articulated through its higher officials, was that some small farmers and brickmakers who complained about the non-payment of compensation had actually receive it but misspent the amount and returned to demand a new payment. This, according to a District Administration official, "may have been one of the reasons for the growing list of small farmers and brickmakers demanding compensation from the company."

I also heard from a police officer I befriended that the brickmakers involved in conflicts with Vale were vandals, not owners of the brickworks for which they were demanding compensation. However, the way in which Vale removed the brickmakers from their brickworks was criticised by CSOs in Moatize as a violation of human rights. The CSOs pointed to the mining company's excessive use of force, enabled by the police. These organisations insisted that the issue of removal and compensation for the brickmakers must be resolved in the courts, where Vale and state officials, as well as local leaders and the police, could be prosecuted for their role in violating the brickmakers' human rights.

In February 2023, according to Reginaldo, a member of a CSO in Moatize, a meeting was organised by Vulcan and attended by small farmers, brickmakers, and members of the Tete provincial government and the Moatize District Administration, as well as representatives of the Republic of Mozambique police. During the meeting, Vulcan explained that the list of 11,000 brickmakers could not be used to pay compensation because it was unrealistic; besides, the company did not have the financial resources to do so, even if it wanted to. As Reginaldo told me, the police were present as guests to be informed but also to discourage possible protests by alleged brickmakers demanding undue compensation. In line with previous cases in which the District Administration took repressive action against those who opposed the company's plans, the police presence at the February 2023 meeting was another example of how the state's powerful resources prevailed over the brickmakers' weak tactics in resolving the issues surrounding the list.

The Moatize case shows that some small farmers and brickmakers were deceived, first by Vale and then Vulcan, but that they also developed tactics to benefit financially when economic resources produced by coal mining were otherwise unfairly distributed. These tactics are part of the political world of marginalised people, in which they express their outrage and denounce the extractive practices of the powerful (cf. Ferguson 2010).

Due to a political environment characterised by the repression of any discourse that contradicted the practice of coal mining, the residents of Moatize, especially small farmers and brickmakers, were reluctant to organise open collective actions against the company. The environment of censorship, as well as the persecution of the organisers of the mobilisations, created a climate of terror, which means that criticism was always made anonymously in order to avoid identification and punishment.

Residents also carried out individual and collective acts of infrapolitics against negative mining practices by circulating videos on social media of

mining activities that degraded the local quality of life. I observed the distribution of videos that showed the harmful side of Vale's and later Vulcan's mining practices. These videos showed, for example, black water coming out of the taps and food covered in coal dust. The makers of these videos have never identified themselves for fear of reprisals. The state presented its concern as the criticism grew. Some residents reported that the police had issued notices to report to the police station to explain the messages and videos criticising Vale's mining practices. In their defence, they said that they were only circulating what they had received. They were consequently warned not to share that type of content on social media.

The social dimensions of Vale's development project are better understood from a human rights perspective in a context where the company itself managed the project with the state, excluding local people from the governance process. Both the company and the state as joint instigators of the project saw local people as agents to be transformed and used power mechanisms to repress whoever opposed the project's intentions. Vale's displacement practices contrasted with a planned displacement and resettlement that sought to compensate and create adequate socio-economic conditions for the displaced, while the residents' descriptions show how Vale ignored the brickmakers' legal rights.

Law 19/2007 on land use planning and Decree 31/2012 on the regulation of the process of resettlement resulting from economic activities, which should have allowed compensation for the small farmers and brickmakers, left loopholes for different interpretations by the District Administration and Vale officials. Law 19/2007 on land use planning is ambiguous when it comes to the payment of tangible and intangible assets, as well as the loss of productive assets in relation to the displacement of people. It should also be mentioned that the model of monetary compensation for small farmers and brickmakers was inadequate, given that they were deprived of their means of subsistence – the fact that some of them received monetary payment did not imply the return of their means of survival. The brickmakers and small farmers lost land assets that had a value difficult to measure in financial terms, since their whole survival depended on that land. The compensation money itself, as some resettled people reported, "did nothing to protect our livelihoods."

5.2 Moatize resettlement neighbourhoods

The lives of the residents of Moatize, especially in the 25 de Setembro resettlement neighbourhood, although characterised by complaints about coal mining practices, also included enjoyable social moments. On these occasions,

which I attended several times, I noticed that the residents put aside frustration and were able to have fun with friends and family members. On a Saturday in May 2021, I attended a ceremony called *Xitique* in the 25 de Setembro neighbourhood, invited by Fred, a 43-year-old friend I met on another day of fun in the city of Moatize. *Xitique* is a rotating exchange system organised by a group of people as a system of mutual aid or solidarity.

When I attended the practice as a guest, the people had agreed to hold a monthly exchange to give money to the person who had benefited from *Xitique* that month. There were six members in the group, and they had agreed to collect 10,000 MT per person each month, equivalent to US$167 US. On that particular day, Fred received 60,000 MT, equivalent to US$1000, which included his contribution, although it is not obligatory to contribute when it is the recipient's turn. The date for the *Xitique* was set for the end of the month when all members had received their salaries. From the moment the member receives the *Xitique* amount, he is obliged to make the same contribution of 10,000 MT until he reaches the sixth person, and then the next round follows.

When I arrived at Fred's house, the *Xitique* members were not the only guests present – he had also invited some of his extended family. The tables were filled with food, drinks, and a cake, as though it were a birthday party. The ceremony began with a prayer by one of the family members, followed by lunch. Then the money was handed over, but since three of the members had already transferred their portion to Fred's bank account, they instead gave him proof of the transfer. The party continued, the cake was cut, Fred put on some music, and we all started dancing as a sign of joy and the fact that things had gone well.

After a few beers, Fred told me that the *Xitique* had helped him a lot because whenever he received the money, he was able to do things that his small salary could not support. According to him, the group not only brought friends together to have fun, but also gave him access to a sum of money he would not have been able to earn as a salary. This ceremony is a form of social solidarity through which members continue to expand their network of relationships. The larger *Xitique* solidarity network is also important for the local population, especially in times of illness, when people from the same neighbourhood mobilise to support the family in question. As they say, "Life is a *Xitique*," which means that today it is this one, but tomorrow another will also need help. This is why the residents feel obliged to participate in this solidarity mechanism.

A group of resettled people in the 25 de Setembro neighbourhood also told me that they were initially very excited when they arrived at their new Vale-built house because the resettlement area had infrastructure that their old neighbourhood lacked – modern amenities such as a health centre, a municipal

market, and paved streets, as well as luxury homes belonging to wealthy residents who benefited from the mining industry. However, my interviews with residents reveal that both the mining company and the state deceived them and subjected them to the so-called "curse of coal mining." Locals talked about *maldição dos recursos*, which in English means the curse of the resources. This term is used to describe the negative impact of coal mining in Moatize. For local people, it would have been better if the project had not gone ahead because it brought harm rather than any socio-economic benefit.

The excitement soon faded when problems with the construction of the houses and the water supply appeared. Over time, the resettled people's high expectations were dashed completely as their houses cracked and began to leak when it rained. The resettled people of Cateme also claimed that a year after they arrived in the resettlement areas, the new houses began to develop cracks because the construction company had not laid solid foundations to support them. As one resettled small farmer in Cateme said, "When we complained about the danger posed by the cracks in our houses, the officials of the company said that it had something to do with the tremors." However, the coal mines were situated a considerable distance away in the town of Moatize, 35 km from Cateme.

Residents in the resettlement area of 25 de Setembro neighbourhood said that conditions in the area were worse than in the Chipanga neighbourhood, where they had lived before Vale's mining operations. Another resettled resident in 25 de Setembro told me that in Chipanga, seven public standpipes supplied the neighbourhood with unlimited water, with no restrictions on the use of water, even for residents served by the public network (FIPAG). By contrast, the resettlement area of 25 de Setembro lacked a proper water supply network.

The Moatize District Administration, through one of my interlocutors in the *Serviço Distrital de Planeamento e Infraestrutura* (SDPI, District Planning and Infrastructure Service), referred to the issue of small farmers' resettlement and acknowledged that the resettled people did indeed face challenges in the resettlement areas. As he explained during the interview, some small farmers, in order to support themselves, asked the restoration of their income they lost when they were displaced. He added that the resettled people had themselves to blame for their bad situation. He explained that when the survey questionnaire was administered to classify residents within the resettlement framework, many who were not small farmers identified themselves as such. Those who identified themselves as small farmers, rightly or wrongly, in Vale's quantitative survey were therefore resettled in the rural environment of

Cateme. However, some of them did not know how to cultivate land. The people resettled in Cateme received more support in terms of the compensation package, such as land and agricultural tools, than did people resettled in the urban area of Moatize. However, it was in this village that popular mobilisations against unsustainable mining practices were most violent, as I will show in Chapter 6.

Resettled people described that almost none of the promises made by Vale were fulfilled, and their standard of living had been greatly reduced. According to them, Vale's contracted construction company had been dishonest when it built precarious houses that later cracked, endangering their lives. Resettled people were also forced to live entirely in a money economy, as the mining company had taken away their land. They had less money but more expenses, having to pay their new houses' water bills. They had to buy the food that they had previously grown on their fields, while they had no opportunity to find paid work in Moatize**.**

The resettlement of residents to the 25 de Setembro neighbourhood also had spiritual consequences for them. In the socio-spiritual world of the people of Moatize, the living and the dead interact. However, resettled traditional healers described themselves as being ignored and not given space by the local authorities. The traditional healers, who believe they have control over the spirits in Moatize, said they should have moved the dead from the old cemeteries to the new one in the 25 de Setembro neighbourhood. The Moatize District Administration has recognised only Queen Ana Spanela as a representative of the spirit world, to the exclusion of traditional healers, who claimed this neglect caused the spirits of the dead to wander and possess people – some of whom went mad and eventually died. From what I gathered, the political figure in the traditional hierarchy is the Queen, who holds the officially recognised position of *régulo* (see Decree 35/2012). The traditional healers, who are also part of this hierarchy, believe that the Queen overshadows their power. They produce all kinds of discourses to criticise her regular presence at ceremonies organised by the District Administration.

In Wiegink's (2022) study of Mualádzi, she showed how problematic the relocation of the dead is when carried out without respect for the socio-spiritual world, which is much neglected in development-related projects. In Mualádzi, the local people believed that the relocation of their deceased relatives to an empty cemetery would result in many deaths. Local traditional healers advised that starting to bury the dead in an empty graveyard would bring more deaths, as those buried first would feel alone (Wiegink 2022:91–92). The company that resettled the people to Mualádzi should have moved the dead at the

same time, as promised; then it would have been possible to start using the cemetery as if it were the old one in Capanga.

The involuntary resettlement of Moatize residents was supposed to follow a set of principles designed to protect the dignity and human rights of those displaced. Although Mozambique's legislation on displacement and resettlement – introduced after the implementation of the multinational mining project– followed international guidelines, in practice these principles were not effectively implemented, revealing a gap between policy and practice.

5.2.1 The *mudzi* house and the resettlement houses

The resettlement of the residents of Moatize ignored their traditional housing model, which corresponds to their socio-cultural practices. Within residents' courtyards in Moatize, it is common to find several households living together in domestic groups in what locals call a *mudzi* house. These houses can be spatially divided, firstly by the main house, usually the largest, which is occupied by the head of the family, his wife, and their underage sons. In the backyard of the main house are smaller brick houses that belong to the married sons of the head of the family. The number of households within the *mudzi* house depends on the number of sons and their willingness to continue this form of spatial organisation. The family group in the *mudzi* house has joint economic goals. The smaller households within the *mudzi* house contribute to support the extended family, since each adult member has a *machamba* or produces clay bricks that bring income for the extended family.

The *mudzi* house functions as a support network for its members, particularly because their livelihood depends primarily on agricultural products, which are scarce in the dry season. The importance of the various sons' households in the *mudzi* house lies mainly in the members pooling their resources, which can take the form of food or even money from the sale of bricks. Normally, the father is the head of the household, and he wants his sons to remain in his household, bringing continuity to the extended family. A father and head of the family in his 60s stated, "In modern times, the sons manage to leave the *mudzi* house when they find another place to live because they have the financial conditions to do so, and others manage to find work in places far away from Moatize." He emphasized that the head of the household tends to delay the departure of a well-earning son. As he pointed out, "the departure of a member who contributes to the survival of the family group unbalances the economic level of the family."

However, the 25 de Setembro resettlement planners did not develop *mudzi* houses to accomodate this household structure, even though it is one of the main local ways to organise dwellings. The consultancy company *Diagonal*

Urbano created a socio-economic register of families based on their numerical composition, occupation, and whether they had *machambas.* Once the impact study was completed, Vale hired another company to send teams to the old neighbourhoods to measure the square metres of the main houses. The company carried out these measurements without taking into account the logic of the social organisation of families – and without any prior study of the consequences for the local population. The company measured only the main house of the *mudzi*, excluding other small houses in the compound.

The company designed five new types of resettlement houses. To create these house types, the company's technicians measured only the length and width of the main house and then calculated its area. The first, type A, was 10 to 15 square metres. Type B was 25 square metres, type C was 35 square metres, type D was 45 square metres, and type E was 55 square metres. These modern resettlement houses were constructed from sheet houses techniques that differed significantly from those used for traditional dwellings in Moatize. Traditional dwellings in Moatize typically have walls made of wattle and daub (a wooden frame filled with clay or mortar) or sun-dried mud bricks. Their roofs are usually made of a wooden frame covered with straw, zinc, or tiles.

The resettled people in type A houses received one bedroom and one living room. This fact caused problems because the space was organised in a way that made this house feel smaller than the one they had in their old neighbourhood. It also introduced an uncomfortable situation because those living in a type A house had to accommodate boys and girls in the same space, going against local cultural practices in which it is important that boys and girls have their own spaces. According to the resettled people, having boys and girls share the same space disregarded their traditional norms of social and spatial organisation. Consequently, they demanded houses from Vale similar to those they had in their former neighbourhoods, but to no avail.

The spatial problems were not solved, and many of the residents abandoned these impractical modern houses. Some of the residents rented their houses to the miners, while others sold them and looked for new houses in the countryside that would better suit their household organisation. In this hostile environment, some of the local population chose to attempt to restore the traditional *mudzi* housing by peaceful means, while others openly mobilised and demanded their rights. But because Vale refused to acknowledge their needs, the only way for them to change their spatial organisation was to do it themselves.

The case of the resettled residents of Moatize who did not adapt to the new style of houses built by Vale is comparable to the study by Harries (1994) of Mozambican migrants who worked in South African mines. Harries shows

how, in the context of working in the mines, the Mozambicans interpreted their experiences on the basis of their own culture. Harries (1994:40–49) notes that Mozambican migrant miners were housed in small burnt-brick barracks with galvanised iron roofs, but most men preferred the privacy of a hut shared with friends or relatives. On arrival, these men lived in hastily constructed shelters on their employers' land. As they became familiar with the mining fields, many attempted to gain more control, left their employers' areas, and moved to black communities on the fringes of the mining camps. There they built simple huts alongside the mud, stone, and brick houses of more established community members.

In Moatize, the District Administration officials argued that the reasons for the unsuccessful resettlement process were cultural issues. Most of the resettled people had never lived in sheet houses before and accused the Administration of trying to kill them with strange housing, therefore demanding to return to their previous homes. In a conversation with Finória, a 60-year-old woman, she said that she had grown up in a *mudzi*-type house in Chipanga but was later resettled by Vale in one of the modern houses built in the 25 de Setembro neighbourhood, which caused her to lose her connection with the spirits of her ancestors. According to her, "the spirits of the ancestors do not recognise the type of house in which I was resettled." Furthermore, in these types of houses she no longer performed traditional ceremonies such as *Malombo*, which had previously been very important in her daily life. She told me it was through this ceremony, performed in a *mudzi* house, that she made contact with her ancestors and received the protection she sought. As she said, "many of the resettled people, like me, have left the resettlement areas because Vale has not built *mudzi* houses in them, which are the type of traditional housing that is appropriate for us."

5.2.2 Water supply and pollution in Moatize

In Moatize, drinking water issues were linked to administrative policies and FIPAG's water provision, leading to widespread resentment over water scarcity during long, dry periods. Water in Moatize is particularly scarce between September and January, forcing residents to find creative ways to access it. During this period, poorer residents – mostly women – formed kilometre-long queues, carrying multiple containers to collect water from different suppliers. Even those with taps in their homes had to join the queue, as their water supply often ran dry.

The wealthier residents, who invested in real estate, benefited from the start of mining activities by renting their property to outsiders. Initially, they organised trucks to drive to the FIPAG depots or to the rivers to bring water to

their rented houses. The cost of water was included in the rent because without water, tenants quickly abandoned their homes. However, the lack of water in Moatize also became a business opportunity for the truck owners, who began to sell water to residents whose taps had no water, or who simply did not have a tap and relied on water from public fountains, which FIPAG had not provided.

As the poorer residents pointed out, FIPAG caused many practical and economic hardships for the resettled residents in the 25 de Setembro neighbourhood, as well as in the other neighbourhoods of Bagamoio, Chithatha, Primeiro de Maio, and Liberdade. Residents did not understand the function of their taps at home, as water was only delivered twice a week. As one resettled resident said, "The water is delivered at dawn while we are asleep, but we have to wake up to fill the containers because the supply is cut off in the early hours of the morning." I heard people in the resettlement area criticising FIPAG on a daily basis and calling for improvement to the water supply system.

In the 25 de Setembro neighbourhood, residents were most unhappy about the fact that wealthy people in Vale's gated community had a water supply system that drew water directly from the Zambezi River, which, after being treated, was piped into their homes. The poorer people of Moatize wondered why FIPAG was not trying to improve the water supply outside the gentrified areas where Vale employees lived. In the neighbourhoods with water restrictions, residents believed that since Vale has caused the water access problems, it should also be responsible for supplying affecting residents with drinking water.

Faced with long periods of irregular water supply, and monthly bills for something they could not access, the poorer residents preferred to cancel their contracts with the water company and look for private water suppliers. A group of resettled residents facing water shortages mobilised against both FIPAG and Vale, demanding the construction of public drinking water fountains. They argued this was only reasonable since they had enjoyed sufficient access to water in their former neighbourhoods. Even so, FIPAG did not build the requested public water fountains. The local Consultative Council,[23] however, alarmed by the residents' mobilisation, requested that water supply be

[23] Consultative Councils are organs for the participation of local communities in the decentralised governance process in Mozambique. In Moatize, the Consultative Councils are responsible for discussing and deliberating on local development priorities, such as consulting citizens on the management of the 2.75% mining revenue fund allocated by the government to communities affected by mining. As the 25 de Setembro neighbourhood receives a 2.75% share of the mining revenue fund, its Consultative Council can prioritise the construction of public drinking fountains to provide residents with water that FIPAG is unable to supply to their homes. In

included as one of the priorities for the 2.75% mining revenue funds that the government channelled to communities. The people who had managed to stay in the resettlement area without a reliable water supply demanded the installation of public taps with an electric pump system that would allow them to draw water whenever they needed it. However, the hired contractors installed a simple drinking water fountain with basic taps, similar to the FIPAG taps, which supplied water only at restricted times.

Residents stated that pollution problems in Moatize had been minimal but increased after Vale began its operations. People were also aware that coal mining had led to increased health problems. As shown by Hota and Behera (2016) and Leuenberger et al. (2021), open-cast coal mines emit significant amounts of pollutants such as ozone, sulphur oxides, and nitrogen oxides, with serious implications to local people's health and livelihoods. In everyday life in Moatize, people suffered from pollution, mine explosions, and dust that discoloured food and water both inside and outside their homes. In the 25 de Setembro neighbourhood, for example, the water that came out of taps in the early morning was black. FIPAG dismissed public concerns, saying the black water in the mornings was normal because the company always cleaned the water tanks at that time. Because of this problem, people dependent on FIPAG's water used it only after it has been boiled. They told me that "when the water is boiled at 100 degrees, the impurities in the liquid are eliminated." Some people used water filters to treat water. Residents who could afford it bought 25-litre containers of water from supermarkets and used it only for drinking, reserving the water that came out of the tap for showering and washing dishes and clothes.

5.2.3 Consultations with Vale

In 2021, despite having already announced its intention to abandon coal mining in Moatize, Vale announced the opening of Block 2. This expansion of its coal mining areas would involve the displacement of more small farmers from their homes and *machambas*. A series of public consultations were held with small farmers and CSOs. I attended one such civil society consultation meeting at the Hotel Moatize after seeing the announcement of the meeting in *Jornal Noticiais*, one of the country's main newspapers. The announcement stated that individuals or CSOs members interested in attending should send an email to the consultancy company that Vale had hired to run it. All those registered

chapter six, I will analyse how they are involved in management that is more tailored to their problems.

for the meeting received a Vale document describing the company's achievements since arriving in Moatize. This document also described the Vale's plans to open Block 2.

Government representatives from the Ministry of Mineral Resources attended the meeting. Vale's environmental consultants, who sat in the front row, chaired the meeting, which was attended by 42 people, most of whom were members of local civil society organisations. The first person to speak was Vale's main representative, who explained the reasons for calling the meeting: to consult CSOs members and other individuals on the opening of Block 2. He then gave the floor to an environmental consultant, who presented Vale's expansion plan and the opening of Block 2 using PowerPoint slides. The presentation was given in Portuguese, with no need for translation because everyone present spoke Portuguese. At the end of the meeting, a caterer hired by Vale gave everyone a takeaway lunch.

The Vale consultant who chaired the meeting said that opening Block 2 for coal mining would have no negative impact on the local people. The CSOs members present disagreed, with one remarking, "When the company arrived in Moatize, Vale made the same promises it is making today, but in the end, it only set back the social life of the people of Moatize." Vale has been openly criticised for water shortages and pollution by CSOs that attended the consultation meeting, but at the meeting, Vale denied that it was causing pollution problems. Its consultants stated that the level of pollution in Moatize was minimal and therefore could not cause health problems for citizens. Citing their own air quality monitoring equipment, Vale's consultants denied any effects, insisting there was no danger from Vale's mining activities.

Vale denied the environmental damage caused by its coal mining operations, refusing to compensate the local population for the harm it caused. Although the company was aware of the harmful effects of its operations on the people of Moatize, it produced a discourse that contradicted the lived experiences of residents. Because the District Administration had no air quality monitors to compare with Vale's, residents continued to suffer the negative effects of coal mining without any action being taken to minimise them.

The CSOs representatives argued that Vale mining activities have negatively impacted local life, particularly in terms of food and water, with coal dust often contaminating water supplies. They also argued that the scientific criteria used for measuring air quality differed from those used by the residents, who wanted to compare the situation before and after mining activities.

The case of displacement and resettlement in Moatize indicates that planners and politicians with the same mindset designed it. One could say they speak the same language – the language of self-interest and profit. The needs

and aspirations of local people were not considered. Contrary to what was expected in Moatize, a gap emerged between development rhetoric and practice, leading to frustration and discontent among Moatize residents that materialised in protests against Vale and the District Administration, as I will show in Chapter 6. The residents' experience of waiting for development that did not come can be compared to the expectation of modernity described by Ferguson (1999) in Zambia. Ferguson describes how a small-scale society in the Copperbelt in Zambia was suddenly replaced by large-scale industrialism. The expansion of the mining economy that drove this urbanisation process was a stereotypically industrial one, whose noisy smelters and sooty miners seemed to repeat a familiar chapter in the usual narratives of the West's own rise to modernity, evoking in particular the iconic images of the early period of modern British industrialisation (Ferguson 1999:4–5). Somewhere along the way, however, the "African Industrial Revolution" went off the rails. Zambia's roadmap to emergence via industrialisation and urbanisation was confounded by more than two decades of steep economic decline.

According to Ferguson (1999), the Copperbelt was seen as a symbol of progress and modern life, with mining jobs offering a route to improved social status and economic stability. However, the decline of the industry shattered these dreams for many, leading to a sense of disillusionment and a questioning of modernity itself. The disillusionment of the Zambian people stemmed from the negative practices of neo-liberal policies, particularly the Structural Adjustment Programmes imposed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Their policies included the privatisation of the mining sector, the reduction of state subsidies, and austerity measures. Privatisation led to a decline in mining output, job losses, and a deterioration in living standards. The comparison that can be made with Moatize is that with the privatisation of CARBOMOC, the state withdrew its support for the miners, and the labour market under the new company was governed by rules that privileged foreign workers, exacerbating economic hardship in Moatize, particularly for those who depended on mining for their livelihoods. I demonstrated and analysed this through the discourses of former CARBOMOC workers, who spoke of their marginalisation when Vale arrived.

5.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, I examined the experiences of displacement and resettlement of Moatize residents in the context of neoliberal coal exploitation. I demonstrated the gap between Vale's development discourses and its actual prac-

tices, showing how the coal mining project degraded residents' means of survival. When the state failed to protect them, residents responded by adopting tactics to challenge and subvert Vale's dominant strategies.

The residents' accounts painted a powerful multinational mining company as being allied with the Moatize District Administration, which, in their words, had marginalised them. Although the local people's agency was undermined by repressive practices of the state police, who prevented them from holding open demonstrations, they denounced bad mining practices in a variety of ways, revealing the power inherent in seemingly mundane actions. One example was the tactics adopted by Moatize residents – particularly brickmakers and small farmers – to benefit from Vale's mining resources by manipulating the list of compensation beneficiaries. Although some residents lied to get listed, their aim was to secure a share of the mining-related economic resources, which they believed were distributed unfairly among the residents.

These tactics were used after the open form of resistance, such as strikes and demonstrations, proved ineffective in the face of police repression. Given the repressive nature of the police in Moatize, residents found other ways to continue the struggle against the violation of their rights, using practices of everyday resistance that at times relied on the open criticism voice by CSOs at the both the local and national level. Through these resistance tactics, such as circulating anonymous videos in social media, it was possible for residents to push back to Vale bad mining practices.

The fact that residents had to resort to covert resistance tactics signals that they have lost not only their economic rights but also their political right to protest openly against a state that defends the neoliberal interests of the multinational company Vale rather than the dignity of its citizens. The use of repressive means against people fighting for their rights has led locals to mistrust state institutions and to seek alternate ways to make their grievances heard. What remained was a sense of injustice and revolt, as seen in the case of the brickmakers, suggesting that resistance to the mining company would continue, even under the threat of police repression. This is illustrated in the next chapter, which presents the tense political climate that followed the police repression of open resistance. In its aftermath, rumours, gossip, and private conversations about harmful mining practices became part of daily life in Moatize – and part of the residents' ongoing forms of struggle.

Chapter 6. Mobilisation for Mining and Land Resources

In this chapter, I analyse different forms of residents' mobilisation, both covert and overt, that escalated into violence and were later repressed by the police in Moatize, thus raising the issue of human rights violations. Faced with police repression and a decline in their living standards due to harmful mining practices, residents chose to rebel. The more violent forms of political action, such as riots and rebellions, were quickly stopped so as not to jeopardise Vale's coal mining project. However, the mobilisation of residents to access the economic benefits of mining also involved engaging with official mechanisms controlled by the state at the district level. I analyse the debates about the transfer of the mining revenue fund to the District Administration and their subsequent management, which was shared with local Consultative Councils. I argue that the management of the mining revenue fund became a source of conflict between residents and the state because this fund did not serve the community development but instead benefitted the private financial interests of certain state officials.

The chapter begins with a discussion of the residents' mobilisation and the repression they faced. It then examines their forms of resistance, including the actions and reactions of members of the local Consultative Councils. In meetings with the District Administration, these council members decided the development priorities of the communities that legally received the mining revenue fund. Hence, resistance was both formal and informal, overt and covert.

6.1 Residents'mobilisation and police repression

The mobilisation of the residents of Moatize took different forms in the resettlement areas of Cateme and the 25 de Setembro neighbourhood.

The resettlement process of Cateme began in 2009 and ended in 2011, but according to the residents, the relationship between the Vale and the newly resettled people soured when the company failed to construct a paved road, part of the package of promises Vale made when it first arrived. The road was seen as important because it would facilitate trade and travel to other areas,

both within and outside Moatize. In addition to the broken promise of the road, the *machambas* that Vale offered as compensation were not suitable for cultivation because they were full of stones, as one small farmer said. Flávio, 52 years old, small farmer in Cateme, put it this way:

> The company bought fertiliser to make the land productive, but the fertiliser was new to us and we had never used it before. Vale hired another company to train us to use the fertiliser. However, we had information that the fertiliser product would spoil the land and make it impossible to germinate. I and other small farmers understood that the company was not committed to buying fertiliser for us for a long time.

Accordingly, the resettled small farmers felt forced into a system that required them had to invest money in new products for their *machambas*, something they had never done before. Consequently, they resisted by choosing not to fertilise the land.

At the local political level, the resettled people found that their community leaders – which included neighbourhood secretaries, local chiefs, and block chiefs – had been violating their rights in the name of the District Administration. These leaders were supposed to represent their needs to the state, but according to most residents, they were instead in league with Vale and District Administration officials, meaning that their demands would have no effect.

As Flávio explained to me, many community leaders in Moatize were appointed based on friendship and trust rather than merit. When appointed to a leadership position, in this clientelist system, individuals were obliged to remain loyal to their hierarchical superiors. Failure to do so could result in dismissal. As he underlined, "Some of the current leaders were once upright individuals. However, they have been corrupted by power and have turned against their brothers." Consequently, the resettled people formed their own committees to defend their interests. As residents in Cateme told me, human rights abuses committed by Vale led to the formation of many civil society groups fighting for transparency and accountability from both the multinational and the state.

After forming the new committees, the resettled residents demanded the construction of the promised road, which would enable development in Cateme. In December 2011, residents held their first demonstration to demand the road, blocking the railway line used to transport coal to the port of Beira. The Rapid Intervention Force (FIR) was sent to the scene. During the confrontation, one resident was hit by a stray bullet, some were arrested, and others were beaten by the police (Human Rights Watch 2013:83–85).

Hanlon (2012) argues that the events in Cateme had significant national and international repercussions. Human rights civil society organisations came together to defend the locals. At the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, on 27 January 2012, Vale received the annual Public Eye Award for the worst corporate misconduct. Activists and NGOs cited the company for "repeated human rights abuses, inhumane working conditions and ruthless exploitation of nature" (Hanlon 2012:1), and Nobel laureate Joseph Stiglitz made the announcement. Hanlon (2012) adds that the Mozambican NGO Justiça Ambiental (Environmental Justice) has been active and reporting on the issue for over a year. In turn, the *Jornal Verdade* (8/8/2012) highlighted the NGO's participation in the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, known as Rio +20, between 20 and 22 June 2012. In parallel with Rio +20, Justiça Ambiental participated in the III International Meeting of those Affected by Vale, from 15 to 18 June, which defined as a priority the "deconstruction" of the company's image and the expansion of global reporting strategies. At the meeting, Justiça Ambiental denounced Vale's failure to fulfil the promises and agreements it had signed with more than 1,365 families from four communities in Moatize. The organisation also condemned the disputes in Cateme, which culminated in the brutal repression of around 700 families, who had gathered to protest against the degrading conditions of their resettlement at the end of 2009 and had blocked the Vale train that was already on its way. The denunciation of Vale at the 2012 meeting has given the case a greater international impact (Hanlon 2012).

The *Jornal Verdade* (8/8/2012) also reported that during the meeting, the international articulation of those affected by Vale coordinated a protest march against corporations in the centre of Rio Janeiro, attended by around 2,000 people, including representatives of the social movements participating in the People's Summit, including Justiça Ambiental. The events in Cateme led to various forms of further resistance, including protests and blockades. Human Rights Watch (2013) highlights that while the Mozambican government passed legislation to protect resettled communities, enforcement had been weak, leading to conflict and resistance from local populations. Selemane's (2022) article critically examines the debate over Tete coal, Vale's operations, the grassroots movement of resettled people in local villages, and the government's responses. He argues that Vale's operations have led to displacement, resulting in a significant deterioration in living conditions, including inadequate housing, limited access to drinking water, and the loss of fertile land. For Selemane (2022), despite legislative efforts to allocate a percentage of mining revenues to local development, imple-

mentation has been inadequate, failing to address the core issues of displacement and economic marginalisation. These conditions have fuelled numerous protests and strikes, as evidenced by the frequent community resistance actions documented between 2009 and 2022, including road blockades, mine blockades, and work stoppages.

The analysis of the agency of residents who, due to their marginalisation, were considered incapable of responding to Vale's negative mining practices, shows that poor and marginalised people were not merely recipients of neoliberal projects such as Vale's but also active agents capable of protesting against a powerful mining company using the resources available to them. At the same time, this is one of the thesis main contributions to the literature on forms of resistance carried out by individuals constrained by both a reprehensible state and powerful economic corporations.

Because the Cateme event had national and international repercussions, and both Vale and the Mozambican government were heavily criticised, they eventually agreed to one of the demands: they built a paved road from Cateme to the junction with the N7 road. However, the grassroots movement that mobilised to achieve this outcome was short-lived because it had no leader and focussed only on immediate concerns. The fact that some alleged protest organisers were arrested also discouraged the group's continuation and diminished the possibility of it becoming an organised and cohesive movement.

There has also been at least one instance of armed resistance to Vale's mining activities. In 2014, the company announced that insurgents had attacked one of its coal trains on the Moatize railway line, injuring the conductor. RENAMO troops were blamed, as the attack occurred during a period of renewed rebellion against Frelimo, marked by sabotage operations on the country's main economic infrastructures (Els 2014). Another opposition to Vale's coal mining activities took place in October 2018, when a group of 200 people invaded the Vale mine, paralysing coal mining activities. The protesters declared that they would not leave the area without "clear indications" that their land and resettlement issues would be resolved. Thinking they could just talk to the company, they were astonished when the police arrived to reprimand the group and arrest the protest organisers (Catueira 2018). In January 2023, on one of the days I met with the brickmakers' representative and other association members at Vulcan, I spoke with a group of brickmakers who were demanding the compensation owed to them, which the company was refusing to pay. Tempers between the brickmakers and the company officials flared, and they nearly came to blows. The reason was that Vulcan had promised to discuss their compensation that day, but the meeting was postponed to the following month.

6.1.1 Resistance to leaving Moatize river and forests

In the Municipality of Moatize, residents demonstrated in front of the Vale offices, by the Moatize river, in the Primeiro de Maio neighbourhood, and on areas conceded to the company. Part of the Moatize river was granted to the Vale company because of its proximity to coal mines. Residents of the Primeiro de Maio neighbourhood were most affected by this measure, leading to conflicts between residents and both Vale and Vulcan. The part of the river that starts in the Primeiro de Maio is an important supply of water to the local population, as well as to people living in other neighbourhoods of Moatize. When Vale was granted access to the river, it erected a fence to prevent locals from entering, which the local people described as "a violation of our rights to use natural water resources." They declared that the river belonged to them, and the confrontation between them and the company guards escalated. I visited the river several times and spoke with those using it, who talked about its importance and the negative impact of Vale taking control. Brígida, a 34-year-old woman dressed in shorts and a red blouse, was sitting on a boulder while her friends chatted on another boulder nearby. She told me they were cooling off in the breeze – it was a hot day – and described the conflict over the river with Vale as follows:

> After the people's persistent entry into the area, followed by direct confrontation, the company reopened part of the river. If the company had not opened the entrance to the river, we would have carried out sabotage until they returned what is ours.

This shows that in some situations, albeit few, the company has abandoned its position after being challenged. According to residents of the Primeiro de Maio neighbourhood, the police had previously intervened to repel citizens who had jumped the fence and entered company property, but in the end, they allowed access to the river, which is vital not only as a water source but also for fishing, bathing, and washing clothes. Recognising the river's importance in providing local residents with access to water, the company installed water tanks in the neighbourhood. Tomázia, a 35-year-old resident of the Primeiro de Maio neighbourhood, who was queuing to get water from the tanks with five yellow 25-litre cans, said, "The company's argument was that the local people could get water from these tanks and not from the river. The company's defence was that the river water is polluted and the coal is mined right next to the river." However, before the company granted access to the river because of residents' complaints, people had already opened many fences. From my observations as well as from what residents told me, it is rare for the tanks to

run out of water, but there have been occasions when the company supplying the tanks was unable to deliver water and residents had to rely on the river.

I also met a woman at the river who was carrying yellow plastic cans to fetch water. She was drawing it at a time when other people were drawing good quality water from the tanks provided by Vale. She said that she took water from the river "because it is free, whereas people have to pay money to get it from the tanks." However, people who use river water are at serious risk because company trucks transporting coal pass close by. Every day, the people living near the river witness the blasting of the mines and the extraction of the coal, with all the pollution problems that this practice brings. The river water was not clear but dark in colour, which means that they were consuming water unfit for drinking.

Another local group in conflict with the mining company over access to the river are the cattle breeders. Sávio, a 53-year-old cattle breeder, was wearing boots and black cloth trousers when I met him tending his cattle, which not only drank from the river but also fed on the grass that grew along its banks. Sávio spoke as follows:

> I have been herding cattle since I was a child, and I have always taken them to this river to drink. The company once tried to resettle me with my cattle in other areas within Moatize, but in those places, there was no water for the animals to drink because it was so dry. I purposely took my cattle and brought them back to the Primeiro de Maio neighbourhood, and that is why you see me grazing my cattle with grass and the water from the river.

The cattle breeders were angry with Vale because it did not compensate them with land with accessible water for their animals, as Sávio said, so they returned to the river, where company guards would evict any cattle breeders and animals, they found inside the fence. During the dry season, Sávio explained, the lack of water threatened the survival of their animals. The drought affected the lakes and rivers where their cattle usually drink, causing the animals to die of thirst. To avoid this happening, cattle breeders had to travel long distances to find water for their livestock.

The negative consequences of coal mining in Moatize also caused a deprivation of forest resources. In order to resist Vale on a daily basis, locals used various strategies to undermine the mining operations. In the Moatize neighbourhood of Bagamoio, residents cut the company fence to access part of the forest inside Vale's property. Those who were caught by guards on the company's property were beaten, but one small farmer pointed out that when the guards were away, locals kept on searching for essential forest resources such

as firewood and medicinal plants, which they used in their daily lives. Whenever I went to the Bagamoio area, I often saw men and women coming and going from Vale's land. However, when I spoke to Alegria, a 54-year-old woman carrying firewood on her head and some vegetables in a plastic bag tied to the *capulana* on her back, she spoke of the Vale lands she had violated in the following terms:

> I consider the forest fenced by Vale to be mine, as it is where my *machambas* were located and where I collected firewood and medicinal plants for my children and myself. I will continue to search for these resources until I am shown my new lands for survival. Although there are guards present, they cannot control the large number of people who enter at different times.

The mining company relied on repression to contain these incidents of "vandalism," using the mine's private security guards and the police to confront people on their property.

6.1.2 Resistance to police repression

In the midst of police violence, I asked small farmers and brickmakers if they had filed a complaint against the uncompensated displacement, the repression, and the violation of their right to protest. One of the brickmakers said that they did not want to go to the courts because these were "politicised." These locals did not trust the judicial bodies, which they saw as controlled by political power allied to the mining company that had displaced them. The representative of the brickmakers stated, "Because of the lack of independence of these legal institutions, there is no way for us to win the case we are disputing with the mining company." The relationship between the residents and the state, represented by the police force that protected Vale, was marked by constant tension, given that open protests against mining activities were violently repressed. Locals continually experienced negative effects of coal mining, but their criticism of mining activities could not be voiced publicly. Lancerdo, a 47-year-old resident of the Primeiro de Maio neighbourhood who worked as a small farmer and a vendor at the Moatize municipal market, told me that he had already taken part in one of the open demonstrations against the company. The police had been called in to stop it, and he had to flee to avoid reprisals. He said:

> We cannot protest openly because the police are on our trail and any attempt to demonstrate will be repressed. We do not criticise Vale in public for fear of reprisals. We are also careful whom we talk to because information easily reaches community leaders who support mining projects because they make money from them.

The brickmakers have also been arrested for demanding their rights. Their representative told me that he had been imprisoned several times in Moatize, and whenever he and other brickmakers prepared for a demonstration, the men of the FIR (Fast Intervention Force) have been ready to suppress and prevent them from protesting. The representative added that the FIR came well-armed and had already caused the deaths of some brickmakers, with stray bullets even hitting mere bystanders at the demonstrations. Because residents mobilised to defend themselves against the problems caused by coal mining, they tended to disband when their demands were answered or rebuffed by the regime of the day. Bayat (2015) refers to this type of space, created by the poor, as a non-movement that disintegrates as soon as its intentions are realised. This was the case with Moatize's small farmers and brickmakers, who formed associations to defend themselves against the expropriation of their livelihoods by the mining company. These associations, as far as I know, had no legal status and did not belong to wider national Peasant Union, the UNAC (Peasant Union of Mozambique). Moatize's local associations were active when claiming their rights but had no other relevant political activities after that. The small farmers and brickmakers said that the absence of UNAC in Moatize was detrimental to their struggle for rights to the land expropriated by Vale. They said that UNAC was based in Tete city, 15 km from the town of Moatize, and that they had was little communication with it.

Because of tense political relations between the residents, Vale, and the District Administration, and because of the repressive police force, the acts of resistance carried out by the small farmers and brickmakers tended to be covert rather than overt. In Moatize, residents trespassed on Vale's land when the guards were away. Resistance was thus conditioned by the political power of Moatize, which, by facilitating Vale's extractive activities, forced them to engage in infrapolitical acts of resistance to avoid identification and later repression by the police. In this way, the inhabitants' resistance practices were linked to the means at their disposal, enabling them to confront a powerful mining company backed by the state police. They used tactics that kept them out of harm's way but still allowed them to gain advantages. Even when the Vale guards tried to control them, the improvisational quality of their tactics allowed them to turn the situation to their advantage.

The residents in Moatize also criticised the police for protecting the Vale's property. The police set up barracks inside Vale's premises to defend the company's interests and to protect it from public demonstrations intended to paralysing the coal mining activity. Popular dissatisfaction intensified because when locals had security problems in their neighbourhoods that required the police intervention, the police were not available. Lélio, a 49-year-old small

farmer and street vendor, lived in the 25 de Setembro neighbourhood. He told me that assaults and robberies were common on his block. Although the police intervened in these cases, he was not happy with their response. He said the following:

> The police became unavailable for their duties of protection and security in the neighbourhoods from the moment they started to serve and protect the Vale facilities, even though Vale also has a private security company.

A question that remained unanswered was why the state chose to invest more in repressive measures against residents demanding their rights, rather than engaging in dialogue to address the reasons behind their mobilisation against Vale. Residents had their own opinions: that the state was "aligned with the plans of unfair mining exploitation organised by the company, supported by the local political elites, who are getting rich from our impoverishment." Discourses that Vale, along with powerful elites, was enriching itself at the expense of the local people are very common in Moatize. For the small farmers and brickmakers, the government's use of police to repress protests against the mining company was a sign of the elite's ties to the company.

Drawing on Holston (2009:153–155), I argue that the struggles of Moatize citizens to secure basic resources can be understood as the emergence of an insurgent citizen movement that demand recognition and rights. The urban poor articulate this demand for citizenship with greater force and originality in the realm of daily and domestic life when the insurgency arises from urban exclusion. Citizens fight for the right the kind of life worthy of an urban citizen, with housing, property, security, and other aspects of residential life guaranteed. The people of Moatize activated new forms of insurgent citizenship to reassert their rights to the land and to counter the general exclusion from decision-making on mining-related issues in their daily lives.

Thompson and Tapscott (2010:1) argue that contemporary mobilisations and social movements in the Global South reflect a wide range of social, political, and economic concerns expressed at local, national, and global levels. In this way, the collective mobilisation against Vale/Vulcan in Moatize can be characterised as being aimed at achieving substantive citizenship intended to bring immediate, material benefits. The situation of coal mining contestation in Moatize can also be related to what Monga (1996) outlines as the "anthropology of the anger," which is a feature of Africa's long tradition of an autochthonous form of activism through culture, social organisations, and individual and collective behaviour in the public sphere (Monga 1996:6). According to Monga (1996), the development of civil society is crucial for collective resistance to authoritarianism, as well as for the collective willingness and

commitment to build new and more effective political systems. The residents of Moatize told me that civil society has played a crucial role in raising awareness of land rights among citizens, encouraging them to demand respect for their human rights when protesting against Vale. National and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) publicly denounced the violence against protesters in Moatize, causing far-reaching repercussions and forcing the government and Vale to respond to some of the demands of the protesting residents.

As a way of dealing with an induced mining development project, citizens engaged with Vale and the Mozambican state by participating in collective actions that were described as informal and illegal. The forms of citizen resistance that characterise Moatize led me to perceive this as a struggle for an inclusive citizenship in the midst of a multinational and capitalist coal mining industry. Kabeer (2005:23) refers to the forms of resistance forged between mobilised citizens as "horizontal forms of participation." The spaces of resistance are created or invented by the same aggrieved citizens. One of the characteristics of informal collective action against the mining companies operating in Moatize was that it was not permanent but rather ephemeral due to the lack of a strong collective political identity, as some interlocutors mentioned.

The residents of Moatize also made demands for mining resources through institutional channels. Here, local Consultative Councils that discussed the channelling of mining funds transferred from the central state to the communities hosting mining projects represented the communities. Law on Local State Organs (LOLE) 8/2003 in Mozambique institutionalised consultation and local civil society participation in governance at the district level through Consultative Councils as a way of bringing services closer to citizens. Law 8/2003, which established new principles and norms for the organisation and functioning of local government organs, opened up a mechanism for direct citizen participation in the governance of Moatize.

6.2 Consultative meetings

The meetings of the local Consultative Councils with the Moatize District Administration officials are important to bring up and analyse in this chapter. The law stipulates that the Community Consultative Councils and the District Administration must consult on which development projects the communities will prioritise with the 2.75% mining revenue fund transferred by the central government. Law 01/2013 was the first to define the transfer of mining revenues to communities affected by the mining problem, but it directed funds

through District Administration organs rather than the respective Consultative Councils (cf. CIP 2020). On one hand, it is important to describe and analyse these consultative meetings because they demonstrate how mining revenues fund can be transferred to communities hosting mining projects. On the other hand, these meetings highlighted how they were permeated by the power relations between the actors involved in the exploitation of coal in Moatize. In these consultation meetings, members of the local Consultative Councils demanded what, by law, should be shared with them as beneficiaries of the mineral resources being exploited in their communities. These meetings were also a form of struggle and resistance against the unfair distribution of mining revenues in Moatize.

6.2.1 The channelling of mining revenues in Moatize

The members of the civil society organisations in Moatize argued that although the law recognised the sharing of mining revenues fund, in the case of Moatize, it did not happen until seven years after the start of coal mining. According to members of CSOs and local Consultative Councils, in 2018 the Mozambican state, through the Ministry of Finance, began to transfer 2.75% of the state's revenues from mineral exploitation to the Directorate of Finance of the Moatize District Administration. The mining revenue transfer law does not mention how the process should work, nor does it specify the roles of the actors involved in the process. This has led to what local people in Moatize called a "non-transparent process." It is also unclear to members of CSOs and Consultative Councils how the percentage of 2.75% – the value to be shared with communities hosting mining projects – was calculated. In Moatize, at both the Municipal and District levels, I attended four meetings of the Consultative Councils in 2023 that dealt with the transfer of 2.75% of mining revenues fund and the debates that took place around it.

6.2.2 Residents claiming mining revenues

According to Moatize residents, the CSOs in Maputo informed them about the existence of the mining revenue fund allocated to communities hosting mining projects. These local civil society organisations disseminated the information in the neighbourhoods to prepare Consultative councils to discuss their development priorities, which could be financed by the fund. CSOs were indeed making an effort to make residents aware of this mining fund, but one resident of the 25 de Setembro resettlement neighbourhood said that he had never heard who was benefiting from it and how he could be involved in the distribution decision process. Another resident in the neighbourhood said, "There

is so much talk about a democratic game where citizens participate in making decisions about their lives, but in practice the ideas and orders of hierarchical superiors still prevail."

Although some residents did not know or understand what these organs did, the Consultative Councils had been established as mechanisms for community participation in the discussion and deliberation of community needs. However, when it came to deciding the allocation of the 2.75% mining revenue fund, the choices made by the community were sometimes contradicted at higher levels. According to Lélio, a resident of the 25 de Setembro neighbourhood, this was what really happened:

> When we in the neighbourhood choose what is a basic need and what should be included to be purchased or rehabilitated within the framework of the 2.75% fund, we are not listened to. After, we hear that what we asked for has been replaced because the money reserved for us as a fund is not enough to buy that particular thing….

Lélio pointed out that the tendering process was not properly followed because it was opaque, with the District Administration, through the Infrastructure Office, choosing the contractors it trusted the most. The various members of the civil society organisations with whom I interacted had already informed me that many works carried out with the 2.75% mining revenue fund had been stopped due to the lack of accountability of the contractors.

As a result, residents said public taps in their neighbourhoods had not been completed because contractors had started work and then disappeared. They also heard that the same contractor had failed to complete work in other neighbourhoods. For them, this had become a vicious circle in which the District Administration took advantage of the fund. In order to manage all this "juggling," they told me how they always tried to make sure that people they trusted were on the neighbourhood councils, as well as the locality[24] councils, "so that they could always defend what they wanted to buy and get benefits from up there."

The residents of 25 de Setembro believed that the members of the Consultative Councils were chosen to legitimise the interests of the higher consultative body. These interests did not coincide with those of the residents. They saw new contractors hired, while the works from previous years remained incomplete, as was the case in the 25 de Setembro neighbourhood and in the villages of Cateme and Mualádzi.

[24] Consultative Councils in Moatize start at the neighbourhood level, followed by the locality, municipal and district levels. The District Consultative Council is the highest body responsible for approving the development priorities indicated at the lowest level.

The four consultation meetings I attended were at the Municipality of Moatize and villages of Mualádzi, Benga, and Cateme. Three officials from the *Serviços Distritais de Planeamento e Infraestrutura* (SDPI, the District Planning and Infrastructure Services), which is an organ of the District Administration responsible for consulting with the various Consultative Councils in Moatize District, chaired the consultation meetings. The Consultative Councils submit all decisions made at their meetings to the District Consultative Council, the highest body, which is chaired by the Administrator of Moatize. To ensure the transparency of the consultation process, two members from the CSOs attended all four consultation meetings that I attended. Below I outline some of the key issues that led to conflict when members of the Consultative Councils disagreed with the way in which the funds would reach local communities in the city of Moatize and the villages of Mualádzi, Benga, and Cateme.

6.2.3 The consultative meetings in the district of Moatize

The first consultative meeting I attended concerned the city of Moatize, which is not represented by the Municipal Council but by the Municipal Consultative Council, established by law.[25] The members of the Ussalu and Spanela localities in the city of Moatize make up the Moatize Municipal Consultative Council.

What I noticed about the Moatize Municipal Consultative Council is that it was dominated by members of the Frelimo party, and this influenced the decisions made, especially about what to invest in or buy with the mining revenue fund. The meeting highlighted the fact that contractors who had won public tenders had started work on several development priorities in the neighbourhoods but then disappeared. This was seen as an indication that the management model and the transfer of mining revenues were not benefiting the targeted people and led to discussions between the members of the District Administration and Municipal Consultative Council. The issue of transparency was also discussed in relation to the monitoring of works financed by the mining revenue fund, in which the law requires the participation of CSO members. The CSO members present at the consultation meeting mentioned that monitoring visits to works carried out by contractors rarely took place in their

[25] The distinction between the Municipal Consultative Council and the Municipal Council is made in Law 8/2003 on LOLE and *Decreto 80/2004 sobre a articulação entre as autarquias locais e autoridades comunitárias* – Decree 80/2004 on regulation of the articulation between local autarchies and community authorities. An analysis of this law shows that it tends to favour centrally appointed state organs over elected ones in local governance. Many of the existing conflicts in the management of the mining revenue fund arise from the fact that in Moatize, the central state, represented by the District Administration, seeks to control a municipal area created by the decentralisation of power.

presence. This gave the impression that members of CSOs provided for by the law were not monitoring the works. After discussing issues of transparency and signs of corruption that characterised the management of the mining revenue fund, the Moatize Municipal Consultative Council decided it would use the fund allocated for 2023 to purchase solar lamps. The solar lamps would light public streets in the 25 de Setembro neighbourhood – the same plan as the previous year. This decision caused conflict between the District Administration and the Municipality of Moatize, as members of the local Consultative Council and CSOs told me.

I met Gilda, a 48-year-old member of a CSO in Moatize, one afternoon at the District Administration offices. I had been invited by another CSO member to monitor the condition of the solar lamps left by members of the Municipal Consultative Council, and Gilda was also there. She explained to me that the solar lamps were supposed to have been installed in the 25 de Setembro neighbourhood in 2022, but the budget of 2.75% mining revenue fund was not enough to cover the cost of installation. Since the lamps had not been installed, the Municipal Consultative Council decided to store them in the facilities of the Moatize District Administration. As Gilda mentioned, the Moatize District Administrator, who is head of the District Consultative Council, had criticised the members of the Municipal Consultative Council for purchasing the solar lamps. This criticism, she added, was because the District Administrator did not see solar lamps as an immediate priority for the resettled people in the 25 de Setembro neighbourhood. It was, however, a priority for the Moatize Municipality Administration, because *Electricidade de Moçambique* (EDM, Mozambique's electricity company) had cut off the neighbourhood's electricity supply for non-payment of agreed contracts. The District Administrator suspected that officials of the Municipal Administration had lobbied the Municipal Consultative Council to provide solar lamps using the 2.75% mining revenue fund. Gilda added that the District Administrator knew that the electricity supply to the 25 de Setembro neighbourhood had been cut off because the Municipal Administration had failed to pay the electricity company. The only way to restore electricity to the neighbourhood was to register the solar lamps as a need of the 25 de Setembro neighbourhood in the framework of the 2.75% mining revenue fund.

While the District Administrator distrusted the Municipal Administration because of its influence on the choice of the local people's needs within the framework of the 2.75% mining revenue fund, residents of the 25 de Setembro neighbourhood distrusted the District Consultative Council and the contractors because they did not acknowledge the neighbourhoods' needs. The management of the 2.75% mining revenue fund in the Municipality of Moatize

served as an arena in which powerful actors or stakeholders, in the name of a democratic game, influenced others in a lower position to choose certain interests. The case above showed that the Municipality maximised its interests through the mining revenues, even though the Moatize District Administration continued to control the hiring of contractors.

In Mualádzi, the local Consultative Council had earlier decided that the amount provided by the central state as their 2.75% mining revenue fund should be shared among Mualádzi families. The families' decision to ask for a share of the mining fund came after members of the local Consultative Council realised that the fund was not benefiting residents affected by the mining problem. However, the Council's proposal was rejected because the law stipulates that the mining revenue fund should be used to build or rehabilitate infrastructures such as classrooms, health centres, community irrigation and dams, local markets, roads and bridges, water supply and sanitation systems, and activities related to forestry (MPD and MF 2013). The members of the Mualádzi Consultative Council reported the same problem as the Moatize Municipal Consultative Council: the contractor disappeared after starting to rehabilitate two classrooms (in this case) without completing them.

The anger of the members of the Consultative Council escalated because three meetings had been held with the District Administration officials without any serious works being carried out. Given that the members of the Consultative Council were limited to development items mentioned in the law, they ended up choosing the construction of a paved road, which would link Mualádzi with the village of Cateme, making travel by *chapas* (minibuses) possible.

Benga, nine kilometres from the Municipality of Moatize, is another resettlement area where residents are supposed to benefit from the mining revenue fund. There, contractors had started to lay pipes, but there was still no water. Members of the local Consultative Council requested that the management of the 2.75% mining revenue fund be entrusted to the traditional leaders of the first, second, and third ranks to ensure good use and transparency. In Benga, the members of the local Consultative Council tended to be young people with some training in human rights issues. They showed that they knew their rights and requested that the mining revenue fund be used to build a road, even though CSO members and the District Administration officials only wanted the potholes on the local road to be filled. In the end, the Council request prevailed.

Rather than serving as a political strategy for sharing mining revenues, the Moatize consultative meetings appeared to me as a tool to hold them, even as local people were being deprived of their livelihoods through coal mining.

These meetings between officials from the Moatize District Administration and the local Consultative Councils made it clear that the state has abdicated its role in the social contract with the communities affected by the problems caused by coal mining.

Cateme, another village where I attended a consultation meeting, was chosen by the District Administration to resettle displaced people from the Moatize Municipality. It had also been the site of a confrontation between the residents, the Moatize District Administration, and Vale, with resettled small farmers demanding a fair resettlement. In Cateme, I found that the previous year's mining revenue fund had been used to build neighbourhood centres, a plan that some members of the Consultative Council did not support. During the meeting, one member said that Cateme had serious water supply problems and that it would be better to use the fund to buy four manual water pumps for the neighbourhoods. Because these neighbourhoods had problems accessing electricity, the manual water pumps would make it easier for them to access the area's well water at any time.

The CSOs members present at the meeting also argued that the neighbourhood centres would be of interest only to the leaders and not to the community. In the end, however, Cateme Consultative Council decided to build the neighbourhood centres, as had been decided the previous year. For the Council, prioritising development was political. In discussions I had with residents, I was told that such a proposal had been made but that the majority in the neighbourhood had not agreed to it. It cannot be ignored that the District Administration, which needed to be represented locally, had no infrastructure for its representatives. Some members said it was possible that the District Administration had influenced the local Consultative Council to opt for the construction of the neighbourhood headquarters instead of purchasing manual water pumps that would have made it easier for them to access water.

6.2.4 Understanding the consultative meetings

Analysing the meetings between the Consultative Councils and officials of the Moatize District Administration indicates that these resemble political directives, with little regard for the development priorities of the communities. In addition to this process being criticised by CSOs for not specifying how the sums allocated to the communities were decided, to make matters worse, the way in which the Consultative Council meetings were conducted meant that communities were often denied the resources they needed. This fact, as I have shown through ethnographic accounts from four sites in Moatize, caused discontent among the target populations, who felt marginalised by both the mining company and the state, represented by the District Administration of

Moatize. In general, the Moatize consultative meetings legitimised the holding of open meetings in which communities, through their local consultative councils, presented their development priorities. However, these meetings were far from representing the development interests of the communities, showing signs of corruption and a lack of transparency on the part of both the political power and the contractors.

Hota and Behera (2016), referring to the impact of coal mining in India, state that the distribution of costs and benefits arising from mining depend on various factors, which include resource ownership, access and control, and asymmetries of economic and political power. As I observed in Moatize, unequal power relations permeated the consultative meetings, as community participation in the management of mining revenues was determined by the political structure of the District Administration, not by community members.

According to Sanches and Júlió (2021:586), civil society plays an important role in promoting transparency, but its relationship with the government is sometimes tense when it presses the government for greater transparency. The government does not always respond positively to requests for information about the partners of exploitative companies and the fees charged, either for contracts and licences or for company revenues. If the government is receptive to some demands but not to others, this suggests that the interests of the multinationals have prevailed over those of Mozambican communities and the national private sector – and that the government has been unwilling to fully address the conflicts of interest and protect the interests of the population (Sanches and Júlió 2021:587).

In Moatize, strategies for allocating mining resources to residents have failed to give them control over local decision-making priorities. The District Administration officials and the contractors who controlled and managed the mining revenue fund had interests that did not align with those of the communities whose livelihoods had been destroyed by mining practices. These interests conditioned the communities' struggle for the right to economic compensation for the damage caused by the mining project. The practice of mining will continue to be a curse for those who were supposed to benefit from the 2.75% mining revenue fund in Moatize, because the model of fund transfer and management did not involve the intended beneficiaries, thus generating conflict and corruption instead of the socio-economic development it was supposed to create.

In the four consultative meetings I attended in the Moatize District, it became clear that the members of the Consultative Councils have agency and used it to fight for the fair distribution of their mining revenues, but they have very weak weapons, to paraphrase Scott (1985). An analysis of discussions

about what should be acquired for the benefit of communities shows that Consultative Councils formed at the local level were ineffective in ensuring the fund was used for local development needs. They have less power than the District Administration in the fund's management. The way in which the fund was managed and distributed suggests that residents are likely to continue to resist it. As customary owners of the resources in their areas, the local people, as Pandey (2015) argues, need to be protected by mining revenue legislation that is favourable to them, which has not happened in the Moatize District. The model of sharing these revenues has increased social inequalities and conflicts. It has also exposed citizens to the negative externalities of mining. The case of Moatize can also be related to Bebbington et al. (2008:892), who argue that there is a negative relationship between good governance and mineral wealth because mining revenues are appropriated and used by the state. For this reason, the state prioritises its relationships not with citizens but with foreign companies that are useful for its financial interests.

6.3 Conclusion

The mobilisation of the residents of Moatize against the mining practices of Vale can be described as a struggle in which Moatize residents used different means to achieve their goals. However, power relations in the district limited residents' ability to openly resist the multinational company, whose activities were supported by the District Administration. Police repression and censorship of any action against mining practices forced local people to be more cautious in their resistance, opting for infrapolitical means such as the distribution of videos showing bad mining practices while concealing the identity of those who filmed them. Although marginalised groups such as small farmers, brickmakers, cattle breeders, and traditional healers initially protested openly against the bad mining practices, they switched to covert acts of resistance when open forms of protest were repressed by the state police. Nevertheless, the groups who resisted the powerful mining multinational used a variety of covert tactics and managed to achieve immediate material gains, which allowed them to survive after being displaced from their land. The compensation mechanisms had failed to meet their daily needs.

However, in the public consultations on the sharing of mining resources in Moatize, the residents were forced to take an openly political stance when they criticised the way revenues were distributed, which was seen as failing to benefit them and exacerbating their poverty. The Consultative Councils fought for the fair distribution of their mining revenues, but they have weak weapons. Consultative Councils formed at local level were ineffective in ensuring the

money was used for local development needs, having less power than the District Administration in the management of the 2.75% mining revenue fund. Discontent over how the fund was managed and distributed suggests that residents are likely to continue to resist it. The residents criticised the same model for creating social inequalities in their communities while hosting the multinational project. For example, the start of public works such as classrooms and public drinking water taps, and their failure to be completed because the contractors suddenly disappeared, has reduced the quality of life in these communities. The failure to build much-needed infrastructure has robbed them of the dignity they had before the multinational began mining in Moatize and fostered distrust of both the multinational and the state, represented by the District Administration.

The next chapter looks at another form of resistance by traditional healers, who have also used the weapons at their disposal to confront Vale's mining practices.

Chapter 7. Traditional Healers and Coal Mining Practices

In this chapter, I will examine the forms of resistance that traditional healers used against the mining company Vale, particularly those represented by the Association of Traditional Healers of Mozambique (AMETRAMO). The Mozambican government created AMETRAMO after the political changes and democratisation of the country in the 1990s, and the case of Moatize clearly shows how this instrumentalisation took place. Traditional healers claim to control the spirits of the ancestors, who in turn have the ability to intervene in the world of the living if the living does not follow the will of the ancestors. These healers wield substantial influence over the people of Moatize, who greatly fear the spiritual powers of traditional medicine practitioners. Traditional healers also claim to be able to interact with spirits and intercede on behalf of the living. Healers can also cause harm, such as making people sick, bringing bad luck, and even killing certain people chosen by the spirits.[26] Traditional healers believe that the failure of human agency in the fight against bad mining practices has allowed them to activate an agency they attribute to the spirits of the ancestors, who, according to the healers, have the ability to stop the disruption caused by the mining company. According to traditional healers, these ancestral spirits of relatives buried in local cemeteries were angry and returned to the world of the living to oppose the disorder that the exploitation of coal brought to their land. Above all, the traditional healers resisted Vale's mining activities because they were concerned about being displaced from their sacred lands, where they performed traditional ceremonies and used medicinal plants to support their activities.

To understand how the world of ancestral spirits is operationalised in Moatize, I first present the story of António's daughter, who became ill and later died. António's quest to cure his daughter is explained in terms of the traditional model of healing that involves the spirits of the ancestors. Even

[26] According to traditional healers, it is usually the spirits of ancestors within a kinship group that return to the world of the living, with certain individuals in a family being chosen and possessed by the spirits. In his view, spirits never take possession of anyone outside the kinship group.

though biomedical services played a part in her care, they were irrelevant for António when it came to explaining his daughter's death. According to my various interlocutors, the experiences of António's family were similar to those of other locals who had also experienced illness. After the case of António's daughter, I present the widely accepted and culturally grounded model of the spirits among the residents of Moatize. I then look at Moatize residents' perceptions of the traditional healers' services, followed by an examination of the state's instrumentalisation of the traditional healers' association (AMETRAMO). Finally, I show how mining practices in Moatize have affected the livelihoods of traditional healers and how they have activated their spiritual knowledge to oppose the mining company.

7.1 The illness and death of António's daughter

António was a 28-year-old man who lived in the Chithata neighbourhood on the outskirts of Moatize. He worked as a security guard at a house on the site where Vale had built a series of buildings for its workers. António worked eight-hour days as a security guard but in the colder months, such as June to August, his work at night was difficult because he could not afford clothing warm enough to withstand the cold. When I first met António, he had told me about his wife, who was very ill with weakness and constant headaches, and he had taken her several times to the health centres in Moatize. The medical examinations carried out in one of the health centres did not reveal any disease. This prompted António's family members to advise him to seek out a traditional healer, who, they said, would be able to solve his wife's health problems. António said that the traditional healer used spirits to diagnose his wife's problems, and she was cured after the treatment. António mentioned that the diagnosis made using the traditional healer's game of conch shells (consultation with the ancestors) indicated that when the woman went to live with her husband, one of her paternal aunts was not at the *lobolo* (traditional wedding). Normally, in Nyungwe patrilineal society, the aunt (ego's father's sister) is the father by classification. From what he said, neither the aunt nor the father of Antonio's wife were present at their daughter's *lobolo* ceremony. In Antonio's consultation, his wife's aunt had already died, but she was angry with her niece for not inviting her to attend the niece's most important event. As a treatment, António said, the traditional healer recommended that he and his wife visit his aunt's grave and then have a family ceremony with food and drink, remembering her and apologising for not informing her about the traditional wedding ceremony. According to António, his wife stopped complaining of headaches after this ceremony.

In my daily interactions with António, he often talked about his daughter's illness, and I asked him why he did not take her to a hospital for biomedical treatment. António had the option of using the public biomedical services available in the Municipality of Moatize, namely the health centre of Chithatha, the neighbourhood where he lived, as well as the Vale-built public health centre of 25 de Setembro in the neighbourhood of the same name. Available treatment also extends to the largest hospital centre in the district, the CARBOMOC public health centre. However, António explained that his daughter's illness was a punishment from the ancestors: when the daughter was just twenty months old, he said, his wife became pregnant with a son, and two months later the daughter started to get sick. In Moatize and other regions of Mozambique, health centres recommend that there should be at least two years between pregnancies to give the first child the opportunity to stay close to the mother and develop well. Although this is the advice of the biomedical health authorities, there are many cases of mothers not following this recommendation. In Moatize, the popular discourse is that there is no problem with ignoring the recommendation, but if mothers do not want to be bewitched and having their children born ill, they must keep the pregnancy a secret. Alexandra, a 42-year-old mother of two girls, said: "Successful cases of mothers giving birth to healthy babies without observing the two-year interval between pregnancies occur among couples living alone, where the secrecy of the fact is controlled."

The elders told António this: "The spirits of the ancestors have come and punished your daughter with illness." As António described, "My daughter lost weight, and as time went on, she lost more and more weight." After several months, she began to swell, and António and his wife decided to take their daughter to the 25 de Setembro health centre in the resettlement area.

The decision to take the daughter to the health centre in Moatize stemmed from the fact that the nurses at the health centre in Chithatha, where he lived, did not carry out any medical examinations and only prescribed syrup[27] for the child to take, which he said did not work. After three visits to 25 de Setembro health centre, the nurses advised him to take his daughter to traditional healers, since the health centre could not solve the child's problem. From that point onwards, António and his family decided to look for a local prophet[28] – a term António used. (He distinguished a prophet from a traditional healer, but as the traditional healers of AMETRAMO pointed out to me, these categories

[27] António could not tell me the name of the syrup, but according to him, it was to help the child gain weight.
[28] Someone who has the ability to communicate with the spiritual world and provide guidance, insights, and predictions about the future.

overlap). Among the practitioners of traditional medicine, there are traditional healers who can prophesy (communicate with the ancestors) and those who learn the practice of traditional herbal medicine. The prophet told António that his daughter had *utambya*[29] in an advanced stage, as the child's body was harmed and weakened, and that there was no cure for her. As António said:

> The prophet took a 1.5 litre bottle of water and bathed the child. At the end of the bath, the prophet removed dark bugs from the child's body, a witchcraft called *xitumwa*. He then administered a medicine called *michando*, which consists of water and salt.

The *michando* treatment is used in cases of witchcraft, as was the case with António's daughter. In cases where no witchcraft is diagnosed, a simple prayer by the prophet or traditional healer is enough to cure the disease. "The prophet's treatment improved my daughter's health, but three days later part of her skin began to peel off and sores appeared on her body," António told me. When he returned to the prophet after the daughter's condition worsened, the prophet told António that nothing could be done.

After spending money and failing to get his daughter treated by the prophet, António decided to find another traditional healer who would try a different procedure. The traditional healer also diagnosed *utambya*, but in order to remove the witchcraft from the child's body, he used a different medicine than the prophet. António told me how the traditional healer mixed the water he used to wash the child's body with the roots of a tree and then took a new razor blade to make some cuts on the child's wrist. However, his child did not get better after the traditional healer's treatment, and António no longer had the money to continue the treatments.[30] António again decided to look for biomedical services at the CARBOMOC health centre in the town of Moatize. There, the nurses hospitalized his daughter because she was so weak. Then a health technician carried out a blood test and diagnosed the child with anaemia. After three days in hospital, the child died.

António was depressed when I met him after his daughter's death. Nevertheless, it was clear to António that the cause of his daughter's death had nothing to do with the failure of traditional services. According to him, his daugh-

[29] In Nyungue culture, *utambya* designates the disease that makes the body swell, with the hands and eyes turning white.

[30] In 2021, when the health of António's daughter deteriorated, he spent 500 MT on the prophet and 300 MT on the traditional healer. The US dollar equalled 60 MT that year, which means that António spent US$13 on his daughter's consultations and treatment. This was a significant amount of money, given that he earned just 3000 MT a month as a security guard.

ter's death was punishment from the ancestors for having broken the postpartum abstinence rules. He told how he knew of many children with *utambya*, but who had been treated earlier and managed to be cured, unlike his daughter.

According to António, the biomedical services reported that "the daughter died because he and the family were negligent in seeking services early enough." However, António told me that when he first went to the health centre, the nurses did not do any medical tests on his daughter, instead prescribing ineffective medicines. António's narration points to the negligence of the public biomedical services. António, with no financial means, could not seek help from private health services to examine his daughter. Even the state-owned 25 de Setembro health centre sent him to look for traditional services without performing any medical examinations. Although the *Resolução 11/2004 sobre a Politica da Medicina Tradicional* – Resolution 11/2004 on Traditional Medicine Policy required the integration and representation of traditional healers in biomedical health centres, in Moatize, this law was not followed, and the healers were not represented. At the CARBOMOC health centre, when the nurses realised that António's daughter could not be cured, they said that the treatments the child had received in the traditional health services had caused her anaemia.

I noticed in Moatize that although the biomedical health service representatives talked about cooperation between the two entities, it did not happen. The core issue remained a lack of recognition and legitimacy for traditional medicine, especially within state-run public services. Mahumana (2015) states that public health planners and biomedical health professionals in Mozambique perceive health practices rooted in traditional medicine as forms of ignorance and resistance to biomedical knowledge and modern health care. However, despite the denigration of traditional services by biomedical health institutions, people still choose to use them.

António's case, according to residents of Moatize, reflects the inadequate care offered by the area's biomedical health centres. It is likely that this inadequate treatment was linked to his socioeconomic background; coming from a poor family, António may not have been able to afford the medical examinations that his daughter needed. However, it is also important to mention that the prices charged to patients in public health centres are low compared to the private health sector. But while costs are low, it is common for nurses and doctors at public health centres to report shortages of medical supplies and medication, as well as frequent breakdowns of the diagnostic equipment used to treat patients like António's daughter.

Two factors help explain why António's daughter died, despite his efforts to find a cure for her. First, António was poor, with limited financial resources

to pay for specialised medical examinations in private hospitals, and had to rely on public health services. These centres, however, often lack of medical equipment, and in some cases, patients must even make small bribes in order to be examined. Second, the medical staff who treated António's daughter at the 25 de Setembro health centre were negligent. António took his daughter there three times, but staff merely advised him to seek traditional medical services, even though a simple blood test at the health centre would have diagnosed the anaemia that António's daughter was suffering from. According to my interlocutors, the absence of traditional healers representing the traditional medicine in state hospitals was due to a lack of effort on the part of the biomedical health agents. They did not create the conditions, such as rooms, for healers to be consulted once biomedical staff have established (rightly or wrongly) that a particular patient's illness is of a spiritual nature and needs to be treated with traditional medicine.

As I have shown above, the alleged cause of his daughter's death was anaemia, which could have been cured in a public hospital. The dominance of traditional medicine, in which António believed and from which he sought a cure for his daughter, is under attack, criticised by some citizens, especially by biomedical health technicians, as being ineffective and lacking a solid scientific basis for curing diseases.

For Mahumana (2015), traditional medical services must be seen within their own epistemology, with their specific foundations rooted in local society and culture. Yet, for some biomedical health professionals, António quest to cure his daughter through traditional medicine was the result of ignorance and misconceptions about health and illness. Although António's understanding of health was based on traditional perspectives, or ethnomedicine, and biomedical services were considered health alternatives, the large-scale social and economic structures in which illness, health, and disease are embedded are still not adequately understood. For example, Farmer (2004) explores how poverty and social inequalities are closely linked to health disparities, showing how such inequalities become embodied as unequal risks of illness or death. António's case illustrates also how environmental, political, economic, and cultural forces shape the health services in Moatize. As Mahumana (2015:27) states, in traditional medicine services "the spirits of the deceased are placed in the same social context as human beings, and that the so-called abnormal and supernatural illnesses are also socially and historically embodied by those who suffer from them."

It is easier to understand António's quest for a cure for his daughter as navigating the everyday realities related to social space in Moatize. His actions, in relation to the choice of one health service over another, took place at the

intersection of political, economic, social, and cultural processes that shape people's options to seek care (Winchester and King 2017). It is a fact that cultural aspects related to António's belief in traditional medicine may have precipitated his daughter's death, but lack of adequate biomedical care in Moatize makes it easier for situations like that of Antonio's daughter to occur.

Traditional medicine has always existed in Mozambique, and its services cover a greater proportion of primary health care than the Mozambique's National Health Service. It is estimated that while there is one traditional medicine practitioner for every 200 inhabitants, there is only 0.8 doctors per 10,000 inhabitants, far below the WHO recommendation of one doctor per 1,000 inhabitants (cf. Kumar and Ranabir 2018). Furthermore, there are people in Mozambique who only ever use traditional medicine as a means of health care (Garrido 2020: 9). Statistics from the MISAU (2014) also show that around 70% of the Mozambican population use traditional medicine to treat physical, mental, and social illnesses. Although the *Serviço Nacional da Saúde* (SNS, National Health Service) in Mozambique has integrated traditional medicine services into its system, health issues related to spiritual or social illness are still referred to traditional medicine services. What keeps Mozambique's National Health Service from being a viable alternative for the majority of the population is not only cultural factors but also problems related to poverty and increasingly accentuated social inequalities. As Mitano et al. (2016:5) argue, the population of Mozambique is mostly unemployed, and no matter how "small" the payments for medical consultations are, there are also the costs of medicine and transport for those who live far from health facilities.

7.2 The spirit world of traditional medicine

Honwana (2002:51–52) writes about living spirits, modern traditions, and spirit possession in the context of southern Mozambique. Her accounts explain that spirits who possess an individual are inherited from deceased maternal or paternal relative. During this process, the individual experiences a temporary separation from his or her own essence and identity, as the spirits have taken over the affected individual as an external soul, entering his or her body to take over his or her personality and actions. Traditional healers in Moatize explained to me how the spirits of the ancestors return to the world of the living by choosing and possessing certain individuals in a family.

Isabel, a *nhabeze* (traditional healer), told me that these spirits normally tell the possessed person in a dream what to do. Failure to do what the spirits command will lead to illness and death for that person. In her words:

> When I was 12 years old, spirits that came from my aunt, who is my father's sister, possessed me. I am 60 years old, [31] and I still have the same spirits. My aunt also possessed the spirits of her grandparents when they died. When I die, the spirits will choose another person from my family to take over. It is something from our ancestors that the chosen person cannot escape. The spirit that possesses me is called *Massemaculo*, which means the spirits of my grandparents.

Thus, a person possessed by spirits automatically becomes their servant. The spirits dictate their will, and everything they say must be done. Usually, spirits appear in dreams at night and may tell the possessed person to go to a certain field to gather certain medicinal plants because the next day someone will come looking for him or her at the spiritual house (separate building where the traditional healers do their treatments). These spirits also explain in dreams how to treat a certain illness or misfortune.

The traditional healers at the AMETRAMO headquarters told me that they have been able to diagnose these spirits when they are present in an individual and to see whether they are malignant or benign. Honwana (2002) points out that the spirits reproduce the hierarchy that exists among the living. When someone dies and their body is buried, it is believed that their spirit remains in society as a manifestation of their power, personality, and knowledge. Although Honwana's (2002) study of spirits and possession was conducted in southern Mozambique, her findings are similar to those found in Moatize. The *Massemaculo* grandparent spirits hosted in the body of Isabel – spirits of older people – had a higher status and more power than spirits of young people, reflecting the elderly's superior position in life. The spiritual world was thus seen as a continuity of the world of the living in the sense that even after death, elders continued to guide and control their descendants (Honwana 2002:53).

The traditional healers in Moatize indicated that if someone hosts the spirits, he or she will enter into the trance and speak what the spirits are demanding. It is also possible that the person hosting the spirits will become ill, and the traditional healers at AMETRAMO's headquarters will be sought to make a diagnosis. The *nhabeze* performs rituals, and if the person affected manages to tame or control the spirits so that they do not attack anyone, the person has good spirits and automatically becomes a member of AMETRAMO and a practitioner of traditional medicine. After diagnosis, the person must still go through training, which I describe below. According to the traditional healers of AMETRAMO, they do not control the spirits that possess people who are not members of the association.

Most traditional practitioners in AMETRAMO are *nhabeze* (healers), some

[31] The interaction with this *nhabeze* started in 2021, but the interview above was in February 2023.

called by the spirits and some not. The training to become a traditional healer consists of being isolated in a spiritual house where drums are played as part of the ritual. Traditional healers in Moatize, who may also be herbalists, have learned from their ancestors about the medicinal and healing properties of plants. The herbalists are different from healers who are possessed by guiding spirits, but these groups can sometimes overlap and are familiar with both ways, as is the case in Moatize. However, as pointed out by the traditional healers at AMETRAMO's headquarters, becoming a traditional healer "is an art," a skill reserved for a few, for those chosen by the spirits. As they said, "We train traditional healers in our own way, just as universities train doctors and specialise in biomedicine."

In the streets of Moatize, sellers of traditional medicine are common. Those I spoke with confirmed that their knowledge of plants had come from the training they received from their elderly dead relatives, who had also worked with plants. Controversy surrounds this street-trading group of herbalists, however. As one traditional healer at AMETRAMO's headquarters said, "There are some who are fake herbalists who mislead some people who seek their services." In order to control the traditional healers under its jurisdiction, AMETRAMO registers them, mainly to oversee their use of traditional medicines. AMETRAMO also sets and approves the prices of these medicines, although some traditional healers set their own prices according to the severity or financial situation of their customers.

As one traditional healer said, "AMETRAMO is also aware of some traditional healers who use traditional medicines for bad purposes, and AMETRAMO as an association has fought against them, as they jeopardise its diagnostic and healing activities." Practitioners who misuse traditional knowledge are not part of the association. The use of traditional medicine for bad or "evil" purposes refers to cases in which residents seek out healers to cast spells on others. In this way, these types of traditional healers use the services of traditional medicine to harm other people, such as making them sick or even killing them. AMETRAMO's traditional medicine practitioners and healers are taught to treat people well, and the inspectors of the association denounce and prosecute those who practice traditional medicine for harmful purposes.

In Moatize, some traditional healers with knowledge of plants use them for evil purposes and hide their activities, according to members of AMETRAMO. However, there are always people who seek this kind of service, so AMETRAMO carries out inspections for this type of traditional healer. AMETRAMO inspectors wear uniforms when carrying out their monitoring duties, a sign of a militarised society in which soldiers in uniform are respected

by the populace. The use of a uniform, primarily associated with military matters, represents power and respect. Supervision by AMETRAMO's uniformed traditional healers includes knowing what exactly traditional healers, whether registered with AMETRAMO or not, are doing in their traditional medicine practices. According to one of the traditional healers, "If a healer is caught using black magic to harm people, the inspectors handcuff him or her and take him to the association's headquarters to be arrested by the police."

In fact, the uniform is a way of identifying the traditional healers of AMETRAMO, who, as health leaders, have a certain amount of political power. As well as being worn during the fiscalisation process, uniforms also worn during traditional healing activities at the AMETRAMO headquarters and when the practitioners are invited to represent their association in public state ceremonies. The uniforms are expressly meant to symbolize the association's power. At the AMETRAMO headquarters, traditional healers in leadership positions wear uniforms that resemble the military structure. Manjate (2022:227) has shown that third rank leaders, such as traditional healers, wear berets with their uniforms but do not have stars like the *régulos* do.

7.2.1 Perceptions of traditional medicine practices

In Moatize there are residents who consider themselves "modern" and distance themselves from traditional practices, but the majority of people in Moatize see traditional medicine as an effective alternative to the physical and spiritual problems they face. In descriptions of their daily lives, people told me that traditional medicine was used to explain certain problems that arose in the context of social pressures caused by the influence of modernisation, including the issue of mining. AMETRAMO has also been consulted by residents seeking explanations from the spiritual world about the poor treatment they have received from their bosses at the mining company, the evil eye of their hierarchical superiors, the reasons why Vale's mining practices have destroyed their assets, and more. I understand that these services are, to some extent, a way of explaining the causes of various social and health problems affecting the local population. Many of the problems reported by AMETRAMO's traditional healers are related to illness and unemployment, and the role of the healers is to explain how to solve or minimise these problems in accordance with the spirits' wishes.

Some people in Moatize have problems with the recognition and legitimisation of the practice of traditional medicine. Because traditional medicine was not recognised in the country between 1975 and 1992, there are those who claim they have never sought traditional medical services. Despite the negative discourse around traditional healers and their practices, AMETRAMO

members affirmed that Moatize natives know that traditional medicine can cure many illnesses, especially spiritual ones, because they were born into a traditional Nyungwe culture that taught the power of traditional medicine. For the traditional healers at AMETRAMO's headquarters, the problem was that in some of the service areas of Moatize, bosses forbade their workers to seek traditional medical services, claiming that its practitioners were "obscurantists" and always harmed others. Nevertheless, the same people who said this while at work would themselves seek the healing services of traditional healers at night.

This ambiguous double standard was also present among state public sector workers in Moatize. Within the state apparatus, those I spoke with informally acknowledged that practices of sorcery existed, but that it served a harmful purpose by "hindering the career advancement of some people." State officials who said they were "modernised" and did not follow tradition mentioned that some colleagues in the state used *curandeiros* (traditional healers) to seek professional advancement. Consequently, they stopped investing in their studies, which could have actually helped them advance their professional careers. These state officials considered traditional medicine as magic used to harm an adversary or enrich themselves. Yet many state employees in Moatize sought the services of traditional healers to resolve health issues or to assist with job searches.

One AMETRAMO traditional healer pointed out that they only use traditional medicine for positive purposes and do not engage in harmful sorcery. AMETRAMO is an association that works directly with the state and therefore is aligned with the Ministry of Health's agenda. According to AMETRAMO guidelines, "evil practices are not allowed." Although they did not admit it to me, Moatize's traditional healers have knowledge of sorcery, but as an organisation recognised by the state, AMETRAMO no longer legitimises sorcery practices because it is prohibited. Healers also confirm this fact when they say that have the ability to remove spells that may affect residents who seek their services.

Another traditional healer at the AMETRAMO headquarters informed me that society has an idea that civil servants and urban citizens are unlikely to use traditional health services, but the truth is that many of their patients come from both government services and private companies, seeking advancement and recognition in their professions. In Mozambique, there was an idea that traditional medicine was "backward" and held back development, and that there was a need to build a modern society away from these practices. This idea became widespread after independence in 1975, but it did not stop people from seeking or practising traditional medicine. Some sought these services

clandestinely, as the traditional healers at AMETRAMO headquarters mentioned, but others adopted the idea that "backward" traditional medicine should be replaced entirely by biomedical health services.

Anastâncio, a 55-year-old traditional healer who I spoke with at AMETRAMO's headquarters in Moatize, made it clear that their practices, although involving spirit possession, were different from sorcery. They used their traditional knowledge in conjunction with spirits exclusively for benevolent purposes. In practice, the traditional healers at AMETRAMO said that what they do is *kulapa*, which means to "heal," and many people came to them for *kulapa*. One of the traditional healers said that everyone in Nyungwe culture has used traditional medicines for *kulapa*. In Moatize, everyone is born into a traditional medical model in which a child is given "moon medicine" (*ntsatsi*) at birth. This medicine is believed to promote health throughout the child's development, and those who do not receive it are at great risk of becoming mentally ill in adulthood. Specific medicinal plants taken from their sacred lands were used to prepare this remedy. The medicine was associated with the moon because children took it when the moon was full, and children or adults who did not take it are thought to be in a state of imbalance with nature. The rationale given to me was that children tended to be out of balance with their environment during full moon periods, and the way to heal them was to administer moon medicine. Diseases that occurred in children, such as epilepsy, were associated with not having received moon medicine. Therefore, someone without knowledge of traditional *ntsatsi* risked having a sick child, and the hospital would always treat the illness in ways that contradicted the recommendations of traditional medicine recommend.

Viewing traditional AMETRAMO healing practices as witchcraft could lead to a lack of understanding of local health practices. Geschiere (1997:2–3) points out that in Africa, witchcraft discourses are linked to modern changes, often in surprising ways. Today, modern techniques and commodities, often of Western origin, are central to rumours about the occult. It is therefore difficult to argue that there is an obvious opposition between witchcraft and modernity; on the contrary, rumours and practices related to occult powers are widespread in the most modern sectors of society. In Africa, the dynamism of these concepts and images is particularly striking: they are constantly being reformulated and recreated, often in a determined effort to signify or control political-economic changes. In fact, rumours and practices associated with occult forces are prevalent in contemporary society of Moatize, including public sector environments of the state. Some interlocutors in Moatize even speculate that those who hold influential positions in these sectors used witchcraft to attain their status.

The traditional healers at AMETRAMO headquarters confirmed to me that people working in state institutions also reported anonymous magical attacks against public officials in leadership positions. The attackers sought to take over their management roles. It is common for traditional healers at AMETRAMO to receive complaints about sorcery in state police stations, where unknown persons drugged the police chiefs in order to kill them. Although attempted murders have not been ignored, the dominant explanation for these and other misfortunes has typically involved the spiritual world, overseen by traditional healers. Even if it was proven that someone ordered the attempted murder of a leader, consulting traditional healers was considered necessary to strengthen the leader's position and prevent further attacks. Geschiere (1997) argues that the embrace of modernization in African societies does not necessarily lead to the disappearance of witchcraft. Modernity itself generates discourses about witchcraft, resulting in inequality, with some citizens being perceived as elite and others as subalterns. This is exactly what I observed in the relations between state officials and AMETRAMO.

7.3. The Mozambican state and AMETRAMO

Interacting with traditional healers in Moatize, I learnt that the state no longer invited them to important state events, such as performing rituals to communicate with the ancestors. Traditional healers in Moatize said that the Municipal Council and District Administration have sidelined them in matters of state. As I found, both the Municipal and District Administrations separate traditional entities according to their areas of activity, with traditional healers usually associated with the area of healing and the chieftaincy as the highest traditional political structure, representing traditional power as a whole.

Although AMETRAMO representatives mentioned that the state underestimated and often failed to recognise them, especially when it handed over their sacred lands to the multinational mining company, it remains noteworthy that the association nevertheless cooperates with the state health sector at the local level. Inside the AMETRAMO headquarters, for example, biomedical health images were hung on the walls to campaign against the attack, trafficking, and murder of albinos[32] in Moatize. The local biomedical health services had turned to AMETRAMO for assistance, offering these posters to support their biomedical health campaign to change their negative attitudes towards

[32] There is a local belief in Moatize that albinos are not equal to other human beings, leading to them being trafficked and killed for magical practices. There are also rumours that albino genitals, alleged to bring power and wealth, are sold on the black market. As one resident said, "Albino genitals are also used by traditional healers to treat sexual impotence."

albinos. Because messages were more likely to be heard and understood if delivered in the local language, and by an influential traditional association, AMETRAMO's healers always used the Nyungwe language to make people aware of this criminal practice.

During campaigns to raise people's awareness of harmful health practices, the state offered motorbikes to traditional healers to facilitate their movement in the neighbourhoods of Moatize. Anastâncio stated: "We have been involved in raising awareness of the state's campaigns to vaccinate children, in a context where the population believes more in traditional medicine than in biomedical practice. We also campaign for voter registration and against the stigmatisation of albinos." In other words, the Frelimo government has used AMETRAMO to support its interests, including the association and other traditional healers in maximising its political agenda. For their part, the traditional medical services also relied on state medical services to support their work, despite having their own doctrine and therapeutic mechanisms. The National Health Service through the Moatize Health Directorate supported AMETRAMO with material equipment and paid traditional healers to carry out biomedical health campaigns. In 2016, however, these campaign activities stopped because the Ministry of Health did not have the financial resources to continue them, prompting AMETRAMO members to speak of their absent "father." At the same time, AMETRAMO functioned as an institution within the state and was, in fact, created by the state for these purposes, closely following the state's own agenda. AMETRAMO was linked to the services of political power, and Frelimo rationalised its mobilising role, particularly important in a region where the state needed to impose itself, given that traditional authorities had historically been linked to RENAMO. The state, through Frelimo, continued to work with representatives of AMETRAMO and traditional authorities in general as a way of controlling traditional power, which was legitimised by society.

The traditional healers at AMETRAMO's headquarters also indicated that as an association, they were open to learning biomedical practices – and even replacing of some of their practices, such as those using razor blades, one of the main instruments they used to make incisions on body parts in therapeutic procedures. The biomedical health services and users of traditional medicine in the country have previously criticised the prevalent use of razor blades in traditional healing procedures. This criticism came in the context of HIV/AIDS, when practitioners were accused of using a single razor blade to make incisions in the bodies of different patients and thus spreading the disease. Biomedical health workers, in coordination with AMETRAMO, have raised the awareness of the dangers of this practice so that traditional healers

do not reuse razor blades for different patients. The traditional healers in Moatize pointed out that patients were also concerned about bringing their own razor blades to use in these services. Another point the healers emphasised was that when they used razor blades to make incisions, "we are carrying out a vaccination as the biomedical health services do." As one of them said, "They work with the syringe to vaccinate, while we work with the razor blade to do our vaccinations."

From what I observed in Moatize, the power of the traditional healers' knowledge was one of the main reasons that the state cooperated with AMETRAMO; it did not control them completely, particularly in matters of the spiritual world. However, the state was also concerned with training AMETRAMO members in good health practices. In this kind of cooperation, traditional medicine services depended on the state to develop their activities. AMETRAMO only intervened when the state gave permission to proceed. The partnership envisioned by Resolution 11/2004, which established a policy of traditional medicine and approved the incorporation of traditional medical knowledge into the National Health Service has not truly materialised. What is actually happening is that patients are simply transferred from one institution to another when an illness considered outside the institution's remit. The transfer of patients does not happen when traditional healers are represented in biomedical health centres or biomedical health officials are represented in traditional medicine institutions. In this partnership, one entity had more power over the other and tried to impose its vision of health. As modern biomedical health systems necessarily influence the traditional one, unequal power relations exist in local therapeutic landscapes (Mahumana 2015). Thus, although traditional medicine was legitimised by the Mozambican state, the problems of recognition and integration still prevailed in the Moatize Municipality. Politically, local biomedical health services conditioned the interventions of traditional healers – primarily those represented by AMETRAMO – and made them dependent on the state. Interestingly, some traditional healers claimed the paternity of the state and regretted its absence from their programmes.

7.4 Traditional healers and coal mining practices

While the Vale/Vulcan companies and the Mozambican state saw coal mining as creating development opportunities and turning Moatize into a productive and modernised landscape, bringing new infrastructure such as roads, private health clinics, and a state health centre, practitioners of traditional medicine

did not have the same vision. For them, the mining projects destroyed the territories that gave rest to the spirits and connected them to their ancestors. Leda, a 52-year-old healer who practises traditional medicine in her home and advertises her services on posters, explained that in the 25 de Setembro neighbourhood, the construction of the 25 de Setembro Health Centre did not mean that the demand for traditional medicine services had diminished. On the contrary, she argued that she and other traditional healers saw these traditional services as a way of making sense of their existence amidst the changes brought about by the mining boom. Leda also said that in the resettlement area, many Vale miners sought her services for treatment that would ensure their success at work or even to help them gain promotions in their workplaces.

In the streets of the 25 de Setembro resettlement area, where people were generally well-informed about modern health practices, it was normal for traditional healers to display posters advertising their ability to fix problems brought about by "modernity." These posters claimed the healers had the power to cure various health problems related to sexual impotence, asthma, and blood pressure. Traditional healers reinvented themselves by expanding their range of health services in the midst of changes brought about by urbanisation. Rather than resisting external influences as such, locals sometimes appropriated and incorporated them into their own culture. According to the traditional healers, the concession of their traditional lands to Vale had created a huge spiritual void in Moatize. Within the land ceded to the multinational company were environmental resources such as sacred trees, under which their ancestors performed traditional religious ceremonies for the stability and cohesion of community life. As 54-year-old Belito, an AMETRAMO traditional healer, explained:

> Because of the dispossession of sacred land, the spirits that resided there have left the place and returned to be hosted by the patients that we have previously removed them from, and the danger of these spirits is that they will cause illness in the people that we have healed.

According to traditional healers at the AMETRAMO headquarters, this happened because the state and Vale expropriated their land without carrying out adequate traditional ceremonies. The traditional healers suggested that the cosmology of nature held by them and others in Moatize has been challenged by the mining company's massive dispossession of their land, where biodiversity had been destroyed to make way for coal mining. The construction of huge coal mining areas also forced traditional healers to find distant fields to access the medicinal plants used in their therapeutic procedures. To reach

these new, distant fields,[33] they had to shoulder the costs of transport. They were also forced to pay fees to local leaders to access the forests, unlike in Moatize, where they had collected medicinal plants for free.

The traditional healers' descriptions of the different kinds of spirits that resided on their sacred lands, which the company's caterpillar mining trucks were removing, made it clear that there neither the company nor the state showed any respect for their ancestors. Traditional healers also mentioned that they should have been included in the ceremony of removing various amulets and other traditional items left on their lands. In the ceremonies granting Moatize lands to Vale, the Queen Spanela represented the traditional structure as the traditional head of the Moatize lands. However, the traditional healers of AMETRAMO have stated the Queen is not the only one with the ability to contact the spirits – they also have the same ability to contact the same spirits. There was a need to separate the spirits upon their departure from the traditional lands. They knew how to recognise a lion spirit from a leopard or *mamba* snake spirit, and whether it should go to a specific site or not. Anastâncio, a traditional healer from AMETRAMO, pointed this out:

> In the case of the snake spirits that were run over by the diggers, they returned to the people they inhabited. The same people felt severe headaches and began to scream alone as if they were mad, and others died. If we had removed the spirits, they could have been tied up in a shawl or black *capulana*, which is placed in water, from which later a small snake emerges, which allows the person possessed by the spirit to survive or to be cured of the spirits. This small snake is taken to a large river in a cloth or a black *capulana* to immerse it in the bottom of the water, and after two days a small snake will appear and transform into a spirit that traditional healers can control to prevent it from attacking patients that it has hosted before.

The traditional healer's description above raised a question for me about how animal spirits can take possession of people. As I came to understand, these traditional healers recognise a category of animals as their totems and intimates. These animals can be embodied by the chiefs of the Moatize lands (see also Chapter 3). These animals can also be used to classify spirits, as mentioned by the traditional healer above. However, there were many things about the secret domain of the spiritual world that the traditional healers did not tell me, such as the relationship between these animals and the possession of the spirits of dead ancestors. This is related to what Bertelsen (2016:90–91) says about Honde, in the Manica Province, where there is a crucial connection between the politics of chiefly rule and traditional authority, cosmologies of the

[33] These new fields were located in the Angónia and Tsangano districts, 292 km and 174 km away from Moatize respectively.

land and the well-being of its inhabitants, and where the spirits, have the capacity to resist the territorialisation of their land by state-driven dynamics. Lan (1985) also refers to contemporary Zimbabwe, where the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) relied on the spiritual powers of witches to defeat the enemy in guerrilla warfare. Animals, such as eagles, would tell the ZANLA troops that danger was imminent, and they would retreat from the area, only for the enemy to attack while they were still retreating.

Sebastião, a 58-year-old traditional healer from AMETRAMO, explained that the lack of rain in Moatize was a result of the spirits being run over by the mining company's cranes and excavators. According to him, the lack of cooperation between the District Administration, the mining company, the traditional healers, and the Queen hindered them from organising a joint ceremony to peacefully remove the spirits from the land they occupy and stop the evil occurring in Moatize. Sebastião added this:

> If the mining company had carried out a coal mining operation that respected traditional issues, the spirits would not have manifested and punished Moatize as they did. They would have been controlled, and there would have been no accidents at work in the various mining sites, no people getting sick because of the spirits, and there would have been no lack of rain and productivity in Moatize.

Two points of view must be highlighted to analyse what the traditional healers said about the consequences of removing of spirits from ancestral lands to make way for Vale's coal mining activity. The first is related to the level of discourse against a modern project that, in their view, has come to destroy the forms of power that they once commanded in the community, a power based on traditional knowledge about the spirit world that only they can explain. Because explaining the spirit world is possible only within the realm of traditional knowledge, and because the spirit world is feared by various sectors of Moatize society, it is mobilised to oppose unsustainable mining practices.

Second, the mining industry has caused practitioners of traditional medicine to lose the resources they relied on for survival, making them vulnerable. These are typical discourses against modern projects like Vale's. Such projects make it difficult for traditional healers to earn a living from their fields. Traditional knowledge based on local cosmology, such as that of spirits, is used as a mechanism to explain the emptiness that has befallen them. The presence of witchcraft in modern contexts provides multiple interpretations of the new inequalities that have emerged (cf. Geschiere 1997:16). The discourse of traditional healers in Moatize was embedded in the struggle for resources and the affirmation of their power as agents of traditional medicine, which they see being weakened by the coal industry.

AMETRAMO's traditional healers also reported that the spirits have the ability to stop the mining company's cranes or excavators from extracting the coal. Anita, a 49-year-old traditional healer from AMETRAMO, gave the following example:

> A bulldozer driver got inflamation on his skin, and his machine stopped working while he was extracting coal in the mine. The company later took the driver to a specialised clinic, which was unable to cure him, so the driver decided to seek us out as traditional healers.

When the bulldozer driver consulted the traditional healer, the spirits revealed that a lion spirit inhabited the site where the machine was extracting coal and that this spirit forbade him to extract the coal. The spirits also revealed the medicine that the driver should take as a treatment, and a few days later, he returned to work. In Moatize, traditional healers also pointed out that with the arrival of the mining company, many workers discovered spiritual problems whose solution lay in the healers' domain. This was why the number of traditional ceremonies to exorcise the evil spirits in the miners' work was multiplying.

Although it is difficult to understand the human agency of actions related to "witchcraft" practices, as Geschiere (1997) mentions, the fact that Moatize's traditional healers were fighting Vale's mining practices by using these invisible means placed the traditional healers in a domain of resistance. Traditional healers may have operated in the invisible realm of spirits, but they also had earthly agency and were, above all, political actors. The argument about their form of resistance to bad mining practices fits well into Scott's (1990) concept of infrapolitics – what they do is unnoticeable and feared because of its invisibility. The traditional healers of Moatize have developed this vast arsenal of the spirit world as a weapon for clandestine protest in an environment where open protest is extremely dangerous and repressed. Witchcraft is in many ways the classic recourse of these marginalised people, who have no open means of challenging the mining practices of a powerful multinational company like Vale (see Scott 1990:141–144). The invisible agency of the spirits has made the resistance discourses of the traditional healers more feared and more respected. This also meant that, unlike other visible resisters such as small farmers, the police did not physically repress them.

Outside AMETRAMO's headquarters, several traditional healers mentioned that Vale did not take seriously the issue of spirits that resided on their land and in the houses where they treated patients. Vulcan followed the same policies as the Vale. According to Isabel, a traditional healer, before Vale came to Moatize, she had a good brick house as well as a house where her

assistants, also traditional healers, slept. When Vale wanted her land, they did not ask about her work as a traditional healer who depended on the spirit house (a separate building where she does her treatments), which was also destroyed. When Isabel stopped working after the destruction of her spirit house, the spirits chased her and would not let her go, demanding that she returned to work as a traditional healer. From her point of view, the spirits would have killed her had she had not sought ways to return to her work. Later, when the Moatize District Administration intervened in her case, she was able to build a spirit house, though not the same size as the one she had in her old neighbourhood of Chipanga. Isabel mentioned that there were consequences for moving her spirit house to the 25 de Setembro neighbourhood – the spirits no longer had the same power because they did not recognise the new area as sacred. Even her clients who had visited her in Chipanga struggled to locate her new house, suggesting that the same spirits were preventing them from finding it.

Isabel's narrative illustrates how mining activities can affect the ways in which local cosmology and spirits survive. However, modernisation projects such as Vale's, which presupposed the modernisation of the traditional environment of Moatize, have had the opposite effect on traditional medicine, whose practitioners, although negatively affected by the practice of mining, continued to practice their activities and even mobilised.

7.4.1 Traditional healers and environmental sustainability

The traditional healers who were dedicated to selling a range of medicines said that certain plants with therapeutic power have been difficult to obtain because the forests had been destroyed to make way for mining projects. The traditional healers' perspective extended to others who had received compensation land, claiming that it lacked the size and symbolic value of the expropriated plots. In other words, both traditional healers and small farmers in Moatize feel that their way of life, based on coexistence with nature, was undermined by the "logic of extraction" (cf. Perez-Garcia 2021). Small farmers and traditional healers were concerned not only about the land itself but also about the biodiversity that played a key role in their lives. Even after their lands were expropriated and they were resettled in areas closer to the urban centres of Moatize, the traditional healers demanded alternative lands of equal symbolic and material value, located farther from Moatize, as compensation. There, they were able continue living in the forest, with access to ecosystems different from those that were destroyed.

The descriptions of traditional healers of the role of spirits in resisting mining practices in Moatize could be also interpreted as a way of asserting the

power they were losing against the Queen, who was considered an intermediary with the District Administration and the multinational coal company. According to Geschiere (1997:8–10), traditional discourses against modernity offer hidden means to gain power while also reflecting feelings of impotence. One version of these discourses is a reaction against the cumulative force that prevails in modern African politics. Modernity projects can cause inequality in local communities and disrupt traditional orders. This may lead to new forms of power, such as those brought about by coal mining, which can break old internal solidarities.

To explain the phenomenon of land loss caused by the coal industry in Moatize, Martinez-Alier (2002, 2014) has presented a useful interpretation. He argues that in the territories located on the borders of mineral extraction, conflicts arise due to the contest over the values and environmental resources that are at risk. The existing land conflicts can be interpreted as classic land conflicts with an environmental content, in which territorial struggles overlap with environmental struggles. Using the concept of "environmentalism of the poor," Martinez-Alier (2002, 2014) helps to explain the phenomenon of land loss, biodiversity, and deforestation, as well as to understand the set of resistance strategies that traditional healers generated to protect and defend their environmental rights in Moatize. Communities regarded various development projects, including mining, as hostile because such initiatives resulted in the loss of natural resources on which their livelihoods depended. They also emphasised that the environment is not a luxury but a fundamental condition of survival. The environmentalism of the poor does not mean that the poor usually feel, think, and behave like environmentalists. In the many resources and extractive conflicts of the past and present, the poor have often been on the side of conservation against corporations and the state. Martinez-Alier's environmentalism of the poor is in line with the interests and values of the residents of Moatize, for whom the degradation of their environment represented a loss of their way of life. For traditional healers, both the forest environment and their sacred lands provide the resources essential for their livelihoods. In this context, they sought to defend their territorial rights in areas containing particular sacred elements, including the forests, trees, and medicinal plants.

Martinez-Alier (2002:11) argues that the main thrust of the environmentalism of the poor is not a sacred reverence for nature but rather a material interest in the environment as a source and condition of livelihood; not so much a concern for the rights of other species and future human generations as a concern for today's poor people. Although Martinez-Alier (2002) adds that in ecological distribution conflicts, the poor are often on the side of resource conservation and a clean environment, studies such as Lacbawan's (2022) in

the northern Philippines show that the poor do not always care about protecting their environment, with cases of local people being punished for destroying the environment. The poor use the language of economic compensation as one of several ways to express the value of environmental damage, but in Moatize, because they depend on the environment resources, residents sometimes resort to non-economic terms to describe its worth, reflecting the environment's incommensurable value.

Low and Lawrence-Zúniga (2003:13) argue that the relationship between people and their environment involves more than ascribing meaning to space. It involves the recognition and cultural elaboration of perceived properties of environments in mutually constituting ways through narratives and practices. In addition, Ballard and Banks (2003:299) suggest a concern with controlling fundamental issues of community sovereignty through various channels and media, as well as appealling to more powerful audiences about environmental degradation. Community protest against environmental degradation is not always reducible to a prioritisation of environmental concerns to the detriment of other interests.

The analysis of Vale's mining practices in Moatize shows how the company endangered the sustainability of local residents, in particularly the traditional healers who depended on the ecosystem for survival. Traditional healers, especially those affiliated with AMETRAMO, recognised their marginalisation in the concession of Moatize lands to Vale. The state granted concession in the presence of Queen Spanela, the head of the Moatize lands, and but excluded the traditional healers, who were also part of the region's traditional authority. This led to conflicts between the two traditional power structures.

7.5 Conclusion

The traditional healers in Moatize demonstrated that they are political actors who have managed to resist the mining practices of the multinational company through visible and invisible means, which Scott (1990) refers to as infrapolitics. This visible and invisible resistance reinforced the discourses of power underlying their practices. Because those who understood and engaged in invisible resistance operated within the realm of traditional knowledge, their actions were not suppressed, unlike other forms of resistance based on overt human agency. The traditional healers' resistance to Vale's mining practices was also a political struggle to reclaim their roles as practitioners of traditional medicine and as representatives of a traditional power structure that was undermined when Moatize lands were granted to Vale.

Despite this, AMETRAMO was held significant political influence and was

able to mobilise the population, especially in rural areas. This mobilisation was essential for cooperation with the biomedical services, which involving AMETRAMO in various national health campaigns. The integration of traditional medicine services, framed as a partnership between the two medical landscapes, was, in practice, characterised by the imposition of the biomedical vision of health on the traditional one. What was actually happening in Moatize is the instrumentalisation of this institution by the state, which used AMETRAMO to impose its agenda on the population. When the state created AMETRAMO, it was aware of the power of traditional medicine in communities and created a legal space for it, where it would receive the same consideration as state biomedical services. However, in Moatize, AMETRAMO was integrated within the state health services and became more dependent on the state for the implementation of its activities in public health units. The state also provided campaign materials on biomedical health services, ranging from HIV/AIDS prevention to the search for medical and pharmaceutical assistance when people did not have illnesses related to spirituality.

The spiritual world in Moatize was used by the traditional healers to claim their rights as part of a traditional institution with ability to diagnose spirits and ward off evil. They argued that their absence from the ceremonies granting land to Vale for mining is the reason that evil spirits continue to roam Moatize, causing drought and spiritual problems for people previously cured of evil spirits. Because these spirits were not informed of the expropriation of their sacred lands, Moatize will never prosper, and the land will never produce at the levels of the past.

The struggle of traditional healers in Moatize against coal mining practices was a fight to defend both their resources and their authority, which has been threatened by the practices of the mining industry. It was a struggle in which spirits – as invisible agents of resistance – acted within a modernity characterised resource accumulation that excludes certain groups, such as traditional healers who, in addition to being excluded, saw their means of survival expropriated by Vale.

The spiritual world was not only a source of power for traditional healers in Moatize but also shaped the beliefs of the residents, who viewed it as a way to explain health, illness, and misfortunes, and to seek good fortune, such as gaining employment in specific institutions. However, to avoid misunderstanding, the spiritual world of Moatize must be explained using its own concepts. It should also be understood in relation to modernisation and as a means of political engagement for those not directly involved in formal politics.

Chapter 8. Conflicts over Mining Revenues between Public Authorities

In this chapter, I examine another level of resistance: the political agency asserted by the Moatize Municipal Administration over the Moatize District Administration, both of which are led by members of the ruling Frelimo party. In this type of resistance, the Municipal Administration, led by its Mayor, did not comply with the rules of the Decentralisation Law 2/1997, as it sought for to exercise its decision-making power in areas of the Municipality controlled by the District Administration. This is a form of institutional resistance by the Municipal Administration, which opposed the District Administration's control over the 2.75% mining revenues fund allocated by the central government. Their resistance stems from the fact that these mining resources are earmarked for development programmes in the communities affected by Vale's resettlement, which are located within the municipal area. However, the Mayor's resistance is grounded in the support of citizens, who legitimise his governance and underpins his attempts to gain control over the fund's management – a move that would mean changing the law on the management of mining funds. This chapter argues that both the Mayor and the residents of Moatize tried to use the tactical means at their disposal to wrest control of the 2.75% mining revenue fund from the District Administration.

In order to examine the conflicts of interests between the two public authorities, I will analyse the celebration of the Day of Mozambican Heroes, which I attended on 3 February 2023. This event revealed the power struggles between the Municipal and District Administrations and illuminated how decentralisation in Moatize is influenced by a power struggle over mining revenues. Because the perspectives of Moatize residents are central to understanding the conflicts between the two authorities, I will analyse residents' views on decentralisation practices in Moatize, highlighting the ways in which each public administration impacts on their daily lives, particularly in the provision of services of public interest. In the latter part of the chapter, I will analyse how the political opposition party RENAMO resists mining practices affecting the local population in Moatize through various deliberations in the Municipal Council, where the party holds some seats.

8.1 The ceremony honouring Mozambican heroes

The celebration of Mozambique's Heroes' Day took place at *Praça dos Heróis* (Heroes' Square) in the centre of Moatize and was attended by around 250 people, many of them young. The heads of various departments of the District Administration were also present, dressed in their formal attire. Also present were *antigos combatentes da luta armada de libertação nacional* (former combatants of the armed struggle for national liberation), who, because 3 February is a day reserved for paying tribute to their comrades who died in the liberation struggle, were also dressed in their formal uniform of trousers, shirt, and blue cap. The ceremony was scheduled to start at 9:00 a.m. but started 15 minutes late, finishing around 10:45 a.m. The Mayor of Moatize arrived shortly after 9:00 a.m., accompanied and escorted by members of Frelimo sympathisers on motorbikes and dressed in red T-shirts with Frelimo symbols and flags, and his popularity was noted during the entire ceremony. When he arrived, the other guests of honour were already there, but the ceremony still could not start because the District Administrator, who was representing the president of the Republic of Mozambique, had not yet arrived. Shortly after the Mayor's entrance, the Administrator arrived, accompanied by a man escorting him, but without the pomp of the Mayor's arrival. A curious fact about the state ceremony on 3 February 2023 was that no members of RENAMO, the main opposition party in Moatize, were present. However, a member of the Democratic Movement of Mozambique (MDM) held RENAMO's flag. The rest of the crowd consisted of civil society members and ordinary citizens who attended the ceremony to honour Mozambican heroes.

The ceremony began with the singing of the national anthem, after which the master of ceremonies announced the laying of flowers by the District Administrator on Heroes' Square. After the wreath laying, the high dignitaries of Moatize made their speeches. Mayor Carlos Portimão was the first to give his speech. Yet instead of honouring the heroes for whom the date was reserved, the Mayor described the achievements of the Municipality of Moatize under his mandate. He highlighted the social infrastructure that he had built, especially the roads. Then he said, "All the promises I made, my Administration will fulfil." He went on to criticise all those who had sullied his name and his term in office by accusing him of diverting funds allocated for social infrastructure in the Municipality. The Mayor's accusations extended to those who claimed that he was not committed to the development of Moatize. At the end of his speech, the Mayor invited the former combatants of the armed struggle for national liberation to a reception organised by the Municipal Administration to celebrate the passing of Heroes' Day. He announced, however, that he would not attend the reception because he was not feeling well.

Then followed the speech of District Administrator, Eugénio Muchanga who began by criticising the Mayor's speech, saying that "there was much that he mentioned that should not have been said at a ceremony honouring Mozambican heroes." According to him, "Much of what the Mayor said could have been said in an activity review meeting that we used to have together." Then he said this: "In Moatize, I am the representative of the Head of State." Then he turned to the ex-combatants and told them: "I am your leader, and there is also a department for ex-combatants in the District Administration, where the Mayor should have withdrawn his invitation to ex-combatants to attend the celebration." After these words, there was total silence among those in attendance at the ceremony. The silence, according to those present, showed that they knew the consequences that would follow for those who failed to obey the District Administrator's orders: they would be punished.

However, the day after the reception organised by the Mayor, I heard from Estrelinda, a 42-year-old state official present at the ceremony, that some of the ex-combatants went to the reception. I asked her why they did not obey the orders of the District Administrator and why they remained silent after he reiterated that he was their leader and should not attend the reception. This is what she told me:

> After the Administrator's speech, most of those present, like me, remained silent and looked at each other without murmuring, as a sign of respect. This was not because we agreed with what he was saying, but because we knew that if we openly disagreed with what he was saying, we could be considered rebels. […] The former combatants also know that they owe obedience to the Administrator, but knowing that there would be no control over their presence at the event, some of them attended the reception.

However, on 3 February 2023, which was a Friday and a national holiday, many of those present at the end of the ceremony went to social events organised for the occasion with work colleagues, friends, and others. Some celebrated by drinking beer in the *barracas* (small restaurants). It was in these small restaurants that I heard many views on the contrasting speeches of the two leaders of the two public authorities in Moatize.

8.1.1 Understanding the ceremony

Residents I spoke to on 3 February 2023 after the ceremony, as well as later that week, stressed that they had never witnessed a state event at which there were contrasting speeches between leaders, especially those from the same political party. In a conversation with Reliquia, a 41-year-old state employee,

she gave me the following interpretation of the arrival of the two heads of the public administrations of Moatize:

> Normally, the pomp and circumstance given to the Mayor of Moatize should have been given to the highest leader of the district, in this case the Administrator. However, as we have seen, the young people have their own interpretation of municipal and district leadership in Moatize. They need to understand that the highest leader in Moatize is the Administrator.

Her words suggested that the young people who accompanied Mayor Carlos Portimão were supportive of him, singing hymns on his arrival to show their support. However, some of those present at the ceremony interpreted this behaviour as a violation of the rules, since the same demonstration of support should have been shown for the Administrator, who is the highest state dignitary in Moatize. According to other residents I spoke to, the attitude of the young people present at the ceremony is linked to the Moatize district governance process, in which many young people feel unrepresented.

The residents of Moatize attributed also the contradiction between the speeches of the Mayor and the District Administrator to the fact that the District Administration, an appointed and centralised authority, manages the 2.75% mining resources fund that the central state transfers to them. The Municipal Administration, through its Mayor and as an elected and decentralised public authority, opposed this type of management in its decentralised area, believing that it has the right to control mining revenues within its jurisdiction. The residents of Moatize pointed out the control of mining resources was determined by the state not by the wishes of the Municipal Administration, nor by themselves, who legitimised the Municipal Administration because it responded to their daily concerns. As they mentioned, Moatize was also characterised by an unequal distribution of mining revenues. Carlos, a 47-year-old member of a local CSO, said the following about how he perceived the opposing speeches of the Mayor and the Administrator:

> This concerns the control of mining revenue fund. Sharing the same funds seems to lead to a lack of mutual understanding. Significant amounts of money are flowing into Moatize, and both the Municipal and District Administrations are closely monitoring the situation.

Municipal residents, mainly from the 25 de Setembro resettlement neighbourhood, said they did not understand why their area, which was under the jurisdiction of the Municipality, was being administered by the District Administration when it came to managing the 2.75% mining revenue fund to which they were entitled. For these residents, it made sense for the Municipality to

claim its right to manage the mining revenue fund. As these residents pointed out, the everyday discourses and practices of governance in Moatize, which give legitimacy to the Municipal Administration, have led it to claim political agency and control over the 2.75% mining revenue fund in the areas under its jurisdiction. However, the law is clear: the District Administration is the public authority that administers the 2.75% mining revenue fund. But the residents and the Municipal Administration, through its Mayor, wanted to force a change in the law, using all the tactics at their disposal.

Reginaldo, a member of one of Moatize's civil society organisations, who was also present at the ceremony, said the following in his interpretation of the contrasting speeches:

> The Mayor and the Municipal Council expected to manage the 2.75% fund, but this is not the case, so a Municipal Consultative Council has been created to discuss and decide on its development priorities, reporting to the District Consultative Council. The fact is that the Consultative Council very much follows the agenda of the Municipal Administration in choosing its development priorities, which does not sit well with the Moatize District Administration.

What Reginaldo refers to in his description is what I discussed in Chapter 6: the fact that the District Administrator of Moatize did not agree that the solar lamps purchased using the 2.75% mining revenue fund were a priority for the communities affected by the mining problem in the Municipality Moatize. In the day-to-day governance of Moatize, the Municipal Consultative Council interacted more frequently with the Municipality Administration than with the District Administration. According to residents, this is why the Municipal Administration was able to influence the Municipal Consultative Council's choice of development priorities within the framework of the 2.75% mining revenue fund.

As the residents in Moatize told me, the main reason for the Mayor's popularity and legitimacy in the municipality was his inclusive approach to local governance, which included frequent interactions with them about the day-to-day problems in their neighbourhoods. Nevertheless, as I described above, the District Administrator viewed Mayor's actions during the honouring ceremony as an attempt to assert a protagonism that exceeded his authority as Mayor.

In order to understand the process of transferring the 2.75% mining revenue fund to Moatize as the host of mining projects, I will analyse the relevant Mozambican legislation. Legally, Law 1/2013 – the State Budget Law – was the first to provide for the transfer of the 2.75% mining revenue fund to the Mozambican areas where mining projects are located. However, how these

funds would be transferred to the communities was not specified. Law 8/2003 on Local State Organs (LOLE) states in Article 3 that it aims to decongest the central level and bring public services closer to the population. In order to ensure that decisions are timely and suited to local realities, the central state strives for principles of administrative deconcentration and debureaucratisation. Law 8/2003 (article 12, number 1) also defined the district as the main territorial unit for the organisation and functioning of the state's local administration and the basis for planning the economic, social, and cultural development of the Republic of Mozambique. The *Lei 2/1997 sobre Descentralização* – Law 2/1997 on decentralisation states that local authorities enjoy administrative, financial, and patrimonial autonomy, but are subject to administrative and financial supervision by the state, which means that the Municipality of Moatize is subjected to supervision by the District Administration, verifying the legality of its administrative acts.

Law 8/2003 on LOLE gives power the central state organs in the respective territories to carry out economic, social, and cultural tasks and programmes of local and national interest, without prejudice to the autonomy of the Municipalities. These national interests must comply with the Constitution of the Republic, the deliberations of the Assembly of the Republic, and the decisions of the Council of Ministers and higher state organs. Within the above legal framework, the Mozambican state at the central level, through the Ministry of Finance, transferred 2.75% of the mining revenues to Moatize. The District Administration of Moatize, protected by Law 8/2003, took on the responsibility of managing the 2.75% mining revenue fund as the main territorial unit in Moatize. However, the way in which legislation on state local organs in Mozambique has been designed, in the absence of coordination between the Municipal Administration and central state organs, can allow for an overlap of agendas, as I will show below.

Law 8/2003 also establishes a legal framework for how local state organs and community authorities should coordinate their activities with a view to participatory governance at the district level, as well as in administrative positions. In turn, the 2003 Guide for Community Participation and Consultation in District Planning, published in the Bulletin of the Republic (*Guia para participação comunitária de 2003*), also provided for participatory planning by local Consultative Councils – composed of citizens from the relevant districts, administrative posts, and localities – in matters of governance and local development. However, Decree 80/2004, which regulates how local government bodies interact with community authorities, assigns the Municipal Consultative Council the role of solving problems that affect the population in municipal areas, which creates an overlap with the functions of Municipal Council.

In Moatize, although there are Consultative Councils set up under the above-mentioned legislation, the management of the 2.75% mining revenues fund was under the direction of the Moatize District Administration. This means that an organ of the central state overlaps with the consultative organs set up at the municipal level. The overlap between municipal and district boundaries further complicates the devolution process, reflecting the District Administration's cautious approach to expanding municipal governance (cf. Weimer and Carrilho 2017). The residents said that the fact that the Moatize Municipality did not have the right to exercise full power over the areas under its jurisdiction also limited its political agency, which would allow it, for example, to define local development priorities that would be fairer and closer to residents. For this reason, resistance to the Moatize model of central state organs came from the Municipal Administration, which saw its right to manage its territory restricted, and from residents, who saw the central state organs as ineffective because they did not respond to their social problems, including those regarding the use of the 2.75% mining revenues fund.

Anastância, a 44-year-old who worked with one of the CSOs in Moatize, said the following:

> The Consultative Councils, which include members of the communities in the areas benefiting from the 2.75% mining fund, are organs that are in practice managed by the District Administration and do not have independence in their decisions on the development priorities set in the context of mining compensation.

Moatize residents also mentioned that the fact that the management of the 2.75% mining fund was entrusted to a central state organ, rather than a municipal organ that interacted with them on a daily basis, meant that the management of the fund did not reach them. To them, the District Administration appeared to have less up-to-date knowledge of the local population than did the Municipality. Residents described the inefficiency of the District Administration in dealing with the contractors it selected to build development facilities under the 2.75% mining fund. They pointed out that conversations should have taken place both with the contractors and with them as the beneficiaries of the development projects in question. For these residents, if the Municipality had managed the mining revenues, it would have directly involved them in the construction of the various works built with these revenues. As they added, "This would have avoided the lack of compliance with the implementation of the development projects requested within the framework of the fund." They added that "if the Municipality had managed the fund, we, as beneficiaries, would have had control over the monetary values of the fund."

In fact, as I showed in Chapter 6, the management of the 2.75% mining revenues fund in Moatize was under the control of the District Administration, which often interfered in its management, influencing the choice of development projects – and, in the case of Cateme, benefitting the Frelimo party when the District Administration chose to build new district headquarters, used by Frelimo members. The case of the Municipal Council's interference in the Moatize Consultative Council's choice of development priorities was an example of resistance to overlapping legislation that gives more power to the District Administration. The case of institutional resistance by the Municipal Administration can be explained using the approach of Vinthagen and Johansson (2013), who show that resistance is a practice that develops in all social contexts, depending on local political conditions. Johansson and Vinthagen (2020:28) also show that everyday resistance is carried out in certain situations and contexts where open resistance is not an alternative, while resistance to power is still seen as motivated. With this in mind, the Municipal Administration, led by its Mayor and aware that the law on the transfer of mining revenues was not favourable to it, tried to act through tactics –such as using its popularity in a state ceremony, as well as highlighting the Municipality's achievements in the same ceremony – to force its recognition as a public authority capable of managing its area of jurisdiction, including the 2.75% mining fund.

The conflict of interests between the District Administrator and the Mayor illustrates the problems with the decentralisation process in Moatize. Although the process of decentralisation or democratic devolution has been taking place in Moatize, there are also concerns about the central state, with the District Administration overriding and controlling the Municipality and its democratically elected organs. The situation is all the more visible because Moatize is rich in coal resources, which provide revenue for the state at both local and central levels. If the District Administration in Moatize – as an organ of administrative deconcentration of the state – controls the mining resources, it is guaranteed that the central state, governed by Frelimo, will also control its coal mining resources, even if the opposition political parties should one day run the Municipality.

Residents of Moatize also interpreted the conflicts of interest between the Administrator and the Mayor, who both belong to the Frelimo party, and which were made visible at the ceremony honouring Mozambican heroes, as linked to conflicts within the Frelimo party over positions of power that give their holders access to economic power. The residents believe that this strug-

gle will exacerbate tensions in Moatize because members of Frelimo's governing organs have used their political power to elect allies to the Municipal Council so they too can benefit from the economic advantages of the position.

Elton, a 39-year-old resident of Moatize and a member of a civil society organisation, stated the following:

> The Frelimo party has in the Municipality a political organ called *Comité de Zona da Cidade de Moatize* (Frelimo committee for the city of Moatize). During municipal elections, this committee elects candidates to run for various positions in the Municipal Council. However, the Frelimo District Committee, which is the party's highest body in the district, often replaces the candidates with those who belong to the District Committee. This creates tensions and rivalries within the party.

Elton's description above shows that if the Frelimo District Organ, which is hierarchically superior to the Municipal Committee, is interested in filling a councillor position in the municipal elections, it has the power to withdraw the name proposed by the Frelimo committee for the city of Moatize and enter the one it is interested in. This shows that the election of Frelimo municipal councillors in Moatize depend also on the Frelimo District Committee. However, the practice described above contradicts Frelimo rules, which recommend that the Frelimo Committee for the city of Moatize choose and approve candidates for municipal elections. It also shows that the Frelimo District Committee is concerned with controlling and ensuring the election of Frelimo councillors to the Municipal Council who will defend the interests of the party at the local and central levels of the Frelimo party.

Normally, as one local party member explained, there are guidelines within the Frelimo political structure stating that orders from above must be obeyed, not discussed. However, because members of Frelimo's committee for the city of Moatize, who typically fill leadership positions in the party's internal elections and are elected as municipal councillors, felt they were merely being used as party activists, when other party members who were unfamiliar with them appeared to be taking their positions. The same member said that members' commitment and dedication to party activism was no longer respected, as was the case in Frelimo during the time of Samora Machel (1975–1986). According to this member, it was currently normal to hear within the party that some members had been involved in corruption schemes in order to be elected to the Municipal Council. Tensions and conflicts within the Frelimo party, he added, "must be analysed taking into account and considering the different political and economic interests of the members who joined the Frelimo party after it ceased to be Marxist-Leninist." The member associated the attitude of the District Administrator at the state ceremony with that of a

leader concerned with securing control of a rich mining district, which is economically important for keeping Frelimo's power.

Another aspect of the contradiction of the speeches and the non-political alignment between the two public leaders as highlighted by Elton was this:

> I was aware of the conflict between the Mayor and the Administrator, but I was surprised to see them airing their grievances on a day meant to celebrate our heroes. It is unusual for internal conflicts within Frelimo to be made public. This incident is particularly worrying because it involves leaders of the same party, and the state ceremony of 3 February showed how obvious the power struggles within the party are.

As far as I have been able to find out, Frelimo's internal problems are resolved in the party's internal forum but cannot be made public. Weimer et al. (2012:31–32) point out that Frelimo, as an organisation that exercises state power, has to constantly mitigate the potential for competition and conflict within and outside the party. For these authors, the power of the party and the guarantee of sufficient inter-party cohesion are inextricably linked to the party's control of the state. Within the Frelimo party, adjustments to the power structure are continually made in response to economic and political crises through political arrangements or political settlements, sometimes in conflict between factions and segments of the party (as an organisation) aligned with the party's constituent elites.

8.2 Residents' perspectives on decentralisation practices

The showdown between the two heads of Moatize's public authorities at the state ceremony in honour of Mozambican heroes was also interpreted by residents in terms of the impact the Municipal and District Administrations had on their daily public life. Key concepts related to decentralisation, such as deconcentration and devolution,[34] are useful for the understanding the way the decentralisation has been taking place in Moatize.

Devolution is the transfer of authority to locally constituted units of government or special purpose authorities (Hagberg 2009:10). Maschietto (2016:105) adds that devolution is democratic decentralisation, where there is a transfer of powers and resources to sub-national authorities that are democratically elected and relatively independent of central government. The views of Moatize residents are also related to administrative deconcentration, which

[34] Law 2/1997, the first law on territorial decentralisation and the deconcentration of state services in Mozambique, introduced devolution as a practice of democratic decentralisation in Mozambique for the first time.

Hagberg (2019:10) defines as the delegation of responsibilities to field units of the same department or level of government. Since the process of administrative deconcentration is still dominant in Moatize and overlaps with public services transferred to the Municipal Administration, I will first present the residents' perspectives on the District and Municipal leaders and the way they saw them as public servants.

While residents see the Municipal Administration as efficient and concerned with their daily life and the development of their area, they produced discourses of belonging to describe the reasons why the District Administration was inefficient. One of the reasons they cited is that the Administrator was not from Moatize and therefore failed to acknowledge the problems of the residents, such as their compensation from Vale, because he was not a son of Moatize. Expressions such as "Moatize District Administrator was not sensitive to issues of local people and their development" are common in Moatize. For the residents, the Administrator was more concerned with controlling local mining resources that benefit the central state than dealing with issues important to them.

A Moatize-born District Administrator, residents believed, might have solved their problems. Januário, a 37-year-old taxi driver living in Moatize town said, "A leader who was born and raised in Moatize is more sensitive to our problems than someone who was appointed and came from outside the district." Januário and others repeatedly mentioned that the problem of compensation for small farmers and brickmakers was not satisfactorily resolved because the Administrator was insensitive to the concerns of the residents. The word "insensitive" was used by the residents to refer to the Administrator's failure to analyse their situation and to his accusations that they were acting in bad faith during the negotiations with Vale. Januário stressed that the Administrator's attitude had been crucial in preventing them from receiving the compensation they deserved. He said that instead of taking their problems seriously, the Administrator accused them of deceiving Vale and the District Administration in order to receive compensation for land they did not have before the multinational began operating in Moatize. In the same vein, Isabel, a traditional healer, said:

> I do not understand why the government in Maputo says that we have the right to elect the Mayor and then sends us someone else as an Administrator. The Mayor was elected because he is Nyungwe and from our home in Moatize. He knows our problems and is sensitive to them. The Administrator is here more to give orders and oppose what we want.

Although Isabel, Januário, and other Moatize residents have mentioned the ethnic factor in their descriptions, such as the fact that the District Administrator is not Nyungwe, it is not enough to link it to ethnicity. Indeed, in other cases where the Administrator acted in line with their wishes, ethnicity was not mentioned. Geschiere (2009) states that autochthonous people, by virtue of being native to a particular region, claim the right to share in that region's resources. However, the use of the idea of belonging quickly dissolves as soon as material interests are put in practice. This is called politics of identity, which can be instrumentalised to access resources in the name of belonging to a particular place.

The case of Moatize shows that residents found the politics of belonging useful to explain their exclusion from power structures and lack of access to mining resources, mobilising it as a reason for that exclusion. Even the central government in Maputo, knowing that the different ethnic identities in Mozambique could be used for various purposes, including exclusion, has consistently erased the ethnic issue in its speeches about nation-building in Mozambique. Geffray (1991:15) points out that after Mozambique's independence, the Frelimo regime was unable to think about nation-building without erasing the concrete and historical histories of the social groups that Frelimo wanted to integrate under the banner of a unified Mozambican citizenship. As he states, "The new society that emerged victorious and united Mozambique's history was not homogeneous. Rather, it was divided by a long history of social struggles within a colonial context."

To understand why the Administrator in Moatize is not Nyungwe, it is important to recognise that the central Mozambican state is based on the idea of a united nation. Appointments to administrative positions across the country are made by the central state based on political trust. In this way, anyone from the Frelimo party, even from the southern region, can be an Administrator in the centre or north of the country, and vice versa. During the fieldwork in Moatize, the local Administrator was from the southern part of Mozambique. What I came to understand is that Moatize residents were less concerned with democracy itself than whether the president appointed an Administrator from Moatize who spoke Nyungwe – in which case, the central government's oversight would not be a problem. The mobilisation of the Nyungwe people's sense of belonging was common and important in their way of doing politics.

Accounts from residents also indicated that Moatize's municipal governance was accessible and actively involved in their daily lives. Januário added the following:

> The Municipal Administration is very close to the people. I cannot remember ever having a meeting and interacting with the District Administrator of Moatize. For example, in the meetings, the Municipality discusses with us the programmes they have for our neighbourhoods. Since the staff of the District Administration hardly ever organise the same meetings with us, we think that the Municipal Administration has replaced them.

Residents of Moatize described the District Administration as representing the interests of the central state, while the Municipal Administration was concerned with their daily lives. The Mayor took advantage of the citizens' perception of the Municipal Administration, as shown by the group of young people who accompanied him to the state ceremony in honour of Mozambican heroes. Other residents claimed that the District Administration did not care about the specific needs of local citizens because it is controlled by the central state in Maputo. They saw the District Administration functioning as a political institution more concerned with enforcing the law, using coercive means if necessary. The police, the army, and the various District Directorates, which represent the central state and oversee Moatize as a whole, affirmed its legitimacy. These officials characterised the District Administration as the top governmental organ in Moatize, with the role of controlling all institutions in Moatize, including the Municipality. One senior state official said that "a man appointed by the District Administration who had served in the Mozambican armed forces heads the Moatize municipal police force." The residents of Moatize told me that it was this attitude on the part of the District Administration that was the reason for their lack of support.

During his research in Marracuene, Manjate (2022:102) found that some residents were very optimistic about decentralisation, while others were sceptical about its outcomes. The optimists believed that decentralisation would enable local communities to improve their socio-economic living conditions. They believed that their needs would be met and their interests protected because they could elect local government representatives who were born in Marracuene and understood the specific concerns of the local communities. The sceptics feared political actors (especially political parties) serving individual or group interests would manipulate that decentralisation. According to Manjate (2022), this argument stems from politicians interpreting decentralisation in ways that satisfies their own selfish political interests, particularly in a context where Frelimo has managed to co-opt the various political actors, namely the neighbourhood secretaries and community authorities, who are actually members of the Frelimo party.

The residents of Moatize also referred to the provision of public services in areas where the Municipality charges fees. The collection of these fees and

taxes is supported by the *Decreto 63/2008 sobre o Código Tributário Autárquico* – Decree 63/2008 on Municipal Tax Code, which, among several taxes and fees, refers to the municipal tax on vehicles and fees for licences granted for economic activities. These fees serve as an economic source for the Municipality's plans and activities, in addition to the *Fundo de Compensação Mineira* (FCA, Municipal Compensation Fund) transferred by the Ministry of Finance. Fees are paid by Mozambique's railway company, CFM, which uses the municipal area to transport coal. The Municipality also benefits from public transport fees and from lorries that import food, mainly vegetables, from other areas such as Tsangano and Angónia. Market and street vendors are also subject to a daily tax.

Since Vale's offices, now inhabited by Vulcan, are located in the city and coal mining takes place in some municipal areas, the mining company pays fees to the Municipality. However, as one RENAMO councillor said, "There is no transparency when it comes to the payment of taxes by the mining company to the Municipality, and I and other RENAMO councillors do not know how it works because it is not explained to the Council." What happened, according to the RENAMO councillor, was that "the financial reports presented at the Municipal Council meetings did not include the figures relating to the fees paid by Vale as a company that has been granted a licence to operate in the Municipal area." For the councillor, it cannot be possible for the mining company not to pay taxes to the Municipality, while other companies pay them. However, the councillor's account indicates that Vale/Vulcan was in fact paying the licence fee to carry out its economic activities not to the Moatize Municipal Council but to a state deconcentration organ. Mining Act 14/2002 states that mineral resources in Mozambique are the property of the state and that the state ministry overseeing mining activities is the Ministry of Mineral Resources and Energy.

The Ministry of Mineral Resources and Energy issues mining titles and licences to all mining companies operating in Mozambique. Canhanga (2009:16) states that around 70% of Mozambique's GDP is generated by the industrial and services sectors, most of which are located in urban areas where municipalities operate. However, the tax revenues generated by the exploitation of industrial and other mega-projects remain under the control of the central government, even though they operate in municipal territories. According to the RENAMO councillor mentioned above, the money from mining, which is controlled by the state, "should be used to pave roads, improve the water system, build bridges, and collect rubbish, which were the main problems facing the Municipality." However, he added, "The amount that Vale should be taxed has never been mentioned in Council meetings."

Working residents such as street vendors, market sellers, and motorcycle taxi drivers who deal directly with the Municipality, while complaining about high fees, still recognise it as an efficient authority. Jéssica, a young woman living in the 25 de Setembro neighborhood, stated, "Although some municipal services are inadequate, they reach us." The Municipality's collectors charge street and market vendors directly, and other groups of taxpayers, such as taxi and motorbike drivers, pay at the municipal headquarters. Rebeca, a 52-year-old vendor, said this about the fees she was charged:

> The Municipality charges us fees to improve our working conditions in the markets. I can say that things are improving here in the market, but as a vendor, I want more. For example, we did not have this market before. I am now selling inside the market, while there are people who still do not have stalls and sell on the ground outside. Most people sell inside the market, and we have benefited from the cleaning of this place.

Although Rebeca was satisfied with the Municipality's use of fees to build a new market, other street vendors said that the price of 20 MT (equivalent to US$ 0.33) per day was a lot of money. Street vendors, argued that no vendors should be left without a stall in the town's markets, because the daily fee of 20 MT per vendor is enough to allow the Municipality to build and equip several markets. Although many of the vendors I spoke to said that the daily fee was high, the introduction of municipal services has benefitted them, bringing public services closer, though not without problems, such as the shortage of market stalls. The fact is that the Moatize vendors have begun to be listened to and to have their demands respected by the Municipality's commercial services. They have also been able to voice complaints when promised services are not properly delivered. This is related to what Ewald and Mhamba (2019) found when they conducted their study on the process of centralisation in Tanzania. Ewald and Mhamba (2019:16) note that because much of the population in developing countries is both poor and excluded from elite politics, any system that appears to offer greater political participation to ordinary citizens is likely to increase their "voice" and, hopefully, the relevance and effectiveness of government policy.

In a conversation I had with one of the RENAMO councillors in Moatize, he said that the Municipality of Moatize was not fully autonomous from an economic point of view. The Decree 33/2006, which establishes the framework for the transfer of functions and powers from state organs to local autarchies, sets out the gradual transfer of powers and functions to municipalities – *Decreto 33/2006 que estabelece o quadro de transferência de funções e competências dos órgãos do Estado para as autarquias locais*. This is accompa-

nied by a corresponding transfer of financial resources, and human and patrimonial resources if necessary. Nevertheless, in practice, the transfer is low. The competencies transferred under Decree 33/2006 are more oriented towards social issues, such as schools, health centres, social action, and transport, and these types of competencies do not constitute a primary source of income for the Municipality of Moatize – on the contrary, they require greater investment (cf. Canhanga 2009: 20). As a state official in Moatize told me, "The transfer of the Municipal Compensation Fund (FCA) by the Ministry of Finance in Maputo is not only very low in relation to the level of expenditure foreseen for it, but its disbursement has also been slow, which limits the Municipality's ability to provide public services to its citizens."

According to Canhanga (2009:14), fiscal decentralisation does not promote efficiency in the provision of public services within municipal jurisdictions, and the municipal tax system provides weak opportunities for investment in public services within municipalities. The mismatch between the increase in central state powers within municipalities and the apparent expansion of the tax base also contributes to the worsening situation. The low level of intergovernmental budget transfers and the low level of financial execution affect the level of development and poverty reduction efforts in the Municipality of Moatize (cf. Canhanga 2009). While central state transfers to the Municipal Compensation Fund are negligible, Weimer et al. (2012:72) note that the Mozambican state spends on average less than 5% of national expenditure at the subnational level (district and municipality), compared to 50% in Nigeria, 40% in Ethiopia, South Africa, and Uganda, and between 12% and 15% in Ghana.

8.3 The long way to the devolution of power in Moatize

Hagberg (2019:9–10) notes that in the democratisation processes that took shape in the late 1980s and early 1990s, governments and international organisations around the world expressed a renewed interest in decentralisation as a means of changing the over-centralisation of political decision-making at the top of the state. He adds that the raison d'être of decentralisation depends largely on the ability of elected government bodies to support the livelihoods of local people and to solve the day-to-day problems of poor health and education facilities, inadequate water supplies, and lack of employment opportunities, marketing, and investment. However, the way in which decentralisation reforms are operationalised in different contexts varies. At the same time, there is a concern on the part of the central state to re-centralise political power after decentralisation, to override elected local power. This is how the central

state keeps political and economic power under its control, especially in mineral-rich municipalities such as Moatize (cf. Hagberg 2019). The combination of a formerly highly centralised Mozambican state with a strong political party in control is one of the main challenges for power devolution in Moatize (see Ewald and Mhamba 2019).

One of the issues raised by the residents of Moatize in conversations after the political showdown between the two leaders of Moatize's public authorities was that the political dispute over decentralisation was taking place in an intra-party context of Frelimo and rather than the multi-party context characterising Moatize. The debate among residents made me aware of the difficult political environment in which other opposition parties in Moatize find themselves. For example, when I spoke to one of the RENAMO councillors, he told me that members of his party were not present at the state ceremony to honour Mozambican heroes because the District Administration had not invited them. He added that the RENAMO councillors would not feel comfortable with the flag of the Frelimo party being displayed at a state ceremony rather than that of the Republic of Mozambique. As one of the councillors said:

> On 25 February, the day of the city of Moatize, the Frelimo flag was hoisted first, followed by the flag of the Moatize Municipality. In order to avoid conflict, as RENAMO representatives, we withdrew from the event, which should have belonged to the state but became Frelimo's.

It is worth noting that one of the reasons for introducing decentralised governance in Mozambique was to create a political space for RENAMO to participate in the country's multi-party elections, since it had become an official political party after the 16-year civil war. Other reasons were related to promoting the effectiveness of the state in providing public services and reducing poverty, as well as reforming the centralised model of governance (Weimer and Carrilho 2017).

Relations between political parties are strained in Moatize, and RENAMO claims to be a political party that could be heard more. Moatize's situation resembles that of semi-authoritarian one-party regimes, where the top-down model characteristic of dictatorships shapes the way citizens participate in political life, as Monga (1996) says. Weimer et al. (2012:36–37) add that Frelimo has little political interest in decentralisation in the sense of devolution, either as part of a coalition government or as a substantial decentralisation of power and resources. It could, however, take place if there is an urgent political need to change the rules of the game and make realignments and adjustments to ensure that Frelimo remains in power. One reason for this, they argue, is that

for some senior members of Frelimo, decentralisation, in the sense of the transfer of power and resources, can, if left unchecked, create conditions conducive to rivalry. Another is the exclusion or marginalisation of potentially powerful local political and economic elites in the formation of coalitions and political settlements. In fact, my observation of the Frelimo party practices in Moatize shows that senior Frelimo elites fear losing control of local governance.

The Municipal town of Moatize was established in 1997, under *Decreto 10/1997 que cria municípios de cidades e vilas em algumas circunscrições territoriais* — Decree 10/97, which established municipalities of cities and towns in some territorial districts of the country. When the first municipal elections were held in the country in 1998, Moatize joined 32 other municipalities. The town of Moatize was granted city status in 2020. It is also important to note that the first municipal elections were held in only 23 Mozambican cities and in 10 of the country's 68 towns. Currently, Mozambique has 53 Municipalities, 10 of which were introduced in 2008 and the remaining 10 in 2013. Rocha and Zavale (2015:114) note that when municipal power was introduced in 1998, it extended to only 10% of Mozambican territory, meaning that only 25% of Mozambicans gained the right to elect their representatives. The gradual municipalization process in reflect Frelimo's concern to keep political power controlled at the central level of the state, deconcentrating it administratively through local state organs but never handing it over to opposition political parties, at least at the level of district.

In Moatize, municipal elections have always been won by Frelimo, but the first one, in 1998, was boycotted by RENAMO, the main opposition party, because it did not agree with the gradual decentralisation model approved by Law 2/1997 on Decentralisation. According to Rocha and Zavale (2015), RENAMO disagreed with the way in which the Frelimo-led government carried out the decentralisation process, as the opposition party wanted the process not to be gradual but to cover the entire Mozambican territory. As a result, RENAMO boycotted all local elections in 1998, including those in the Municipality of Moatize.

As a result, RENAMO was not represented on the Moatize Municipal Council elected in 1998, which was made up solely of Frelimo councillors. When I started my ethnographic fieldwork in 2019, three political parties — Frelimo, RENAMO and MDM — dominated Moatize's political scene. However, as the RENAMO councillor said, "the MDM is not normally a significant party in Moatize."

As Hagberg (2019:10–11) argues, the materialisation of decentralisation depends not only on policy and legislative reforms but also on the political

will of the central government to transfer real discretionary decision-making powers to local government bodies. As power has not yet been fully devolved, and centralised practices still exist in Moatize, I found Maschietto's argument interesting. Maschietto (2016:103–104) asserts that the limited effectiveness of decentralisation reforms in Mozambique reflects the inherent contradiction between the strong top-down dynamics that shape the process and the bottom-up effects it aims to promote. The process simultaneously enables and obstructs change. Although the government has formally adopted the decentralisation agenda, partly in response to pressure from international donors, the specifics of this agenda and its implementation have prevented substantial change to the national political landscape. In Mozambique, she adds, there has been a preference for administrative deconcentration rather than political devolution to local government units. At the local level, this has had little impact on the provision of public services, which remains distant from the people, nor has it ensured that communities are actively involved in the decision-making process regarding mining resources. In the same vein, Weimer et al. (2012:71) state that deconcentration is a political choice on the part of the ruling Frelimo elites to deal with local state formations and societies, as well as their representatives, in a way that avoids negotiation, productive commitments, and transformation. This demonstrates a reluctance to extend decentralisation or the transfer of power, legitimacy, and resources – for example, through forms of democratic decentralisation – in order to avoid the emergence of potential political arenas that could cause rivalries.

8.4 RENAMO members of the Municipal Council

RENAMO councillors said that their actions were concerned with the problems of coal mining affecting the people of Moatize. Their involvement as a political party has taken the form of discussions with Frelimo party members in the Municipal Council, as well as the interactions they have sought with the multinational Vale. Between 2018 and 2023, the Moatize Municipal Council was made up of 21 councillors, of which 10 were from RENAMO and 11 from Frelimo. According to a RENAMO councillor, the results of the 2018 municipal elections, which determined the composition of the Council, did not respect what the citizens of Moatize had voted for because, as he told me, "RENAMO won the same elections." He added that:

> Since the establishment of the Municipal Council in Moatize, our party has consistently been in minority. Despite proposing solutions that were in the best interest of the local people, our proposals have always been rejected by the Frelimo party. What always

> passes as deliberations comes from the Frelimo party, because it has the majority in the Council.

The example given by one of the RENAMO councillors of how the majority of Frelimo councillors were used to deliberate on inconsistent plans was the money from the Municipal Compensation Fund that the Ministry of Finance sent to the Municipality. This money was always included in the Municipal management plans to be approved by the Frelimo councillors, but:

> The RENAMO bench always denounces them because they are full of inconsistencies. Many of the things mentioned in the plan are not for the development of the municipality, but for the Frelimo party or some influential people within the Frelimo party. However, knowing that they have the majority on the Council, they draw up plans that their bench will approve, but these have never had a positive impact on the social life of the people in the municipality. The Frelimo bench has never presented a plan to the Council that has been fully implemented.

As the RENAMO councillor above said, a number of plans that came up every year in Moatize were not fulfilled, and when RENAMO looked at the balance of activities carried out, they asked where the money budgeted for these plans. But their questions remained unanswered. The Frelimo councillors would ridicule them by asking why they voted against the plans of the Municipal Council, and RENAMO's councillors would reply, "We will never vote for non-transparent plans." The councillors of RENAMO said that they did not want to be responsible for the future consequences of bad governance in Moatize. In the event of problems arising from bad deliberation, the Frelimo bench would answer to the Constitutional Court, the main organ that supervises municipal governance. They, as RENAMO councillors, would prove through the Council minutes that they did not sign up to plans that harmed local citizens.

8.4.1 RENAMO and the issue of coal mining

As mentioned above, RENAMO, as the main opposition party and a major political actor in Moatize, has been involved in discussions between the District Administration and Vale on the issues facing residents displaced by Vale company. RENAMO has monitored the process of displacement and resettlement of the residents since Vale began its coal mining activities in Moatize. The RENAMO structures were aware of the support they enjoy from the residents of Moatize. The young people from Moatize with whom I interacted told me that one of the occasions when the majority of Moatize residents, especially the younger ones, demonstrated their support for RENAMO was

when the results of the 2018 municipal elections were announced, giving victory to Frelimo. Young people took to the streets to protest, saying that their vote was for RENAMO and that there had been fraud, thus demanding restoration of the electoral verdict. However, they said, there was no restoration of the electoral verdict, and they were reprimanded by the police.

Recognising the support of the people, the RENAMO structures in Moatize have been involved in grassroots actions and political intervention on the issue of coal mining, as a way of addressing and resolving the problems of the residents. Its criticism of coal exploitation is based on the fact that the formal economy has created few jobs for young people,[35] even with the boom in mining. This lack of work has led to discontent among young people, who make up the majority of the population in Tete Province and Moatize District. Young people's discontent has been maximised by RENAMO, which has used the discourse of mismanagement of resources and corruption by the Frelimo party in its campaigns for the local elections.

A RENAMO councillor told me that only a few young people have benefited from employment opportunities in the industrial coal mining sector in Moatize. Many of Vale/Vulcan's workers come from outside Moatize, mainly from Maputo, Zimbabwe, and South Africa. Young people in Moatize, according to the RENAMO councillor mentioned above, claimed that people from Maputo had an advantage in the local mining industry because they have been formally trained and have more skills to work in mining. Vale, meanwhile, has consistently claimed that it cannot employ local youth because they do not have the technical skills to work in the mining company.

The problem, local people argued, was that Vale had already brought in skilled workers and was unwilling to train and integrate young people from Moatize into technical roles. The RENAMO councillor said that in the past, the former state coal company CARBOMOC used to train local people at the Institute of Geology and Mines for employment by the company. As the councillor said, "since Vale needed many workers with higher education, the District Administration should have established a higher education institute in Moatize." In Tete, the only higher education institution that trains technicians is the *Instituto Superior Politécnico de Tete* (ISPT, Tete Higher Polytechnic Institute), a private institution located in the city of Tete, 15 km from Moatize. As some of the young people mentioned, when they finish secondary school, "we do not have the financial means to enrol in a private school," which means that they will not meet the requirements for employment in technical positions in the mining company.

[35] According to the INE (2018), the Moatize district has a population of 344,000 inhabitants, of which more than 50% are young people.

Regarding the displacement and resettlement of the small farmers and brickmakers and their claims for compensation, the RENAMO councillors said that neither the District nor Municipal Administrations were interested in paying them. RENAMO as a political party questioned the fact that several meetings had been held between the displaced residents and the District and Municipal Administrations to resolve the compensation issue, but that Vale, which had caused the problems, had not attended these meetings. Above all, as the councillors pointed out, "Vale's absence from the meetings was always covered up by the two public authorities." Attempts by RENAMO councillors to obtain clarification and details about a specific group of small farmers and brickmakers who had not received their rightful compensation were consistently refused by Vale. The same councillors described Vale's facilities as "if they were part of another country" and that the company's workers "needed something akin to a visa to enter there." RENAMO councillors had written a letter asking to visit the company facilities but had received no reply. In the view of the RENAMO councillors, the company did not respond to their request because "it knew well that we would demand answers to the evils provoked against the Moatize residents." By refusing to allow them to visit, the company also avoided being held accountable for the problems faced by residents because of coal mining and sidestepped criticism from an opposition party that was not its political interlocutor in Moatize.

However, as part of their work in the Municipal Council, councillors from the Moatize Municipality (both RENAMO and Frelimo) visited the Vale company, and RENAMO councillors had the opportunity to question Vale officials about compensation for the displaced residents of Moatize. Vale officials replied that many of the residents who had been displaced had been paid in coordination with the District Administration, but that the District Administration had presented another list of displaced people who had not received their due compensations. For these, Vale had transferred the money to the District Administration. It was during this visit that the RENAMO councillors learned that Vale did not owe the residents any compensation money because the company had already paid out to the District Administration. RENAMO councillors also questioned Vale officials about the number of cracked houses, which was increasing daily. The officials, according to one councillor, said, "This had nothing to do with the explosions of Vale's mines, but with the poor quality of the houses in Moatize." But as many residents made clear, the houses did not crack before Vale arrived in Moatize, and it was obvious to them that Vale was trying to evade responsibility. Even houses not built by Ceta (one of the companies contracted to build the resettlement houses) started to crack

when Vale began to operate the mines in Moatize. Blaming poor housing construction was a way of refusing to compensate residents whose houses had been damaged by mine detonations.

The RENAMO councillors also mentioned that some people had died because of the pollution caused by mining activities. But Vale claimed this was because "some local hospitals were using places near rivers to dump their waste, contaminating the water consumed by the local people, since FIPAG (Investment Fund for Water Supply) could not supply water to Moatize efficiently" and was therefore not responsible for the harm caused to the local population. The RENAMO councillors found it strange that people in a town in neighbouring Zambia claimed for the pollution caused by Vale and received due compensation, while the people of Moatize, suffering daily, did not receive a cent. They also found it absurd, because the border with Zambia is more than 100 km away from the Municipality of Moatize. The RENAMO councillors wondered if Vale had in fact set up a fund to deal with the effects of the pollution in Moatize, but that it had not reached the residents or been used to alleviate the problems caused by the pollution.

RENAMO's resistance to bad mining practices in Moatize was important because it raised issues and brought them to the Municipal Council for debate. RENAMO also served to inform residents of Moatize aware of their rights, which had not been respected by either the District or Municipal Administrations. Although RENAMO councillors defended the interests of the small farmers and brickmakers displaced from their *machambas* and brickworks, it did not have a majority of councillors to approve measures that would benefit them. Politically, RENAMO's fight within the Moatize Municipal Council has not had a positive impact on the residents' concerns because they hold only a minority of seats.

8.5 Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the problems associated with the decentralisation process in a context previously characterised by over-centralisation. These challenges remain central to ongoing reforms, as the devolution of power is not linear and depends on the will of the central organs of the state (Hagberg 2019). In the case of Moatize, I analysed the 2.75% mining funds that the central state allocates to Moatize as a source of conflict between the two public administrations in Moatize. Although the process of democratic decentralisation that has been taking place in Moatize, with the transfer of power to the Moatize Municipality, the central state, through the administrative deconcen-

tration bodies, is concerned about overlapping with the Municipal Administration in its jurisdiction territory. But what can be concluded from the resistance of the Municipal Administration to the District Administration is that the Mayor – and the residents who supported him – understood that the law on the transfer of mining revenues was favourable to the District Administration. However, they sought to use the tactics available to them to push for recognition of the Municipal Administration authority's over its jurisdiction, including the 2.75% mining fund. The type of resistance described in this chapter is institutional, driven by political agency, where overt resistance as an alternative, would be clearly violating the law.

The conflict of interests between the leaders of the two public administrations in Moatize is linked to the central state's control over the Moatize district, which, rich in coal, is an economic source for maintaining Frelimo's government in power at both local and central levels. It is no coincidence that, alongside the gradual trend of devolving power to the local level, legislation is being drafted that overlaps with laws granting certain rights to democratically elected municipal councils. This fact has led those who feel harmed or weakened by the same type of decentralisation, albeit with leaders who belong to the Frelimo party, to use tactics not in accordance with the law to force changes, mainly in the decentralisation legislation.

Ethnographic material provided by the RENAMO councillors of the Moatize Municipal Council showed that their party is also an agent of resistance against bad mining practices in Moatize. Although the political space for opposition parties in Moatize is restricted, RENAMO remains concerned about the various problems caused by Vale/Vulcan's mining practices. RENAMO leverages unresolved displacement and resettlement issues to strengthen its political campaigns for the Moatize municipal elections. RENAMO's fights within the Moatize Municipal Council have not had a positive impact on residents' concerns because they are a minority on the Council. Both the District Administration and the Council are dominated by Frelimo and are in collusion with the multinational Vale. However, RENAMO's resistance to bad mining practices in Moatize remains important because it has raised issues and brought them to debate in the Municipal Council, making them public. RENAMO also serves to inform residents of their rights, which have been ignored by both the District and Municipal Administrations.

Chapter 9. Resistance to Industrial Coal Mining Practices

This is an anthropological study of the dynamics and practices of residents' resistance of the large-scale mining project in Moatize in central Mozambique, where local people experienced the Brazilian multinational coal mining company taking away their livelihoods and making them vulnerable. In this thesis, I examined how dynamics and practices of residents' resistance are shaped by the neoliberal model of development as implemented through a mining multinational company facilitated by the state. In doing so, I have sought to analyse the ways in which local people have interacted with the multinational company's coal mining practices, generating acts of overt resistance and then evolving into forms of covert resistance, which James Scott (1990) describes as infrapolitics. I have focused on the agency of local residents to resist the mining practices of a powerful Brazilian company, Vale, in their vulnerable position as victims of large-scale mining, using the weak weapons at their disposal. By analysing local resistance to industrial mining practices, I have analysed forms of agency that exist at the grassroots level. At this level, a wide range of local people, including small farmers, brickmakers, traditional healers, cattle breeders, and others, activated various tactics to gain benefits from the practice of coal mining after they saw their standard of living decline after being promised development driven by the coal-mining project. Most importantly, the residents demonstrated their ability to resist covertly, using their own means to avoid police reprisals as they contested the marginalisation caused by the mining project.

My analysis of the forms of resistance practised by the local people of Moatize was inspired by Scott's theoretical approach (1985, 1989, and 1990). De Certeau's (1984) concept of tactics as the art of the weak in resistance to powerful institutions was also paramount. I also used the theoretical approach developed by Vinthagen and Johansson (2013), which extends Scott's understanding by showing that resistance is a practice that develops in every social context, shaped by the political conditions offered locally. Vinthagen and Johansson (2013) further emphasise that all acts of resistance depend on some form of agency. While Johansson and Vinthagen (2020) argue that resistance

is also carried out in certain situations and contexts when open resistance is not an alternative.

However, the forms of everyday resistance that many people in Moatize carried out went largely unnoticed by those they were confronting because, as resisters, they carried out their actions in anonymity for fear of being reprimanded by the state police. The case of Moatize has shown that local people are not free to develop open acts of resistance against Vale because the company relies on the state police to repress the resisters. Nevertheless, the people of Moatize have found ways to voice their concerns, such as using social media platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook to share videos showing negative effects of mining projects. These platforms became a weapon to criticise Vale's bad mining practices, and care was taken not to reveal the identity of those who first filmed and distributed the images. The police were worried that these videos would be circulated more widely, having already created a negative image of Vale's mining practices. After the first open protests against Vale were repressed by the state police, people of Moatize realised that the only way to oppose the mining practices that threaten their survival was to carry out acts of resistance that would not be perceived as such by the company or the police. This is what Scott (1989:34) refers to when he says that it is convenient for subalterns to opt for everyday practices of resistance involving tactics rather than for more open forms of political conflict, because the dominant power is more likely to respond to open practices of resistance with armed force and bloodshed. The practices of everyday resistance used by the residents of Moatize allowed them, for example, to collect necessary firewood and green leaves from the Vale lands that had been expropriated from them.

To sum up, this study has sought to capture the everyday practices and discourses that Moatize people have about their interaction with the practices of the coal mining industry, which has been facilitated more by the central state than by the local communities where the projects are located. Specifically, I have shown how local people have experienced the changes in their livelihoods brought about by industrial mining exploitation, with a particular focus on their access to mining revenues, land, water, health, and work.

Methodologically, the study focused on the discourses of the main marginalised groups that interact daily with coal mining practices and the impact on their daily lives, namely small farmers, brickmakers, cattle breeders, and traditional healers. The study also aimed to examine the socio-political context shaping the life of local people. During my fieldwork, I engaged with members of civil society organisations who were knowledgeable about the coal mining process and its impact on local communities in Moatize. The discourses of the traditional authorities, including the Queen of Moatize and the

traditional healers, were analysed alongside those provided by the marginalised groups. The analysis of the discourses also included the voices of state officials from Moatize's District Administration and Municipal Administration. To understand how the funds shared by the central state of Mozambique were distributed among the communities that benefitted from the fund, an ethnographic account of the Consultative Councils in the Municipality of Moatize was conducted. I carried out participant observation, semi-structured interviews, informal and formal conversations, and follow-up consultations with all the above actors. The empirical material of my interlocutors was analysed and interpreted in the light of the conceptual grid of the resistance of marginalised people who use the weapons of the weak, according to Scott (1985). Based on interactions, observations, and analysis of information, the study made some key findings, which are discussed below.

One finding relates to the land granted by the Mozambican state to the multinational company Vale to make the coal mining project viable. What has happened in Moatize is that although the land is owned by the state, the local population, mainly the displaced small farmers and brickmakers, consider the land to be their property and not that of the state, which has given them the right to use it. This is because Mozambique's Land Law 19/1997 recognises customary land use rights, common among the Moatize people. Local traditional leaders are also influential, reproducing the discourse that they are the traditional chiefs of Moatize land. The Moatize people believe that customary land tenure is also linked to the fact that traditional chieftaincy is still present in the Moatize and involved in aspects of governance legitimised by the local state. For example, although land is owned by the state and the state has the prerogative to grant the right to use it, the traditional chieftaincy is also entrusted with the right to legitimise new occupants of the land through the performance of certain traditional rituals. Many residents do not have the DUAT document that gives them formal land rights, which has had a negative impact on their displacement, given that the District Administration and the mining company Vale demanded the DUAT as a means of compensation. The displaced people, however, believed they did not need a formal DUAT to prove their rights to the land – they had inherited from their ancestors and that was to be protected under Land Law 19/1997.

Resistance to Vale's displacement came from the fact that some residents did not receive the compensation to which they were entitled because they did not have the formal DUAT. Power relations also permeated Moatize residents' quest for the issuance of formal DUAT documents. Legally, the investors had the advantage in terms of knowledge to demand the issuance of these DUATs. The majority of residents were convinced that their customary rights secured

through the Land Law 19/1997 were sufficient to defend themselves against expropriation of their land and to receive the due compensation in the case of later land conflicts. Because the arrival of the multinational Vale increased the demand for land, national and foreign investors have used strategies to influence the models by which land is traded, a process in which locals have also used tactics to benefit financially from illegal land transactions due to the existing gap in land legislation.

The case of Moatize shows also an imbalance of power and legal knowledge between residents and investors. Vale had more access to legal knowledge than the local residents. While some residents relied on the traditional way of granting land, which is enshrined in Law 19/1997, it also prevented them from applying for land titles. The chieftaincy as a traditional political structure legitimized by the residents of Moatize was needed to consent to the political power of the Frelimo state in Moatize. In this way, the state used the Queen as a traditional chief to prevent the residents from mobilising against Vale for its bad mining practices. Because many marginalised people such as small farmers, brickmakers, and traditional healers legitimised the chieftaincy, the Municipal Administration co-opted it into the municipal governance structure and used it as a tool to avoid resistance by residents claiming that Vale had violated their land rights. As a result, the chieftaincy system in Moatize has proved that it is not just an outdated institution with no influence on the modern structure of governance. Above all, what mattered for the co-optation of the leadership of the traditional power structure into the modern structure of municipal governance in Moatize was the latter's capacity to mobilise residents, especially the marginalised groups that identified with it. In this way, the political agency of the traditional leadership was co-opted by the political power in Moatize to better serve the state's political and economic interests. The argument here is that weakening traditional power by integrating the Queen into the governing structure limited the weak weapons of the resistance against the bad mining practices of the powerful Vale, which was supported by the District Administration. But even though the Queen was integrated into the municipal governance structure, she defended the interests of subaltern people who were marginalised by mining activities. This shows how, in a situation where political power sought to limit her ability to intervene on behalf of the local population, she found other means to resist bad mining practices in favour of marginalised Moatize groups.

Another finding supported by the ethnographic material is that Vale has exacerbated the social inequalities already present in the District of Moatize. The practices of the national and foreign coal mining companies in Moatize revealed that they operated differently, each with its own impact. According

to former employees, the parastatal CARBOMOC improved the social life of its workers. However, as other residents who did not work for the company mentioned, this does not mean that life was better for everyone; the civil war raging at the time affected Moatize greatly. Moatize was also affected by droughts, which meant that there was no agricultural production, leading to hunger in the district. Another indication of the district's difficult socio-economic conditions was the scarcity of imported good from neighbouring countries, likely a result of socialist Mozambique strained relations with Malawi at the time.

The multinational company Vale was described as focused on profiting through its extractive industry, and its social actions benefited the company's workers – in particular, those living in the gated communities, who were far more privileged than those not connected to or employed by the company. By focusing exclusively on serving its foreign workers and providing them with better social conditions in luxurious neighbourhoods, the company created social inequalities. The process that has been described as the marginalisation of the people of Moatize, especially the workers, began when the private multinational company first started mining in Moatize.

There was also the emergence of corporate territories in the form of gated communities that housed Vale's national and foreign workers, while the majority of Moatize residents were marginalised by the extractive coal industry, which did not create formal jobs for them, leaving them in vulnerable sectors of informal trade and subsistence agriculture. The gated communities built in Moatize also demonstrated the emergence of new power relations and a powerful new actor linked to the extractive industry. Managed by the company, these communities were a source of discontent and triggered resistance in the form of protests by residents who were resettled in neighbourhoods such as 25 de Setembro and Cateme. Gated communities reserved for company workers and the social inequalities that emerged in Moatize explain residents' negative discourse about mining practices, as well as their limited ability (weak weapons) to counter them. The fact is that, as the residents described it, the Vale *condomínios* are very luxurious compared to the houses where the residents have been resettled. The discourse is that the company had the means to build better resettlement houses for them but did not do so because they matter less than Vale's workers. The Vale workers who live in *condomínios* are described as economic agents who invest in local transport, known as *chapas*. An image has also been created that imported Vale workers are better than the locals. In reality, they belong to a different social class than the majority of residents, who are poor and do not have the same economic conditions.

One finding concerns the displacement and resettlement in Moatize. I described how, after Vale implemented the coal mining project, there was a discrepancy between their rhetoric about developing the area and their actual practices. Residents of Moatize described Vale as having a negative impact on the socio-economic lives of the local people, particularly small farmers and brickmakers. The experiences described are those of displacement and resettlement, which forced small farmers and brickmakers from their lands and repressed those who did not comply with the order to leave areas that later became mining sites. The coal mining project degraded the residents' means of survival, and the state failed to protect them, leading them to adopt tactics to challenge and subvert the dominant strategies of Vale and the District Administration (cf. de Certeau 1984). These tactics were applied after open resistance, consisting of strikes and demonstrations, proved ineffective. Given the repressive nature of the state police of Moatize, citizens found the means to carry out the struggle against the violation of their human rights in the forms of everyday resistance, where mining was covertly criticised. From time to time, covert forms of resistance of the residents relied on the open criticism of CSOs locally as well as at the nationally.

Examples of the everyday resistance of the citizens of Moatize, who denounced Vale's bad mining practices and preferred not to be identified, are a sign that they have lost not only their economic rights but also their political rights to openly express themselves in protest against Vale. The company has violated their rights and compromised their dignity. The use of repressive means against people fighting for their rights has led locals to mistrust state institutions and to seek means of resistance that made their grievances heard. Because the political powers failed to uphold the ethical responsibilities of displacement and resettlement, what remained was a sense of injustice and revolt, such as that of the brickmakers, suggesting that resistance to the mining company will continue, even under the threat of police violence. Examples of videos circulating on WhatsApp, whose creators have not been identified, show that in the context of police repression in Moatize, it has been possible for residents to use social media to voice criticism of bad mining practices instead.

The popular mobilisation against Vale's mining practices can be described as a struggle in which power relations limited the space of resistance for the people of Moatize. Moatize is a highly politicised space, and there is a tendency for the local state to control public discourse and monitor potential organisers of protests against Vale. Although residents demonstrated their agency by openly mobilising against the company, police repression and censorship of any action against mining practices forced residents to be more

cautious. They opted for a disguised resistance through which they could make immediate gains that did not directly threaten Vale's mining practices. Although the residents concealed their actions by anonymously denouncing Vale's negative mining practices through videos and messages, some civil society organisations in Moatize were forced to take an open political stance due to the scale of land rights expropriation that the residents of Moatize had experienced.

Another finding concerns the mining revenue fund. The practice that caused resistance is the model of sharing mining revenues with the communities that host mining projects. An analysis of the discussions about what should be acquired for the benefit of the communities from the 2.75% mining revenue fund showed the local Consultative Councils proved ineffective in ensuring the fund was used to address local development needs. The way in which the fund was managed and distributed suggests that residents are likely to resist in the future. This model has created greater social inequalities between regions that have benefited and those that have not. Consultations with the District Planning and Infrastructure Service (SDPI), one of the District Administration organs, have revealed that residents were being pushed further into hardship, contrary to the local development that the fund was supposed to support. The start of public works, such as classrooms and public drinking water taps, and their failure to be completed because of contractors abandoning the projects, has diminished the quality of life in these communities. The failure to build much-needed infrastructure has robbed them of the dignity they had before the multinationals began mining in Moatize.

Yet the resistance to mining practices also took place in the invisible realm of AMETRAMO's traditional healers in Moatize. Their acts of resistance were only understood by those aligned with the traditional healers' practices and can be seen as an infrapolitical phenomenon, invisible to ordinary citizens who do not understand or practice it. The struggle of the traditional healers against Vale's mining practices is also a political struggle for them as agents of traditional medicine as well as political representatives of the traditional structure that was lost when the lands of Moatize were granted to Vale. It is important to highlight the conflict that exists within the traditional power structure of Moatize. While the traditional healers of AMETRAMO state that they are not politically visible because the Queen's role as head of the Moatize lands takes precedence, the Queen herself states that she has not placed appropriately within the municipal governance structure, which did not respect her high rank in the traditional hierarchical structure. The Queen's role was thus equated with that of the neighbourhood secretaries, which means that she was

demoted, demonstrating the intention of the local political power to reduce her traditional authority in Moatize.

However, as the traditional healers pointed out, because they did not take part in the rituals to grant land to Vale for mining, evil spirits continue to roam Moatize, causing droughts and spiritual problems for people that had once been cured of evil spirits. The Queen's presence at the ritual was not enough, they said, because they, as part of the traditional power structure, should have been there too. The traditional healers claim to control the spirits, and until the spirits they control are informed of the dispossession of their sacred land, Moatize will never prosper, and the land will never produce at the levels of the past. In Moatize, the spiritual world holds a power that traditional healers have used to claim their rights as part of a traditional institution able to diagnose spirits and ward off evil spirits.

The resistance of traditional healers in Moatize against coal mining practices was a struggle to reclaim resources and power threatened by the practices of the mining industry. It was a struggle in which spirits are invisible agents of resistance in a modernity characterised by the tendency to accumulate resources in which some groups are excluded, such as the traditional healers who, in addition to being excluded, witnessed their means of survival expropriated by Vale. The spiritual world was not only a source of power for traditional healers but also influenced the beliefs of the residents, who saw it as a mechanism for explaining health and illness as well as various misfortunes, or for seeking good fortune in order to gain employment at a particular institution. However, the spiritual world in Moatize should be understood on its own terms, using its own concepts, in order to avoid misunderstandings. This area also needs to be explained in relation to modernisation and as a way of political engagement for those excluded from formal politics.

Resistance in Moatize is also analysed from the point of view of political decentralisation and the economic resources generated by the extractive mining industry. This resistance is linked to the agency and power of each organ to have its interests heard and fulfilled. Vinthagen and Johansson (2013:36) argue that, like any other acts, resistance acts are performed by someone, since all acts have actors and depend on some form of agency. Resistance is not an inherent attribute of the subaltern subject. Instead of originating within the subject, it arises from the combination of subjectivity, context, and interaction. The case of Moatize shows that the gradual implementation of the decentralisation process has created tensions between the two public authorities in Moatize. What makes this even more interesting is that the tensions were between representatives who belong to the same ruling Frelimo party. For example, the 2.75% mining revenue fund that the central state provides to the

District Administration created conflicts of interest between the District Administrator and the Mayor. The fact that these mining resources, intended to benefit the residents of the municipal area, were channelled through an appointed organ created the aforementioned conflicts. In this sense, the Mayor, backed by the residents, invented tactics that violated the decentralisation Law 2/1997 in order to gain control over the 2.75% mining fund. It is for these resources that the Municipality of Moatize, through its Mayor, is fighting to gain political power – that is, to reclaim its ability to exercise political agency.

Residents' resistance in Moatize takes place in a mining context of unequal power relations between the actors involved in resource extraction. Access to the mechanisms of power, as highlighted in the discourses of the Moatize people, was fundamental to the operationalisation of the multinational coal project. The possession and exercise of power has also allowed the District Administration to control mining revenues in the Moatize Municipality, creating another level of resistance from the elected Mayor, which believes it has the right to control the 2.75% mining fund that the central state reserves for communities affected by the mining problem. But what is really at stake in Moatize is the control of a district rich in coal resources, which are important for the state at local and central levels. This is why the 2.75% mining revenue fund is channeled through an appointed public authority, ensuring that even if the opposition wins the municipality elections, the fund will always be channelled through the District Administration, which is run by Frelimo.

Residents' perceptions of political decentralisation in Moatize showed that the Municipal Administration was the most useful and responsive to the day-to-day problems of citizens. The citizens had more interaction with the Municipal Administration than the District Administration, with the former responding effectively to the concerns of vendors, taxi drivers, and other urban workers. The District Administration was concerned with the political interests of the central state. Following Vinthagen and Johansson's (2013) argument that all acts depend on some form of agency, I argue that the Moatize Municipal Administration attempted to use its political agency to control and manage the mining revenue fund allocated by the central state to the District Administration. This resistance is linked to the agency and power of each organ to have its interests heard and fulfilled. In this case, the power relations favour the district organ as the principal organ responsible for controlling and managing the mining revenue fund.

Another factor of resistance in Moatize stems from the fact that coal mining has failed to bring socio-economic benefits to the local population, who have largely been excluded from the formal jobs created by multinational extractive

companies. This fact, as well as the poorly managed displacement and resettlement of small farmers and brickmakers, caused discontent that RENAMO capitalised on in its political speeches as an active player in Moatize's political sphere. Accounts from the RENAMO members on the Municipal Council show that their party is an agent of resistance against mining practices that threatened the survival of the local population. However, RENAMO's political resistance is constrained by the limited political space granted to the opposition in Moatize. Since the first local elections, Frelimo consistently holds majority on the Moatize Municipal Council. All its proposals have always been approved, even if they go against efforts to minimise the social problems affecting Moatize. The political opposition in Moatize, represented by RENAMO, operates in a space where different forms of participation in local political life are limited, which has at times led to socio-political tensions, as the local population historically supports RENAMO.

The resistance of the people of Moatize to the coal mining practices of the multinational company Vale shows that while residents may assert agency in their socio-economic and political lives, their agency is constrained by a central political power that continues to dictate the management of its economic and political projects. However, both the residents and the local decentralised authority (the municipality) have sought to assert their interests in the area's coal resources. Vale's coal mining project, although failing to bring promised development to the local population, thus setting their lives back, has shown that residents are capable of resisting a multinational development project facilitated by the central state. The present study contributes to debates in the anthropology of resistance, offering an account in which local people, appearing powerless, confront a powerful mining company allied to the central state by making recurse to the means at their disposal. In Moatize, residents' resistance to industrial coal mining employed a combination of social, cultural, spiritual and political tactics.

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