

Axel Prestes Dürrnagel

Peri-urban life-worlds contested

Everyday experiences, governance, and conflicts
at the rural-urban interface of Maputo, Mozambique

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Cover illustration: The photo shows the expanding city of Maputo, from the perspective of the peri-urban coastal plain. © Axel Prestes Dürrnagel



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List of Abbreviations

AdeM	Águas da Região de Maputo (Regional water provider)
APIE	Administração do Parque Imobiliário do Estado (State property agency)
CAP	Centro de Análise de Políticas (Centre of Policy Analyses)
CCM	Conselho Municipal de Maputo (Maputo Municipal Council)
DMOTC	Direção Municipal de Ordenamento Territorial e Construção (Municipal Directorate for Territorial Planning and Construction)
DMUPA	Direcção Municipal de Planeamento Urbano e Ambiente (Municipal Directorate of Urban Planning and Environment)
DAPPE	Departamento de Agricultura, Pesca, Pecuária e Extensão (Department of Agriculture, Fisheries, Livestock and Extension)
DUAT	Direito de Uso e Aproveitamento de Terra (Right to Use and Benefit from Land)
EDM	Electricidade de Moçambique (State energy company)
FIPAG	Fundo de Investimento e Património do Abastecimento de Água (State water system provider)
FLCS	Faculdade de Letras e Ciências Sociais (Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences)
Frelimo	Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (Mozambique Liberation Front)
GDs	Grupos Dinamizadores (Dynamising Groups)
GZV	Green Zones Office
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MASA	Ministério de Agricultura e Desenvolvimento Rural (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development)
OMM	Organização da Mulher Moçambicana (Organization of Mozambican Women)
PEU	Plano de Estrutura Urbana (Urban Structure Plan)
PEUMM	Plano de Estrutura Urbana do Município de Maputo (Urban Structure Plan of the Municipality of Maputo)
PP	Plano Pormenor (Detail Plan)

PPU	Plano Parcial de Urbanização (Partial Urbanisation Plan)
PUI	Peri-urban interface
Renamo	Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (Mozambican National Resistance)
SDPI	Serviço Distrital de Planeamento e Infraestruturas (District Planning and Infrastructure Service)
UEM	Universidade Eduardo Mondlane (Eduardo Mondlane University)
UGC	União Geral das Cooperativas (General Union of Cooperatives)
UN	United Nations
UNAC	União Nacional de Camponeses (National Union of Peasants)

1 Introduction

Peri-urban Areas as the Habitat of the Future

Episode 1:

Once in the street, the Italian seemed overcome by the coolness of the afternoon. The market women were clearing up their goods and an immense peace seemed to be returning to the inner recess of things. Risi sat down in the only bar in town. He seemed to want to be alone and I respected his wish. I sat myself down further away, enjoying my dose of fresh air. People passed by and greeted the foreigner in a friendly manner. Many minutes went by and I asked him whether he wanted to return to the guesthouse. He didn't want to. He didn't feel like anything except to stay where he was, away from his room and far from his duties. I sat down next to him. He looked at me as if for the first time:

Who are you?

I'm your translator.

I can speak and understand. The problem isn't the language. What I don't understand is this world here

(Couto 2004: 25–26).

The opening paragraph of this dissertation originates from Mozambican writer Mia Couto's¹ famous novel *The Last Flight of the Flamingo* (*O Último Voo do Flamingo in Portuguese original*). It plays at the end of Mozambique's civil war, when the Italian United Nations officer Massimo Risi is sent to the village of Tizangara to investigate the mysterious deaths of local United Nations peacekeepers, who have suddenly been blown up. The local Joaquim is the narrator of the story. He is the visiting stranger's assistant and translator. In the quoted scene from the beginning of the

¹ Born in the Mozambican city Beira in 1955, Mia Couto worked as a journalist at the time of the 1975 Independence. Since then, he published several collections of poetry, short stories, and novels of international reputation and translated into several language Couto 2004: front cover.

novel, he describes Risi's first encounters with the villagers, which are marked by deep frustration due to various misinterpretations and misunderstandings.

Throughout the novel, author Mia Couto links these problems of understanding to the clash of different worlds and cultures, each with their own meanings and interpretations of situations and things. Not only in terms of the differences to the life-world of the European officer Risi, but also in terms of the diversity of Mozambican worlds, such as between generations or between the state administration and the local population.

As in the context of qualitative social research at large, this dissertation's empirical research process was likewise characterised by the interpretations and understandings of social situations. In intersubjective encounters, the researcher and the research participant come together in moments of spatio-temporal immediacy. Afterwards, each one leaves the other to make his or her own interpretations of the encounter. As the second episode from the field aims to illustrate, the initial phase of the empirical research was particularly decisive in this regard:

Episode 2:

The drive out of Maputo's centre was unusually fast. The otherwise busy streets were still empty. It was Saturday morning at 7 am, and the sun was just rising. After arriving at secluded Pescadores beach (cf. photo 1), we had to wait more than an hour for the tide to come in before sailing over to Xefina Island. The two fishermen waited patiently, as they do it every day. We met them a few days earlier when they invited us to accompany them. On the way to the island, I was allowed to take the helm of the boat, and they showed me how to steer it properly. Xefina is infamously known for its advanced erosion, and some old Portuguese fortifications are meanwhile almost entirely swallowed by the sea. We asked them how they perceived the environmental changes and how they would affect their lives. They asked us about the beach in Germany and the fish we would catch there. Later, on the island, we could see the Maputo skyline in the distance, with its modern and ever-increasing office and apartment towers. One of the fishermen eventually said: "from here, the city looks beautiful, but to be there in the midst of it? That's not for me!"

On the one hand, there is the interpretation of my colleague and myself, us immersed in our world of geographical thoughts, asking typical researcher questions. On the other hand, the two fishermen are placed in their everyday life's reality at Maputo's coast, asking their typical fisherman questions. For each of us, the world as we know it represents the reality taken for granted. It is the most common thing for me as a researcher to be curious about environmental processes, as it is for the fishermen to earn a living just by being a fisherman. However, as in Mia Couto's novel, it is not only the cross-cultural difference that arrests attention but also the differences re-



Photo 1: Pescadores beach at low tide

Source: Photo by author (2019)

garding different local worlds. Although being residents of Maputo, both fishermen prefer to keep a distance from its urban core, sharing a sense of discomfort with the strangeness of the urban world. After all, this pertinent moment was productive in guiding this research. It means that all individuals take a subjective perspective on the world in which they live and come to their own interpretations of it. Finally, one inevitably has to embark on this subjective perspective to understand this world and the reality that the individual is facing.

This dissertation takes the subjectivity of perspectives as its starting point. Based on the example of the Mozambican capital, Maputo, it seeks to understand a world that has not yet received the necessary scholarly attention it deserves. The peri-urban areas on the outskirts of African cities represent the centre of this world, the meaningful life-worlds of countless peri-urban dwellers the object of investigation. Against this background, the introduction to this dissertation presents the relevance and motivation for this research (cf. chapter 1.1.), followed by the research objectives (cf. chapter 1.2.) and a brief outline of its structure (cf. chapter 1.3.).

1.1 Relevance and Motivation

Africa's urban geography is currently experiencing overwhelming transformations. The cities on the continent are increasing at an accelerated pace. Between 1950 and 2015, the urban population grew by 2,000 %. The number of its cities increased from 624 to 7,617 (OECD/SWAC 2020: 15). Africa represents the world's most rapidly urbanising continent, with an urban growth rate being 11 times more rapid than in Europe (UN-Habitat 2016: 7). While the world is currently home to 4.2 billion city dwellers, this number is expected to rise by 2.5 billion to a total of 6.7 billion people in 2050. Africa and Asia together will account for 90 % of this growth. Within this period, the African urban population is about to triple, and its share of the world's urban population is projected to grow by more than 70 % (from 13 % in 2018 to 22 % in 2050) (UN-DESA 2019b: 10).

2007 marked the historical point when the global urban population exceeded the global rural population for the first time. But only in 1950, 70 % of the world's population was still rural. One century later, in 2050, the distribution will be nearly the inverse, with 68 % of the global population being urban. With its dynamic catching-up urbanisation, the African population will be 59 % urban by 2050, while it is currently still just over 40 % (UN-DESA 2019b: 5–7).

Mozambique is symbolic of the African continent's demographic developments. In 2019, the country had a population of 30.4 million people, with an annual population increase of 2.9 %. By 2050, the population is expected to double and exceed 65 million people (UN-DESA 2019a: 826–828). Whereas in 1990, the number of the Mozambican urban population was 3.3 million (25 % of the total population), it has meanwhile tripled to almost 11 million (36 % of the total population). By 2050, another triplication is projected with roughly 37 million people, accounting for 55 % of the country's total population (UN-DESA 2019b: 21).

The Mozambican capital, Maputo, was merely home to 92,000 inhabitants in 1950. Within the following decade, it grew by 100 % to 181,000 inhabitants. In 1980, it exceeded 500,000, and around the turn of the millennium, the mark of 1 million inhabitants was surpassed, while the neighbouring city Matola almost reached half a million (UN-DESA 2015: 338) (cf. figure 1). Facing these numbers, the population of Maputo is still moderate compared with the megacities on the African continent such as Cairo, Kinshasa or Lagos (UN-DESA 2019b: 18). However, the situation of the Mozambican capital is still emblematic for the developments on the continent.

The reasons for the rapidity of Africa's urban growth are the natural increase in the population and continued rural-urban migration flows (UN-Habitat 2020: 12). In Mozambique, 44.4 % of the population is younger than 15 years. The country exhibits a fertility rate of almost five births per woman (UN-DESA 2019a: 823). On the other hand, cities grow, and urban areas expand towards their peripheries. Hence, neighbouring settlements are incorporated, and former rural areas are reclassified as

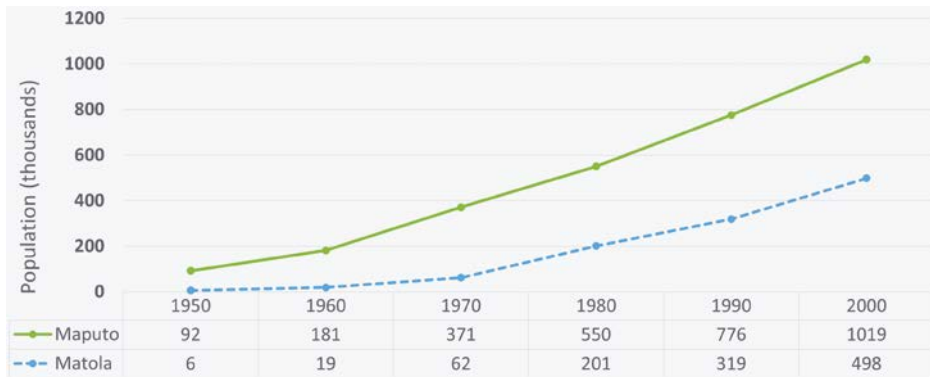


Figure 1 Population growth of Maputo and Matola between 1950 and 2000

Source: Illustration by author based on data from UN-DESA (2015: 338)

urban settlements (UN-DESA 2019b: 14). The urban sprawl of agglomerations and the in-situ urbanisation of pre-existing rural habitats are significant components of Africa's urban growth. These developments are explained by the flows of rural-urban migration and increasingly by the flows of populations from the city centres towards the urban peripheries (OECD/SWAC 2020: 26).

The emergence of vast peri-urban areas represents the most striking outcome of these dynamics. Peri-urban spaces are located at the frontier of the growing and expanding cities. They absorb the bulk of the arriving population. With an increase in the population, the area occupied by settlements increases even faster. Thus, the already tremendous spatial extensions of peri-urban areas continue to expand further towards the rural hinterlands. According to a study with a sample of 120 cities worldwide, between 1990 and 2000, the built-up area of these cities grew two-thirds faster than the rate of their populations (Angel 2015: 2).

According to estimations of Cattaneo et al. (2021: 1), one-fourth of the global population is already living in peri-urban areas of smaller cities. In this regard, Ravetz et al. (2013: 14) highlight that peri-urban areas “may become the most common type of living and working situation in the world in the twenty-first century”. Thus, places in peri-urban environments will be the centre of the life-worlds of the future urban populations. In proximity to both urban and rural areas, they represent a unique environment and habitat where the lines between the urban and the rural are increasingly blurred (OECD/SWAC 2020: 15).

However, peri-urban spaces still suffer from a lack of attention from scholars and policymakers. In particular, the failure to accept their persistence as an inseparable ingredient of African urbanisation processes denies the social dimensions of peri-urbanity as being the habitat of the future. Instead, most contemporary conceptualisations describe them in terms of territorial dimensions and functional characteristics or by foregrounding their transitional character (Follmann 2022: 5). Simon

(2008: 168), for example, criticises the hitherto “widespread perception that the urban fringe represented a short-term transitional area that had little enduring and importance”. Too often, peri-urban spaces are regarded with an overemphasis on their negative features, such as the “front line between the problems of the city and the countryside” (Ravetz et al. 2013: 14). Furthermore, by emphasising their deficiencies, either by losing rural features (e.g., biodiversity, fertile soils, cultivable land, etc.) or by lacking urban characteristics (e.g., infrastructure, services, etc.) (Allen 2003: 136). Thus, there is a need to look at peri-urban areas not only by their negative features but also by foregrounding the opportunities and benefits for its growing populations (Ravetz et al. 2013: 13–14).

A closer look at Maputo’s urbanisation dynamics reveals that its peri-urban areas are not a transitional phenomenon but habitat of the future for the generations to come. The urban sprawl of the capital has long reached beyond its municipal boundaries. The agglomeration already encompasses the neighbouring city of Matola and extends far into the province of Maputo (cf. figure 2). The continuous built-up area’s extension from Maputo’s centre to northern Bobole already measures 40 km. According to the most recent census from 2017, 1.1 million people reside in Maputo. Together with the province’s population and its capital Matola, the number adds up to 3.1 million. Until 2050, the growth for the city of Maputo is only projected at 0.2 million. However, the province’s population will increase by 160 % and become the home of an additional 3.2 million inhabitants (cf. figure 3) (INE 2017a, 2017b). Hence, the immense population growth does not take place within the urban core areas but rather outside in its peri-urban surroundings.

In Maputo and in other cities of the region, the territory of the peri-urban sprawl already stretches across municipal boundaries. Different administrative units at different government levels (e.g., local, municipal, regional) are responsible for sectors like transportation or land-use planning and the provision and maintenance of infrastructures and services like roads, water, energy, and waste management. Likely, these are equipped with different resources and capacities and a lack of cooperation may result in uncertainty and conflicts regarding the division of responsibilities (Allen 2003: 138; Simon et al. 2006: 11–12). Besides these aspects of “institutional fragmentation” (Allen 2003: 138), peri-urban areas are also typically characterised by governance arrangements where customary institutions and norms exist in parallel to statutory state law (Tacoli 2003: 7; Förster & Koechlin 2018: 232).

For local, municipal and regional authorities, peri-urbanisation processes are associated with “profound governance and planning challenges” (Simon 2021: 2). Indeed, the dynamic pace and extensive scale of the transformations make it impossible for urban structures to emerge simultaneously on the scale required. Throughout sub-Saharan Africa, the rapid transition from a rural to an urban society is clearly overstressing the capacity of governments to provide land, adequate housing, jobs and services. Urban structures are overstrained, and cities are unable to accommo-

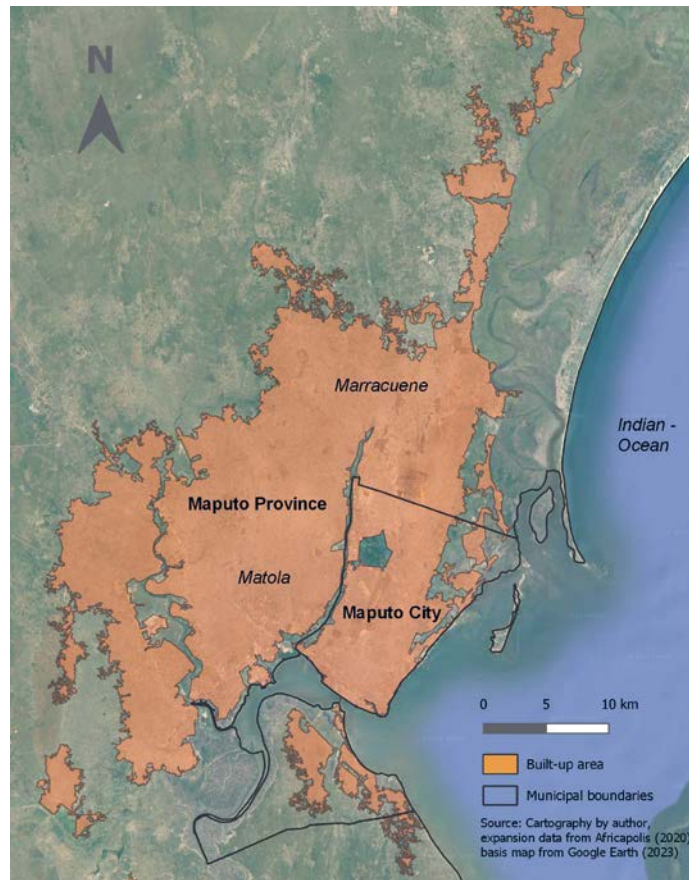


Figure 2 Map of the urban expansion of Maputo beyond its municipal boundaries

date the influx of migrants and the growing urban-born population (Simon 2008: 169). In line with the already weak capacities of postcolonial nation-states, much of the infrastructure and service provision is realised outside of central state control, but through the self-sufficiency of the population (Jenkins & Smith 2001; Simone 2004).

Thus, according to Lund (2006: 686), it is distinctive for postcolonial nation-states of sub-Saharan Africa that “there is no shortage of institutions aiming to exercise authority”. Alongside the authority of the state, they constitute “places in which diverse and competing claims to power and logics of order co-exist, overlap and intertwine, namely the logic of the ‘formal’ state, of traditional ‘informal’ societal order, and of globalisation and associated social fragmentation” (Boege et al. 2008: 10). Situated between the urban and the rural worlds, peri-urban areas are a particular arena where a variety of different actors coexists, interact, and compete for resources. In-

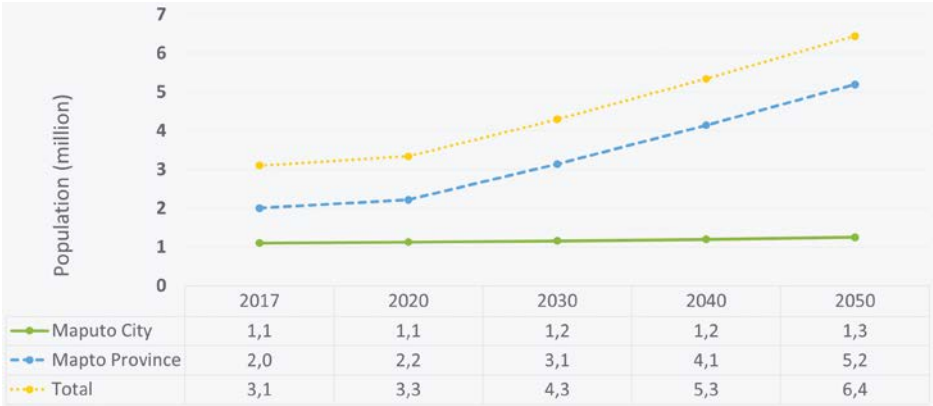


Figure 3 Population projection of Maputo City and Maputo Province
Source: Illustration by author based on data from INE (2017a, 2017b)

deed, they are characterised by their heterogeneous social composition, which refers to the common presence of different actors in the same spatial context, often as opponents with diverging interests and perceptions (Brook & Dávila 2000: 1; Allen 2003: 137). The composition of actors, however, is not in a stable state but, as Allen (2003: 137) reminds us, “subject to change over time, in a process characterized by the fluctuating incorporation of new stakeholder”.

Issues regarding the social inequalities inherent to peri-urbanisation processes are barely emphasised by scholars (Narain 2014: 974). Likewise, concepts considering power to examine peri-urban contestations and conflicts (Mbiba & Huchzermeyer 2002: 127). In line with the aforementioned failure to taken the persistence of peri-urban areas as serious, Bartels et al. (2020: 1238) add that “neglecting peri-urbanisation as a phenomenon entails disregarding inequalities that are embedded in the processes of peri-urbanisation or emerge in peri-urban spaces”. Researching peri-urban processes, therefore, has to go beyond its descriptive character and explicitly include analyses of power to assess peri-urban conflicts and contestations between different social actors (Mbiba & Huchzermeyer 2002: 127–128).

Once again, Maputo is emblematic of these dynamic rather than static peri-urban realities. In particular, the city’s northern coastal plain. With the recent construction of the *Circular de Maputo* ring road system in 2017, vast tracts of land have suddenly become accessible for urban expansion processes (Beja da Costa & Mazzolini 2021). As a result, the life-worlds of long-time peri-urban dwellers and local farming communities are confronted with the emergence of new actors in their surroundings, such as middle-class residents, investors, and municipal authorities. These developments are accompanied by even more profound changes, such as new institutional arrangements and land tenure systems. With the rapid expansion of the city to its periphery, competition for resources is increasing and the growing commodifica-

tion of land poses significant threats to the agricultural practices and customary systems. In this regard, peri-urban areas constitute “spaces in which contestation associated with different practices and values of different domains takes place” (Long 2001: 59).

Returning to the initial quote from Mia Couto’s novel, the peri-urban interface (PUI) represents primarily also a social interface where different worlds and meanings collide and clash (Long 1989: 1–2). The lack of an understanding of each other’s world leads to misinterpretations and the incompatibility of actors’ perspectives and interests to far-reaching conflicts. Many of the conflicts and contestations associated with development processes occurring on the outskirts of cities arise precisely from the lack of a proper understanding of peri-urban spaces. It is necessary to understand peri-urban life-worlds in order to arrive at possible explanations for the causes of discontinuities and conflicts. This means that it is inevitable to embark on the subjective perspective and to come to see and interpret the world from the point of view of the acting subject.

1.2 Objectives and Research Questions

Given the multiple challenges that peri-urban spaces pose to scholars, practitioners, and planners, Brook et al. (2003b: 134) aptly describe them as “a space crying out for attention”, which this dissertation is envisaged to pay. It embarks on the presumption that at the outskirts of Africa’s rapidly growing and expanding cities, the ideal-type and simplistic dichotomy of being either urban or rural has long ceased being a reality (Simon et al. 2006: 4). At the peri-urban interface, where the urban and the rural features interact and intertwine, new categories of sociality, places and spaces emerge. They constitute not just a fringe between the city and the countryside but rather “a new kind of multifunctional territory” (Ravetz et al. 2013: 13). Since our being in the world and our relation to land, environment, and places is, without doubt, a two-way and reciprocal dependence (Malpas 2018 [1999]), these emerging peri-urban spaces also shape specific peri-urban life-worlds and vice-versa.

The life-world as the “total sphere of experiences of an individual” (Schütz 1970: 320) and the mental horizons of peri-urban dwellers expand continuously, thus producing “a new awareness of one’s place in the world of opportunities, dangers, and risks that we inhabit, along with cultural changes in individual attitudes and conduct that occur at seemingly hyper-rapid speed” (Friedmann 2016: 164). Through a phenomenological life-world perspective and by reconstructing peri-urban space and place experiences, it becomes possible to gain empirical insights into peri-urban existences. These are helpful to address the complex challenges for governance and planning, and the inequalities which are produced (and reproduced) in peri-urban areas (Simon 2021: 1–2; Bartels et al. 2020: 1238).

Indeed, solutions for the diverse conflicts over land use and land access which result from rapid developments that often take place outside officially planned interventions (Simon 2021: 1–2), require a change in perspective which has to embark on the perspectives of the ones immediately experiencing it. Bartels et al. (2020: 1243) argue that for a better understanding of peri-urbanisation, it is “important to place in the foreground the descriptions and understandings of their environments by people who live in spaces categorised by scholars as peri-urban”.

Using the example of Maputo’s peri-urban coastal plain, this dissertation seeks to explore the intrinsic qualities of everyday life in peri-urban areas. At the same time, it aims to assess peri-urban governance arrangements, state-society interactions, and the multiple contestations and conflicts that arise between different actors. On the one hand, this requires an inductive approach by the phenomenological life-world perspective. Based on the reconstruction of the subjective experiences of peri-urban dwellers, it seems more appropriate than other approaches for exploring the essential qualities of peri-urban spaces. On the other hand, the deductive actor perspective is indispensable for assessing peri-urban governance and conflicts. Thus, from the disciplinary starting point of human geography and based on a critical realist ontology, this dissertation combines life-world phenomenology with an actor-oriented approach.

Against this background, this dissertation pursues two fundamental research objectives. The first is to understand peri-urban life-worlds, and the second is to explain peri-urban governance and conflicts. Two research questions underpin each overarching research objective:

Objective 1: Understanding peri-urban life-worlds

1. What does it mean to be a peri-urban dweller in Maputo?
2. What spatial, temporal, and social dimensions of lived experiences are constitutive of peri-urban life-worlds, and what are the constitutive dimensions of peri-urbanity?

Objective 2: Explaining peri-urban governance and conflicts

3. How do actors act and interact in shaping peri-urban governance in Maputo, and how do state-society interactions evolve?
4. How do peri-urban dwellers experience urban expansion processes and state interventions, and how do these cause social discontinuities and conflicts at the peri-urban interface in Maputo?

From a phenomenological and life-world perspective, human experiences represent the primordial epistemological perspective for conducting social research. Thus, phenomenology’s concern with the essential meaning of people’s experiences is crucial for addressing the first research objective. According to van Manen (2016: 42), a phenomenological question asks what a phenomenon “really” is like. Therefore, in

order to understand peri-urban life-worlds, this research seeks to explore what it is really like to live in Maputo's peri-urban spaces. Thus, following van Manen (2016), it must ask about what it means to be a peri-urban dweller in Maputo. Moreover, the stratification of the life-world into the spatial, temporal, and social dimension is most central to Schütz's work and thus to this dissertation (Schütz & Luckmann 1973). The life-world dimensions of the lived body, space, time, and relations are universal and guide empirical life-world research through a reflective and comprehensive inquiry (van Manen 2016: 101–102). The reconstruction of the lived experiences of the life-world dimensions is therefore, as a second research question, essential for a proper understanding of peri-urban life-worlds.

The second research objective is to explain peri-urban governance and conflicts. Interactions between actors are inherent in governance processes and in situations of contradiction and conflict. An actor perspective focuses on the actions of actors and their interactions in social situations. Thus, the third research question concerns peri-urban governance such as the provision of public goods and services through actors. It asks about the actors involved beyond the state, and how interaction with the state evolves. The fourth research question asks about the social discontinuities and conflicts in Maputo's dynamic interface situations. In particular, about the conflicts caused by urban expansion processes and state interventions such as new institutional arrangements and land tenure systems. Thus, explaining peri-urban governance and conflicts means acquiring knowledge about the causes of actions and predicting their outcomes. However, the life-world perspective of actors must be understood before their actions can be explained. "Understanding precedes explaining" (Eberle 2022: 107), and although they are realised in two separate operations, the answer to the second research objective necessarily builds on the first one.

1.3 Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation consists of seven chapters. This first introductory chapter has already discussed the relevance and the motivation for this research. The research objectives and the respective research questions were also presented. A brief outline of the structure of the remaining chapters follows, with a more detailed outlook on the content following at the beginning of each chapter.

Chapter 2 sets out the theoretical and conceptual considerations. It is based on three pillars consecutively building on each other to provide a solid basis for understanding this work and the further procedure. Life-world phenomenology and human geography form the first pillar, which is mainly informed by the fundamental work of Alfred Schütz. After an introduction to the philosophical foundations of interpretative life-world research and the associated beliefs towards ontology and epistemology, Schütz's methodological journey is outlined. The following consolidation between

life-world phenomenology and human geography represents the main theoretical endeavour. It traces the roots of humanistic geography with a focus on place as the stage of the life-world and provides this dissertation's basis programme: a geography of lived experience. It builds on Schütz's stratification of the life-world into the spatial, temporal, and social dimensions and extends it with a human geographic interpretation based on the role of the lived body, lived time, lived space, and lived relations.

A conceptualisation of peri-urban life-worlds forms the second pillar. It introduces the phenomenon of peri-urbanisation and discusses the dominant urban studies literature, which continues to marginalise peri-urban spaces despite promising entry points for their theorisation. Based on the shortcomings of contemporary conceptualisations of peri-urban areas and processes due to their overemphasis on development interventions, a framework for understanding peri-urbanity through a phenomenological life-world perspective is presented that is apt to overcome the theory-development dualism. It provides a starting point for theorising peri-urban life-worlds.

The third pillar is informed by governance and the actor perspective. It introduces governance and its emergence as a concept of interacting actors beyond the state to provide public goods and services. In this regard, some conceptual premises on governance, the state, and self-organisation in sub-Saharan Africa follow. Based on Norman Long's actor-oriented approach, the relational actor perspective is introduced afterwards. It provides a framework for assessing governance and conflicts at the peri-urban interface before concluding the chapter with the dialectical theory of social action that underpins this dissertation.

Chapter 3 presents the methodology and the qualitative research design for reconstructing life-world experiences. In a reflective section on the positionality in conducting empirical research in a postcolonial setting, ethical considerations and underlying issues of power are considered. This is followed by a discussion of the methodological challenges of researching the subjective perspective of people's lived experiences. These are translated into a methodologically sound programme for place-based research and life-world-analytical ethnography. It informs the subsequent design of the empirical research process with a detailed presentation of the applied data collection methods used. The chapter concludes with the applied analytical and interpretative strategies.

Chapter 4 provides an introduction to Maputo and the study area. It begins with a historical overview of the Mozambican capital, from an early settlement on the Indian Ocean, through Portuguese colonisation, to the more recent socialist revolution and independence. It presents the current structural context of urban planning and land management at the national level of Mozambique and at the municipal level of Maputo, with the respective housing and land legislation and the contemporary planning context characterised by the implementation of several large-scale infrastructure projects. Finally, it presents the local historical, administrative, and planning context of the study area, providing a rich ethnographic description to become familiar with local dynamics and place names for the subsequent life-world analysis.

Chapter 5 represents the first one of two major empirical chapters. It responds to the first research objective of understanding peri-urban life-worlds. Therefore, it is structured according to the stratification of the life-world into the spatial, temporal, and social dimensions. It begins with the meaning of the dwelling place as the spatial centre of the life-world. By doing so, it addresses the topic of land access and the creation of the home with the multifunctional meaning of the plot, exploring the fundamental question of how people live in peri-urban areas. The description of peri-urban infrastructures and mobilities comes second. It asks how people experience the socio-material infrastructures of their surrounding world and how people appropriate this world, moving through it while pursuing their everyday activities and plans. The presentation of peri-urban farming follows third, introducing the collective production fields of the so-called *machambas* as an essential example of the peri-urban life-world's meaningful places, thus asking what it means to be a farmer in Maputo. The discussion of the peri-urban sociality comes fourth. It asks how people live together in the neighbourhood, highlighting how others are experienced and typified and by what type of sociality collective community life is determined. Finally, the chapter culminates in formulating a thesis on the constitutive dimensions of peri-urbanity, consisting of locality, self-sufficient practice, and community.

Chapter 6 represents the second of two major empirical chapters. After understanding peri-urban life-worlds, it is dedicated to explaining peri-urban governance and conflicts of state-society interactions. Thus, it responds to the second research objective and builds on the relational actor perspective. First, local peri-urban governance arrangements are discussed. A focus is put on land governance and tenure and the role of community authorities. Local regulations are fragile, and with the expanding city, the local governance system is at a crossroads. Based on two in-depth cases, the chapter assesses the social discontinuities and conflicts arising in line with new actors and state institutions entering the life-worlds of peri-urban dwellers. The first example discusses the ambiguity of urban plans and land use titles in light of radical transformations and displacement processes. The second aspect addresses land use conflicts between peri-urban agriculture and real estate developments. In line with the previous chapter's thesis, this chapter culminates formulating an antithesis of state-society interactions. It critically questions the illusionary vision of the state in planning as opposed to the local reality experienced by the peri-urban population.

Chapter 7 represents the final chapter of this dissertation. It aims to provide a synergy between peri-urban life-worlds and the actor perspective. First, it proposes a life-world approach to planning that is not illusionary but realistic and based on the everyday reality of peri-urban life-worlds. Thus, it presents the synthesis between the thesis on the constitutive dimensions of peri-urbanity and the antithesis of state-society interactions. Second, and in conclusion, a critical appraisal of the combination of life-world phenomenology and an actor-oriented approach is presented based on which final implications for future research follow

2 Theoretical and Conceptual Considerations

Applying the Phenomenology of the Life-world to Peri-urban Spaces and Governance

This chapter sets out the theoretical and conceptual considerations that underpin this dissertation. It rests on three successive pillars, which build on each other to provide a solid foundation for the further approach. After combining life-world phenomenology with human geography at the theoretical level (cf. chapter 2.1.), the established understanding is transferred to peri-urban spaces and translated into a conceptualisation of peri-urban life-worlds (cf. chapter 2.2.). The chapter on governance and the relational actor perspective (cf. chapter 2.3.) then provides a framework for assessing governance arrangements and conflicts around the previously conceptualised peri-urban life-worlds.

2.1 Life-world Phenomenology and Human Geography

Life-world phenomenology and human geography form the first theoretical pillar. It begins with an introduction to the philosophical foundations, a trilogy of critical realism, phenomenology, and hermeneutics (cf. chapter 2.1.1.). Schütz's methodological journey of Schütz and his life-world theory are presented afterwards (cf. chapter 2.1.2.) before addressing it from the perspective of human geography. Precisely, the interrelationship between the life-world and the concept of place in humanistic geography (cf. chapter 2.1.3.). It then follows the theoretical hallmark of this dissertation, the conceptualisation of a geography of lived experiences based on Schütz's stratification of the life-world into different dimensions (cf. chapter 2.1.4.).

2.1.1 The Philosophical Foundations of Interpretative Life-world Research

Specific philosophical assumptions towards ontology and epistemology underpin the design of this dissertation. Being situated on a meta-theoretical level, these beliefs inform the underlying theoretical and conceptual considerations and the meth-

odological and empirical chapters. In this regard, I draw on a philosophical trilogy combining critical realism, phenomenology, and hermeneutics. Hereinafter, a brief introduction to these three philosophies is presented, and a discussion of how a consistent alignment of the three is achieved is provided, thus providing an appropriate philosophical foundation for conducting interpretative life-world research.

Whereas the ontological assumptions are concerned with the nature of the world and the reality of our being, the epistemological assumptions refer to the nature of our understanding and our knowledge of the world (Maxwell 2005: 36; Creswell 2013: 20). To put it in simpler terms, “ontology is about *what* it is that we think we can know and epistemology is about *how* we think we can know it” (Braun & Clarke 2022: 166). Ontology precedes epistemology, and both together inform methodology and its connected strategies of data collection and interpretation (Maxwell 2005: 36). Because of its powerful claims towards the nature of reality, critical realism determines the ontological and rather abstract level of this dissertation. With shared epistemological properties and a common focus on the life-world and experiences, phenomenology and hermeneutics tie in as valuable theoretical and methodological extensions to critical realism. To make this argument, a brief outline of a critical realist ontology is presented, before providing a sound understanding of phenomenology and hermeneutics, which will then receive a critical realist reading.

After realist ideas have almost fallen into oblivion over the last decades, this dissertation follows the recent call from Hubert Dreyfus and Charles Taylor in line with their work and the illustrative title of *Retrieving Realism* (2015). Critical realism emerged in the 1970s as an opposition to positivist positions in the philosophy of science (Pratt 1995: 63). It was mainly provoked by the work of Roy Bhaskar with his books *A Realist Theory of Science* (1975) and *The Possibility of Naturalism* (1979). A decisive feature of Bhaskar’s work lies in his “revindication of ontology” (Bhaskar & Lawson 1998: 5). This means to treat them as separate domains, the ontological realm as the theory of being from the epistemological realm as the theory of knowledge. By what he calls the “epistemic fallacy”, Bhaskar (2008 [1975]: 5) strongly criticises the assumption that the nature of the world (ontology) is reducible to our knowledge of the world (epistemology). From a critical realist perspective, it is impossible to equate the reality of the world with our empirical knowledge of it. It entails that we cannot arrive at true or false statements about the world by merely using experiments based on the epistemological logic of the natural sciences.

On the one hand, critical realism, therefore, represents “a full-frontal rebuttal of positivism” (Pratt 2009: 381). On the other hand, it also opposes constructivist philosophies by arguing that there is more to the world’s reality than what is to be found in the knowledge and discourses of human beings (Lawani 2021: 321). But how is reality conceived through the lens of critical realism? For critical realists, the world in its material and social dimensions exists regardless of our knowledge and awareness. The reality is not directly observable, and our knowledge of it is always fallible. But

we can deploy adequate theoretical and methodological tools to approach the ontological being of the external world (Lawani 2021: 323; Budd 2012: 75–76; Danermark et al. 2019: 23).

Bhaskar (2008 [1975]: 2) further expressed this ontological depth through the stratification of the world into three different domains of reality: the real, the actual, and the empirical (cf. table 1). The domain of the real comprises the realm of the total reality. It is where generative structures and underlying causal mechanisms are located that generate the events of the world. In the domain of the actual, these events actually take place. This occurs regardless of whether we experience or observe them. Not everything that happens in the world is at the same time observable. In the domain of the empirical, we then find what we really experience and observe. It is also where social scientists find their data and collect them through perception or measurement (Hood 2016: 162; Lawani 2021: 323; Danermark et al. 2019: 13–14).

To decipher the relationship between the three domains and to explain social events by tracing them back to their causal mechanisms is a major concern of critical realism (Lawani 2021: 323). In this light, critical realism also provides a foundation for explaining social action, serving as a resolution for the controversial relationship between structure and agency that goes beyond conventional approaches rooted in dualisms (Jessop 2005). A categorial distinction is made between social structures and social action. The analysis focuses on the dialectical interaction between them (Danermark et al. 2019: 71). Social structures (the domain of the real) pre-exist the individual and are at the same time, the necessary condition for an individual’s intentional agency (Jessop 2005: 44; Archer et al. 1998: xvi). Accordingly, “society is both the condition and outcome of human agency and human agency both reproduces and transforms society” (Archer et al. 1998: xvi). This discussion will be elaborated later (cf. chapter 2.3.4.)

But before being able to explain causal mechanisms in the domain of the real, it is necessary to first immerse into the more accessible domains of the empirical and the actual. The description of the empirical experiences and the interpretation of actual events precede the explanation of the real (Lawani 2021: 323; Archer et al. 1998: xvii). This requires us to move on from the ontological level to the epistemological underpinnings of this dissertation. That is, to the philosophies of phenomenology and hermeneutics that provide the theoretical backbone for conducting life-world research.

Table 1 The three domains of critical realism

	Domain of Real	Domain of Actual	Domain of Empirical
Mechanisms	X		
Events	X	X	
Experiences	X	X	X

Source: Table adapted from Bhaskar (2008: 2)

The life-world theory represents, according to Dahlberg et al. (2008: 37), “an epistemological and methodological tool with which the multifarious world of human being is revealed and understood”.

Phenomenology emerged as philosophy and a movement in Central Europe around the beginning of the 20th century. Edmund Husserl (1859–1938) is famously known to be the founder of phenomenology since his *Logical Investigations* (*Logische Untersuchungen*) was published in 1900/1901. He saw himself as the father of a radically new discipline and an explorer in a new domain of consciousness (Moran 2000: 2). “To the things themselves” is Husserl’s often-cited account and call to approach the world as it shows itself to human beings in everyday experiences (Dahlberg et al. 2008: 32). Moran (2000: 4) provides us with a distinctive definition of phenomenology which already reveals much of its epistemic value of how to approach the world and how to acquire knowledge about reality.

Phenomenology is best understood as a radical, anti-traditional style of philosophising, which emphasises the attempt to get to the truth of matters, to describe *phenomena*, in the broadest sense as whatever appears in the manner in which it appears, that is as it manifests itself to consciousness, to the experienter.

Although Husserl coined phenomenology as a philosophy, important precursors of phenomenological thought are already found in the works of Immanuel Kant, Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, and Ernst Mach. But only since the efforts of Husserl and his followers has phenomenology evolved into one of the most influential currents of philosophy throughout the century (Moran 2000: 1–2). His first successors in the early 20th century were Martin Heidegger, Max Scheler, and Edith Stein. Their work led to the establishment of the field of phenomenology from the very beginning. Since the second half of the 20th century, some of his most prominent successors have been Emmanuel Levinas, Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Hannah Arendt. The early phenomenologists already interpreted and expanded the writings of their predecessors in different and dynamic forms. They paved the way for the subsequent establishment of various traditions and orientations of phenomenology, which are often difficult to place in a precise philosophical or historical framework. Instead, they opened up new opportunities to look at the world from ever-new and astonishing perspectives, following phenomenology’s imperative of continuous creativity and constantly critically rethinking its program and practices (van Manen 2014: 72–73).

For example, Edmund Husserl was the first to elaborate the phenomenology of the life-world. He was the first to describe the life-world as an epistemological idea (Dahlberg et al. 2008: 35). When his mentee, Alfred Schütz, resumed Husserl’s outline of the life-world, he retained some features while rejecting others, thus leading to the advancement of the life-world theory in itself (Costelloe 1996: 248). Schütz also

introduced the life-world into sociology, which finally marked the transition from the philosophical towards a sociological phenomenology (Münch 2003: 192). In addition to this central example, van Manen (2014: 73) reminds us that throughout the development of phenomenology as a philosophical discipline, different movements and schools have evolved and will continue evolving. Each one is and will be “associated with particular authors who have given unique scholarly impetus, significance, and new order to the development of phenomenology as a constantly renewing and self-critical, creative tradition of traditions”.

The same holds for hermeneutical philosophies which were introduced by Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834) as a method for interpretation (Dahlberg et al. 2008: 66). Schleiermacher had significant influence on Wilhelm Dilthey and Hans-Georg Gadamer, but similar to phenomenology, hermeneutics do not represent a unified philosophy, but rather an ensemble of diverging and even conflicting traditions (Moran 2000: 248; Dahlberg et al. 2008: 65–66).

Since there is no scope to go more into detail about the distinctiveness and peculiarities of each phenomenological and hermeneutical stance, the remainder draws on the commonalities of phenomenological and hermeneutic views, ultimately resting on their mutual attention to the life-world and experiences (Dahlberg et al. 2008: 87). The pre-reflective reality of everyday life represents the focal point of life-world research. Whereas phenomenology is generally concerned with understanding the everyday experiences of human beings, hermeneutics represents the proper theory to interpret these experiences (van Manen 2014: 4–7).

The connection of both philosophies is essential, and not only classical but also contemporary authors advocate for a “hermeneutic phenomenology” (cf. Ricoeur 1975; Gadamer 1975; van Manen 2014). Their common denial of positivism also aligns both phenomenology and hermeneutics with critical realism. Husserl wanted to move away from positivistic ideals that would “ultimately result in the dehumanization of society” (Finlay 2011: 44). Likewise, Gadamer condemned positivistic science’s approach to defining the world factually through the verification of theories only to satisfy the method. He asserted that examining the human world is not reducible to a single method and, above all, not through that of measurement (Dahlberg et al. 2008: 75–76).

Against this background, Husserl aimed to provide a scientific foundation rooted in human beings’ everyday experiences (Finlay 2011: 44). From a phenomenological and life-world perspective, human experiences represent the primordial epistemological perspective for conducting social research. For Gadamer, the connection between phenomenology and hermeneutics lies in their common concern for the meaning that human beings ascribe to these experiences (van Manen 2014: 39; Moran 2000: 248). The phenomenological focus on experiences rests not on how we conceptualise experiences but emphasises investigating experiences as we live them as “lived experiences” (Vagle 2018: 63). The term “lived experiences” is echoed in the

prominent works of phenomenological and hermeneutical thinkers, starting with Husserl and Dilthey to Merleau-Ponty and Schütz. Whereas in English, the word “experience” does not imply the meaning of “lived”, the German word “*Erlebnis*” (“lived experience”) already conveys the notion of “lived”. The verb *erleben*, deriving from the noun *Erlebnis*, means to live through something. Hence, lived experience refers to “active and passive living through experience” (van Manen 2014: 39).

According to Schütz & Luckmann (1973: 3), an experience itself has no meaning. The attribution of meaning occurs when the individual trawls through the stream of memorised experiences from the past and puts them into relation to the actual experience. The attention of the moment is then upheaved from its simple actuality and brought into a broader context. Meaning is grasped in relation to the remembered experiences of the past that still resonate. Or to say it with the original words, “meaning is a relational magnitude established in consciousness, not a particular experience or quality ascribable to experience itself. It concerns, rather, the relation between an experience and something else” (Schütz & Luckmann 1973: 3). To complete these profound epistemological premises, Dahlberg et al. (2008: 90) provide us with a precise and intriguing summary that we cannot afford to miss at this point:

we can now conclude that to be human, to have a world, to live in and through a life-world, means to deal with meaning. We cannot talk about experiences without talking about meaning at the same time. There is meaning already when we begin to understand what we experience. Meaning comes in the same package as experience, so to speak. Meaningful experiences belong to the lifeworld and the everyday manner in which we live our lives, being researchers or not.

Lived experiences represent the central theme of this dissertation. After this superficial crack on Schütz’s work, we will come back to his theory of the life-world shortly. The stratification of the life-world and the conceptualisation of a geography of lived experiences represents the theoretical hallmark of this dissertation (cf. chapter 2.1.4). But before that, we will first align our phenomenological and hermeneutic epistemology with our critical realist beliefs about the reality of our being. Therefore, we once more come back to the ontological level.

Critical realism likewise embraces the ideas of experience, meaning, and interpretation (Davies 2008: 6). Considering this, life-world phenomenology and hermeneutics can indeed become part and parcel of a critical realist inquiry into the world. In fact, what applies to the ontological assumptions about the nature of reality also holds for our everyday life. Reality is more than what we observe, and whatever is real exists within our direct everyday experiences and beyond our knowledge and consciousness (Danermark et al. 2019: 24). Hence, our direct experiences are merely a part of our life-world. In a critical realist sense, the life-world as a whole represents nothing inferior to “the ontological reality in which one experiences life” (Budd et al. 2010: 274).

Hermeneutics are likewise inseparable from critical realism. But while the study of natural objects only requires a “single hermeneutic”, an understanding of social events and interactions inevitably presupposes a “double hermeneutic” (Sayer 1992: 37). The social reality is always pre-interpreted by social actors. Since they represent an object of inquiry for the social scientist, an understanding of their understandings consequently calls for an interpretation of their interpretations (Danermark et al. 2019: 30). For Bhaskar (2015 [1979]: xxv), the hermeneutical circle of understanding is equally epistemological, “whereby the parts cannot be understood unless there is some prior understanding of the whole, and vice versa”. Any attempt to understand causalities in the domain of the real presupposes an understanding of the social occurrences in the domain of the actual, which in turn calls for an understanding of the meaning that the social scientist experiences in the domain of the empirical as, for instance, in research encounters with his social objects of study.

According to Yeung (1997: 55), “critical realism makes its strongest claims at the ontological level: the independent existence of reality and causal powers ascribed to human reasons strengthen the possibility of reclaiming reality and an emancipatory social science”. With critical realism being situated within the philosophy of science, Yeung (1997: 53) further argues that adequate theoretical and methodological input has to stem from the respective social science disciplines. In this dissertation alike, critical realism’s contribution remains mainly within the confines of its ontological assumptions, what this introduction aimed to demonstrate. The remainder of this chapter is dedicated to an in-depth theoretical discussion of the phenomenology of the life-world. To substantiate a consistent argumentation, however, references to a critical realist ontology are made whenever appropriate, accompanying this dissertation like a thread.

2.1.2 The Methodological Journey of Schütz’s Life-world Theory

The work of Alfred Schütz¹ (1899–1959) was, from the beginning on, influenced by the Austrian intellectual field when he became part of the so-called “Mises-Circle”. Several oppositions and methodological discussions fuelled the academic field

¹ Alfred Schütz was born in Vienna on April 13, 1899. After graduating high school in 1917, he joined the Austrian army and served voluntarily in World War I. Following his military deployment Schütz studied law at the University of Vienna and in 1921, he received his doctorate with a focus on international law (Münch 2003: 189; Dreher 2011: 489). During his academic studies, Schütz was soon attracted by the Austrian intellectual field. At the university, he was influenced by renowned figures such as the economist and philosopher Ludwig von Mises. Both created a lifelong bond which was not only manifested in an intellectual but also a social nature. Mises eventually became Schütz’s mentor and invited him to form part of the “Mises-Circle”. During regular meetings and private seminars, Schütz befriended several other intellectuals from disciplines like economics, sociology, philosophy, and political science (Eberle 2009: 493–495).

around the circle at that time. The so-called *Methodenstreit* on the motivations for human action led to the division between the advocates of inductive or deductive approaches and nomothetic or ideographic methods. The dispute was originally settled between Carl Menger and Gustav Schmoller. The former established the Austrian school of economics to which Ludwig von Mises also belonged (Atkinson 2018: 400). Therefore, Mises sided with Menger in the *Methodenstreit* in favour of a deductive theory, whereas Schmoller followed Wilhelm Dilthey's inductive procedure. The prominent debate affected the overall relationship between the *Naturwissenschaften* (natural sciences) and the *Geisteswissenschaften* (human sciences) since Dilthey made the distinction that the natural science uses the method of *Erklären* (explaining). In contrast, human sciences presuppose *Verstehen* (understanding) (Eberle 2009: 497–498).

The subsequent appearance of Max Weber in Schütz's thoughts greatly influenced his impressions of the *Methodenstreit*. When social scientist Weber held a lecture in Vienna in 1918, his methodological reflections became very popular in the Viennese intellectual field (Dreher 2011: 490). Weber attempted to bridge the opposing positions in the *Methodenstreit* by conceptualizing a *verstehend-erklärende* (interpretative-explaining) sociology, which Schütz then adopted (Eberle 2009: 500). The theoretical confrontation with Weber grounded Schütz's sociological pathway. Weber's sociology of understanding also laid the basis for the subjectivist perspective, based on which Schütz elaborated his concept of the life-world (Dreher 2011: 490).

Although Schütz regarded himself as a Weberian sociologist throughout his life-work, he still considered Weber's work to be incomplete and continued to search for the nature of humans' motivation and consciousness (Atkinson 2018: 401). His interpretation of subjectivity was distinct from Weber's neo-Kantianism. Social actions and their meanings are different for the acting subject, the observer in everyday life, and the social scientist. He concluded later, with his phenomenological insights, that the subjective meaning of an action can only be fully grasped by the acting person him- or herself. Understanding the other can only succeed based on our subjective experiences. The experiences and subjective constructions of the others are therefore not directly accessible but only with the help of appresentative systems (Eberle 2021: 38, 2014b: 187).

Between 1925 and 1927, Schütz studied the work of Henri Bergson and his philosophy of consciousness and inner time. However, he was not satisfied with Bergson's elaborations to serve as the foundation for his sociology of understanding. His friend Felix Kauffman introduced him to Husserl's phenomenology of the consciousness of inner time. With Husserl's perspective, Schütz solved his previous disagreement with Weber and established the phenomenological foundations of his theory of action (Dreher 2011: 490). The discovery of Husserl's ideas made Schütz become "an ardent phenomenologist" (van Manen 2016: 146) and led to his first monograph, *The Phenomenology of the Social World* (*Der sinnhafte Aufbau der sozialen Welt*), published

in 1932 (see Dreher 2011 for an overview on Schütz's writings). It was followed by *The Problem of Social Reality* (1962), published as volume I (from IV) in a series of Collected Papers. In the preface, Herman van Breda recapitulates the methodological and theoretical journey of Schütz in a concise but rather precise manner:

To found philosophically the understanding of meaning as actually employed and understood by social sciences, is to find its source in the life of consciousness itself. Schutz does not fail to observe the significance of Bergson and the return to the immediate data of consciousness and to the experience of inner time. But it was Husserl's theory of intentionality and his notions of intersubjectivity and of the *Lebenswelt* which were to guide Schutz's thought and to give it its specific character. [...] In this work, [...] he undertook to trace the origin of categories peculiar to the social sciences in the fundamental facts of the life of consciousness, thus establishing a connection between Weber's *verstehende Soziologie* and Husserl's transcendental phenomenology (Schütz 1962: VIII).

Schütz's academic and professional scholarly opportunities were compromised by that time's social and political circumstances. Because of his Jewish descent, the growing spread of antisemitism in the 1920s made it impossible for him to obtain a position at the University of Vienna. Having an official academic career denied, he could only give private lectures without remuneration. Immediately after finishing his studies in the early 1920s, Schütz started a career as a banker, ensuring a living for himself and his family throughout their lives (Dreher 2011: 491). According to Dreher (2011: 489), being "a banker at daytime and a phenomenologist at night", Husserl is said to have portrayed him once. It characterized the double life that Schütz was forced into. Eventually, *The Phenomenology of the Social World* owes its conclusion to the research that Schütz undertook in the evenings and on the weekends (Münch 2003: 189). After all, it took him twelve years of research (Schütz 1962: VIII).

With the "Anschluss" of Austria to the Third Reich in 1938, the National Socialists' secret police Gestapo raided Ludwig von Mises' flat and confiscated all the documents of the Mises-Circle. Schütz stayed in Paris for a business trip during the invasion and brought his family to France (Eberle 2009: 496). They stayed in Paris for 16 months, where he became acquainted with important French phenomenologists and sociologists such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty. With the following job opportunity with his bank in New York, the family finally emigrated to the United States in 1939, only a short time before the outbreak of World War II. Mises also arrived in New York one year later, and both continued their academic work.² Establishing himself

² Between 1945 and 1969, Mises taught at New York University as a Visiting Professor. He died in 1973 at 92 (Eberle 2009: 494). Schütz obtained a position as a lecturer at the New School of Social Research in New York in 1943. In 1944, he became a Visiting Professor and in 1952, he was appointed Full Professor of sociology and social psychology (Münch 2003: 189–199).

in the North American academic field, Schütz also established contacts with US sociologists, phenomenologists and pragmatists such as Talcott Parson, William James, George Herbert Mead, Alfred North Whitehead, and John Dewey. In particular, the ideas of William James sustained a crucial influence on Schütz's following theory of the life-world, which consequently turned out to be his paradigmatic life-task (Dreher 2011: 491–494).

The Structures of the Life-World (*Die Strukturen der Lebenswelt*) represent Schütz's substantial lifework. It was published in two volumes, and due to his unexpected death in 1959, Schütz could not terminate his work. It is due to the efforts of his wife, Ilse Schütz and the ambitions of his student Thomas Luckmann that Schütz's lifework became finally completed with the publication of the English versions of Volume 1 in 1973 and Volume 2 in 1989 (Dreher 2011: 491). *The Structures of the Life-World* was published in co-authorship with Thomas Luckmann (Eberle 2014b: 188). As the following paragraph will highlight, he significantly masterminded Schütz's posthumous importance in the social science disciplines.

The legacy of Schütz's structures of the life-world led to the development of two divergent disciplinary approaches. Whereas the first one became more prominent in the German scientific landscape, the second one developed in the context of the US-American social sciences (Eberle 2012: 135; Dreher 2021: 2). On the side of the German variant, phenomenology and sociology are regarded as two different but compatible pairs of shoes. In the footsteps of Schütz, his student Luckmann interpreted the analysis of the structures of the life-world as a "proto-sociology" – as the philosophical precursor and foundation – to "sociology", to which sociological concepts and theories must refer to (Eberle 2012: 138, 2021: 18). Luckmann understands the structures of the life-world therefore as a "*mathesis universalis*". He stated that the elaboration of a *mathesis universalis* appropriate to the social world,

will have to be based on the premise of the epistemological reflexivity of a science of human conduct. A science that describes and explains the constructions of social reality must be able to develop a program of formalization (and a theory of measurement) that is appropriate to the constitutive structures of everyday life (Luckmann 1973: 165–166).

The proposal of this *mathesis universalis* of social reality constitutes a program for a phenomenology of the universal structures of everyday life. It was not to serve as a theory but for methodological purposes and by providing a matrix for empirical analyses through which the social science disciplines are enabled to approach the life-world in its concrete and historical structures (Luckmann 1973: 174). According to Eberle (2012: 138), such a matrix is supplied by phenomenological life-world analysis, which provides a solution to the measurement problem of social sciences. Through the uncovering of the invariant structures of the life-world (Luckmann

1973: 174), it further serves as a *tertium comparationis* to relate and compare data from different cultures and historical epochs with each other (Eberle 2021: 22). Luckmann's interpretation of the analysis of the life-world as a proto-sociology and his insistence on the rigid distinction between phenomenology as a philosophy and sociology as science was first and foremost for methodological reasons. Based on Luckmann, Eberle (2012: 138) clarifies the difference between both disciplines as follows:

1. Phenomenology is a philosophy. It analyses phenomena of subjective consciousness. Its perspective is egological and its method proceeds reflexively. Its goal is to describe the universal structures of subjective orientation in the world.
2. Sociology is a science. It analyses phenomena of the social world. Its perspective is cosmological and its method proceeds inductively. Its goal is to explain the general properties of the objective world.

The interpretation of the US-variant took another methodological path. Contrary to the German distinction between both disciplines, the US scholars undertook a synthesis that led to the establishment of *phänomenologische Soziologie* (phenomenological sociology) (Dreher 2021: 5). Prominent advocates are found in the work of Harold Garfinkel and George Psathas. Garfinkel's (1967) "ethnomethodology" contributed significantly to popularising Schütz's work in the US-American social sciences, not as a philosophical proto-sociology but as an alternative approach to sociology. His student Psathas (1973) subsequently forged the term of what is now known as "phenomenological sociology". The social and political context was characterised by the rise of the hippie movement, the students' and the anti-Vietnam war protests. Therefore, the US-American alternative of phenomenological sociology in distinction to positivist sociology can be regarded as the result of the search for alternative approaches in many life-worlds (Dreher 2021: 5; Eberle 2021: 30).

A programme with the prospect of combining phenomenology and sociology was presented by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, who collaborated to publish *The Social Construction of Reality* (1966). It is compatible with Schütz's proto-sociology and builds on his reality of everyday life as the foundation of knowledge. Based on his insights, they elaborate a sociology of knowledge that integrates two perspectives. On the one hand, they portray society as an objective reality, which refers to institutions and processes of legitimisation. On the other hand, there is society as a subjective reality referring to processes of internalisation in line with one's socialisation (Berger & Luckmann 1966: 7; Eberle 2014b: 189). Hence, their sociological theory offers a dialectical reading that bridges between subjectivism and objectivism (Dreher 2016: 54). This perspective is, above all, fruitful for addressing how power operates in the life-world, and we will draw on these insights at a later stage.

With *The Social Construction of Reality*, Berger & Luckmann also wanted to turn against the dominant currents in sociology at the time, which were characterised by an ensemble of reductionist positivism as a philosophy of science paired with Parson's structural functionalism as a theoretical basis (Luckmann 2008: 33). As Luckmann (2008: 33) states, they complained about the lack of a realist perspective in sociology:

We asked ourselves how a reality that emerges in long intergenerational human activities acquires something like objectivity. How could something, a historical socially solidified reality, emerge from nature through human consciousness and collective action, become the 'second nature' of human beings? (own translation).

Although their work is a fundamental reference in social constructivism, which emerged only after the publication, Luckmann – in contrast to the delusive title – identifies himself as a follower of a rather realist ontology. Indeed, he distances himself from the contemporary interpretations of social constructivism and takes an unequivocal position towards it.

Berger and I could not know anything about constructivism at the time, which did not yet exist, and today do not want to know anything about the latter epistemologically and scientific-theoretically untenable developments, which were later named as such (Luckmann 2008: 33).

2.1.3 The Life-world from the Perspective of Human Geography

Having outlined Schütz's methodological journey and the relevant predecessors and successors of his work, it is time to turn to the life-world theory itself, but from the perspective of human geography. It begins with a brief introduction to Schütz's framing of the life-world in order to approach his terminology. Then the understanding of the life-world by humanistic geographers is presented, before the theoretical proposal of a geography of lived experience is outlined in detail (cf. chapter 2.1.4.).

The version of the life-world developed by Schütz is lauded by Hitzler & Eberle (2004: 67) as "one of the most important background theories of qualitative research". However, according to Moran (2000: 181–182), this credit owes much to earlier elaborations on the life-world from the late Edmund Husserl, which laid the foundations and inspirational sources of Schütz life's work. Thus, Husserl first framed his concept as *Erfahrungswelt* (world of experience) in *Ideas I* around 1913. Only in his later work *Crisis*, in the 1930s, did the concept of the *Lebenswelt* (life-world) become immanent. He regarded it "as the universal framework of human en-

deavour” (Moran 2000: 182). For both thinkers, the life-world constitutes the ordered world of everyday life, and Schütz uses the terms life-world and world of everyday life interchangeably. According to Schütz (1970: 320), this life-world encompasses

[t]he total sphere of experiences of an individual which is circumscribed by the objects, persons, and events encountered in the pursuit of the pragmatic objectives of living. It is a ‘world’ in which a person is ‘wide-awake’, and which asserts itself as the ‘paramount reality’ of his life.

The life-world represents the world as it appears to each individual in their “natural attitude” as “taken-for-granted” (Münch 2003: 200). In the natural attitude, the reality of everyday life is unquestioned. This reality is taken-for-granted, and the dimensions of experiences are pre-reflective. The objects and the people that I encounter, I see them as self-evident and real because I can assume that this world existed before me, and I do not question its persistence after me (Schütz & Luckmann 1973: 4; Buttner 1976: 291).

The life-world is, first of all, an individual world and a subjective world. Therefore, everyone’s life-world is different and unique. The structures of my life-world as a male geographer born, raised, and socialised in Germany are obviously distinct from those I encountered and partnered with during my fieldwork in Maputo. The life-world of someone who reads this text is again different and unique, just being one “of the multiple and different lifeworlds that belong to different human existences and realities” (van Manen 2016: 101). But human beings are social beings and live together in an intersubjectively shared world. The shared horizons of the life-world of a group consisting of all those typifications commonly used by people through their mutual existence (Münch 2003: 201). The life-world is, therefore, “a matter of *living together*” (Hitzler & Eberle 2004: 70).

The life-world is an intersubjectively shared world, a store of knowledge consisting of typifications, skills, important knowledge and recipes for looking at and interpreting the world and acting in it (Münch 2003: 201). More precisely,

the correlates of an individual’s experience correspond to the correlates of the experience of others in ways that may be typologized. From this, meaning schemata may be created, which are shared by different subjects and are therefore intersubjectively valid, and these correlate to a greater or lesser extent with individual, biographically conditioned, meaning structures (Hitzler & Eberle 2004: 70).

The important notion of intersubjectivity is something that Schütz overlooked and extended from Husserl (Schütz 1962: VIII). Husserl’s understanding of the life-world emphasised the individual perspective of the “transcendental ego”. His attempt to

achieve objective knowledge was based on the method of phenomenological reduction. By bracketing any previous knowledge, to gain access to the pure consciousness of the ego from where the reconstruction of reality can be achieved. With an overemphasis on the individual, however, Husserl's philosophy was confronted with the question of how different egos can arrive at the point of an intersubjective and shared worldview (Münch 2003: 200).

Schütz solved this problem by regarding intersubjectivity as something pre-given in everyday life. He writes that "the life-world is at the outset intersubjective" (Schütz & Luckmann 1973: 59) and that this "philosophical problem of intersubjectivity is the clue for social reality" (Schütz 1962: XXX). Therefore, he rejects Husserl's sphere of transcendental phenomenology and thereby circumvents the prerequisite of methodological reduction (Costelloe 1996: 252–253). Schütz inserts his approach at the level of the life-world itself. He saw it as the scientist's task to investigate "the details of an intersubjective world already in place" (Costelloe 1996: 248). He transformed the life-world from a pure philosophical phenomenology into a sociology aimed at disclosing the intersubjectively shared knowledge of social reality (Münch 2003: 192). But let's see how Schütz puts this goal into words:

The primary goal of the social sciences is to obtain organized knowledge of social reality. By the term 'social reality' I wish to be understood the sum total of objects and occurrences within the social cultural world as experienced by the common-sense thinking of men living their daily lives among their fellow-men, connected with them in manifold relations of interaction. It is the world of cultural objects and social institutions into which we all are born, within which we have to find our bearings, and with which we have to come to terms (Schütz 1962: 53).

Another aspect that Schütz expanded on Husserl is the extension of the life-world by a spatial and temporal dimension (Atkinson 2018: 402) and by integrating them with intersubjectivity, alias the social dimension of the life-world. Each life-world enfolds in space, has roots in the past and is directed towards the future (Buttimer 1976: 281). The life-world's spatial, temporal, and social stratification represents one of the most central components of Schütz's theory. In light of this dissertation, the stratification of the life-world into these dimensions is key. In the following chapter, an in-depth examination of spatial, temporal, and social experiences succeeds from a geographic perspective. Through its situatedness in the traditions of phenomenology and sociology, the spatiality of the life-world, in particular, has not been addressed satisfactorily. This dissertation ultimately aims to remedy this "spatial blindness" of sociology.

The influence of phenomenology and hermeneutics on human geography became manifested in the 1970s with the emergence of humanistic geography. It was intend-

ed to overcome the dominant positivist streams of thought and their concomitant focus on the measuring of spatial phenomena through solely quantitative research approaches (Seamon 2015: 36). A humanistic geography can, according to Dörfler & Rothfuß (2018: 96), best be understood as a “a phenomenologically based human geography with an anti-positivist orientation and a focus on life-world problems and questions of meaning” (own translation).

It was also aimed to renew emphasis on the subject and its corporeal experiences based on the philosophies of Husserl, Schütz, and Merleau-Ponty, which would also involve new approaches to field research through more oral, textual, and visual forms of data collection (Dörfler & Rothfuß 2017: 416). With the introduction of the term life-world, the focus of humanistic geographers turned to the interrelatedness of place, meaning, and the human body, which then became the new “ground zero of geographic investigation” (Jones 2001: 121–122).

The most influential works from the early days of humanistic geography stem from Edward Relph (*Place and Placelessness*, 1976), Yi-Fu Tuan (*Space and Place*, 1977), David Seamon (*A Geography of the Life-world*, 1979), and Anne Buttimer (*Grasping the Dynamism of Lifeworld*, 1976). Further, Edward Casey (*Getting Back into Place*, 1993), Jeff Malpas (*Place and Experience*, 2018[1999]), or as well in the work of phenomenological philosopher Merleau-Ponty (*Phenomenology of Perception*, 2012[1945]).

The paradigmatic change towards a humanistic geography was most prominent among northern American scholars. Therefore, Hasse (2017) complains that there is an absence of phenomenology within the circles of German human geographers. But even on the American continent, it had fallen into decay in the late 1980s, when many of its perspectives were confronted with reluctance by the more dominant Marxist structuralist and feminist approaches (Seamon 2015: 35). Meanwhile, however, a renewed interest in research based on phenomenological and hermeneutic traditions emerges. For instance, there are Dörfler (2015), Dörfler & Rothfuß (2018, 2023), and Haase (2017) among German geographers, but also the unbowed continuity of Seamon’s (2018) work. Moreover, two extensive volumes focusing on place are to be mentioned, edited by Janet Donohoe (*Place and Phenomenology*, 2017) and Bruce B. Janz (*Place, Space and Hermeneutics*, 2017). Of course, I do not claim completeness, as there is no scope for an exhaustive literature review. But it is in large part these mentioned works, among others, which influence the theoretical grounding of this dissertation, and I will refer to them in more detail throughout the following pages.

We will now open up the dialogue between human geography and Schütz’s life-world phenomenology. According to Dörfler & Rothfuß (2018: 96), the latter can potentially serve as a “proto-sociology of space” (own translation), if lived experiences embedded in place are grasped accurately. In fact, addressing the life-world from a geographical perspective provides avenues for prolific spatial inquiries. Geography

is connected to Schütz's phenomenology in a profound and intrinsic way. It already forms an elementary constituent of the pre-scientific natural attitude of the life-world. More than most other disciplines, it takes a commonplace in the profane thoughts as we observe, analyse, and apprehend spatial aspects, objects, and people around us. In our environment's everyday experiences, we use our geographical consciousness as we order and objectivise with consistency and universality before any theoretical reasoning (Lowenthal 1961: 241–242).

This holds true for every human being navigating with curiosity through life while experiencing it from their very own subjective perspective. Or, as Lowenthal (1961: 241) depicts it, "anyone who inspects the world around him is in some measure a geographer". Our life-worldly experiences, however, precede any scientific geography. Instead, the establishment of scientific geography derives first of all from our existential involvement in the geographical real world (Relph 1976: 6). In this vein, Schütz (1962: 134) already wrote, "[t]he place in which I am living has not significance for me as a geographical concept, but as my home". It is, therefore, the task of phenomenological geography to reveal the significance of people's geographic experiences and the geographic portions of the life-world (Seamon 1980: 148–150). For Relph (1976: 117), this represents the authenticity of geography and place experience. He states that scientific geography,

presupposes a geography of immediate experiences of the lived-world. Such an experiential geography is differentiated into places according to our experiences of particular physical settings and landscapes and our intentions towards them. This is an authentic geography, a geography of places which are felt and understood for what they are – that is, as symbolic or functional centres of life for both individuals and communities.

Since this quote already emphasises the extraordinary meaning of places for human existence and, thus, for scientific geography, let's now turn our attention to the concept of place. After a brief disciplinary "placement of place" that underlies this dissertation, I will draw a broad connection with the concept of space before leading over to the relevance of place for a geography of lived experiences. This preliminary orientation is deliberately kept short. It aims to obtain a first conceptual clarity in advance. The manifold connections between the concepts of place, space and the life-world will be presented in much more vigour throughout the subsequent pages.

According to Cresswell (2015: 1), place represents by far one of the most important concepts in geography, but since the underlying philosophic perspectives may vary, different streams of thought conceptualise, interpret, and make use of place differently. Accordingly, Janz (2005: 90) categorised the application of place as a concept into four disciplinary backgrounds: phenomenology and hermeneutics, symbolism

and structuralism, social constructivism and Marxism, and finally, psychology and determinism. This dissertation is arranged around the first group, whose bedrock is characterised as follows:

The benefit of phenomenological work on place is that it does not tend either toward idealizing place or materializing it. Place neither simply exists as an abstract idea, nor as stuff “out there” apart from experience. Approaching place phenomenologically and hermeneutically means to recognize that the experience of place brings out something significant about both the world and the one experiencing it (Janz 2005: 90).

Against this background, what might appear more significant than examining the nature of our existence and our being in the world? Human existence is still tied to specific locations. We live, think, act, and interact with others locally, where our life enfolds and takes place (Pfeilschifter et al. 2020: 5; Donohoe 2017: 435). Although they are always located somewhere, the essential qualities and the meaning of places go beyond a mere description of them in terms of their location (Relph 1976: 3). How we get socialised, how we get to know the world, how we get to know the surrounding others, and ultimately, how we get to know ourselves; our existence is tied to the places that surround us. Therefore, place experience plays a permeating role throughout our life until the place in which we shall die (Seamon 2018: 87; Casey 1993ix)

Whereas phenomenology represents a conceptual framing for grasping human experiences, consciousness, and meaning, a phenomenology of place “draws on situations and experiences relating to specific places and place experiences” (Seamon 2018: 2). “*To be is to be in place*” and that “*there is no being without place*” are existential propositions that Casey (1993: 14) traces back to the Pythagorean philosopher Archytas of Tarentum (428–347 B.C.). Likewise, Aristoteles already claimed place to be “*prior to all things*”, and that “the power of place will be a remarkable one” (Casey 1993: 13).

Space and place are related and call each other for definition (Tuan 1977: 6). If the world represents a sequence of aggregated places and if we traverse through them, so Sack (1997: 31), “they tend to blur together so that our experience is one of movement through space”. While spaces comprise areas and volumes, places have spaces between them. In this regard, a place seems more concrete, while space appears to be something rather abstract. From the perspective of experience, if we narrow the perspective down from space to place, things appear and become better graspable. We can rather ascribe meaning to place as opposed to the superficiality of space (Tuan 1977: 6; Cresswell 2015: 15).

Places represent the centres of meaning in space (Relph 1976: 22), but too often, places are subsumed, and they tend to become only a narrower understanding of space that does not deviate much from their physical location (Malpas 2018 [1999]: 23). Tuan (1977: 6) differentiates differently, by linking space to movement

and place to pause: “if we think of space as that which allows movement, then place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place”.

These thoughts bring the temporal dimension into play. Movement through space takes time, while a pause in place requires the temporal interruption of movement. Hence, both space and place are indiscernible from time. We are always immersed in space and time, whether we move or pause. But since our human existence, thoughts, and experiences are intrinsically tied to place, space and time are also not separable from place (Malpas 2018 [1999]: 18). Therefore, place constitutes the medium through which space and time unfold at first. Ultimately, Seamon (2018: 2) defines place as “*any environmental locus that gathers human experiences, actions, and meanings spatially and temporally*”.

With the spatial, temporal, and social dimensions of place at hand, we have arrived at an understanding of place as the stage of our everyday life-world (Relph 1976: 22). Place is a pivotal constituent of the life-world. It represents a powerful phenomenological concept because it opens up opportunities “to articulate more precisely the experienced wholeness of lifeworlds”³ (Seamon 2018: 13). The following pages are dedicated to this endeavour, the conceptualisation of life-world geography of lived experiences grounded in place.

2.1.4 Towards a Geography of Lived Experiences

The stratification of the life-world into different dimensions is one of the most central aspects of Schütz’s theory (Dreher 2011: 496). He extended Husserl’s earlier work with spatial, temporal, and social structuring (Atkinson 2018: 402), which makes it extremely appealing from the perspective of social geography. In particular, lived space – the spatiality of subjective experiences – offers new ways of inquiry that sociology does not pay the same attention to. This overlooked spatial value is carved out at this point: the geographical perspective of the life-world, which Buttner (1976: 287) considers to be “the latent substratum of experience”.

The everyday life-world represents the province of meaning, retaining the taken-for-granted accent of reality. In everyday life situations and relations, the spatial, temporal, and social arrangements of the lived experiences constitute the individual’s life-world. In this cognitive style of meaningful experiences, every individual has a subjective perspective (Schütz & Luckmann 1973: 35–37). Life-world, therefore, refers primarily to the subject’s horizons of perception, orientation, and action. The

3 Apart from the spelling “life-world”, the spelling “lifeworld” is used in some quotations in order to reproduce the term exactly as it appears in the original source.

life-world does not exist without the subject, and the subject does not exist without its life-world. However, the subject is not its life-world, but rather, it has its life-world (Hitzler & Eisewicht 2020: 14).

But before deciphering in more detail how I conceive the fundamentals of a “geography of lived experiences”, Schütz’s original structuring of the life-world needs to be supplemented by an additional dimension of meaningful everyday experiences: the corporeal experience of the world through the “lived body”, as suggested by van Manen (2016: 101). The subject and its body as a bodily subject represent the essential medium through which space, time, and people are experienced through meaningful bodily experiences (Merleau-Ponty 2012 [1945]: 209). Hence, it is inevitable to integrate the notion of the “lived body” into the other dimensions of the life-world. Based on these underlying principles, van Manen (2016: 101–105) speaks of four fundamental life-world themes, which he calls “existentials”.⁴ Accordingly, our everyday life-world is experienced by our lived body (corporeality), as we experience lived space (spatiality), lived time (temporality), and lived relations (relationality), alias the social dimension. It is these four ingredients by which all human beings experience the world, regardless of their historical, social, or cultural background. As “universal themes of life” (van Manen 2014: 303), they pertain to everyone’s life-world.

Places constitute the stage for our experiences of the everyday social world (Relph 1976: 22). Since place forms the integral constituent of the life-world, it already accommodates van Manen’s life-world existentials. Whatever we experience with our body and however we experience space, time, and other people, it is essential that all these experiences are always grounded in place. Moreover, “places gather” these dimensions, and it is through their “holding together” in place that these dimensions meld into a particular configuration of lived experiences (Casey 1996: 25–26). It is the gathering and hold of place in particular, that makes the lived experiences meaningful, emotional, memorable, and unique. Therefore, lived body, lived space, lived time, and lived relations may be differentiated from each other as categories, but a separate treatment of them does not do justice to the complexity of the lived world. “They all form an intricate unity which we call the life-world” (van Manen 2016: 105).

In a similar vein, Sullivan (2017: 5) argues that “space, time, and place are indissoluble elements, inextricably bound together, and should be treated as such”. Therefore, it is the essential precondition to understanding all four existentials as always acting simultaneously upon me as an emplaced subject. At any time, just as Schütz & Luckmann (1973: 19) summarise, “I find myself in a spatiotemporal and

4 In another work, van Manen (2014: 302) adds the notion of “lived things” as a fifth dimension to refer to the materiality of the life-world. In the context of this dissertation, an in-depth engagement with spatiality already encompasses the material artefacts and objects of the life-world.

social situation, in a naturally and socially articulated surrounding world". To harness these dimensions for the conception of a geography of the life-world, however, the following sections elaborate them consecutively. It starts with the role of the lived body as the primordial medium of experiencing space and place. Then, the bodily subject becomes emplaced into the spatial dimension of the life-world of lived space. The temporal and social dimensions are successively added to the spatial dimension. Bearing in mind "that one existential always calls forth the other aspects" (van Manen 2016: 105), they are put into relation with each other to arrive at a point where the complexity of a geography of lived experiences becomes more comprehensive.

The Role of the "Lived Body" for Experiencing Space and Place

The paramount perspective of the province of meaning of the everyday life-world is the wide-awaken bodily subject. Therefore, it is obvious that "one cannot analyse a province but from the standpoint of the individual" (Benta 2018: 76). From a phenomenological perspective, the meaning of the body has to be further differentiated, which becomes more vivid in the German language. On the one hand, the term *Körper* refers to the corporeal body as a physical object. On the other hand, *Leib* refers to the body as it is lived (Casey 1996: 22). Philosopher Aho (2017: 117) distinguishes precisely between both terms:

With etymological roots in the words for 'life' (*Leben*) and 'experience' (*Erlebnis*), *Leib* is not a reference to an objectively present corporeal thing, but to the lived-body, to *one's own* bodily experiences, feelings, and perceptions as they are expressed, lived, and made intelligible within the context of a 'lifeworld' (*Lebenswelt*).

Instead of being an abstract recipient merely reacting to inputs of the social world, as in *Körper*, the *Leib* represents a somatic entity. It represents the medium for all possible sensory perceptions involving seeing, hearing, and smelling, as well as tactile perceptions and haptics (Dörfler & Rothfuß 2017: 414). Through the full sensory perceptions of the bodily subject, the experience of space and place becomes associated with (social) atmospheres that go beyond a mere visual grasping (Hasse 2017: 354; Dörfler & Rothfuß 2018: 96). Atmospheres convey the particular "sense of place" (Seamon 2022: 3). They are felt via the body and make it possible to capture and describe the non-visible features of places and spaces and their unique ambiances and characteristics. Places reflect atmospheres in a meaningful way, such as being pleasant and convenient or sinister and narrow. They represent a spatial dimension of the life-world, "of which the subject – and only the subject! – can give evidence" (Dörfler & Rothfuß 2017: 414).

There is hardly anyone who has appreciated the role of the lived body more as Merleau-Ponty did it in his *Phenomenology of Perception*. For Merleau-Ponty (2012 [1945]: 254), perception is primary and in terms of a phenomenological geography, he considers the “experience of space prior to any theoretical elaboration”. This does not mean, however, that the body’s ability of perception is prior to the existence of the social world. On the contrary, perception is never pre-social, and the given-ness of the social world permeates all acts of perception. The primacy of perception rather refers to the primacy of the lived body. Perceiving with and through the body precedes the verbal conceptualization of the perceived. All acts of perception are therefore indeed pre-discursive and pre-conceptual, but never detached from social constraints (Casey 1996: 18–19).

People are never separated but always entwined with their world. This “human-immersion-in-the-world” (Seamon 2018: 12) contains relations of reciprocity and mutual interdependence between the world and our intentions towards it. Heidegger (2013), for instance, has called it “being-in-the-world” and Merleau-Ponty addressed it through the lived body. He characterises the relational character of our being-in-the world as a primordial and indispensable dimension of existence:

I can certainly turn away from the social world, but I cannot cease to be situated in relation to it. Our relation to the social, like our relation to the world, is deeper than every explicit perception and deeper than every judgment. It is just as false to place us within society like an object in the midst of other objects, as it is to put society in us as an object of thought, and the error on both sides consists in treating the social as an object. We must return to the social world with which we are in contact through the simple fact of our existence, and that we inseparably bear along with us prior to every objectification (Merleau-Ponty 2012 [1945]: 379).

The Spatiality of the Life-world as “Lived Space”

After having outlined the role of the lived body and the nature of its immersion into the world, the preconditions for a closer examination of the spatiality of the life-world are fulfilled. Spatiality refers to the extension of the life-world in space (Benta 2018: 76). “Lived space” asks for the meaning of spatial experiences of individuals (van Manen 2014: 305). In this sense, space constitutes, according to Buttmer (1976: 282) “a dynamic continuum in which the experiencer lives and moves and searches for meaning”. In a similar vein, Relph (1976: 12) coined the term “existential space”. He delineates it as “the inner structure of space as it appears to us in our concrete experiences of the world as members of a cultural group”. Bollnow (2011 [1963]: 21) prefers the term “experienced space” over lived space, as “the actual concrete space in which our life takes place”. What all conceptualisations have in common is an emphasis on the relationship of the human being with his surroundings.

Space, in this sense, gives structure and orientation to our human existence (Bollnow 2011 [1963]: 22). In the outline of his stratifications of the life-world, Schütz conceived this relation in the following way:

The place in which I find myself, my actual 'here', is the starting point for my orientation in space. It is the zero-point of the system of coordinates within which the dimensions of orientation, the distances and perspectives of objects, become determined in the field that surrounds me. Relative to my animate organism, I classify the elements of my surroundings under the categories right, left, above, below, in front of, behind, near, far, etc. (Schütz & Luckmann 1973: 36–37).

All acting individuals experience the space that surrounds them, and they typify these experiences, just as they do it with the temporal and social arrangements of the life-world they are immersed in (Dörfler & Rothfuß 2021: 156). With an increase in the distance from the personal zero-point of the bodily subject, the degree of familiarity and knowledge about the spatial arrangements and objects tend to decrease. Our horizon sets the spatial boundary of the life-world, and we have no knowledge of what is beyond it. But the horizon is also constitutional for the appearance of the things inside it. It makes the sky, the landscape, the houses, and the people appear within it and allows us to typify them. Within the shell of our horizon, the availability of space constitutes a resource, and we can realise plans and act on them (Benta 2018: 79).

The spatiality of the life-world can be imagined in terms of spatial spheres that surround the individual in circular arrangements. They are stratified as concentric spaces of varying degrees of intimacy, filled with objects and people that the individual experiences and to which he or she makes corresponding typifications. While Dörfler & Rothfuß (2018: 101) frame them as “spatial rings” (own translation), Buttimer (1976: 284) illustrates them as “con-centric ‘layers’ of lived space, from room to house, neighbourhood, city, region and nation”.

The home represents the kernel from where the spatial arrangements of the life-world expand outwards. It refers to the physical place where humans live their everyday lives and sleep at night (Benta 2018: 81). “Dwelling” represents the more apt phenomenological term as it refers to the relationship of humans with their homes and the ways they live in their homes (Bollnow 2011 [1963]: 121). But the meaning of dwelling goes beyond the meaning of home. Heidegger (1993: 349) traces its significance back to the Old High German word *buan/bauen*, whose proper meaning has been lost over time:

To be a human being means to be on earth as a mortal. It means to dwell. The old word *bauen*, which says the man *is* insofar as he *dwells*, this old word *bauen*, however, *also* means to cherish and protect, to preserve and care for, specifically to till the soil, to cultivate the vine.

Dwelling refers to the place where humans are rooted and feel at home (Bollnow 2011 [1963]: 121). For built places and houses to be dwelling places, they must allow for a repeated return for inhabitancy and provide a feeling of familiarity and security (Casey 1993: 15–16). The dwelling is the place where people are at home and where they always can return home. It stands in the centre of one's world (Bollnow 2011 [1963]: 120). Heidegger elaborated his ideas of the intrinsic relationship between human existence and a particular place based on the example of dwelling peasants' farmhouses in the Black Forest. It represents a rather ancient and ideal form of dwelling and rootedness, which most of the urban dwellers of our modern society simply cannot retreat to (Cresswell 2015: 94–95).

However, what is still decisive is the centredness of the life-world and the distinction between the comforting home and the rather unknown world. According to Benta (2018: 81), this is, at least for most settled populations, “anthropologically universal”, and it permeates not only the spatiality but also the sociality and the temporality of the life-world. In fact, there are people within our surroundings who provide us with the same comfort as our place of home. Likewise, there are certain times in our personal history or sacred times like holidays, that cause feelings we associate with being at home with our close and beloved ones (Benta 2018: 81). The latter, the experience of time as “lived time” will now become added to our geography of lived experiences.

Adding the Temporality of the Life-world as “Lived Time”

Human life is centred. Each human being, wherever situated and at home, experiences the surrounding space from an individual zero point. Its location defines what is near and far within the spatial spheres that encircle it (Bollnow 2011 [1963]: 55). In Schütz's terminology, the nearest spatial strata represent “the world within actual reach” and the more distant ones “the world within potential reach”. By adding the life-world's temporal dimension, the world within potential reach can either derive from the remembered past as “restorable reach” or be directed towards the future as the world within “attainable reach” (Schütz & Luckmann 1973: 36–39). The world within potential reach can be brought into actual reach by the movement of the subject in the form of “any spatial displacement of the body” (Seamon 1979: 33) towards another attainable position.

Based on George Herbert Mead's (1932: 120–124) “manipulatory area”, which is concerned with the experience of reality through the perception of physical objects around the centred bodily organism, Schütz elaborated his modified version as the so-called “*Wirkzone*” (“zone of operation”). This denotes the spatio-temporal compression of distances. Distant but attainable objects can be brought into actual reach through a change of location deriving from kinaesthetic and locomotive abilities (Schütz & Luckmann 1973: 41–43). To sum it up with Schütz's words:

It is clear that the world within my reach, inclusive of my zone of operation, changes because of my changes in location. By means of the movement of my animate organism, I transfer the center, *o*, of my system of coordination to *o'*, and this circumstance alone is sufficient to alter the coordinate values belonging to this system (Schütz & Luckmann 1973: 43).

Both of the previous quotations from Schütz illustrate his choice of words, using a language of coordinates to provide a three-dimensional image of the world. This peculiar diction of a centre *o* in a system of coordinates is also echoed in the work of Mead (1932: 120). It is a misleading suggestion, however, to imagine the surrounding life-world as geometrical Euclidean/Newtonian isotropic and homogenous space, which is primarily mathematical (Lefebvre 1991: 1; Benta 2018: 76–77). This would evoke the attempt to measure the spatial and temporal dimension of the life-world based on a positivist ontology. With abstract geometric relations and absolute space and time distances between different objects and people according to their location in the coordinate system of a three-dimensional life-world grid (Buttimer 1976: 281–282).

Under those conditions, the distances of the manoeuvring through the spatial spheres of the life-world (measured in meters and centimetres) would be equivalent to the temporal duration of the relocation (measured in minutes and seconds) (Bollnow 2011 [1963]: 17). Of course, there is the objective time or cosmic time, which represents the “spatialized, homogenous time” (Schütz 1945: 540). On the other hand, however, the experience of time, like the experience of space, bears a subjective dimension that does not coincide with abstract mathematical space (Bollnow 2011 [1963]: 17).

As Atkinson (2016: 17) correctly states, “movement necessarily takes place in time”. It takes a certain time to transcend a particular spatial distance. Yet, the absolute time it takes depends on the modality of the movement, whether it be by car or on foot. Conversely, time unfolds in space, and a certain spatial distance can be transcended within a particular time, whereby a car can reach further than a pedestrian during the same period. But the experience of time as lived time is individually felt and does not necessarily depend on the traversed spatial distance nor the means of the locomotion. Each time we transcend an equal spatial distance, our perception of the time it takes or how we perceive it all might differ (van Manen 2014: 306). In their everyday activities, human beings generate certain circulation patterns, following distinct routes to particular places repeatedly. According to the frequency of traversing a distance via the same route, and in dependence on the importance of the place of destination, the distance may shrink or expand (Buttimer 1980: 27). Seamon’s (1979: 54) expression of “time-space routines” refers exactly to these habitual routines that are free from our consciousness and attention directed to time and space.

Hence, lived space and lived time are likewise interwoven, but in contrast to their absolute dimensions, they are not homogenous nor isotropic. They are subjective and, therefore, experienced differently by each person. According to Tuan (1977: 119), “[p]eople differ in their awareness of space and time and in the way they elaborate a spatio-temporal world”. The particular intertwinement of the subjective dimensions of space and time defines each person’s individual lived experiences and the spatio-temporal structure of their life-worlds (Tuan 1977: 130–131). Lived time is tied to Schütz’s concept of inner time (*durée* in Bergson’s work). It connects actual experiences with recollections of the past and anticipations of the future (Schütz 1945: 540).

Regarding the former, the restorable reach entails meaningful individual or group experiences from relevant events in relevant places from the past (Benta 2018: 76). These experiences of the remembered past are projected towards the future, which is still unknown. Still, I can bring it into attainable reach, assuming that “I can always do it again”. The future is, therefore, always determined by my biographical situation and the future plans are ultimately conditioned by my past experiences (Schütz & Luckmann 1973: 39). The future also indicates the lifetime of humans on earth, the one-directional and forward directed course of human life (Tuan 1977: 131). Hence, lived time conveys a fundamental telos involving aspirations, plans, and goals people set (van Manen 2014: 306). These are ultimately conditioned by our awareness of finiteness, what Schütz (1962: 228) calls the fundamental anxiety, the fact that “I know that I shall die and I fear to die”.

The awareness of temporal finitude and the spatial boundaries of the life-world confine the space-time horizons of each human being (Buttimer 1976: 286). According to Hägerstrand (1970: 10), we manoeuvre through a spatio-temporal world on a path from a starting point with birth to an ending point with death. Therefore, not only during our life but also throughout the duration of just one day, space and time represent more or less limited resources that we have to draw on to realize our plans and goals (Johnston et al. 1994: 625). Space and time constrain our capabilities; they determine our ability to move and confine the realisation of our plans to the places of our location (Hägerstrand 1970: 12). Also, Bourdieu (2018: 106) admits that human beings, as “biologically individuated bodies”, are condemned to the place they occupy as “they do not have the property of physical ubiquity, which would allow them to be at several loci at the same time”.

Conjoining Hägerstrand’s ideas of a “time geography” with the work of Schütz and Tuan helps to draw a more realistic picture of the life-world by mapping out the individual’s selection of paths, places and plans contingent on the spatial and temporal resources at hand. It becomes more evident what becomes possible to realise within everyday time-spaces, what distances can be traversed, and which places can be reached within the spatial spheres encircling the home. Here, accessibility and mobility play a crucial role in time-space compression as well as competition and conflicts over the advantages and profits of place localisations (Buttimer 1976: 286;

Bourdieu 2018: 106). Finally, it shows that lived space is not only intermingled with lived time but that both are also intermingled with place, through the bodily subject, inescapably being bound to a location.

Social Space and the Sociality of the Life-world

Through our corporeality (lived body), we experience the spatiality (lived space) and the temporality (lived time) of our life-world. As mentioned above, we can experience objects in the spatial dimension by their location in proximity and distance, and we can apprehend them in the temporal dimension as remembered things from the past and projected towards the future. Since we are social beings, these typifications also refer to our experience of other people. Indeed, the language of proximity and distance applies not only to the spatial and temporal but also the social dimension of the life-world. We differentiate the objects and people around us by their distance in space and time but also by their social distance. Hence, by degrees “of intimacy and anonymity, of strangeness and familiarity, of *social* proximity and distance” (Schütz & Luckmann 1973: 40–41).

Our life-world’s spatial and social dimensions represent the physical and social spaces surrounding us. Both “physical space” and “social space” stand in a metaphorical relationship with each other expressed in our language of spatial and, accordingly, social proximity and distance (Bauman 1993: 145). The spatial distance to another person may correlate with the social distance, but their relatedness can also be the inverse. On the one hand, we can have a close friend living in a distant place. On the other hand, individuals living in our closest spatial surroundings can be socially very distant from us (Tuan 1977: 50). We have already elaborated on why lived space and lived time do not coincide with abstract physical space (Bollnow 2011 [1963]: 17; Benta 2018: 76–77). The same holds for the subjectivity of lived relations in social space. Life does not enfold in geometrics but in meaningful experiences, and the degree of intimacy of our relationships with others cannot be mapped in concentric circles around us, where we are placed in the centre of our social world.

In distinguishing spatial and social proximity and distance, Tuan (1977: 50) states that it “may not be possible to decide which sense is primary and which derivative”. For Bourdieu (2018: 108), it is clear that the language used to describe social space “is loaded with metaphors borrowed from physical space”. But from a phenomenological perspective, it is quite the opposite. As pointed out earlier, our existential social engagement in the world precedes any scientific understanding of it (Relph 1976: 6). In this vein, Bauman (1993: 145) argues that “physical space” represents only an abstraction of “social space”. We cannot experience the former directly but only after a systematic reduction of the temporal and social dimensions of the life-world from the latter. He elaborates precisely that

the idea of a ‘physical space’ could be arrived at solely through phenomenological reduction of daily experience to pure quantity, during which distance is ‘depopulated’ and ‘extemporalized’ – that is, systematically cleansed of all contingent and transitory traits; only at the end of such reduction the ‘objective space’, the ‘space as such’ may be conceived of – as ‘pure space’, ‘empty space’, space devoid of any content relative to time and circumstance (Bauman 1993: 145).

A geography of lived experiences is not interested in empty space but in social space and the typifications of things and people that fill this space with meaning. The notion of social proximity is, therefore, not a function of spatial proximity but rather a function of the knowledge we have of something or someone. It is a question of our shared biographies and of how much we have been through together (Dörfler & Rothfuß 2021: 157). According to Schütz (1962: 134, 1967: 142–143), the social world is arranged around the individual in its centre. The relationships with others are typified by the intensity of the experience and the extent of knowledge of another according to various degrees of intimacy and anonymity. He discerns between the social world of associates (*Umwelt*), the social world of contemporaries (*Mitwelt*), the social world of predecessors (*Vorwelt*), and the social world of successors (*Folgewelt*). All people experience each other and act towards their counterpart in the way they have subjectively assigned him or her to one of these social world realms.

The *Umwelt* [world of associates] is the immediate world within which direct and relatively intimate experience of Others is possible. The *Mitwelt* [world of contemporaries] is a world of mediate, but contemporary, experience within which indirect and relatively anonymous experience of Others can be obtained. The *Vorwelt* [world of predecessors] refers to experiences of the historical past. The *Folgewelt* [world of successors] refers to the future, of which no experience is possible, but toward which an orientation may exist (Schütz 1962: 134).

Schütz’s typifications represent ideal types between the intimacy and anonymity poles of social space, and we establish numerous categories and classes for others (Bauman 1993: 148–149). Towards the anonymity pole, the other becomes a stranger, of whom we barely have knowledge. Consequently, we don’t know how to act, much less how to interact. The assignment into categories derives from the knowledge we have acquired of others. Within the realm of anonymity, we can generally state about the others that we do not know them. Instead, “we know *of* them” (Bauman 1993: 149).

The life-world is not a private world. It is an intersubjective and shared social world (Schütz & Luckmann 1973: 4). It is a social world and, therefore, also a relational world. My fellow human beings belong to my life-world as much as I am an inseparable element in theirs. We are intertwined, derive meaning from each other

and plan our acts according to each other in a relational and reciprocal way that we cannot avoid. "The social world in which I live as one connected with others through manifold relations is for me an object to be interpreted as meaningful. It makes sense to me, but by the same token I am sure it makes sense to others too" (Schütz 1976: 15).

Schütz differentiates between "interactional relationships" (Schütz 1970: 163) and "indirect social relationships" (Schütz 1970: 218). The prototypical case of an interactional relationship takes place in a face-to-face situation, in which the other appears in full reality (Berger & Luckmann 1966: 43). Direct interaction in the face-to-face relationship presupposes simultaneity in the form of "spatial and temporal immediacy" with one's counterpart. With the awareness of the respective other and an intentional consciousness directed towards him, the ego takes up the attitude of a "Thou-orientation". When the directed attention of the "Thou-orientation" becomes reciprocal, both enter into a "pure We-relationship" (Schütz 1967: 163–164, 1976: 23–25). In a "pure We-relationship", both individuals are aware of each other and take part in each other's lives for a limited time (Schütz 1967: 164). It represents the foundation for "concrete social relations in face-to-face situations" (Schütz 1976: 28). In indirect social relationships of the "They-orientation", however, the other is not apprehended within a subjective context of meaning, and the ego is not aware of the other's ongoing flow of consciousness. "They-orientation" refers to the ego's own experience of social reality. It is not directed towards someone as "Thou", as being a concrete individual, but in an objective context of meaning (Schütz 1967: 183–184).

We can transfer these categories from the individual level of social encounters to the collective level of group relationships. The members of a group (in-group) share their subjective meanings and refer to each other in terms of "We". Members of other groups (out-group) or individuals outside the group, however, share an objective meaning of the group in question. From the point of view of outsiders, they refer to its members as "They" (Schütz 1976: 254–255). Schütz's (1976: 251–252) understanding of a group is as follows:

the subjective meaning the group has for its members consists in their knowledge of a common situation, and with it of a common system of typifications and relevances. This situation has its history in which the individual members' biographies participate; and the system of typification and relevances determining the situation forms a common relative natural conception of the world. Here the individual members are 'at home,' that is, they find their bearings without difficulty in the common surroundings, guided by a set of recipes of more or less institutionalized habits, mores, folkways, etc., that help them come to terms with beings and fellow-men belonging to the same situation. The system of typifications and relevances shared with the other members of the group defines the social roles, positions, and statutes of each. This acceptance of a common system of relevances leads the members of the group to a homogeneous self-typification.

To sum it up, both individuals and groups dwell in places. They have their home and feel “at home” in the places and in the group, they belong to. An individual has a life-world, such as a group can have a collective life-world. These life-worlds are sustained by the places that embrace the individual and collective life-worlds. Whereas the individual’s life-world refers to the subjective geography of lived experiences, the collective life-world refers to the intersubjectively shared experiences of a group or community in the places significant to them (Seamon 2018: 12; Benta 2018: 76).

The home or the neighbourhood represents the centre of the social world of the individual dweller and the neighbourhood community. The kernel of the social space stretches around each individual and group as a meaningful experiential space. Social space is multidimensional in that it encompasses and unifies all the other dimensions of lived experiences. Since the bodily subject represents the essential medium through which space, time, and people are experienced (Merleau-Ponty 2012 [1945]: 208), the life-world’s social space amalgamates all the other dimensions. This is why Benta (2018: 76) suggests understanding the life-world in terms of “a space-time-society homology”.

2.2 Conceptualising Peri-urban Life-worlds

Prevailing conceptualisations of peri-urban spaces inform the second theoretical pillar. In this regard, contemporary urban studies literature extends the preceding theoretical considerations of life-world phenomenology and human geography. The aim is to arrive at a theoretically grounded conceptualisation of peri-urban life-worlds that will serve as the basis for the remainder of this thesis. First of all, an introduction to the phenomenon of peri-urbanisation is presented (cf. chapter 2.2.1.). It continues a discussion of current debates in the urban studies literature where peri-urban spaces are marginalised, albeit promising entry points exist for a theoretical approximation (cf. chapter 2.2.2.). Contemporary conceptualisations of peri-urban areas in the Global North and South are presented afterwards (cf. chapter 2.2.3.). Based on their shortcomings, the central arguments follow with the proposition of a phenomenological life-world perspective for empirical inquiries into peri-urban spaces (cf. chapter 2.2.4.).

2.2.1 Urban vs. Rural: Approaching the Phenomenon of Peri-urbanisation

The term “urban” usually evokes mental connections to some ideal-type places and spaces in cities, which come with the imagination of typical urban phenomena and everyday situations. Being it a popular city square, a busy traffic crossroad, or a residential neighbourhood, the individual conception of the urban depends on how one

has experienced the urban or at least how one imagines the urban to be. In contrast to the urban imaginary, there is the “rural” as its antipode. Initial associations with the rural are clearly different and tend to evoke mental associations with places corresponding to small villages, agricultural landscapes, forests, and wide-open spaces rather than densely populated and built-up areas.

As with places, the same holds true for conceptions of urban vs. rural life-worlds and the environments they are placed in regarding social relations, economic activities and livelihoods, or infrastructure and mobility patterns. The places we inhabit are part of our life-world, and whether being an urbanite or a villager, each has an ideal conception of how the other one might be. Whereas the conception of rural life might evoke the idea of intimate neighbourhood relations and place-dependent subsistence farming, the idea of urban life might instead imply more anonymity in the masses and an income that derives rather from commercial activities that allow or even requires more mobility. At least, aspects like the size of the population and its density in built-up areas, along with characteristics of the infrastructure and typical economic activities, tend to be the “main variables conventionally used to distinguish rural from urban” (Allen 2003: 136).

The ideal-type and simplistic dichotomy of being either urban or rural has long ceased to be a reality along the outskirts of rapidly growing and expanding cities. To describe the complex and dynamic processes settled at the urban fringes, the terminology “peri-urban” gained momentum in the 1990s. Previously, land use patterns and human behaviours were studied by social scientists in a clear distinction, and rigid boundaries were set between the urban and the rural. The lack of attention derives much from the former assumption that peri-urban spaces and their associated features merely constitute a temporary phenomenon of transition to turn to pure urban characteristics in a short time. This conception is obsolete since their longer-term persistence became more and more apparent with growing awareness of the importance of the function of these spaces. Particularly in the context of the dynamic urban growth in Africa and Asia, extensive peri-urban areas resulted as the urban structures of the cities were unable to absorb the influx of migrant populations and the quickly rising urban-born populations (Simon 2008: 168–169, 2021: 1–2; Simon et al. 2006: 4–5)

In sub-Saharan Africa, those tendencies became further stimulated by the effects of the 1980s structural adjustment programs imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The debt crisis had severe impacts on state expenditures, “causing situations of stress or crisis in urban and, in particular, peri-urban areas” (Mbiba & Huchzermeyer 2002: 117). The real income of a large portion of the urban population declined suddenly, and the ones who were already poor suffered most of all (Potts 1995: 245). Incapable of affording a home within the existing city, a substantial part of the deprived population resorted to the peri-urban outskirts to construct a shelter or even to rent something affordable (Simon et al. 2006: 9).

In fact, significant changes in migration processes and tendencies of reverse urban-rural migration are related to the economic recession during the debt crisis. Prolonged droughts and devastating civil wars like in Angola and Mozambique, however, continued to have an effect on rural-urban migration at the same time (Potts 1995: 246). The search for survival strategies beyond city limits from both rural and urban migration resulted in the spatial polarisation of the cities across the continent. It led to vast zones combining urban and rural features with mosaic patterns of mixed land uses and livelihoods. All of these factors and the acknowledgement of the vital functions of these areas, which provide not only a habitat but also food sources and other resources and materials, caused the growing scientific interest towards peri-urban spaces (Simon 2021: 1, 2008: 168–169).

2.2.2 The Marginalisation of Peri-urban Spaces in Urban Studies

Peri-urban areas are located in the surroundings of cities. Their emergence is inseparable from the expansion of cities and wider urbanisation processes (Phillips et al. 1999: 5). Therefore, a city always constitutes them. Without a city, its associated population growth and attractiveness for migrants, there will also be no peri-urban area. Paradoxically, the phenomenon of peri-urbanisation receives only poor attention in the prevailing urban research literature. As such, peri-urban areas are not only located at the margins of cities. They are also marginalised by the scientific discourse in a field that should have the greatest interest in better understanding them. After all, since peri-urban areas represent the future habitat of African cities, as I argued in the introduction of this thesis.

In fact, most of the theoretical perspectives on peri-urbanisation are Eurocentric and donor-driven (Mbiba & Huchzermeyer 2002: 113). They largely stem from a research programme which was initiated in 1996 by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) through its Natural Resources Systems Programme (NRSP). With a focus on two case study city regions in Kumasi (Ghana) and Hubli-Dharwad (India), it aimed at analysing peri-urban interface dynamics and systems through a comparative approach. Several studies and publications resulted from a decade of research, such as Brook & Dávila's (2000) *The Peri-Urban Interface: A Tale of Two Cities*. Little more than a decade ago, it was characterised by Simon et al. (2006: 7) to be "probably the only book-length treatment of peri-urban dynamics". A second seminal publication from the same research program, however, followed quickly afterwards (Simon et al. 2004: 236) with the title *Changing frontiers – The Peri Urban Interface Hubli-Dharwad* by Brook et al. (2003a).

In the opening section of the first book, Brook & Dávila (2000) argue that a substantial part of the population growth takes place on the outskirts of urban agglomerations, at the so-called peri-urban interface, where livelihoods predominantly de-

pend on the natural resource base such as land and water for the production of food and fuel but also for inhabiting a piece of land. They further extended that the increasing pressure on land leads to an overexploitation of those resources, which in turn comes with uneven effects for different population groups:

The population pressure means that resources in such zones are often overexploited. Although heterogeneous in its social composition, the peri-urban interface (PUI) constitutes the habitat of a diversity of populations, including lower income groups who are particularly vulnerable to the impacts and negative externalities of both rural and urban systems. This includes risks to health and life and physical hazards related to the occupation of unsuitable sites, lack of access to clean water and basic sanitation and poor housing conditions (Brook & Dávila 2000: 1).

The research conducted by international development agencies provides a clear description of peri-urban dynamics, the configuration of actors, and their needs. It helps to better understand the complexity of the various interrelated processes and allows depicting them in approachable categories of a precise spatial language. Despite this, Mbiba & Huchzermeyer (2002: 127–128) criticise them for their lack of a critical engagement with the contradictions and conflicts that take place in peri-urban areas. Likewise, the attempts to link the peri-urban concept with broader theoretical positions remain sparse. Environmental implications of peri-urbanisation processes and the underlying conditions of poverty, for instance, take priority over analysing their causes (Mbiba & Huchzermeyer 2002: 116).

Moreover, the publications are largely descriptive, emphasising the relevance of development interventions. In line with this perspective, an overemphasis on the deficiencies of peri-urban areas seems further prevailing. The presented definitions, for instance, highlight features such as the overexploitation of resources and the lack of adequate housing. Although “massive social and environmental problems can be found in peri-urban hinterlands” (Ravetz et al. 2013: 13), they are foremost spaces where millions of dwellers manage their lives creatively against these adverse conditions.

The relative neglect of peri-urban spaces in the field of urban research owes much to the prevalence of other dominant debates. In fact, discourses in the social science disciplines that aim to understand cities have hitherto been heavily engaged in disputes around competing perspectives, whilst the increasing prominence of peri-urban areas was overlooked. Above all, there are the confrontational positions between the “global city” from the Global North versus the “ordinary city” from the Global South (Haferburg & Rothfuss 2019: 170).

With the transition to the 21st century, the bulk of the urbanising population has shifted from the Global North to the Global South (Parnell & Robinson 2012: 593). Urban growth now takes place in the “developing world”, but most of the dominant

theories of how to read and understand cities still originate from the “developed world”. For Roy (2005: 147), it is, therefore, indispensable “to move from the Chicago school of urban sociology”, from where much of the theoretical debates emanated throughout the second half of the last century. More recently, the prominent research on Global or World Cities from authors like Friedmann (1986) and Sassen (1991) draws a geography of cities in the global economy with a clear bias on the (economic) importance of cities in the Global North. According to Haferburg & Rothfuss (2019: 171), it is through academic think-tanks like the *Globalization and World Cities Research Network* (GaWC), that “the world class mantra remains a decisive reference for urban governance and planning”.

The work of Robinson (2002: 531) illustrates how these competing perspectives produced an array of dualisms leading to a radical division in the field of urban studies. This is manifested in the distinctions between the “West” and the “third world”, between the prosperous “global city” and the chaotic “megacity”, as well as between “theory” and “development”. The significance of the latter dualism is most striking. It divides urban studies between the cities where urban theory is produced and those where it is applied for development intervention (Robinson 2006: 2, 2002: 531). Stigmatising categories such as the negative connotations of overcrowding, disorderliness or diseases that are associated with the label “slum” are transported by the imperative of development in dominant urban discourses. They stand as the antithesis of the urban norms of the cities where these categories are developed and reproduced.

Eventually, the term “slum” was introduced during British colonialism in opposition to its modern town planning system (Huchzermeyer 2014: 95). The practices and processes of colonial urban planning often resulted in the construction of a bifurcated society, which led to the radical segregation of space (Home 2014: 80; O’Laughlin 2000: 6). Peri-urban areas, at the outskirts of former colonial cities, were excluded from any planning and are still most affected by the (post-)colonial stigmatization:

The former colonial town has as its preferred form spacious detached housing on securely fenced compounds for the higher income groups, successors to the former ‘colonial masters’. Imported rules of urban management set a legal cordon around the colonial town, while outside lay a neglected sprawl of self-built peri-urban areas, and a divided form has marked the post-colonial cities of the global south ever since (Home 2014: 83).

The binaries of “formal” vs. “informal” or “legal” vs. “illegal” represent the categories of contemporary bifurcation in policy and planning (Groenewald et al. 2013: 110). For planners, informal spaces are the object of development since they represent the “exception to planning, lying outside its realm of control” (Roy 2005: 155). The dichotomous definitions, however, produce the understanding that a single approach

can be applied to each “type” of settlement, being either formal or informal. This conception goes past the diverse and multifaceted reality of the inhabitants of these places. According to Groenewald et al. (2013: 110), “policies and approaches that deny complexity and ignore the mechanisms of change inherent in informal settlements are problematic”. On the other hand, peri-urban spaces are often the site of the “new informality” (Roy 2005: 149), the location for informal housing practices of local elites. In opposition to self-built settlements like “slums”, their aesthetic appearance seems to correspond to formal urban norms. It lends legitimisation but is still informal if they violate land use regulations.

According to Robinson (2002: 531–532), the “theories” for an understanding of the city are developed exclusively by the experiences of a relatively small group. Like in the perspectives mentioned above on peri-urbanisation, “development” always bears the notion of deficiency. As a category that lacks the qualities of the exclusively defined city-ness bearing the imperative of what kind of norms are to acquire. The consequence, however, is far from being constructive:

Envisioning city futures on the basis of these partial accounts is certainly limiting. And from the point of view of urban theory, these developmentalist city experiences do not contribute to expanding the definition of city-ness: rather they are drawn on to signify its obverse, what cities are not (Robinson 2002: 540).

“Postcolonial urbanism” (Ong 2011; Roy 2011) expresses the antipode to the dominant political economy of globalisation. It emphasises how the colonial past continues to take effect in the present urban culture. The agency of subaltern groups is foregrounded, in particular of the ones most subjugated to the neocolonial forces based on categories like race, class, or gender (Ong 2011: 8; cf. Spivak 1999). Without disregarding exploitative power relations, Schindler (2017: 58) yet argues that post-colonialism alone does not advance our understanding of cities in the Global South. Likewise, he points out that political economy is not “the overriding context within which urban processes unfold” (Schindler 2017: 47). Both opposing positions, political economy and postcolonialism, “are each associated with a unified set of economic effects or political outcomes for shaping global spaces” (Ong 2011: 2). The inherent overemphasis on capitalism in both frameworks narrows the perspective and bears the risk to lose sight of the complexity of cities. As Roy (2011: 307), summarises, neither “is sufficient in enabling robust theorizations of the problem-space that is the contemporary city”.

Urban theory has to challenge the neo-imperial power relations, but it has to go beyond the dominant critique of neoliberalism (Robinson 2006: 2; Parnell & Robinson 2012: 611). In fact, there is a wide range of critical endeavours such as Connell’s (2007) “Southern theory”, Robinson’s (2006) “ordinary cities”, Schindler’s (2017) “Southern urbanism”, and other theoretical urban perspectives from the South (cf.

Parnell & Oldfield 2014). Although there is no scope to go into detail, there is still enough room to summarise some central arguments. In contrast to the dualisms mentioned above, Robinson (2002: 548), for instance, claims that “urban theory should be encouraged to search for alternative formulations of city-ness which don’t rest upon these categories and which draw their inspiration from a much wider range of urban contexts”. In a similar vein, Huchzermeyer (2014: 95) contests the contemporary visions “with their exclusionary demands on the urban space economy through extravagant planning norms, along with the totalizing discourse on ‘slums’”. She further adds that these “have to be challenged from below, to represent and support a multitude of diverse urban realities and aspirations”.

Rakodi (2006: 316) states, “an improved understanding of the nature of African cities might give rise to a vision that is rooted in reality and inclusive, not unrealistic and exclusive”. The focus on everyday life and practices (cf. Certeau 1984) reflects the social reality of the urban populations in the “ordinary city”. It represents an alternative vision to neocolonial imaginations of city-ness (Robinson 2002: 546). This perspective is widely echoed in contemporary theoretical debates. For Simone (2010: 2), the focus on everyday practices means to “emphasize the various intricacies of everyday urban life, the challenges that residents face on a daily level”. Pieterse (2008: 32) adds the need to pay more attention to “the qualitative aspects of everyday life in slums, especially since the emerging consensus seems to be that they will become a major part of our urban future”.

Likewise, peri-urban areas represent the lived reality for millions of people. A focus on peri-urban areas and the attempt to theorise them meets the urgent challenge of urban theory, which is “to remain relevant to the majority of cities and their populations” (Robinson 2006: 2). Life-world phenomenology represents the genuine discipline for the theoretical apprehension of everyday life, and proves extremely beneficial for a conflation with urban theories for research into peri-urban realities. What this fruitful proposition entails will be advanced further below after discussing contemporary conceptualisations of the peri-urban interface in both the Global North and South.

2.2.3 Conceptualisations of Peri-urbanisation in the Global North and South

Albeit not under the label of “peri-urban”, geographers in the United States and Western Europe started to pay attention to the urban hinterlands of their cities by the mid-20th century. In the context of the USA, the places where the urban and the rural categories meet were first coined with the term “urban fringe”. These works were mainly based on empirical studies regarding morphogenetic and functional perspectives bestowing a strong bias on the urban influence and associated suburban growth (Adell 1999: 5). The strong focus on the functions of the peri-urban is

also echoed by Ravetz et al. (2013: 13), describing them as “a zone of social and economic change and spatial restructuring”. Pryor’s (1968: 204–205) review of around 60 existing case studies on growing urban areas in Western countries led to his definition of the “rural-urban fringe” which he subdivided further into “urban fringe” and “rural fringe”. This differentiation should assist in conceiving longitudinal studies to assess urbanisation processes and the urban invasion into rural areas, their effects on land use conversion, and the decline of agricultural areas:

The rural-urban fringe is the zone of transition in land use, social and demographic characteristics, lying between (a) the continuously built-up urban and suburban areas of the central city, and (b) the rural hinterland, characterized by the almost complete absence of nonfarm dwellings, occupations and land use, and of urban and rural social orientation; an incomplete range and penetration of urban utility services; uncoordinated zoning or planning regulations; areal extension beyond although contiguous with the political boundary of the central city; and an actual and potential increase in population density, with the current density above that of surrounding rural districts but lower than the central city. These characteristics may differ both zonally and sectorally, and will be modified through time (Pryor 1968: 206).

Pryor depicts the rural-urban fringe as a “landscape phenomenon” (Pryor 1968: 202) adapted to North American cities and as a one-directional process-response model, after which the urban growth affects its hinterland (Pryor 1968: 205). Although this perspective helps understand many peri-urban processes, it omits to capture the bi-directional and reciprocal rural-urban linkages, which are peculiar aspects of the peri-urban interface. Urban and rural features coexist in it, integrating both the urban and the rural features by providing a variety of environmental, social, and economic functions (Allen 2003: 135).

In France, the term “*périurbanisation*” (peri-urbanisation) characterises spaces external to cities where processes of an outward expansion, “but essentially residential ones” (Adell 1999: 6) take place. Apart from that, the term “peri-urban”, which is nowadays well-established in its English usage, also has counterparts with similar meanings in other languages. The most analogue comes from the Dutch version of “*halfsteden*” (semi-urban). But there is also the German expression, “*urban-ländliche Zonen*” (urban-rural zones) and in Afrikaans, the so-called “*buitestedelik*” (beyond the city). In the context of Indonesia, the term “*deskota*” (city-village) emerged to illustrate peri-urban phenomena which are observable in Southeast and East Asia’s extended metropolitan regions (Simon et al. 2006: 5; Simon 2008: 170). Also, there is the Chinese expression of “*chengzhongcun*” (urban village) referring to former rural settlements absorbed by the city through rapid urbanisation processes (Liu et al. 2010).

Contemporary debates in urban research tend to remove the “rural” category entirely. According to Brenner & Schmid (2014: 751), we are situated in the “urban age” with urbanisation as a planetary phenomenon. Accordingly, there is “no longer

an *outside* of the urban world". Even what lies beyond the cities' peripheries and peri-urban areas has become a fundamental part of the urban condition. Worldwide, scholars increasingly refer to life-worlds at the urban fringe zones under the label of suburbanism, such as "global suburbanism" (Hamel & Keil 2018) or "suburban planet" (Keil 2017). Ekers et al. (2012: 407) define suburbanisation as "the combination of noncentral population and economic growth with urban spatial expansion". In this light, they emphasise "to incorporate all manner of peripheral growth: from the wealthy gated communities of Southern California, to the high rise-dominated old suburbs of Europe and Canada, the faux Westernized outskirts of Indian and Chinese cities, and the slums and squatter settlements in Africa and Latin" (Ekers et al. 2012: 407)

Indeed, some authors like Dutta (2012) use the terms suburban and peri-urban as synonyms. According to Simon (2008: 170), in particular, in the United States and Europe, the peri-urban interface is regularly equated with suburbanisation. However, the conceptualisation of peri-urban spaces on which this work builds must clearly contradict such a "counterproductive overgeneralisation" (Bartels et al. 2020: 1245). Subsuming peri-urbanisation under the label of suburbanisation would fall short, disrespecting the postcolonial critique, and it would neglect the singularity of peri-urban areas, their dynamics and the diversity of actors and functions integrating both urban and rural features.

Indeed, according to Kurtz & Eicher (1958: 36), the suburb serves exclusively for residential purposes, characterised by its homogeneity with "a fairly regular pattern of nonfarm residential land use". As it will be discussed precisely throughout this thesis, "such perspectives fail to acknowledge the diverse forms and processes that may co-exist and reveal even contradictory or countervailing patterns" (Simon 2021: 3). The lived experiences of residents of formerly rural areas, whose surroundings are becoming encroached by the expanding cities, cannot be captured by concepts and categories that stem from the Global North but require the generation of theories based on empirical material that derives from genuine peri-urban experiences (Bartels et al. 2020: 1244–1245).

In the context of the Global South, the aforementioned DFID research program has set the agenda for contemporary conceptualisations (Simon et al. 2004: 238). Since its inception in 1996, the literature on peri-urbanisation has grown substantially and researchers from different disciplines and paradigmatic backgrounds interpret it sometimes quite contradictory. Whereas some refer to certain aspects as pertaining to a definition of peri-urban, others delineate the same features as the outcome of peri-urbanisation processes (Iaquinta & Drescher 2000: 1). The result is a "conceptual landscape of theoretical uncertainty" (Adell 1999: 36). In this regard, Iaquinta & Drescher (2000: 2) criticise that "the concept of *periurban* has become trivialized and tautological, its analytical and practical utility severely compromised".

Nowadays, there is no shortage of terminology referring to the peri-urban and its associated phenomena of urban-rural linkages. Some of them were already mentioned in the previous pages, such as “peri-urban space”, “peri-urban area”, “peri-urban zone”, “rural-urban fringe”, or “peri-urban interface”. Other authors, however, also referred to it almost synonymously with expressions like “urban-rural fringe”, “urban transition zone”, “rural-urban divide”, or “urban-rural continuum” (Phillips et al. 1999; Mortoja et al. 2020). Certainly, all these terms denote the category of a spatial extension (e. g., space, area, zone) which is located somewhere at the edge of one or in-between two entities (e. g., fringe, interface, transition, divide, continuum).

Narain & Nischal (2007: 261) highlight that peri-urban as a word can denote three aspects of being a place, a concept, or a process. “As a place, it can refer to rural fringe areas surrounding cities. As a concept, peri-urban could be seen as an interface of rural and urban activities and institutions. As a process, it could be thought of as the two-way flow of goods and services and a transitional stage between rural and urban”. Similarly, Follmann (2022: 5) categorises peri-urban research into three conceptual groups along territorial, functional, and transitional understandings of peri-urban areas.

(1) Territorial conceptualizations have an interest in the spatial demarcation of the peri-urban zones surrounding cities (cf. Mortoja et al. 2020). These embark on a rather static and essentialist understanding of space (Bartels et al. 2020: 1243). Regarding the dimensions of peri-urban interfaces, Simon (2008: 171) indicates a diameter of 30–50 km as an orientation for large cities. Under conditions of rapid change, however, he asserts that setting spatial limits only captures a moment in time and is, therefore, only of limited value (Simon et al. 2004: 238).

(2) Functional conceptualizations largely stem from discussions on rural-urban linkages (cf. Tacoli 2003). They foreground the flow of goods and services as well as the environmental functions and ecosystem services that the hinterland provides for the city and vice-versa (Follmann 2022: 5; Allen 2003: 137). A city’s “ecological footprint” (Rees 1992: 121) stretches way beyond its built-up area. Hence, peri-urban areas dispose a significant carrying capacity since “every city is an ecological black hole drawing on the material resources and productivity of a vast and scattered hinterland many times the size of the city itself” (Rees 1992: 125). Whereas construction materials, fuelwood, food and drinking water tend to flow inwards, their residual effluents and waste products flow outwards afterwards (Simon et al. 2004: 237).

(3) Transitional conceptualisations highlight the spatio-temporal changes in peri-urban areas and the transformations associated with urban growth and settlement expansion (Follmann 2022: 5). They embark on the notion of the “peri-urban interface”, characterised as “a zone or interface in transition from rural to urban appearance, land use mix, functions, and status” (Simon 2021: 2). In contrast to earlier conceptualisations of a place-based/territorial definition, emphasis is put on the dy-

namic processes and changes that characterise peri-urban areas (Bartels et al. 2020: 1243; Follmann 2022: 5). These definitions are “process oriented” (Simon 2008: 171) receiving most scholarly attention and their characteristics have to be examined in further detail.

An early and frequently cited definition of the PUI derives from DFID’s NRSP programme. Because of its research orientation towards rural and environmental aspects, it bears a strong focus on farming systems:

The peri-urban interface is characterized by strong urban influences, easy access to markets, services and other inputs, ready supplies of labour, but relative shortages of land and risks from pollution and urban growth (Phillips et al. 1999: 5).

What is important for a more comprehensive understanding, however, is the additional consideration of two broad zones of the interface. Closer to the urban core, in the inner “zone of direct impact”, land demands for buildings or infrastructures are higher, and the associated effects of resource degradation and pollution compromise the environment more severely. More distant from the centre, in the outer “zone of influence”, the impacts are less rigorous. They encompass predominantly market-related aspects of agricultural production and the handling of resource products (Phillips et al. 1999: 5–6).

Imagining the two zones in terms of a model of concentric circles with “a clear-cut sub-division within the peri-urban area” (Simon et al. 2004: 238) is, however, misleading. Within the areas of the PUI, complex social, environmental, economic, and institutional changes occur. An understanding of the PUI, therefore, also has to be processual, highlighting the various dynamic processes that take place (Brook & Purushothaman 2003: 2). These processes are largely generated by the influences of the urban zone proper rather than by the unambiguously rural zones (Phillips et al. 1999: 5). The urban influences, however, are neither uniform nor linear. The differentiation between direct impact and influence illustrates the idea of a gradient or a continuum between the more urban and the more rural parts of the interface. The dimensions of the rural-urban gradient are not static but dynamic; it “slopes away from the city but is not of uniform steepness either across the entire zone or in all directions” (Simon et al. 2004: 239). The PUI, therefore, does not display a discrete and homogenous area “but rather a diffuse territory identified by combinations of features and phenomena” (Phillips et al. 1999: 5).

With the expansion of the city, the PUI is undergoing changes. The areas representing the “urban” and the “peri-urban” may increase, and what was “rural” before becomes “peri-urban”, and what was “peri-urban” might become “urban” (Brook & Dávila 2000: 3). As these processes are not uniform, the inner zone of the interface on the urban side may advance outwards towards its fringes at a slower or a faster pace than the outer zone moves towards the rural area (Simon 2021: 1–2). The over-

all dimension of the interface may therefore grow, stagnate, or even decline for a relatively long or short period. Between the two opposed poles of what is unequivocally urban and rural, “shifts in the position of the zone as a whole” (Simon et al. 2004: 239).

A study on the spatio-temporal land use along the urban-rural gradient in Dar es Salam, Tanzania, was conducted by Wolff et al. (2021). With an increase in distance from the city centre, they describe how the housing density decreases while, at the same time, the tree coverage increases. Their findings also show that space for construction tends to be rather available and cheaper towards the rural edge, whereas, under the stronger urban influence, the plots are cleared from their vegetation for the purpose of buildings (Wolff et al. 2021: 10). Furthermore, they emphasise the lack of infrastructure and services as characteristic of peri-urban areas. This is manifested in limited access to roads and public transport, by the overall bad conditions of roads as well as by the lack of services (e.g., water and electricity) and social infrastructure (e.g., schools and hospitals) (Wolff et al. 2021: 6). As a general trend, this may also be transferable to other cities, but there also may exist (sub-)urban enclaves of the middle-class in the outer zones as well as areas of more rural character in the inner zones (Simon et al. 2006: 11; Simon et al. 2004: 239).

Different factors influence the specific characteristics of the peri-urban interface and its gradient. The local topographic and environmental conditions, for instance, can pose physical barriers to the expansion of settlements and other land use types (Simon et al. 2006: 4). On the one hand, the built-up area of a city may be located beneath a mountain range or adjacent to a low-lying wetland zone. In such places, or at least towards these geographic directions, the peri-urban interface will be practically inexistent, and it is to assume, if there is no easy crossing of the barrier, that a rural area continues beyond it.

On the other hand, socio-economic factors can serve as determinants that trigger and accelerate peri-urban growth (Wu et al. 2018). Along transportation infrastructure such as arterial roads connecting other towns, for instance, the diametric expansion of the peri-urban interface can reach exceptional distances towards just one single direction. Friedmann (2016: 164) calls it the “fusion of horizons” when under particular conditions, the peri-urban areas of two neighbouring cities aggregate to become just one large conurbation. Moreover, when new infrastructures are erected, the expansion of the interface may set in late but at a high pace. Due to joint effects and neighbouring factors, the first parcels of land are occupied by pioneers in an early stage of the peri-urbanisation. Imitators follow quickly, attracted by relatively still low acquisition costs (Wu et al. 2018).

In his paper with the title *The future of peri-urban research*, Friedmann (2016: 165) further explains that the different processes unfolding in peri-urban areas “can be approached by researchers in ways that highlight historical, spatial, institutional, cultural, economic, political, and socio-ecological dimensions”. Whereas the op-

tions for empirical inquiries are diverse, the social dimension of peri-urban spaces is often simply overlooked. Already in one of the earlier DFID publications, Brook & Purushothaman (2003: 2) content that “the biggest misconception which arises from a largely spatial definition of peri-urban interface is that it does not take people into account” (emphasis in original). Almost two decades later, not only Bartels et al. (2020: 1243) but also Varkey & Manasi (2019: 100) still find that “people’s own perceptions and understandings of the peri-urban have been largely overlooked in the theorization of the peri-urban”.

The lack of paying the necessary attention to the lived experiences of those inhabiting peri-urban areas derives much from the inadequacy of dominant theories. Prevailing research continues to be rather descriptive and pragmatic than theoretical. Some conceptualisations of space even essentialist. The relevance of peri-urban areas is limited to donor-driven views and more preoccupied with satisfying the needs of development interventions instead of revealing the diversity of views and perspectives of peri-urban social life (Mbiba & Huchzermeyer 2002: 119; Friedmann 2016: 163).

Of course, there are critical exceptions (cf. Bartels et al. 2020) with a theoretical focus on urban political ecology or Nuhu (2019) with a focus on power relations between actors. Still, the Southern critique against developmentalist approaches as expressed by (Robinson 2002, 2006) is inherent to peri-urban research perspectives, by “simply reducing the problem of improving city life to the promotion of ‘development’” (Robinson 2002: 545). Moreover, this epistemic bias is highly contradictory since authors characterise the peri-urbanisation processes largely as a Southern phenomenon, while an engagement with Southern or postcolonial urban theories barely exists (Follmann 2022: 8).

The removal of the people from the equation bears another detrimental fallacy. Contemporary interface approach conceptualisations are too preoccupied with overcoming the earlier ideas of a territorial and static peri-urban zone with fixed boundaries (Bartels et al. 2020: 1242; Simon et al. 2004: 238). Consequently, this leads to the potential overemphasis on the transitional character of peri-urban areas. Accordingly, peri-urban zones “expand and shrink geographically, ‘eating’ their way into the countryside, while they are swallowed by the expanding urban core area” (Dupont 2005: 16). They are “subject to rapid and profound changes in their built environment, population and socio economic activities” (Varkey & Manasi 2019: 96).

Land use and land cover change in line with broader structural changes. However, I argue that it can only be the most serious error of a (social) scientist to consider people as a transitory phenomenon or even as an interchangeable component of peri-urban areas. The scientific fascination with macro-level dynamics clearly seems to overshadow the social realities at the micro-level. Peri-urban spaces represent the living space for millions of people. The peri-urban environ-

ment constitutes their life-worlds, and the peri-urban spaces of everyday interactions and struggles are meaningful and provide orientation. Peri-urban areas are tied to peri-urban existences. The latter may be anything else, but definitely not transitory!

2.2.4 Understanding Peri-urbanity through a Phenomenological Life-world Perspective

The contemporary conceptualisations of the peri-urban interface are rather poor in theory. But due to their development-oriented focus with sound empirical studies, they provide a rich understanding of the dynamic processes unfolding in peri-urban areas. On the other hand, urban theory is characterised by its lack of interest in peri-urban spaces yet proves promising theoretical entry points. Therefore, I propose to overcome the theory-development dualism (cf. Robinson 2002) by embarking on a synergy between urban theory and development studies. The synergy effect is realised by adopting a phenomenological life-world perspective based on the lived experiences of peri-urban dwellers. It allows arriving at a conciliatory level that bridges both bearings, contributing to urban studies and peri-urban development studies alike while resolving the blind spots of each.

As the following sections seek to highlight, the phenomenological life-world perspective also enables us to arrive at an understanding of the very nature of peri-urban areas. Embarking on the perspective of peri-urban dwellers brings the people back in and sheds light on the hitherto obscured socio-spatial aspects of peri-urban existences. Thereby, we can overcome the previously discussed misconceptions, treating the peri-urban no longer as a transitional residual but rather as a meaningful space. Finally, we can enrich the contemporary discussion on the peri-urban interface and theorise it from below, where peri-urban life takes place.

Urban studies emphasise the need to build theory based on people's everyday practices and experiences in the ordinary city. It is through this perspective that an understanding of city-ness does not become exclusive but remains relevant for the majority of the population (Robinson 2002: 546, 2006: 2; Huchzermeyer 2014: 95). These demands are reminiscent of a fundamental postulate made by Dahlberg et al. (2008: 31), in reference to the Swedish philosopher Bengtsson. They point out

that a science that is too far removed from the human world runs the risk of creating a crisis of confidence. A science that has lost its contact with the lifeworld will soon also lose its importance for everyday people. Such science will estrange rather than increase understanding.

In fact, life-world phenomenology constitutes the genuine discipline for a theoretical apprehension of everyday life. So far, this perspective has barely met the approval in the field of (peri-)urban studies, although its promising contribution is highlighted and called for. Pieterse (2008: 9), for instance, writes that “the phenomenology and practices of ‘the everyday’ or ‘the ordinary’ must be the touchstone of radical imaginings and interventions”. Likewise, Parnell et al. (2009: 236) refer to the life-world as a basic proposition for a new research agenda. Accordingly, “theory must be built on ‘empirical’ and analytical work about real-life experiments in city building, whether in the form of official government programmes or the mundane ordinary practices associated with reproducing livelihoods and ‘lifeworlds’ in the city”.

This call has been reproduced in other scholarly works (cf. Parnell & Robinson 2012: 598), but it remains rather superficial since reference is merely made to Long (2001), whereas the more profound life-world phenomenologists like Husserl or Schütz remain untouched. Against this background, it is inevitable to mention that Schütz’s theories are obviously not Southern or postcolonial but undoubtedly Northern and Eurocentric. In this context, (Mbembe 2001: 1–2) emphasises that the Western philosophical tradition is rooted in the long-standing denial of the existence of another “self” except the own “I”. Consequently, identities in the non-European world were depicted as the “stranger”, failing to portray the idea of shared humanity.

Against these colonial afflictions, the life-world theory provides a methodological programme rather than a political project. This dissertation takes the postcolonial critique seriously, and relevant aspects are repeatedly discussed. The call for conducting realistic research rooted in the everyday reality of the ordinary city is likewise respected. Therefore, life-world theory is particularly adequate since it also provides the advantage of a universal heuristic. It enables scholars not only for cross-cultural research but also to conduct “a non-Eurocentric de-centred study” (Siriwardane-de Zoysa & Hornidge 2016: 7). This endeavour has been proven fruitfully not only by Siriwardane-de Zoysa & Hornidge (2016), but also in other cross-cultural studies in the Global South (cf. Oberkircher & Hornidge 2011; Simarmata 2018).

The literature on the peri-urban interface is still biased by its focus on development. Accordingly, the phenomenon of peri-urbanisation represents the “potential terrain for planning intervention” but “offers little scope for high-flying theorizations” (Friedmann 2016: 163). On the other hand, peri-urban areas display the realm of the cities where currently the most dynamic processes unfold. These are persistent, and conceptualisations of the peri-urban therefore have to go beyond its territorial, functional, and transitional approaches. Instead of being merely descriptive, theories are needed to better understand the social reality of the peri-urban population and their lived experiences. Understanding peri-urban life on the micro level “from below” represents the necessary precondition for avoiding the reification of peri-urban concepts on the macro level (Long 2001: 64).

Only through this change of perspective is the theory-development dualism resolved, and it is the prospect for development interventions to benefit from this understanding by being less estranged from peri-urban realities. Pieterse (2008: 128) warns us not to turn into a deadlock where “the dynamism and rich phenomenology of everyday life – which gives cities their true identity and meaning – is taken out of the equation in order to focus on the materiality of poverty and betterment”. Instead, the development perspective has to make sense of everyday life in all its complexities and contradictions to generate realistic and, thus, appropriate and effective interventions. Finally, this would change the perspective from merely prescriptive to more progressive engagement with peri-urban areas.

Peri-urban spaces may be in constant transition, but they are not a transitional phenomenon. While the inner zone of the peri-urban interface may expand and transform peri-urban into suburban or urban areas, the outer zone may expand even faster, leading to an extension of the peri-urban area at large (Simon 2021: 1–2). There is the overall tendency that the spatial expansion of peri-urban areas continues at a higher pace than the urban population growth rates (UN-Habitat 2016: 7; Angel 2015: 2). There is enough empirical evidence that “peri-urban spaces exist for a long time and that development pathways remain contingent” (Follmann 2022: 11). This also entails that the peri-urban not necessarily means to become urban shortly or at all, and that peri-urban areas are indeed persistent.

Against this reality, the idea of the inevitable transition from rural to urban holds up, neglecting the sustained existence of a space between both entities. Instead, and despite the widespread consensus on the inadequacy of the rigid distinction between urban and rural areas (Simon 2021: 1), a binary confrontation between the two categories persists. For instance, Tacoli (2003: 3) admits in her well-cited paper that the “notion of a ‘divide’ has become a misleading metaphor, one that oversimplifies and even distorts the realities”. At the same time, she describes the linkages and interactions at the peri-urban interface as “a complex web of connections in a landscape where much is neither ‘urban’ nor ‘rural’ but has features of both” (Tacoli 2003: 3). Likewise, Narain & Nischal (2007: 262) highlight “the existence of both rural and urban characteristics and the linkages between the rural-urban”. Even otherwise prolific, Simon (2008: 170) defines the PUI as the “zone of (dynamic) transition or interaction between urban and rural areas”.

Although these ideas are not wrong in their attempts to define peri-urban spaces in their complexity and heterogeneity, they are nevertheless unsatisfactory or even misleading. The retention of the two categories “urban” and “rural” and capturing the term “peri-urban” through linkages and interactions between them does not pay the required attention to the intrinsic originality of peri-urban spaces. In short, it denies them their “intrinsic logic” (cf. Löw 2012). I argue that peri-urban areas are not in transition between urban and rural areas, nor can they be defined exclusively by the coexistence of urban and rural features. Rather, they are constituted as rela-

tional places and spaces that produce new qualities at the interface, spaces with their own context of meaning and properties that can no longer be reduced to urban or rural features alone.

Peri-urban life takes place (cf. Seamon 2018). But the underlying conception of place in this dissertation, as presented in the previous theoretical considerations (cf. chapter 2.1. 3.), goes beyond its fixed spatial location on a map and intrinsically takes the people into central account. Therefore, I strongly agree with Seamon (2018: 21), who writes that “I attempt to understand place conceptually and pragmatically as a lived engagement and process whereby human beings both shape and are shaped by the world of places in which they find themselves”. This very critical realist and relational understanding of place suggests that peri-urban environments shape peri-urban identities, livelihoods, and social practices. In line with the intrinsic logic of peri-urbanity, peri-urban places “evoke a sense of place, where the built environment, material structures and cultural dispositions not only intertwine but also give meaning to everyday life and social practices” (Berking 2012: 319). Borrowing from Haferburg & Rothfuss (2019: 181), we come to apprehend peri-urbanity “as a kind of spatiality, understood as a relationship between space, place and people based on intersubjective experiences of living together”.

Peri-urban places and spaces represent the paramount reality for peri-urban dwellers. It is the “finite province of meaning” that beholds the unquestioned accent of reality with its particular style of (peri-urban) lived experiences (Schütz & Luckmann 1973: 23). These are, I argue, inherent to peri-urban life-worlds but distinct to the lived experiences in the meaning context of purely urban or rural life-worlds. According to Schütz, the lived experiences of this primary reality underlie a particular cognitive style consisting of six aspects: a specific tension of consciousness, namely wide-awakeness (1), a specific epoché (2), a dominant form of spontaneity (3), a specific form of self-experience (4), a specific form of sociality (5), and a special time perspective (6) (Schütz 1945: 552; Schütz & Luckmann 1973: 25–28). In this natural attitude,

man surely does not suspend his beliefs in the existence of the outer world and its Objects. On the contrary, he suspends every doubt concerning their existence. What he brackets is the doubt whether the world and its Objects could be otherwise than just as they appear to him (Schütz & Luckmann 1973: 27).

In other words, the peri-urban world is real for its inhabitants. This real world is taken for granted in its existence and persistence. Any honest attempt by scholars interested in the social aspects of the peri-urban interface must take into account this primordial life-world perspective. To deny it, however, is to fail to understand peri-urban life properly and is nothing more than dismissive arrogance towards the objects of study.

The distinctiveness of peri-urban life-worlds (cf. Berking 2012) has so far received no attention from scholars. Instead, it is depicted that the population is “having a foot in both the urban and rural worlds” (Narain & Nischal 2007: 262). For any peri-urban dweller, however, only one world exists, which is his or her life-world. This world is centred around him or her amid the peri-urban interface and does not oscillate between its edges. However, the world is not a disc but in the shape of a sphere. Likewise, peri-urban life does not enfold in two-dimensional distances or three-dimensional geometries (as in essentialist and territorial conceptualizations) but rather in meaningful experiences as multidimensional social space (Benta 2018: 76). Due to the disregard for the distinctiveness of peri-urban areas, at least as a conceptual category, contemporary research fails to grasp the peri-urban in its essential qualities.

In fact, most of the scholars struggle to distinguish peri-urbanisation from urbanisation. Their definitions tend to be interchangeable, and the description of peri-urban processes is borrowed from urban categories. After all, the peri-urban remains under-theorised, a transitional phenomenon and a residual category of the urban, as something “not-yet-urban” or “not-quite-urban” (Follmann 2022: 7–8). Following Lawhon’s (2020: 37) claim to clarify what “counts” as urban, we likewise need to engage with the question of what actually “counts” as peri-urban. Follmann (2022: 9) explains that “by leaving the reference points of what counts as (peri-)urban unquestioned, scholars risk reducing the *peri* to an empty – or at least limited – signifier and limiting the term’s usefulness in theoretically (re)conceptualizing southern urbanization”.

As stated in the opening section, what does it mean to be urban and what does it mean to be rural seems rather comprehensible than the meaning of peri-urbanity. For instance, there are social and psychological components of everyday life referring to attitudes, tastes, values, and behaviours regarded as rural or being characteristics of an urban life-world (Iaquinta & Drescher 2000: 2). According to Iaquinta & Drescher (2000: 9), the social-psychological orientation of the population is the “key differentiating factor”. They likewise argue that “[t]he social-psychological component is the one most often omitted” in definitions and “ignoring this component misses the reality of periurban, underestimates the prevalence of social change and misclassifies the experiences of numerous people and communities in the real world” (Iaquinta & Drescher 2000: 3).

As cities expand, rural places may become absorbed by the urban built-up area. Some residents may change their rural-derived mental orientation towards urbaneness while others safeguard their distinct identity and history (Simon et al. 2006: 12). The life-world approach is apt for grasping these dynamics and helps to overcome the dichotomy of rural vs. urban. By exploring peri-urban life-worlds based on profound empirical research, new categories will be established that enable us to define and theorise peri-urbanity in an inductive endeavour. The essential qualities of

peri-urban will remain obscured as long as scholars don't step out of the darkness and consider its spaces in their persistence and "intrinsic logic" (Löw 2012). By adopting a phenomenological life-world perspective, the conceptually maintained dichotomy between urban and rural can be dissolved, and thus, the peri-urban can be brought into the light.

2.3 Governance Interactions and the Actor Perspective

Governance and the actor perspective build the third theoretical pillar. The stringent interrelation between both concepts is fundamental in this dissertation. According to Börzel & Risse (2010: 114), governance is understood as "the various institutionalized modes of social coordination to produce and implement collectively binding rules, or to provide collective goods". In this regard, Pfeilschifter et al. (2020: 13) add that governance "does not only happen through authoritative regulation by the hierarchical state, but also through interaction and negotiation processes by the actors of the political-administrative system". The next pages are dedicated to better grasping the governance of interacting actors, regulations, and the provision of public goods and services. It is aimed to make these concepts fruitful for an inquiry into peri-urban governance processes and conflicts.

It begins with a general introduction to the concept of governance (cf. chapter 2.3.1.), followed by a discussion of conceptual premises on governance and the state in sub-Saharan Africa (cf. chapter 2.3.2.). Then, the actor perspective is presented as the central framework for assessing peri-urban governance and conflicts (cf. chapter 2.3.3.). It is mainly informed by the work of Long (2001), which serves as an adequate supplement to life-world phenomenology. Finally, the dialectic relationship between structure and agency is discussed (cf. chapter 2.3.4.), providing the basis for understanding the specific theory of social action that underlies this dissertation.

2.3.1 From Government to Governance: on the Emergence of a Concept

Today, governance constitutes "a catchword in the social sciences" (Kooiman et al. 2008: 2). It is applied in various disciplines just as in policy and planning discourses on various scales, ranging from the neighbourhood to the global context. Its origins date back to the 1970s when the concept of governance as a manner of steering manifested itself in opposition to government as the state (Jessop & Sum 2006: 249). Although the term governance has several meanings and has led to different interpretations, the shift from government to governance generally refers to new governing processes, changing circumstances of ordered rules, and new actors and methods by which the social world is governed (Rhodes 1996: 652).

Jessop & Sum (2006: 249) explain that emergence of the governance concept is the result of both practical and theoretical reasons that coincided during that time. This goes in line with Pierre's (2000: 2) double meaning of governance as "an emerging political strategy for states to redefine its role in society and subsequently, a growing interest among social scientists in the process of state restructuring and transformation". Thus, on the one hand, complex societal problems emerged across various scales that required new approaches for finding solutions and the state was forced to adapt to the changing environments. On the other hand, there was widespread dissatisfaction with contemporary approaches of mainstream social science disciplines to explain the novel forms of coordination in societal systems through the hitherto existing theoretical concepts (Jessop & Sum 2006: 249; Pierre 2000: 3).

The notion of governance eventually got adopted in the literature with different meanings. The diversity of its application in various disciplines has led to various distinct definitions (for an overview, see Rhodes 1996: 653; Kooiman 2002: 72). What the variety of governance approaches have in common, however, is that the declining hegemony of the state has led to the blurring of lines between the institutional triad of state, market, and civil society, whereas their strict division has been predominating in the past (Sørensen & Triantafyllou 2016: 1). Traditionally, each one was expected to deal with certain societal issues alone and no one of the three was to interfere with the sphere of action of the other ones. Whereas the exclusive role of the state was to solve societal problems, the market should create societal opportunities. Finally, civil society was to deal with remaining marginal issues (Kooiman 2002: 78). However, tasks that previously have been the sole role of the government, are nowadays more and more often seen as societal issues that can be resolved not only by the state but also by other actors (Pierre 2000: 4).

Regarding the role of the state vis-à-vis the market and civil society, Kooiman et al. (2008: 2) highlight a normative imprint, in a sense that "governments are often seen as failing to live up to the expectations of those whom they govern", and other actors inevitably must step in. Thus, in line with the erosion of the traditional political power of nation-state came the growing role of markets and neoliberal approaches to governance. Pierre (2000: 1) depicts them as one of the most fundamental changes that the modern democracies of the industrialised world have experienced during the last decades.

Indeed, capitalist economies have been facing widespread difficulties since the recession of 1973, and deindustrialisation, unemployment and fiscal austerity manifested on national and local levels. The transition from a Fordist-Keynesian regime of capital accumulation to a regime of more flexible accumulation also heralded the rise of urban entrepreneurialism, and the local scale became increasingly engaged in attracting investments. Therefore, the power of the nation-state in controlling money flows declined tremendously. At the same time, cities assumed the negotiation with multinational investors (Harvey 1989a: 5). Throughout these processes, the

state was rather regarded as the principal source of societal problems and weak economic performances instead of being seen as the saviour or the one to facilitate solutions (Pierre 2000: 1).

Consequently, the late 1970s and early 1980s were marked by a strategic political response to the recession, which resulted in the gradual imposition of neoliberal policies to extend market discipline, competition, and commodification throughout all societal sectors. State control became gradually deregulated, and public services were reduced or privatised. The neoliberal ideology was enforced by a strong political alliance with Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan at its core. The neoliberal creed promised that competitive and unregulated markets free from all forms of state control would be the best means of achieving economic development (Brenner & Theodore 2002: 350). Against this background, the shift from government to governance was characterised by what Jessop (1997: 573) described as the “hollowing out of the government apparatus. It has led to the establishment of specific uses of governance referring to the governance as the “minimal state”, to governance as the “new public management”, and to the term of “good governance” (Rhodes 1996: 654).

The term “good governance” became first of all promoted by the World Bank and other international institutions such as the IMF or the World Trade Organization. Assuming the role of transnational agents of neoliberalism, they began to extend market forces and commodification towards the countries of the Global South, heralding the inception of rigorous structural adjustment programs (Brenner & Theodore 2002: 350). In line with the critique mentioned earlier regarding the imperative of development, “good governance” is not only focussed on providing more efficient urban services through privatisation and partnerships with non-state actors, but it strives towards more profound reforms of the political and juridical system of nation-states (Rhodes 1996: 656).

Whereas the ideology of good governance builds in rhetoric and practice on the values of democracy, decentralisation, and liberalisation, it starkly contrasts the political and economic experiences that many urban dwellers face (Myers 2011: 104–105). Indeed, the interplay between the institutional triad of the state, the market and civil society is highly complex and dynamic on the African continent. Therefore, some conceptual premises on peri-urban governance and the state in sub-Saharan Africa are indispensable.

2.3.2 Governance, the State, and Self-organisation in Sub-Saharan Africa

As post-colonial nation-states, the functional and territorial reach of African governments is often limited (Pfeilschifter et al. 2020: 11) which is why they are regularly characterised as being “weak”, “failing”, or even “failed” states (Korf et al. 2018). However, the normative prejudices of dysfunctionality and incompleteness that res-

onate in such conceptualisations, are inadequate for studying state-society interactions in post-colonial states. In addition, the condition of weak statehood does not necessarily imply a desolate condition that must be overcome at all costs (Pfeilschifter et al. 2020: 9). Indeed, if the state does not represent the interests of particular groups of society, informal, local, and customary institutions outside the state's realm are often vital in delivering public goods that correspond to state-like roles and services (Mohmand 2016: 6).

In addition to the common misconceptions of the state, the concept of civil society, and primarily the rigid institutional distinction between state and society, are likewise not too easily transferable to analyses in the Global South. As Azarya (1988: 10) points out, "the very notion of state-society relations which presupposes the state to be different from society is a Western liberal idea". Thus, focusing on civil society and the state as two separate and interacting entities is misleading. It fails to grasp the complexity that constitutes the nature of governance in contemporary African cities, where a substantial part of public regulations is negotiated outside the sphere of formal state institutions (Lindell 2008: 1882). Against this background, the state does not represent a "coherent institution; rather, public authority becomes the amalgamated result of the exercise of power by a variety of local institutions" (Lund 2006: 685). Hence, beyond the analytical distinction between state and society, public authority is often provided by what Lund (2006: 686) calls "twilight institutions", whose institutional affiliation is fluid, thus operating "in the twilight between state and society, between public and private".

Against this background, governance also represents a contested arena in which various actors of the entire institutional spectrum compete over authority and resources and engages in interaction and negotiation processes to provide solutions for societal problems. For the context of urban Africa, Pieterse (2008: 87) attributes governance to "a relationality of power as it flows through networks between the state and institutional actors in the market and civil society". The level of participating actors spans from the supranational level to national or regional governments, to the municipality and to the neighbourhood and household level. According to the urban governance understanding of Healey (2006: 302), actors' interlinkages range from official and strategic partnerships to informal connections of politicians to lobby groups and firms and to their participation as citizens in private life. Thereby, the lines between the state, the market, and civil society are increasingly blurred, and governance practices of everyday life or those held in council chambers, do not occur in clearly demarcated and distinct territories.

Facing the central state's limitations and/or willingness to permeate all societal sectors and spaces, the dominant role of civil society actors represents another striking feature in the context of governance arrangements in sub-Saharan Africa. Whereas in the past, civil society was merely regarded as an object of governance or even as a burden that must be governed, it is increasingly recognised as a potential

resource to achieve efficient and more effective public governance (Sørensen & Triantafyllou 2016: 1). Beyond that, Moulaert & Swyngedouw (2010: 219–220) argue that many civil society initiatives emerge precisely in response to the failure of both the state and the market to satisfy the human needs of the population. Therefore, they can also contribute to changing the governance forms and direct them towards arrangements of participation that are more inclusive and democratic.

Civil society organisations like market, trade, and farmer associations provide opportunities for individuals and groups to sustain their livelihoods. They are legitimised and accepted in their function as the primary vehicle for the distributing of public goods and services (Scheye 2009: 6–7). According to Neubert (2014: 11), however, the diversity of societal organisations in Africa is not sufficiently captured by the Eurocentric label of civil society. Instead, other forms of local self-organisation play a vital role in everyday life but do not conform to the ideals of liberal democracy. Local groups that share collective interests and values are often legitimised by tradition instead of voluntariness, and not seldom do they wield authority through violence. Beyond the Western concept of civil society, African types of self-organisation cover a broad spectrum which ranges “from political organisations, institutions like chiefdoms, councils of elders and local defence communities, to vigilante or militia groups” (Neubert 2014: 9).

Finally, Pfeilschifter et al. (2020: 10) differentiate between self-organisation and self-governance. On the one hand, self-organisation refers to the collectivisation process of a group. It emerges from “a process by which social relations, common in loose networks, are stabilized through the collective definition of mutual interests, positions, and aims” (Atkinson et al. 2018: 170). Similarly, Pfeilschifter et al. (2020: 4) define self-organisation as “a process in which individuals in a group take on common problems and find lasting solutions to them”. On the other hand, self-governance is less concerned with the process than with the outcome of self-organisation. Thus, it refers to the public goods and services provided through self-organisation as well as to the social norms, collective values and beliefs shared by the group members and maintained on a long-term basis (Pfeilschifter et al. 2020: 10).

2.3.3 A Relational Actor Perspective for Assessing Peri-urban Governance and Conflicts

Governance arrangements and actor constellations are particularly complex and dynamic in peri-urban areas. The peri-urban interface is characterised by the interplay of different actors with sometimes competing or even conflicting interests. With the expansion of the city outwards, the integration of new actors into peri-urban spaces leads to profound social and institutional changes (Allen 2003: 137). As a consequence, peri-urban areas become increasingly contested, and peri-urban life-worlds are constantly put to the test.

Peri-urban areas are typically characterised by governance arrangements where customary institutions and norms exist in parallel to statutory state law (Tacoli 2003: 7; Förster & Koechlin 2018: 232). Land tenure systems are a particular field where the peri-urban population is “confronted with both urban and rural laws and institutions which have been breeding a situation of legal pluralism and conflict” (Adam 2015: 5). The customary land access, which is usually allocated by traditional authorities such as village chiefs, is particularly essential for low-income groups (Tacoli 2003: 7). However, the growing neoliberalisation of peri-urban customary land and its increasing commercialisation leads to the conversion of agricultural land, which promotes the displacement of disadvantaged households and farming groups, creating conflicts between different groups of actors (Simon 2008: 176–177; Chimhowu 2019: 899).

According to Galtung (2009), a social conflict refers to a particular case of incompatibility involving at least two actors with contrasting goals or interests. Conflicts usually arise about scarce goods or resources, and following Brauch & Scheffran (2012: 3), they may involve “disputes over competing values, ideologies, interests, social systems, or ways of life”. Peri-urban areas are characterised by conflicts regarding access to resources. Particularly regarding the access to land (Mbiba & Huchzermeyer 2002: 128). Thereby, the voices of marginalised groups are the most unheard. Governmental institutions with a specific focus on peri-urban areas are lacking, so policies and interventions tend to favour the vocal urban-based interests (Allen 2003: 142). According to Nuhu (2019: 13), the “existing legal and institutional framework does not provide the supporting environment for equal participation of all actors”.

This dissertation proposes an actor perspective which helps to understand the nature of these contestations and conflicts. It builds on the seminal work of Norman Long (1989, 2001), which represents an appropriate theoretical supplement compatible with life-world phenomenology and peri-urban interface research. His “actor-oriented approach” with the “social interface” allows an understanding of the differential responses taken by different individuals or groups to changing circumstances. Particularly, it suits understanding how different structures and processes permeate the life-worlds of peri-urban dwellers, how they engage in social interaction, make sense of peri-urban dynamics and deal with complex changes (Long 2001: 72; Verloo & Davis 2021: 120–121).

The life-worlds of peri-urban dwellers and small-scale farmers do not exist in a social vacuum. On the contrary, “the social composition of peri-urban systems is highly heterogeneous and subject to change over time” (Allen 2003: 137). With urban influences diffusing over peri-urban spaces, new actors, institutions, and social forms pervade the peri-urban interface. The middle-class and urban elite may require land for realising housing projects or creating leisure and recreational facilities. Entrepreneurs, in turn, may be in search of space to extract resources such as

clay, sand, or stone to provide materials for industry and urban life (Douglas 2006: 18–19). Municipal authorities are steering the expansion of the city through land use planning and the establishment of infrastructure projects. But the expansion of the influence of cities is usually associated with more profound structural changes, such as administrative reforms or the implementation of new governance arrangements and tenure systems.

Thus, peri-urbanisation processes driven by external actors inevitably enter the life-worlds of peri-urban dwellers. They become part of their resources and constraints, providing room to manoeuvre or leading to the collision of objectives and conflicting interests (Long 2001: 25–27). In line with these dynamic changes, “social forms and arrangements are created, modified and discarded” (Iaquinta & Drescher 2000: 2). These permeate the experienced reality of social groups in different ways and the meanings and values of peri-urban dwellers are constantly challenged. When urban settlements overtake rural areas, for instance, the environment of the local population is changing rapidly. This change can be forced upon some groups and deprive them. Others, in turn, may embrace new opportunities that these changes entail (Brook & Purushothaman 2003: 2). Hence, heterogeneity then also refers to the “co-existence of multiple social forms within the same context or same scenario of problem-solving, which offer alternative solutions to similar problems” (Long 2001: 52). Peri-urban spaces then become “areas of social compression or intensification where the density of social forms, types and meanings increases, fomenting conflict and social evolution” (Iaquinta & Drescher 2000: 2).

An actor perspective embarks on the proposition that the views among different actors are diverse and that they differently attribute meaning to the objects in their changing surroundings. The perceptions and lived realities of peri-urban dwellers are distinct from the ones of state authorities and other urban actors (Verloo & Davis 2021: 121). Hence, peri-urban areas are characterised by the spatial coexistence of “multiple realities” (Schütz 1945). These multiple realities of a multiplicity of actors are rooted in their everyday experiences. At the peri-urban interface, they intersect and intertwine. Different life-worlds and uneven power relations can clash with each other. The incompatibility of world-views, rationales, knowledge, and meaning diminishes potential dialogue while fuelling conflict (Long 2001: 69–71). The peri-urban interface, therefore, represents as well a “social interface” defined by Long (1989: 1–2) “as a critical point of intersection or linkage between social systems, fields or levels of social order where structural discontinuities, based upon differences of normative values and social interest, are most likely to be found”.

Social interfaces are usually found between local and non-local actors, between the state and non-state actors (Neubert 2001: 217–218), or, in our case, more broadly, between the urban and the rural. The peri-urban (social) interface then consists of spaces characterised by “contestations associated with different practices and values of different domains” (Long 2001: 59). It is the task of an actor-centred approach to

examine this interface by identifying the relevant actors and reconstructing their objectives and social strategies. In this course, specific constellations of discontinuities and conflicts are elucidated (Neubert 2001: 217). According to Drinkwater (1992: 371), the actor perspective enables us “to look at what people are doing and understand their actions from *their* point of view”. It is, therefore, inevitable to begin an analysis with actor-defined issues (a step-by-step approach for its application is presented in cf. chapter 6.2.). With an emphasis on the subjective perspective, the actor-oriented approach serves as an adequate supplement to life-world phenomenology and is equally suited to assessing state-society interactions and planned state interventions. Long (2001: 72) puts it as follows:

interface analysis can make a useful contribution to an understanding of how processes of planned intervention enter the lifeworlds of the individuals and groups affected and come to form part of the resources and constraints of the social strategies they develop. Thus, so-called ‘external’ factors become ‘internalised’ and come to mean quite different things to different interest groups or to the different individual actors.

The actor perspective is, from the outset, a relational perspective. Interacting actors stand vis-à-vis each other and act relationally. According to Long, “people’s perceptions of the actions and agency of others shape their own behaviour” (Long 1997: 4). The relationality of actors is also echoed in life-world phenomenology. The category of intersubjectivity represents, according to Atkinson (2020: 45), “an inherently relational affair” and is intrinsic to Schütz’s original writings. For example, he elaborated on how a process of self-typification underlies our interaction with others: “In defining the role of the Other I am assuming a role myself. In typifying the Other’s behavior I am typifying my own, which is interrelated with his” (Schütz 1962: 19). In the intersubjectively shared world of everyday life, we are intertwined with each other, our mutual perception of each other and the reciprocal attribution of meaning between us is “relationally defined” (Atkinson 2020: 45). Inevitably, the condition of relationality is tied to a specific relationship between structure and agency, which informs the later analysis of the conflict.

2.3.4 Agency vs. Structure: towards a Dialectical Theory of Social Action

An actor perspective is necessarily based on a theory of agency, which presupposes that social actors can process their experiences and act accordingly (Long 2001: 49). Following Kooiman et al. (2008: 3), an actor represents “any social unit possessing agency or power of action”. Thus, it can range from an individual to collective actors like associations or even departments and international entities. However, according to Drinkwater (1992: 367), “an understanding of our actions requires an under-

standing of what stands behind us: we cannot ignore structure". The relationship between structure and agency is one of the long-standing and defining controversies of sociological inquiry (Jessop 2005: 45). Although phenomenology was previously criticised by an overemphasis on agency and the "oblivion of power" (Dreher & López 2015: 199), it is here argued that the subjective perspective still proves promising for assessing structural constraints and the various power relations inherent to peri-urbanisation processes.

In this light, this dissertation embarks on a dialectical relationship between structure and agency. Powell (2013: 198) describes agency as "the ability of an actor to transform some aspects of the world in which he or she is embedded", thus providing a definition that is apt for this dissertation. Indeed, "acting in the life-world" (Schütz 1970: 123), as expressed in the ability to initiate an action, the intentions to realise plans, and the motivations to interact in intersubjective encounters with others take an essential place in Schütz's work.

However, structuralists like Bourdieu criticise phenomenological approaches for privileging intersubjective relationships between individuals while excluding structural constraints (Throop & Murphy 2002: 190). Regarding the focus on "lived experience", Bourdieu (1990: 25–26) observes that "it excludes the question of the conditions of possibility of this experience, namely the coincidence of the objective structures and the internalized structures". Similarly, Atkinson (2018: 402–403) summarises the critique "as all about 'micro' relations rather than 'macro' processes, focused on subjectivity as opposed to objective mechanisms, emphasizing agency over structure". He further argues that there is a need to better grasp "how lifeworld, and hence experiences, typifications, relevances, and projects, come to be as they are – how, in other words, they are produced and differentiated by social structures" (Atkinson 2018: 403).

Phenomenology understands human experience and action to be intentional. However, this intentionality, is not grounded in voluntary actions of freewill as methodological individualism is being accused of, but always conditioned by immersion of the subject into the life-world. The individual being can never step outside the world he or she is immersed nor take a perspective of some detached point of view (Seamon 2018: 11). The individual can never escape the world in which he or she lives, but is subject to the constraints of the structures of the life-world (Münch 2003: 202). To say it with Seamon (1979: 15), "we are always housed in a geographical world whose specific we can change but whose surrounds in some form we can in no way avoid".

On the one hand, the world represents the objects of our actions and interactions, and we have to change it and dominate it for our purposes by modifying its objects and their relationships. On the other hand, manifold objects offer resistance, and the world of our everyday life constantly confines our actions. Or to say it in the words of Schütz (1962: 209), "world, in this sense, is something that we have to modify by our

actions or that modifies our actions". To sum it up, while the reconstruction of the subjectivist vision of an individual is centre stage, it is precisely this very subjectivist vision that is preconditioned and structured by the spatial, temporal, and social dimensions of the life-world, by the biography and by the accumulated stock of knowledge of his or her past experiences (Dreher 2011: 506).

Against this background, life-world phenomenology provides the necessary prerequisite to analyse structure and agency from a dialectical perspective. Indeed, analogous to Schütz's statement that "I always find myself in a spatiotemporal and social situation" (Schütz & Luckmann 1973: 19), Jessop (2005: 48) suggests in his "strategic-relational approach" to assess structure and agency as always contingent on the specific spatio-temporal context and in a dialectical way. This means that "structures emerge in specific places and at specific times" (Jessop 2005: 51) and to analyse "structure in relation to action, action in relation to structure, rather than bracketing one of them" (Jessop 2005: 48).

The specific dialectical relationship between structure and agency guides the empirical inquiry of this dissertation, which responds to the second research objective of explaining peri-urban governance and conflicts (cf. chapter 6). It reflects the critical realist ontology, according to which societal structures pre-exist human agency and enable human action possible. At the same time, human agency must exist to make societal structures possible (Danermark et al. 2019: 72). This means conducting analyses "relationally" to assess structures in relation to their effect on actors and the actions they shape, as well as agency with respect to the structures that constrain or enable action in the specific spatio-temporal context (Jessop 2005: 48–50). To conclude with Powell (2013: 201), "every statement in a structural explanation may be reformulated in agential terms and vice versa". These ideas will be revisited later.

3 Methodology and Qualitative Research Design Reconstructing Life-world Experiences

This chapter focuses on the methodology and research design for reconstructing life-world experiences. First, I will discuss my positionality in the field while conducting cross-cultural and postcolonial research. In particular, I will outline how issues of power and ethics manifested and how I dealt with them through critical reflexivity and by embracing reciprocal and dialogical research relationships (cf. chapter 3.1). In addition, an inquiry into life-worlds requires investigating other people's subjective experiences, which bears significant methodological challenges. Since the methodology is informed by ontology and epistemology, the philosophical trilogy of critical realism, phenomenology, and hermeneutics poses further methodological premises. These methodological challenges are discussed (cf. chapter 3.2.) before translating them into a methodology of place-based research and life-world-analytical ethnography adequate for reconstructing life-world experiences (cf. chapter 3.3.). In the subsequent description of the design of the empirical research process, the applied methods and the realisation of the data collection procedure are discussed in detail (cf. chapter 3.4.). The chapter concludes with the applied analytical and interpretative strategies that underlay this dissertation (cf. chapter 3.5).

3.1 Positionality, Reflexivity, Reciprocity, and Dialogue

The realisation of qualitative social research and an inquiry into lived experiences inevitably requires a life-worldly and experiential approximation to the social reality of the ones being researched. Consequently, there is no alternative to collecting empirical data tied to social interactions in intersubjective encounters (Rothfuß & Dörfler 2013: 23). Also, there is no doubt that my appearance in the field and my position vis-à-vis my research partners significantly impacted the results and the research process at large. In particular due to the cross-cultural and post-colonial research context since I am a white, male, European, post-graduate academic. Throughout the next paragraphs, I discuss my positionality in the field, how issues of power and eth-

ics were manifested, and how I was dealing with it through critical reflexivity and by embracing reciprocal and dialogical relationships (Dowling 2005: 24; Cloke et al. 2004: 165–167).

The practice of qualitative research and the collection of social information and data is always based on personal interaction. Interviews, the principal method for collecting qualitative empirical data, involve at least two or more individuals who come together in a specific social and spatio-temporal situation. These intersubjective interactions do not occur in a social vacuum but are embedded in the broader societal contexts, influenced by various and sometimes diverging social norms, interests, and expectations. Relationships of power are internalised in societal structures and, therefore, also in social relationships. The interview, as well as qualitative research more broadly, is always placed in structures of power which affect the relationship of the researcher with the participants at the specific time and the particular place of the encounter (Dowling 2005: 19). “Power cannot be eliminated from your research since it exists in all social relations” (Dowling 2005: 23), and there is a growing awareness among social geographers and social scientists to reflect this relationship and their position in the field in a self-critical manner (Rose 1997; Merriam et al. 2001; Browne et al. 2010).

During the ethnographic fieldwork, I was usually accompanied. A student from Maputo’s University supported me as a field assistant, cultural interpreter and translator for *Changana* and *Ronga*, the most common native languages in southern Mozambique. In addition to that, my wife, an anthropologist herself, accompanied us on countless occasions during the second field research, and she participated in several interview encounters. Our presence in Maputo’s peri-urban neighbourhoods as “outsiders” was noticeable. Not rarely, our arrival was already announced by the curiosity of children calling out loud *Mulungu* (white person). Being strangers in the place, we were usually met with the residents’ openness, facilitating the opportunity to start conversations quickly. But at the same time, encounters were sometimes biased, and we were met with prepossession. On numerous occasions, we were offered to buy plots since we were considered potential land buyers. In one situation, we were also met with the direct mistrust of two young farmers who regarded us as possible land grabbers. Being transparent about my position as a researcher helped to resolve uncomfortable situations and clarify expectations.

Due to my affiliation with Maputo’s Eduardo Mondlane University (UEM, *Universidade Eduardo Mondlane*), I had a research credential and an official research permit from the municipality of Maputo. Also, the official attendance and interviews with local authorities typically preceded data collection in neighbourhoods. Thus, we explained the objective of our research and were introduced to the neighbourhood. We perceived that land issues are very sensitive, which later became the principal object of study. In this light, it was a central concern of my research not to be patronizing but to address locally relevant issues and to provide knowledge which

does no harm but supports the self-determination and the rights of the local population (Howitt & Stevens 2010: 57). Therefore, I identify myself with the statement, that “many social geographers are motivated by a feeling that there is injustice in our world, and they want their work to be useful in addressing – and redressing – those injustices” (Staeheli & Mitchell 2010: 553).

Against this background, there is a tense relationship between the intention to represent the voices of the research participants and research that tends to be exploitative (Merriam et al. 2001: 414). Informants sacrifice their time for the supply of information, which ultimately serves the researcher to develop his career while the informant receives little in return (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007: 217). According to Appadurai (1988: 16–17), the issue of voice conveys both a problem of multiplicity and a problem of representation. To what extent can we say that we represent the diversity of voices from the field while, at the same time, many voices were left unheard? In addition to that, we might “speak for the native point of view”, but we are also biased by our cultural background and knowledge expectations, dictating the dialogue and thus “our informants are often made to speak for us” (Appadurai 1988: 17). The issue of authoritarian voice and representational divergences between the view of the “outsider” and the “insider” can become even more evident in cross-cultural research situations where the life-world of the researcher and the life-world of the researched are rather distant. Ultimately, research runs the risk of resulting “in a dangerous cocktail of epistemic privilege and representational objectivity” (Siriwardane-de Zoysa & Hornidge 2016: 5).

Representation and knowledge are first conditional on language. Knowledge about everyday life is expressed and communicated in the native language, and language represents not only the means of communication in an interview but also expresses the everyday reality (Spradley 1979: 20). Thus, Howitt & Stevens (2010: 56) suggest learning the local language to be able to interact with “others”. Since my Portuguese language skills are fluent, direct verbal interaction with most of Maputo’s peri-urban residents was possible, which means that the experiences of the everyday reality did not become distorted or lost in translation (Spradley 1979: 20). Throughout the second stay in Maputo, I also participated in a six-week language course of *Changana* to pick up some basic vocabulary. Although it did not suffice for elaborated conversations, it was enough to break the ice through brief greetings that nonetheless had a significant value for de-powering relationships and creating intersubjective comfort (Howitt & Stevens 2010: 56).

The participation of my wife during the fieldwork was furthermore advantageous. Not only because she is a native Portuguese speaker but also because of the representation of the voices of female farmers who were much more open and interested in speaking with her. When reflecting on issues of multiplicity and diversity, one cannot disregard the written representations of societal relations as they appear in the original writings of Schütz or Husserl. Schütz, for instance, continuously elabo-

rates his life-world theory on behalf of the “normal, wide-awake adult”, which evokes at first glance a rather exclusive than inclusive worldview regarding difference and diversity. Explicitly, he writes that “we must neglect the special problems of the child’s world and of pathological realities” (Schütz & Luckmann 1973: 21). This issue has already attracted the attention of Maskit (2017: 229), who writes that Schütz “clearly means by normal adult a sighted, able-bodied man, presumably white”. But I agree that Schütz’s “blinded view” (Maskit 2017: 229). On these accounts owes their debt rather to the lack of socio-political awareness towards difference, which was predominant at the time of his writings, than to his personal ignorance.

Critical reflexivity does not eliminate the power dimension in intersubjective interactions but guides a researcher’s continuous awareness of potentially exploitative relationships. In addition, it asks for the constant negotiation of the research process and to adjust it whenever necessary and appropriate (Dowling 2005: 23–25). I highly identify myself with the objectives of collaborative research and the methodology of participatory action research (PAR), which is based on a non-hierarchical and shared ownership of the research. It follows emancipatory purposes and strives for social change through concrete action (MacDonald 2012; Kemmis et al. 2014; Pain 2004). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated travel restrictions, however, my research underwent constant modifications. The second and principal field research had to be postponed by one year, and eventually, the duration had to be shortened from a projected nine months to less than six months. Still under pandemic conditions, participatory methods, therefore, could not be realized during the field research. Not only to avoid gatherings and ensure social distance but also due to lack of preparatory time and opportunities to implement a collaborative approach.

Being critically reflexive also entails not imposing a research agenda just for the sake of being critically reflexive. In fact, participatory research is also not always the appropriate approach since it still bears the risk of leading to exploitative relationships. A researcher may unintentionally establish research relationships that are to the disadvantage of the ones under study. According to Hammersley & Atkinson (2007: 217), this “is a problem that can even arise in those situations where the researcher has an intellectual and emotional commitment to the people concerned and seeks to establish a non-hierarchical relationship with them”. In this light, Rose (1997: 319) reminds us that we can never entirely understand how power operates. Therefore, researchers have to acknowledge potential absences and fallibilities in their research and that it cannot be seen as the full consequence of the relation with the researched but that there are aspects beyond our control. Practising reflexivity without this awareness may lead to destructive outcomes where the overemphasis on the reflexivity of the researcher overshadows the research participants and obscures their voices, thus falling into a perspective which is “ultimately pessimistic, unproductive, and completely inward-directed” (Davies 2008: 17–18).

By attending to the concept of place, additional dimensions of privilege and power come to the fore. According to Appadurai (1988: 16), the “problem of place” refers to the site of the researched, which is chosen and culturally defined by the researcher, whereas the privileged locus of their origin mostly remains unnamed and unknown for the researched. “Ethnography thus reflects the circumstantial encounter of the voluntarily displaced anthropologist and the involuntarily localized ‘other’” (Appadurai 1988: 18). Combined with the dilemma of voice as mentioned above, “the problem of place and voice is ultimately a problem of power “which owes much to the hierarchical “relationships between places, so that until there are as many persons from Papua New Guinea [or Mozambique] studying Philadelphia [or Germany] as vice versa, the appearance of dialogue conceals the reality of monologue” (Appadurai 1988: 20).

However, those hegemonic and “moral aspects of place” (Smith 2007) apply not only to the cross-cultural and continental difference between Germany and Mozambique but also perpetuate in the local context of Maputo’s places of exclusion itself. I was repeatedly asked by people I met in the field in which neighbourhood I would live in Maputo. The city centre, where I was accommodated most of the time, and the growing number of gated communities reflect places of exclusion with restricted accessibility. Although the racial politics of spatial segregation during the colonial regime have been abolished for over three decades (cf. chapter 4.1.3.), socio-spatial fragmentation continues to be grasping. For the majority of Maputo’s residents, the freedom to choose a place to live is restricted, albeit mostly for socio-economic reasons, which nonetheless cannot totally be separated from racial reasons.

How also confronting the intersection of the problem of voice and the problem of place if not being able to break down or radically change power relations in the short term? With reflexivity and awareness of the dimensions of privilege and power, I embarked on a research approach that embraces reciprocal and dialogical relationships. Of course, as a researcher, I cannot deny my reliance on the participating subjects to gain insights into the lived experiences of everyday life. In contrast to exploitative relationships, however, reciprocal relationships are characterized by mutual respect, empathy, and the sharing of knowledge (England 1994: 82). It also aims to achieve an equal share of the costs and benefits between the researcher and the participants (Dowling 2005: 23). England (1994: 82) suggests the researcher assuming the role of “supplication”. In conducting fieldwork, “the researcher-as-suppliant is predicated upon an unequivocal acceptance that the knowledge of the person being researched (at least regarding the particular questions being asked) is greater than that of the researcher” (England 1994: 82). By shifting power from the researcher to the researched, he adds, this approach is appealing for asymmetrical and potentially exploitative relationships.

Through long-time fieldwork and existential commitment, I was enabled to form intimate relationships with the people and their places, creating rapport, trust, mu-

tual respect, and positive feelings about interviews (Stevens 2001: 68; Spradley 1979: 78). More than a dozen times, I was “getting my hands dirty”, while participating in the agricultural work on the *machambas* of the farmers’ associations. Instead of exploiting their time, I was helping to get the work done while gaining insights into everyday experiences. Throughout the fieldwork, first encounters with people became regular conversations. Following in-depth interviews with key informants that involved audio recordings were only realised after several meetings when a foundation of mutual interest in sharing time and knowledge was guaranteed. The interviews were held in Bakhtin’s (1981) sense of a dialogical relationship where two persons talk to each other at a particular time in a specific place without confronting each other but with sensitivity to otherness and the plurality of experiences:

each will seek by means of intonation, pronunciation, lexical choice, gesture, and so on, to send out a message to the other with a minimum of interference from the otherness constituted by pre-existing meanings (inhering in dictionaries or ideologies) and the otherness of the intentions present in the other person in the dialogue (Bakhtin 1981:xx).

Since the methodology of this dissertation involves visual methods and photography, I sought to confront Appadurai’s “problem of place” through sharing photos of my *machamba* at home and the places constituting my life-world in Germany. By revealing my life-world and responding to personal questions, I tried to uncover my “otherness” through a reciprocal and dialogical relationship and mutual interactions between meaning and places. According to Janz (2005: 92), the concept of place can also be used to dissolve the distinction between researcher and researched and be recognised as being constituted equally without privileging neither. “To the extent that it can be imagined in this way, place then becomes the location of dialogue and critique” (Janz 2005: 92), for instance, while sharing our experiences about the difficulties of planting zucchini and tomatoes.

3.2 The Methodological Challenges of Researching Lived Experiences

The universality of the structures of the life-world was already highlighted in the previous chapter. They represent a *mathesis universalis* which serves as a *tertium comparationis*, thus allowing for research applied to different social and cultural contexts while at the same time preserving a non-Eurocentric perspective (Eberle 2021: 23–24; Siriwardane-de Zoysa & Hornidge 2016: 7). According to Schütz (1962: 39), the common-sense typifications of the life-world structures hold good, “not only for the participants in a social interaction pattern but also for the mere observer of such interaction”. While these considerations concern the viability of implementing the life-world as a concept in cross-cultural research, they do not relieve from further

requirements regarding methodological procedures during the process of research itself. In fact, practical guidance on how to deduce the life-world's meaning through empirical research is missing (Eberle 2014a: 25).

Therefore, the scientific observer, alias the researcher, faces significant methodological challenges. Above all, since the life-world is foremost a subjective world. Instead of giving statements of his or her own lived experiences, an investigator is primarily asked to obtain valid data about the lived experiences of others (Honer & Hitzler 2015: 548). A dilemma arises concerning the discrepancy between achieving objectivity based on the subjectivity of the objects of study and pseudo-objectivity based on one's own subjectivity. In other words, "how to see and describe the world through other people's eyes without mixing this perspective with one's own life-world, that is, how to give 'their' answer to the research question instead of 'our' answer" (Oberkircher & Hornidge 2011: 399).

The elaboration of the invariant structures of everyday life as *mathesis universalis* was Thomas Luckmann's endeavour. By establishing a matrix for empirical and comparable analyses, he aimed to provide a solution to the problem of measurement in the social sciences (Eberle 2021: 23). Nonetheless, methodological challenges persist in applying life-world analyses to empirical research. According to Eberle (2021: 24), the genuine problem of measurement in social science consists in finding, on the one hand, the methods that are best apt for data collection and, on the other hand, the ones most suitable for their interpretation. To accomplish this task, we will first draw on Schütz's own methodological considerations more specifically. His ideas are afterwards supplemented with additional methodological insights from critical realism, phenomenology, and hermeneutics.

In *The Problem of Social Reality*, Schütz (1962: 3–47) included a comprehensive chapter dedicated to a methodology of the life-world. Likewise, he saw himself confronted with the aforementioned discrepancy between the subjective context of meaning and the scientific claim towards objective knowledge:

First, we have seen from the previous analyses that the subjective meaning an action has for an actor is unique and individual because it originates in the unique and individual biographical situation of the actor. How is it then possible to grasp subjective meaning scientifically? Secondly, the meaning context of any system of scientific knowledge is objective knowledge but accessible equally to all his fellow scientists and open to their control, which means capable of being verified, invalidated, or falsified by them. How is it, then, possible to grasp by a system of objective knowledge subjective meaning structures? Is this not a paradox? (Schütz 1962: 35).

The source of all meaning and understanding arises through lived experiences. For the individual actor, meaning is "constituted" by living through his or her experiences. The life-world then represents the all-encompassing structures where the entirety

of his or her meaningful experiences and actions is “constituted” (Schütz 1967: 12; Luckmann 1973: 174). However, the social world’s reality is intersubjectively “constructed” by social actors. The experienced and meaningful “construct” is interpreted and understood by the individual actor and all social actors in a shared world (Dörfler & Rothfuß 2017: 423). Hence, whereas “constitution” refers to processes in subjective consciousness, “construction” refers to social processes that are empirically observable (Eberle 2014b: 189). Life-world phenomenology in this sense is concerned with the “constitution” of meaning in the subjective consciousness of individual actors (Hitzler & Eberle 2004: 67). Social science, on the other hand, is concerned with an analysis of the social “construction” of reality (Berger & Luckmann 1966: 15).

As emphasised earlier, Berger & Luckmann’s (1966) “construction” has to be differentiated from contemporary interpretations of social constructivism (Luckmann 2008: 30). Instead of “constructivism”, Dörfler & Rothfuß (2017: 415), therefore, call for “reconstructivism”. In fact, it is only through the process of “reconstruction” that the subjectivity-objectivity dilemma is resolved by referring back to the subjective meaning that social actors ascribe to their experiences and actions (Hitzler & Eberle 2004: 68).

Against this background, Schütz makes the methodological differentiation between the “first order” constructs of the everyday life of individuals and the “second order” constructs developed by the social scientists. The constructs of social science are second order because we can only deviate them from the common-sense first order constructs of the everyday reality (Hitzler & Eberle 2004: 69; Dreher 2011: 503). Thus, they are “constructs of the constructs made by the actors on the social scene, whose behavior the scientist observes and tries to explain in accordance with the procedural rules of his science” (Schütz 1962: 6). To solve this apparent paradox, Schütz (1962: 43–44) developed the “postulate of subjective interpretation”, and the “postulate of adequacy”.¹

Regarding the postulate of subjective interpretation, the scientist constructs a model of the sectors of the social world of an individual, which contains typical attributes, actions, and interactions patterns. It is mandatory for social science, however, to be consistent with the subjective meaning that an event or an action has for an actor. Regarding the postulate of adequacy, it is necessary for social scientists to construct their models in such a way that they are understandable for an actor and for his or her associates. This means that the scientific constructs have to be consistent with the constructs of the common-sense life-world and everyday experiences (Schütz 1962: 43–44; Eberle 2014a: 14). Hitzler & Eberle (2004: 69) further accentuate that

¹ Schütz developed five postulates but for reasons of scope, only the two most important ones are highlighted here (cf. Dreher 2021; Eberle 2014).

the point of view of an individual actor can only be captured with approximation but never with complete adequacy. The latter, “therefore remains an unachievable ideal for interpretative social sciences”.

In line with this approximation, critical realism also argues that we can never completely reconstruct the social world through the subjective meaning of individual actors. But still, we can deploy the methodological tools to approach reality (Davies 2008: 20; Danermark et al. 2019: 13). From a critical realist perspective, *Erklären* (explaining) of social events and their causal mechanisms represents the overall aim of social science (Danermark et al. 2019: 97). In the tradition of Schütz and Weber, however, *Verstehen* (understanding) of the subjective meaning of individual actors’ actions represents sociology’s principal purpose (Eberle 2021: 38). Thus, we arrived at a point where it is necessary to come to clear terms to overcome some still outstanding methodological dichotomies.

As mentioned earlier within the so-called *Methodenstreit* (cf. chapter 2.1.2.), hermeneutic philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey made the clear-cut distinction that the natural science uses the method of *Erklären* (explaining) whereas the human science presupposes *Verstehen* (understanding) (Eberle 2009: 497). Later hermeneutic thinkers like Paul Ricoeur, however, moved beyond this dichotomy, suggesting a dialectic reading of explanation and understanding where both approaches interact and complement each other (Dahlberg et al. 2008: 81). Weber also aimed at overcoming the oppositions through the elaboration of his *verstehend-erklärende* (interpretative-explaining) sociology which Schütz also adopted (Eberle 2009: 500).

Schütz (1962: 58) is also neither hostile towards the method of explaining, but according to him, “a theory which aims at explaining social reality has to develop particular devices foreign to the natural sciences in order to agree with the common-sense experience of the social world”. For him, explaining social reality is placed on the level of second order constructs of the social scientist, but it must refer to the subjective meaning of first order constructs that an action has from the perspective of the actor. Therefore, it intrinsically presupposes “understanding”:

The postulate of subjective interpretation has to be understood in the sense that all scientific explanations of the social world *can*, and for certain purposes *must*, refer to the subjective meaning of the actions of human beings from which social reality originates (Schütz 1962: 62)

The methodological premises of Schütz are reconcilable with a moderate version of critical realism without omitting the existence of an independent reality which is, after all, promising for emancipatory social science research (Yeung 1997: 55). Instead of aiming for strictly causal or predictive statements through experiments, empirical research based on a critical realist ontology in this sense strives to provide explanations based on the meaning of experiences (Davies 2008: 21–22). In Bhaskar

(2015 [1979]: 53), “society is not given in, but presupposed by experience”. The meaning of an experience, however, cannot be measured, but it is expressed in language and dialogue and therefore has to be understood. This suggests qualitative methods such as ethnography and interviews to be the precondition for explaining social events and processes (Yeung 1997: 57).

Davies (2008: 22), for instance, encourages ethnographers “to explore the phenomenological reality of actors’ understandings and interpretations and their effects on social structure, but not to take these interpretations as fully constitutive of social structure”. The latter can never be studied directly but only by observing their effects on actors which does neither deny their independent reality nor the possibility to make them an object of knowledge (Bhaskar 2015 [1979]: 53; Davies 2008: 22). The lived experiences of the life-world can likewise “neither be captured through a model of ‘outside versus inside’ nor with the help of socio-temporal and spatial measurements” (Honer & Hitzler 2015: 545). Instead, according to Honer (2004: 116), the methodological attempt to reconstruct the world derives from the phenomenological description and hermeneutical interpretation of as many sources as possible that allow access to an individual’s subjective viewpoint.

3.3 Place-based Research and Life-world-analytical Ethnography

A research programme for analysing life-worlds must be appropriate to meet the methodological challenges and premises. At the same time, it has to be consistent with the ontological and epistemological assumptions. From the perspective of social geography, it has to emphasise the spatial dimension of lived experiences. Further, a place-based inquiry “demands that we seek to discover the world as it is experienced by those who are involved and situated in it” (Dörfler & Rothfuß 2017: 424). Therefore, the data collection process requires the use of methods which are qualified to reconstruct the subjective meaning that Maputo’s peri-urban dwellers ascribe to their lived experiences. Understanding furthermore requires a data analysis based on a deliberate hermeneutical interpretation (Honer 2004: 113).

Thus, ethnography informed by phenomenology with fieldwork grounded in place represents the ideal research programme for life-world analysis and reconstructing lived experiences. According to Honer & Hitzler (2015: 548), “ethnographers interested in the life-world devote themselves more determinedly and more explicitly than others to investigating how people subjectively experience their world and the certainties that shape it”. “Hermeneutic sociology of knowledge” (Reichert 2004b; Schröer 1997) offers the proper framework for interpretation and “thematic analysis” (Braun & Clarke 2022) suits as an additional method to systematically identify patterns of collective meanings to reconstruct the lived experiences (cf. chapter 3.5.).

Schütz's legacy in contemporary social science research is still profound. In particular, among sociologists, several ethnographic approaches to conducting empirical research emerged (see (see Eberle 2021). The methodological approach of this dissertation is mainly guided by "life-world-analytical ethnography" (Honer & Hitzler 2015). With a strong connection to Schütz's mundane phenomenology, it is best suited for researching peri-urban life-worlds. As an ethnographic and phenomenology-based approach to empirical research, it was developed by the joint work of Anne Honer, Roland Hitzler, and Michaela Pfadenhauer (Eberle 2021: 35). It has, since then, been developed further and is also known under the labels "life-worldly ethnography" (Honer 1993) or "life-world analysis in ethnography" (Honer 2004).

Life-world-analytical ethnography aims to reconstruct the actors' "inside view" as approximate as possible. Therefore, it seeks to describe people's experiences and actions in their subjective meaning, to understand them through interpretation, and to explain them by referring to their original subjective context. Relying on the subjective perspective represents "the only really sufficient guarantee that social reality is not replaced by a fictitious non-existent world constructed by some scientific observer" (Hitzler & Eberle 2004: 68).

To accomplish this, place-based fieldwork represents the uttermost presupposition for life-world research. "There is no knowing or sensing a place except by being in that place, and to be in a place is to be in a position to perceive it" (Casey 1996: 18). This requires the temporal dislocation of the researcher to the places of study and to dwell in with the people one is interested in. It is aimed to partake and witness as much as possible of the lived spatial, temporal, and social dimensions of their life-worlds. "To study place, or more exactly, some people or other's sense of place, it is necessary to hang around with them – to attend to them as experiencing subjects" (Geertz 1996: 260). Honer & Hitzler (2015: 548–549), therefore, recommend an "existential engagement" as an approach to fieldwork by which the researcher participates in everyday life and activities. He or she engages with the world-views of the subjects and co-experiences their world of places.

This approach is not pioneering but builds on and complements existing ethnographic research programmes (Honer 2004). Sophisticated entry points are given by Geertz's (1973) "thick description", Spittler's (2014) "thick participation", or as well as by Stevens's (2001) "fieldwork as commitment". Long-term fieldwork increases the opportunities to establish close relationships with people and places, and ethnography traditionally involves a stay of at least one year (Stevens 2001: 68; Spittler 2014: 211). However, ethnographic approaches such as Knoblauch's (2001) "focussed ethnography" favour shorter stays. These usually involve an already predefined theoretical interest, are rather structured and include more diverse methods of data collection and analysis (Knoblauch 2001: 129).

The primary focus of life-world research rests on researching lived experiences. An inquiry into the life-world of Maputo's peri-urban dwellers aims to reconstruct

the spatial dimensions of lived experiences in order to understand the meaning people ascribe to their spatial experiences. Through place-based fieldwork, as a researcher, I am immersed in the places of my interest. My own lived experiences of space are directly available to me. I don't have to reconstruct them in the way I have to do it with the lived experiences of others. Since my own experiences of space are potentially the experiences of others, the ego-logical perspective represents a pristine methodological starting point for life-world research (van Manen 2016: 54).

Thus, in addition to researching other people's lived experiences, life-world analytical ethnography encourages researchers to use their subjective experiences in the field explicitly and reflexively to collect meaningful data. By so doing, "*the genuine form of an experience*" (Eberle 2014b: 195) is not lost through the reconstruction or transcription before bringing it into an objectified form. Whereas still a few decades ago, Buttmer (1976: 281) criticised that "[r]arely, however, has a geographer made a phenomenological investigation of his own perceptions", life-world-analytical ethnography proceeds differently. Honer & Hitzler (2015: 549) advocate that "one should also reflect on one's own lived experience (*Erleben*) and one's own meaningful experiences (*Erfahrungen*) as self-evident data, and that one should integrate them more into the methodological canon of empirical social research".

Seamon (2023) differentiates between first-person studies of place and third-person studies of place. Whereas first-person studies derive from the first-hand experiences of the researcher, third-person studies of place are the constructs of other people's place experiences. Insights into the lived experiences of others are gained through, for instance, observations, written accounts, conversations or visual representations. The own perceptions and experiences of the researcher can present a vital phenomenological data source. Being aware and reflective of them, they can



Figure 4 The four methodological pillars of data collection

Source: Illustration by author

guide towards a more profound analysis of the phenomenon in question. Thus, since we live in an intersubjective world, my own experiences are potential experiences of others and vice-versa (Finlay 2011: 150–151; van Manen 2016: 57–58).

The ego-logical perspective, however, does not substitute but rather complements an investigation of other people's lived experiences. Since life-world analyses aim to make available as many sources as possible to reconstruct the subjective viewpoints of social actors (Honer 2004: 116), additional methods must be consulted. The methods of data collection of this dissertation are built on four pillars (cf. figure 4). Besides using my own lived experiences during fieldwork, I used variations of participant observation, different forms of qualitative interviews, and visual methods. These four methods are, however, not strictly separated from each other, and I applied them in combination to harness the life-world experiences and people-place relationships in a multimodal account. After briefly characterising the remaining three (participant observation, interviews, visual methods), I will outline how I realised my empirical life-world research in practice.

According to Spradley (2016 [1980]: 54), the method of participant observation comes with a dual purpose. On the one hand, to engage in the activities of people in a social situation and on the other hand, to observe the social situation in which people's activities take place. The participant observer experiences the place, the social situation and its meaning being both an "outsider" and "insider" at the same time (Spradley 2016 [1980]: 56–57). Based on the classic works of Junker (1960) and Gold (1958), Hammersley & Atkinson (2007: 82) distinguish four dimensions of an ethnographer's relation with the field which are expressed in a continuum of varying degrees between an "outside" and "inside" perspective. The "complete observer" has no contact with the observed ones and takes up a position external to the field. The "observer-as-participant" and the "participant-as-observer" are located in the middle. In contrast, in the role of the "complete participant", the ethnographer takes up the "internal" perspective and he or she is directly involved in the activities of the field.

Depending on the social situation, I adopted a flexible position between observing and participating. Being the complete and covert observer without interaction would bear the risk of losing transparency and failing ethical standards. Being a complete participant, however, would demand to immerse into the culture completely which is simply not possible due to the cross-cultural research setting and temporal constraints. It would also mean to suppress my own role as a researcher and as Hammersley & Atkinson (2007: 85) correctly state, "in neither case will the ethnographer interact as a researcher with the people being studied".

The added value of observations over interviews can be significant under certain circumstances. Although it might seem obvious that a linguistic approach reveals more comprehensive and less effortless access to data, there are also several situations in which observations are better able to grasp phenomena more profound and

adequate (Spittler 2001: 8). Implicit knowledge and routinised modes of orientation in space constitute elementary components of lived experiences, but they often remain unspoken and are nearly impossible to be explored through interviews (Soeffner 2004: 98; Honer & Hitzler 2015: 551). Moreover, certain phenomena, actions, or events are simply too complex to describe accurately through language. This is particularly true for the environment, spatial arrangements or place-specific characteristics. An observer can capture a scene such as a crowded street corner at a glance, whereas an oral account would barely do justice (Spittler 2001: 8).

Visual methods such as photographs helps to grasp the multifaceted materiality of the social world and the complex social events that take place in it (Harper 2004: 231–232). Since it can assemble large amounts of social information with a small (timely) effort, “the photograph is worth a thousand words” (Harper 2004: 231). Observations of a place, however, are primarily confined to the subjective perceptions and perspectives of the researcher and reveal not much about how other people experience and interpret their lived environments (Kusenbach 2003: 460). Qualitative interviews, therefore, represent the primary method of how I investigated the lived experiences of other people.

The outline of the “problem-centred interview” by Witzel & Reiter (2012) serves as a prototype for my interviews. By referring to Schütz, the interviewer and participant co-construct and reconstruct a topic in an intersubjective situation. In an interactive and discursive dialogue, the researcher’s prior knowledge meets the respondent’s everyday knowledge (first order constructs). Together, the social scientific knowledge (second order constructs) is developed (Witzel & Reiter 2012: 18–19). According to Valentine (2005: 111), qualitative interviews aim “to understand how individual people experience and make sense of their own lives”. Against this background, all the interviews I conducted are purely qualitative and I will refrain from using the adjective “qualitative” before the word interview each time. In fact, it is rather limiting to ask each respondent the same standardised question as in questionnaires. Instead, Vagle (2018: 87) reminds us that in a phenomenological study, “all interviews are treated as exciting opportunities to potentially learn something important about the phenomenon [...]. The goal is to find out as much as you can about the phenomenon from each particular participant”.

The nature of the dialogue in each interview moved between semi-structured and more formal interview situations and informal and unstructured conversations (Finlay 2011: 199). Unstructured and too open interviews bear the risk of losing sight of the actual research interest (van Manen 2016: 66). Therefore, I spent a lot of time preparing the interview questions, which was fundamental to familiarise myself with the topics I wanted to cover. In practice, however, I never stuck to the order of questions; no singular interview was ever the same. It requires the interviewer to be attentive to the situation to show empathy and curiosity towards the interviewee while being able to respond and pose questions spontaneously and reflexively (Fin-

lay 2011: 198). This attitude is likewise important for critical realist research. For instance, Sayer (1992: 245) favours less standardized and less formal interviews based on vivid interactions. Accordingly, this is the “precondition of a meaningful type of communication which maximizes the information flow by making use of communicative and social skills”.

The nature of the questions is further decisive for the quality of the generated data. Although it is the objective of phenomenological research to reconstruct lived experiences and interpret meaning, Spradley (1979: 81–83) reminds us not to directly ask for the meaning of things but to pose descriptive questions to discover locally relevant issues. It aims to gather extensive narrative accounts of experiences, concrete stories, and particular events as the basis for phenomenological reflection and later interpretation (van Manen 2014: 314). According to Witzel & Reiter (2012: 68–69), the beginning of a problem-centred conversation represents the critical moment. The opening question, in particular, has the objective of “breaking-up the stereotypical question-answer structure” by “encouraging narratives and in this way producing material in the sense of starting points for further exploration”.

Regarding research interested in the life-world, the realisation of interviews in the places where the life-world is situated helps to generate contextualised forms of knowledge and meaning. By paying explicit attention to the socio-materiality of the spatial surroundings and integrating these into the dialogue, the respondent’s memory is triggered, and experiences are recalled (Anderson 2004: 254–255). Berndt’s (2008: 359–360) “observational interview” suggests combining place-specific observations with interviewing whereby the researcher actively seeks to integrate relevant objects of the spatial context into the interview, thus developing a context of meaning. In this regard, walking interviews or “go-alongs” represent another method for exploring space and place with substantial phenomenological sensibility (Kusenbach 2003; Jones et al. 2008).

Certeau (1984: 97–98) describes the act of walking as “a process of appropriation of the topographical system on the part of the pedestrian” constituting “a spatial acting-out of the place”. Thus, combining observation and interviewing with movement through space facilitates a more profound and meaningful engagement with everyday places and spatial practices. It allows to harness the multifaceted dimensions of place experiences, as researchers “actively explore their subjects’ stream of experiences and practices as they move through, and interact with, their physical and social environment” (Kusenbach 2003: 463).

Visual methods represent the fourth methodological pillar applied in this dissertation. “Visual geographies” (Schlottmann & Miggelbrink 2009) enhance the possibilities for studying the relationship between space and society through the use of imagery. Through visual images such as photographs, satellite images and videos, spatial knowledge is produced and/or communicated in a non-textual way (Schlottmann & Miggelbrink 2009: 1). In line with Harper’s (1988: 54–55) “visual sociology”,

images and photographs can serve for two specific research purposes. First, as a method of data gathering by taking pictures of the social world and second, to analyse the pictures produced by the ones inhabiting the social world. In this dissertation, both approaches were followed.

Photographing places and social situations creates an image that “isolates a moment in time” (Harper 1988: 62). Through the act of photographing, it is achieved to objectify the subjective perspective in both technical and theoretical terms (Dirksmeier 2007: 1). The captured scene where something is taking place therefore always has a certain level of evidential quality, and it is ascribable to a specific time-space location (Schlottmann & Miggelbrink 2009: 7). But whatever a researcher may grasp at a glance through photographs, it only captures the present observable and visible elements (Pink 2013: 40). In line with the critical realist ontology stratified onto the domains of the empirical, the actual, and the real (Bhaskar 2008 [1975]: 2), the social reality in its entirety cannot be recorded through photographs. After all, the underlying subjective meaning structures remain obscured (Pink 2013: 40).

However, the analyses of pictures taken by the subjects under study can provide profound insights into everyday life while retaining the insider view of actors following Schütz’s postulate of subjective interpretation. By combining photographs with interviewing, through the evocation of both pictorial and verbal stimuli; associations, and memories awake, thus eliciting a fruitful flow of lived experiences and meaning (Schaeffer & Carlsson 2014: 57). Different methods explicitly make use of this perspective albeit in similar ways. For instance, “photovoice” (Wang & Burris 1994), “photo-elicitation” (Harper 2002), and “reflexive photography” (Hagedorn 1994) (see Dirksmeier 2007).

In reflexive photography, a change of perspective is induced, shedding light on the subjectivity of the photographing social actors. It allows them to express their subjective view of the world by visualising their life-worlds’ places (Dirksmeier 2007: 8). This method allows for an accurate reconstruction of the subjective meaning that actors ascribe to their socio-spatial experiences and practices. Further, it facilitates approximating the subjective point of view with the highest possible adequacy. The control lies no longer in the hands of the researcher, and a significant amount of power is shifted to the photographing research partner, who anonymously decides what he or she wants to objectivise. Thus, reflexive photography ultimately enables the researcher to address the problem of voice while minimising the risk of a biased representation of the life-worlds under study.

3.4 Design of the Empirical Research Process and Methods of Data Collection

The qualitative approach of case study research informs the research design of this dissertation. According to Yin (2014: 2), “a case study investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the ‘case’) in its real-world context”. Maputo’s peri-urban coastal plain represents the unit of analysis, alias the case study based in which an understanding of the contemporary phenomenon of peri-urbanisation is addressed. Since peri-urban places represent the stage of peri-urban life-worlds, peri-urban areas bear a world of places with qualities that are distinct from rural and urban places. Likewise, the places within the peri-urban interface differ from each other and depending on their location within the rural-urban gradient, they may be characterised by continuities or subject to change.

By embarking on the perspective of peri-urban dwellers, the nature and dynamic of these changes can be grasped more accurately because it is the peri-urban residents and farmers that witness these changes foremost. Therefore, I propose a phenomenological inquiry into several places across the PUI from its inner “zone of direct impact” towards its outer “zone of influence” (cf. Phillips et al. 1999). As Seamon (2018: 3) suggests, “one potential real-world context would be several in-depth, longitudinal, participant-observation studies of two or three actual places, selected in such a way as to offer provocative evidence for comparison and contrast”.

This approach allows shedding light on the socio-materialities of places and the constitution of the life-worlds of its inhabitants. However, this operation also enables a qualitative comparison of place processes along the rural-urban gradient, which goes beyond quantitative attempts to measure its diameter by explicitly considering (instead of masking) the non-linearity and non-uniformity of urban influences (Simon et al. 2004: 235).

The criteria for selecting the area with an exhaustive description of the peri-urban transect from the centre to the periphery are presented in the next chapter in much detail. What follows now focuses on the methodological design of the empirical research process and the applied methods of data collection. To understand peri-urbanisation in its complexity, relying on just a single data source does not suffice. Therefore, following Creswell (2013: 98), “the researcher collects many forms of qualitative data, ranging from interviews, to observations, to documents, to audio-visual materials”.

The research process can be divided into different phases (cf. figure 5). It started in April 2019 with the commencement of the DFG Research Unit LoSAM.² During the

² DFG Research Unit 2757 / Local Self-Governance in the Context of Weak Statehood in Antiquity and the Modern Era (LoSAM). Throughout the research process, the author was affiliated with the LoSAM research project, and the position and the empirical fieldwork were funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG).



Figure 5 Design of the empirical research process

Source: Illustration by author

first months, it was aimed to approach the phenomena of interest and to become familiar with the relevant scholarly work. Therefore, this initial phase was essentially dedicated to the study of existing literature on (peri-)urban (land) governance and urbanisation processes on the African continent and in the context of Maputo in particular. The collection of empirical data occurred during two fieldwork visits to Maputo in 2019 (October – December) and in 2021 (May – October). Between the two stays, five qualitative interviews were conducted with experts such as urban planners and architects via the online platform Zoom.

The first empirical fieldwork in 2019 was characterised by its explorative nature. It was the objective to establish contacts with local researchers, to gather the first empirical material, and to select an adequate case study area. Therefore, its duration of roughly eight weeks was deliberately kept short. After analysing the first data and a profound methodological preparation, the second phase of the fieldwork should continue in spring 2020, just a few months after the first phase. It was originally aimed to stay in Maputo for about nine months to allow for a life-worldly and experiential immersion into the field.

Due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 and its associated health precautions and travel restrictions, the research design was subject to continuous modifications. The second fieldwork stay could only be realised with a one-year delay, which is why, in the meantime, the aforementioned online interviews were realised. Moreover, the duration had to be shortened from the projected nine months to roughly five months. A third fieldwork phase, which was scheduled for two months in late 2021 to close remaining knowledge gaps, was eventually cancelled altogether. Hereinafter, I discuss in detail the empirical research process and the methods of data collection that were used.

3.4.1 Explorative Fieldwork and Expert Interviews

For a duration of eight weeks, the explorative fieldwork in Maputo took place from October 2019 to December 2019. During both stays in Maputo, the Centre of Policy Analyses – CAP (*Centro de Análise de Políticas*) from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences – FLCS (*Faculdade de Letras e Ciências Sociais*) at Maputo's Eduardo Mondlane University – UEM (*Universidade Eduardo Mondlane*) served as the host institution. The support from CAP and its researchers, however, was not limited to the time spent in Maputo, but pivotal throughout the whole research process, not only in bureaucratic but also in thematic and personal matters. An immediate contact with local researchers was established from the beginning. The affiliation with CAP paved the way for accessing the field, approaching local institutions, and achieving official research permits from the municipality of Maputo. The very first activities were conducted in teamwork with a colleague who also forms part of LoSAM's geography subproject. Having the focus in her dissertation on local water governance, our subjects complemented each other. Above all, in the beginning, our collaboration was helpful in processing our findings and guiding our fieldwork reflexively.

Empirical fieldwork can be distinguished into an “explorative”, and a rather “problem-centred” phase (Beer 2008: 2). The first stay in Maputo was characterised by its explorative character. With the subsequent selection of the case study area, however, it became more focused towards the end. Throughout the course of two months, 14 qualitative interviews were conducted and likewise, their nature transitioned from being purely “explorative interviews” (Honer 1994) towards being more “problem-centred interviews” (Witzel & Reiter 2012) (cf. table 2, see table 4 in annex for a detailed register of all conducted interviews).

Explorative interviews aim at providing an initial orientation and raising awareness towards the way of looking at a scientific problem (Bogner et al. 2014: 23). Their main interest lies in the perspective of the participants and their first order constructs regarding the knowledge on certain topics (Honer 1994: 624–625). 7 interviews were held with academics, 3 already in Germany and 4 in Maputo. The interview partner's background ranged from agricultural sciences to human geography, political sciences, and history. All of them had knowledge of current dynamics in Maputo's peri-urban spaces. The explorative interviews guided the research process and the sampling procedure, thus opening the way to more profound insights, further contacts and new interview partners.

These first insights guided parallel field explorations to the four municipal districts at the peri-urban margins. During the first fieldwork, 16 field explorations were realised (see table 5 in annex for a detailed register of all fieldwork activities). 9 explorations went to the district KaMavota, which comprises the case study. The other three districts KaTembe, KaNyaka, and KaMabukwana were visited twice each. Observations, the analysis of satellite images, on-site mappings, and the documenta-

tion through photographs underpinned this procedure. Throughout these visits, 7 additional interviews were conducted with local neighbourhood authorities, representatives of civil society organisations, and further academics. 2 interviews explicitly focused on (peri-)urban agriculture and socio-spatial dynamics in KaMavota, being audio recorded and transcribed.

Besides the affiliation with the UEM, a second way of gaining access to the field was paved through one of the previous explorative interviews. It established the contact with Maputo's urban farming community and the friendship with Matias, who works with Maputo's Municipal Department of Agriculture, Fisheries, Livestock and Extension – DAPPE (*Departamento de Agricultura, Pesca, Pecuária e Extensão*). Matias introduced me to Maputo's farmers' associations, enabling my participation in extensive activities during the second fieldwork stay. Our continuous exchange and mutual interests eventually led to different joint presentations and publications (cf. Prestes Dürrnagel et al. 2022). During the explorative fieldwork in 2019, I still participated in two farmers' meetings, which were held at the *Casa Agrária* in KaMavota. They focussed on current issues and conflicts around land resources and urban agriculture. They involved officials from the municipality and civil society organizations and representatives of the respective farmers' associations. The interaction between the participants of the discussions made different perspectives and subjective meanings based on experiences visible.

After the explorative fieldwork, 5 “expert interviews” (Bogner et al. 2014) with academics, urban planners and architects were conducted between October 2020 and January 2021. Expert interviews aim to explore, systematise, or acquire insider knowledge on specific topics. They represent a particular variant of the problem-centred interview (Witzel & Reiter 2012: 33). The interviews were realised via

Table 2 Overview of conducted interviews according to type

	No.
A Interviews during the explorative field work (October 2019 – December 2019)	
Explorative interviews with academics in Germany and Mozambique	7
Problem-centred and semi-structured interviews in Maputo	7
B Expert interviews realised online (October 2020 – January 2021)	
Semi-structured interviews with academics, urban planners, and architects	5
C Interviews during the ethnographic fieldwork (May 2021 – October 2021)	
Problem-centred and semi-structured interviews (prearranged and mostly recorded)	30
Problem-centred and semi-structured interviews	
Informal conversations and encounters	29
(see annex for a detailed register of interviews)	Total 75

Source: Illustration by author

the Zoom online platform, ranging from 40 minutes to almost 2 hours. All of them were recorded and later transcribed. These interviews were no longer explorative but focussed and semi-structured based on open questions prepared in advance as an orientation (Finlay 2011: 199). Since the actual fieldwork could not be realised, I aimed at gaining access to the interviewees' experiences and their "*Kontextwissen*" (contextual knowledge) (Meuser & Nagel 1991: 446) concerning Maputo's peri-urban spaces and the constitutional dimensions of everyday life. In addition, I addressed the expert's "*Prozeswissen*" (processual knowledge) (Bogner et al. 2014: 18) to reconstruct local governance and actor constellations and to gain insights into typical social interactions and processes such as land access and obtaining tenure rights.

3.4.2 Ethnographic Fieldwork

The second fieldwork in Maputo took place from May 2021 to October 2021. After the first explorative fieldwork, it was characterised by its ethnographic approach with a predetermined spatial focus on the case study area. In light of the outlined methodology of place-based research and life-world-analytical ethnography, my subjective experiences in the field through lived explorations resemble a substantial method for the collection of socio-spatial data. These are intermingled with participant observation, different forms of interviews, and applied visual methods. I will discuss now, in detail, how the data collection was realised in practice.

Lived Explorations: Observing and Participating

An approximation of the subjective meaning of lived experiences is life-world research's uttermost objective. The perceptions and experiences that stem from my ego-logical perspective are meaningful for me and present a vital data source. Being bodily immersed and present in a place, I experience it, sense it, and acquire knowledge about it. My experience of walking from one place to another is potentially similar to the experience of someone else walking the same distance on the same path. On the other hand, I can assume that if I co-experience other people's everyday life, I can acquire an understanding that comes close to their lived realities and knowledge of places (Pink 2009: 23).

Although I cannot claim to make a statement about the experiences of others, I still can experience the same environments. According to Casey (1996: 18), "[l]ocal knowledge is at one with lived experience if it is indeed true that this knowledge is of the localities in which the knowing subject lives. To live is to live locally, and to know is first of all to know the places one is in". In line with this statement, a substantial constituent of my ethnographic fieldwork relies on my subjective experiences and

how I experienced places firsthand through the bodily appropriation of space. Hereafter, I call my bodily experiences of space and place during fieldwork activities as “lived explorations”.

I consciously integrated my lived explorations as a data source but not as independent or separable from the other data collection methods. My bodily perceptions are perpetual as long as I am emplaced. Therefore, they are both a complement to and a constituent of my observations, participations, and the various forms of conversations and interviews. Against this background, I draw on Seamon (1979: 17) experiential place categories, consisting of movement, rest, and encounter. With movement, I refer to the lived explorations during the fieldwork of traversing peri-urban space and moving between places on foot, by car, or by public transportation. With rest, I refer to the lived experiences based on the presence in a place, such as during observations. Encounter refers to the intersubjective dimension of spontaneous conversations or arranged interviews, either while resting in a place or during movement in go-along and walking interviews. Following the hermeneutic circle of understanding, each of these three categories represents a mere part, whereas all together, they reveal the larger whole of everyday place experience. Triangulating these experiential dimensions allows me to acquire a more profound understanding of peri-urban everyday realities.

The lived explorations through movement were mostly realised in the company of a field assistant, and several times, my wife joined us. We usually met in the morning and took a *chapa* to some previously defined place from where we started our strolls through the neighbourhoods (cf. photo 2a). On some occasions, when we went to rather distant areas, we also decided to take private transport in order not to waste time. But since the *chapa* ride resembles the experience of everyday relocations of Maputo’s residents, we preferred to take the *chapa* whenever possible. The destination and approximate route were defined beforehand. A vast number of photographs were taken during the fieldwork in connection with on-site mappings. Satellite images of different periods were used to analyse spatial processes and changing land use patterns.

The value of fieldwork on foot through the practice of walking is also emphasised by Lee & Ingold (2006). It allows for an understanding of places, which is created through the body’s interaction with its environment through the creation of a route ahead and the leaving behind of a path. By doing so, we explored Maputo’s peri-urban agricultural fields and neighbourhoods, as Lee & Ingold (2006: 68) suggest, “most fruitfully by walking through and around”.

The movement in and through the field was not only crucial for reconstructing distances and observing everyday situations but also for experiencing the materiality of space such as the conditions of road infrastructures. On the one hand, some main roads were recently constructed, having a tarred or well paved surface. On the other hand, we were stuck twice with our car in sandy and unprepared roads, and we



a) Fieldwork on foot



b) Stuck with the car

Photo 2 Fieldwork through lived explorations*Source: Photos by author (2021)*

had to balance countless times over sticks and stones in flooded areas (cf. photo 2b). Moreover, a comprehensive experience of space becomes immanent only through an ensemble of the multisensory perceptions of the body involving seeing, touching, hearing, smelling, as well as physical and emotional feeling (Spittler 2014: 213).

For example, the agricultural work in middays heat in contrast to the rest under a shaded and tempering mango tree. These conditions also refer to apprehending the “sense of place” (Seamon 2022). In this regard, other people’s common presence in place must be noted. Although without direct encounters or verbal contact, “passive sociability” (Mehta 2013: 100) represents a decisive ingredient in how we perceived Maputo’s peri-urban places. Without people being passively present in it, the perception of the place and the sensory apprehension of its atmosphere would not be possible. It would not be the same place, such as the crowded and noisy *chapa* terminal *Combatentes* or the lively neighbourhood alley full of playing children.

With a recurrent engagement in the activities of Maputo’s farmers’ associations, my role turned from being a mere observer towards being a participant (cf. photo 3). After establishing rapport during the first fieldwork, renewed access to Maputo’s urban farming community was facilitated from the beginning. In their lifeworld analysis of Uzbek farmers, Oberkircher & Hornidge (2011: 399) report that they solved the subjectivity-objectivity dilemma by being present in the field and participating in the farmers’ activities. In this regard, Honer & Hitzler (2015: 553–554) propose to conduct “observant participation” instead of “participant observation”. Accordingly, “the ideal attitude to assume when entering and moving around in the field is characterized by a willingness to engage as completely as possible with all kinds of things”. In this sense, participating becomes more important than observing to approach the life-world’s inside perspectives. A high degree of familiarity is achieved by immediately becoming involved in practice and obtaining a temporary group membership (Honer 2004: 114).



a) Farming fieldwork



b) Farmer Field School



c) Farmers' meeting



d) Land demarcation

Photo 3 Engagement in the activities of Maputo's farmers' associations

Source: Author (2019, 2021)

During the time in Maputo, a pilot project to combat soil salinity and climate change was realised in cooperation with students from the UEM. It allowed me to continuously participate and co-experience the everyday activities on the *machambas*, lending a hand and engaging in reciprocal relationships with the farming community members. Moreover, I attended several farmers' meetings and discussions. I participated in Farmer Field Schools, which were realised on the *machambas* as part of the project activities. Furthermore, I participated in an assembly of the farmers' associations on the municipal level with representatives from the municipality and civil society organisations. In addition, I was present during a site inspection which aimed at demarcating the agricultural areas to impede the further usurpation of land. Finally, my presence on Maputo's *machambas* enhanced my understanding of being a farmer in Maputo. I gained profound insights into the local relationships with land and territorial conflicts caused by advanced urbanisation processes.

Fieldwork Documentation

During the ethnographic fieldwork stay, I documented 36 days of lived explorations (cf. table 5 in annex). The explorations cover the entire case study area, and most of the areas were visited several times to re-meet the people encountered and to gradually acquire a more comprehensive understanding of the places. As I will outline below, most of the conducted interviews and conversations were likewise realised in connection with the lived explorations. Drawings, photographs, and fieldnotes underpinned the collection of data during the ethnographic explorations. In particular, during the beginning of the fieldwork, I also recorded the GPS tracks to reconstruct the routes and to map the most important place experiences.

Fieldnotes constitute “the record of an ethnographer’s observations, conversations, interpretations, and suggestions for future information to be gathered” (Agar 1980: 112). Although Agar (1980: 112) regards fieldnotes as “most overrated”, I fundamentally disagree. Being immersed in the field all day and remembering the specific, detailed experiences which “make the difference between good and so-so ethnographic research” (Bernard 2006: 389) was extremely challenging. Among the different techniques and types of field notes, Bernard’s (2006: 389) “field jottings” became my favoured one. I always had a folded piece of paper and a pen in my pocket, prepared to make field jottings on the spot.

My days’ work of jottings usually consisted of a two-page accumulation of various keywords, names, and numbers padded with adjectives to adequately grasp the observed and my lived experiences. To avoid disturbing the continuity during informal conversations, I recalled what was being said and jotted it immediately afterwards. Bearing in mind, “[i]f you don’t write it down, it’s gone” (Bernard 2006: 389), my jottings were sufficient to provide the trigger to jog my memory, to recall the details, and to write them up more elaborately in the evening.

Intersubjective Encounters and Interviews

Despite the phenomenological advantages of lived explorations and participant observation, interviews remain the principal method for investigating other people’s lived experiences. According to Schütz (1967: 141), ordinary life constitutes the starting point of social science research. In this light, Spradley (1979: 25) consequently adds that the “ethnographer seeks out ordinary people with ordinary knowledge and builds on their common experience”. The interviews and conversations I realised conform with these principles.

During the second fieldwork stay, I documented 59 intersubjective interview encounters (cf. table 4 in annex). 30 interviews were previously arranged. 30 interviews had been arranged beforehand. They had the character of in-depth and problem-centred interviews. Of these, 23 were recorded and transcribed with a duration of between 20 and 90 minutes. The majority of the remaining 29 interviews was re-

alised during the lived explorations. They had the character of rather informal conversations emerging from spontaneous encounters with residents or with people and informants that were met regularly, such as during the participation in farming activities. Some of them were more directed toward a specific knowledge interest. Others were rather undirected and open. All of these were relatively short (up to 20 minutes) and not recorded. However, notes were taken either during the conversation or afterwards.

Regarding the 30 interviews that were previously arranged, two further distinctions have to be made. Firstly, in institutional terms, regarding the function of the interviewed person and secondly, in methodological terms, regarding the specific type of the interview for place research. Within the institutional classification, 18 interviews were realised with neighbourhood authorities, whereas 4 were with *secretários* and the remaining 14 with *chefes de quarteirão*.³

The *secretários* of four different neighbourhoods (Costa do Sol, Albazine, Guava, Mutanhana) were approached with the official research permit from Maputo Municipality. The interviews were held at their office building within the respective neighbourhood. Through the interviews with the *secretários*, the contacts for the subsequent interviews with *chefes de quarteirão* were established. In turn, they enabled access to the neighbourhoods for lived explorations and conversations with residents. The value of interviewing the *chefes* was therefore twofold. On the one hand, being knowledgeable of local governance and land related issues but also for being long-time residents in the neighbourhood.

Moreover, five interviews were conducted with members of farmers' associations or civil society organisations that support farming activities. Two interviews were held with officials in the areas of urban- and land use planning from both the city of Maputo and the town of Marracuene. Another two interviews involved private companies from the areas of urban planning and the construction sector. The remaining three interviews were conducted with residents.

Observational Interviews, Go-alongs, and Reflexive Photography

From a methodological point of view, I sought to emphasise the phenomenological dimension of reconstructing place experiences by explicitly including the socio-spatial environment in the interview. Thus, the majority of the interviews were therefore realised by integrating and combining place observations, go-alongs, and reflexive photography. The following specifications aim to illustrate this endeavour. The re-

³ The so-called *secretários de bairro* (neighbourhood secretaries) and *chefes de quarteirão* (quarter chiefs) represent Mozambican community authorities, exercising administrative and regulative tasks at the level of neighbourhoods. A more elaborate introduction to Maputo's governance structures is realised in chapter 4.2.3.

spective interviews where I now refer to were not realised in addition but as part of the previously documented interview situations. It is merely aimed to foreground the essential lived experiences inherent to the interview situations.

For instance, the interviews with *chefes de quarteirão* and with most residents were realised at their homes, on their personal plots in front of their houses (cf. photo 4a). It constitutes the dwelling place, the kernel of the life-world, which is surrounded by the spatio-temporal world of everyday experiences. Likewise, the interviews with farming community members were held on their *machambas*, where they spent the bulk of their mundane activities. The use and the meaning of land and the personal plot, the relationship with neighbours, and the perceived changes in the neighbourhood were always central conversational topics. The visual and sensory presence of the places allowed for an abundant recalling of memories and events constitutive for an understanding of the life-world (Anderson 2004: 258). As Anderson (2004: 258) argues, the dialogue then not only includes the researcher and respondent but also the place, rendering to “excavate levels of meaning both the researcher and researched may theretofore have been unaware of”.

Go-along interviews were conducted with 8 participants. With 2 participants, these were realised repeatedly as “ride-along” (Kusenbach 2003: 464) while we were being seated in their car (interviews C-50, C-57). These were crucial for sensing distances, observing land use patterns, and experiencing the scale of peri-urban development dynamics.

The remaining walking go-alongs were realised after a first interview was held in a specific place. With *chefes de quarteirão*, for instance, we were transecting neighbourhoods to better understand social occurrences and the particular events we discussed during the previous conversations (interview C-19, C-21). Such “*transect walks*” (Chambers 1994: 960) were also realised with peri-urban farmers (interviews C-17, C-18, C-28). It was important to understand the conditions of soil and production but also vital for reconstructing territorial disputes and land conflicts.

1 go-along interview was particular. It had the character of a covert interview. In this regard, I did not disclose my role as a researcher, and I did not state my intentions (Davies 2008: 62–63). It was realised during the site visit to a housing project being developed by a private company (interview C-30). The decision to stay covert was made to gain access at all. Ethical issues were marginal, and it was the only occasion of covert research.

Interviews in connection with reflexive photography were realised with 4 participants. 1 participant being a farmer (interview C-29), 1 being a resident (interview C-22), and 2 being *chefes de quarteirão* alias residents (interviews C-21, C-27). The proposal to participate in reflexive photography was only submitted after several previous encounters when a relationship based on trust and mutual respect was established. Single-use disposal cameras were provided for the participants, and they were



a) At the home of the chefe de quartirão



b) Reflexive photography discussion

Photo 4 Typical interview settings

Source: Photos by author (2021)

asked to portray their life-world and to take photos of the places that are significant to them. It was also aimed to draw on land-related issues and places that are sites of conflict. A few weeks later, the cameras were recollected, and the photos were developed. During a renewed encounter, in-depth conversations about the photos were realised (cf. photo 4b). In this regard, I also shared my knowledge and the photos portraying my life-world in Germany to arrive at a reciprocal dialogue where the curiosity of both parties becomes satisfied.

3.4.3 Integration of Secondary Data

In addition to the methods applied during the ethnographic fieldwork, different secondary data sources were used. Above all, official documents from the Maputo Municipality, policy documents and reports, and media articles. Regarding official documents, I gained access to several land-use plans through the interviewed experts. On the municipal level, a hierarchy of different types of land-use plans exists (Silva 2015c: 139). This dissertation draws on the Urban Structure Plan of the Municipality of Maputo – PEUMM (*Plano de Estrutura Urbana do Município de Maputo*) and three different Partial Urban Plans – PPU (*Plano Parcial de Urbanização*). The PEUMM represents the master plan being designed for the entire territory of Maputo. It dates from 2008 and is still valid, providing official guidelines for land use such as protected areas, land for agricultural use, a classification of the neighbourhoods and the infrastructures in place (CMM 2008). The PPU represents a more detailed zoning plan elaborated at the neighbourhood level, and the three available plans cover a large part of the case study area.

There is no scope to mention the entirety of the academic literature, but it is worth highlighting the documents and reports that were elaborated in the context of the project UFISAMO (Urban Agriculture for Food Security and Income Generation

in South Africa and Mozambique, 2016–2019). The Centre for Rural Development (SLE – *Seminar für Ländliche Entwicklung*) realised the project at the Humboldt University in Berlin, Germany, involving various local stakeholders and research partners. In particular, during the explorative fieldwork at the beginning, the various publications were seminal (cf. Halder et al. 2018; Engel et al. 2019). Throughout the research process, different media reports were collected in print or video from newspapers and TV stations, as well as statements published on social media. Regarding content, they involved official announcements from the municipality, reports about social incidents such as land use disputes and conflicts, and announcements from the agricultural sector. These mainly guided the empirical research. However, a few are cited in this dissertation.

3.5 Analytical and Interpretative Strategies

Researching lived experiences poses significant methodological challenges that require adequate data collection methods. Thus, reconstructing people's inside view and describing their experiences and actions in relation to their original subjective meaning context calls for a sophisticated methodological procedure. Against this background, Honer & Hitzler (2015: 551) convey a word of warning regarding the risk of lapsing into "pseudo-objectivity". Accordingly, researchers may too hastily present interviewees' descriptions as experiences instead of first interpreting them as descriptions of experiences. Indeed, analysing the data and understanding their subjective meaning through interpretation requires not less caution than their collection in the field. Thus, concluding this chapter with the applied analytical and interpretative strategies, it follows Reichertz's (2004b: 291) call to "to spend a great deal of time on the analysis".

Interpretative procedures in the hermeneutic tradition, such as "social scientific hermeneutics" (Soeffner 2004) and the "hermeneutic sociology of knowledge" (Reichertz 2004b; Schröer 1997) provide a sound methodological basis. In addition, practical insights from "thematic analysis" (Braun & Clarke 2022) were consulted to better structure the analytical process. As it will be showcased, both programmes are compatible and complement each other, thus fruitfully forwarding the endeavour of reconstructing life-word experiences and interpreting their subjective meaning context with accuracy and adequacy according to Schütz's postulates (cf. chapter 4.2.).

In line with the research objectives of this dissertation, to reconstruct the lived experiences of Maputo's peri-urban dwellers, and to grasp the meaning of peri-urbanity, Soeffner's (2004: 97) concept of social scientific understanding provides a substantial entry point. Its main objective concerns "the discovery of the constitutive conditions of 'reality' and the demystification of social constructs". It is not

aimed to reconstruct the singularity of each subjective perspective but to achieve the reconstruction of an objectivised “ideal type” by building on the reconstruction of case-transcending patterns of extensive singular cases. Following iterative processes of interpretation and meaning generation, the interpreter gradually arrives at the discovery of general structures of social action of, for instance, an ideal “peri-urban type” (Reichertz 2004b: 293; Soeffner 2004: 99).

The thematic analysis follows a similar logic. Likewise, it is less appropriate for analysing a person’s unique and individual experiences, but to identify, analyse, and interpret shared patterns of meaning among several individuals or data items (Braun & Clarke 2022: 4; Kiger & Varpio 2020: 847). As such, it guides the operationalisation of life-world analysis by elaborating codes and themes to be applied with data processing software. In this regard, it reflects similar methodological procedures of qualitative research such as “qualitative content analysis” (Mayring 2022) or “grounded theory” (Strauss & Corbin 1990).

The interpretation was also informed by the ideals of the “documentary method” (Nohl 2013) to reconstruct the frame of orientation and action of individuals and groups based on their lived experiences. In this regard, it is essential to differentiate between two types of knowledge. On the one hand, the theoretical knowledge inherent to argumentative text passages and on the other hand, the implicit a-theoretical knowledge intrinsic to descriptive text passages which are decisive for reconstructing frames of orientation and action (Bohnsack 2010: 100; Philipps & Mrowczynski 2019: 64). This distinction ties in with the nature of phenomenological interview questions to retrieve detailed descriptive accounts on actual experiences and lived-through social events (van Manen 2014: 314).

The step-by-step approach of analysis and interpretation applied in this dissertation is presented throughout the next paragraphs. Particular emphasis is placed on the underlying principles of logical interference, meandering between abduction, induction and deduction (Reichertz 2004a). Assuming that the “peri-urban” is distinct from both “rural” and “urban” life-worlds requires an “abductive attitude” throughout the entire research process (Schröder 1997: 117). After all, the endeavour of elaborating the inherent logic of peri-urbanity may become biased, and the discovery of its essential qualities eventually subsumed under either rural or urban features. These are rather known, and such common-sense conceptions could interfere with reflective reasoning. However, to grasp the novelty of the peri-urban, the abductive attitude calls for “research in such a way that ‘old’ beliefs are seriously tested and, in certain cases, ‘new’ and more workable beliefs can be developed” (Reichertz 2004b: 294). In principle, it embodies the phenomenological *epoché*, which is, according to Dahlberg et al. (2008: 53) characterised by “standing aside from one’s subjective experience in order to observe the world or a particular phenomenon from a pure epistemological and totally objective perspective”.

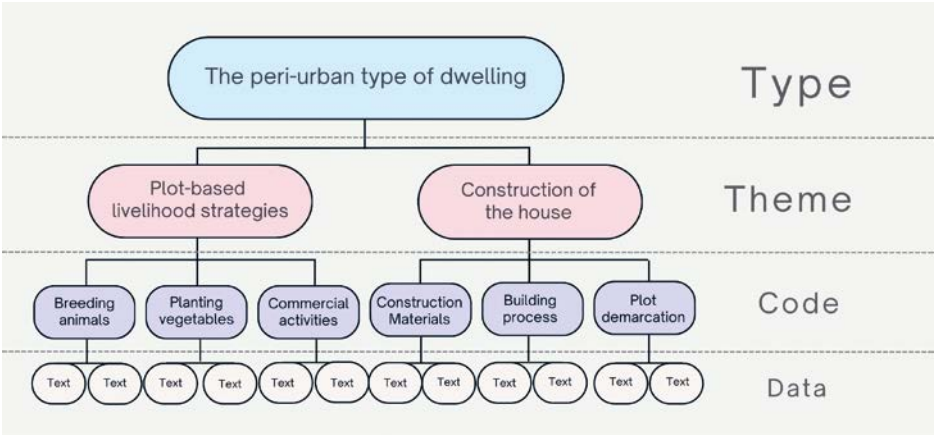


Figure 6 The four-level approach of data analysis and interpretation
Source: Illustration by author

The attitude of abduction not only concerns the analytical and interpretive work. Its principles already build on the ideals towards openness of the previous data collection phase. Indeed, it presupposes that the researcher enters the field with a stance of cautious naivety and collects qualitative data in a non-standardised way and as unstructured as possible to prevent them from being undermined by subjective perspectives and pre-existing beliefs (Reichertz 2004b: 294). Regarding the composition of data, Reichertz (2004b: 294) requests them to have the “properties of a whetstone”, and the researcher, alias interpreter, “must be forced abductively to grind down, or re-sharpen, his or her existing prejudices”.

The analytical and interpretative work is organised along several successive operations. In this regard, Braun & Clarke (2022: 34–36) employed a six-step process for analysing and interpreting the data with thematic analysis. Other authors like van Manen (2014: 319–320), Reichertz (2004b: 295), and Soeffner (2004: 98) suggest the analysis to follow three steps. For this dissertation, a four-level approach of data analysis and interpretation was developed, leading from the text of the dataset to the elaboration of codes, themes and, finally, the constructions of types (cf. figure 6). It builds on a consensus of the other approaches, thus striving for a rigorous procedure promising meaningful interpretations. The interview transcripts were analysed using MAXQDA software, and the subsequent description of the work steps began when the data material was already present as transcribed text.

(1) Familiarisation with the Dataset

The first step was characterised by what van Manen (2014: 320) calls the “wholistic reading approach” when attention is given to the “text as a whole”. To familiarise myself with the data set, it entailed repeatedly listening to the audio recordings and re-reading the transcripts. In this phase, the first topics were identified within each

transcript. Notes were taken on aspects that arose curiosity and each transcript was summarised as a whole. At this stage, however, analysis remained on the single case of an interview focusing on each person's lived reality without aiming to discover case-transcending meaning patterns (Braun & Clarke 2022: 35).

(2) Inductive Coding Process

The second step entails the inductive coding process. It is focussed on the in-depth examination of each interview. As Reichertz (2004b: 294) puts it, "the document in question is analysed sequentially, extensively and in detail, and indeed line by line or even word by word". This phase was the most time-consuming, and in an open coding process, each transcript was disaggregated into thematic sections attributed to a thematic code. The generation of thematic codes followed an inductive process based on the phenomena and topics expressed by the interviewees. Since it represents the baseline for the major interpretative work, inductive coding ensures a realistic and accurate reconstruction of the subjective perspective. To achieve an understanding of the "ideal-typical constructs" (Soeffner 2004: 99), the central interest lies in the social distribution of perspectives towards phenomena. The assumption is that different social groups in different social worlds share distinct meanings and symbolic systems towards their surroundings. Thus, following Flick (2016: 402), it is crucial to create codes which allow for comparing the utterances regarding certain themes while not eliminating the subjectivity of perspectives. For instance, sequences from different interviews about the plant beds of lettuce and cabbage in front of the house were coded as "planting vegetables". Utterance and written observations on animals like ducks or chickens as "breeding small animals".

(3) Elaboration of Themes

The third step requires the most careful and important interpretative work. It comes in line with a shift of the nature of the data from subjective first order constructs immanent to inductive codes towards the formulation of second order constructs expressed by the interpreter through the identification of themes. Themes encompass shared patterns of meaning across a dataset. They consist of clustered codes of the interviews of several individuals (Braun & Clarke 2022: 79). Thus, it refers to "looking for more highly aggregated meaning units and concepts that bind together the individual partial units" (Reichertz 2004b: 295). With the elaboration of themes, the analysis goes from the single case to the case-transcending examination of the data (Braun & Clarke 2022: 79). This step requires the reflective interpretation of the data by the analyst. In this regard, Schröer (1997: 120) reminds us that data are generally silent and can only be made to speak through mental processes. The mental process of identifying and elaborating themes itself is subject to reflection and interpretation. According to the hermeneutic circle of understanding, the elaboration of themes is not straightforward but open to the refusal, redefinition and refining of

themes. Returning to the exemplar codes of “planting vegetables” and “breeding small animals”, both became subsumed under the theme “plot-based livelihood strategies” grouped with codes referring to other commercial activities such as small stalls or services.

(4) Construction of Life-world Types

The fourth step is located at the most abstract level. While analysis initially consisted of numerous single case elements, passing through the identification of case-transcending patterns, it finally arrived at the construction of an objectivised ideal type of action through interpretative understanding (Soeffner 2004: 99). At this point, the deductive attitude becomes immanent, and the shared patterns of subjective meaning and orientation paired with the construction of types commensurate to the stratification of the life-world and its spatial, temporal, and social dimensions. These dimensions reflect the universal structures of the life-world representing the theory that informs the empirical inquiry of this dissertation. While the previous steps tried to mask any theoretical concepts and prior knowledge in order not to restrict the search for the diversity of subjective perspectives found in the dataset, the deductive orientation becomes the guiding principle at this point of interpretation (Schröer 1997: 127). For instance, the theme “plot-based livelihood strategies” was subordinated to the life-world type of “peri-urban dwelling” together with themes regarding the properties of, for instance, house constructions and materials. “Dwelling”, in turn, constitutes the deductive life-world category essential to the spatiality of the life-world.

Finally, meaningful analysis and interpretation are achieved, following Reichertz (2004b: 295), “when a highly aggregated concept or meaning configuration has been found or constructed, into which all the investigated elements can be integrated in a meaningful whole”. Meandering between the abductive attitude, induction and deduction, the overall result of the data analysis and interpretation constitutes the structure of the empirical chapter 5, “Understanding peri-urban life-worlds”. It discusses the spatiality, temporality, meaningful places, and sociality of the life-world in four subchapters representing the deductively determined dimensions of the peri-urban type, into which the aggregated themes and the inductively created codes are integrated. The example of the dwelling place containing the multifunctional meaning of the plot presented here thus represents a model for understanding how the structure of the empirical chapter and its content with empirical data material came into being.

4 Maputo and the Study Area

Setting the Scene for Peri-urban Life-worlds

The life-world is a subjective world and the analysis of peri-urban life-worlds is foremost a subjective endeavour. It presupposes accessing individuals' subjective perspectives and reconstructing the subjective meaning they ascribe to their lived experiences. After the profound methodological explorations, these premises should be taken for granted at this point. Nevertheless, an individual's subjective perspective is determined by the spatial, temporal, and social structuration of his or her life-world. Thus, by places and spaces where the life-world is embedded, by the history and an individual's biography, by the social structures and the institutional world. These form part of the objective social reality that existed before the individual. This reality is unquestioned and accepted as already given. It informs the system of typifications, which is historically imposed on him or her. It is valid and comes with coercive power that he or she cannot escape (Schütz & Luckmann 1973: 94; Berger & Luckmann 1966: 77–78).

By introducing Maputo and the study area, this chapter introduces this social reality, which is essential for the social scientist to understand the intrinsic qualities of peri-urban life. It sets the scene for peri-urban life-worlds, and does so in line with three sections. A historical overview of the Mozambican capital comes first, emphasising the particular condition of its peri-urban areas during different socio-political regimes (cf. chapter 4.1.). The current context of urban planning and land management succeeds. It discusses relevant policies and legislations and provides an overview of current plans and infrastructure projects and the city's administrative structure (cf. chapter 4.2.). The third part narrows it down from the city level to the specific context of the study area, the peri-urban coastal plain (cf. chapter 4.3.). It presents the historical, administrative and demographic context of the area. Finally, it provides a rich ethnographic description of the peri-urban transect along the coastline of Greater Maputo, where the fieldwork was carried out and based on which the subsequent life-world reconstruction succeeds.

4.1 The Historical Context of Maputo

Maputo's peri-urban life-worlds are embedded in history. It is passed down from the preceding world and expressed in relevant typifications and legitimatisations of social situations. Thus, the life-world situation is historically determined, and the particular historicity of the situation informs the respective view of the world, guiding how to act and interact. It is imposed on the individual as "an ontological boundary condition of his factual existence" (Schütz & Luckmann 1973: 94). To better grasp the existence of peri-urban dwellers in Maputo, drawing on their conveyed historicity is inevitable.

4.1.1 Early Settlements on the Indian Ocean

The Mozambican capital Maputo lies in the very South of the country (cf. figure 7). It is located at Delgoa Bay, a profound and well-protected inlet of the Indian Ocean where several rivers flow into the sea (Newitt 1995: 148). Although written historical records of Maputo only coincide with the arrival of Portuguese navigators just after the mid of the 16th century, there is evidence of human existence dating back to the first century AD. Indeed, the geography of the natural environment had offered favourable conditions for settlements. The fertile soils of the wide river banks were used for agriculture and cattle keeping, whereas the location adjacent to the bay allowed for extensive fishing and whale hunting (Jenkins 2000: 207; Newitt 1995: 148; cf. Prestes Dürrnagel & Tiegna 2022).

The first Portuguese settlement was established in 1781, and until today, this year is considered the city's founding. The settlement was first named Lourenço Marques, after one of the early explorers of the bay area, and this name should only change after the Independence of Mozambique in 1975 (Jenkins 2000: 207). At first, it was the principal objective of the Portuguese occupation to set up trading posts along the African coast for the shipment of ivory and the control of sea routes and slave traffic (Silva 2015a: 7). Therefore, the sphere of influence remained restricted within a perimeter of fewer than ten kilometres around the settlement. At the same time, however, the hinterland of Lourenço Marques was marked by the territorial expansion of two distinct powers. On the one hand, the militaristic Nguni states started with expansionist warfare in the 1820s, which affected the neighbouring regions of Zulu, Swazi and Gaza. On the other hand, the newly established colonial power of the Boers in the Cape area began trekking in the 1840s towards the high plains and further to the West, where they created new states inland at Lydenburg and Zoutspansberg. Although both powers attempted to interfere, the Portuguese maintained Lourenço Marques during that period, and the presence of the Boers, in turn, led to the beginning of extensive trade relations and labour migration (Jenkins 2012: 62 f., 2000: 207).



Figure 7 Map of Mozambique with the capital Maputo in the South

At the end of the 19th century, the formerly malaria-plagued outpost Lourenço Marques experienced a rapid transformation into a town to be governed by systematic urban policies. The discovery of gold at nearby Lydenburg caused substantial economic changes on the regional level. On the global scale, a new political order was imposed by the Berlin Conference (Bertelsen et al. 2014: 2755; Tostões & Bonito 2015: 43). The Berlin Conference (1884–1885) initiated a new era in the colonial relationship between Europa and Africa. Although many colonial countries had already been on the continent for a long time, occupations generally consisted of small set-

tlements and trade posts along the coast. In the following decades, however, the geography of European empires changed dramatically and gave birth to the beginning of a continuous evolution of an African urban network (Silva 2015b: 1).

The negotiation between European countries critically determined the future dominance on the continent, and Portugal and England fought out as opponents in the scramble for Southern Africa. For a long period, the English dominated trade to the south of Lourenço Marques from their base in Port Natal, known today as the city of Durban. Only after legal arbitration through French President Marshall MacMahon in 1875, Britain retreated its claims to land at Delagoa Bay in favour of Portugal. However, due to its economic and political weakness, Portugal was subordinated to surrounding British colonial interests. As a result, Britain was able to reject the Portuguese proposal brought up at the Berlin Conference, which aimed at uniting the territories of Angola and Mozambique from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean (Jenkins 2000: 208, 2012: 63–65; Tostões & Bonito 2015: 43).

After the Berlin Conference, Portugal aimed to reinforce its geostrategic position by extending its political and military hegemony over the region. The capital of Mozambique eventually became transferred from Mozambique Island to Lourenço Marques in 1887, and the colonial administration began with the strategic expansion of the town towards the hinterland (Tostões & Bonito 2015: 43–44). The settlement's hitherto rudimentary structure became extended, and new public buildings and the first proper streets were constructed. Within a 2 km radius around the town centre, a land register was established, providing the foundation for elaborating the first urban plans at the beginning of the 20th century (Jenkins 2012: 63–65). With increasing claims over territory, the land was annexed from the local population and indigenous clans were successively subordinated and forced to pay hut taxes. By 1887, around 13,500 hut taxes were being collected from 14 subordinated indigenous clans in the immediate surroundings of the town (Tostões & Bonito 2015: 43–44; Jenkins 2010: 94).

4.1.2 A Colonial History of Exclusion and Oppression

Around the turn of the 20th century, Portuguese colonial rule was marked by a shift “from military to administrative concerns” (Kyed 2008: 164), based on strict racial policies. The 1899 Labour Law marked the beginning of the exploitation of the native population. Mozambicans had the obligation to commit labour in urban infrastructure projects and railway constructions, as well as on plantations and settler farms (O’Laughlin 2000: 12). The following code of the *Indigenato* in 1907 systematised the legal distinction of the population. It resulted in the production of a bifurcated society which led to radical segregation. The population was divided along racial lines with differentiated access to civil rights and urban space. On the one

hand, non-native *civilizados* (civilised) were granted full rights and were entitled to Portuguese citizenship. On the other hand, native *indígenas* (indigenous) were subject to political control and exploitation (Roque et al. 2016: 646; Kyed 2008: 164). Through the introduction of pass laws, the permission to access the colonial town centre was reserved for the white *civilizados* and with restrictions for *assimilados* (assimilated). Acquiring the assimilated status, however, required a certain level of education and a formal job and social behaviour associated with abandoning rural customs such as languages, beliefs, clothing and dietary habits (Tvedten 2018: 40; Roque et al. 2016: 646).

The racial segregation of urban space was further manifested in the materiality of the urban built environment. The colonial town centre was called *cidade de cimento* (city of cement), home to the colonizers living in houses built of permanent materials such as concrete. However, most of the Mozambican population lived outside the city centre in homes built of wood, tin, and reeds in the so-called *cidade de caniço* (city of reeds) (Roque et al. 2016: 646). The very existence of the *caniço* was regarded as a temporary phenomenon, potentially to be removed at any time. Therefore, construction with permanent materials that would outlast precarious resources was strictly forbidden (Morton 2019: 81; Andersen et al. 2015b: 426).

Nowadays, the areas outside the centre are often referred to as *bairros* (neighbourhoods)¹ or *subúrbios* (suburbs). Reed constructions became a rather rare appearance and got gradually replaced by more resilient materials such as cement blocks (Roque et al. 2016: 644; Morton 2019: 20). The socio-spatial structure of the city is much more heterogeneous, and the respective categories of expressing differences have changed. Nonetheless, the former division of the urban space between *cimento* and *caniço* is still visible in aerial images, with Avenida Marien Ngouabi marking the former separation between the planned town centre and the organically grown neighbourhoods (cf. figure 8).

The implementation of colonial rule was further manifested in installing two parallel governance systems. Whereas the *civilizados* were governed by civil law and civil authorities, the *indígenas* were governed by customary law and customary authorities. The Portuguese administration invented the term *régulo* (small king) to designate customary authorities. These *regulos* were authorised with the mandate of governing territorial units called *regadorias*, a denomination of a local governance unit being translated from Portugal to its overseas occupations. The position of the *regulos* was based on heredity and ought to constitute a chief after traditional lineage (Kyed 2008: 164; O’Laughlin 2000: 16). The appointed chiefs, however, did not compulsively represent lineages of local sociocultural tradition, and there was not much of a tradition within the customary system (Andersen et al. 2015b: 425).

¹ The terms “*bairro*” and “neighbourhood” are used as synonyms hereafter.



Figure 8 Aerial view of Maputo with Avenida Marien Ngouabi (highlighted in red)

Source: Illustration from Google Earth, satellite imagery by Airbus (2024)

After all, *régulos* received remuneration from the colonial state. They were authorised to collect taxes and endowed with significant power to recruit forced labour and to decide on how much land had to be cultivated by whom (O’Laughlin 2000: 17). The invention of customary authorities under the guise of tradition had the aim to ensure political control. Like in other African countries, it was constituted by indirect colonial rule, which suppressed any native participation in land markets. African access to land was only enabled through non-market mechanisms, controlled by customary and, therefore, ultimately by colonial authorities (Chimhowu & Woodhouse 2006: 352).

The Land Law from 1918 divided the land into three categories. State land, land under private tenure, and native reserves. *Régulos* were in charge of the allocation of land within the reserves. However, it was merely acquired for use but not for purchase. Mozambicans were excluded from any form of land ownership, and access to land outside the reserves was strictly restricted (O’Laughlin 2000: 14). It was not until 1961 that the African population was permitted to access individual and modern land rights (Jenkins 2010: 96). The political system of the *Indigenato*, with its three pillars of subordination in terms of legislation, land, and labour is described precisely by O’Laughlin (2000: 16), characterising it as:

a dualistic system of local government under which Mozambican subjects were governed by chiefs and Portuguese citizens by administrators; a correspondingly dualistic legal system under which Mozambicans were subject to customary law and citizens to Portuguese civil codes; a dualistic system of land tenure under which Mozambicans

had rights to land in the native reserves under communal tenure while citizens held land as private property; and a dualistic system of labour regulation which restricted the movement of Mozambicans and allowed for their conscription as forced labour, while the citizen was both free and free to engage forced labour.

Nonetheless, the colonial administration adopted a *laissez-faire* attitude to land occupations in peri-urban areas outside the city centre (Jenkins 2001a: 631). Informal housing supply was tolerated and needed to absorb the growing demand for workforce. This *laissez-faire* approach towards land in peri-urban areas did even provide some room for manoeuvre. Outside the Portuguese governance system, agricultural cultivation complemented and sustained the livelihood of the Mozambican population (Sheldon 2003: 373). Since women were excluded from the labour market and the men's poor salaries did not suffice to sustain a living, rural forms of production and family-based agriculture schemes expanded in the peri-urban areas (Veríssimo 2013: 228). Women could restore to established skills and access to seeds and inputs which were brought with to the city from their rural places of origin.

The work of Sheldon (1999; 2003) valorises the particular role of women, profoundly shaping urbanisation processes across the peri-urban margins of Maputo. As she points out, “female cultivation of vegetable gardens affected the way that land was appropriated and allocated, determined what produce was available in the markets and brought a noticeable green aspect to the city's physical appearance” (Sheldon 2003: 372). During Portuguese colonial rule, authorities treated the peri-urban areas as rather a rural matter without much interest in administering them (Tvedten 2018: 40). The *regadorias*, however, did not have exclusively rural characteristics but were rather “semi-urban”. With the growth and expansion of Lourenço Marques, their dimensions were continuously adjusted (O’Laughlin 2000: 17). Tvedten (2018: 40) describes them as “a situation of informal settlements with a mix of the ‘urban’ and the ‘rural’ – with brick houses next to reed huts, small fields in between congested living quarters, and domestic animals kept in *quintas* (yards)”.

Between 1940 and 1980, the population of Maputo grew more than tenfold from 74,000 to 755,3000 inhabitants (Jenkins 2000: 208). As the city expanded, growing portions of land allocated by the local *régulos* were incorporated into the city's administrative area. The growing demand for residential areas went accompanied by a gradual loss of land for cultivation. Whereas previous arrivals from the countryside had more options, land for farming was less available for the most recent migrants (Sheldon 2003: 362). Struggles over land access and between the use for farming and other dominant interests appeared more frequently towards the end of the colonial period. The urban growth and the associated expansion of the land registry further led to the privatisation of vast territories and considerable land speculations (Andersen et al. 2015b: 426).

During the 1960s, the alienation of properties for the benefit of particular interests reached an extreme dimension. Of the 770ha pertaining to the territory of Lourenço Marques, 670ha were in private hands. However, more than three-quarters (570ha) were held by just 11 landowners (Rita-Ferreira 1967/68: 181). According to Morton (2019: 168), peri-urban neighbourhoods became far denser populated with the influx of migrants since the late 1950s and as a consequence of the competition for space, rental rates tripled and sometimes even quadrupled. Hereafter, it is not surprising that the post-independence government portrayed the land and housing markets as the key drivers of the exploitation of the African population. Extensive nationalisations became one of the first actions that the government embarked on, whereas the nationalisation of all Mozambican land was most fundamental (Jenkins 2001a: 635–636; Brito 2019: 104). Renowned architect José Forjaz, who was significantly involved in structuring the post-colonial state, later commented:

In Mozambique we prohibited speculation in the building sector. Nobody can rent or let a house or any building or any part of any building. Only the state. We also nationalised the land. (It was the minimum a revolution could do ...) Having finished speculation we finished speculators ... and most of the builders in the process (Forjaz 1985: 66).

4.1.3 Frelimo's Socialist Revolution and the Mozambican Independence

Mozambique's independence from Portuguese colonial rule was accomplished in 1975. It was the result of a decade of armed struggle under the efforts the Mozambique Liberation Front – Frelimo (*Frente de Libertação de Moçambique*). It succeeded one year after the Portuguese revolution, which ended the fascist Salazar regime in 1974 (Newitt 1995: 541). When Frelimo took over power, reducing the duality became one of its guiding principles. The state followed a Marxist-Leninist doctrine of socialism, embarking on the centralization of the economy and a one-party political system (Raposo et al. 2012: 192–193). The initial revolutionary phase during the first years after independence was characterized by the radical rupture with the colonial administration and the break away from exploitative colonial social relations (Silva 2015c: 138; Grest 1995: 151).

Frelimo considered the reform of the local governance system to be crucial for overcoming the dualistic colonial past. *Regulós* were portrayed as colonial collaborators and replaced by the Dynamising Groups – GDs (*Grupos Dinamizadores*) under the conduct of Frelimo party officials (O'Laughlin 2000: 28; Kyed 2008: 166). The role of the GDs at the local governance level was decisive for decades. Particularly in the context of land management in peri-urban areas, the allocation through GDs represented the most dominant form of accessing land for most of the population. This vital function is meanwhile performed by the present day system of local gov-

ernance consisting of *secretários de bairro* (neighbourhood secretaries) and *chefes de quarteirão* (quarter chiefs). These replaced the GDs after new government legislation in 1997 (Andersen et al. 2015b: 429; Jorge 2020: 608).

The transformative procedure of extensive nationalisations began just one month after independence on July 25 in 1975. It started with the nationalisation of land, the education and health sector, and certain private businesses such as funeral services (Brito 2019: 104). Although Mozambique was 90 % rural, and the strategic program of Frelimo was focused on rural areas by establishing communal villages for peasants working on state farms (Morton 2019: 233), the urban population benefited most from the first nationalisations (Brito 2019: 104). In fact, it was the cities where the bulk of the colonisers had been present, leaving behind the majority of abandoned properties, businesses and social infrastructures. With the cessation of private land ownership and land market pressure, residents of self-built settlements in peri-urban areas felt a level of tenure security for the very first time (Groenewald et al. 2013: 97), and the abrupt availability of a large amount of land opened up opportunities for the construction of new homes and the appropriation for agricultural practices (Brito 2019: 105).

Indeed, during the first two decades after independence, the government promoted the large-scale provision of land for low-income families. At the city's margins, a series of so-called site-and-service projects should provide plots for the peri-urban population. It was aimed at anticipating spontaneous occupations and controlling the rapid horizontal expansion of the city. While the official resources were strictly limited, and trained staff was lacking, the facilitatory role of the GDs in successfully advancing the projects' progress was decisive (Melo & Jenkins 2019: 4; Nielsen & Jenkins 2020: 5). From 1975 to 1980 alone, 7,600 plots were laid out in the first years. Between 1980 and 1987, implementing the Basic Urbanisation Programme (*Programa de Urbanização Básica*) targeted the land provision for Maputo and its neighbouring city Matola, leading to the demarcation of 10,400 plots (Jenkins 2001a: 636).

The nationalisation of rental buildings and houses followed a few months after the nationalisation of land on February 3 in 1976. The overall effect on the social and racial composition of the city was even more profound, and in the first instance, the city's duality began to decline remarkably. After independence, numerous housing units were already left vacant as many Portuguese residents had left the city centre. However, The rents have remained high, and many landlords refused to let their spaces to Mozambicans. During the nationalisation, the state became the only owner of rental units, and henceforward, all its property was managed by the newly established state agency *Administração do Parque Imobiliário do Estado* – APIE. Eventually, rents became linked to income and household size to fill the empty housing stock. The lower the income and the larger the family, the lower the rent was set. Due to the new policy, abandoned houses and apartments received new tenants, and res-

idents of the *cidade de caniço* and *cimento* began to cross the obsolete boundary of their own free will. Finally, the nationalisation also marked the end of racial discrimination in the housing sector, which gave Mozambican people finally the right to live in areas that they so far only frequented for work or on rare visits (Brito 2019: 105; Roque et al. 2016: 647).

Another immediate effect of independence represented the change of the city's name from Lourenço Marques to Maputo. It was announced by President Samora Machel on the same day as the nationalisation of rental property. In his speech, he proclaimed:

Lourenço Marques is no longer Lourenço Marques. The capital is called Maputo. Since 9:35 am today Lourenço Marques is dead, our capital is called Maputo. Province of Maputo, capital Maputo. Viva the population of the district of Maputo! Viva the population of Maputo (Castela & Meneses 2015: 216).

The name Maputo symbolises the struggle for a national and independent Mozambican identity that once started by crossing the Rovuma River in the North of the country and ended 13 years later in the South of Mozambique at the Maputo River. This announcement did not only have symbolic meaning or as a rhetorical metaphor for breaking with the colonial past. It was rather part of a revolutionary pedagogy that involved renaming streets, reference points and neighbourhoods as an integral part of the postcolonial political project. Names imposed by the Portuguese colonial state (e.g. Heroes of the Occupation Square and Discoveries Square) and references to Portuguese monarchs (e.g. Dom Luís Avenue and Dom Manuel Avenue) were replaced. Frelimo aimed to produce a revised official geography and to provoke plural political projects. This was manifested in references of streets and places to the history of the Mozambican independence war (e.g. Eduardo Mondlane and Samora Machel), to political leaders of other independent states in Africa (e.g. Kenneth Kaunda and Patrice Lumumba), and the socialist project at large (e.g. Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin, Ho Chi Minh, Mao Tse-tung) (Castela & Meneses 2015: 217–219; Morton 2019: 356).

Despite the nationalisations, the housing sector could not meet the increasing demand caused by accelerated population growth as the result of both in-ward migration from rural areas and natural growth. Although 90 % of the former European and much of the Asian population had left Maputo by the end of 1976 (Morton 2019: 220), it is estimated that between 1975 and 1980, the overall population grew by 97 % from 383,000 to 755,000. The arrivals were attracted by the new policies, which also included the abolishment of certain administrative controls on movement. During the previous time, household heads working in Maputo were obliged to live by themselves, but now they were allowed to reunite with their families that arrived from the countryside (Jenkins 2012: 75).

However, Morton (2019: 252–253) highlights that not even 2 % of the Mozambican population came to live in APIE units. The agency itself was overwhelmed with its tasks since the beginning and soon to be subverted by pervasive corruption. The maintenance of the building stock stretched the capacities of the state, and due to the lack of trained personnel and shortages of basic materials, repairs soon have been kept to a minimum. At the same time, the most prestigious neighbourhoods, such as Schommerschild and Polana, were inhabited by the leadership of Frelimo and their entourage, as well as by diplomats and foreign workers arriving in Maputo in the service of socialism (Roque et al. 2016: 647).

In the long run, the vast influx of people was manifested foremost in an accelerated growth of settlements in peri-urban areas (Jenkins 2012: 75). This tendency was further intensified due to the arrival of refugees displaced by the civil war (1977–1992) between Frelimo and anti-communist Mozambican National Resistance – Renamo (*Resistência Nacional Moçambicana*). As Jorge (2020: 608) describes it, the enduring civil war was “exacerbated by the polarizing effects of the Cold War”. Whereas the Soviet bloc supported Frelimo, Renamo received support from the Western bloc. The war caused insecurity, poverty, and hunger across the entire country, reinforcing the migration flows into the capital. According to Jenkins (2012: 78–79, 2000: 209–210), the positive trends in urban development, which characterised the first years after independence, were reversed. Indeed, the government had only limited resources and massive difficulties in implementing urban development programmes.

4.2 The Contemporary Context of Urban Planning and Land Management

The current planning context and today’s effective urban policies can be traced back to the late 1980s, when a gradual shift towards market-oriented liberalisation was initiated. Frelimo withdrew Marxism-Leninism as the official state doctrine in 1989, peace accords were signed with Renamo in 1992, and in 1994, Mozambique held its first multiparty elections (Morton 2019: 317). The World Bank and the IMF played a key role in dictating the subsequent restructuring of the economy through Structural Adjustment Programmes. Foreign aid soon became the main source of state financing. This has led to the further consolidation of policies inscribed to neoliberal ideologies. Facing democratisation and liberalisation, however, Frelimo had managed to preserve its central and authoritarian role as the main protagonist in the market and continues to be the only political party in power since independence (Jorge 2020: 608–609). Today’s housing policy and land legislation are the result of an interplay between state control and liberalisation which is specific for the context of Maputo and the city’s current plans and infrastructure projects.

4.2.1 The Legal Framework for Housing, Land and Planning

The very first National Housing Policy was established in 1992, in the same year when peace was officially agreed. The state was supposed to assume the facilitatory role, whereas the private sector should boost construction activities. Based on the principles of free market forces, real estate activities got liberalised, and a housing market was brought into being. Embedded in a state-controlled land market, the private housing market expanded. Thus, buying and selling properties became legal, whereas land sales remained illegitimate. Paradoxically, the purchase of a building involves the land on which it was built, which has led to the illegal commodification of urban land and the rapid growth of urban land speculations (Nielsen 2009: 16; Andersen et al. 2015a: 339–340).

As an immediate effect of the housing policy, a substantial part of the hitherto nationalised housing stock got privatised and transferred to tenants at a highly subsidised rate. The beneficiaries originated mainly from the upper and emerging middle class. The same group benefited most from the commodification of urban land, which remained nationalised and under state control. Instead of the expected stimulation of private sector constructions, the opposite turned out, and the economic and political elite competed to allocate land in the most prestigious locations. Eventually, due to weak institutional and technical capacities, the collapse of the state-planned provision of land and housing for lower-income groups became unstoppable. Meanwhile, the demand for it was rising towards unexpected dimensions. Particularly between the late 1980s and the early 1990s, the overall tendency of urban development was characterised by informal practices and spontaneous occupations in unsuitable areas (Nielsen 2009: 15–16; Jenkins 2012: 79).

The 1995 National Land Policy and the 1997 Land Law (*Lei das Terras*) were approved shortly after the new Housing Policy. The creation of the Land Law was carried out in a democratic process involving several public sectors, civil society, and experts. On the international stage, the law was praised as progressive because it recognises customary forms of land access while simultaneously promoting foreign investments without adverse effects on local communities. Customary land rights are obtained in “good faith” by occupying a piece of land for more than ten years. By so doing, the rights of peasants and traditional communities throughout the entire country are protected (Tanner 2010: 105–106; Raimundo & Raimundo 2012: 31). Whereas the housing policy liberalised real estate activities, the land policy kept hold on the principle of state ownership. Preserving this constitutional principle means that all land in Mozambique belongs to the state and cannot be sold. According to the law, “land is state property and cannot be sold, or otherwise alienated, mortgaged or pledged” (Law 19/97, Article 3 in Negrão 2008: 121, own translation).

To access land, land use rights are acquired from the state. The DUAT (*Direito de Uso e Aproveitamento de Terra*) represents the official title document that approves

the formal right to use and benefit from the land. DUATs can be acquired by individuals or corporate entities and not only by Mozambicans but also by foreigners. The application to register a DUAT involves two steps. Under a first provisional authorisation, the applicant is obliged to develop the land according to the intended purpose within five years (two years for non-Mozambicans). Depending on the defined usage of the land for farming, housing, or industry, facilities, buildings, and infrastructures can be erected. After fulfilling the operational plan within the respective period, the DUAT title is issued in a second step. The DUAT holder then assumes ownership of the respective infrastructures and developments established on the land via leaseholds for (first of all) 50 years. The land use rights are also transferable, either by inheritance or by the sale of the respective structures (Raimundo & Raimundo 2012: 31; Malauene et al. 2005: 8–9; Kihato et al. 2013: 69–70).

In the urban context, however, the practice of land registration faces various constraints, and it fails to address the needs of most of the peri-urban population. Roughly a decade after the 1997 Land Law, followed the Regulation for Urban Land and the Territorial Planning Law approved in 2006 and 2007. According to the first one, DUATs can only be allocated in the presence of an urbanisation plan for the corresponding area. The latter, in turn, sets out the conditions for the establishment of urbanisation plans through a strict top-down hierarchy of plans (Melo & Jenkins 2019: 6). On the municipal level, the hierarchy of land-use plans consists of three levels: the Urban Structure Plan – PEU (*Plano de Estrutura Urbana*) represents the master plan. It covers the entire territory of Maputo City. The Partial Urbanisation Plan – PPU (*Plano Parcial de Urbanização*) is a zoning plan that covers the area of a neighbourhood. On the lowest level, the Detail Plan PP (*Plano Pormenor*) represents the urban design plan that only depicts certain neighbourhood sections (Silva 2015c: 139).

The Regulation for Urban Land has developed from a technical viewpoint, and it only recognises properties legitimate for DUATs for which a local plan has been drawn. Against this background, the prerequisite for the acquisition of a DUAT involves the surveying and parcelling of the plots in the neighbourhood, the demarcation of streets that are accessible for cars as well the development of some basic infrastructure such as for the supply of water. For the residents of informal settlements, these conditions are far from reality. In particular, in spontaneously grown, self-produced areas with narrow alleyways, only a few plots fulfil the technical requirements (World Bank 2009: 169; Jorge 2015: 206). In a study conducted by Kihato et al. (2013: 71), it was revealed that until not much more than a decade ago, the share of the population in Maputo with a DUAT was still marginal. Out of the city's 1.1 million inhabitants, around 800,000 were estimated to be without a DUAT in 2010. Another source states that even only 5 % of Maputo residents had a DUAT around the same time (Raimundo & Raimundo 2012: 18).

The current Urban Structure Plan of the Municipality of Maputo – PEUMM – (*Plano de Estrutura Urbana do Município de Maputo*) dates from 2008 (CMM 2008). It involved upgrading various neighbourhoods through a series of Partial Urbanisation Plans. Thereby, the state's top-down approach to planning received substantial support from the World Bank-financed programme ProMaputo (1997–2007), which involved the massive regularisation of land use titles, issuing more than 40,000 DUATs between 2007 and 2017. At its peak phase between 2014 and 2016, around 10,000 DUATs were processed per year (World Bank 2020: 6). In Maputo, the Municipal Directorate for Territorial Planning and Construction – DMOTC (*Direção Municipal de Ordenamento Territorial e Construção*) is responsible for treating DUAT applications. For the neighbouring district Marracune, it is the District Planning and Infrastructure Service – SDPI (*Serviço Distrital de Planeamento e Infraestruturas*). In an interview with an officer of the DMOTC, he estimated that the percentage of the population in Maputo with a DUAT meanwhile must have exceeded 50 %.

However, the percentage of households with a DUAT decreases significantly from the city centre to the periphery. Most peri-urban dwellers live in informally grown neighbourhoods, where the prospect of surveying the neighbourhoods and parceling plots according to rectangular geometries is technically barely feasible. Despite its almost unattainability, the DUAT, with its associated demands, expectations, and aspirations, plays a central role in the local population's everyday lives. For this reason, the fundamental meaning of the DUAT and its far-reaching consequences will also, throughout the course of this dissertation, occupy a central standpoint.

4.2.2 Recent Large-scale Infrastructure Projects

The current planning context is furthermore characterised by the emphasis on large-scale infrastructure projects. Above all, two mega-projects stand out, which were realised in the last decade, paving the way for significant structural changes in Maputo's peri-urban coastal areas. On the one hand, the construction of the *Circular de Maputo* is responsible for much of the dynamic transformations in the study area in the North of the city. On the other hand, the Maputo-KaTembe bridge was finished in 2018, linking the city centre with the peri-urban district KaTembe located in the South across the bay (Jorge 2020: 611; Beja da Costa & Mazzolini 2021: 4).

The bridge represents one of the largest suspension bridges on the continent, with a length of 680 m, clouded by two impressive towers with an altitude of 135 m. The realisation involved the implementation of a 209 km highway from Maputo to Ponta do Douro connecting the country to South Africa with the nearby city of Durban (Nielsen & Jenkins 2020: 11). The Maputo Municipality aims at creating new centralities beyond the bay through large-scale urban development schemes and projects KaTambe to receive major urban growth rates in the future (CMM 2021). On the

other hand, several settlements had to be demolished due to the construction works, and since the announcement of the project in 2011, the land prices in KaTembe have “sky-rocketed” (Nielsen & Jenkins 2020: 12).

The construction of the *Circular de Maputo* commenced in 2012, and it was finally inaugurated in 2017 (Beja da Costa & Mazzolini 2021: 1). The project of the road to encircle Maputo and to relieve it from its traffic encompasses a total length of 74 km divided into six sections. The first three sections fall partly under the study area with the 6.5 km amplification of the Avenida da Marginal, the 19.9 km construction from the Costa do Sol to Marracuene, and the 10.5 km construction from Chiango to the neighbourhood of Zimpeto, passing Albazine (cf. figure 10). The overall costs of USD 315 million were largely financed with a loan of USD 300 million from the Chinese Exim Bank. The USD 15 million contribution from the Mozambican government was used to resettle families (CMM 2016; Beja da Costa & Mazzolini 2021: 4).

Both projects, the bridge and the *Circular*, were realized and implemented by the state company Maputo Sul in corporation with the China Road and Bridge Corporation (Nielsen & Jenkins 2020: 11). Only through the debt-financed realization, the urban expansion towards these new spaces was enabled at all. According to Beja da Costa & Mazzolini (2021: 4), these are a symbol for the “stronghold of Chinese investment in Mozambique’s capital city, altogether causing a permanent imprint on Maputo’s coastal landscape”.

4.2.3 Administrative Divisions and Municipal Structures

Maputo lies in the very South of Mozambique. According to the PEUMM, the total surface area of the municipality measures around 308 km². However, as highlighted in the introduction of this thesis, the expansion of the coherent urban structure and the built-up area has long crossed the capital’s administrative boundaries. Thus, a substantial part of the metropolitan area lies beyond the actual municipal borders within Maputo Province. Maputo Municipality and Maputo Province are two out of eleven national provinces. Maputo’s neighbouring city, Matola, is the capital of Maputo Province. The province, in turn, consists of eight provincial districts, of which four are bordering Maputo Municipality, partially forming part of the metropolitan area of greater Maputo. These are the provincial district of Marracuene to the North with the town Marracuene, to the Northwest and West the city Matola, to the West the provincial district Boane, and to the South the provincial district Matutuine (CMM 2008: 14–15).

Similar to the surrounding province, the city of Maputo is subdivided into districts. As depicted in figure 9, seven urban or municipal districts form part of Maputo Municipality: KaMpfumo, Nlhamankulo, KaMaxakene, KaMavota, and KaMubukwana represent the continuous urban and peri-urban areas on the main-

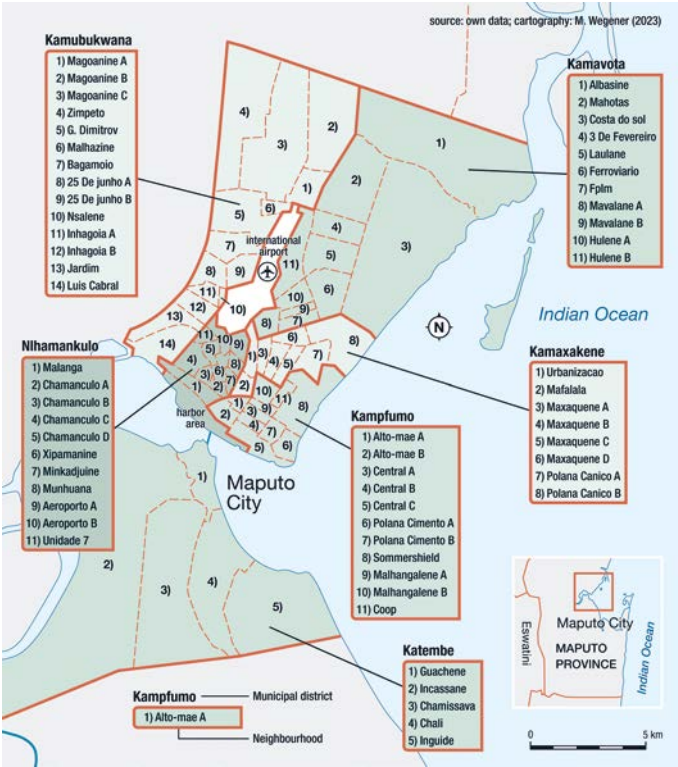


Figure 9 Map of the urban districts and neighbourhoods in Maputo

land. KaTembe lies South of the bay, recently connected by the Maputo-KaTembe bridge. The seventh district, KaNyaka, is not depicted on the map. It constitutes an island characterised by its rural characteristics. It is situated several kilometres East of the mainland in Maputo Bay and is only accessible by boat.

Below the municipal district level, *bairros* determine the local administrative units. The seven municipal districts of Maputo consist of 61 *bairros*, the twin city Matola counts three urban districts and 41 *bairros* (CMM 2008: 12) and the provincial district of Marracuene is made up of 45 *bairros*. Each neighbourhood is furthermore divided into *quarteirões* (quarters). The number of *quarteirões* that each *bairro* counts is diverse, depending on the dimensions of the *bairro*. The number of households within each *quarteirão* does likewise vary and is subject to change with the successive densification of the neighbourhoods. They range from 50 up to 100 households and in line with the growth, larger *quarteirões* eventually become split.

The respective administrative levels are accompanied by certain positions from the level of the municipality down to the neighbourhood. At the highest level, the mayor (*presidente do conselho municipal*) and governor (*governador da província*) ac-

company the municipal and provincial administration. Besides, the governmental body of the Maputo Municipality consists of 16 councillors (*vereadores*). Seven of them oversee the administration of the seven municipal districts. Therefore, each district has a district administration equipped with technical and administrative staff. The hierarchy continues down to the neighbourhood level with the *secretário de bairro*, who, as a government official, likewise has its office building in the community. Below the level of the *secretário* comes the already mentioned *chefe de quarteirão*. The *chefe das dez casas* (chief of ten houses) represents the lowest level, and as its title reveals, he or she is responsible for administering ten households (Raimundo & Raimundo 2012: 15–17). The positions are merely mentioned at this point to provide a first overview of the governance structures at different hierarchical levels. At a later stage, particularly in the context of peri-urban governance (cf. chapter 6), the different positions and their roles and functions receive broader attention.

4.3 Maputo's Peri-urban Coastal Plain: the Case for Life-world Analysis

The peri-urban coastal plain of Greater Maputo represents the study area of this thesis (cf. figure 10). The area stretches to the North of the city's central parts along the shoreline, comprising spaces of Maputo's urban district KaMavota, and parts that belong to the administration of the neighbouring district Marracuene, which already lies beyond the municipal borders in Maputo Province. To the East, the coastal plain is confined by the Indian Ocean with Maputo Bay. Sandy beaches, mangrove forests, wetlands, temporary flooding zones and the meandering outlets of several small streams characterise the physical environment of the coastline. To the West, the area is limited by the straight stretch of the railway line running on a plateau from Maputo's city centre towards the North. From the railway eastwards, a longitudinal escarpment falls into the study area, adjoined by extensive agricultural fields in the Mahotas Valley.

Whereas beyond the railway line, dense urban settlements existed for a long time, the study area was in the past only sparsely populated. Only with an increase in population since the 1980s did the local villages of farming and fishing communities grow significantly, consequently leading to the consolidation of peri-urban life-worlds in the vicinity of the city. However, most of the vast areas continued largely undeveloped until the recent construction of the *Circular de Maputo* ring road, which was concluded in 2017 (Beja da Costa & Mazzolini 2021: 2). It transects the coastal plain from South to North, paving the way for the rapid expansion of settlements by different groups with competing interests and perspectives. In line with this intervention, the social composition of the actors in the area has become increasingly heterogenous, causing territorial conflicts and contestations over peri-urban spaces and meanings.

Against this background, Maputo's peri-urban coastal plain represents an appropriate study area, providing a prolific ground for an empirical inquiry into peri-urban life-worlds, processes, actors, and contestations. The study area of the plain has the form of a trapezium opening up from the centre towards the periphery with a spatial extension from South to North of roughly 15 km. Thus, the selected spatial transect will allow for a qualitative and comparative inquiry with the concept of the peri-urban interface as a heuristic. Categories like the "zone of direct impact", "zone of influence", and "rural-urban gradient" (cf. Phillips et al. 1999; Simon et al. 2004). can be put to the test, realised through the dimensions of phenomenological life-world research with an inquiry into different places, thus providing evidence for a longitudinal comparison and contrast across the interface (Seamon 2018: 3).

The remainder of this chapter outlines the area's history, its administrative characteristics, current demographics, and development dynamics. It concludes with a description of the socio-spatial and environmental composition of the study area, realised along the longitudinal transect from South to North following the *Circular* road. Thus, it is aimed to provide familiarity with localities and the places by introducing peculiar landmarks on which the following chapters will consistently draw.

4.3.1 Historical Outline of the Study Area

The name of the district KaMavota dates from the colonial era when the area pertained to the *regadoria* of Mahotas. Several dispersed settlements existed then, mainly the ones that are still inhabited by farming and fishing communities like Mutanhana, Pescadores, and Costa do Sol. The latter neighbourhood eventually gained its name after a restaurant that existed in the 1960s and continues in place until today (CMM 2013b: 4; Beja da Costa & Jorge 2019: 149). Triunfo, which is located closer to the urban centre, already had a less rural character at that time. In the vicinity of the expanding city, the first low-lying swamps became drained by segments of a middle-class population and speculators with the prospect of establishing residential areas (Jenkins 2012: 69–70; Beja da Costa & Jorge 2019: 149).

The grounds of the northern district of Marracuene are famously known for a historical battle during colonial times in 1895. Shortly after the Berlin Conference (1884–1885), the Portuguese colonisers began the expansion of their territories towards the Gaza Empire. At the Incomati River in Marracuene, 30 km north of Maputo, they were ambushed and surprised by the successful resistance of the Gaza warriors. On January 28, it came to a new showdown with a battle of several hundred soldiers on both sides. The superiority of the Portuguese firearms was, after all, decisive for their victory. However, the historical resistance against the Portuguese colonial rule is locally celebrated each year on February 2 with a festival called Gwaza Mutinhi, a name which honours a traditional warrior dance (MAE 2005).

Agricultural production in peri-urban Maputo already occurred during colonial times. The extensive cultivation fields in KaMavota are situated in the fertile Mahotas Valley. It is located on an alluvial plain embedded between the plateau in the West and the coastal wetlands in the East. Arable land was available in vast amounts, and due to the restrictions of accessing other income sources, peasant families, mainly women, embarked on agricultural labour. Besides, the Portuguese colonisers had installed small- and medium-sized farms to produce vegetables, fruits, and livestock for the city's markets with hired labour (Cruz e Silva 2006: 99–100; Sheldon 1999: 125–128). In the post-independence period, after land was nationalised, the new government took over the abandoned Portuguese farms. *Senhor Tobias*², the president of the Union of Farmers' Associations of the City of Maputo (*União das Associações dos Agricultores da Cidade de Maputo*), explained that “in the conquest of independence, the government freed the people and the land. Land became the property of the state, there were the nationalisations, so everything started from scratch” (interview C-23: 3).

Hence, at the third party congress of Frelimo in 1975, official guidelines were developed to encourage collectivisation through cooperatives on state farms across the whole country (Sitoe & Sitole 2019: 2). In Maputo, this process was facilitated under the direction of the *Grupos Dinamizadores*. However, production on state farms remained at a low level. Apart from the lack of inputs, work was based on voluntarism, so income opportunities were limited, and families further depended on cultivating their personal plots. In response, the government created the Green Zones Office (GZV) in 1980, which was linked to the Maputo City Council and the Ministry of Agriculture. The purpose of the GZV was to promote the development of farmers' associations and cooperatives while providing technical support and knowledge on marketing, inputs, and irrigation (Cruz e Silva 2006: 100). Farmers' associations (*associações de camponeses*) are today's most common type of producer organisation with more than ten collectives currently operating in the study area.

After Mozambique's independence, peri-urban areas like KaMavota experienced rapid population growth due to natural increase and in-migration. It was intensified through the devastating civil war in the 1980s, which reached the peri-urban outskirts of Maputo (Morton 2019: 261). One of the interviewed architects explained it as follows:

In 84, the war came to Maputo, to Mahotas. The limit of the war was Mahotas [...]. The houses in Avenida Lourdes Mutola are all built in one continuous block; without a break, there is no exit. This was a blockade in the wartimes, and Mahotas was the limit.

² Almost all names used are pseudonyms to protect the anonymity of the interviewees. Interviewed experts are the exception to this. Most of the interview partners are referred to several times in the course of this dissertation, and names are explicitly used to facilitate an approach that is close to their life-worlds. However, all names and interviews are also listed in the annex.

So, they [the refugees] came in war to Mahotas, and the people who were on the outskirts of the city had to give plots of land to allocate people. And theoretically, it was temporary. The permission was to stay temporarily until the war ended, but obviously, people ended up staying (interview B-04: 10).

The population growth rates at that time were significantly higher in peri-urban areas than in the city centre, leading to a redistribution of the bulk of the population (Chikanda & Raimundo 2016: 9–10). The neighbourhoods of district KaMavota experienced the most drastic changes. From 1980 to 1997 alone, the population of KaMavota grew by 280 %, from 82,000 to 228,000 inhabitants (Jenkins & Andersen 2011: 7). Due to the rapid and uncontrolled increase, the occupation of settlements was realised rather spontaneously in a piecemeal fashion and not accompanied by planning or parcellation processes (Beja da Costa & Jorge 2019: 149; CMM 2013b: 4). After all, this is reflected in the difficulties of contemporary planning processes.

4.3.2 Administrative Characteristics and Demographic Dynamics

The area under study pertains to two different administrative bodies. The southern and larger part belongs to the Maputo Municipality. The adjacent northern areas form part of the Marracuene District, which is part of Maputo Province. The majority of the data was collected in four different neighbourhoods. In Costa do Sol and Albazine, which belong to Maputo, as well as in Mutanhana and Guava, belonging to Marracuene. In addition to the official names of the neighbourhoods, additional names for places exist in common usage. In the southern part of Costa do Sol, for instance, exists the *bairro* Triunfo. In the centre is the fishing community of *bairro* Pescadores, and in the North of Costa do Sol, there is also Mapulene. Within Albazine, the area towards the coast is often called Chiango. These names are not used to designate the respective administrative units but refer to particular places within them and since their usage is widespread among the residents, this thesis will make use of them too.

The Costa do Sol and Albazine neighbourhoods comprise large areas of roughly 26 km² and 23 km² (CMM 2013b: 11, 2010: 4). Forming part of the Maputo Municipality, Partial Urbanisation Plans were realised in 2013 and 2010, respectively. Embedded in the 2008 Urban Structure Plan, they guide future land use planning and provide a background on the socio-demographic characteristics of the area. However, the determinations and objectives of the Maputo Municipality appear somehow inconsistent, and the use of urban vs. rural categories and denominations is somehow sketchy. Accordingly, half of the population in Costa do Sol was estimated to be dedicated to fishing activities, and a considerable number was involved in agricultural practices (CMM 2013b: 6).

On the other hand, it is depicted that Costa do Sol already had “a transformation from rural to urban in the late 1970s” (CMM 2013a: 9). In the context of Albazine, subsistence farming and the production of local products is likewise highlighted. Further, it is noted that the *bairro* is undergoing a socio-economic transformation characterized by “the recent transition from the rural habitat to the current semi-urbanised environment” (CMM 2010: 6). The socio-demographic data from both PPUs are based on census data from 2007, when the Costa do Sol was home to 16,828 inhabitants, composed of 3,987 households (CMM 2013b: 10). In Albazine, it was 15,975 inhabitants composed of 3,616 households (CMM 2010: 8). According to the latest census from 2017, the population almost doubled within ten years. At the Costa do Sol, it was 30,407 inhabitants, whereas in Albazine, it was 26,724 (INE 2020: 37).

Local plans for the Marracuene neighbourhoods of Mutanhana and Guava are non-existent, and local-level statistics are sparse. The entire district was estimated to be home to roughly 120,000 inhabitants in 2012 (INE 2012: 10). The *bairros* Mutanhana and Guava only represent a small percentage of the area, and with the rapid transformations occurring in the study area, these demographic data are outdated.

The *secretários* of all four neighbourhoods (Costa do Sol, Albazine, Mutanhana, Guava) and numerous *chefes de quarteirão* were interviewed during the fieldwork. The interviews with the *secretários* were realised at their respective office buildings called *círculo* or *secretaria*. The insights from the interviews reconfirm the unbroken population growth, particularly towards the more distant areas. So far, these were less densely populated, and more vacant spaces are still to be found. The Costa do Sol neighbourhood contains 87 *quarteirões* with the same corresponding number of *chefes*. However, in the *quarteirões* of Triunfo, under the stronger urban influence, the overall population and the density actually decline in line with the exchange of the former population by more affluent groups. As one of the *chefes* explained, recently arriving wealthier residents live in mansions on larger plots. The same space was once accommodated by several families living on various albeit smaller plots.

Towards the periphery, the demographic developments tend to be the inverse. To cope with the ongoing population growth, neighbourhood reorganisation processes are realised in Albazine and Guava. According to the effective Partial Urbanisation Plan from 2010, the *bairro* Albazine possessed 22 *quarteirões* (CMM 2010: 4). However, Albazine's *secretário* explained that a recent enquiry showed that the neighbourhood meanwhile counts more than 8,000 houses, and this number continues to grow steadily. This means that on the local level, each of the 22 *chefes* of officially 22 *quarteirões* was, on average, in charge of dealing with more than 350 houses instead of just about 50 houses. Since the recent growth dynamics go beyond the administrative scope, the areas of the former *quarteirões* were split, and new ones were created. Thus, following the reorganisation Albazine currently consists of 170 *quarteirões*, which means, on average, that where once was one *quarteirão*, there are now

seven (interview C-15). Of course, the densification processes are not uniform and homogeneously spread across the neighbourhood, but nonetheless, they provide qualitative insights into the ongoing dynamics.

Beyond the *Circular* in Guava, the situation is comparable, if not even more rapid. An interview was conducted with the local *secretária*, and she explained that the Guava neighbourhood officially consists of 36 *quarteirões*. At the time of the fieldwork, the administrative reorganisation was just in progress. The work was already finished for the first and second *quarteirão*, adjacent to the *Circular*. Whereas the first one became subdivided into 15 new *quarteirões*, the second resulted in 42 *quarteirões*. Against this background, she further estimates that the number of *quarteirões* in her neighbourhood will likely rise from 36 to at least 200 or 300 in line with the restructuring (interview C-06). Due to its rapid growth to a substantial size, one of the interviewed *chefes* also believes Guava will be elevated to town status soon. However, these processes, in all their scope and velocity, take place in peripheral spaces that the central state never paid much attention to, although the current planning laws and regulations represent the exact attempt to regain control. As it will be showcased throughout this thesis, the resulting discrepancy between vision and reality is of great magnitude.

4.3.3 Description of the Peri-urban Transect from the Centre to the Periphery

The urban district KaMpfumo represents the city's central district, occupying the southern tip of the headland (cf. figure 9). It constitutes the former colonial town centre, the so-called city of cement, home to the Portuguese population and the colonial administrative apparatus. KaMpfumo comprises the historical nucleus of the city and the most affluent neighbourhoods with Bairro Central, Polana Cimento and Sommerschild. Bairro Central is characterised by high-rise office and residential buildings, which are steadily increasing in both size and number. From here, Maputo's most glamorous avenue, Avenida Julius Nyerere, passes outwards through the neighbourhoods of Polana Cimento and Sommerschild before crossing the district KaMaxakeni and leading to the district KaMavota. Sommerschild represents, by far, the most prestigious neighbourhood of Maputo's centre. It accommodates mainly luxury residential areas but also the offices of important firms and international organisations. Here, most of the embassies and consular representations and numerous upscale restaurants and services are located.

The main campus of Eduardo Mondlane University marks the boundary between the districts KaMpfumu and KaMaxakeni. From here, two main access roads fall to the city's Northern parts leading into the study area (cf. figure 10). Avenida Julius Nyerere continues on an elevated plain more towards the inland neighbourhoods of KaMavota and beyond. Avenida da Marginal leads through the low-lying coastal

plain along the shoreline. Numerous real estate and leisure projects have been realised within the last few years along the waterfront below the university at Avenida da Marginal.

The first section of the Avenida da Marginal, which was amplified within the *Circular* project, leads northwards along the beach through the neighbourhood of Polana Caniço, which still belongs to the urban district KaMaxakeni. The Casino Polana, several sea-view residential towers (cf. photo 5a), and the modern shopping centres Baía Mall and Marés follow large-scale luxurious hotel complexes like the Radisson Blu and Gloria Hotel. The beats of bars and fancy beach restaurants attract the young upper class and expats on the weekend evenings, turning the adjacent parking lots into the stage for expansive SUVs and pickups. The gigantic representative building of the United States embassy was just finished during the fieldwork. The golf course, the Autódromo racing track, and the private hospital and international schools are nearby.

Whereas *caniço* was once the synonym for precarious buildings, Polana Caniço has nowadays, in large parts, become a privileged place and prime location for real estate investments in the private sector (Jorge 2020: 612). The housing aspirations of the political and economic elite are no longer made of “reeds” but rather “cemented”, as manifested in the emergence of numerous condominiums, gated communities and enclaves (cf. Caldeira 1996). In the southern part of the Costa do Sol, Triunfo, the first gated housing complexes appeared in the 1980s (Quembo 2009). By 2012, 30 large housing complexes (5–10ha) already existed along the Costa do Sol. Within the last five years, another 15 complexes were built (Nielsen & Jenkins 2020: 14). After providing access through the *Circular*, these new urban forms of luxury housing began to expand outwards, gradually encroaching over and replacing the lower-income housing structures standing in their way (cf. photo 5b). Hereinafter and throughout this thesis, it is referred to as the “real estate frontier”, expanding in line with the demands of a growing middle class and the interests of the real estate sector fuelled by the prospects of profit through the increasing commodification of urban and peri-urban space. Chapter 6.2. will provide a detailed account of the involved conflicts and life-world discontinuities.

In the second row, most of Triunfo’s “ordinary” people live behind the leisure and shopping facilities, not in residential towers but predominately in one-story brick buildings. These self-produced neighbourhoods were mostly spontaneously established, characterized by an organic tissue of irregular alleys and small streets. In a distance of roughly 10 km from the city centre, this area pertains to the “zone of direct impact” (Phillips et al. 1999: 5) of the expanding city. Land demands are higher, and the densification of the neighbourhoods is extremely advanced. Free spaces are lacking, and the margins of the settlements already began to invade lower flooding zones. The expansion of gated housing complexes exerts increasing pressure from the other side. Their homogenous spatial forms with linear and clear-cut boundaries

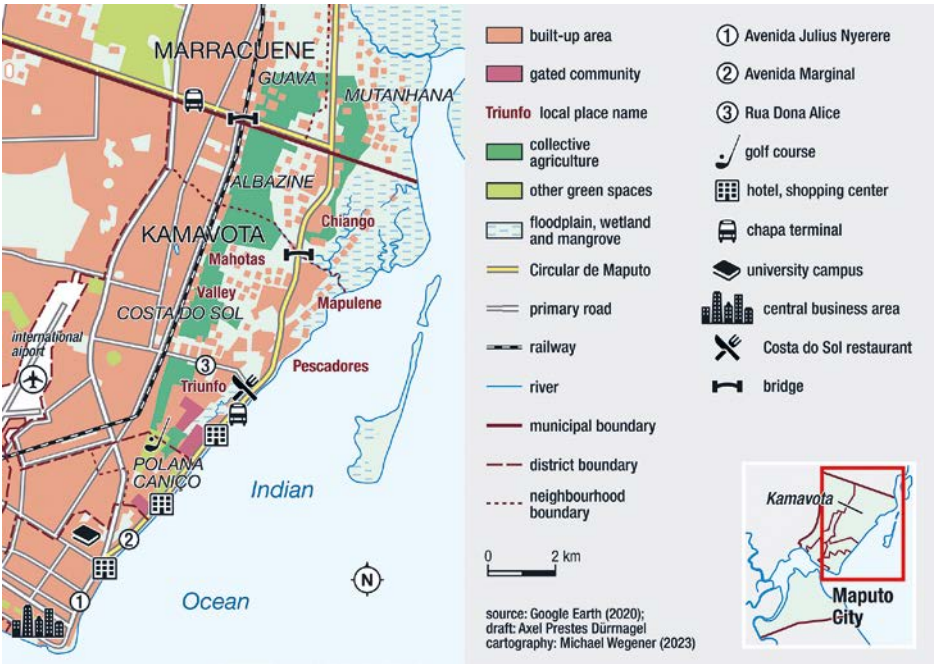


Figure 10 Map of the peri-urban study area

push towards the self-produced spaces' heterogenous fabric, obviously, with the tendency of gradually replacing them (cf. Jorge 2020: 615).

The first stretch of the *Circular* until the famous Costa do Sol restaurant leads directly along the shoreline with its sandy beach. It passes in front of the Autódromo and the Maputo Fish Market, where smaller streets provide access to the interior neighbourhoods. The last sequence of the *Circular* until the restaurant is built on top of a dune system. Mangrove swamps are located to the West, and the Indian Ocean lies to the East. According to Beja da Costa & Mazzolini (2021: 4), the dune dynamics, water drainage, and tidal movement are already compromised. In fact, the disruption of the ecosystem dynamics is visible, and the common onshore wind blows up the sand and sediments in small accumulations on the road surface. Although the *Circular* was only recently concluded, the coastal erosion has already severely damaged the construction.

The Costa do Sol *chapa* terminal is situated a few metres before the restaurant. From here, connecting *chapas*³ either lead to the interior neighbourhoods of KaMavota or further North along the *Circular* to Albazine, Zimpeto, and Marracu-

³ *Chapas* are minibuses and vans, the most common means of public transport. On certain routes, *chapas* circulate through the city between several terminals, covering the areas of Maputo city and the surrounding province (see chapter 5.2.).

ene. The road towards the interior is commonly referred to as Rua Dona Alice, although officially named Rua Engenheiro Santos Resenoe. It passes through the mangroves and leads to the Triunfo neighbourhoods and farmer associations in the Mahotas Valley, where a substantial part of the fieldwork was realised. The neighbourhood of Triunfo lies to the South of Rua Dona Alice, and the *machambas* of the farmer associations to the north of it.

Back on the *Circular*, from the *chapa* terminal northwards, the road passes the entrance to *bairro* Pescadores. Fishermen have inhabited the settlement of Pescadores with its beach access for decades, and it is now becoming more densely populated. Several dozen small wooden sailing boats are usually moored off the coast, and at low tide, the local women search for shellfish and molluscs in the mudflats. At this point, the road bends away from the coast towards the inland, entering the area called Mapulene. This part of the *Circular* already represents the new build section. In the past, access was only able until the Costa do Sol restaurant. Making the way to the northern parts of *bairro* Costa do Sol, like Mapulene and Chiango, was previously very difficult since no proper road existed. Indeed, beyond Pescadores, a vast flat area sprawls out. It is under the influence of tides and possesses large-scale flooding zones.

The *Circular* leads on an elevated stretch through the wetlands of Mapulene. The construction sites and expansion areas range several hundred meters into the plains to both sides of it (cf. photo 5c). Extensive backfilling with earth is necessary in order to be able to start to build at all in the context of the raised groundwater level. Regardless, the plots already reach far into the *machambas* of the farmer associations, and a significant amount of farming land has meanwhile been transformed into construction sites. The associated land use conflicts and the discrepancies of the interests of farmers and investors are addressed in chapter 6.3.

A few hundred meters further North, the *Circular* bridges a small channel which drains the inland. With the crossing of the bridge, one leaves the *bairro* Costa do Sol and enters Albazine. During the fieldwork 2021, a toll station for the *Circular* was under construction, leading the traffic on a small detour around it. The nucleus of *bairro* Albazine is located a few kilometres inland, beyond the farming fields. The part of the neighbourhood in the lower plain close to the sea is called Chiango. A few disperse, and growing settlements existed, but it gets less densely populated overall. Whereas the number of new housing constructions declines, other types of usages like industry and commerce increase. The largest part of the area towards the sea, however, consists of wetlands, salt marshes, dunes, and mangroves located immediately at the coast.

The stretch from the bridge through Albazine until Maputo's border measures roughly five kilometres. A large roundabout demarcates the limit from where the *Circular* splits towards interior Zimpeto or northern Marracuene. The Mutanhana neighbourhood is located beyond the municipal boundaries. The distance from Ma-

puto town hall to the nucleus of Mutanhana is 25 km, and from here, it is another 12 km to the town centre of Marracuene. Besides the nucleus adjacent to the *Circular*, some of Muthanna's settlements lie directly at the coast beyond the wetlands. A large portion of the population is engaged in fishing, like in Pescadores. The access way from the *Circular* to the coast is in poor conditions and sometimes even flooded. Before the construction of the *Circular*, even the nucleus of Mutanhana was still located in a remote area.

The *bairro* Guava adjoins Mutanhana to the West. It has its nucleus on the interior plateau beyond the railway line. In the valley between the two *bairros* lie extensive agricultural fields. They represent the northern extension of the Mahotas Valley, divided by the *Circular* road. The *machambas* in Marracuene become encroached by the expansion of settlements descending from Guava's consolidated upper areas into the low-lying plain. The nature of this expansion is rather spontaneous in an incremental process. Individual homes are first built and still surrounded by fields, which are gradually replaced by following houses. Thus, leading to stepwise densification. Families with lower incomes primarily realize this pioneering process. The houses are rather small, infrastructure like roads or sewage is not yet existent.

The section of the *Circular* from Chiango into the interior marks the border between the administration of Maputo and Marracuene. From the coast, the road leads up to a bridge over the railway. These upper parts are already more consolidated, forming a coherent built-up area between both administrations of Albazine (Maputo) and Guava (Marracuene). From the elevated point on the bridge, the almost horizonless expansion along the railway to the north is visible (cf. photo 5d). It depicts the area where the administrative reorganisation of the neighbourhood is just in progress to gain control over the rapid growth rates. However, the extent of the sprawl across the municipal boundary is still relatively recent. In an interview with an architect and planner, she put a strong emphasis on these dynamics. Likewise, she raises an essential question regarding the categories of urban vs. rural:

When I came here in 2010, was very low density, very low density. Not rural because I don't want to use these words because I haven't studied that. But then, the year after, it was all occupied. One year after, they were expanding to Marracuene, and now they are reaching Marracuene. So, I don't know exactly what peripheric is. Is it [distance] from the centre of Maputo? Taking into account the whole metropolitan area or the [administrative] limits of Maputo? Because this doesn't work as a real limit, it is an administrative limit (interview B-04: 3).



a) Sea-view residential towers



b) Luxury housing



c) Expansion of construction sites



d) View towards Guava, Marracuene

Photo 5 On the Circular along the interface from the centre towards the periphery

Source: Photos by auhtor (2019, 2021)

This statement reflects quite vividly reflects the shortcomings of today's conceptualisations of peri-urban spaces which this dissertation aims to overcome. Most importantly, the persistent attempts of trying to define them in administrative terms or according to their extensions in mathematical dimensions. Obviously, these are incapable of capturing the essential qualities of peri-urbanity. Therefore, this quote serves as an excellent point of departure to get to the core of this dissertation, which follows in the next chapter, an understanding of peri-urban spaces not as an administrative unit, but primarily as the living space of peri-urban life-worlds.

5 Understanding Peri-urban Life-worlds

Being a Peri-urban Dweller in Maputo

After introducing the city of Maputo and the peri-urban study area, the first of two main empirical chapters follows. This chapter addresses the first research objective of this dissertation. It is dedicated to understanding peri-urban life-worlds. As outlined in the theoretical chapter on the geography of lived experiences (cf. chapter 2.1.4.), Schütz's stratification of the life-world into the spatial, temporal, and social dimensions provides the framework for this endeavour.

Since this structuration is invariant and universal, the logic of the *tertium comparationis* also applies to the methodological proceeding of empirical analyses. Hence, the phenomenological life-world analysis of Maputo's peri-urban dwellers follows a heuristic framework, which is generally applicable in other socio-cultural and historical settings. The structure of the present chapter, therefore, provides a frame of reference which serves as a matrix for the analytical procedure of reconstructing life-worlds. It represents a practicable method to be applied in other socio-spatial and historical contexts and allows for possible variations. The empirical findings of the subsequent analysis can therefore get compared with other peri-urban areas and put to the test, or they can get contrasted with urban or rural life-worlds regardless of being in the Global North or the Global South.

For the life-worldly immersed individual; space, time, and the sociality of the world are not experienced as separate entities. Instead, the spatial, temporal, and social aspects of the world are inextricably interwoven and always experienced simultaneously. The multifarious ensemble of all of them makes up the life-world's "space-time-society-homology" (Benta 2018: 76). However, for the methodological and analytical purposes of an operationalisation, it is inevitable to systematise the reconstruction of the life-world. A framework for reconstructing life-worlds is presented hereinafter to make any generalisations and after all theoretical comparisons possible (cf. figure 11).

The framework reflects Schütz's scheme of the stratification of the life-world, alias van Manen's "existentials": lived body, lived space, lived time, and lived relations (van Manen 2016: 101–103). Thus, its structure is organised according to the sequence

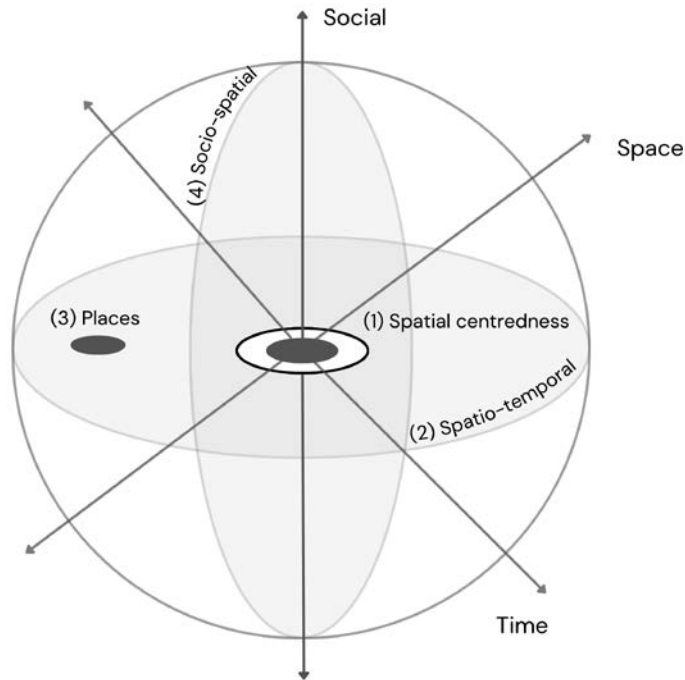


Figure 11 Three-dimensional framework for reconstructing life-worlds

Source: Illustration by author

presented in chapter 2.1.4. The essential empirical content, in turn, is explained by the applied analytical and interpretative strategy presented in detail in the methodological chapter 3.5. Since this work is rooted in the discipline of human geography with the primary aim of elucidating the life-world's geographical portions, the spatial dimension constitutes the overarching experiential reference. Therefore, it starts with the spatial centredness of the life-world, before the temporal and social dimensions eventually unfold as spatio-temporal and socio-spatial worlds. Likewise, the framework provides space for the meaning that other important places in everyday life provide. After a brief presentation of the steps, they are applied to the empirical context of peri-urban Maputo throughout the remainder of this chapter.

(1) The Spatial Centredness of the Life-world

The reconstruction of life-world requires an understanding of subjective experiences. The experiences of the individual subject are, in turn, contingent on its body since the bodily subject constitutes the essential medium for experiencing the world in its material and social appearance. The lived body, however, is not ubiquitous. Indeed, it is constrained to a specific location, always bound to a particular place. Therefore, the spatial centredness of the life-world with the body-in-place, determines the point of departure for reconstructing the life-world. It begins with the personal zero point

of the subject. It is the place where the individual subject dwells and feels at home, the kernel of the life-world. The inquiry asks about the subject's relationship with his or her dwelling place and discovers the experiential meaning that the home bestows on him or her. The life-world spatial centre is neither a-temporal nor a-social, but space, time, and sociality coincide in it. Apart from the meaning and significance during everyday life, it is about the memories of the past that the dwelling place preserves and the future aspirations it conveys. It is about how the home is shared and experienced with others as a common living space.

(2) The Spatio-temporal Structures of the Surrounding World

The dwelling place represents the life-world's kernel. Thus, the home constitutes the original starting point for going out into the world and experiencing the manifold spatial and temporal layers encircling the individual subject in its centre. This world encompasses the spheres where the routinized everyday activities are fulfilled, providing an orientation in life. It is where the various plans are realized according to the spatial and temporal resources at hand, be it during everyday time-spaces or even throughout the course of life. Understanding the spatio-temporal surrounding world and reconstructing its structures represents the second step of the life-world analysis. The analysis follows outwards along the expansion of the life-world's spatio-temporal horizons. It begins with the immediate environment at the doorstep, following the street and the neighbourhood, until beyond the city and the countryside, grasping whatever appears as meaningful for the individual experiencing subject.

(3) Understanding the Life-world's Meaningful Places

The surrounding world is not only a world full of material objects but foremost a world of places. The home represents the place from where one originates to explore the world. Likewise, it is where one returns to sleep at night. In between, however, there exist other places within this world. These are laden with meaning and sometimes not much less significant than the dwelling place itself. The workplace, for instance, is often frequented daily and throughout a substantial part of one's lifetime. On the other hand, public places in the neighbourhood are the locus for social gathering and interaction. The third step of the life-world analysis concerns the experiences regarding the places where life eventually enfolds. It is about the diverse and manifold places that provide meaning and orientation in everyday life.

(4) The Socio-spatial Structures of the Intersubjective Surrounding World

The surrounding world is a social world from the beginning on. It is the intersubjectively shared world where others are experienced with varying degrees of intimacy and anonymity. This world comprises relations with the next of kin and friends. It involves the street and the interactions with neighbours and strangers. The social space of this world stretches around each individual and group in meaningful expe-

periences that are lived through with others: the predecessors of the past, the contemporaries of the present, and the successors of the future. The fourth step of the life-world reconstruction addresses its socio-spatial structures. It is the last and all-encompassing step since it revisits all the other steps and spatial layers while emphasising their social characteristics.

Hereinafter, the framework is applied to the empirical context of Maputo according to the following structure. It starts with the life-world's spatial centredness referring to the meaning of the dwelling place (cf. chapter 5.1.). It explores the fundamental question of how people live in peri-urban areas. It entails how they find access to land, construct their houses, make sense of their home, and use it for multiple purposes.

The description of peri-urban infrastructures and mobilities follows second (cf. chapter 5.2.). It is equivalent to the spatio-temporal structures of the surrounding world asking how people experience and appropriate their neighbourhoods. It refers to experiences of the built environment and the socio-material infrastructures in peri-urban areas and people's movements through it when pursuing their everyday activities and plans.

As an essential example of the peri-urban life-world's meaningful places, it follows the presentation of peri-urban farming with the meaningful place of the *machambas* (cf. chapter 5.3.). It asks what it means to be a farmer in Maputo. Agricultural production fields betake an eminent portion in the study area just as in people's lives. In this regard, the intertwined dimensions of lived space, lived time, and lived relations are discussed to elucidate the wholeness of peri-urban farmers' everyday experiences.

The peri-urban sociality is discussed as the last step, corresponding to the reconstruction of the socio-spatial structures of the intersubjective surrounding world (cf. chapter 5.4.) It asks how people live together, at the dwelling place and in the neighbourhood. It asks how others are experienced and typified in the socio-spatial surrounding world of the neighbourhood and by what type of sociality collective community life is determined in peri-urban areas.

The formulation of a thesis on the constitutive dimensions of peri-urbanity concludes this chapter (cf. chapter 5.5.). At this point, it is argued that the peri-urban type consists of three overarching and interrelated dimensions: locality, self-sufficient practice, and community. These three dimensions are finally elaborated based on the findings of the entire chapter.

5.1 The Meaning of the Dwelling Place: how Do People Live in Peri-urban Areas?

The reconstruction of Maputo's peri-urban life-worlds begins within its spatial centre. It is the home of families, the dwelling place where life enfolds. The peri-urban residents' meaningful experiences tied to their dwelling place guide the orientation throughout the following paragraphs. To begin with, the peri-urban way of dwelling

in Maputo implies the fundamental question of gaining access to land. Or, to put it differently, finding a place in space (cf. chapter 5.1.1.). Since the land market in peri-urban Maputo is highly competitive, only after the accomplishment of this delicate task succeeds the creation of the home (cf. chapter 5.1.2.). The typical peri-urban home consists not only of the house but also of the plot's outer space. The dwelling place serves multifunctional social and economic purposes on which peri-urban families depend for survival.

5.1.1 Peri-urban Land Access: Finding a Place in Space

The nature of gaining access to land in Maputo's peri-urban areas has changed throughout the last decades. During colonial times, local chiefs like the *régulos* were responsible for land allocation. Within the immediate post-colonial period, this role was transferred to the *grupos dinamizadores* and, during the late 1990s, to the *secretários de bairro*. With the growing scarcity of public land, negotiations between private individuals and the increasing monetisation of land transactions became predominant until today. In the past, however, the allocation of a plot was realised without direct monetary payments. It usually involved the exchange of small gifts like a chicken or even alcoholic beverages (cf. Jenkins 2001a: 631; Andersen et al. 2015b: 429). In an interview with *Senhor Timoteo*, one of the *chefes de quarteirão* of *bairro Pescadores*, he retold his personal experience of gaining access to a plot. He further explained how the nature of land access has changed over time.

Senhor Timoteo is a local fisher and resident of *bairro Pescadores* for nearly half his life. Already as a 12-year-old boy, he used to come down from KaMavota to catch fish with a hook. He always had to walk a long distance from his former home until he finally settled down in 1984. A few years after independence, he got his plot allocated by the *grupos dinamizadores*. He emphasized that he did not have to pay anything for his plot. Since he is a fisherman who needs the ocean nearby to make his living, he received a written confirmation which officially allowed him to transfer his place of residence. *Pescadores* was still sparsely populated at that time. In vicinity to his home, there were only five other families while there are now several dozen within the same perimeter. The allocated plots were significantly larger in the past and over time, they got divided and were allocated to family members and the migrant arrivals coming from other Mozambican provinces.

Meanwhile, *Pescadores* grew from a small community of fishermen to a populous neighbourhood. Its settlements continue to expand along the mangrove coast while becoming more and more densely populated. Non-monetary and state controlled mechanisms of land allocation have long ceased to be a reality. Not only in *Pescadores*, but in the study area at large. *Senhor Timoteo* is in the position of *chefe de quarteirão* for the last 14 years. During that time, he has documented the local land transactions within his area and he explained to us the current conditions:

There are many people now [...]. From now on, if you need space today, there is nobody who is going to give you space. Everybody is supposed to buy the space, but we know land cannot be sold [...] Land cannot be sold, but there are already many people that don't have a place to stay because space is very expensive (interview C-10: 9).

The quote from *Senhor* Timoteo points towards three different aspects that characterise the social mechanisms of land access in contemporary peri-urban Maputo: (1) The transition from land being allocated by the state towards inter-individual and private land transactions. (2) The increased competition over land which goes in hand with its increasing commodification and the emergence of a pervading land market. (3) The contradiction between land transactions on the one hand, and the constitutional principle of state ownership according to which land legally cannot be sold. Peri-urban dwellers, being in the need for a place or already long-time settled, are confronted with these dynamics. They permeate their life-worlds and determine the lived local realities in different ways. We will therefore briefly discuss these three interrelated aspects to understand their implications on peri-urban everyday life.

(1) The first aspect implies that inter-individual and private land transactions have to a large part replaced the allocation of land by the state. Whereas the state once was able to allocate vacant land to individuals in need for a plot, public land reserves are meanwhile sparse. Not only in proximity to the urban side of the peri-urban interface, but also towards its rural side lying within the administration of Marracuene. Indeed, the population and settlement density in the Marracuene neighbourhoods of Mutanhana and Guava is less consolidated than in Maputo's Triunfo and Costa do Sol neighbourhoods. But although land resources may seem vacant, it often belongs to the *nativos* (natives), local groups and traditional resource users, which are regarded as the *donos da terra* (owners of the land).

People in Maputo are generally typified as the *nativos* of a place if they are born there or have at least been present for a very long time. They enjoy the customary use rights to the plots they inhabit and to the land which may be used for farming. The use rights of *nativos* are hereditary and families are sometimes locally present for generations. In addition to that, rights to use the land also apply according to the so-called *ocupação de boa fé* (occupation-in-good-faith) after occupying a place for more than ten years.

It has to be stressed that these rights are usually not registered or recorded in written documents. Asserting those rights requires the witness statements of other neighbouring individuals that can testify the *nativo* status. Land rights merely based on such oral traditions, however, exposes peri-urban dwellers and customary resource users to the risk of being displaced by more powerful actors. At the same time, asserting traditional use rights and claiming the *nativo* status has become a loophole for individuals and groups in their attempts to acquire land illicitly. Thus, the catego-

ry of the *nativo* bears, after all, conflicting characteristics: between safeguarding the rights of the most marginalized and the land grabs of rather malignant forces to capitalize on these rights.

Although the negotiations and the payments occur inter-individual, the neighbourhoods' *chefes* and *secretários* play a pivotal role in the consequent authentication and documentation of land transactions. In addition to the written testimonies of the buyer and seller, there is the need for local *testemunhas* (witnesses) to confirm that the land in question belonged to the respective owner and has now changed hands. The *chefe de quarteirão* then provides the new information on the land occupancy within his quarter to the *secretário do bairro*. The *secretário do bairro*, in turn, emits a *declaração* (declaration) to the involved parties that confirm the transaction and occupancy of the respective parcel. The *chefe* keeps the file with the *ficha do morador* (resident card) of the inhabitants of his quarter, and a written registry of the transactions is held on the neighbourhood level at the office of the respective *secretário*. Documentations such as the authentication of land transactions form part of the tasks of the local *chefes*. As it will be highlighted later, these are vital for the functioning of the community, and form an important ingredient of local peri-urban governance arrangements (cf. chapter 6.1.).

To find a plot and a place of residence, individuals can no longer rely on the state but depend on their opportunities to acquire land from other owners. Hence, it is common that larger plots become successively divided or parcels of land are acquired from *nativos*. Negotiations between willing buyer and seller are usually realised in an intersubjective encounter without an involvement of the central state nor the local neighbourhood authorities. One of the *chefes* in Mutanhana explained that "even though we know that space cannot be sold, it is the state's property, people work something out" (interview C-02: 4).

The bypassing of the transactions behind the back of the state's local representatives occurs in the awareness of actually committing a crime when land is sold. In this light, *Senhor Timoteo* added that "people have to outsmart the *chefe de quarteirão*" (interview C-10: 8) by not mentioning that the transaction involved any payments in money. However, I also spoke with *chefes* who treated this matter with less secrecy but rather pragmatic. *Chefe Rolando* in Triunfo, for instance, was totally aware of the prices being paid in his neighbourhood. He claimed, however, that serious problems will arise for the involved parties if the higher instances at the district and municipal level become aware that land is being sold openly.

(2) The increased competition over land, its increasing commodification and the existence of a radically evolving land market refer to the second aspect that determines access to land in peri-urban Maputo. For the poorest strata in search for land, these factors represent serious constraints. For peri-urban dwellers who are long-time settled but do not dispose considerable means, the risk of displacement increases. Social capital and in particular the social relations with the family and extended

kinship are vital resources in the search for a plot. In more consolidated neighbourhoods like Triunfo, it is common to have relatives in the same neighbourhood. In encounters with residents, it was repeatedly revealed that the plot once belonged to a family member and was eventually handed over.

In Triunfo and in other areas of the Costa do Sol which are closer to the city centre, there are meanwhile practically no vacant plots left. The density of the population and the build-up area is here much higher than in the periphery. In Marracuene's neighbourhoods of Mutanhana and Guava, for instance, land is still available. The chance to acquire a piece of land at a reasonable price increases with the distance from the city centre. In the search for a plot, it is also a common practice to just stroll around in the area of one's interest. The common terminology of *apreciar a zona* (appreciating the area) refers to this practice which bears the prospect of a potential opportunity to establish face-to-face contact with *nativos* and other potential vendors. Also, a research colleague from Maputo's UEM university explained that he could find a plot for himself this way in Bobole. In a context where a land market does officially not exist, the quest of finding a place represents a long-term and effortful endeavour which inevitably requires the endured physical presence in space. After all, social capital represents again a vital resource to get particular spaces and their owners indicated. One of the encountered residents in Guava, for instance, became his plot facilitated by his nearby living grandfather and another one referred to her aunt as being the mediator for the transaction.

The encounter with the young father of a family in front of their newly built home was furthermore illustrative how the lack of social relations and financial resources restrains the chances of finding an adequate plot. The family has been living on site for about a year. He told us that he had been here some years before, looking for a plot for himself and his family. Since the area is potentially subject to flooding, they were not confident and continued to search elsewhere in other districts of Maputo. However, it was impossible to find a better alternative which is why he came back again. Meanwhile, the *nativo* landowner had raised the price from MZN 15,000 (EUR 214) to MZN 45,000 (EUR 642).¹ Nonetheless, the family father assured that in the long run, it is still better and cheaper than renting a flat elsewhere.

As we walked through Maputo's neighbourhoods during the fieldwork, we were asked several times if we were looking for a plot. In some cases, people approached us directly and even followed us after word got around that there might be potential buyers in the *bairro*. Land and property transactions are not only common in areas where undeveloped spaces will turn into housing. In fact, even in the most consolidated and built-up parts of the Costa do Sol, the selling and buying of houses is not

¹ The Mozambican currency is Meticaís (MZN). All conversions to Euro (EUR) in this dissertation are based on the exchange rate from August 20, 2023, retrieved from the currency converter Oanda. Available online at <https://www.oanda.com/currency-converter>, checked on 8/20/2023.

less vivid than in Marracuene. In the southern parts of the study area, close to the beach and to Maputo city, luxury homes and housing complexes are gradually replacing the homes of the long-term residents. By the same pace as green spaces and *machambas* are converted into building plots in Guava, the real estate frontier expands from the city outwards encroaching over Triunfo. In both cases, the transformations are realized by the same procedure of people being actively in space, negotiating transactions in an incremental and plot-by-plot process.

Along the transect of the peri-urban interface, the price discrepancy for plots is enormous. In Guava, 20 km from the city centre, *chefe* Eduardo mentions average prices ranging between MZN 300,000 (EUR 4,279) and MZN 500,000 (EUR 7,131) for a plot. Prices tend to be higher in the upper parts close to the railway with good connections to public transportation. Descending into the valley, the prices are gradually decreasing. In the lowest swampy plains, one can already acquire a plot for less than MZN 100,000 (EUR 1,426). In Triunfo, on the other hand, the prices for property transactions are at least ten times higher. The *quarteirão* of *chefe* Rolando consists of 65 families. He recalls that six families sold their property during the last year and moved to either Marracuene or Bobole. Since it forms part of his task to document the property transactions, he could tell that the prices were in each case ranging between MZN 3 million (EUR 42,785) and MZN 6 million (EUR 85,570).

After all, gaining access to land in peri-urban Maputo is determined by the financial capacities and by the social relations an individual can draw on. Being it family and kinship ties or beneficial links to local neighbourhood authorities. Most powerful actors possess the possibility to almost freely choose a place to call home even if it occurs at the expense of other residents by replacing them. People with less resources have less spatial flexibility in picking a habitat. The quest of finding a place turns from being just a decision into a lengthy process which can become exhausting and disappointing. The most disadvantaged population groups lose out in the competition for peri-urban space. In particular poor migrants arriving from other provinces of Mozambique to Maputo in the hope of a better future. Without financial means and social relationships, the opportunity of choosing a place is evidently non-existent. In fact, they are enforced to settle in high-risk areas, at the coast and in low-lying plains which are subject to recurrent flooding. After severe precipitation events, certain areas are submersed for prolonged periods and houses are literally flooded up to knee height. Leaving home and walking through water bodies becomes a serious obstacle. Borrowing Bourdieu (1999: 127), the lack of resources and other options “chains one to a place”.

Due to the increasing lack of space, some of the most deprived population groups meanwhile resort to inventive techniques to create new space out of grasping necessity. In *Senhor* Timoteo's *bairro* Pescadores, he showed us how people settle in the adjacent mangroves and gradually fill up the tidal flats with sand, mud, and rubbish.

Since there is no space left, and they have no place to stay, space is being created through landfills which transform swamps into more or less suitable plots. The processes of landfill through *matope* (mud) have also been documented by Beja da Costa (2020: 192). The efforts of elevation and stabilization are often complemented with the construction of walls around the edges of the plots to secure protection from high tides. Plants and shrubs are occasionally planted to increase resistance to erosion. To permit that the tidal water flows back into the sea, some houses are also built on plateau-like islands with access via self-built bridges. The materials are frequently cut from the mangroves, which is not only used for construction but also as firewood and to produce charcoal.

Those and similar landfill processes are observable in low-lying plains areas across the whole study area. They are carried out not only by low-income, but also by middle-class and elite residents. Due to population growth and the increasing lack of free space, occupations invade into unsuitable and protected areas where construction activities are actually forbidden. The landfill in areas inhabited by poorer people often occurs clandestine during the night and under the cover of darkness, whereas more affluent people have the ability of finding loopholes for the performance of their illicit acts via other means such as corruption. One of the interviewed experts from Maputo characterised the latter as *branqueamento fundiário* (land whitewashing):

It is likely that some municipal officials have benefited a lot from being involved in the game called *branqueamento fundiário* [land whitewashing], basically regularising something that is against the law, against postures, against everything, against the urban structure plan. Regularising this means going over the top. So, someone gets paid to accept that the person can build (interview A-14).

(3) It remains to discuss the third aspect that characterises land access in peri-urban Maputo. It refers to the contradiction between the common and widespread realization of land transactions which are after all embedded in the constitutional context that strictly prohibits the sale of land. As the previous paragraphs demonstrated, land transactions are pervasive, and the Maputo land market has meanwhile gained momentum. In the interview with a municipal official working with the Maputo's planning department (DMOTC), I consciously confronted him with this issue, and asked how it would work with the selling of land in Maputo. His immediate response was unambiguous: "*A terra não se vende!*" (interview C-24: 10). He further explained that selling land is prohibited and constitutes a crime. If the state becomes knowledgeable of people selling land, sanctions can be imputed since "you cannot sell something which is prohibited by law" (interview C-24: 12). On the neighbourhood level, one of the interviewed *chefe de quarteirão* understands this controversy with more pragmatism: "Spaces are actually bought. It says that land cannot be sold, but nobody here gets land attributed. The people buy land" (interview C-19: 6).

The legitimization of land transactions in the institutional context of a national constitution which strictly prohibits the sale of land is obviously to be highly contradictory. With the help of Berger & Luckmann (1966), however, we can come to an interpretation of the meaning behind this legitimization. Accordingly, legitimization is understood as a process “described as a ‘second-order’ objectivation of meaning”. It “produces new meanings that serve to integrate the meanings already attached to disparate institutional processes” (Berger & Luckmann 1966: 110). Before we will draw on the patterns of legitimization practices in Maputo’s land transactions, it is first necessary to give a brief overview of the controversial legal context.

It is the social reality in Mozambique that all land is property of state who is responsible for the allocation to its citizens. This reality “is learned as objective truth in the course of socialization and thus internalized as subjective reality” (Berger & Luckmann 1966: 84). It institutionalized since the nationalisation of land after independence, and it became reinforced with the 1995 National Land Policy and the 1997 Land Law (Andersen et al. 2015: 339, Jorge 2020: 609). With the market-oriented liberalization of the economy imposed by structural adjustment programs, the 1992 National Housing Policy went into another direction, thus producing new meanings. Whereas the land policy kept holding on the principle of state ownership, the housing policy liberalized real estate activities (Jenkins 2012: 79; Jorge 2020: 608–609).

Embedded in a state-controlled land market, the private housing market expanded and the buying and selling of properties became legal whereas the sale of land remained illegitimate. Paradoxically, the purchase of a building involves the land on which it is built (Andersen et al. 2015a: 339–340). Apart from its legal context, it remains the question of how this paradox of a new institutional order is dealt with in practice, and thus how everyday land transactions are after all legitimized. Crucial to an understanding of the process of legitimization are the “explanations” and the “justifications” that evolve around it. These also refer to the cognitive and normative elements of the practical legitimization of the institutional orders. Or in this particular context, the legitimization of land transactions (Berger & Luckmann 1966: 111).

Following Berger & Luckmann (1966: 111), “[l]egitimation ‘explains’ the institutional order by ascribing cognitive validity to its objectivated meanings”. In Maputo, land sales are illegal whereas the sale of houses is legal. One of the interviewed *chefes de bairro* explained that “what we are selling here is the house” since “there is no way of selling land” (interview C-25: 6). Hence, achieving validity of the land transaction is cognitively rendered by ascribing it to the transaction of the house and not to the land on which it is built. Thus, transactions involving land become legitimate, although its sale is prohibited. In Maputo’s local practice, the existence of any material infrastructure on a property is already sufficient for a plot to change hands legitimately. The *secretário* of the neighbourhood Albazine, for instance, revealed that “for someone to transfer an area, there has to be something on it, an infrastructure” (interview C-15: 7). The same was confirmed during the interview with the *secretário*

of the neighbourhood Costa do Sol. He asserted that even small investments in facilities or *benfeitorias* (betterments like foundations or a perimeter wall) allow for transactions, and thus rendering it legitimate (interview C-07).

The second aspect concerns the justifications of land transactions in the process of its legitimization. According to Berger & Luckmann (1966: 111), “the institutional order is justified by giving normative dignity to its practical imperatives”. The practice of selling and buying land is prohibited by law. It goes against the directives and rules on which the constitutional elements of the Mozambican postcolonial state and its identity are built. Nevertheless, transactions are somehow realised. To justify them with normative dignity, the expressions of “buying” and “selling” are left out of the common vocabulary and get replaced by a different terminology. The *secretário* of the neighbourhood Guava explained it accordingly:

What is happening lately is that I appear as [a person] and I want a residence here because [another person] has a large area, and he is going to make a cut from that area of his and sell it to me. This is what we call a transfer (interview C-06: 5).

According to *Senhor* Timoteo, it is crucial “to avoid this kind of Portuguese, since it says that land is not for sale. Because if you say that you sold space, the government will already catch you” (interview C-10: 8). Instead of using a wording that refers to a monetary exchange, the everyday practice of land transactions becomes paraphrased with verbs like *ceder* (cede), *cortar* (cut), or *traspasar* (transfer) the plot. By doing so, the institutional order becomes bestowed with normative legitimacy. But the circumvention of the potential illegality is also reflected in the practical act of the transaction itself. As *Senhor* Bernardo explains, it provides an imperative and a practical orientation of how to deal with it in everyday life:

I can't say in front of my family that I sold my house. The person came to talk to me, and I ended up ceding, it's a little different from selling. It was an exchange because I didn't put up a sign, only if I would put a sign which says, 'for sale', this would mean I sold my house. But if someone comes along, who would want this space in exchange for something, I didn't sell, I ceded (interview C-13: 10).

While this differentiation might appear as a banality for the mere observer of the social world, it nonetheless provides essential guidance for the individual experiencing subject. It conveys an orientation in his life-world and of dealing with the institutional orders in place. Land is not for sale but for finding one's space, it is unavoidable to buy it. Social life has to be explained, social action has to be justified. The everyday rules of living together are accepted by the partaking individuals in society. Inevitably, they have to make sense and meaning. Or as in our case of land transactions, they have to be made meaningful, at least in some way.

5.1.2 The Creation of the Home and the Multifunctional Meaning of the Plot

Finding a space and gaining access to land in peri-urban Maputo is a critical and effortful endeavour. As the previous paragraphs have clearly demonstrated, vacant land is increasingly becoming a scarce resource and competing peri-urban dwellers have to draw on temporal, social, and economic resources to find an adequate plot. After eventually removing the manifold obstacles and having accomplished this delicate task, it follows the next fundamental step. Namely, the transformation of the acquired space into place, from a mere plot into a home. The creation of the home as the meaningful dwelling place involves the building of a house as the centre of the life-world. But the question of gaining access to land goes far beyond the production of shelter. Land is at the heart of any social and economic development and the opportunities to make use of and valorise land and the personal plot are crucially determining the livelihood strategies of peri-urban dwellers. The house and the plot on which it is built are both attached with purpose and meaning. As Casey (1993: 148) writes, “the basic act of building consists in establishing two distinguishable zones: a central or main structure, which is the ‘building’ proper, and an outlying area beyond the building yet belonging to the place”. Casey’s basal explanation of the home is likewise transferable to the peri-urban dwelling place in Maputo’s coastal plain. Hereinafter, the meaning of the home for peri-urban dwellers will be illustrated which consist not only of the house but also of the plot’s outer space.

The relationship with the house and the plot is essential and emotional. It is loaded with plans, aspirations, and desires. Over the course of life, it becomes steadily filled with lived experiences and memories. But the building itself, with its concrete walls and zinc roof, is not what makes meaningless space turn into becoming a meaningful place. The becoming of a dwelling place with an identity which is tied to a specific place called home essentially derives from the social coexistence of other human beings in a shared space of living together (cf. Bollnow 2011 [1963]: 248). It is the social relationships with the family that make the process of finding a plot become possible in the first place. A plot is shared with the family, or it was given by an aunt or uncle. Ultimately, it is the plan that the children and grandchildren will one day be its inheritors. Using Schütz’s terminology, it is obtained by the predecessors, handed over to the successors, unwished shared with the beloved associates and befriended contemporaries (Schütz 1962: 134).

Against this background, the foundation of an own family and the moving out from the parents’ house is often the main reason for acquiring a plot in peri-urban Maputo. “A pumpkin does not stay in its place when it grows” depicts an appropriate metaphor which I heard from a resident who just moved to Guava. The project of building a house and selecting its location is therefore nothing circumstantial. It comes with the fundamental decision of where the life-world will have its centre.

Unlike living for rent in a flat in the city, it is not potentially a temporary project but rather a life-long endeavour. As Eliade (1963: 51) puts it, “what is involved is undertaking the creation of the world one has chosen to inhabit”.

The act of building the house itself therefore does not enfold in one piece, but in an open and incremental process. In line with the financial means available and the actual needs at hand, the construction gets gradually improved and eventually enlarged by additional rooms when the family grows. The washing area and latrine as well as the kitchen may first be situated outside the house in reed constructions and only later become incorporated. Over time, amendments are made to the materials. The cement block walls might get plastered and painted, and an initial roof made of *caniço* or palm thatch be replaced by zinc plates providing more resistance to wind and weather.

Chefe Eduardo came to live in bairro Guava in 2003. The home of his family is located just below the railway tracks, from where the neighbourhood expands down into the valley. At that time, his house was the last one before the *machambas* began. Meanwhile, however, the settlement grew significantly towards the lower plain. When he and his wife had their first child, they were still living with Elia’s mother in the central neighbourhood of Maxaquene. Although their economic situation was challenging, he was not satisfied with the living situation for him and his family:

So, I decided to leave, I decided to leave and at the time when I arrived here, I only had made a *caniço* house. When I arrived, I took the [zinc] sheets from the bathroom cover of my mother’s house to cover it. There was no door, there was no nothing, the door was just matting (interview C-19: 6).

Almost twenty years later, we are sitting together in front of his house. Eduardo laughs when he tells the story of his arrival, but he also assures that it was a good decision. He is very proud of his house which is now made of plastered cement blocks. It is meanwhile also erected on an elevated floor which saves the interior from humidity and water after heavy rainfalls. The situation of Eduardo applies to a large part of the new arrivals in the more peripheral neighbourhoods of Albazine and Guava. When the housing stock was nationalized after independence, it was mostly the younger age group to benefit from the empty flats in Maputo’s centre. The families grew while the apartments obviously stayed the same size. Due to the lack of space, the second-generation after the nation’s independence is now looking for land in peri-urban areas. The rents have meanwhile reached high levels in the city, but plots in distant areas are still affordable. Many prefer to leave the city for places where they are independent and can build according to their wishes and possibilities. City apartments are cramped and do no longer provide comfort, whereas having an own plot provides not only space but also opportunities to achieve plans and to sustain a future (interview C-15).

In the low-lying expansion area of Guava, piles with *blocos* (cement blocks) for house constructions are found at each corner (cf. photo 6a). The *blocos* are fabricated within the neighbourhoods and sometimes directly at the building sites. Some residents are specialized in their production and can make a solid living in the growing communities where building activities are vivid. In an encounter with a local, he explained to be a *pedreiro* (bricklayer). When I asked him how his business was going, he revealed “that it is already enough not to be lazy”. Houses with brickwork made of *blocos* represent peri-urban Maputo’s most common building type. They have long replaced the *caniço* constructions, which were dominating during past decades. *Blocos* have meanwhile become an accessible material since the cement prices are reasonable. Sand and soil from the plot are often added to the mix when fabricated on-site before moulding, pressing, and then air-drying (cf. photo 6b). *Tijolo* (clay) bricks are also used, but way less frequently. They are being burnt and prove to be more stable, but they are also pricier (cf. Andersen et al. 2012: 70).

The choice of the construction material is finally a function of the financial means. In Maputo’s coastal plain, where flooding is a recurrent occasion, the air-dried *blocos* are soon affected by decay and corrosion. The damages and gaping holes in the brickworks are after all an indication of the height of the water level of the last flood. Meanwhile, a new adaptive technique became quite common. It is widely observable that the foundation of the walls up to knee height are covered in plastic sheets to prevent the blocks from corrosion.

In vicinity to the city, the material composition of the houses is much more heterogeneous than towards the periphery. Photo 7 was taken by *Chefe* Rolando in his *quartirão* in Triunfo as part of the reflexive photography method. It shows types of different construction materials and houses which are commonly found in the area. The following typifications stem from the descriptions of *Chefe* Rolando and the perspectives of other residents regarding the built environment in their surroundings. The central construction in the front is made of *caniço* with a plastic foil roof cover. The building in this picture, however, is used as a kiosk and not as a place for living. The brickwork on the right side below the trees is made of cement *blocos*. The walls of the house on the left side are likewise made of cement *blocos*, but they are additionally plastered. In the background looms a two-storey residential villa which is still under construction.

According to the materiality of the building, a differentiation between different types of houses is made by the residents. The *casa de caniço* (reed house) represents the most precarious type, made of non-permanent materials. More durable materials are used to build the *casa de madeira e zinco* (wood and zinc plate house). This type is more common in urban neighbourhoods but barely present in the study area. The type of the *casa de blocos* (cement block house) with a roof made of *chapas* (zinc or iron sheets) is by far the most common house type in peri-urban Maputo. The type of the *vivenda* (villa) or also *casa melhorada* (improved house) represents the typical



a) Piles with cement blocks



b) On-site construction

Photo 6 Cement blocks for house constructions

Source: Photos by author (2021)

middle-class home. It has one floor with several rooms. It is erected on an elevated concrete floor and mostly surrounded by a veranda. The walls are not only plastered but also painted, and the windows usually have iron gratings as a protective measure (see Raposo & Salvador 2013; Andersen et al. 2012).

Like the one under construction in the photo, luxury houses are a rather novel appearance in peri-urban Maputo. However, they are becoming much more frequent in line with the expansion of the real estate frontier outwards along the coast. In this light, a new typology and essential distinction between houses have recently become evident. All the aforementioned house types have merely a *rés-do-chão* (ground floor) and are all commonly typified as *casas* (houses). The newly erected ones, in contrast, are built at least with *rés-do-chão e primeiro andar* (ground- and first-floor). In opposition to the common peri-urban *casa*, these two-storey houses are typified by residents as *prédios* (buildings). The material condition of the house reflects the social position of its owner. The social differentiation becomes much more visible in light of the stark contrast between *casa* and *prédio*.

We will now draw our attention to the space in the immediate surroundings of the house. To the personal plot, which forms an integral part of the home in peri-urban areas. The outer space of the dwelling represents the extended living space where much of the everyday life is spent. It is not only the place for leisure but also for vital domestic, social and economic activities. The layout of the plot and its spatial division (cf. figure 12) reveals its multiple meanings and purposes. In addition to the main house, which usually consist of only one or two rooms for living and sleeping, the facilities for cooking and washing, and the latrine are often situated around it in separate smaller constructions. However, they may become integrated into the main house throughout the process of its gradual expansion. Sometimes, additional annex buildings exist if larger plots are shared with the extended family or rented to subtenants.



Photo 7 Peri-urban construction materials and house types

Photo by Rolando, taken in the context of the reflexive photography method (2021)

The ground of the plot usually consists of pounded earth and grass, or it is partly paved. Substantial space is considered for *machambinhas* (small vegetable gardens), for the breeding of smaller animals, or for other economic purposes. The outer space is not only the extension of the inner space but also the buffer zone between the familiarity of the private and the strangeness of the public world. The act of cultivating and taking care of the dwelling's outer space is of important significance. It is the space which is mostly visible to strangers. It represents the space where your world is seen by others, and therefore you present it how you want your world to be seen. Whereas nearby busy streets are chaotic and disorderly, the plot gets cherished and taken care of. The spatial layout is well organized, everything has its place. Weeds and leaves that lie around are removed, the grass is trimmed, and the earth is swept.

Trees provide not only fruits and shade on searing summer days, they foremost provide a place for social interaction. While rangy palm trees, papayas, and *bananeiras* (banana trees) occupy the margins of a plot, *mangueiras* (mango trees) and *cajueiros* (cashew trees) usually determine its spatial and social centre. It is underneath their evergreen and wide spreading treetops, where domestic work is performed, where young children are taken care of, where older children play or do their homework. But most importantly, it is the place for socialization, where visitors, friends, and clients are received. Whereas the building proper represents the space of personal privacy, the peri-urban outer space represents the place of receiving news, of maintaining relation-

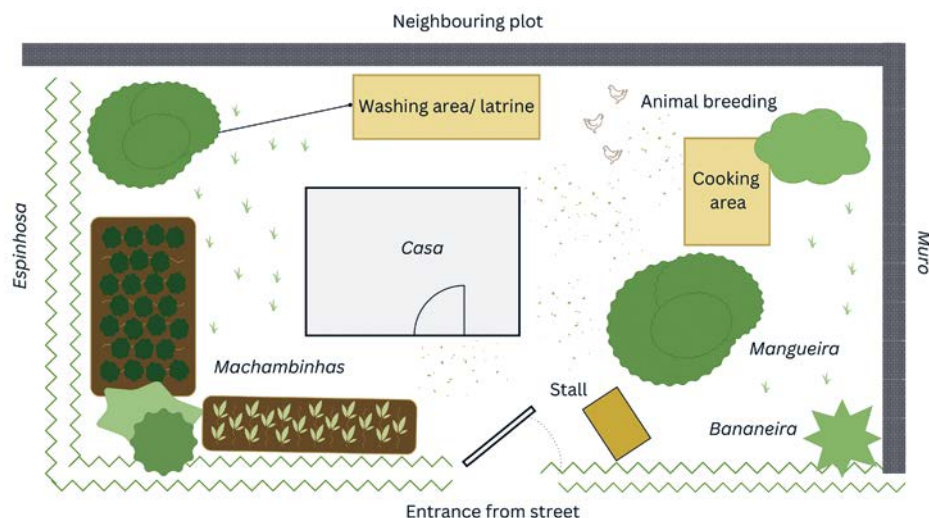


Figure 12 Typical spatial layout of a peri-urban plot

Source: Illustration by author with support from Mira Vögel

ships, and of conducting business. During the fieldwork, the interviews with peri-urban residents were usually held in front of the house on the plot. Chairs were brought out of the main building, and we were invited to sit. The conversations were located in the centre of the individual life-worlds, from where this world was explained to us.

The spatial structure of the plot according to its functions for domestic work also reflects the realization of gender-related tasks. While strolling through Maputo's peri-urban bairros on our lived explorations, at the majority of the plots, at least someone was always at home. Women were pounding manioc with a mortar and preparing food while watching over the children. Male fishermen were laying out their nets to dry while cooking their caught prawns on charcoal. During the Covid related closing of schools and other public institutions, we saw how neighbouring children were tutored from other young adults. One of the chefes de quarteirão also told us that he used his large plot for realizing educational work on preventative hygiene measures.

After all, the relationship with the home is foremost a relationship with the family. Dona Marta, for instance, she is the proud grandmother of more than 20 grandchildren. Her plot is considerably large, and some part of her family lives with her on the same plot, three generations together. Most of the remaining family members also live nearby and while their parents are at work, the grandchildren stay with her throughout all day. However, Marta reveals that she is seriously preoccupied with the situation and the challenge of providing enough food for everybody. The appropriation of the plot through farming on a small-scale, however, is what helps her out to get by.

According to estimations of Flores (2018: 12–14), around 80 % of the residents in peri-urban KaMavota are engaged in horticultural activities on their personal plot. The main purpose rests in the need to grow food for subsistence and self-consumption under conditions of poverty. These numbers coincide with the observations from the fieldwork. On their *machambinhas*, peri-urban families produce salad, cabbage, tomatoes, onions, and many more types of vegetables. Another resident in Triunfo ironically explained that she just cannot plant any vegetables because the chicken would eat up everything. Indeed, animal breeding and the raising of small livestock is almost as common as having small vegetable gardens. In more distant neighbourhoods, the plots are less frequently enclosed or fenced and the ducks and chicken waddle across the properties. In older neighbourhoods closer to the city, walls are more common around the properties. When we entered the gate to the plot of *Dona Marta*, we were surprisingly received by a pig behind the walled confines of her property. During another interview with *Senhora Dália*, it was even difficult to keep count of the quantity of her animals. She had more than fifteen ducks, a proud cock and his entourage of at least half a dozen of hens.

In addition to the reliance on the plot for food self-provision, it represents the place for economic activities and income generation. Improvised *bancas* (stalls) are often located at its edges where families sell the surplus from their *machambas* and other products. Small grocery stores are sometimes accommodated in small but proper constructions providing the neighbourhood with processed food, beverages, essential household products or kitchen utensils. In this light, people become creative and flexible. One resident sold tomatoes from her property and when I asked her if she herself would grow them, she negated with a smile. In fact, she buys them in large quantities on the market in Zimpeto to resell them in the neighbourhood after she had realized, that yet nobody was offering tomatoes.

All kinds of different services are also offered from the plots. Hairdressers, tailors, and shoemakers are most common after all. As Bénard da Costa & Biza (2012: 139) point out, the diversification of strategies is necessary since one activity is often not sufficient to get by. Selling just one product or offering just one service is further accompanied by the uncertainty and unpredictability of the potential income. Instead, the socio-economic appropriation of the plot “requires a degree of wheeling and dealing, knowledge of demand and the ability to imagine and anticipate future developments if a minimum amount of success is to be achieved” (Bénard da Costa & Biza 2012: 139).

The economic activities of selling goods and services are essentially place-based. While being at home, it allows pursuing other household or social activities at the same time. But equally for consuming and procuring certain products, the confines of the personal plot do not necessarily have to be left. Mobile merchants constantly circulate the neighbourhoods, sonorously advertising their products. Within a one-hour interview on someone’s plot in Guava on a Friday afternoon, at least four mer-

chants or service providers passed the property and knocked the gate. Among them were a truck with young adults selling charcoal for cooking, a lady selling pastries, a senior collecting discarded metal, and an employee of the local water provider.

Peri-urban families depend on their dwelling place, but they can also rely on it and the multifunctional social and economic practices that it allows for. Tvedten (2018: 49) has framed the peri-urban way of dwelling as “the invigoration of the rural at critical moments in life”. It is the expression of both a refuge from the harsh everyday life of the city and the yearning for rural traditions and social life. In this regard, Jenkins (2003: 121) describes the urban expansion areas as the urban-rural frontline, where different livelihood strategies commingle as “the result of the need for rural residents to combine non-agricultural activities, mainly in the urban informal sector, with subsistence farming for their survival, rather than the product of demand for labour in urban-based industry and services”.

The very particularity of the peri-urban life-world, with its centralisation around the home and plot-based activities, can, according to Veríssimo (2013: 240), be understood as the product of the continued translation of ancient traditions which already date back to the Bantu agro-pastoral settlements. The plot’s meaning reflects the family’s traditional heritage. The precious value attributed to the land entails sociocultural values beyond its appropriation as a resource. This meaning must be preserved, and the multiple social and economic purposes must be maintained for survival. Thus, in competitive peri-urban environments, the house and plot must be protected and secured.

The boundary of the plot provides an essential means of protection. Its line demarcates the private sphere from the public sphere. It marks the spatial separation between the safe and protected refuge of the home and of being outside in the surrounding world where one is exposed to potential insecurities and dangers. I refer to the German opposites of *Ansapannung* (tension) vs. *Entspannung* (relief), to adequately describe an individual’s mental state when being located either outside or inside the spatial sphere of the secure home.

While in the outside world, unknown and unexpected experiences are likely to happen. One cannot always avoid them, but one must deal with unforeseeable or malicious events. When entering the confines of the individual plot, however, the tension is finally relieved and transformed into a state of relief and comfort. At home, one senses familiarity and protection. In a similar vein, Bollnow (2011 [1963]: 124) refers to Heidegger’s expression, whereas “the ‘Frieden’ [peace] in which one lives is related to the ‘Umfriedung’ [enclosure] of the dwelling area”. Hence, the enclosure around the plot leaves one at peace and in a state of relief as it for-closes the undesired and malignant forces which potentially could be harmful.

Such as building the home, the demarcation of its enclosure is likewise a material process. The two most common types of plot enclosures in peri-urban Maputo are either a typical local thorn hedge called *espinhosa* or a wall made from *blocos* (cf.

photo 8). Whereas the *espinhosa* gets planted, and it costs mostly time and effort to grow, the erection of walls involves material costs, which presupposes the existence of certain financial means. Thus, the enclosure's materiality reflects its owner's socio-economic status. Likewise, it determines the prospect of successfully protecting your home and property. Thus, the boundary also bears a relational category. While the demarcation encloses, it also forecloses someone or something.

After all, a plot of land rarely exists as an isolated entity but rather as a relational spatial unit. It constitutes only one plot within the many plots of the *quarteirão* where one lives. Its boundary draws a line between the private and the public, or indeed between one's own private sphere and the private sphere of someone else. This means that the boundary of a plot likewise constitutes a shared boundary. Beyond the demarcation which limits my space begins the space of my neighbour. Thus, the plot, its boundary, and the need to defend it and demarcate this boundary is, above all, a social affair. It is nested in Maputo's competitive neighbourhood relationships, and in the chapter on peri-urban sociality (cf. chapter 5.4.), we will review this issue in detail.

Finally, as the spatial layout of the depicted plot reveals, the boundaries are usually of a rectangular shape. This means that irrespective of being *espinhosa* or wall, the enclosures around the plots are erected in straight lines. Not only in officially



Photo 8 The two most common types of property demarcations: *espinhosa* and wall

Source: Photo by author (2021)

planned but also in spontaneously grown neighbourhoods, the layout of plots follows geometric shapes. These are the product of the collective efforts and negotiations in line with the ex-post restructuring of peri-urban neighbourhoods. Throughout the temporal development of peri-urban neighbourhoods, roads are widened to facilitate the accessibility for cars and the provision of infrastructure. Throughout this procedure, individual dwellers will have to withdraw parts of their properties. These processes will be highlighted throughout the next sections on the neighbourhood's surrounding world (cf. chapter 5.2.1.).

The efforts towards achieving a homogeneous spatial order of the neighbourhood with rectangular plots goes in hand with the aspirations for the realisation of urban plans, which are ultimately tied to the prospect of receiving land use titles. As mentioned earlier, only a rectangular plot is eligible for obtaining a DUAT since it has to be surveyed and entered into the municipal cadastre. But even without having a DUAT, the existence of a rectangular plot already provides a degree of legitimacy since its spatial appearance adheres to a status of legality.

5.2 Peri-urban Infrastructures and Mobilities: how Do People Experience and Appropriate their Neighbourhoods?

The house and the plot on which it is built are no isolated islands in an otherwise empty sea. They constitute one small piece of the sheer infinite puzzle that makes up the intersubjectively shared world surrounding the central dwelling place. This world comprises the street and the interaction with neighbours, the meaningful and familiar places within the neighbourhood, and the unfamiliar and strange places of the entire city and beyond. This world of everyday activities surrounding the central dwelling place represents the topic of this section. It is a spatio-temporal world insofar as space and time are indiscernible and interwoven. Manoeuvring through the spatial spheres of this world inevitably takes time. Each day's established time-spaces are finite and ultimately dictate peri-urban everyday activities and plans (Hägerstrand 1970: 10; Buttner 1976: 287).

Any peri-urban dweller depends on the body's locomotion to circulate in this world and to appropriate the experiential spheres around the personal zero-point. Traversing space and moving between places may be realized by foot, car, or a public *chapa*. Regardless of the means of transportation, however, it presupposes a fundament and surface on the ground on which this locomotion is conducted and, after all, which renders it possible. Pathways, alleys, streets, and roads in their width and material conditions determine the nature of the movement. But foremost, they provide access to the dwelling: a way to go out into the world and to return home.

Therefore, before discussing peri-urban mobility patterns, it follows a detailed account of the experiences of peri-urban dwellers with the built environment of their

surrounding world. In this light, the prototypical temporality of the neighbourhood in terms of the infrastructure developments is reconstructed along the PUI and over time. Thereby, the pivotal role of the residents' collective contributions in producing and maintaining these infrastructures is highlighted (cf. chapter 5.2.1.). Afterwards, it follows the focus on the appropriation of this surrounding world by Maputo's peri-urban residents. It sheds light on an analysis of everyday mobilities and the peri-urban zone of operation. Likewise, on the selection of paths, places, and plans, all being conditioned by the spatial and temporal resources at hand during the present everyday time-spaces (cf. chapter 5.2.2.).

5.2.1 The Temporality of the Neighbourhood and "People as Infrastructure"

The municipality of Maputo and other state entities rarely plan the growth and densification of peri-urban settlements. The state's resources are weak, the growing demands exceed any capacities to come up, and peri-urbanisation usually takes place in areas that receive little attention. According to an interviewed technician of Marracuene's planning office SDPI, in an ideal scenario, the state would parcel the expansion areas, establish a grid of streets, provide water and energy infrastructures, and finally, the construction of homes could begin.

In the peri-urban reality, however, it primarily works in reverse order. The construction of the house is the first step that becomes realized. In line with the temporal consolidation of the neighbourhoods, the infrastructures like roads, water, and energy become gradually implemented in an incremental and continuous process. The implementation of the infrastructure and services accompanies the development of the neighbourhood over time. It largely depends on the local organization of the population through self-provision under the decisive role of the respective neighbourhood authorities.

In opposition to the ideal scenario of a planned expansion, the emerging settlements in the lower parts of the Guava neighbourhood in Marracuene are exemplary for the outset of a settlement process characterized by rather spontaneous occupations. In a simplified sense, the ongoing developments depict what more consolidated and central neighbourhoods like Triunfo have lived through in their past. The developmental stages of consolidated neighbourhoods, in turn, anticipate what emerging settlements are going to experience in the future. Hence, It allows for the following reconstruction of the prototypical temporality of a peri-urban neighbourhood in its socio-material infrastructure developments and service provision along the PUI and over time (cf. figure 13).

Peri-urban settlements' spontaneous emergence and unplanned growth were the content of intensive conversations with Guava's local *chefe de quarteirão* Eduardo. He also participated in reflexive photography and took several photographs of the ongo-

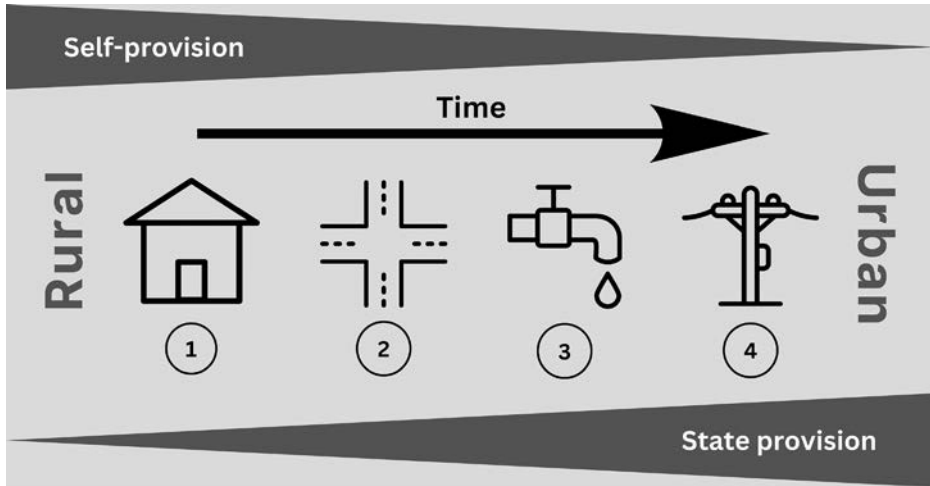


Figure 13 The prototypical temporality of peri-urban infrastructure provision

Source: Illustration by author



Photo 9 The construction of the house as the first stage of development

Source: Photo by Eduardo, taken in the context of the reflexive photography method (2021)

ing processes that he regarded as particularly emblematic. Eduardo took the depicted photo 9. It shows a typical cement block house. It was recently built, and it is located in the midst of *machambas* in the lowest part of the valley. In front of the house stretch various horizontal patches planted with lettuce that range until the building. Eduardo says it is the residence of someone who bought the space from the *nativos*.

He further explains that in the surroundings, “everything is *machamba*, and he is the only one who is living inside the *machamba*. There is no energy, no water” (interview C-27: 16).

(1) First Stage of Development: House Construction

The spatial setting depicted in the photograph represents the first stage of development in spontaneously emerging settlements. Initially, the house represents far and wide, the only construction. Soon, however, more homes will be joining the landscape of the expanding neighbourhood. Since the allocation of the plots is not administered by the state, their exact locations are somewhat more accidental than projectable. It depends on where one can purchase land from another landowner. Therefore, infrastructures like roads are non-existent in the first place, and the access to the plot often commences with a small dirt track, not rarely cleaving through shrubs and bushes.

Former *machambas* or undeveloped land is being subdivided and sold to different individuals. The plots’ demarcation and appropriation by the new owners become realised according to the size of the purchased piece of land. Hence, the limit of the own plot likewise determines the beginning of the neighbouring plot. Both properties share the same boundary, primarily drawn arbitrarily without proper surveying. Open spaces become increasingly sparse with the gradual filling of the areas between the plots. The once available accesses to properties gradually turn to smaller lanes winding their path through the heterogeneous mosaic of plots. With the advancement of the spontaneous densification of the settlements, a labyrinth of narrow alleyways and properties determines the spatial structure of the neighbourhood.

(2) Second Stage of Development: Provision of Road Infrastructure

Chefe Eduardo characterised the spatial structure in his neighbourhood as “disorganised”. With time, he adds, there was the necessity to establish “proper roads”. The expression *abrir ruas* (opening roads) describes a widespread practice in peri-urban Maputo. It refers to the common procedure of a processual development when streets and roads are widened and extended concurrently with the consolidation of the neighbourhood or even later in an ex-post process. One of the representatives of neighbouring Mutanhana explained that “in the old days, there were no streets, there were only tracks, paths. So, as the neighbourhood grew, we had to widen them, to have streets” (interview C-01: 4)

The reordering of the neighbourhoods’ spatial structures is a rather conflictive endeavour. The posterior opening of roads has the inevitable consequence that individual plot owners will have to withdraw some space from their properties. Someone with only an *espinhosa* is likelier to lose out than someone with a wall. *Chefe* Eduardo also admits it to be a highly problematic procedure. He reveals that *espinhosas* eventually get cut unhesitatingly and against someone’s will, whereas a wall will not be demolished.

Enabling access to cars represents the most crucial motive for the enlargement of roads. For instance, one of the residents in Triunfo said that “when someone loses their lives, or when someone falls ill, we have to find a way to have a means of transport to that very house” (interview C-12: 4). The accessibility for cars also serves as an important reference for the necessary width of the roads. *Chefe* Eduardo told me that he and his opposite neighbour withdrew sufficient space that allowed for two oncoming cars to pass each other exactly. The *chefes de quarteirão* and *chefes de dez casas* are the responsible authorities to advance the process on the local level. Only in seriously conflictive situations the higher level of the *secretário de bairro* has to intervene. Lucas is *chefe de dez casas* in Eduardo’s *quarteirão*. He explained that it usually should come to a consensus between the involved parties:

Okay, I’m going to withdraw 1.5 metres, you on the other side withdraw 1.5 metres. Normally, it has been that, 3 meters, but in the new neighbourhoods they do more, you find streets with 16 meters, 18 meters, with a street layout that people can circulate freely. Imagine one day we are going to want a paved road, here it won’t be possible because we don’t leave space for it [...] Until it’s going to happen, they will have to demolish houses (interview C-27: 6).

What resonates in this quote are clear aspirations for the future. “We have to create futuristic ideas” is what Lucas revealed later in our conversation. He predicates that the neighbourhood residents might have cars one day, so the streets must correspond and be adequate. These plans of the residents are, in turn, prescribed by the state’s visions of development and become mediated by urban planning instruments. Finally, the parcelling out of streets and their accessibility by car is a prerequisite for obtaining a DUAT. The *secretário de bairro* Albazine, characterised by a high proportion of narrow alleys, gives a clear account of the conditional relationship between the allocation of the DUAT and the possession of a car:

The problem is this: the municipality is having difficulties allocating DUATs in an area that is not ordered. Because the secret is that it has to order the neighbourhood first. So, as long as there is no organisation, it is not easy to allocate the DUATs. How will you allocate the DUAT in a place where you do not even have access to your house nor to put your car? So, how are you going to allocate the DUAT? (interview C-15: 6).

However, the percentage of peri-urban dwellers possessing a car is minimal, and for the majority, it is far beyond the scope of reality. Although almost non-existent, the DUAT and the car dictate the local aspirations towards peri-urban infrastructures. This clearly reflects the rampant discrepancy between a state’s understanding of development and the actual social reality on the local level. Furthermore, it conforms with Robinson’s (2006) postcolonial critique of “developmentalism” with the imperative of

overcoming alleged deficiencies by implementing exclusively defined planning norms of Western cities (cf. chapter 2.2.). In a later chapter, we will address this contradiction in more detail (cf. chapter 6.3.). At first, however, the pivotal role of civil society in creating and maintaining peri-urban infrastructures has to be recessed more precisely. It ultimately reflects the actual reality of the peri-urban areas in the ordinary city.

Following the heuristics of the PUI, the emerging Guava neighbourhood is relatively distant from the centre of Maputo. It is located towards the PUI's rural fringes, where state institutions' provision of public infrastructure is almost entirely absent. However, the lack of state provision does not mean the complete absence of services. An essential characteristic of Maputo's peri-urban neighbourhoods resets in the provision of infrastructures through the collective contributions of the residents. In the context of Mutanhana, for instance, one of the local representatives accentuated that the parcelling "was not the municipality, not the state, but due to the initiative of the proper community" (interview C-01: 4). The same holds true for peri-urban neighbourhoods, which are located closer to the city, albeit the processes are meanwhile advanced or even completed.

The self-organisation of peri-urban communities represents an emergent property of civil society. It originates out of necessity in response to the failure or unwillingness of the state and the market in delivering goods and services (Hasanov et al. 2019). Regarding the development of streets, a Triunfo resident recalls that "the residents take care of everything [...] because if the residents wouldn't do it, they will be left without nothing, so they have to do it" (interview C-25: 23). In addition to mutual agreements to withdraw space from the plots, it is common practice to build and maintain smaller roads through joint labour and commitment. It is also common for residents to contribute small amounts to the rehabilitation of roads. For example, during a field visit in 2019, the access road to a peripheral settlement north of *bairro* dos Pescadores was badly damaged. A road sign had been put up at the entrance. It was addressed to the residents, asking them to contribute MZN 150 (EUR 2.14) for the purchase of *entulho* (rubble) to rebuild the road (cf. photo 10).

(3) Third Stage of Development: Water Provision

In a context of lacking access to formal jobs and employment, self-organisation also provides the opportunity for Income generating activities (Lindell 2008: 1879). The water provision represents a prime example of it. In Maputo's peri-urban neighbourhoods and the coastal plain of KaMavota, small-scale private providers substitute the state service where it is lacking (cf. Prestes Dürrnagel et al. 2021). Such water entrepreneurs operate autonomous infrastructure systems that extract groundwater through boreholes with electric pumps. Around 800 small-scale water systems are active in the greater Maputo area providing access to water for more than one-third of the population (Schwartz et al. 2015: 32–33).



Photo 10 Provision of road infrastructure through collective contributions
Sources: Photo by author (2019)

The official water utility only exists in more central neighbourhoods. It is supplied by the regional water provider AdeM (*Águas da Região de Maputo*), whose water systems are operated by the state-owned company FIPAG (*Fundo de Investimento e Património do Abastecimento de Água*). With increasing distance from the centre towards the periphery, however, the presence of the state provision decreases significantly (cf. figure 14). The efficiency and service of private operators are by some residents even preferred over state provision. For Guava, *chefe* Eduardo explains that a private operator has been in place for more than ten years until FIPAG even arrived. In addition to that, the private provision runs around the clock, whereas the state supply is often interrupted during the night.

(4) Fourth Stage of Developmental: Energy Provision

The connection to the official electricity grid is one of the last infrastructural developments. For installing the electric line for supply, the roads must already be large enough that a corresponding construction vehicle can pass. Eventually, the power lines run along posts driven into the ground with heavy equipment. Along these posts, official street lighting usually becomes erected as well. EDM (*Electricidade de Moçambique*) is Mozambique's official state-owned energy company responsible for expanding and distributing the electricity infrastructure. The photograph (cf. photo 11a) depicts the lowest part of the Guava neighbourhood during the 2021 fieldwork. It shows a home that got only recently finished. Whereas the local private provider already establishes access to water, the energy provision still depends on the creativ-



Figure 14 Map of water supply by the state and private entrepreneurs

ity of the house owner who installed a solar panel. Unlike Guava, Triunfo belongs to the zone under a stronger urban influence. Meanwhile, EDM provides electricity, but the population likewise had to rely on their own contributions in the past. *Dona* Natalia, for instance, explained that she still had to use an oil lamp when she moved to Triunfo in the late 1990s. Whereas the premise for the self-provision by the people did not change, the technical inventions at least provided some innovations. At that time, Triunfo was located at the outer part of the urban-rural gradient, just like Mutanhana nowadays.

In the temporal development of infrastructure, the official electricity grid comes last. *Chefe* Rolando also explained that implementing the grid is a significant investment for EDM. After all, costly transformer stations must be erected where the high-voltage lines are transferred to the lines for the house connections (cf. photo 11b). Since public resources and capacities are strictly limited, neighbourhoods only become eligible when there are enough residents to make the investment worthwhile. Therefore, it sometimes comes to the illegal tapping of the power lines. Finally, gaining access to the official power grid depends much on the initiative of the local population and the neighbourhood authorities. The *secretário* of Albazine, for instance, is currently trying to push EDM with the electricity grid expansion for his

neighbourhood. He hopes that the residents will feel safer if the alleys are lit up at night since more minor crimes, such as thefts, mainly occur in dark places during the night.

In a common understanding, the term infrastructure merely refers to material provisioning. In the presented peri-urban context, for instance, it concerns the network of streets in a neighbourhood, the water pipes leading to the households, or the electric wires. However, Simone (2004) notion of “people as infrastructure” goes far beyond the materiality of provisioning. People as infrastructure bears an intrinsic social ingredient to infrastructure as an intertwining socio-material arrangement. Undoubtedly, we can expand this concept to the infrastructures in peri-urban Maputo. People as infrastructure refers to the activities of people in the city and how they substantially contribute to its functioning. According to Simone (2004: 407), it “emphasizes economic collaboration among residents seemingly marginalized and immiserated by urban life”. People’s self-organisation and their collective contributions to public services are substantial in the peri-urban spaces of the ordinary city. They represent a vital constituent of everyday life and shape the peri-urban sociality and the forms of living together.

After all, public goods and infrastructures are primarily produced by the collective contributions of private individuals, albeit not always voluntary. The widening of streets results from conflict-ridden processes whereby private spaces are being transformed into public spaces. Due to the spontaneous emergence of settlements and the absence of the state in planning, public spaces and social infrastructures



a) Solar panel



b) Transformer station

Photo 11 Peri-urban energy provision
Source: Photo by author (2021)

barely exist in peri-urban neighbourhoods. As the previous paragraphs have demonstrated, the structure of peri-urban space is, from the outset, dominated by the sequence of private plots bordering each other with bare room between them. It is exceedingly ironic in a context where all land is state property and public. To sum it up, *Senhor* Timoteo explains the situation in his neighbourhood in Pescadores as follows:

Here, we don't even have a school for the children or a day-care centre. We don't even have a place for the children to play [...] because this whole area is full of houses. All the places and all the properties are people's properties. If you said you wanted this space to be a field for the children to play in, it's impossible. Saying that this would be good here to open a day-care centre, you would have to buy it [...]. Well, we don't have that kind of money to buy it (interview C-10: 2).

The sequence of steps of an incremental growth do not always follow the same logic, but they are neither accidental. In her work, Caldeira (2017) framed the term “peripheral urbanization”, which likewise follows an inherent temporality of constructing homes and neighbourhoods in a stepwise and long-term process. Accordingly, “the [neighbourhood] grows and the population increases, streets are paved; water, electricity, and sewage arrive; and local commerce expands” (Caldeira 2017: 6). Neighbourhoods like homes are always in the making and never complete, and it is foremost the initiative of the residents leading to a continuous improvement over time from a once precarious towards a more consolidated neighbourhood with better service provision.

This temporality is characteristic throughout the process of emerging settlements becoming mature. Thus, also according to their location along the PUI, as the comparison between Guava and Triunfo aimed to clarify. The involved processes are non-linear, and the state of the families' individual constructions and building progress is non-uniform. Hence, to the same extent that the houses and buildings differ from one another, the neighbourhoods are heterogeneous and diverse not only in their stages of temporal development but also within them.

5.2.2 Peri-urban Mobilities and the “Zone of Operation”

The conditions of the material and social infrastructures in peri-urban neighbourhoods directly impact people's everyday lives. The lack of schools or hospitals, for example, requires a certain mobility to reach outside the spatial boundaries of the *quarteirão*. The lack of proper roads, in turn, prevents this mobility from being exercised by a vehicle. This suggests patterns of particular everyday mobilities of peri-urban dwellers, and a “zone of operation” that is conforming to the infrastruc-

ture arrangements of the surrounding world. The following paragraphs will therefore address the question of how peri-urban dwellers appropriate their surrounding world and how they move through it to pursue their everyday activities and plans.

Walking continues to be one of the most dominant forms of locomotion in peri-urban Maputo (cf. photo 12a). Hence, the lived body and its bodily activity represent the primordial medium not only to experience but also to exercise this locomotion. Against common aspirations, possessing a car is for the peri-urban majority beyond reach, and the aforementioned infrastructural conditions constrain the accessibility for cars to circulate within the neighbourhoods. For example, some *quarteirões* in Mutanhana and Pescadores that lie directly at the shoreline are only reached by traversing the extensive plains. If existent at all, the roads are usually in terrible conditions and frequently flooded. Particularly in those more remote areas, this poses severe obstacles to the accessibility and the everyday mobilities of residents. During my first visit to Mutanhana's coast in 2019, I experienced these difficulties myself when our car was stuck in the mud of a pothole. Only with much timely and physical effort were we finally able to continue.

Further in the South on the peninsula of Pescadores, the conditions are comparable. Being situated on a dune, the surface soil in the neighbourhood consists of sand. When we were walking to *Senhor* Timoteo's home, our feet sank into the ground, and it was tedious to make progress. He explained that cars with four-wheel drive are the only vehicles that can enter this part of the settlement. If someone is seriously sick or an accident happens, the people must be carried in arms. Since public and social infrastructures do not exist within the residential *quarteirão*, the children must walk long distances to get to school and back home. If there are extremely high tides, the seawater floods the neighbourhood access, and the children have to wade through water which ranges up to knee-high.

But even on straight and paved roads, the everyday circulation by foot may not be less challenging or exhausting. During the go-along interview with Rolando in his neighbourhood Triunfo we walked on a newly paved main street which connects several *quarteirões* which each other. It was built with the purpose of allowing for a smooth passage for cars, but the planning process did not consider the needs of pedestrians. It was a scorching summer day. While walking in the sandy alleys of the neighbourhood was more complicated, the trees on the adjacent plots at least provided shade. However, we were exposed to the unpleasant blazing sun on the heated concrete of a newly built street. After an interview on another day nearby, *Dona* Felismina even felt commiserated to let us walk through the heat of the day and offered us a car ride to the next *chapa* stop.

Whereas within the neighbourhoods, walking often represents the only feasible option for locomotion, public transportation is the most viable option for longer distances. The *chapa* minibuses (cf. photo 12b) are the most widespread means of public transportation. They circulate on different routes between Maputo's centre and the



a) Walking



b) Public transport by chapa

Photo 12 Peri-urban mobilities

Source a: Photo by author (2021) Source b: Photo by Susan Thomschke (2020)

peri-urban neighbourhoods. Different terminals like Costa do Sol or Combatentes allow transferring to routes leading to further distant neighbourhoods and rural places in Maputo Province.

The existence of a specific road infrastructure and a public transportation system makes the inherent difference to the “zone of operation” between rural and peri-urban dwellers. The typical spatio-temporal activities during a day of a peri-urban dweller go beyond a rural dweller’s reach. The rural “zone of operation” is mainly confined to the surroundings of the rural place. Long distances to the next town or city are only travelled occasionally. It takes time, requires economic resources, and is less necessary. Facilities for the inevitable everyday supply are nearby in walking distance. The accessibility via infrastructure and transport, however, enlarges the spatio-temporal “zone of operation”. What lies in potential reach can easier be brought into actual reach by using motorised vehicles and well-established road networks. The Mutanhana neighbourhood in Marracuene provides a meaningful example. Before the construction of the *Circular*, its character was still very rural, and for its residents, the world within attainable reach during the typical time-spaces of a day remained somewhat restricted. One of the senior residents remembers:

Here, there was practically no such a road; there was just a dirt road that took ages. It is our grandparents who were here to make this dirt road. Working with a hoe all the way to Maputo and to Marracuene (interview C-03: 2).

With the expansion of Maputo and the construction of the *Circular*, the (peri-)urban influence set in. The neighbourhood was suddenly accessible by car and public transportation. With improved accessibility, more comprehensive infrastructural changes were unfolding, as another interviewee highlights:

It changed a lot because this was for real a forgotten area; we didn't even think that today there would be a road like this road. Even the energy, we had no energy; today, we have energy. We have a road; we have *chapas* from here to Marracuene. In a few minutes, you're already in Marracuene, eipah, a lot has changed (interview C-02: 3).

To put it in a nutshell, with the insertion of Mutanhana under peri-urban influences, road infrastructure and public transportation developed. The sudden accessibility and connectivity led to the time-space compression of distance (cf. Harvey 1989b), and, at the same time, to the spatial expansion of the zone of operation of the residents. Mobility makes the difference between peri-urban dwellers and rural dwellers. Or, to put it differently, site-specific factors of enhanced accessibility and mobility are the distinguishing feature between peri-urban spaces and rural areas.

Contemporary literature struggles to recognise the persistence of peri-urban spaces and their inherent logic. Likewise, the distinctiveness of peri-urban mobility patterns remains neglected. The transitional conceptualisations for peri-urban spaces are predominating, and the binary opposition between the urban and the rural poles continues to be emphasised. In terms of mobility, peri-urban spaces are consequently only regarded as a mere corridor of transit between the two sides for the "flows of people moving between rural and urban settlements" (Tacoli 2003: 4). This conception would also entail that "peri-urban dwellers who commute to town interact much more in both worlds than subsistence farmers who do not commute" (Narain & Nischal 2007: 262).

However, the findings indicate that peri-urban dwellers can be both commuters and subsistence farmers at the same time. Hence, it is important to highlight that the spatial activities of peri-urban dwellers do not flow between two worlds but between the urban and the rural sides of just one singular peri-urban life-world. *Dona Hortencia*, for instance, lives in KaMavota's Ferroviário neighbourhood near the railway tracks. She has a smaller *machamba* in walking distance at the margins of the golf course where she goes every evening. Three days a week, she commutes by *chapa* to Maputo's city centre, where she has a service job. On the other three days, she takes a *chapa* towards the rural direction until Albazine where she cultivates larger *machambas*. Sunday is her day off, and she goes to church.

The "zone of operation" of *Dona Faustina* is similar. She once commuted a lot to the city from her Costa do Sol home. She had a stall close to the campus of the UEM where she sold groceries. Meanwhile, she prefers to travel daily to her distant *machambas* in Marracuene. To get there, she must first walk a few hundred meters until Costa do Sol's terminal, where she takes a *chapa*. In addition to that, she takes care of the vegetables on her plot. Sunday is likewise her day off for going to church.

Figure 15 depicts an idealised sketch of the peri-urban "zone of operation". The idea is borrowed and adapted from Buttner's (1980: 32) "activity space profiles" and similar to the notions of "activity space" (Klingbeil 1980) or "action space" (Dijst

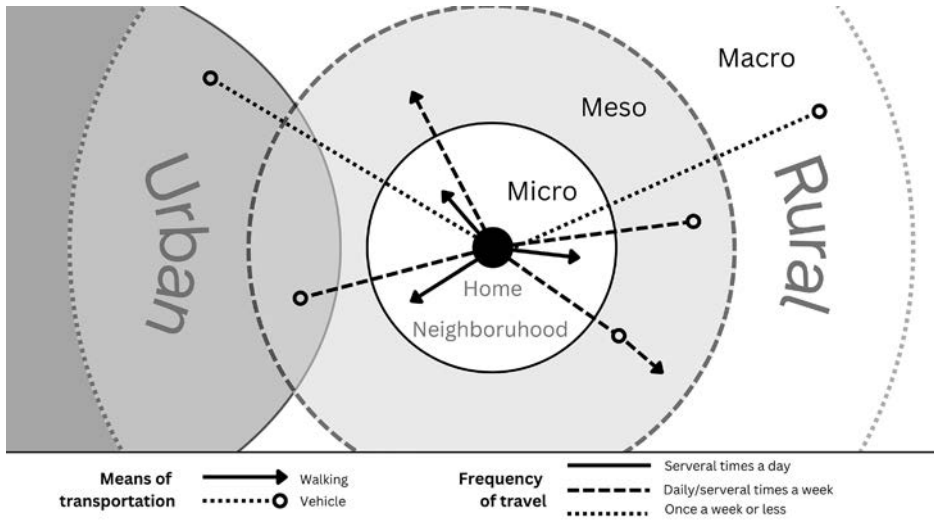


Figure 15 Idealised sketch of the peri-urban “zone of operation”

Source: Illustration by author

1999), all informed by Hägerstrand (1970). Acknowledging the heterogeneity of peri-urban dwellers’ spatio-temporal activities, it aims to draw a schematic picture of peri-urban everyday mobilities instead of an exact model for an individual person.

The spatio-temporal micro-zone (1) refers to the nearest spatial strata around the home. It involves the various small-scale movements that are realized within the immediate surroundings in the neighbourhood. These short distances are quickly traversed and almost exclusively on foot or by bicycle. Micro-zone activities are realized with high frequency, usually several times per day. It encompasses activities like daily errands, groceries, and services available within the neighbourhood’s confines. It also involves the visits of family or friends and direct interaction with the neighbours.

The spatio-temporal meso-zone (2) reaches beyond the confines of the neighbourhood. It is covered by walking, with a vehicle or in combination. For instance, walking to a *chapa* terminal before continuing by public transportation. Emanating from the dwelling place, the locomotion can be directed towards the urban or the rural direction. It involves the everyday commuting to jobs, the way to the machamba, or school. Likewise, regular trips to certain services and shops, visits to church etc. Depending on the individual situation and motive, movements within the meso-zone are realized daily or at least once a week.

The spatio-temporal macro-zone (3) expands most outwards. It marks the boundary for the activities and plans that are realizable and attainable within just one day. The spatial distances range until beyond the city, and locomotion requires a motorized vehicle. Activities within the macro-zone are less frequent but not insignificant.

Yet, the importance of travels to the rural hinterland is most neglected in the literature since the attraction of the city is accentuated. Due to the continued flows of rural-to-urban migration throughout the last decades, many families still maintain strong ties with family and kinship in the rural province of Maputo or neighbouring Gaza. In addition to occasional visits, many peri-urban dwellers still possess some land in the rural places of origin, used for the extensive production of maize or manioc during the dry season.

As depicted, the spatio-temporal distances of the meso-zone exceed the distances of the micro-zone. The distances, however, are not exclusively measured in spatial distances, as the concentric layers on the simplified sketch might suggest. Indeed, the spatio-temporal distance from one's dwelling place to the urban centre does not coincide with its absolute mathematical distance in metres or kilometres. Travelling to the centre might take one hour by *chapa*. But it can also take time for the entire day when someone walks. Space and time are resources, and the time-spaces of a day determine peri-urban mobility (Hägerstrand 1970: 10).

Being mobile, however, represents both an opportunity and a constraint. It can enable a peri-urban dweller to travel to the urban centre for work and return home in the same evening. In harsh peri-urban environments, however, being mobile also represents an imperative. Growing vegetables is not enough to survive. In contrast to a purely rural environment, monetary constraints dictate everyday life in Maputo's peri-urban spaces. "It's all about money" is how Tvedten (2018) recently captured it precisely. Hence, peri-urban dwellers must be mobile to pursue strategies to get along in competitive and individualised peri-urban environments. When no schools are nearby, young students must be mobile and walk long distances. Adults, in turn, must be resourceful and creative in selecting the paths and the daily places where they can earn income to sustain their families.

The advantages of location and accessibility of places are, therefore, decisive factors not only of the dwelling place but also all the other meaningful places of everyday life (Buttimer 1976: 287). What Bourdieu (2018) calls the "profits of localization" constitutes these places and help determine the daily plans of peri-urban dwellers. The neighbourhood of Pescadores, for instance, is characterized by its remoteness and poor road infrastructure. Located directly at the shoreline with its mangrove forest, however, it provides substantial locational profits for the fishing activities of the local population. This is how *Senhor* Timoteo puts it into words:

Here there live mostly fishermen that always work at sea fishing for shrimp, catching fish. But they personally enter it walking; there is no boat, no nothing. Of most of us here, there is nobody who has a boat; we only use the hook-and-line fishery; we use those trawl nets, like the one over there. Yes, fishing for shrimp. Most people don't work in a company; they only work here at sea, like the ladies that catch clams, shells. There is plenty of things that they catch here at sea (interview C-10: 1).

Whereas the accessibility and infrastructure are weak, the people do not necessarily have to leave their neighbourhood. They take advantage of the profits of the location of their place and the availability of natural resources. In a context where formal employment opportunities are scarce, they can rely on the provision by the sea. However, they do not only rely on but actually depend on the locational profits of the place. In this sense, they are place-dependent, and this dependence particularly rests on the characteristics of the natural environment of the place and its rurality.

In contrast to Pescadores, the location's profits in Guava follow a different logic. Due to its distance to Maputo's centre, it still offers feasible options for ordinary people to find a space to dwell. At the same time, the accessibility of Guava by public transportation is particularly advantageous, and it allows for daily commuting to the centre. Besides the *chapa*, different options are available, such as the *comboio* (train) and another service with larger buses called *maxibombo*. These operate on different routes and, more importantly, with a direct connection to the city centre without the need to change in between. Changing the *chapa* means paying twice, whereas only one fee applies on a direct connection. When depending on the service daily, accumulating even small amounts makes a massive difference in keeping the budget, as many interviewees repeatedly revealed.

Chefe Eduardo, for instance, is an employee with the postal service and commutes to the centre on workdays. During our conversation, he compared the advantageous locational profits of his home in Guava with the neighbourhood of Cumbeza, where some families recently were relocated by the government:

So, they took that person who was here near to primary school, secondary school, and health centre and put him to Cumbeza, from where he will have to take 2 or 3 cars to get to the city of Maputo to work. But here, if he leaves at 5 o'clock, he catches the train and goes directly downtown. At 5:45 pm, he catches the train back and spends MZN 22. But from Cumbeza to get to the Museum, for example, he'll spend a lot more, and he's not near to schools, he's not near the hospital, so what's the gain? (interview C-19: 10).

Regarding the absolute spatial distance from Maputo's city centre, Guava and Cumbeza do not differ much. But by including time into the equation and concerning the spatio-temporal distance, the difference becomes remarkable. In fact, the location of the dwelling place and its accessibility matter a lot for the mobility of peri-urban dwellers. Being mobile, in turn, matters for the chances of socio-economic participation in everyday life and the successful mastering of the livelihood. Guava's locational profits seem to matter so much that marginalised population groups even accept to settle in areas that are repeatedly flooded after rainfalls. During the rainy season, the water remains in the houses and inundates them for prolonged periods. The local *secretaria* do *bairro*, Dona Johanna, told me that the government was trying to resettle the affected people, but they are reluctant and refuse to move to safer places:

Because the people are used to living near the road. They say we can get a *chapa* here; our children go to school nearby. There, there will be no illumination; there is no hospital. So, people deny what happens. As a government, we look for good-faith neighbours who can take these families in until the water recedes. But even with the water, they prefer to stay there. Some people sleep on the tables; they sleep on top of the table. But when the government says no, there is no way here, let's get you to place X, he will refuse; he doesn't want to. He says that everything is near here; I take the bus to work, my son is at school, so I can't go there, so the government will do what? (interview C-06: 15).

We can summarise that mobility matters and the locational profits of a place matter. But the previous paragraphs also showed that besides that, infrastructure matters. This holds for the development within neighbourhoods, but also at a larger scale. The construction of the *Circular* has been a distinctive game changer in peri-urban Maputo. For peri-urban dwellers, it enabled mobility, enhanced the accessibility of places and the possibility to benefit from locational profits. After all, it has led to the spatio-temporal compression of distances along the PUI, between Maputo city centre and distant Marracuene.

Therefore, we can emphasise the underlying fact that distance has not only a spatial but equally a temporal dimension enabling mobility, activities, plans, and the mastering of life. Finally, reconstructing the "zone of operation" of peri-urban dwellers and mapping out their spatio-temporal activities helped to overcome the unsatisfying category of bi-directional flows of people. The peri-urban "zone of operation" sheds light on peri-urban everyday mobilities that emanate from the core of peri-urban spaces instead of merely crossing over them as if they were an empty and meaningless vacuum. The dwelling represents the kernel of the life-world from where each individual goes out to experience the world, and it is the place to where one comes back home each night.

5.3 The Meaningful Place of the *Machambas*: what Does it Mean to Be a Peri-urban Farmer in Maputo?

After moving through the spaces of the spatio-temporal surrounding world, it is time to pause again at a place that bestows a particular meaning for Maputo's peri-urban dwellers. In what follows, the focus is set on the collective production fields of the *machambas*. The *machambas* represent a meaningful place in the life-worlds that provide specific spatial, temporal, and social experiences. An explanation of the contestations and conflictive dynamics that evoke around the *machambas* succeeds at a later stage of this thesis (cf. chapter 6.2.2.)

At this point, it is aimed to understand what makes the *machambas* meaningful both for the individual life-world of a peri-urban farmer and for the collective life-

world of the farmer's associations. Therefore, we take Casey's following quote as an invitation to dedicate the subsequent paragraphs to Maputo's peri-urban *machambas* and to reveal the essential significance that the practice of farming bestows on the life-worlds of the peri-urban population. Afterwards, the structure follows according to the spatial, temporal, and social dimension of the life-world.

It is thus time for us to move outside the city limits and into the margins of built place, into the peripheral areas where the natural and the cultivated conjoin and where we finally confront nature (Casey 1993: 148).

5.3.1 The Spatial Organisation of Agricultural Production

The *machambas* constitute the coherent and collective agricultural production fields. They are cultivated by a multitude of *camponesas* (female farmers) and *camponeses* (male farmers). Not only in Maputo but throughout the entire country. The following paragraphs, however, focus on the particular context of the capital. The areas that are designated for agricultural production are found in four out of the seven municipal districts, in KaTembe, KaNyaka, KaMabukwana, and KaMavota. The organisation of collective production has changed over time, and today, farmers' associations are the most common type of producer organisations. In total, 34 associations are operating in the four municipal districts of the city, accommodating more than 11,000 individual farmers on an area of approximately 1,300 hectares (Engel et al. 2019: 73).

The so-called *zonas verdes* (green zones) of KaMabukwana and KaMavota represent the two most important areas for agricultural production. The cultivation in KaMabukwana stretches along a fertile valley to both sides of Infulene River. In KaMavota, they are located in the Mahotas Valley on an alluvial plain below the railway tracks, embedded between the plateau in the West and the coastal wetlands in the East (Cruz e Silva 2006: 99–100). Emphasis will hereinafter be put on the *machambas* pertaining to the case study area: the Mahotas Valley in KaMavota and its northwards continuance to Marracuene beyond the municipal borders of Maputo.

The spatial layout of the *zona verde* in the Mahotas valley can be best described as an elongated belt (cf. figure 10, chapter 4.3.3.). From South to North, their longitudinal extension measures almost 10 km. From the East to the West, the dimensions vary between roughly 200 metres and more than 1 km. In parallel to the railway tracks, the western boundary of the cultivated area is made up of a long and straight line which coincides with the escarpment of the KaMavota plateau. Many of the farmers live up there in one of the neighbourhoods beyond the railway tracks. Their fields lie within walking distance, and several paths and smaller roads lead down the valley. Except for the Rua Dona Alice which connects upper KaMavota with the

coast, the green zone is characterised by its spatial coherency and unbroken South-North continuity. According to data from 2019, the total area of the green zone in KaMavota culminated to 602 ha (interview C-23).

From South to North, 11 farmer associations line up next to each other. Each of them disposes of its proper territories and an internal subdivision. Each association is different in size regarding the cultivated area and the number of members. According to a recent study conducted by Engel et al. (2019: 331), the smallest association had 60 members (Massacre de Mbuzini), whereas the largest association had 1114 members (Lirandzo). The number of members of all associations sums up to 6617 individuals, comprised of 2087 male *camponeses* and 2516 female *camponesas*. Most of the members belong to a senior age group. In line with the urban expansion, the cultivated area and numbers of members tend to decline in some associations. Dona Luisa is the president of the Tomas Sankara Association, and she revealed that whereas they once had 650 members, it is now only 350 members. The *machambas* are, first of all, a family business, and the parcels are handed over from generation to generation. When the older farmers retire, their potential successors prefer to sell the land. She explains that “they cannot embrace this idea of agricultural production” (interview C-18: 4). On the other hand, Vicente, a younger member of the Joaquim Chissano association, complained that the “aged leadership of the association wants to sell the *machambas* for their retirement” (interview C-55).

Breaking it down to the level of associations, each one has its internal spatial subdivisions. In the case of the association Tomas Sankara, for instance, the total area of 84 hectares is divided into eight *blocos* (blocks). Each *bloco*, in turn, has its *chefe de bloco* who works as an intermediary between the leadership of the association and the individual members. The so-called *canteiros* (plant beds) represent the smallest spatial unit. *Canteiros* typically have a rectangular shape and a size of only a few square metres on which usually just one crop type is planted. The individual members and their families have their own *machambas* within the associations, and the number of *canteiros* each family cultivates varies. Since soil quality is heterogenous within each association, the spatial distribution of the *canteiros* belonging to one family is mostly dispersed, permitting each one to diversify the production plan. Individuals are members of the association, and collective activities form part of the associational life. However, each *machamba* owner is responsible for their decisions on production and commercialization. Dona Luisa says that it is essential that each farmer decides for himself what product to cultivate, when to seed, and how to sell.

During the second fieldwork, I picked up with Adriano. Being in his mid-20s, he is one of the few members of a younger generation. He forms part of the association Armando Emílio Guebuza, and already, as a child, he used to help his mother when he had school holidays. Since he was truly interested in sharing his knowledge as a peri-urban farmer, he was also curious to document his everyday life on the *machambas* with one of the single-use cameras. The photo (cf. photo 13) he took depicts a

snapshot of the production fields in his association. Adriano's explanations help us better understand the spatial structuring of the *machambas* and the meaning attached to it.

The small path of pounded earth in the middle leads slightly downhill into the valley. The picture was taken close to the western entrance to the *machambas* while looking eastwards toward the coast. A small grove of banana trees lies in the distance. Two men work in front of it on a field next to a stack of straw and grass used to cover the *machambas* to maintain the soil humidity and diminish evaporation. The remains of the straw are likewise on the small path which paves the access to the *machambas* in the lower parts of the valley.

To the right side of the path, green and leafy *mudas* (seedlings) *alface* (lettuce) are planted in parallel and rectangular *canteiros*. The seedlings grow in a straight line and very close to each other. Soon, they will be ready to be taken out, sold and transplanted. When implanting them again, a distance between them of at least 30 cm is essential to ensure sufficient space for their growth. When I once helped out in planting, we carefully measured the parallel lines and distances. The more experienced farmers, however, possessed a perfect sense of proportion after years of bodily experience. Adriano affirms that a seedling nursery is good for creating an income. But the seedlings require a very good soil quality, and they only grow well at specific locations. However, the seedlings from these *machambas* are well in demand and sometimes even sold to places in the Maputo Province.

The big-leafy and dark-green crops to the left side of the path depict *repolho* (cabbage). It is soon ready to be harvested and will be cut with small but sharp knives. Lettuce and cabbage are by far the most common horticultural products to be found on the peri-urban *machambas*. They are produced for the urban markets in Maputo and are in high demand. The market dictates the types of products which the associations produce. Lettuce and cabbage have an approximate growth period of only 45 days. They guarantee a quick turnover, making them a preferred cash crop at a relatively low economic input.

The spatial structure and layout of the *machambas* are hierarchically organized. From the all-encompassing level of the green zone, it follows the territorial dimension of the associations, their internal structure of *blocos*, and finally, the individual *canteiros* of the members. For the mere observer, the right-angled surface areas of the maps and the geometric shapes of the production fields appear homogenous and consistent. The cultivation beds, at first sight, may even seem monotonous. For the outsider, the *machambas* are what Eliade (1963) has framed as the "profane space" characterized by the profane experience of neutrality and homogeneity. In stark contrast stands the "sacred space". As two different "modes of being in the world" (Eliade 1963: 14), the *machambas* are for peri-urban farmers qualitatively, "something wholly different from the profane" (Eliade 1963: 11). Hence, the relationship with the spaces of the *machambas* reveals something meaningful. Their spatial structure



Photo 13 Plant beds with cabbage (left) and lettuce (right)

Source: Photo by Adriano in the context of the reflexive photography method (2021)

manifests itself as highly heterogeneous and divers. Without the need for boundary stones, everybody knows where the personal parcel ends and where the neighbour's parcel begins. Different tons of green tell how much to water, and the size of the leaves informs when it is time to harvest.

5.3.2 Everyday Life and the Temporal Structure of the Seasons

The day on the *machambas* starts in the early morning hours. When I used to leave the city centre towards KaMavota to the fields, the capital's streets were still quiet and empty. Outside the city, in turn, the different pathways leading down to the production fields were most busy after sunrise. However, on the way back during the hottest hours of the afternoon, it was quite the opposite. Most farmers would already have left their *machambas* for the day while the hustle and bustle were still in the centre. Maputo's farmers start early, and on their walk to the fields, they usually take up a rather hurried pace instead of just strolling. Harvesting must occur in the morning so that the products reach the urban markets fresh and early. On the pathway to the *machambas*, the first pickup trucks are leaving for the city before I even arrive. Their loading areas are stacked with massive bundles of freshly harvested lettuce and cabbage. Some women wearing their colourful *capulanas* carry the bundles in the traditional style, balancing them on their heads.

Dona Rita is one of the members of the Costa do Sol Association. She explained that transporting the harvest and its commercialization is the most challenging. The large markets in the city centre and Zimpeto are rather distant from the machambas in the Mahotas Valley. Most of the farmers don't have vehicles to carriage the goods. The products are sometimes carried over long distances on foot, and the wrapped bundles of lettuce are often even transported in public *chapas*. *Dona Rita* further complains that she and her associates depend on the *maguevas* (intermediary resellers). They come directly to the machambas to buy the products, but since the market is very competitive, the prices are dictated by the *maguevas*, and there is barely any bargaining power for the farmers. For the harvest of one *canteiro* cabbage or lettuce, she sometimes does not receive more than MZN 100 (EUR 1.43).

Not only the harvest but also the irrigation has to be done in the morning. The watering of the machambas is realised through manual labour, and there are no irrigation systems in place. One farmer told me that they once installed a water tap, but since any material can be turned into cash quickly, it got immediately stolen during the night. Watering in the morning during the coolest hours is essential to avoid water loss due to evaporation. But the manual labour with watering cans is tough and exhausting. For a *canterio* of a few square metres, several cans are necessary. Most farmers have to rely on dozens of *canterios* to produce enough products to make a sufficient income in the competitive market. A few better-off farmers can hire some youngsters for the hard work, but most of them have to do it themselves. The main water sources are drainage channels that flow down from the KaMavota plateau and the groundwater reservoirs. Both are being fed by rainwater, and throughout the year, water availability fluctuates between absolute scarcity and the drowning abundance which ruins the plantations. In a long conversation with *Dona Luisa* from the Tomas Sankara association, she gave me a detailed account of this dilemma:

Because the people are working, they get tired of the watering cans. They still get water out from here [a drainage channel], but when this water runs out, we have to take it out from the borehole over there with a bucket. To water a machamba [...], you saw my machamba here, but I have more parcels over there which are even larger. For you to start in the morning watering – we enter here at 5.30 and leave at 18 – you go home tired, we don't have an irrigation system for watering (interview C-18: 17).

My participation in farming activities occurred during the dry season. I realised the interview with *Dona Luisa* at the beginning of september after several months without significant rainfall. The water level in the borehole that she mentioned was extremely low. The water had to get out with a bucket by someone climbing down a few meters. It was then decanted into the watering cans before the heavyweight was finally carried for dozens of metres to the *machambas*. Like *Dona Rita* and *Dona Luisa*, many farmers are female seniors, and the physical work draws hard on them. *Dona*

Luisa does not want to give up her passion for the *machambas*, which she has now cultivated for many decades. However, she recently downsized the number of her fields and began to raise chickens at home on her plot, which is less physically demanding.

Prolonged drought periods complicate farming activities, and the boreholes may eventually run dry. *Dona Rita* explained that she comes every day to her *machambas* in the *zona verde* during the production period. Except for Sunday, then she goes to church. From September on, however, horticultures barely grow and cause too much work. Like many other farmers, she has additional *machambas* far outside Maputo's municipal borders for the extensive production of *seceiros* (dry farming). The plantations of maize or manioc don't need to be watered and demand less labour input than the intensive production of horticultures. These are typically located in Bobole to the north and Boane to the South of the city. The relocation to these rural areas, however, demands long *chapa* rides. Nonetheless, they provide the necessary substitute for filling the food and income gaps towards the end of the dry season.

With the onset of the rainy season from December on, the groundwater reserves in the Mahotas Valley gradually fill up again. During the heavy rainfalls in January and February, a large part of the *machambas* in the lower plains is temporarily submerged, making any production impossible. Climate variability has increased over the last few years (Engel et al. 2019: 230). The usual onset of the rainfall period comes late or holds off. In contrast to extreme droughts, heavy precipitation events and floods often pervade later than March, when the horticultural season should officially become inaugurated. Notwithstanding the erratic weather events and climate change impacts, the temporal dimension of the life-world of a peri-urban farmer is, after all, determined by the course of the year. When I met with a representative of the National Union of Peasants – UNAC (*União Nacional de Camponeses*) during the first fieldwork stay in October 2019, he gave me an explanation of the seasonality of the farming activities which provides an apt synthesis:

We have two seasons here; the first season starts in October, which is the issue of cereals and mainly legumes, and then, the second season is from February on, which is the issue of vegetables. With the intense heat, you have to work hard to maintain vegetables [...] Now you can launch vegetables, but you need to accompany them with a very strong treatment because this weather is hot in Mozambique. In November, December, January, February, and March already starts to change temperature, [...] and it gets cooler (interview A-13).

In addition to the seasonal fluctuations within a year, there have been various changes experienced throughout the years. First, these manifest in changes in the lived, natural and built environment. For instance, due to the increasing salinity of the soil, horticulture production is facing severe difficulties. Lettuce, in particular, suffered

from extreme crop shortfalls. In the vicinity of the coast, the groundwater reserves are already affected by salinity, which is why the watering of the crops sometimes worsens the situation. Changing from lettuce to planting beetroot represents a recent strategy to adapt to the changing environments since the beets are more resistant to soil salinity.

However, a second aspect concerns the ongoing urban expansion into the valley originating from the *Circular*. In line with the loss of soil quality and production possibilities, substantial farmland was already converted into construction sites. The *machambas* are meanwhile highly contested, and numerous land conflicts have arisen. A later chapter (cf. chapter 6.2.2.) will address these aspects in further detail. However, it has to be mentioned at this point in anticipation. It forms part of the *machambas* temporal structure because it concerns the endangered future of the farmer associations.

During both everyday life and throughout the year, the temporal structure of the *machambas* is strongly influenced by the time of a rural-based lifestyle. It means that the natural environment, with its weather, temperature, and climate, dictates a peri-urban farmer's time and the life-world. It involves the need to do one's work before the heat of the day and waiting until the rainy season comes and cedes. According to Baumgartner (2014: 718), this kind of rural and natural time is "slow, cyclic and repeated by succession for the seasons". On the other hand, the time of the clock of the urban life-world stands in opposition to the natural time of a rural life-world. The urban type is hectic and fast-paced. It comes with the experience that there is no sufficient time and "24 hours are not enough to 'live' one day" (Baumgartner 2014: 719).

As the previous paragraphs made clear, the everyday life of a peri-urban farmer is likewise influenced by the time of the urban environment. Not least because the market defines what kind of products are planted and at what time these have to be delivered to be competitive. The time of the year may be cyclic, but the routines of everyday life are contrary to slow. The need to practice different jobs at a time and the imperative of being mobile demand a great deal of flexibility to get by with the everyday tasks to be performed at different places to get by. After all, the temporal structure of the life-world of a peri-urban farmer represents a vivid example of how at the peri-urban interface, between the urban and the rural worlds, something of a new quality emerges which bears its own temporal logic.

5.3.3 The Collective Organisation in Farmers' Associations

The relationship with the land is existential for peri-urban farmers. Peri-urban farmers depend on the land to grow food for their own existence and to secure the livelihoods of their families. Moreover, they depend on the resources of a particular place

which offers good soil fertility and favourable climatic conditions. But this existential place-based relationship is reciprocal. The land takes care of the farmers, and the farmers likewise take care of the land that sustains them.

Meetings of the associations on machambas usually begin with acknowledging the ancestors who cultivated the land in the preceding world. The respective owner of the land where a reunion is realised holds the privilege of expressing the acknowledgements through prayer. To ask for permission before stepping on someone's land is tacitly assumed, even though obtaining this approval through eye contact and an appropriate gesture is already sufficient. The respective owners are appreciated for receiving their fellow farmers on the land they are responsible for, which they cultivate and take care of.

Indeed, aforementioned Casey (1993: 173) traces the roots of the English word to cultivate back to the Latin verb *colere*. Accordingly, one of its essential meanings is "to care for". Hence, cultivating a place means caring for a place. Through the prolonged experience of caring for the land, of tilling its soil, and of cherishing its fruits, the reciprocal relationship of caring is what finally cultivates the intrinsic "sense of place" (Tuan 1977: 198) that the *machambas* preserve for the collective identity of peri-urban farming groups. This sense of identity around the *machambas* and the dedication to farming is intersubjectively shared, and it constitutes the collective life-world of the group. It is rooted in the experiences of the past in the world of predecessors. It flourishes in the present world of associates' reality of everyday life, and its seeds are planted in the aspirations and the plans to be nourished by the future world of successors.

Having its roots in the past represents not only a metaphoric expression. One day, a senior farmer started a conversation after we had passed by his machamba several times throughout the past weeks. *Senhor* Antonio arrived in Maputo in 1956 at the age of 18. At the place where he created his first *canteiros*, he planted a palm that has become a proud tree towering more than 30 metres towards the sky. The palm tree is unmistakable and visible from far away. He says that he calls it his *bandeira* (flag). It reminds him of his homeland Inhambane (a Mozambican province famously known for its palm trees), and it marks the place of his second home in Maputo.

Like his palm tree, *Senhor* Antonio put down his roots at this particular place, and the half-century growth of the tree stands for his relationship with the land surrounding it. The palm tree is not just a random tree but is not replaceable with any other tree. It bestows its unique meaning for *Senhor* Antonio and his identity with the place, which took decades to mount. The presence of the palm tree is what constitutes the particular place. To say it with Ingold (1993: 167), "[t]he place was not there before the tree, but came into being with it".

When *Senhor* Antonio arrived in Maputo, the country still suffered under colonial rule. He and many of his associates cultivated the land before independence and long before the associations were founded. He declared himself to be one of the founding

fathers of the Tomas Sankara Association. Likewise, *Dona Luisa* states, “it is us who created the associations” (interview C-18: 19). The majority of the associations were created during the 1980s. At that time, the municipal Green Zones Office (GZV) was installed by the Frelimo government to facilitate the creation of both state cooperatives and associations. On the one hand, there was the need to organise land management to preserve the *machambas* from habitation. On the other hand, there was an urgent necessity to ensure the feeding of the increasing city. During the civil war, accompanied by a long-lasting drought, agricultural production intensified due to the disruption of rural food supply and the rising demand caused by the migration of people into the city (Cruz e Silva 2006: 100; Sheldon 1999: 128).

In 1983, Frelimo launched the programme called *Operação Produção* (Operation Production). It aimed to remove the “unproductive” jobless and delinquent individuals from the capital (Brito 2019: 110). Thousands of urban dwellers were forced to move into *aldeias comunais* (communal villages) of other provinces, where they were obligated to work on collective state farms (Nielsen 2011: 340). In his seminal work “Seeing Like a State”, James Scott (1998: 3) has picked up compulsory villagisation as a central theme. He has characterised it as “among the great human tragedies of the twentieth century, in terms of [...] lives irretrievably disrupted”. In fact, the translation of the state’s vision of ordering nature and society resulted in the marginalisation of civil society and any form of social organisation without links to Frelimo was strictly banned.

In the context of peri-urban Maputo, cooperatives and associations emerged in parallel to each other. The cooperative movement was, in the beginning, strictly tied to Frelimo party organizations like the GDs and the Organization of Mozambican Women – OMM (*Organização da Mulher Moçambicana*). Over time, it became gradually detached and emancipated under the umbrella of the General Union of Cooperatives – UGC (*União Geral das Cooperativas*) (Cruz e Silva 2006: 101–103). In the view of many peri-urban farmers, cooperatives still carry the burden of involuntary collectivisation. After all, the cooperatives have lost their importance in contemporary peri-urban Maputo, and the associative movement predominates. During my participation in a meeting of the associations, I perceived how distrust towards the cooperatives was expressed since it would portray “a private company” where participating farmers are working for the “leader of the cooperative”.

The collective identity of peri-urban farmers outlived different political regimes. They were forced to commit themselves to work for both the colonial state and the post-colonial socialist state. Against the compulsive top-down command, which prevailed on the state cooperatives immediately after independence, individual autonomy and self-determination are vital aspects in everyday life of the association. The historical trajectory finally explains why it is of uppermost importance that each member is regarded as the owner of his *machamba* with the power of individual decision-making. As Adriano unambiguously emphasised, “the association does not

own the land. The owners of the land are the members of the association themselves” (interview C-17: 4). The shift from the cooperative to the associative movement has more recently become reinforced by the government through a state decree from 2006. Its establishment provided the legal framework for the recognition of agricultural associations as “a form to bring together the individual efforts of farmers and to improve their organization and link them with other sectors of the economy and society” (Sitoe & Sitole 2019: 3).

Nonetheless, the shared history of oppression of each farmer endows their collective identity with meaning. First and foremost, there is the decade-long “*luta armada*” (armed struggle) of the liberation from the colonial regime, which commenced in 1964 (Brito 2019: 36). The belonging to the cause of the liberation of the land and from forced labour is reflected in the particular naming of the associations (cf. table 3). Above all, they are named after the most important figures of the Mozambican liberation (e.g. Eduardo Mondlane and Samora Machel), other African independence fighters (e.g. Tomas Sankara) or the South African place of Mbuzini where first president Samora Machel died in an air crash in 1986. Endowed with plenty of room for conspiracy theories, the incident is also known as the so-called “Massacre of Mbuzini”.

Each association’s internal structure consists of three hierarchical levels whose positions are democratically elected during plenary meetings. The highest level consists of the board of directors with president, vice-president, and secretary positions. It also includes the general assembly and the supervisory board. The second level comprises positions with specific tasks and mandates that individual members take. The head of production gathers and disseminates information on the overall production, production techniques, and different crop types. The head of drainage is re-

Table 3 Farmers’ associations in urban district KaMavota

No.	Name
1	Samora Machel
2	Eduardo Mondlane
3	Tomas Sankara
4	Costa do Sol
5	Joaquim Chissano
6	Armando Emílio Guebuza
7	Graça Machel
8	Lirandzo
9	Djaulane
10	Massacre de Mbuzini
11	Albazine

Source: Illustration by author

sponsible for maintaining irrigation ditches and boreholes. The head of a block oversees the spatial unit of a block, ensuring the flow of information as an intermediary between the association's board and its members. In addition, there is also the treasurer position. The third level comprises the individual members of the association (interview C-28, cf. Prestes Dürrnagel et al. 2022).

In different conversations, individual members valued the hierarchical structure. Since most associations have hundreds of members, the organisation of activities and collective tasks is more effective in being centralised. A female peasant, for example, noted that "it was to organise an association that resolves things, it has its leader, it would not make sense a large site without someone directing, being responsible" (interview C-44). Likewise, another farmer highlighted the role of associations in resolving conflicts and having someone responsible in the organisational structure to be contacted in case of internal disputes or theft. "If anything happens, it is just to inform the association to resolve it, for example, if there are thieves who steal the produce" (interview C-43).

As these statements reveal, the organisation of farmers in associations and their institutional embedding is crucial for its members. Access to land and land use rights and the defence of those rights is particularly important. This aspect is regarded with much attention in chapter 6.2.2. Beyond the institutional support, membership in farmers' associations is also important for generating social capital and empowering farmers. According to Putnam (1993: 167) social capital "refers to features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions". Social capital is tied to the social interaction in a community, crucial for peri-urban life-worlds. For marginalised farmers, social capital is the most viable way to access resources. In this light, the social reality of Maputo's farmers' association is somehow allegoric to Coleman's (1990: 307) notion of social capital with the example of the farming community,

where one farmer got his hay baled by another and where farm tools are extensively borrowed and lent, the social capital allows each farmer to get his work done with less physical capital in the form of tools and equipment.

Indeed, besides family and kinship ties, relationships of spatial proximity between farmers producing crops next to each other are most important. As one of the interviewed commented, "among neighbours, we help each other, if something is missing, for example, we give each other seedlings if we need them. I get on well with the neighbours. They are colleagues" (interview C-43).

Physical proximity represents the precondition for social proximity and, thus, for social capital. It is generated in shared spaces where interaction from face-to-face occurs. Everyday life on the *machambas* provides the basis for these interactions. These interactions range from the informal daily exchange of news and information

to more institutionalised exchange formats such as through reunions or Farmer Field Schools. For individual farmers, the reunions and trainings represent essential spaces to receive information on new techniques or innovative production methods. The direct interaction between individuals in a face-to-face situation is paramount and the subsequent chapter on peri-urban sociality will discuss the nature of this kind of interaction in much detail.

5.4 Peri-urban Sociality: how Do People Live together in the Neighbourhood?

The final step of the life-world analysis is concerned with the lived relations of Maputo's peri-urban dwellers. The social characteristics of peri-urban areas represent the dimension which, so far, only received poor attention in the literature. By reconstructing the socio-spatial structures of the surrounding world, the subsequent paragraphs shed light on these hitherto obscured social aspects of peri-urban existences. First, the nature of social relations in peri-urban neighbourhoods is addressed. It is asked how people interact, how others are experienced and typified in everyday life, and how each individual is surrounded by layers of social space (cf. chapter 5.4.1.). Second, it will be showcased how the neighbourhood relations at the peri-urban interface produce a particular kind of sociality distinct to both urban anonymous and idealising conceptualisations of collective rural life (cf. chapter 5.4.2.). In this light, it is discussed to what extent the particular peri-urban sociality constitutes, in the Schützian sense, "a finite province of meaning."

5.4.1 Social Interaction between Collectivisation and Individualisation

In the place-based social environments of Maputo's peri-urban neighbourhoods, the intersubjective understanding between individuals derives largely from interactional face-to-face relationships. The experience of the other through direct interaction in a face-to-face situation represents, according to Berger & Luckmann (1966: 43), the "prototypical case of social interaction". As in the presented context of the farming community, this form of direct interaction constitutes the most common type of interaction in Maputo's locally anchored peri-urban life-worlds. Indeed, a large part of the social situations depicted during the previous paragraphs inevitably presupposes the "spatial and temporal immediacy" (Schütz 1967: 163) of two or more individuals. For instance, the essential quest of finding a dwelling place requires a physical presence in space since it follows the prospect of a potential opportunity to establish face-to-face contact with a landowner. Likewise, everyday life's essential economic and commercial activities are plot-based and necessarily realized in direct

interactions with passing clients or merchants. Territorial disputes about shared property lines are just another example. They are, after all, only settled when two neighbours confront each other face-to-face.

Living in a peri-urban neighbourhood comes with the obligation to obey the rules of collective community life. Collective tasks such as neighbourhood clean-ups are realised with regularity. The reordering of neighbourhoods, the posterior opening of roads and the self-provision through “people as infrastructure” represent prime examples of collective contributions. Characteristic of peri-urban Maputo is also the solidarity among the residents if someone passes away. The *chefe de quarteirão* usually collects money or food contributions to support the deceased’s family. Regular meetings with the residents are also held in each *quarteirão*. The respective *chefes* convoke the neighbourhood reunions, and their regularity depends on the necessities and varies from *quarteirão* to *quarteirão*. One of the *chefes* revealed that they used to meet twice a month before the Covid-19 pandemic impeded any gatherings. Another *chefe*, however, mentioned that meetings in his neighbourhood only took place every three months. Communication in face-to-face situations usually evolves around locally relevant issues close to everyday life and place-based problems. Therefore, the amount of information is relatively small and restricted, which points, according Baumgartner (2014: 718), towards more ruralised forms of living together.

While the idealised concept of community life may be characterised by mutual aid and each individual’s selfless sacrifice, such an over-romanticised imagination of the marginalised community does not apply to Maputo’s peri-urban spaces. Indeed, cooperation remains largely restricted to episodes that Mitlin (2008: 342) characterised as “collective self-help strategies”. They are common in low-income communities when “there is simply no way in which households can manage their situation without a degree of collective action” (Mitlin 2008: 343).

Besides the infrastructure provision, such strategies are primarily visible in cases of emergency. For instance, when streets are flooded after heavy rainfall, affected neighbours come together to improvise drainage canals or improve barriers to prevent their homes from flooding. After all, collective contributions are often subject to the control exerted by neighbourhood authorities, which results from the legacy of the forced collectivisation of social life during Mozambique’s socialist period. It is, therefore, less the product of the spontaneous altruistic sacrifice of individuals but rather the result of necessity and institutionalised and proven collective reliance.

On the other hand, more than three decades after the change of the political course and the restructuring of the economy through structural adjustment programs, societal individualisation prevails. “Everybody is for himself” was the response of one of the residents when I asked about self-help in the neighbourhood. Close to the city, the living expenses and foodstuff, water, and electricity costs are constantly rising. The provision for the family is paramount. The struggles of getting by take place in harsh and competitive environments consuming time and money.

Lacking resources and structural poverty not always lead to solidarity but also to self-centeredness, provoking criminality and social isolation. One of the interviewed academics has put it in a nutshell:

Individualism ended up taking over this society, with all these economic and political changes, etc. The last years have been years of deep individualism, of the de-characterization of the neighbourhoods, also of that organization that once worked better (interview A-14).

The dynamic interrelationship between historical collectivisation and the increasing individualisation of society was already mentioned in the context of the farmers' associations. Similar tensions between rural collective vs. urban individualistic ideal conceptions of community life are likewise inherent to the social cohabitation in peri-urban neighbourhoods. They produce a particular kind of peri-urban sociality that oscillates between more cooperative and competitive social behaviour. The following discussion of the lived experiences of a female peri-urban dweller and her relationship with the plot and the neighbourhood will help to understand what this particular sociality entails.

We met *Dona Faustina* during one of our lived explorations in *bairro* Triunfo while passing by her plot when she took care of her *machambinhas*. Her life story



Photo 14 Dona Faustina's plot

Source: Photo by Dona Faustina, taken in the context of the reflexive photography method (2021)

is emblematic of peri-urban areas. What she told us during our different conversations likewise resembles our experiences with other residents and thus expresses the social reality of living in peri-urban Maputo. *Dona Faustina* participated in the reflexive photography method and carried a camera for a few weeks. One of the photographs taken by her (cf. photo 14) is particularly illustrative for grasping the nature of living together in a peri-urban neighbourhood. During an encounter, she recalled different decisive experiences triggered by the photograph. Hereinafter, it is aimed to reconstruct the subjective meaning that she ascribed to her experiences.

Dona Faustina bought her property in 1999, for which she had to pay MZN 5,000. At that time, the area was still much less inhabited, and for a while, she continued to live for rent in a neighbourhood closer to the city centre. However, she was tired of paying rent and preferred to better invest in constructing a house on her plot in Triunfo. In 2009, a decade after the purchase, her home was finally ready to move in. Faustina took the photograph from the middle of her plot. The tree trunk on the right side of the picture depicts one of three mango trees she planted after acquiring the plot. In spring, they are hanging full of delicious fruits, she proudly describes while pointing towards the tree. She complains that when she did not yet have her *espinhosa* planted, people would always enter her property to eat from her mangos and oranges while she was not home. Therefore, she planted her *espinhosa* along the plot's boundaries to impede the intruders and protect her property. The hedge served its purpose, and eventually, people stopped entering her plot. However, the *espinhosa* displayed in the picture is already the second one she planted. The first one used to be much higher, and in summer, it was full of green leaves protecting her space from the views of passing people.

While sitting together on her plot, she recalls the traumatic experience when she was forced to remove her first *espinhosa*. She was seriously upset since it took her a lot of work and several years to grow to its former size. In the context of the efforts of reordering the neighbourhood, and the opening up and widening the roads, one day, she was approached by a group of six men, consisting of the *chefe de quarteirão* and his auxiliaries. She tells us how the appearance of the group force left her seriously intimidated, and she voluntarily agreed to withdraw the space she was asked for. At that time, she admitted, there was only a tiny alleyway for pedestrians, and cars could not pass yet. Whereas Faustina does not possess a car, her opposite neighbour, living behind the red gate, needed more space to pass with his car. However, all her neighbours refused to withdraw any space from their properties and somehow resisted the order. As a powerless single mother, Faustina was eventually confronted a second time and asked to cede even more space from her plot. Even years after, she still feels aggrieved and angry when she remembers what had happened to her. Moreover, the incident has, after all, seriously compromised the relationship with her neighbour:

These people treat me like toilet paper to use in the bathroom. Why do I have to withdraw a second time, although I already withdrew in the first place? Why don't they tell him to withdraw? The conflict is only for me! [...] A person with good faith would later admit that he was wrong while I was right. I must say that because I am outraged about what they are doing to me (interview C-22: 3).

The interpretation of the experiences of *Dona Faustina* reveals what it means to live with others in a peri-urban neighbourhood. The dwelling place and the individual plot rarely exist as isolated entities. They represent a relational spatial unit inserted in the surrounding world of the neighbourhood where social interactions are inescapable. In Maputo's competitive peri-urban environments, the personal space has to be protected. The increasing societal individualisation is expressed in the need for protection and defence, having a twofold meaning. On the one hand, any dweller must protect the property from the intrusion of thieves and rising criminality. But protection also refers to the essential defence of the personal space's territorial limits and keeping up the plot's boundaries.

According to Arnheim (1977: 73), boundaries represent the "precarious products of opposing forces". In Maputo's densely populated neighbourhoods' competition over space, boundaries are never absolutely given. As the example of *Dona Faustina* illustrates, if someone extends his space, it inevitably leads to someone's loss. To say it with Bollnow (2011 [1963]: 240), "one can gain space only by taking it away from the other". Therefore, each individual has to be on guard to constantly reinforce his or her territorial entitlements. The conflictive endeavour of the posterior reordering of the neighbourhoods' spatial structures represents just one example. The boundary that encircles my plot protects me from the tensions of the surrounding world. Still, it is not less important to actively protect the boundaries of my property from the surrounding world.

The enclosure's materiality reflects the plot owner's personal economic situation. It also represents a function of power and expresses the prospect of exerting one's interests, of keeping others at a distance and defending one's private property. As *Dona Faustina*'s example shows, the *espinhosa* hedge obviously does not provide the same means of protection as a built wall. The situation in the picture, in particular, depicts a strong contrast between her little hedgerow and her neighbour's impressive fortress-like brickwork. In the rural part of the PUI, *epinhosas* are much more common than near the city where *Dona Faustina* lives. In newly emerging *quarteirões* like Guava, the property boundaries initially consist only of carefully created ditches, where the *espinhosa* eventually gets planted. Towards the city, however, the dominance of *epinhosas* becomes gradually replaced by walls. The more urban a neighbourhood gets, the more frequently walls encircle the plots, and the *espinhosa* eventually becomes a rare appearance. As we will further emphasise, these material tendencies in the transition from the peri-urban towards a more urban structure have an enormous imprint on the social fabric of the neighbourhoods.

At the outset, the social space of the peri-urban neighbourhood is characterised by the almost complete absence of strangers. Since walking represents the most common form of locomotion in peri-urban Maputo, a large part of everyday mobilities is confined to the spatio-temporal micro-zone. Hence, the majority of activities and the running of errands but also the cultivation of friendships and social relations are spatially restricted. They remain within the perimeters of the neighbourhood and thus lead to a dense pattern of micro-level interactions. Peri-urban residents trade with each other and pass by each other in everyday situations. They may greet and talk to each other across their *espinhosa* fences or just ignore each other. Through the typical recurrence of these small-scale everyday interactions, the individual members of this intersubjectively shared social world encounter each other with a reciprocal understanding of familiarity. The degree of this familiarity, however, concerns the volume of knowledge about the social situation of the encounter and not necessarily the degree of intimacy with the other individual. As Bauman (1993: 151) reminds us, familiarity does not have to mean friendship or trust. On the contrary, relationships among the residents of the same street or even between neighbours can be tense and conflictive.

Within my *quartirão*, I can cultivate intimate relationships with my associates, and there are contemporaries I know, albeit to a lesser degree of intimacy. But regardless of the degree of intimacy, they are no strangers. I might not know them by name, but I know them by sight from passing by their plot. We might not have talked face-to-face in a pure “We-relationship”, but we are no faceless strangers to each other since we occasionally encounter each other during reunions. The sedimented stock of knowledge provides a repertoire of rules for dealing and interacting with each other. As residents in a shared socio-spatial setting, we have similar plans and aspirations. These evolve around the extension of our house and the new roofing we want to install. While the other residents are typified as my neighbours, social and spatial proximity do not necessarily have to coincide. Long-time neighbours can have shared biographies and cultivate intimate relationships. At the same time, two neighbouring families can have a tense relationship and deep-rooted disputes.

In *Dona Faustina*’s photo, the neighbouring wall stands out. But it is impossible to recognise her neighbour on his plot or to even grasp his face as long as the bulky red iron gate remains closed. The opacity of the brickwork makes any face-to-face interaction difficult. In the southern part of the study area, close to the expanding city, walled-off luxury buildings like the one of *Dona Faustina*’s neighbour are popping up everywhere. These modern *prédios* are gradually replacing the typical peri-urban *casas* along the Costa do Sol and Triunfo. According to Heer (2019: 9), the walls that confine their properties “shape the relations of proximity and distance between those who are inside and those who should remain outside”. Although residing in physical proximity, the social distance between differing life-worlds is enormous. The walls are not only symbolic but represent the materialisation of this difference, equivalent to their size and height.

In addition, most new residents at Maputo's prestigious coast are wealthy and possess cars. Instead of walking through the neighbourhood, they tend to traverse space as faceless individuals behind the tinted windows of their SUVs. The new form of living together represents what Bauman (1993: 154) calls the "arcane art of mismeeting", to keep others outside one's social space and prevent any interaction. The overall result implies changing neighbourhood relationships of an urban anonymous cohabitation between strangers instead of peri-urban face-to-face contact between neighbours. The implications for peri-urban life-worlds and long-term residents are disruptive, and the involved contestations and conflicts are profoundly explained in Chapter 6.2.1. But before that, the particularity of peri-urban life-worlds as a "finite province of meaning", in contrast to urban life-worlds, requires further understanding.

5.4.2 Peri-urban Sociality as a "Finite Province of Meaning"

Whereas peri-urban neighbourhood life becomes increasingly individualised due to the various constraints of life, alter egos are still experienced in face-to-face relationships as concrete individuals in a subjective context of meaning. During repeated encounters, two individuals take part in each other's life for a certain amount of time. Thus, they establish a reciprocal "We-relationship" (Schütz 1976: 23, cf. chapter 2.1.4). In line with the tendency of shifting from an individualised towards an urban anonymous neighbourhood life, the reciprocity disappears. Although living next door but behind high-rising walls, the direct experience from face-to-face becomes a remote event, and the experience of the alter ego consequently corresponds to a high degree of anonymity (Schütz 1970: 227).

Triunfo resident *Senhor* Alberto, for instance, sees himself on his plot surrounded by several upscale buildings. He no longer knows his neighbours, and nobody greets him. Previously, before most of his former neighbours left the neighbourhood, he described the community life as "living in a family". However, *Senhor* Alberto shares barely any history with his new urban-derived neighbours with their cars and fancy mansions, whose life-world corresponds to a different reality with a different "zone of operation". For all the other long-term peri-urban dwellers like *Senhor* Alberto, the new ones are strangers in their social space. As Bauman (1993: 153) puts it, "socially distant yet physically close. The aliens within physical reach. Neighbours outside social reach". The socially distant neighbours are experienced in an objective context of meaning, no longer in a reciprocal "We-relationship" but through the unilateral "They-relationship". One of the residents in Mutanhana describes it as follows:

They are people who used to live in the city. So, as it became very dense in that area there, they decided to leave their area and came to look for spaces here in our area and we accommodated these people here (interview C-02: 3).

Likewise, in the *quarteirão* of *Senhor* Bernardo, a complex of multi-storey residential buildings was built which accommodates several dozen flats. Although he is the local *chefe de quarteirão*, the residents of those buildings only participate very seldom in the neighbourhood reunions that *Senhor* Bernardo organises. He says that “they are complicated people; because they don’t want any bothering. You can’t even mobilise them for a clean-up” (interview C-13: 13). In contrast to the new residents, peri-urban dwellers still live collectively in their neighbourhoods, although not always in harmony. They share a subjective context of meaning of what this living together is about and what it entails for every single one.

Being a peri-urban dweller means entering a social contract of obeying the rules of collective community life that the newcomers barely respect. “My house is worth the neighbour’s house” (interview C-27: 6) reflects the apt expression for the cooperative neighbourhood relationships in peri-urban Maputo. What Lucas, *chefe de dez casas* in Guava, means by it refers to the collective provision of infrastructure and services, which depends on each resident’s contribution. For instance, if someone closes the road access by a wall, he prejudices all the remaining neighbours. Thus, it is tacitly agreed not to act individualistic since the collective reliance depends on the individual, who in turn can rely on the collective. If disregarded, a wall will eventually be torn down.

These statements reveal much about the community life that characterises peri-urban neighbourhoods. At the same time, a clear distinction to urban neighbourhoods is discernible. Contrary to the anonymous coexistence that characterises the urban type of “society”, the sociality of living together in the peri-urban neighbourhood is characterised by “community”. The work of Tönnies (2001 [1887]: 19) accurately describes the difference between community and society. On the one hand, “*Gemeinschaft* [community] must be understood as a living organism in its own right, while *Gesellschaft* [society] is a mechanical aggregate and artefact”.

Urban life is individualistic, superficial, and transient. With that kind of sociality, urban-derived newcomers settle in peri-urban neighbourhoods without participating in community life. In contrast, peri-urban sociality is characterised by living together, belonging to a group, and belonging to a place. These intrinsic people-place relations are known under the labels of “sense of place” (Relph 1976: 48) or “place attachment” (Lewicka 2011). It is the ideal type of a community in a neighbourhood where social identification coincides with the spatial identification of a place (Buttimer 1976: 283). The identity of an individual assigned to a place conflates with an inter-subjectively shared and common identity that the community has with this place (Relph 1976: 45).

Through reciprocal encounters and collective obligations, a sense of belonging to the place and the membership of a group persists. This feeling of belonging, however, only emerges through the collective dissociation from the strangeness; through the differentiation from a reality that does not correspond to the collective peri-urban

lifeworld. Whereas there is the “We” of the “peri-urban in-group”, on the other hand, there is the “They” with the strangers of the “urban out-group”. The faceless neighbouring alter ego of the out-group is not apprehended as an individual person but as “anonymous in the sense that its existence is only the individuation of a type” (Schütz 1970: 228). “*Aqueles de fora*” (“those from outwards”) or “*aqueles dos prédios*” (“those from the buildings”) are common typifications under which the individuals are subsumed. After all, the materiality of the home represents the primary characteristic of social distinction. *Chefe* Rolando, for instance, describes that “those who are in the *prédio* have some conditions that are beyond the ones of the person who does not have a *prédio*” (interview C-08: 6).

Consequently, the typification of the house based on its material properties has meanwhile become a social indicator for typifying its inhabitants. The stark contrast between the ground-floor *casa* and the two-storey *prédio* makes the differentiation much more visible. Indeed, it is cast in cement. Long-term peri-urban residents clearly distinguish themselves, making a differentiation between “us” and “them”. During our conversation with *Dona* Natalia, for instance, we were sitting on the patio in front of her house, which she refers to as *vivenda*. It is a one-floor house with fresh paint and well taken care of. As she points towards the new buildings, she explains that “one can say that where there are still some *vivenda* houses more or less like mine, it is us *nativos*, but now where there are *prédios*, it is because some neighbours have already left” (interview C-12: 5).

Against this background, it can be argued that an ordinary house with its outer space is inherent to peri-urban sociality. A closer look at *Dona* Faustina’s social situation substantiates these arguments. The social composition of the inhabitants in Faustina’s neighbourhood has changed during the last few years. She also told us about a new resident who bought several properties. Where once befriended families of her were living, he is now building houses that he can rent. He lives in a *prédio* with a first floor and even has a swimming pool in his yard. She was also offered to sell her house, but it is because she relies on the plot to grow food that she can sustain herself and her two sons:

I said no, I can’t sell the property because I have two sons. Here on my property, I can do many things to help me with my life. So, I planted these trees, and I have a vegetable garden. If I had sold it, what would I do? I wouldn’t have a vegetable garden. It is not about selling; what counts is building when you have money. The property is large, and I can do plenty of work here to invest when I have money (interview C-22: 7).

Her peri-urban life-world plans and aspirations evolve around the dwelling place and the family. Her son once brought some *entulho* (debris) from a company where he does *biscate* (casual works). In her picture above, a pile of debris lies in the centre of the plot next to her vegetable gardens. One day, they want to use it to continue

with the building process of the house. Although they have already been living on the property for many years, she reaffirmed several times that her house is still under construction but that she aspires to conclude it as soon as there is enough money left. One of her ideas to earn money would be to invest in raising chickens. “Laying hens is a good business”, she says because “you can sell the eggs and eggs also make money”. To realise this plan, however, she would need a wall to protect her property from thieves. The *espinhosa* provides some protection, but a wall would be necessary for raising animals. Once, she further adds, thieves entered her property despite her *espinhosa* hedge. They climbed into the house through the bathroom window and stole a full gas bottle that she just bought.

The incremental and gradual process of the creation of the home represents her desire. It is something that gives meaning and orientation to her life. She feels at home on her plot with her vegetable gardens that sustain herself and the family. It is where she is rooted, so selling her property or moving somewhere elsewhere does not make any sense. The aspirations of *Dona Faustina* are not about having a pool or a car. Living in a luxurious home is out of her reality, beyond the horizons of her reach. The idea of raising animals, however, represents a viable plan and a meaningful endeavour to embark on. What counts for *Dona Faustina* likewise counts as peri-urban. It is the province of reality that she takes for granted, and this reality is shared with others in a common system of typifications and relevances.

For the moment, we can summarise that the locality of the peri-urban neighbourhood represents the familiar socio-spatial setting where direct interactions in face-to-face situations take place. Interactions are both indispensable and inescapable. Any peri-urban dweller depends on them, while at the same time, nobody can escape them. It is through these interactions and the result of peoples’ practices that the particular peri-urban environments of the neighbourhoods are produced.

However, according to the relational understanding of peri-urbanity that underlies this thesis, the peri-urban places and spaces likewise shape the nature of the interactions in which they are embedded, thus producing a particular peri-urban sociality. This occurs by the same token as the built environment conditions everyday mobilities, as mentioned earlier. Hence, physical space and the built infrastructure are intertwined with social practices and activities through reciprocal processes of adaption and conditioning (Haferburg & Rothfuss 2019: 181; Berking 2012: 319). Or to say it with Appadurai (1996: 184), “neighbourhoods both are contexts and at the same time require and produce contexts”. Peri-urban space, with its neighbourhood structure and its places, hedges and walls, produces the peri-urban sociality in the first place. This sociality again reproduces the peri-urban structures in a dialectical understanding. These are intrinsic to Maputo’s peri-urban spaces but distinguishable from rural and urban life-worlds.

5.5 Towards a Thesis on the Constitutive Dimensions of Peri-urbanity: Locality, Self-sufficient Practice, and Community

The reconstruction of the peri-urban life-world experiences according to their spatial, temporal, and social structures elucidated our understanding of what it means to be a peri-urban dweller in Maputo. From the peri-urban dwelling with the typical spatial composition of the peri-urban plot, the spatio-temporal structures of the neighbourhood, peri-urban mobilities and finally, the peri-urban sociality. A comprehensive picture of the essential qualities of peri-urban life in its distinctiveness to rural and urban environments is now graspable

The spaces and places of peri-urban areas represent the unquestioned reality for their inhabitants. As a finite “province of meaning”, this reality is embedded in a particular style of peri-urban lived experiences inherent to peri-urban life-worlds. It allows us to filter out the constitutive dimensions of a peri-urban type that emerges from the findings. In this light, it is argued that the peri-urban type consists of three overarching dimensions: (1) locality, (2) self-sufficient practice, and (3) community (cf. figure 16). These three dimensions sustain each other; likewise, they are mutually dependent on each other. To summarise and complete our understanding of peri-urbanity, the three dimensions of the peri-urban type are discussed in the following paragraphs.

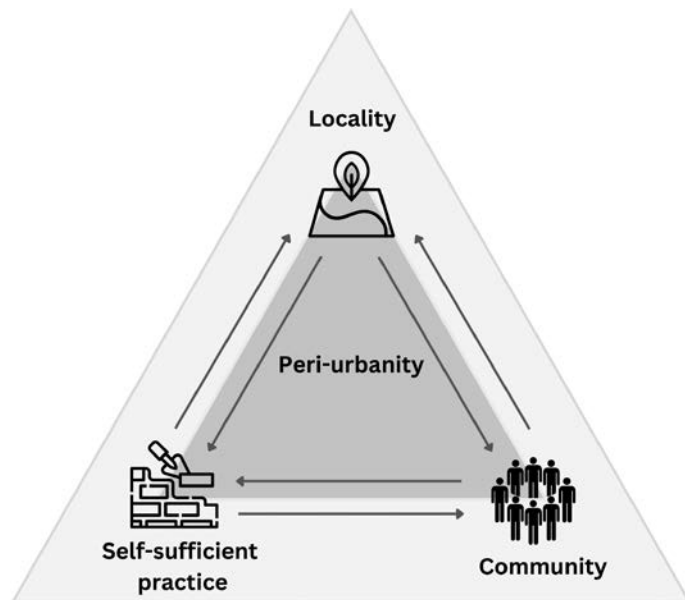


Figure 16 The three constitutive dimensions of peri-urbanity

Source: Illustration by author

(1) Locality

The locality of the peri-urban type represents its first constitutive dimension. First and foremost, this aspect refers to the vital importance of the spatial centredness of peri-urban life with the dwelling place embedded in the familiar surroundings of the neighbourhood. The choice of the location of the home corresponds to the decision to become entrenched in this particular locality. It comes with the plan to build the house of one's own in the consciousness that its construction occurs in a gradual and incremental process accompanying the *durée* of one's life and the ones of the successors. Thus, it entails a lifelong commitment with the privileges and adversities that this place and its community provide.

Growing roots is not symbolic. It is essential. The trees that shade the place where one cherishes the fruits of life, as well as the *espinhosa* that protects it from the outside world, need time to grow and need to be nurtured. In this way, an intimate relationship with the house and plot develops over time. The same holds for the relationship with land through the practice of farming. It is essential, and to sustain it requires a physical presence, day in and day out, caring for that particular place. While everyday life demands mobility in a competitive and individualised peri-urban environment, the home and the *machambas* are places bearing a peaceful constant in life. Whereas an urban apartment may be interchangeable and contingent, the peri-urban plot and its locality are not arbitrary but definite.

As a peri-urban dweller, you need a plot that bestows its multifunctional purposes for mastering life at the peri-urban interface. Likewise, you rely on the micro-level interactions with the other members of the community. In this regard, locality is characterised by the "smallness", "where communication among the insiders is all-embracing and dense" (Bauman 2001: 12). Whether through planting vegetables, breeding animals, offering your services, or socialising with the neighbours. The locality of the neighbourhood is where life takes place in all its facets and living in a ground-floor *casa* is constitutive for the peri-urban type. In contrast, the third or even eight-floor flats of the apartment buildings in the city centre do not provide the essential ingredients compulsively required to pursue life as you know it as a peri-urban dweller.

Indeed, it is the reality that is taken for granted and the only reality known. Morton (2019: 256) describes quite vividly the clashing life-worlds when after the nationalisation of rental buildings, rural arrivals took over empty flats, "cooking on open coals, raising goats and chickens in their apartments, and pounding corn on their verandas". Against this background, we can deduce that urban life is incommensurable with peri-urban life, and the further the distance from the ground floor of the *casa*, the greater the dissociation and alienation from the known familiarity of the peri-urban reality.

However, there is a meaning of locality that goes beyond being place-based and spatially restricted. In the work of Appadurai (1996: 182), locality is depicted as "a

phenomenological property of social life, a structure of feeling that is produced by particular forms of intentional activity and that yields particular sorts of material effects". More precisely, while locality represents a property of social life, the peri-urban neighbourhood is the product of the socio-material practices of peri-urban dwellers, which, in turn, also reproduce the socio-materiality of peri-urban life-worlds. What this actually means in practice becomes more comprehensive in a moment, when the qualities of self-sufficient practice and community are added.

(2) Self-sufficient Practice

Self-sufficient practice represents the second constitutive dimension of peri-urbanity. It is strictly connected with the locality of the dwelling place and the neighbourhood. Against this background, the plot, the *machambas* and the fertile soil to grow food bear the opportunity to rely on the resources it provides and thus to depend less on others and the influx of food from elsewhere. Self-sufficient practice continues at the neighbourhood level, where vital plot-by-plot commercial activities ensure the availability of goods and services necessary for everyday life. As Veríssimo (2012: 132) puts it, a core feature of the self-sufficient community is "to reinterpret and reinvent tradition, based on the principles of resilience, resistance and self-reliance".

Indeed, the flexible interplay of rather urban livelihood strategies to make ends living through informal trade and commerce and the solid foundation of rural-derived farming or fishing practices characterise the particular peri-urban type of a self-sufficient local community. When the food runs about, the rural dweller does not have the opportunity to engage in trading on the buzzing urban markets for an income. Neither has the urban dweller the option to catch his own meal if, for the moment, all other supply options cease.

The incremental and gradual process of building the home with creativity according to one's plans and the resources available represents another example of residents' self-sufficiency in peri-urban areas. Fabricating the *blocos* onsite, retrieving materials from whatever sources are available and whenever some money is left: the organisation, the proceeding, and the realisation of the self-construction processes are individual and contingent on the situation and the possibilities of the builder itself. Under the term *autoconstrução* (autoconstruction), other authors have observed and described these processes in the context of Maputo (cf. Nielsen 2011; Nielsen & Jenkins 2020). However, the term autoconstruction builds on the earlier work of Holston (1991), who developed it a few decades ago to describe similar phenomena occurring in the peripheries of Brazilian cities. The self-managed process and the ambitions under which they occur also apply to the peri-urban context of Maputo. Accordingly, the lifetime projects of autoconstruction refer to the "transformation over decades of an initial shack of wood or concrete block into a dream house – a finished, furnished, and decorated masonry home" (Holston 1991: 447).

The self-provision of infrastructure at the neighbourhood level represents the collective aggregate of the efforts of individual households to build their homes in a self-managed process. Like individual houses, the built environment of the neighbourhood resembles the self-produced outcome of the aspirations and desires that materialise over time in an incremental and gradual process. According to Appadurai (1996: 183), the collective creation of the neighbourhood as “the transformation of spaces into places” is “inherently colonizing”. The example of peri-urban Maputo exhibits this processual exercise quite demonstratively. It is most remarkable in the first stages of its development, when the brick buildings, connected through a network of winding paths, eventually begin to overshadow the swamps and bushes. The result of the collective effort of many individuals. To say it with Appadurai (1996: 183–184), “in a sense that it involves the assertion of socially (often ritually) organized power over places and settings that are viewed as potentially chaotic or rebellious”.

(3) Community

The community represents the third constitutive dimension of the peri-urban type. The existence of a community is the fundamental precondition of peri-urbanity. As both product and outcome, the community is strictly tied to locality and self-sufficient practice. The community’s social contexts are produced by the neighbourhood, embedded in a dynamic interrelationship between collectivisation and the increasing individualisation of society. Neighbourhood relations are neither rural romanticised nor urban anonymous. At the peri-urban interface, the experiences of living together and the mutual understanding between neighbours follow a logic where any individual only survives through competition, and the collective relies on cooperation. Social situations and events define this behaviour and the rules of interactions to which the members of the peri-urban community tacitly agree.

Following the aforementioned ideas of Tönnies (2001 [1887]), the particular type of the peri-urban community is best understood by distinguishing it from the urban type of society, particularly at dynamic interfaces like in Maputo, where the transition zone from peri-urban to urban spaces changes rapidly. The superordinate status of individuality reflects the imprint on societal exchanges in the urban type society. Although surrounded by masses, each other remains the individuation of a type. The exchange is mechanic, characterised by service delivery or professional relationships, guided by each individual’s motive. Indeed, “urbanity is the real of individuality” (Baumgartner 2014: 719). In urban environments, the spaces surrounding the home do not necessarily coincide with the spaces where relationships are cultivated. Therefore, the correlation between spatial and social proximity is not given, nor is a relationship to the place itself. Face-to-face contact is not essential in the spaces immediately surrounding the urban home. Urban dwellers live behind the closed doors of apartment buildings or the fenced-off walls of gated communities: an individualised life without even knowing their neighbours living next door.

Thus, the place of residence is neither essential nor relevant for the urban type. In Maputo's Triunfo neighbourhood, which is currently experiencing the transition from peri-urban to an urban settlement, the new urban residents have no ties to the neighbourhood where they live. They do not interact with their neighbours as they walk by their plots. They merely traverse the neighbourhood spaces anonymously in cars as faceless individuals. They do not participate in meetings or collective takes; in some cases, they are not even known to the *chefe de quarteirão*. In short, they are individuals belonging to the urban society but do not form part of the peri-urban community.

In contrast to the less place-based, mechanical urban society, the peri-urban community depends on place and locality. At the same time, community represents the primal prerequisite for self-sufficient practice. As the findings demonstrated, kinship relations are still vital for peri-urban life-worlds. Family comes first, and the chances of coping with many tasks in life, such as the acquisition of a plot, are determined by supportive kinship ties. Thus, following Tönnies (2001 [1887]: 27), the locality of the dwelling is the first stage of the "community of *blood*". Indeed, while the significance of family is marginal in urban settings, it is most important in peri-urban areas. For example, in the context of the farmers' associations, cultivation is primarily tied to kinship relations, and each family depends on the support each member provides. Finally, the *canteiros* are also owned by the family and not by the collective, passed down from generation to generation.

When repeated face-to-face interactions with fellow farmers and neighbours in shared local spaces stabilise into a reciprocal "We-relationship", they form Tönnies' (2001 [1887]: 27) second type of the so-called "community of *place*". The establishment of relationships of trust is the outcome of the circulation of social capital within the community. They conform with Granovetter's (1973) "strong ties" reflected in the dense patterns of micro-level interactions. Over time, mutual positions and perspectives are established among several individuals, eventually triggering collective action in response to local problems such as a lack of infrastructure or bad road conditions (Atkinson et al. 2018: 170). According to Hasanov & Beaumont (2016: 234), it forms the basis for self-sufficiency through self-organisation, which requires a balanced interplay of spatial proximity, community organisation and collective intentionality.

Finally, it corresponds to Tönnies' (2001 [1887]: 27) third category as the "community of *spirit*, working together for the same end and purpose". Thus, taking the initiative of changing things for the better represents the result of collectively maintained social capital. While social capital is often described as a personal asset instead of the outcome of a collective endeavour (Hasanov & Beaumont 2016: 236), Rothfuß & Korff (2015: 160) suggest considering social capital as a "collective property resource". Accordingly, the "functioning community is itself a resource (or social capital) for its members, that provide mutual support and thereby economic

and social security". Indeed, in the peri-urban context of Maputo, things don't work because of the atomistic efforts of each individual but due to the sum of its parts contingent on the cohesion of the ties among individual community members as a whole. Nothing is achieved as long as only one resident is willing to cede some of their space that a car can pass. It is only achieved at the collective level of the community. Contingent on the "*understanding shared by all its members*" (Bauman 2001: 10). As long as everybody tacitly agrees, anybody being a member of the community can trust and rely on it.

To put it in a nutshell, self-sufficient practice is the product of the self-organised community, and the formation of a community depends on individuals sharing locality and place. Or to say it the other way around, without locality, no community and without community, no self-sufficient practice. However, this conditionality also feeds back to the level of locality. Having achieved something through collective contributions strengthens the community's social cohesion. In spatial terms, a feeling of belonging to the place and the locality is reinforced "as a basis for social empowerment to protect local interests" (Korff 2003: 6).

In the urban type of society, a collective identification with a particular place is rare. In the peri-urban type of community, on the other hand, locality matters, and through the lifelong commitment to a place and its community, the cultivation of a kind of a collective "sense of place" is inevitable. Again, it is important to note that this does not necessarily mean living together in pure harmony and altruism. The results show that it is possible to have frictions or even conflicts with your neighbour and at the same time be part of the community. It is also obvious that places can bear different identities for different groups or communities. The internal of the group is not always homogeneous, and dominant visions and images may subsume others (Relph 1976: 58). At large, neighbourhoods are heterogeneous within and among themselves, but in contrast to the all-encompassing individuality of society, the collective cohesion of the communities is still crucial, most vividly expressed in the distinction between "us" and "them" (Bauman 2001: 12).

In this context, the meaning of community goes beyond the romanticised connotations of self-help and unlimited solidarity. In Maputo, as highlighted earlier, self-sufficient practices of the peri-urban community emerges out of urgent necessity rather than the altruistic sacrifice of individuals. This self-sufficiency has historical roots. It is inherent in local communities faced with state neglect and the failure of the market to provide infrastructure and affordable housing. As Jenkins (2001b: 47)

individual households have strong networks within their communities – both geographical and kinship based – as they have to rely on their own initiative in the face of a relatively weak state and market, which do little to facilitate or provide shelter for low-income groups.

It requires each member to contribute and cooperate, although not always voluntarily, but in exchange for individual freedom. Sociality in the peri-urban community is neither rural romanticism nor urban anonymity. It demands, to say it with Bauman (2001: 4), “stern obedience in exchange for the services it renders”. In this respect, the community authorities of *secretário de bairro* and the *chefe de quarteirão* represent the local institution in charge of exercising an ambiguous position. It oscillates between exercising social control and obedience over the population and providing existential services to the community. After all, they constitute the backbone of the peri-urban system of local governance which the subsequent chapter is going to address in detail (cf. chapter 6.1.).

Before doing so, we can summarise that locality, self-sufficient practice, and community constitute the peri-urban type. These three dimensions sustain each other; likewise, they are mutually dependent on each other. If just one dimension vanishes, the peri-urban type collapses. There is only a community with the locality of the neighbourhood and its organic patterns of social interaction. There is no self-sufficient practice without a community committed to maintaining the locality of the neighbourhood, the security and services it provides, and what makes it worthwhile for people to invest time and resources. The reality of everyday life is contingent on the interrelationship of these three dimensions. They will continue to play an important role throughout the remainder of this work.

6 Explaining Peri-urban Governance and Conflicts State-Society Interactions at the Peri-urban Interface

After understanding peri-urban life-worlds, the present chapter is dedicated to the second research objective of this dissertation, which is to explain peri-urban governance and conflicts. In the critical realist understanding that underlies this work, it aims to explain the contested peri-urban processes and critical events taking place at Maputo's peri-urban interface. In line with Schütz (1962: 62), these explanations are situated at the level of the "second-order" constructs presupposing the previous chapter's understanding of the actors' subjective meaning, alias the "first-order" constructs. Thus, although constituted as an independent operation, explaining is nevertheless contingent on the prior understanding.

This also entails that at the peri-urban interface, there are properties of governance arrangements and actor constellations intrinsic to peri-urban spaces and contingent on the peri-urban type. Indeed, in line with the locality of peri-urban neighbourhood life, the reach of central state institutions is limited, and regulations implemented by the state at the municipal level are often far from peri-urban realities or come to manifest themselves only gradually. However, this does not entail that peri-urban areas are free from rules and regulations. Instead, they are characterised by local governance arrangements serving as a substantial substitute for central state organs and their services. Throughout the next paragraphs, the particularity of peri-urban governance is discussed (cf. chapter 6.1.). Emphasis is put on land governance and tenure (cf. chapter 6.1.1.) and the role of community authorities as twilight institutions (cf. chapter 6.1.2.).

As it will be argued, the peri-urban governance regulations are fragile, and in particular, regarding tenure and property rights, local neighbourhood arrangements have no legal weight at the municipal level. Thus, with the expanding city, the local governance system finds itself at the crossroads, and the study area of Maputo's coastal plain represents a particular case dynamic to analyse what happens when urban structures and the state enter the life-worlds of peri-urban individuals and groups. The lion's share of this chapter assesses the associated social discontinuities and conflicts through a relational actor perspective based on two examples (cf. chap-

ter 6.2.). To this end, a proper introduction and framework for analysis are presented below. In reference to the previous thesis on the constitutive dimensions of peri-urbanity, this chapter concludes with the formulation of an antithesis of state-society interactions, which critically questions the role of the state in planning.

6.1 Local Governance Arrangements at a Crossroads

The constitutive dimensions of peri-urbanity are reflected in the rules and institutions that govern everyday life on the outskirts of Maputo. Thus, the interrelated aspects of locality, self-sufficient practice and community determine local governance arrangements at the peri-urban interface. Opportunities for interaction with the state are limited for peri-urban dwellers, particularly in terms of interaction with the state or state departments at the municipal level of Maputo or above. Interaction is limited to the neighbourhood level, realised through the already frequently mentioned neighbourhood authorities. Since the distribution of public goods and services by the state is sparse, local authorities such as the *chefes de quarteirão* represent an essential substitute for marginalised residents. They ensure the functioning of the fragile local governance system, which is ultimately sustained by the self-sufficient community. In the following, the intrinsic local entanglement of governance is discussed based on the example of land and property rights, followed by an emphasis on the particular role of neighbourhood authorities as twilight institutions.

6.1.1 Land Governance and Tenure

The field of land and property rights provides a vivid example of the local embeddedness of peri-urban governance arrangements. According to Moore (1998: 33), “property is not about things but about relationships between and among persons with regard to things”. In the context of Maputo, it is primarily about a relationship with the state. Obtaining property rights through the DUAT means successfully establishing a relationship with the state at the municipal level. It means that a municipal technician has come down from the city level to the peri-urban neighbourhood to survey the land. The house is registered in the cadastre of the Maputo Municipality. The title-holder receives the official document, a written relation of their name to the specific plot with the official stamp of the department of urban planning. It provides security of tenure. Without municipal registration, the potential threat that someone else could suddenly come along with a DUAT for the property hangs like a sword of Damocles over their heads

When asked about the importance of the DUAT, one of the peri-urban residents explained that “having a DUAT is good because the government already knows that

you live here, that this place is already yours. No one can take it away from you anyway because you already have DUAT" (interview C-10: 12). Another resident who recently received her DUAT said: "I am already safe because the municipality knows me" (interview C-09: 18). Thus, the DUAT is about gaining state recognition. To have property rights granted by the state is to be recognised by the state as a citizen living on that particular piece of land. However, engaging in this relationship with the municipality as a form of acquiring 'urban citizenship' has so far been beyond the reach of most peri-urban dwellers. As will be discussed below, it is not only the weak capacity of the state, but also the demands on the individual applicant that make this recognition a challenge. Instead, a parallel system of land titling prevails in peri-urban areas. However, this system does not involve the municipality of Maputo, but is limited to interactions with the state at the local level with neighbourhood authorities.

There are several obstacles that limit the chances of periurban dwellers to engage with the state and have their land use rights officially recognised through the issuance of a DUAT. The first is the fact that most of the neighbourhoods are organically grown, which means that there are no urban plans, which are a prerequisite for registration. The peri-urban areas far from the city have no priority in the municipal processes. Besides that, applicants face weak institutional capacities, a lack of technical staff and a complex bureaucratic process. For example, the interviewed state official from the SDPI planning department in Marracuene revealed to have at least 2,000 unprocessed cases of individual DUAT applications on his desk to be processed.

The DUAT application process is highly centralised and hierarchical. The central authorities ultimately sign off on the legalisation of each plot. It is issued at the municipal level for properties in Maputo and on the provincial level for plots in Marracuene. From the local plot to the central level, the process goes through all the intermediate departments. It begins with declarations in the neighbourhood, made by the *chefe de quarteirão* and *secretário do bairro*, to prove that the land in question belongs to the applicant. The application is then forwarded to the municipal district (administrative post in the context of Marracuene) before being sent to the municipal (provincial) level. Back at the local level, the community is consulted to give testimony before the location of the plot is formally identified by technicians and finally recorded in the official cadastre (interview C-04, cf. Malauene et al. 2005: 9–11)

Individual applicants are expected to submit to different government departments at different hierarchical levels, which is time-consuming and subject to different constraints. Malauene et al. (2005: 9–12) divide the entire DUAT and land registration process into 64 separate steps, from the compilation of the necessary documents to the final dispatch of the building permit. Accordingly, Nielsen (2011: 330) once aptly described that "few people make their way successfully through the labyrinthine ad-

ministrative process". The findings from the fieldwork confirm this statement, and the perception of the application process remains one of resignation. One of the *chefes de quarteirão* in Mutanhana explained the situation in his neighbourhood:

The majority do not have a DUAT. Most of them do not have a DUAT because of the process of getting a DUAT. A DUAT can take up to 5 years and a lot of hassle. You have to go there, go back there and then go there. In the end, people get tired and give up (interview C-01: 3).

Against this background, corrupt practices are widespread in order to speed up the process and advance the personal application (Malauene et al. 2005: 16). Accordingly, there are some isolated cases of DUATs being granted, albeit under rather dubious conditions. In one of the *quarteirões* visited in Guava, for example, there is exactly one household with a DUAT. For the rest of the almost eighty families, no DUATs have yet been issued. The spatial structure of the neighbourhood is predominantly irregular, and there are no parcelling plans. It is therefore highly unlikely that DUATs will be issued on a large scale in the near future. In turn, the justification for the singular DUAT issued surprises even the local *chefe de quarteirão*. He showed me the property in question during a transect walk through his neighbourhood. It is in a prime location with direct access to the *Circular*, which leaves enough room to speculate that special relations must have helped.

We encountered a similar situation on the Costa do Sol. One of the long-term residents of the neighbourhood had already gone through a lot of bureaucratic trouble to prepare the necessary documents. She went as far as the KaMavota district administration, where she was put off because of the lack of a plan for the neighbourhood. However, there is one family near her home that already has a DUAT. She suspects that this is because their oldest daughter "knows a person there where the DUAT is issued" (interview C-22: 10). At that time, she adds, they paid MZN 3,000 (EUR 43) for *combustível* (fuel) and someone came to take care of the DUAT.

In fact, the whole process of preparing DUATs involves significant costs for the government. The relocations of the technicians to inspect and survey the plots are only part of the story. While the waiting list for a DUAT is long and the official means are rather scarce, the payment of incentives for transportation, fuel, and the alimention of officials can accelerate the process and help to gain priority. Such practices of habitual corruption are inherent to the application process. Often, these are less embedded in official expectations, but rather reinforced by the applicants themselves, who want to expedite their DUAT process (Capaina 2021: 24–25).

In this regard, Tvedten & Picardo (2018: 543) explain that "people's relations with habitual everyday corruption are a reflection of structural coercion and the 'internalisation' or 'embodiment' of corruption as a common practice". Well-informed and well-connected individuals with the necessary means can benefit from these

conditions and establish advantageous social relationships. This applies not only to the application of DUATs, but to the context of interactions with the state in general. However, the opportunities for marginalised groups are more limited and they remain excluded from participating in important social exchanges (Capaina 2021: 23; Tvedten & Picardo 2018: 542).

In the absence of a functioning state mechanism that serves the needs of the peri-urban population, a parallel system of land titling prevails at the neighbourhood level. As mentioned in the context of peri-urban land access (cf. chapter 5.1.1.), the *chefes de quarteirão* keep a register with the so-called *ficha de morador* (resident card) of each resident, and the *secretário de bairro* provides the *declaração* (declaration) on land transactions and the occupancy of the respective plots. While the *de-jure* registration of land by the municipality in the form of DUATs serves only a small percentage of the population in the central neighbourhoods, this system represents the *de-facto* registration of land that meets the actual needs of the population (Earle 2014: 642; Andersen et al. 2015b: 429).

Kihato et al. (2013: 71) emphasise that for peri-urban dwellers, “the *declaração* is the only document that links their name to a particular space in the city” In this regard, emitted documents also serve as proof of residence and an essential prerequisite for participating in social life. For instance, when requesting for a domestic water connection, opening a bank account, applying for a loan, or school enrolment, proof of residence is needed (Earle 2014: 639; Kihato et al. 2013: 71). To say it with the words of Savage (2011: 515), “the ability to have ‘a place of one’s own’ becomes almost a precondition for social existence”.

Although not representing an official title deed like the DUAT with municipal register, it nonetheless provides some security of tenure through its registration at the local level. In the peri-urban community, the rights of occupation are recognised by its members who live together in the neighbourhood. As long as nobody of the community had a DUAT, there was also no need for it since everybody enjoyed the same status. However, Earle (2014: 642) reminds us that the system of parallel titling “holds no legal weight with higher levels of authority”. In line with the expansion of the city, more affluent citizens arrive in the neighbourhoods already with a DUAT in their hands. They are endowed with sufficient power to interact directly with institutions at the municipal level, thus bypassing the local system of titling.

In the areas of Mapulene and Chiango, the access through the *Circular* paved the way for the parcelling of previously undeveloped areas. The expansion is mediated by the municipality and targets segments of the middle-class and urban elite. DUATs are usually already granted in line with the distribution of a plot before even consulting the local authorities whether there are any traditional right holders. A power imbalance between urban and peri-urban actors is expressed in the different hierarchical levels where an interaction with the state occurs, thus whether or not

access to a DUAT is possible. As one of the *chefes* in Mapulene explained, it leads to conflicts and ultimately the eviction of the less powerful:

The issue that worries the *nativos* is that others arrive with a document. Many *nativos* who don't have a document have already left, and those who remain are trying to get a document. The person arrives with a document: 'this is my parcel', and the *nativo*: 'how is it yours if I've lived here all my life?' [...] There are conflicts between *nativos* and others with documents, many without documents already left. [...] DUATs are allocated to those who arrive, not to *nativos* (interview C-11: 2).

6.1.2 Community Authorities as "Twilight Institutions"

Community authorities are the backbone of Maputo's peri-urban governance system at the local level. However, the role of the *secretários* and *chefes* is not unambiguous. On the one hand, they stem from the *grupos dinamizadores* and still have strong ties to Frelimo. They represent the "eyes and ears" of the party at the local level. Although it was once more rigorous, the background of a socialist state apparatus and the enforcement of conformist social behaviour still echoes in the present. For example, the system of the *guia de marcha* (travel permit), was once implemented by Frelimo to control the movement of the population in the immediate post-independence period. It was based on a document issued by the local authorities of the place of origin, indicating the motive and duration of travel, which had to be presented to the authorities of the respective destination (Brito 2019: 111).

Until today, a similar procedure is in place, and new arrivals to a neighbourhood, and even visitors must present themselves to the *chefe de quarteirão*, where they are introduced to the rules of community life. As one of the interviewees explained, "the new residents of a *quarteirão* have to get advice from the *chefe de quarteirão* on how to live in the *quarteirão*, because there are some rules that apply" (interview C-12: 5). They are encouraged to take part in regular neighbourhood meetings and collective activities such as cleaning up the neighbourhood, maintaining the alleys and roads, and trimming the *espinhosa*.

In turn, the *chefe de quarteirão*, in collaboration with his *chefes das dez casas*, oversees the control of who comes and goes. He is expected to report to the *secretário* any unusual occurrences or behaviour that does not conform to the rules of community life and, if necessary, to inform the police. Once intended to prevent subversive thinking that did not conform to the political regime, some of the interviewed *chefes* even admitted to interfering in residents' private affairs, such as family matters and disputes. One even said that she had her "secret informants" to keep her informed of potential incidents.

Social interaction at the peri-urban interface takes place in face-to-face in situations of spatial and temporal immediacy. The same applies to the exchange of information between the state and the community through the neighbourhood authorities. At the Costa do Sol, for instance, the *secretário* gathers the *chefes* of the 86 *quarteirões* belonging to the neighbourhood once a week, and at the community level, monthly meeting with the population are the rule:

Everyone is obliged to attend a meeting once a month. We, as the *chefe do quarteirão*, are obliged to have a weekly meeting. Every Friday, we have a meeting with the *secretário* to tell him about all the difficulties of the people, what is happening in the *quarteirão*. And what the government wants us to do, all these laws, we have to tell it to the people (interview C-10: 1).

Thus, the information chain between the different hierarchical levels is characterised by its bi-directional flows. Whereas *chefes* report to the *secretários*, which in turn report to the district administration, the hierarchical structure guarantees that the dissemination of information also follows downwards until the household level.

From the municipal president down to the *chefe das dez casas*, the capillary-like system ensures that any important information reaches its receiver. For this reason, *quarteirões* with larger numbers of families lead to confusing situations, and if they turn out to be too populated, they get split up and the already mentioned restructurings are realised. It is aimed that one single *chefe* continues to keep the overview. Dona Johanna, the *secretária* of Guava explained:

In each *quarteirão* there have to be 60 families. This is to help us disseminate some information, some communication that we receive from the top. Now, for example, we have this COVID situation. So, this information has to flow through the communities (interview C-06: 3).

Indeed, the COVID-19 pandemic provides an illustrative example for understanding the local governance system and the vital functions that it serves. *Chefe* Rolando took the photo 15. It depicts a gathering with representatives of the households living in his neighbourhood. It was realised at his plot during the pandemic when health workers from the municipality realised awareness training on sanitary measures to prevent infections. All residents and individual family situations being known by the *chefe*, the most vulnerable individuals needing specific assistance could be identified easily and without much bureaucratic effort. In this regard, *chefes de quarteirão* were also entrusted with coordinating the allocation of government subsidies among the residents and identifying individuals with priority for vaccination.

The role of the *chefes de quarteirão* and the *chefes das dez casas* is crucial. The provision of services and infrastructures such as water and energy often depend on their

individual networking and organisational skills. To a large extent, the development of the community as a whole depends on the competencies of the local leadership, which is different and unique in each neighbourhood. Declarations issued by the *chefes* are a prerequisite for social participation, especially for marginalised families. As mentioned before, the *chefes* exert social control over their residents, but they do care about the well-being of each family. Without the existing local governance structures, impoverished people in need of protection and support would fall through the cracks of any official register. However, the fact that they are known to the *chefes* provides them a minimum of dignity, social inclusion and access to basic rights.

Community authorities uphold the local system of governance in spaces that are neglected by the central authorities. In areas where the reach of formal institutions is weak, they complement the state's most essential functions. However, in contrast to the *secretário*, the local *chefes* do not form part of the official state apparatus. *Secretários* receive a salary and have an official office building called *círculo* or *secretaría*. It is located at a central location in the neighbourhood where residents are attended to deal with administrative concerns. The work of the *secretário* forms part of public administration, and the *secretaría* constitutes the most decentralized governmental institution. It is equipped with administrative and technical staff.

In contrast, the *chefes* do not receive a salary. Their work is voluntary, although they charge smaller fees for issuing declarations to cover material costs. They also do not possess an official office building. As residents in the neighbourhood, they re-



Photo 15 Dissemination of health prevention measures during the COVID-19 pandemic

Source: Photo by *Chefe Rolando*, taken in the context of the reflexive photography method (2021)

ceive the residents and their concerns at home, mostly during the evening hours and the weekends outside working hours. One of the interviewed *chefes* summarises:

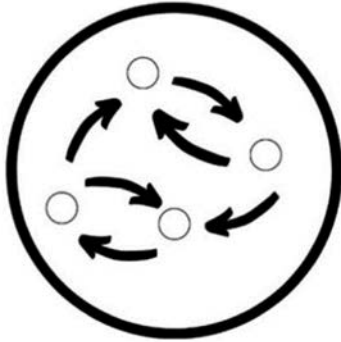
The *chefe de quarteirão* doesn't sleep. Yes, because there can emerge problems inside the *quarteirão* at any time. The *chefe de quarteirão* is here to solve all the problems of the population [...]. You can't neglect them. And to solve those problems, you don't get paid. If I leave here and go to those construction sites where the material has been stolen, I call the police or recover the material. It's not that I'll get paid. No, no one will give me anything. But as I'm here because I was chosen by the population, who said that this is the one who will solve our problems. I can't let them down. When the person wants a declaration for school, you have to make it. For work, for a bank, you have to do it. But when making all these declarations, in the old days, it was MZN 20 to make a declaration [...]. Nowadays, to make a declaration, it's MZN 100 (interview C-10: 18–19).

As this statement reveals, the ties to the local population are strong. As long-time members of the community, the *chefes* are motivated to carry out their work by solidarity and a sense of belonging to the place. At the same time, as respondents to the formal state structures, their motivation is also guided by political ideology and a sense of duty. Wielding public authority as citizens beyond the state, the ambiguous role of the *chefes de quarteirão* represents what Lund (2006) has termed “twilight institutions”. While the analytical distinction between state and society is clearer at the municipal level, the institutional divide becomes increasingly blurred the closer one gets to the ground. Even the *secretário's* tie to the state with salary and office is obvious, but is less clear whether the *chefe* is part of the state or rather of the community. Thus, at the grassroots level, the *chefes* operate in the twilight between municipality and community, between state and society. Even for the *chefes* themselves, their institutional affiliation is not obvious, as one of the interviewees revealed:

I think I am here for the citizens and also for the state. Because if I only worked for the citizens, the state would also complain, right? So, I work for both sides. For the good of the citizens and for the state, because if the *quarteirão* is not well, the state is not well either (interview C-12: 10).

Regarding access to political positions, Raimundo & Raimundo (2012: 15) explain that the mayor of Maputo is elected just as the councillors of the different urban districts. The *secretários* on the neighbourhood level, however, are not elected. The municipal government appoints them. After all, the position of the *secretário* represents a “position of trust”, as different interlocutors revealed, and long-time Frelimo functionaries mostly execute it. The procedure of assuming office in the context of *chefes* is less explicit and is different in each case. On the one hand, they are appoint-

Internal horizontal links “Strong ties”



External vertical links “Weak ties”

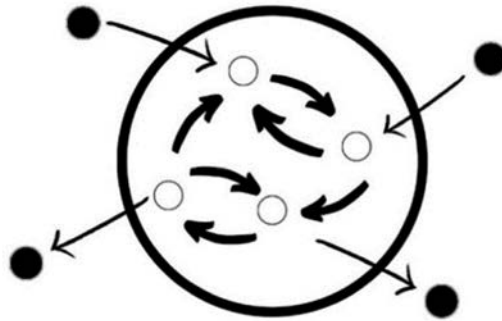


Figure 17 Horizontal and vertical links of social relations
Source: Illustration adapted from Adger (2003)

ed by the *secretários*, based on the fact of being well-respected, with good ties to the people and loyal to the state. However, the community has to approve their representative during reunions. Thus, it can reject a candidate and make its own suggestions. In practice, the term of office of the *chefes* does likewise not follow any specific rules. Interviews were conducted with *chefes* in the position of just a few weeks while several revealed to exercise their position for more than a decade.

Local governance in peri-urban areas is characterised by twilight institutions. From the city centre to the periphery, the involvement of the municipality decreases, while the role of neighbourhood authorities increases. This does not mean, however, that peri-urban areas are free from any kind of state influence. While the self-organisation of the community refers to dense patterns of horizontal interactions at the micro level, the *chefes* also provide a vertical link to the macro level, where the municipal government is located. In contrast to the “strong ties” between the community members and the social capital that sustains them (cf. chapter 5.5.), these links are analogous to Granovetter (1973) “weak ties”. By creating links between social groups and across different levels, they provide access to vital resources and information beyond the homogeneous community which is characterised by a rather limited stock of knowledge (Granovetter 1973: 1376).

To sum it up, as depicted in figure 17, the horizontal links of the strong ties provide the social support and social capital that is essential for “getting by”. However, the vertical links of the weak ties are indispensable for the social leverage and social capital that enables individuals and groups to “get ahead” (Briggs 1998; Adger 2003). A healthy balance of both types of ties and social capital is necessary for communities and governance at the peri-urban interface. Farmers in associations rely on the help

of their colleagues in the collective. Still, they also depend on the institutional support that their affiliation with the associations provides, such as access to seeds or innovative techniques or novel cultivation methods. The same is true for residents in the neighbourhood. Self-organisation among neighbours is essential for the community. So is the leverage that community authorities provide through vertical links with the state.

6.2 Assessing Peri-urban Discontinuities through a Relational Actor Perspective

The local governance system in peri-urban areas is based on direct interactions in face-to-face situations. It rests upon solidarity, trust, and knowing each other as neighbours living in the same *quarteirão* or as farmers cultivating the same *machambas*. At the same time, the system and the social protection that it provides are vulnerable and fragile. Through the construction of the *Circular*, formerly remote areas get roped quickly from the peri-urban interface's outer "zone of influence" to the urban "zone of direct impact", where the demands for land are much higher (cf. Phillips et al. 1999: 5). Since we know from the last chapters, distances at the interface cannot get measured in mathematical terms but by adding time and thus, the establishment of road infrastructures leads to accessibility and the significant spatio-temporal compression of distances. Hence, with its expanding infrastructures, institutional arrangements, and social ramifications, urbanising Maputo encroaches towards its peri-urban areas relatively fast and over vast areas.

With the growth of the city and its spatial expansion, new actors and institutions enter the life-worlds of peri-urban dwellers. It entails municipal authorities, the urban middle-class and elite, developers and investors, all about to participate in the struggle for space and meaning. The two examples of *bairro* Triunfo on the ambiguity of urban plans and land use titles (cf. chapter 6.2.1.) and the contested green spaces with land use conflicts between peri-urban agriculture and real estate developments (cf. chapter 6.2.2.) are discussed to illustrate the far-reaching effect of urban expansion processes on peri-urban communities.

Analogous to the previous life-world reconstruction in chapter 5, the analysis of peri-urban conflicts also follows an analytical framework consisting of four steps (cf. figure 18). It builds mainly on the work of Long (2001) and Jessop (2005) previously discussed in the chapters on the relational actor perspective (cf. chapter 2.3.3.) and the structure-agency dialectic (cf. chapter 2.3.4.). Both scholars explicitly foreground the role of state intervention and state-society interactions, thus making them highly suitable for the following analysis. After a brief presentation of the steps, they are applied to the empirical context of peri-urban Maputo throughout the remainder of this chapter.

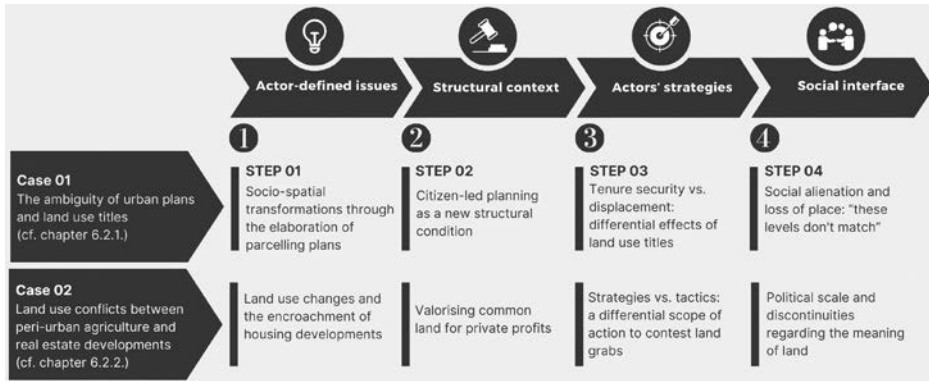


Figure 18 Application of the analytical steps for assessing conflicts

Source: Illustration by author

(1) Embarking on Actor-defined Issues

Starting with actor-defined issues represents the first step of the analysis (Long 2001: 50). It concerns the critical events and problematic social situations as they are perceived by local actors. The urban expansion into peri-urban areas is not uniform. It constitutes a complex bundle of intertwined processes with potentially far-reaching socio-spatial transformations. It involves transformations of the physical environment, the emergence of new actors or novel institutional arrangements, leading to sometimes radical alterations of the peri-urban interface's social composition. Since the implications are multifaceted and experienced in diverse ways, any a priori determination of the structural conditions by the researcher would be deceptive and epistemically wrong since people subjectively ascribe meaning to their experiences and come to proper interpretations of their changing surroundings. Thus, according to McNay (2008: 12) and his "relational phenomenology", "[i]f social action is to be properly understood, then it is important to start from the representations that actors have of the world and the way these inform action and interaction".

(2) The Structural Context and the Domain of the State

The conflicts and contestations at the peri-urban interface are subject to a dialectical structure-agency relationship. When the state or state interventions exert influence over peri-urban areas in line with the expanding city, they enter peri-urban life-worlds and define the actor-defined issues. Thus, in the second step, the structural context has to be assessed in relation to its effects on individual actors and must be developed based on the actors' understanding. It assesses the actors' position vis-à-vis the state and puts the actor-defined issues into the relevant structural context. It can become part of the structural constraints or provide room to manoeuvre to varying degrees. The domain of the state provides the spatio-temporal context and the

regulative ordering principles for understanding the dialectical structure-agency relationship. It helps to understand how actions, choices and desires are framed, serving as the foundation for the subsequent reconstruction of the social strategies of actors (Long 2001: 57–59; Jessop 2005: 49).

(3) Reconstructing Actors' Strategies and Actions

The reconstruction of the actor's strategies and actions follows the domain of the state. In this context, the actor-defined issues and conflicts are analysed in detail. In social situations, actors interact and confront each other, and they interact with the state. The peri-urban interface represents the arena where resource struggles take place, where strategies are exercised, and where social relations are deployed. In a relational sense, emphasis is put on how the perception of the actions of other actors' shapes people's own agency (Long 1997: 4). It embarks on the proposition that the social composition of peri-urban areas is heterogeneous, consisting of multiple realities. Given that agency is treated as contingent on structures, the prior structural context may privilege some actors and their strategies and actions over others, thus providing room for manoeuvre for some while constraining the projects of others (Jessop 2005: 48). The actor perspective embraces the coexistence of multiple social forms as a prerequisite for understanding how similar structural circumstances lead to the elaboration of different responses and strategies, albeit under relatively homogeneous conditions (Long 2001: 13).

(4) Detemining the Social Interface and Life-world Discontinuities

Finally, the determination of the social interface explores the life-world discontinuities between different actors. The incompatibility of actors' perspectives and world views causes most of the interface conflicts in the first place. Contradictory interests and the uneven endowment of resources and power generate these conflicts. They are nested in the differential attribution of meaning to the lived experiences, contingent on actors' knowledge and the strategic relationships to draw on. Following Long (2001: 51), at this point of the analysis, it follows the "mapping out what we might describe as a cartography of cultural difference, power and authority". The phenomenological life-world perspective goes to the bottom of the meaning attributions. Therefore, getting to its root causes makes the social contradiction between actors comprehensible and the outcome of arena struggles explainable (Long 2001: 69–70).

6.2.1 The Ambiguity of Urban Plans and Land Use Titles

The first case of the conflict analysis is situated in *bairro* Triunfo. The actor-defined issue revolves around the radical socio-spatial transformation that comes in line with the elaboration of parcelling plans (cf. chapter 6.2.1.1.). While citizen-led planning through the elaboration of plans to acquire land use titles emerged as a creative bottom-up strategy, it has meanwhile become a new structural condition under the rigid top-down command of control of the state (cf. chapter 6.2.1.2.). The consequences for the population are diverse, ranging between the provision of tenure security and displacements in line with the valorisation of space (chapter cf. 6.2.1.3.). Finally, the social interface and life-world discontinuities are discussed as social alienation and loss of place (cf. chapter 6.2.1.4.)

6.2.1.1 Socio-spatial Transformations through the Elaboration of Parcelling Plans

The physical environment in the neighbourhood of Triunfo is undergoing a radical transformation. At each corner, luxury mansions are built in a modern architectural style with three or even more storeys. Some are rather cubist and square cut with huge windows and glass fronts. Others are more reminiscent of a Roman villa with porticoes and opulent entrance areas. During the fieldwork in 2021, many of them were still under construction or had only recently been completed. They are lined up close together along the straight and paved roads protected behind the high walls and enclaves. While walking by, one can recognise the polished SUVs and swimming pools. The sunlight reflects on their surfaces and dazzles through the small gaps in the decorated gates.

However, the physical appearance of *bairro* Triunfo only began to change about a decade ago, and the long-term residents still do remember their neighbourhood quite differently. Rolando, for instance, grew up in Triunfo during the 1980s. At that time, the houses were not yet built with *blocos* but made of *caniço*. It was a common practice to cut the wood from the adjacent mangroves and use it as construction material and firewood. Over time, the *caniço* houses were substituted by brick houses and charcoal or gas replaced the firewood. He also acknowledged that there was no awareness of the importance of the mangrove forests and that they were severely degraded in the past. However, the mangroves began to recuperate and grow back with the changing material practices. He also told us that the area of Triunfo commonly used to be known by locals as *tihavene* (the place of monkeys, in Changana) since it was once surrounded by dense bushes and scrubs that were inhabited by monkeys that today no longer exist at this place.

Dona Natalia moved to the neighbourhood in the late 1990s when she and her husband started a family. Since she grew up in Maputo's central district Museu, her everyday experiences of the different comfort in the new place still resonate quite vividly:

We had a lot of sand. We didn't have walls in those days. Here, it was really *caniço* houses, precarious houses, and the fence made of that thing called [...] *espinhosa*, that poisonous plant because if you pick it, you get sick. And there was no lighting; I was practically one of the first ones to have electricity here, but it was difficult to get it. Because I said, I can't leave the Museu to come and use an oil lamp, but practically, I used it (interview C-12: 3).

Another interviewed resident of Triunfo experienced the materialities of her everyday life in a similar vein. While we were sitting in front of her house, *Dona* Felismina explained that she was born and raised in the "urbanised" *bairro* Central. After her marriage, she first lived in the nearby gated community of Condomínio Vila Sol, and only in 2003 the family moved into their current home in *bairro* Triunfo. At that time, she felt very uncomfortable because there was no water, electricity, or proper roads. There were only small and disorganised alleys through which not even a car could pass. She explains that she wanted her house, but a house with legal documentation and parcelling. For her family, she said, she wanted "an organised place because after all, we did come from the city" (interview C-25: 17.)

Over time, infrastructure like the water and energy provision arrived, although only through the collective efforts of the residents. However, an official parcelling of the neighbourhood by the municipality did not advance at all. *Dona* Felismina already tried on her own to get the legal documentation for her house in the form of a DUAT, but she was rejected since no local plan yet existed for the neighbourhood. At the same time, the municipality began to develop a vacant area adjacent to her neighbourhood for housing directed at the urban middle- and upper classes. Likewise, rumours spread that *Dona* Felismina's neighbourhood might get relocated to the district Katembe, on the other side of Maputo Bay. Thus, in the immediate vicinity of the new large-scale construction project, the lack of legal land use titles suddenly evoked the fear of eviction.

After one of the regular neighbourhood reunions, *Dona* Felismina met like-minded neighbours sharing her concerns. Eventually, a group of residents from four adjacent *quarteirões* formed a residents' committee aimed at improving the infrastructure and acquiring legal status and land use titles. After first consultations with local authorities, the municipality again rejected the group. To overcome the state's neglect in considering their interests and facing the intimidating parcelling project next door, they finally decided to contract an architect on their own initiative and to entrust him with elaborating a local plan for the neighbourhood.

In the course of the planning process, the small alleys had to get turned into roads for the passage of cars. *Dona Felismina* affirmed that they were “cutting a lot of *espinhosas*”. Eventually, some residents like herself lost a substantial part of the *quintal* (backyard). It was an arduous process of convincing until most people were ready to participate in the project without much reluctance. Yet, *Dona Felismina* emphasises the solidary procedure throughout its execution. To finance the architect’s work, families without many resources living on minimum wage only had to pay MZN 660 (EUR 9.41). In comparison, the ones with a regular income contributed through higher amounts, up to MZN 7,700 (EUR 110) per household. The committee also represented the residents in front of the municipality and handled all the bureaucratic work in the context of the DUAT application.

The realisation of the project took as long as two years until it was ratified by the Municipal Council in 2009. In the meantime, the five *quarteirões* became transformed from an ensemble of irregularly allotted properties into an organised spatial form consisting of parallel streets and rows of rectangular parcelled-out plots. For example, *Dona Felismina*’s property is almost a quadratic shape and has a size of roughly 400 square metres. It states these numbers on her DUAT document, which she received in 2009 and proudly presented during our conversation. She also proclaimed that the municipality of Maputo complimented the project’s success and that it was even exhibited at the Maputo International Fair, FACIM (*Feira Internacional de Maputo*). Due to her commitment to the committee, she was also asked by the former *secretário* to assume the position of *chefe de quarteirão*, and until today, she continues to be in office.

More or less ten years have passed from the project’s conclusion until our interview with *Dona Felismina*. The changes in the material and socio-spatial structures of the neighbourhood from then until today can hardly be imagined more drastically. Comparing two aerial images from the time of the project’s realisation in August 2009 and during the ethnographic research in May 2021 reveals the striking difference (cf. figure 19). In the five *quarteirões*, where the self-organisation of the residents led to the elaboration of a plan and the successful granting of DUATs, formerly sandy alleys are now plastered. The portion of the natural environment and vegetated spaces decreased significantly, in line with an increase in the built-up area. Luxury houses of the upper middle class and elite almost completely replaced the peri-urban *casas*. The houses now occupy the entire plots, eliminating the typical spatial composition consisting of *machambinhas*, shady trees and open space for vital socio-economic activities.

At the same time, the exchange of houses indicates the exchange and replacement of its original residents. *Senhor Alberto* lives in the street parallel to *Dona Felismina* in one of the last remaining cement block houses still enclosed by an *espinhosa* hedge. Sitting on his small veranda, he tells us that only three families remain from the original community in his neighbourhood. When I asked him when it

started that the people would leave the area, he remembered that the entire situation began to change with the attribution of the DUATs after the parcellation. At that time, he explains,

the municipality would give the DUATs to everyone in the neighbourhood, but there was this fee involved that one had to pay. Now, people who didn't have the money could only sell [the property], and then the one who bought it would pay the municipality. But whoever could afford to pay, paid, as I did (interview C-20: 1–2).

The fee that *Senhor* Alberto speaks of refers to the *taxa legal* (legal tax payment) that each applicant must pay to acquire a DUAT. When an individual is eligible for a DUAT, the municipality emits a *comunicado* (notification), which states the amount of the le-



Figure 19 Aerial images of Triunfo neighbourhood in 2009 (left) and 2021 (right)

gal tax to pay before finally receiving the official title document. The size of the property determines the value and depends on its location in Maputo. The municipality determines it. In our interview, the *secretário* of the Costa do Sol revealed that the reference value per square metre in his neighbourhood amounts MZN 75 (EUR 1).

While *Senhor* Alberto states to have paid MZN 48,000 (EUR 685), the fee on the notification of *Dona* Felismina amounted to MZN 34,000 (EUR 485).¹ She estimates that roughly 70 % of the population of almost 250 households could not raise sufficient resources for the DUAT after the municipality approved the local plan for her neighbourhood. Eventually, they sold their homes and left the neighbourhood. Ironically, the document to prove the highest tenure security eventually turned out to be the eviction notice for more than two-thirds of the community.

The lived experiences of the residents in Triunfo point towards immense processes of change that manifest in their neighbourhood. These changes are of both physical and social nature, eventually leading to the radical socio-spatial transformation of the surrounding world. These are embedded in the actor-defined issues identified, concerned with the provision of public infrastructure and access to municipal services. Keywords like “*parcelamento*” and the access to the land use titles “DUAT” stand out. They refer to reordering the spatial structure for parcelling and elaborating local plans as prerequisites for gaining access to DUATs. As emphasised, the process was being realised without the state’s involvement. Yet, the structuring domain of the state was decisive in shaping the collective organisation of the residents.

6.2.1.2 Citizen-led Planning as a new Structural Condition

In its beginning, the spatio-temporal context of the presented case was characterised by the absence of the state. More precisely, the lack of willingness and capacity to provide infrastructure or a partial urbanisation plan. Against this background, the project’s success in acquiring land use titles results from the residents’ collective action. It is based on the people’s agency and capacity to organise themselves. The collective exercise of agency by the resident group corresponds to Lefebvre’s (2001: 779) framing of autogestion. It emerges when it “refuses to accept passively its conditions of existence, of life or of survival [...] but to master its own conditions of existence”. In the context of the case, it resulted in creating a temporary group in the form of a committee. Based on the shared aspiration to improve the deficient infrastructures and acquire legal land use titles, it successfully engaged in action to address these problems.

¹ There is some inconsistency regarding the values of the legal tax payment. Both plots in question are located in the Costa do Sol neighbourhood. However, the paid amounts for the legal tax for acquiring a DUAT are considerably higher than they would be at 75 MZN per square meter.

The successful organisation was furthermore contingent on the three interrelated constitutive dimensions of peri-urbanity: locality, self-sufficient practice, and community. Indeed, all three categories were given in the context of the citizen-led planning processes in the neighbourhood. Locality refers to living together in the same street in spatial proximity. Most of the families are long-time community residents. Reciprocal interactions occur in everyday face-to-face relationships, and families share a substantial part of their life by being neighbours for years or even decades. The social relationships between the residents create social capital and lead to the generation of trust. The past experiences of achieving things as a collective further strengthened the collective intentions to act upon locally experienced problems (Atkinson et al. 2018: 170). In this context, spatial and social proximity tended to coincide to a high degree, creating an attachment to the place and an identity with it. Through the socio-spatial immediacy of several individuals, social cohesion was strengthened, leveraging solidarity action. Finally, it rendered the contributions for the architect's payment and the whole project possible.

Due to its novelty as a creative bottom-up strategy, the citizen-led planning process in *Dona Felismina's* neighbourhood previously caught the attention of other scholars. For instance, anthropologist Morten Nielsen (2011). He described the ongoing processes in the same spatial context of *Dona Felismina's* neighbourhood in Triunfo already at the time of the elaboration of the local plan. Nielsen framed it as "inverse governmentality", which he defines as "the popular and coordinated attempts at producing governmental techniques and regulations by which to be governed" (Nielsen 2011: 347; cf. Nielsen 2009, 2010). Likewise, Mazzolini (2016) or Chiodelli & Mazzolini (2019) picked up on Nielsen's work, terming the associated processes as "inverse planning". Accordingly, it is understood as "planning practices promoted by non-public actors without any previous agreement from public authorities, which have a close and nonconflictual connection with the formal planning system" (Chiodelli & Mazzolini 2019: 177).

Both conceptualisations emphasise the citizen-led initiative emerging autonomously and without much state interference. Meanwhile, the relationship of the citizen-led planning processes vis-à-vis the state has fundamentally changed. Within a decade, it shifted from a creative bottom-up strategy under the exercise of agency through solidarity and mutualism to a new structural condition under the rigid top-down command of control of the state leading to mistrust and displacements. Observing the radical socio-spatial transformations in Triunfo, where citizen-led planning was first described by Nielsen (2011), eventually aroused interest in revisiting the neighbourhood. The re-examination of the case from a phenomenological actor perspective will further allow us to understand people's differential responses taken as the basis for explaining the underlying outcomes.

The provision of urban infrastructure and services in peri-urban spaces has never been a priority of the state, nor does the municipality of Maputo have the capacity to

provide for all its citizens. The role of civil society in providing public services has been pivotal throughout the last decades (Jenkins 2001b: 33). The trigger for the interaction of the residents in *Dona Felismina's* neighbourhood is likewise nothing pioneering. The self-organisation is nothing recent, but it builds on and reflects the peri-urban ideal of “people as infrastructure”. It comprises the characteristic features of “autoconstruction” and the residents’ contributions in providing public goods through economic collaboration and collective action (cf. Simone 2004, chapter 5.2.1.). Thus, it forms part of a repertoire of social interaction reproducible under similar circumstances in the sense of Schütz’s (1962: 20) “I-can-do-it-again”.

The need for acquiring the DUAT became most urgent when the municipality started to develop the adjacent areas. Facing the fear of potential eviction, the realisation of the local plan was less the expression of a radical and counter-hegemonic tactic (Chiodelli & Mazzolini 2019: 167) but rather resulting from the attempts of “bringing the state back in” (cf. Evans et al. 1985). In this sense, the group realised on its own terms by assigning a private firm what the municipality would do if it only had the resources and the interest to provide the planning. With the urban expansion processes, the residents experienced official planning and allotment processes executed by the state just opposite the road of *Dona Felismina's* home and elsewhere. These interventions entered the life-worlds of peri-urban dwellers and became part of their resources and constraints (cf. Long 2001: 45).

The spatial form and rectangular aesthetics of what *Dona Felismina* regards as “organised” determine the structural precondition for obtaining a DUAT, which the group already internalised as part of their subjective reality (Berger & Luckmann 1966). However, the residents could process, reflect, and interpret their lived experiences. Reproducing the municipal planning standards eventually opened up a loophole for strategic action to engage with state authorities. By mimicking the spatial norms of state-led processes observed in their surrounding world, such as particular plot size and road width, the residents actively appropriated the state and made it part of their life-worlds. Nielsen (2010) described these processes of copying and appropriating official urban norms as “mimesis of the state”. Against this background, it is worth mentioning the subsequent bottom line since it aptly captures the meantime transition of citizen-led planning from the creative exercise of agency to being established as a new structural condition:

In confronting the state with an imitation of those urban norms that the state was incapable of actualising and subsequently feeding them back into the formal urban governance system, the activities of the house-builders created the ordering gaze of power by which they ought to be illuminated (Nielsen 2010: 165–166).

Ten years after the complimented success, Maputo’s first citizen-led planning process has become a role model for numerous other neighbourhoods. For instance, *Chefe Ro-*

lando lives at the Costa do Sol in one of the *quarteirões* joining to the North of the area where the first plan was approved (cf. figure 19). Similarly, the residents desired a local plan and the tenure security that a DUAT would provide. He explained that the residents first approached the *secretário*, from where the request went to the district and up to the municipal level. As Rolando recalls, the response from the top was “that it would be better to get a company to organise the area, then the municipal council, in turn, can attribute the DUAT” (interview C-08: 4). Like in *Dona Felismina’s* case, two committees were created to manage the process in the area consisting of five *quarteirões*, one committee for each side of the through road passing through the middle. In the context of the two western *quarteirões*, the residents recently received their communications and the DUATs are ready to be collected. For the three eastern *quarteirões*, the planning procedure was still in process during the fieldwork.

The interview with the local *secretário* of the Costa do Sol at his office in 2021 confirms the local dominance of citizen-led planning processes. He explained that the spatial organisation of the *quarteirões* represents one of his most important duties. He controls the work of the 87 *chefes* in charge of the work in the respective *quarteirões*. In line with the reorganisation, some families must cede parts of their plots to widen the roads. Regarding the elaboration of local plans, he puts straight that the residents now contract a company to do the planning but that this process gets accompanied by a municipal technician. According to Mazzolini (2016: 148), inverse planning processes already cover as much as 80 % of the *bairro* Costa do Sol. In this light, a shift occurred from an isolated attempt to achieve legitimacy by the state to the state actively encouraging its citizens to contract private firms if they aspire to receive land use titles.

Thus, this shift also refers to the entrance of new actors and a new area of business for architecture firms and consultants. In an interview with two employees of Vedor Lda., one of the leading architecture firms involved, they revealed some of the challenges of the planning processes. Accordingly, the lack of awareness of the objectives and benefits of local plans can impede the people’s willingness to participate and, thus, the project’s progress. Obstacles particularly emerge if the arrangement of plots is very disorganised, which demands substantial restructuring and the payment of fees. The architect represents the intermediary between the community and the municipality, and to ensure a smooth procedure, a good connection to the community is inevitable. It requires someone who can convince reluctant individuals about the advantages. Finally, these rest on the improved infrastructure, service provision, and, most important, the DUAT (interview C-26).

Notwithstanding the already lacking public resources, the shifting actor constellations stand in the best neoliberal manner. The entrance of the private sector runs in parallel with the state’s retreat from almost any public responsibility. At large, private actors substituted the role of state officials in performing their duties. The state is not involved during the procedure when the work is done or when the spending of

resources incurs. However, the municipal planning department accompanies the process, and in the end, the municipality approves the plan. Based on minimal effort, the state's benefit from the citizen-led planning processes is evident. After all, regularisation and titling programmes bear the opportunity of substantial revenues through land and property taxation.

As mentioned above, for many peri-urban residents, the bureaucratic costs of acquiring a DUAT represent a financial hurdle that is very difficult to overcome. But in addition to the one-time *taxa legal* (legal tax payment), each property owner has to pay the annual *imposto predial* (real estate tax). The amount depends not only on the size of the plot but also on the erected infrastructures and buildings as well as on the urban area wherein the property is located. The exact amounts are calculated after detailed surveys realised by technicians from the municipality. For a typical plot size of 15 m × 30 m in the Costa do Sol neighbourhood, the *secretário* estimates the annual real estate tax amounting to MZN 12,000 (EUR 171).

If the 87 *quarteirões* belonging to *bairro* Costa do Sol have an average of 50 houses, the tax revenue for 4,350 properties would be roughly MZN 52.2 million (EUR 744,461) annually. Of course, it is nowhere near that all residents will have a DUAT in the future, but the Costa do Sol also only represents one of the several dozens of neighbourhoods in Maputo. Indeed, between 2007 and 2017, the cadastre of properties on the city level of Maputo more than doubled from 19,000 to 40,000. Within the same time, property-related taxes increased by 281 %, and the share of households paying property tax increased from 5 % in 2012 to 30 % in 2017 (World Bank 2020: 6). These data on the property cadastre stem from the World Bank's evaluation of its municipal development programme ProMaputo (1997–20007). With international support, it entailed the massive regularisation of land use titles issuing more than 40,000 DUATs (World Bank 2020: 11). In this regard, Long (2001: 59) reminds us that arenas are not confined to face-to-face interactions. Instead, it is necessary to look beyond the particular spatial-temporal setting and analyse how “external and geographically distant actors, contexts and institutional frames shape the social processes, strategies and actions that take place in these localised settings”.

Indeed, multilateral actors such as the IMF or the World Bank play a crucial role in dictating local planning processes. Not only in Mozambique but across Sub-Saharan Africa, the influence on the state policies of their debtor countries is evident. Between 2004 and 2009 alone, the World Bank supported the neoliberalisation of tenure through 34 land titling projects worth US\$1 billion (Chimhowu 2019: 898). The imperative of regulation represents, according to Chimhowu (2019: 899), “the extension of the state power into a realm where it has had limited influence”. However, the local effects of tenure regularisation programmes are controversial. The “de-Soto approach” of individual titling imposed by the World Bank reveals an enormous ambiguity between providing tenure security on the one hand and market-driven displacement on the other hand (cf. Varley 2017).

6.2.1.3 Tenure Security vs. Displacement: Differential Effects of Land Use Titles

The citizen-led planning process in Triunfo produced controversial outcomes. For some individuals, like *Dona Felismina*, the living conditions improved, and she finally received the long-desired DUAT for her property. For others, however, the attribution of land use titles did not provide security of tenure. Instead, the DUAT became synonymous with the expulsion from the dwelling place and the familiar spaces of the neighbourhood. Chiodelli & Mazzolini (2019: 176) already mentioned the adverse consequences of “creeping gentrification” in line with a shift in the social composition and the physical environment of the affected neighbourhoods. In her dissertation, Mazzolini (2016) also dedicated an extensive chapter to citizen-led “inverse planning”, in which she foregrounds the pivotal role of the emergent middle-class.

However, the radical exchange of the original population in line with the process was not yet documented. I agree that the displacement processes are “not a direct result of inverse planning *per se*” but, as highlighted above, rather “the outcome of the formalisation of land possession and houses” (Chiodelli & Mazzolini 2019: 176). Nevertheless, as the actor-defined issues show, the analysis must go beyond the assumption of the homogenous group where the project’s costs are solidarily born, and its benefits are mutually shared.

By embarking on Schütz’s principle of “multiple realities” (Schütz 1945) that underlies this thesis, it has once more to be emphasised that the social composition of the peri-urban arena is heterogeneous. The phenomenological analysis enables us to arrive at a more nuanced understanding of the outcomes of the local planning processes since it “begins with an interest in explaining differential responses to similar structural circumstances, even if the conditions appear relatively homogenous” (Long 2001: 13). To what extent the results of the ongoing spatial restructuring represent enabling factors or constraints will be discussed in an instant. First, the nature of the planning processes itself, alias the *modus operandi* of the committees, deserves particular attention since it highlights how the projects’ execution is, from the outset, shaped by the interests of particular actors

Committees as Institutional Bricolage

Committees are set up to facilitate the planning process, consisting of members of the area in which the restructuring is realised. It is their task to coordinate the project, to convince the residents of the advantages, to ensure their contribution and to make them cease space if necessary for the enlargement of roads. They further collect the money for the payment of architects and planners, deal with the documentation and bureaucratic procedures, and represent the community in front of the municipality. The setting up of committees follows the logic of Cleaver’s (2012) “institutional bricolage”. It is explained as “the adaptive process by which people

imbue configurations of rules, traditions, norms and relationships with meaning and authority” (Cleaver 2012: 34).

Throughout Maputo’s history, a variety of different institutional arrangements yielded authority in local peri-urban environments: from the *régulos* and their entourage during colonial rule, to the *grupos dinamizadores* during the socialist period, until today’s structure of neighbourhood authorities with *secretários* and *chefes*. In the sense of bricolage, existing norms were adopted, and modified over time, and innovations and new rules were added. Over the course, it led to refurbished arrangements exerting authority and determining the “acceptable ways of doing things” (Cleaver 2012: 34).

The local committees represent the amalgamated and well-proven social institution of bricolage, sorting out how to do and organise things, exerting social control, and ensuring cooperation. Such as the local *chefes* are doing it today and how the *grupos dinamizadores* did it in the past. But more than that, they are not new to peri-urban life-worlds, and similar arrangements have formed part of the peri-urban everyday reality for decades. The state in the form of the municipality barely showed its face on the local level, and institutions beyond the state or in the twilight between the state and society are no novel appearance. Thus, local institutional arrangements like committees provide orientation. They are trusted, and their instructions are adhered to. Their presence is unquestioned. They are accepted as the legitimate authority.

These conditions bear the risk of capture because powerful individuals or groups seize control and steer the negotiations according to their own needs. In contrast, the good faith in the collective ideals of the disadvantaged residents becomes exploited. The employees of the architecture firm Vedor explained that the middle class usually pushes the projects since they are aware of the need to legalise the properties while possessing the necessary means. As Mazzolini (2016: 150) observed, collective regularisation represents, for the wealthier residents, the more viable option, if not the only the only solution, to acquire a DUAT, thereby willingly accepting to bear a share of the expenses of the poorer families. Individual or collective actors may thereby shape the project according to their needs and desires through the strategic exertion of what Fligstein & McAdam (2012: 17) call “social skill”, “a highly developed cognitive capacity for reading people and environments, framing lines of action, and mobilizing people in the service of broader conceptions of the world and of themselves”.

Dona Mata, for instance, lives in a *quarteirão* where the project was recently finished. At the time of our interview, the residents just received the DUAT notifications. She highly praises “the man that took care of the DUATs” in her neighbourhood because now she can feel secure with her property finally being recognised by the municipality. She further adds that he lives nearby in one of the new houses and works together with the municipality, and only because of “him doing a good job” did the DUATs eventually arrive. On the other hand, the local consultations were

realised without any transparency. Until receiving the notification, she was unaware of the involved costs and now has a due tax value of MZN 35,000 (EUR 499). She and her family are not having any formal income, and instead of providing tenure security, the notification of the DUAT has become the source of fearing eviction:

I don't know if the municipality will make a problem for me, I don't know. I can't, and I won't be able [to pay the tax]. I don't know if the municipality will expel me anyway, I don't even know (interview C-09: 10).

As soon as the projects are successfully concluded, the neighbourhood solidarity comes to a sudden standstill, and each one is left to deal with his own fate. Whereas the fees for the architects were born collectively, *Dona Felismina* affirms that the costs for the DUAT processing were already individual, "each one with his DUAT paid his own bill" (interview C-25: 4). This further points towards the assumption of actors' involvement in the committees against the common good, where "middle class residents tend to act as individuals pursuing their single interests, rather than sharing community members" (Mazzolini 2016: 151).

Yet, *Dona Marta* still has confidence in the municipal government and waits for things to get resolved somehow. She is a senior resident in Triunfo and outlived different socio-political regimes and their particular local institutions. She has put trust in the work of the committee and the promise of the DUATs in the same way as she trusts in the collective reliance of the peri-urban neighbourhood where everybody somehow depends on each other, be it through the provision of infrastructure or in emergencies. After decades of being neglected by the state, it is inconceivable for her that the sudden appearance could do any harm.

However, the erosion of community authorities' functions and the virtues of collective life follows the city's expansion through urbanisation plans and the issuance of DUATs. More affluent actors negotiate directly with the municipality, and many *secretários* enrich themselves through corrupt practices and by actively selling plots. On the other hand, the poor population continues to depend highly on the neighbourhood structures. Living from subsistence farming and informal jobs, the tax values are far beyond the financial viability of ordinary people. Whether or not the committees are pursuing the interests of the common good is not subject to any official accountability. On the contrary, neighbourhood authorities are often directly involved in promoting citizen-led planning on behalf of the higher levels, which saves fundamental resources and public spending.

Differential Responses to Similar Structural Circumstances

The realisation of local urban plans has become the project of the urban middle class and elite, encouraged and approved by the state. For instance, *Dona Felismina* and *Dona Natalia*. Both were quoted in the actor-defined paragraphs at the begin-

ning as growing up in Maputo centre and therefore being used to the infrastructure provided by the municipality. The promotion of urbanisation projects stands behind such biographies and relevant knowledge of what it is like to live with public service provision. They live in typical middle-class one-storey houses, to which they attach much importance. In contrast to the simpler *casa de blocos* (cement block houses), the *vivenda* (villa) type is considerably improved. It consists of several rooms with proper roofing and plastered and painted walls.

Although being residents for more than a decade, their urban roots make them discern themselves from the people being born and raised in peri-urban areas. As *Dona Natalia* accentuates, “we are the ones who make the city, we were pioneering, now, there come the ones who make the city as we use to say” (interview C-12: 5). At the same time, however, the growing number of *prédios* (buildings) of a wealthier group with at least two storeys stands in contrast to their own existence. In this regard, it also comes to a clear distinction and an identification with the peri-urban locale: “So, to say that where there are still some houses more or less in the style of mine, we are *nativos*, now where there are buildings it is because some neighbours have already left” (interview C-12: 5).

These examples show that peri-urban areas are not homogenous, neither in their population nor in terms of the built environment. Some residents belonging to the middle class endorse the new situation. For them, the planning process and the associated DUAT attribution were enabling factors leading to an improvement of their living conditions. On the other hand, the provision of infrastructure and streets led to the immense valorisation of the neighbourhoods along the Costa do Sol, due to its pristine location and the sudden accessibility through the *Circular* road. In this light, Jorge (2019: 103) criticises the implementation of partial urbanisation plans upon peri-urban neighbourhoods as “[g]enerators of expropriation, urban renewal, valorisation and gentrification processes”. Likewise, the World Bank post-assessment of the ProMaputo project acknowledges the risk of the very same negative impacts:

If systems are in place, new formal housing units can be entered into the land registry and cadastre, and increased property tax collection can strengthen capacity for sustained service delivery. [...] At the same time, an unmanaged process can quickly drive up housing and land prices in a way that forces poorer residents to migrate far from their places of employment or even to unsafe living areas (such as slums) (World Bank 2020: 19).

When I asked the representative of the municipality’s planning department about the ongoing displacement processes, he pleaded with the law stating that “the Mozambican state does not remove someone because of the lack of DUAT” (interview C-24: 3). Whereas it might be true that the municipality actively does not evict anybody, it neither provides any effective mechanisms to protect the traditional land

rights of good-faith occupation or inheritance. While there is the option of paying in instalments, there is no way of circumventing the arising expenses in order to receive the DUAT title deed one day. Ultimately, the state determines the amounts and has set the legal tax of MZN 75 (EUR 1) per square meter.

As previously described, the accruing values for the plots range up to MZN 40,000 (EUR 570) and are far beyond the means of most peri-urban dwellers. Of course, the state is fully aware of this reality and strategically calculates these structural constraints to convert Costa do Sol's Triunfo into an exclusive territory. The original peri-urban residents are most marginalised, and the sudden appearance of the neo-liberal state in their life-worlds restrains any prospects. To sum it up with Mazzolini (2016: 167), they are "trapped between a planning process that does not guarantee traditional security of tenure, increasing market forces, land pressure exerted by the elite and the progressive retreat of the authority".

Processes of displacements are not a new phenomenon at Maputos Costa do Sol. The origins date back to the 1980s when the construction of the first condominiums commenced (Quembo 2009). Over the decades, however, the displacement front expanded towards the periphery in line with the expansion of the real estate frontier. The radical displacement of the original population appears irresistible in line with the northward's advancement of the citizen-led planning processes. Referring back to the comparison of the two aerial images (cf. figure 19), it was already emphasised that ten years later, barely any *nativos* are left living in the five *quarteirões* where the first inverse plan was drawn.

Adjoining to the North, in the *quarteirão* where *Chefe* Rolando lives, no DUAT notifications have yet been issued, but the vivid buying and selling of properties are already taking place. Only within the last year have six families left Rolando's *quarteirão*. In some cases, the new property owners also seem less interested in building a home for their family than in realising large-scale real estate and investments. *Chefe* Rolando asserts that throughout the last two years, one buyer has individually negotiated with the families of four adjacent plots until he finally successfully bought all of them. The respective plots are just next to his own property, and he joked that he might be the next one to be confronted by the tenacity of the buyer. In this regard, Quembo (2009: 252) asserts that it is a common strategy "to deal with the displaced individually, rather than collectively: this way, the capacity for resistance is reduced more easily with individual strategies than with collective strategies".

Since it is Rolando's task as *chefe de quarteirão* is to testify and document the transactions, so he is aware of the details. Talking about money is not common in Maputo, as many interviewees mentioned. Still, Rolando could reveal that the buyer paid MZN 6 million (EUR 85,570) for each property, although a DUAT was nonexistent. However, the buyer's appearance seemed rather suspicious to Rolando since he always paid in cash for the transactions, and he brought bundles with millions of Met-

icais that he carried in a plastic bag, which Rolando eventually had to count. With the increasing commodification of space in Triunfo, property prices have risen dramatically over the last few years. This process is fuelled by the recent attribution of DUATs in the areas closest to the city. *Dona Felismina* explains that if a property has a DUAT, you “just have to add the zeros” (interview C-25: 6) behind the price.

However, whoever powerful person stands behind the gradual buyout of the neighbourhood remains obscured, and interaction in a direct face-to-face situation does not materialise. As Rolando explains, “the problem is that those who have money don’t show up; they send” (interview C-20: 19). Indeed, whereas ordinary peri-urban dwellers are obliged to be physically present in space to acquire a plot through direct interactions, more powerful actors dispose of a certain ubiquity exercised through delegation, alias “the power of existing and acting from a distance by proxy” (Bourdieu 1999: 127). Rolando’s interpretation leaves no doubt that only a functionary of the state can stand behind it who just cannot show his face appearing in person.

The long-term residents of recently valorised areas are aware of the potential profits that selling the house can promise. Likewise, the words about the experiences of neighbours spread quickly. For the attained values through the sales, it becomes possible to buy a plot and build a new house which is much larger and more comfortable than the actual home. However, one has to move far beyond Albazine or even outside the municipal borders to Marracuene or Bobole. Obviously, these places will lack planning, proper roads and infrastructure, and not to mention a DUAT. For example, Rolando is quite aware of the transformation that his neighbourhood experiences and that, in due time, he will be forced to leave as well. He already arranged a plot for him and his family in Marracuene, and as soon as someone comes with a reasonable price, they will be ready to move. Regarding the changing surroundings within his *quarteirão*, he gave me his elaborate interpretation:

This whole area here is under pressure right now [...] because it’s a “VIP” area. Everyone wants to be near the beach. Why is there so much pressure now? Because those who have money come here, they buy, they build condominiums. Then, they don’t live here. They rent. They rent, and for you to rent a house close to the beach is not like renting a house far from the beach. There is a big difference. So, the houses close to the beach are very expensive (Interview C-08: 8).

Against this background, the local arena is also characterised by another actor constellation, consisting of interactions between willing buyers and more or less willing sellers. In a conversation with a Triunfo resident, we talked about this topic, and he revealed that interested buyers approach him on his plot every few days. He joked that there is already a *bicha* (queue) with people that want to buy his property. Following Long (1997: 4), we also have to look at “how people’s perceptions of the ac-

tions and agency of others shape their own behaviour". Albeit there is no direct benefit from the infrastructure developments in the neighbourhoods such as the DUATs, residents nonetheless embark on strategies aimed at improving their situation that stand in line with the valorisation of their properties.

For instance, nearby living *Senhor* Bernardo. He told me he already received five offers from people "*que não sabem falar*" ("who do not know how to speak"). When I asked him what he meant, he had to smile and said they were offering no more than MZN 3.5 million (EUR 49,916) but that this price was just too low. "If there comes someone who knows how to talk to me, I will leave" (interview C-13: 5), is what he added. A price of MZN 7 million (EUR 89,983) would be the minimum for him, and with that money, he could buy an even larger property somewhere distant and build a new house for himself and his family. *Senhor* Bernardo does not live in a fancy villa. He lives in an ordinary one-storey house which is meanwhile surrounded by several multi-storey apartment buildings (cf. photo 16). Since the former built-up structure will be demolished and replaced throughout the process, it is not the quality of the house which marks the price but the size of the plot and, even more important, the location.

In the areas of the incremental plot-by-plot acquisition of properties, an atmosphere of departure is widespread. The families merely hold out on their plots. Many are desperate to sell, observing with melancholy the changing surroundings and the approaching buildings successively coming closer and getting larger. A feeling of insecurity dominates everyday life. Not to lose the house and be evicted, but also not to get paid too little so that a fresh start is possible elsewhere. The sense of place, attachment and belonging has faded, even in the context of *Senhor* Bernardo, who has lived in the area since 1984, indeed for almost 40 years:

If someone comes along who knows how to talk to me, I'll leave. For what reason? I can't leave my family here. Look at my age. There will come a dishonest person promising this and that. The family is family. They can give in to a value that won't correspond. Now, if someone comes along during my lifetime who can agree on the minimum I demand, I'll leave to go to an area where I know my family will be there much longer than here. This space is not ours. It's not ours because we don't have the necessary means for you to stay here (interview C-13: 5).

Many other families share the fate of *Senhor* Bernardo and his family, consisting of meanwhile three generations all living together on the same plot. He feels displaced and lost touch with his home in the city, and he faces his fate with resignation, not with half-heartedness, but neither with resistance. Ironically, the last sentence of his quote is close to Bourdieu's (2018: 111) expression that "[o]ne can physically occupy a locale without inhabiting it properly if one does not dispose of the means tacitly required for that".



Photo 16 Senhor Bernardo's home surrounded by buildings

Source: Photo by author (2021)

Indeed, although the entire neighbourhood has been planned and parcelled out for a long time, *Senhor Alberto* is one of the few residents whose DUAT application was met with the authorities' refusal. Since his house shares a parcel with two other households, he was informed to be inapplicable to acquire his long-desired status of tenure security. Accordingly, DUATs can only be attributed to individual applicants on individual parcels of proper size and shape. With his peri-urban plot that does not dispose of the exact rectangular form, he does not align with the official frames and planning norms. In short, he and his peri-urban life-world do not fit to be part of the urban world.

6.2.1.4 Social Alienation and Loss of Place: "these Levels Don't Match"

The relational actor perspective elucidates how people are differently affected by enabling factors and constraints, albeit facing similar circumstances. However, the main feature of life-world theory is not to map out our spatial existence in numerical dimensions, such as rising costs of living and the prices on the land market, but to tease out the deeper meanings of people's lived experiences. As the example of *Sen-*

hor Bernardo showed, the radical changes in the social and physical environment are accompanied by existential processes of social alienation and uprooting, which a mere focus of political economy is far from being able to do the necessary justice. Thus, there is an urgent need to examine the socio-spatial transformations' lived dimensions and its implications on everyday life. It starts with revisiting peri-urban dwellers' social space.

The natural environment in Triunfo is determined by its location on the coast. Once, the built-up area was a dune landscape with an arenaceous subsoil. As depicted in the photo (cf. photo 17a), the passage of time led to the substantial subsidence of the older houses. Due to their elevation difference, the aged houses literally appear to be sinking into the ground between the rising buildings. *Senhor* Alberto, a witness of the drastic changes since their beginning, allegorically describes how the new *prédios* were eventually built on top of the ruins of the old demolished *casas*. In the social space of peri-urban dwellers, the type of the house represents an important distinguishing feature to differentiate themselves from the urban-derived residents living in their two-storey buildings. However, with original residents suddenly becoming the minority in the neighbourhood, a new distinguishing feature becomes immanent.

Instead of merely speaking of social proximity and distance in the sense of a horizontal dimension of physical space, it is now increasingly about a vertical category. Thus, the physical level of the house has become a metaphor for the social level of its residents and vice versa. For instance, *Chefe* Rolando repeatedly accentuates that “*esses níveis não batem*” (these levels don't match) to express his resentment toward the new elite class, alias the buildings, which are slowly coming closer, gradually replacing his neighbours' homes. Similarly, when she recalls an unkind encounter in front of her home with a new resident, *Dona* Felismina clearly distanced herself. She also used a language referring to the vertical distinction of the house type. She said that “you have very arrogant people, which is the most negative part. Very arrogant, and I think that's her level; she, when she looks at my house like that because her house is a little bit more elevated, [...] the level of the house makes her level rise too” (interview C-25: 18).

Likewise, the Costa do Sol's *secretário* uses these categories to express the difference between the peri-urban original residents and the newcomers. He also uses them to explain why many families leave the area. In his position as a local politician and public representative, however, his expression leaves little room for empathy with his long-time residents:

When people surrender their houses, they return to the countryside, to the provinces. They return to their homelands where they are more familiar with their social level. Many say I'm selling my house; I can no longer afford it. The Costa do Sol was once a forgotten place, but the changes have come to stay. What else will you do if you see your

casa (house) surrounded by *prédios* (buildings)? You start to think about it. The only ones that don't surrender their homes are the fishing community and some of the farmers (Interview C-07: 3).

The photo 17b was taken on *Senhor* Alberto's plot, looking towards his neighbour's mansion, rising two more storeys over his enclosing wall. Once, with a wall and even with an *espinhosa*, it was possible to protect the personal space and maintain the essential sense of security each person needs to feel at home. But it does not prevent the intrusion of one's social space from above without hermetically sealing it. The typical plot-based everyday activities like cooking, washing, and educating your children become visible from above. If the bathroom has no proper roofing, even the most intimate moment of everyday life that nobody willingly shares is no longer private.

But even worse if the personal social space comes under attack. *Senhor* Alberto reports that the drainpipe from his neighbour's veranda leads to the sewage water directly dripping on his property. But when he confronted him, there was no sense of sympathy or understanding. Moreover, the neighbouring children once threw banana peels out of their window while his children were playing below on the property. The recent research conducted by Nielsen et al. (2021) in the nearby Maxaquene neighbourhood comes to a similar conclusion. Since it suits the situation in Triunfo, it is more than worthwhile to quote at this point:

The previously social ideal of eye-level sociality reflective of the *bairro's* one-level housing and low or non-existent perimeter fencing has been exchanged for the aesthetics and realities of condominiums and verticality. Effectively, enclaving in this format perforates social and physical space (Nielsen et al. 2021)

In *Senhor* Alberto's street, his home is the last one remaining with the typical peri-urban *espinhosa* (cf. photo 17c). No like-minded neighbours are left to greet him across the fence to his left and right. To the front, the family faces a wall of at least five metres. It is whitewashed, windowless and closed off by an electric fence. The coldness of the concrete brickwork overshadows the home of the family. When he, his wife, or his children leave the property, they find themselves in a labyrinth of walls with no exit in sight. They are crammed into a living condition that, from its appearance, finds its only resemblance to a prison yard or, more like a compound in a zoo, with strangers watching you from above and throwing their bananas. Indeed, there is nothing on eye-level, neither socially nor physically. The only direction to look for is above from where you are looked down upon.

The physical changes to the built environment of the surrounding world are enormous. However, they come with changing demands on everyday social life which are by no means less radical. It entails that peri-urban dwellers are subject to the so-

cio-spatial structures of a suburban lifestyle, which imposes its requirements on the social practices of peri-urban life-worlds. Hence, it is not only about the clashing life-worlds, but also about the respective social interaction patterns and mobilities. Indeed, the “zone of operation” of a suburban car owner differs from that of peri-urban dwellers. Instead of the small-scale movements realised by foot within the neighbourhood, the provision for the household is carried out by car. It is brought from the supermarket chains in the modern malls with their prestigious shops along the *Circular*. After all, the use of the car determines the everyday mobilities and distances, whereas the immediate spaces of the neighbourhood are becoming almost meaningless. Someone without a car is seemingly excluded from participation in the suburban lifestyle. As depicted in the picture and like I was expiring it myself, the sole entry to one of the mentioned shopping malls is exclusively for vehicles (cf. photo 17d).



a) Subsidence of older houses



c) The last espinhosa of Triunfo



b) Enclsoed by mansions



d) Entry exclusively for vehicles

Photo 17 Radical changes in the physical environment

Source: Photos by author (2021)

On the other hand, *Dona* Natalia remembers not even having to walk to the bakery in the past. Someone would always pass by selling bread while calling out loud, “*pão a lenha*” (wood oven bread). However, not only bread, but also petroleum for the oil lamp or freshly caught fish, and many other things were sold from door to door. At that time, she further explains, she wouldn’t even have to leave her children alone, but nowadays, nobody circles the neighbourhood to sell things. The vendors only pass in those areas where there is more movement. Likewise, *Senhor* Alberto said, “not even for an onion, you would have had to walk for a long”, since small stalls selling fruits and vegetables from nearby *machambas* existed at every corner. He complains that nowadays, the new ones only build their homes and don’t even leave a *mercadinho* (small market). There is no way except walking long distances since “you can’t even borrow some salt from your neighbour”. His nephew, Rolando further adds, “you even have to dislocate to buy a match somewhere. It’s complicated since the level doesn’t match anymore” (interview C-20: 26).

An organic exchange with vital interactions in face-to-face relationships and commercial activities from plot to plot once characterised neighbourhood life and peri-urban sociality. The transformation of peri-urban spaces into meaningful places represents a long and complex process of individual and collective efforts against adverse conditions. However, the vivid peri-urban social life has been eradicated. Where children were playing, streets are now shade-less and deserted. Constricted by walls from both sides, they are merely empty spaces for passage. To be only traversed by car from one place to another, as hostile environments of treeless and heated concrete channels don’t invite you to linger, much less are they convenient for pedestrians.

On the contrary, walls impede mobility and create distance and social exclusion. Fortified enclaves, like in Maputo, are, following Caldeira (1996: 303), against any “principles of openness and free circulation which have been among the most significant organizing values of modern cities”. Walls are both the material and symbolic expression of the division of the population. They protect the social space of the ones’ while limiting it for the other ones’ (Bauman 1993: 158). After all, the social space of a peri-urban dweller suffocates being placed in the mantle of the physical space of a (sub-)urban world.

According to Appadurai (1996: 184), “meaningful life-worlds require legible and reproducible patterns of action”. While the neighbourhood represents the context for the life-world and provides the frame of reference for social action and interaction, its disruption leads to chaos and disorientation. The ordinary tasks of everyday life are no longer feasible. It also concerns the livelihood of those dependent on their plot-based activities and services, whether as a tailor, a hairdresser, or by selling coal and collecting aluminium. What makes the neighbourhood as a place become peri-urban with its particular identity is lost since the radical changes of the environ-

ment “render it inadequate for the purposes of social interaction and individual behaviour” (Relph 1976: 60). For the original peri-urban dwellers, the loss of the place identity comes with what Relph (1976) calls “placelessness”.

Although the neighbourhoods are not homogenous, peri-urban dwellers nonetheless share a collective life-world. It provides an orientation for spatio-temporal manoeuvring through everyday life and socio-spatial interactions. It is shared within the “peri-urban in-group”, where residents and neighbours stand in a reciprocal “We-relationship”. It is characterised by direct interaction in face-to-face relationships. However, it stands opposite to the unilateral “They-relationship” with the “urban out-group”, which consists of the new residents with whom no direct interaction arises. With the out-group gradually becoming the majority within the neighbourhood, the former insider suddenly becomes the outsider in his or her previously familiar surroundings. In the most extreme case of *Senhor* Alberto, the context can be best described by a situation of “existential outsidership”, characterised by “an alienation from people and places, homelessness, a sense of the unreality of the world, and of not belonging” (Relph 1976: 51).

Indeed, *Senhor* Alberto’s surrounding world shifted from a once meaningful place back to empty space again. “*Aqui já não há nada*” (There’s nothing here anymore) (interview C-20: 15) is how he actually described his surroundings, and the physically close but socially distant neighbours are what Schütz (1970: 221) would call mere “points in social space”, apprehended as a type but not as a concrete individual. In the anonymity of the suburban setting, fortified and enclaved, Bauman (1993: 155) “arcane art of mismeeting” dominates the socio-spatiality. It represses space to its physical dimension and prevents it from becoming a social space. Instead of engaging in face-to-face interaction, the intersubjective understanding between individuals rests on denying each other’s subjectivity. The consequences are dramatic for peri-urban dwellers, being dependent on the inherent sociality and place-based interactions. If the surrounding world loses its qualities intrinsic to peri-urban life-worlds and indispensable for existence, individual residents are literally being displaced without changing their physical location. Thus, they have no other option than moving somewhere else to get back into place.

The three constitutive dimensions of peri-urbanity are lost in Tiunfo. The neighbourhood no longer provides its intrinsic logic. It has lost the ingredients indispensable for mastering peri-urban life and the recipes for manoeuvring through the spatio-temporal surrounding world. *Senhor* Alberto can no longer cultivate his plot-based activities in an open space like he used to without the feeling of being watched, estranged and out of place. The commercial activities through merchants and little stalls that *Dona* Felismina regrets no longer exist. They were upholding self-sufficiency, such as the regular gatherings with former friends and neighbours. Individuality has taken over collective life, and the urban society has swallowed up the peri-urban community for good. Bauman (2001: 5) writes, “once ‘unmade’, a

community cannot be, unlike the phoenix with its magical capacity of rising from the ashes, put together again”.

Finally, the ongoing processes in Triunfo represent what Iaquina & Drescher (2000: 3–5) described as the absorption of peri-urban places and their stepwise annexation through the outward expansion of the urban fringes. If this occurs, they further raise the critical question about the social-psychological orientation of the residents. When rural or peri-urban places become absorbed, what do the people do? The emphasis on the socio-spatial experiences of people, which are too often omitted, provides an answer. The places’ built environment may change from rural or peri-urban structures to suburban or urban features with condominium and residential complexes. However, the life-world of a peri-urban dweller does not alter just because of the changing built environment in the surrounding world. Once again, this substantiates this thesis’ argument that peri-urban spaces are not transitional and not a residual of the urban, but inherent in their logic and foremost meaningful.

6.2.2 Green Spaces Contested: Land Use Conflicts between Peri-urban Agriculture and Real Estate Developments

The analysis of the second case leads us once again to Maputo’s peri-urban green zones. As depicted earlier, the *machambas* represent a meaningful place for thousands of farmers (cf. chapter 5.3.). It is not only by sustaining their livelihoods and providing food for the city but also as a place with a history that has formed the particular cultural identity of the peri-urban farming community. The actor-defined issue articulated by the farmers’ associations refers to the ongoing land use changes and the encroachment of housing developments (cf. chapter 6.2.2.1.). The associated structural context and the domain of the state are discussed as the valorisation of common land for private profits (cf. chapter 6.2.2.2.) affecting people’s scope of action in differential ways ranging between strategies and tactics (cf. chapter 6.2.2.3). Finally, the social interface and life-world discontinuities are discussed as the political scale and discontinuities regarding the meaning and value of land (cf. chapter 6.2.2.4).

6.2.2.1 Land Use Changes and the Encroachment of Housing Developments

The collective production fields are located in the green Mahotas Valley. In an elongated belt, the *machambas* of eleven associations line up next to each other. From South to North, a small road of pounded earth provides access to the cultivation fields (cf. photo 18a). I walked along this path regularly in the morning on my way to the production fields. It stretches for several kilometres and passes along the areas of

the different associations. In the valley's centre, the path leads to a large tree that provides shade for gatherings and reunions. Just a few years ago, the tree used to mark the heart of the green zones. However, the encroachment of the urban expansion areas already reaches deep into the *machambas* (cf. photo 18b). The reddish building bricks and sand stand in strong contrast to the lush green of the salad and cabbage, the palm and banana trees. The red sand does not come from the area. It is brought in from the hinterland to fill the ground to make the wetlands suitable for construction. The rattling trucks that bring the sand leave their traces, and the reverberant construction noise almost predominates the natural sounds of singing birds and chirping crickets. It is the symbol of the local collision of two different worlds, the world of small-scale farmers and the world of upscale housing developments.

During one of our go-along interviews, Matias explained to me that all the spaces east of the path no longer belong to the associations (cf. figure 20). Nonetheless, the spaces on and in between the construction sites are still used to plant vegetables until the very last moment before the ground is cleared for construction. From the *Circular* westwards, the developing area moves forward bit by bit. It slowly swallows the green spaces and converts them into building sites. At the height of the Armando Emilio Guebuza Association, building expansion is most advanced. There is not much left before it reaches up to the KaMavota plateau, which would lead to a break with the spatial coherency and the unbroken South-North continuity of the associations.

Adriano is a member of the board of the Armando Emilio Guebuza Association. He holds the position of the vice-president of the general assembly. The association has 240 members. Most of them are female and form part of an older generation. Adriano is in his 20s and represents one of the few members of a younger generation. The membership on the board represents an opportunity for him to change how things work, and he is very motivated about it. We met him in the green zone of KaMavota during one of our lived explorations. He approached us hastily since our



a) Access path to cultivation fields



b) Contrast between construction sites and vegetable production

Photo 18 Collective production fields contested

Source: Photo by autor (2021)

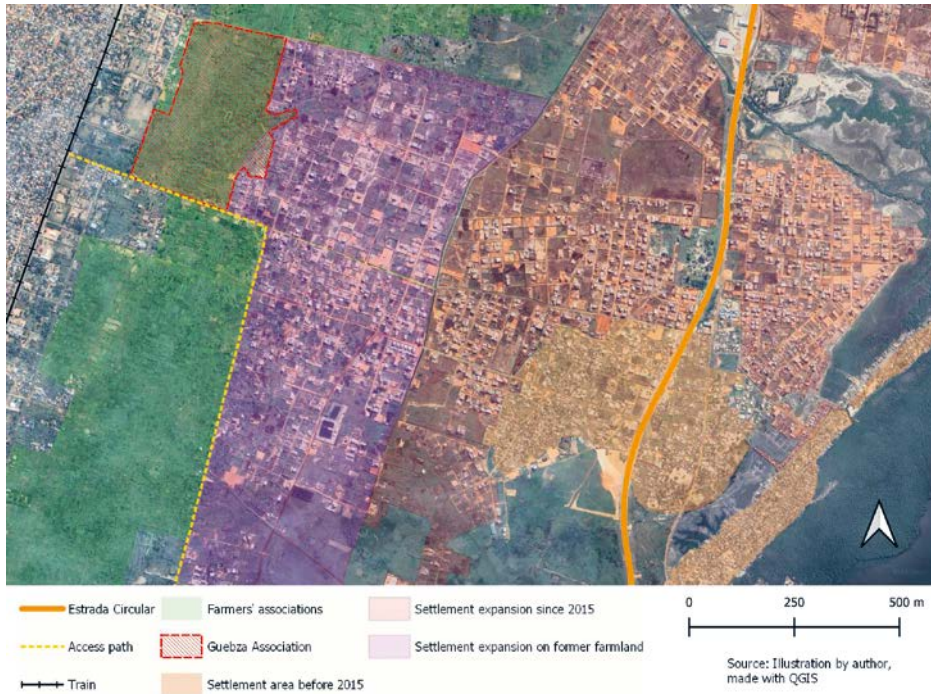


Figure 20 Land use changes and housing encroachment in KaMavota

presence as strangers made him suspicious, as he later admitted. It is very common for people to stroll around to buy land, and currently, there is a major land dispute around the area where we were standing. There are many conflicts, and the association has recently suffered from the usurpation of significant areas. After we clarified the situation, he invited us to visit the association on another day to explain the incidents in detail.

Some days later, we sat with him under a tree in front of the association's building. It is located on the inland side of the green zone, opposite to the *Circular* and the coast. From our elevated position, Adriano points towards the frontier of the new residential buildings that expand into the *machambas*. A few years ago, it was still full of banana trees instead of buildings and from here to the coast, not a single construction was visible. The area of the Guebza Association once reached close to today's ring road, and vast areas of vacant land were used as pasture for livestock. Over time, the livestock disappeared, and in the lowest parts of the association, the conditions for agriculture changed severely. Adriano explains that due to climate change, the salinity of the soil increased and made it difficult for any production.

The association was in possession of a DUAT, according to which the land use was tied to agriculture. As a DUAT holder, utilising the land and practising the activities foreseen in the DUAT is mandatory, whether for farming, housing, or economic and

industrial purposes. If not fulfilling the use, the DUAT can be withdrawn by the state. Since a portion of the association's area belonging to the DUAT became fallow and without any use, there emerged the need to use the area in alternative ways. As Adriano explained, the association approached the municipality to reclassify the land use of the respective area and change the activity from farming to housing.

The *mudança de atividade* (activity change) was requested. We ourselves submitted the change of activities to the municipality. We did the necessary documentation because when the change of activities is made, a percentage of land goes to the municipality, which is 30 %. So, in this whole area that we have, we cede 30 % to the municipality, we keep the rest with the 70 % (interview C-17: 3).

The *mudança de atividade* for the unused areas was requested in 2009, long before Adriano was even a board member. During another meeting with him, he showed me the official letter of approval from 2011, which was sent by the municipality to the association. The Municipal Directorate of Urban Planning and Environment – DM-PUA (*Direção Municipal de Planeamento Urbano e Ambiente*)² issued the communication. Accordingly, 50ha of the total area of 106ha was approved to be detached from the association for housing construction. The municipality parcelled the detached area, and the mandatory 30 % was handed over for public purposes.

The utilisation of the land for agricultural production continued on the remaining half of the detached area. More distant from the sea, the elevated parts of the association did not suffer from saltwater intrusion. On the contrary, the soil quality was promising to sustain future farming practices. Furthermore, the association had its DUAT granted by the municipality and, therefore, the expectation to continue with the best possible tenure security. However, the growing number of real estate developments and the potential gains on the evolving land market led to the infiltration of the association by a few individuals with the malignant intention of depriving the farmers of their fields and converting them into development sites. Since the activity change, the association suffered from the usurpation of significant areas. Adriano is seriously preoccupied with the situation and repeatedly says, “the only problem I can see is housing”. The encroachment of the housing represents the “enemy of the associations”, he emphasises, the only real problem that would threaten to continue farming in the future.

The Guebuza Association does not represent the only association where land is being converted in line with the requested activity change. Throughout the green belt of KaMavota, the majority of associations already detached at least a portion of

² DMPUA is the former name of the municipal authority for territorial planning, which is now DMOTC.

their areas. The Maguiguana Association, closest to the city, even ceased its activities entirely. *Senhor* Tobias, the president of the union of Maputo's associations, explained this fate as a common situation where all the associations find themselves confronted with:

In Kamavota, there have always been 12 associations. One association almost no longer exists because of a *mudança de atividade*. So, the whole area of the association is already a residential area. As you say, there are many land conflicts in Kamavota because Kamavota is close to the beach and everyone looks at the area with great interest in putting infrastructure there with housing. So, there is more conflict between the agricultural spaces and the housing space. So, it is a struggle that we are facing (interview C-23: 5).

The perspective of Adriano and the situation of the Guebuza Association does not display an exceptional case but is rather representative of the life-worlds of Maputo's peri-urban farmers. The land use changes and conflicts in line with the process called "*mudança de atividade*" ("activity change") and the progressing "*habitação*" ("housing") are the critical phenomena that matter. They constitute the actor-defined issue of the problematic situations faced, and it is under those categories that urban processes enter the life-worlds of farmers. Since they are subjectively experienced and interpreted, the local perceptions generate specific behaviour, social strategies, and action. These are underpinned by the contested processes of regulating and ordering in the domain of the state.

6.2.2.2 Valorising Common Land for Private Profits

In contrast to the areas of infrastructure provision and planning in peri-urban neighbourhoods, the state support for peri-urban farmers in Maputo rests on a strong connection. The support is historically anchored since the farmers' associations emerged from former state collectives (cf. chapter 5.3.). Thus, peri-urban collective producers find themselves in the advantageous condition of already standing in a relationship with the state. One of the greatest benefits that can be attributed to these institutional relations rests on the access to DUATs that most associations within the municipal borders of Maputo possess. The peculiarity of the DUATs that belong to agricultural associations is twofold. First, they are collective, which means that titles are not given to the individuals but to the association as a legal entity, which then allocates smaller plots among its members. Second, the use of the land on the DUAT title is restricted to agriculture exclusively, and activities not dedicated to farming are technically illegal. Through the collective DUAT, individual farmers cannot sell the land to third actors, and the land's reservation for farming reduces the risk of usurpation (Sitoe & Sitole 2019: 11).

Around 2010, however, the associations' land use changes commenced. Decisive was mostly the increasing soil salinity. Large areas of the low-lying plains already suffered from low productivity, and cultivation was no longer profitable. In addition, large areas are frequently flooded during the rainy season, while the growing climate variability aggravated the production conditions in general. Since all land resources constitute state property, Maputo Municipality has the sole authority to attribute land and land use titles. Therefore, any *mudança de atividade* must be applied at the municipal planning department (DMOTC). In the 2013 Partial Urbanisation Plan for the Costa do Sol, the municipality highlights that the associations requested the activity changes. Just for the administrative area of *bairro* Costa do Sol alone (Albazine excluded), the ceded area measures 266 hectares. At that time, land use changes were applied by four associations, namely Tomas Sankara, Armando Emílio Guebuza, Maguiguana, and Costa do Sol (CMM 2013a: 24).

On the side of the associations, the decision to apply for a land use and activity change has to be sustained by the collective and democratic decision of the members. In addition, soil tests are mandatory to confirm that the land concerned is indeed unproductive. Throughout the process, the respective area affected by the activity change becomes detached from the collective DUAT. 30 % of the detached area is handed over to the municipality as a concession for the subsequent allotment of the area which goes in line with the elaboration of a plan. The remaining 70 % no longer belong to the association as a collective entity. They are attributed to the individual members who previously cultivated the respective patches. However, having your *machambas* transformed into a parcelled plot does not automatically entail obtaining a DUAT or a building permit. On the contrary, the state collects twice from the farmers. In addition to the transfer of land, the legal tax fees for the DUATs likewise apply.

For example, a part of *Dona Luisa's* area became converted from *machambas* to a development area. However, to acquire the DUAT of a surface of 50 m × 50 m, the municipality asked for more than MZN 500,000 (EUR 7,121). Although she wants to hand the plot over to her son, she has no choice but to sell it since the associated costs are simply not affordable. On the other hand, she says that just for the value of the tax fee, she can buy an entire property elsewhere. Against this background, no peri-urban farmer will build a residence on his or her former *machamba*. But by selling the respective plot, substantial amendments to the personal economic situation are made possible. Other farmers, in turn, will be without land if their patches are located in the area transferred to the municipality. It demands the reallocation of plots within the associations while the whole situation, in its complexity, bears enormous potential for conflict. For *Senhor Tobias*, the balance of this state-society relationship has an unambiguous result:

The association suffers the most, because the municipal council has found a way to take advantage of the associations. There is no alternative way, but this has created a dispute because this is 30 % of farmers' areas. So, at some point, some peasants lose their areas, and we need to do some gymnastics to be able to fit them into the areas of the other farmers. So, the reality we have is that there are disputes in all those areas with activity change. There are conflicts because some people lose their areas in favour of others, so it is kind of complicated (interview C-23: 6).

On the other hand, there is the state's perspective on the ongoing land use changes. According to the interviewed official of the municipal planning department DMOTC, 30 % of the detached areas represent the necessary compensation for the spent resources in the area's allotment. It is destined to serve the state's interest and the needs of the public. In this regard, he mentions the construction of schools, hospitals, public green spaces, and recreational areas. He emphasises that everything must be based on a designed plan according to which the subsequent parcelling becomes realised. When I asked him about the attribution of building sites, he pointed out that plots are not sold since selling land is illegal. Instead, they are distributed according to the needs of the population.

The procedure of developing land under the 70 % vs. 30 % distribution is not restricted to the land use changes of the farmer associations. As the *secretário* of Albazine disclosed, it has become a common practice to transform the land of *nativos* into construction sites. The scope of the affected areas is immense, such as the immense valorisation of the land. In particular along the coastal plain in peri-urban KaMavota. Although the state is the sole proprietor of land on the national level, the land resources at the state's disposal on the municipal level are strictly limited. What appears to be vacant or fallow land mostly already belongs to traditional resource users with customary land rights. The bargain with the associations of realising land use and activity changes suddenly opened access to land in areas whose valorisation coincides with the corridor of the erected *Circular*.

The associations are in the possession of legitimate use rights. The production of vegetables in the green zones of KaMavota sustains the livelihoods of thousands of farming families while serving the municipal markets with locally grown food. Hence, an orientation towards a common good is undisputed. The state, however, or more likely individuals within the state apparatus, eventually found a way to recapture land and to convert it from a common resource into the profitable asset serving the gains of just a few individuals opposite the general public.

Against this background, a critical assessment of the hitherto completed developments reveals who the beneficiaries are, and which social class lives in the area. Orthogonal grids of parallel streets meanwhile cover the former green spaces granting motorised access to the properties on both sides of the *Circular*. The plots have a generous size. Most seem to be owned individually, but a few gated commu-



Photo 19 Real estate constructions and urban expansion on former agricultural land

Source: Photo by autor (2021)

nities stretch over entire blocks. By and large, it is pompous villas in different states of completion, ranging from bare brickwork to enclaved and whitewashed facades (cf. photo 19).

Schools, hospitals and similar public facilities are nowhere to be seen. The green lawns and swimming pools beyond the high-rise walls are the only reminiscence of recreational spaces. However, these might be for anybody but surely not for public use. Contrary to the municipal employee, the neighbourhood *secretário* from Albazine does not mince his words. He confirmed what many interviewees suspect, that when it comes to the distribution of land according to the state's interests, it is mostly about the interest of deserving “*dirigentes*” (leaders), alias the high-ranking Frelimo leadership. In this regard, Adriano also told us that the plots that were transferred to the municipality are ironically called the “*zona presidencial*” (presidential zone) since it accommodates the most prestigious building projects.

Beyond the municipal borders, the scope of the land allocation to private actors seizes entirely different spatial dimensions. Whereas in the partnerships with associations and *nativos*, the municipality is in charge of laying out the streets and realising the allotment, it is different in the Marracuene district. In fact, the state steps back from its provisioning role by simply turning large areas of land over to private enterprises without spending any resources. Beyond Maputo in the Marracuene neighbourhoods of Mutanhana and Guava, several large-scale investments are simultaneously realised along the *Circular*. As depicted on the map (cf. figure 21), numerous spaces are already fenced and walled off, reserved for the economic purposes of individual enterprises while being detached from the potential use of the wider public. The spaces line up next to each other with excellent connections to the city via the *Circular*, thus assuring perfect conditions for their valorisation and returns of the investment.

By far the largest area belongs to the investment of a Chinese state-owned company Jiangxi International (CJIC – China Jiangxi Corporation for International Economic and Technical cooperation). On an area of 50 hectares, the project aims at

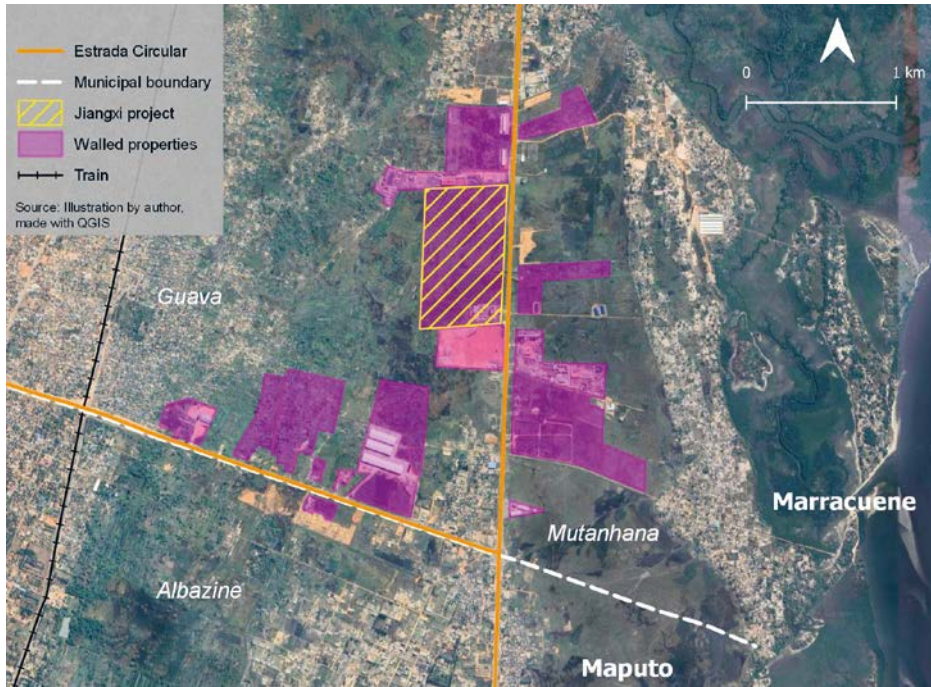


Figure 21 Large-scale land occupations in Marracuene

building 500 housing units during the next years. The project promises a secluded and protected life. Distant from the city but still accessible by car, it entails all the amenities of a modern urban lifestyle. Its superlative projections involve proper shops and leisure facilities, its own school, and a health centre. At the moment, the scenery of the place is rather strange. The vast area continues almost empty, but a protective wall surrounds it, and an armed guard occupies the entrance gate. Apart from the central office building, only the first two buildings with model apartments have been built so far (cf. photo 20).

During our visit to the already furnished and decorated showrooms, the real estate agent explained the price structure of the apartments soon being sold. Accordingly, prices for the smallest housing unit with three rooms (T₃) start at USD 150,000. Four rooms (T₄) are offered for USD 250,000; the largest unit with five rooms (T₅) is sold for USD 350,000 (interview C-30). In May 2021, the site received a press-friendly visit from the political leadership consisting of the Governor of Maputo Province and the Marracuene District Administrator. Accordingly, the project worth USD 100 million is expected to “address the demand for housing among young people” (Club of Mozambique 2021). The governor’s statement, however, must appear cynical for the nearby living residents of Mutanhana since the prices are far out of reach for ordinary families.



Photo 20 Model apartments of gated community project

Source: Photo by autor (2021)

The current developments in peri-urban Maputo stand in relation to larger processes of economic restructuring. In line with the neoliberal turn, new private actors entered the field, and the role of the state changed from providing land and service towards coordinating the activities of other actors, all in an attempt not to lose control over its sovereign territory but to come out as a beneficiary (cf. Nielsen & Jenkins 2020). According to Filipe & Norfolk (2017: 1), it results in a “shift in land use from peasant smallholdings to real estate development [...] and customary structures that were the mainstay of equitable local land allocation and land administration are coming under increasing pressure”. Small-scale peri-urban farmers are constrained by the new structural conditions that the state imposes on the particular spatio-temporal context of Maputo’s coastal neighbourhoods.

In the past, the Costa do Sol was a “forgotten place”, as the *secretário* describes it, and farming was undisputed. On the contrary, agricultural production was praised as the backbone of society at the country’s independence in 1975. As Raposo et al. (2012: 191) argue, it took “10 years of transition towards the creation of an African socialist city and 25 years of building a neoliberal city that is consolidated in the new millennium” (own translation). With the transformation of the socio-political system, the state’s attitude towards peri-urban agriculture changed. With the increasing scarcity of space, the *machambas* became an obstacle to the commodification of land. With the land use and activity change from farming to housing, a mechanism was created to further boost its valorisation and to fill the municipal budget. While being tolerated as a farmer, people whose livelihood depends on subsistence farming are not desired as residents in the newly valorised spaces. The financial demands of an individual DUAT are unreachable and the particular flood-prone location requires fundamental earthwork investments. As Adriano puts it, “unfortunately, we don’t have the conditions to build a house here because of all the necessities that the land demands” (interview C-17: 11).

On the other hand, the emergent structures present not only a structural constraint but also opportunities feeding back to the level of agency. Local actors are

aware of the changes in their surrounding world. Based on processes of learning from experiences, actors make their decisions and act upon them (Long 1997: 9). They perceive how land sales can suddenly lead to significant economic gains. For instance, at the time of the data analysis, a property of 50 m × 50 m was for sale at the former Guebuza Association. It was published on a local online platform (maisvendas.com.mz) at MZN 3.75 million (EUR 53,481). These prices are meanwhile average for the Costa do Sol and benefitting farmers are suddenly in a position to buy cars and other and other consumer goods, that would never have been conceivable through agricultural labour.

Following Jessop (2008: 31), we finally have to emphasise that “the state is neither a unified subject nor a neutral instrument”. Whereas in the tradition of the socialist past, the municipal department for agriculture provides substantial support to the associations serving as a strategic partner, it is the department for urban planning standing behind the promotion of land use changes. As Mathias told me, the municipal department for agriculture sometimes witnesses the association’s requests for land use changes only after its request with the department for urban planning, although the procedure should be vice versa. To those situations, it has to be added that the obligatory soil samples are likewise bypassed to promote land sales in areas that would prove sufficient conditions to continue agricultural production. Following the practices of the political leadership, the prospect of personal gains through individual state representatives permeates all the way down to the locality of neighbourhoods. To conclude it with Jessop (2008: 31), instead of being unified, the state constitutes “an asymmetrical institutional terrain on which various political forces (including state managers) contest control over the state apparatus and its distinctive capacities”.

6.2.2.3 Strategies vs. Tactics: a Differential Scope of Action to Contest Land Grabs

Maputo’s coast represents the place where, at this specific time, the sale of land bears the opportunity to make substantial economic gains. It provides what Jessop (2005: 49) calls “spatio-temporal horizons” of action upon which actors orient their actions. In line with the underlying structure-agency dialectics, the structural tendency of valorising land further reinforces the tendency of land use changes and discourages the practice of peri-urban agriculture. However, not because of the initial conditions of low productivity but rather as “strategically calculated” and “structurally oriented action” (cf. Jessop 2008: 41–42). In the face of the social heterogeneity of the peri-urban interface and the different perspectives of the members within the associations, options for action are differing and struggles between the diverging interests of actors are inevitable, resulting in different types of land conflicts.

Contesting Land Usurpation through Strategic Action and Relationships

The abovementioned case of the Guebuza Association stands out as particular. As Adriano explained, the farming collective suffered from the deprivation of their production fields, taking the scope of land usurpation to a hitherto unprecedented level. At the time of the *mudança de atividade*, a group approached the association's general assembly. They offered to act as intermediaries to provide support with the administrative processes of dealing with the documentation and official guidelines. However, they wanted to take over the land for their particular interest. The aged president of the association was trustful and eventually conferred them the right to represent the association in front of the municipality.

After the sudden passing of the association's president, it got out that the infiltrating group accomplished changing the association's name and land use activity. Thus, from farming as "Associação Agro-Pecuária Armando Emílio Guebuza" to habitation with the new name "Associação Habitacional Flamingos". With access to the association's documents and the individual membership files, the conversion was officially implemented on behalf of the association's general assembly. In 2017, the transfer was eventually published in an official governmental communiqué as a legitimate act (República de Moçambique 2017).

A DUAT provides maximum tenure security, and in practice, the risk of any usurpation should be minimal since the respective parcels have an official entry in the cadastre at the municipality. However, the treacherous strategy deployed in the context of the Guebuza Association raises the attempts of land grabs to a hitherto non-existent level of ingenuity. Adriano summarises the situation as follows:

In line with the activity change, there were people who were not farmers [...], but they worked together with the association as facilitators. They weren't many people, just one person, but when our president [...] lost his life, they took advantage of it. They bypassed the association and created another association using our own identities just to take advantage. So, there is the association that says to be Flamingo within the Armando Emilio Guebuza Association itself. We have this big problem (interview C-17: 13).

On the local level of the association's members, the incidence evokes mistrust of the board of directors with statements like "these people have low culture" or likewise, "they love money too much". Indeed, the former president was even portrayed as having sold the *machambas* for his personal gain:

He sold it, he was the association's representative. He benefited. He doesn't even have a school and doesn't know how to speak Portuguese [...]. Suddenly, he had a car and two wives. Where did he get the money from? We were surprised, suddenly he had money (interview C-44)

The name “Flamingo”, in turn, evokes distress. Among the members of the Guebuza Association, it exists the notion of a person with the name Flamingo who must have bought the area to build houses. Without being able to picture a face behind the occurrences, it inevitably leads to the typification of Flamingo as an individual person. He represents the stranger with whom one potentially could have face-to-face contact if he would only show up on the *machambas*. The direct experience of the other standing vis-a-vis in spatio-temporal immediacy represents the typical type of interaction for most farmers. For them, it is how relationships manifest and struggles are played out, but indirect interactions with authorities across institutions or hierarchies are beyond the scope of knowledge.

The infiltrating group or individual took advantage of the farmers’ vulnerable position, who themselves(s) possess the required knowledge of acting between different social domains and hierarchies. “Those who become skilled in managing such ambivalent positions”, as Long (2001: 70) points out, “are able to deploy them to their personal or political advantage”. However, being aware of this position can also serve as a strategic partner and broker between different levels as it is the case with the farmer associations’ institutional embedding (cf. figure 22). Whereas the farmers live in marginal environments and lack access to land, the disposal of state land to the associations through the municipality provides them the parcels to grow food and, thus, the basis of subsistence. As the previous chapter made clear, access to an individual DUAT for housing is unattainable for peri-urban households. For associated farmers, however, land access is granted from the outset. The state support is rooted in the past, when Frelimo prioritised agriculture through collective production. Although against severe adversities, the supportive environment is maintained through ties of individual farmers through the associations from the local level of the field up to the scale where central state institutions allocate resources.

As depicted in figure 22, on the side of the state, there is the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development – MASA (*Ministério de Agricultura e Desenvolvimento Rural*). Below, at the municipal level, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries, Livestock and Extension – DAPPE (*Departamento de Agricultura, Pesca, Pecuária e Extensão*) coordinates agricultural activities. It is in charge of agricultural extension work, the distribution of inputs, and the coordination of activities. It is also the head of *Casas Agrárias*, which are equipped with staff and resources to implement those services. They are located in proximity to the production areas in each urban district and serve as a space for meetings and knowledge exchange. The function of the *Casas Agrárias* is essential as they represent both the physical and social institutions mediating and bridging between the municipality and the associations. The interests of farmers are likewise represented at the district and municipal level by the Union of Farmers’ Associations – União (*União das Associações dos Agricultores da Cidade de Maputo*) and at the national level by the National Union of Peasants – UNAC (*União Nacional de Camponeses*). The efforts of civil society organizations such as the local NGO Abiodes further complement the support.

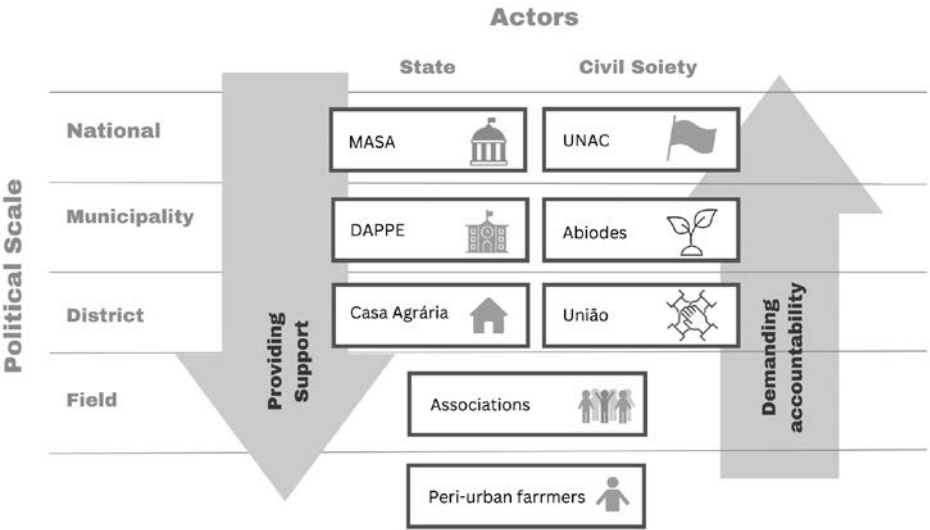


Figure 22 Institutional embedding of Maputo’s farmers’ associations
Source: Illustration by author

Against this backdrop, the sustained persistence of agriculture in Maputo’s peri-urban green zones rests on a fruitful coalition between local government institutions, civil society organisations, and the self-organisation of farmers in associations. Indeed, the institutional support constitutes what Mitlin (2008: 353) calls “a triad of practical local action, engagement with the state and some kind of networking or federating above the level of the individual neighbourhood”. For Maputo’s associations, their institutional embedding is existential for their survival.

For instance, in the case of the Guebuza Association, the agricultural association has been able to access legal assistance. During the time of the fieldwork, attempts were made to challenge the previous incidents in court to regain the DUAT and, thus, the land rights. Figure 23 depicts an official declaration written by the association’s president on behalf of its members. It was published in 2021 in an article in a local newspaper, according to which the association proclaimed the previous name and activity change to be invalid and revoked. The outcome of the dispute remained to be seen.

Direct Action as the Tactics of the Weak

The extensive value of institutional support and legal assistance becomes most evident compared to the fate of smallholder farmers who don’t dispose of it. The view beyond the municipal borders reveals the lived experiences of peasant groups deprived of their land and production fields without prior consultation, eventually leading to violent confrontations.

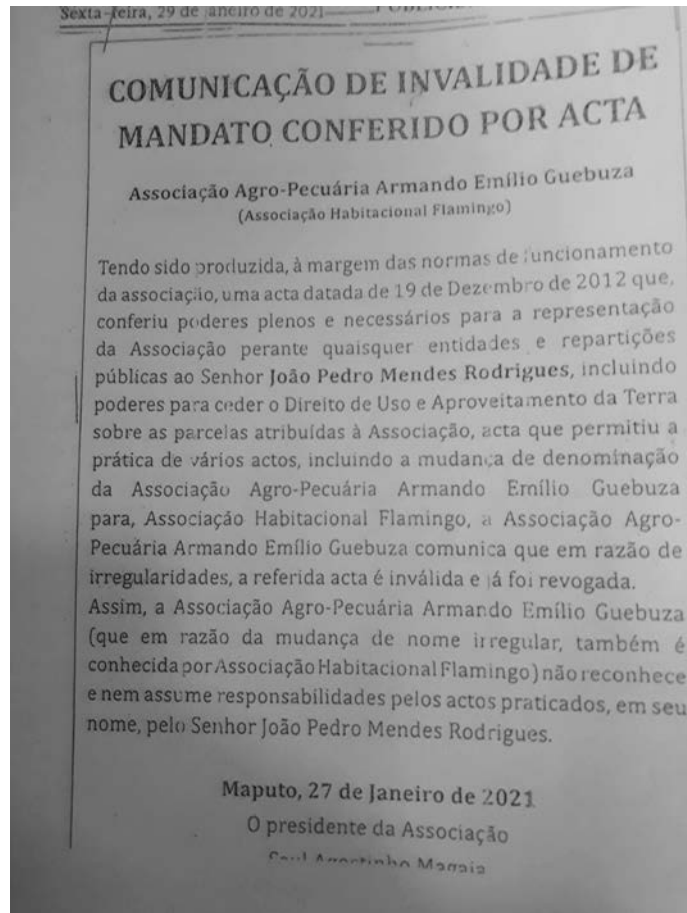


Figure 23 Association's declaration about the invalidity of the land use changes *Source: Magaia (2021)*

In the district of Marracuene, just beyond the *Circular*, several large-scale areas are being developed at the moment. The Chinese housing project mentioned above represents a mere example of numerous comparable land acquisitions by private entities. With the construction of the *Circular*, large portions of undeveloped land became suddenly accessible. Consequently, the area attracted new actors, and the construction of walls to enclose vast areas commenced in no time. The most attractive and valuable pieces of land along the accessible *Circular* are meanwhile occupied. Ironically, on the grounds of the historical battle of Marracuene (cf. chapter 4.3.1.), a conflict of customary resource users against land grabs took place, which is emblematic of the contemporary struggles.

During a stroll through the area in line with our lived explorations, my field assistant and myself were approached by two farmers sharing their experiences with

us. These insights were later deepened through interviews with local authorities and several other site visits. It turned out that a few years ago, an area of more than 20 hectares was granted to a Korean religious community, which also received a DUAT to build facilities. 12 hectares of the respective land were cultivated by a farmers' association, and the remaining 8 hectares by individual farmers. The association did not have a DUAT for their area, but legal rights to the land after customary use for more than ten years. However, without a written record, these rights are difficult to assert.

In this case, negotiations took place without state involvement between the investor and the local community and the purchase amounts were negotiated individually. The disbursement of the amounts was finally realised through middlemen, and many smallholders were defrauded. They were only handed over small amounts that did not correspond to the original amounts if not being left without receiving anything at all. When the construction work began, the land became suddenly fenced off, and a wall was built, cutting through the farmers' production fields. Most of the producers were surprised and did not know what was happening to them. Finding themselves in desperation, they started to tear down the walls and occupied the construction vehicles. In an interview with the *secretária* of Guava, she revealed that only with the intervention of the police did the matter eventually get resolved, and some desperate victims were temporarily held in custody.

Eduardo, one of the *chefes de quarteirão* from the neighbourhood, showed us the wall where the incident occurred (cf. photo 21a). He further explained that the common enclosing of large areas through kilometre-long walls severely affects small-scale farmers and nearby residents. Families already settled in the respective area eventually became encircled by walls. Accessways and smaller streets suddenly get blocked off, restraining the freedom of movement of residents and farmers alike. With almost all spaces adjoining the *Circular* road being occupied, people inevitably must take long detours through the neighbourhood to arrive at their production fields and vice versa, making transporting the produce to the markets severely challenging.

In the context of another wall situated in a low-lying depression, rainwater drainage was impeded, leading to the flooding of several homes when the rainy season commenced. As Eduardo recalls, the situation did become severely hazardous. He showed us a hole in the wall (cf. photo 21b) that eventually had to be cut during the rainfall at night to allow the water to drain and to prevent the adjacent living residents' exposure to the risk of life.

After all, the depicted cases are just examples of similar situations witnessed during the fieldwork. In Maputo's local newspapers, the coverage of the protests of marginalised groups, such as peasants being deprived of their lands, is not a rare image. In his seminal work, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, Scott (1985: 29) characterises "everyday forms of peasant resistance – the prosaic but



a) Fencing off production fields



b) A hole to allow for the drainage of water

Photo 21 Walls as a driver for conflicts*Source: Photo by author (2021)*

constant struggle between the peasantry and those who seek to extract labor, food, taxes, rents, and interest from them". Powerful actors manifest their claims to the territory in cement by constructing walls. However, confronting someone in charge or interacting with someone responsible from face-to-face is not possible.

Thus, direct action serves as "a means for people to exert pressure on governments or other powerful institutions such as business corporations" (Carter 2005: 4). Strike and boycott or sabotage and roadblocks like in the depicted case often represent the last resort, an act of desperation when no other alternatives are viable. Eventually, agriculture is indispensable to life in Mozambique, and being deprived of one's land means losing income and, more severely, the existential food source, which constitutes the most fundamental means for survival.

Indeed, food insecurity is a severe problem in Maputo, which affects almost three-fourths (71 %) of households (Raimundo et al. 2018: 1). The high dependence of Mozambique's food system on imports tends to aggravate these circumstances. Local food prices are volatile and influenced by trends in international food production. The rise of the global wheat price in 2010, for instance, caused an inflation that did not only affect food but also commodities like electricity and fuel (Chikanda & Raimundo 2016: 17). The higher costs of living generated two days of violent protests, which involved the plundering of shops for staple food such as rice and cooking oil. Only a rigorous police intervention has set an end to the so-called "food riots", eventually causing the death of 14 people (Bertelsen 2016: 28).

To resume the differential options for individuals' and groups' actions, Certeau's (1984: 35) differentiation between "strategies" and "tactics" provides a formidable conclusion. Accordingly, a strategy is contingent on "the calculation (or manipulation) of power relationships". Further, it "postulates a *place* that can be delimited as its own and serve as the base from which relations with an *exteriority* composed of targets or threats [...] can be managed" (Certeau 1984: 36). Likewise, the propensity to successfully engage in strategic action is contingent on the power of knowledge.

The land usurpation in the case of the Guebuza Association represents a prime example. The infiltrating individual was equipped with the power of knowledge to exercise strategic action, endowed with the social skills to secure the cooperation of others (cf. Fligstein & McAdam 2012: 17). Finally, he was able to seize the “proper” in appropriating the land use rights to take possession of the place.

Possessing the “proper”, such as legal land use rights, allows capitalising on it for future expansion. A tactic, on the other hand, does not dispose of resources to capitalise on. It depends on time and is contingent on a specific moment to seize the opportunity to manifest one’s interest. In the context of the deprived peasants demolishing walls and occupying construction vehicles, it “insinuates itself into the other’s place, fragmentarily, without taking it over in its entirety” (Certeau 1984: xix). The final result of strategies against tactics is not surprising. Since the “proper” entails “*a triumph of place over time*” (Certeau 1984: 36), tactics are always at the disadvantage of the strategy.

Finally, Samora Machel’s famous proclamation of “*a luta continua!*” (“the struggle continues!”) is more than ever symbolically relevant for Maputo’s peri-urban peasantry. It was first announced in 1974, just after the independence, when the struggle of the young socialist nation-state continued throughout the decade-long civil war (Penvenne 1985: 109). Nowadays, the struggle of the Mozambican peasants continues against land dispossession. The particular narrative, however, is inherent to the collective memory of the associations, and it forms part of their identity.

The conversation with *Senhor* Tobias was most illustrative in this regard. The urban expansion in KaMavota and the usurpation of the land belonging to the farmers’ associations determined our hour-long discussion. His choice of words was not coincidental, but it reflects the lived experiences of Maputo’s peasants and their continued struggle to defend the land and to resist whichever malignant forces:

I really want to stress that the struggles will never stop. First, because at the national level, the peasant is the weakest. So, any investor who looks at land as a resource, the first person to be penalized [...] is the peasant because he barely knows his rights and has barely any way to defend himself. So, we have to believe, and I have to believe, that it is not easy to say that this war will easily cease like other wars that easily ended, but our war has not yet. We can always think that we have already won, but our enemies only change their tactics, don’t they? When they see that this tactic doesn’t work, they get better prepared and attack us again. We are always attacked, whether here in the city or in the provinces, and there are always policies that don’t help the peasant (interview C-23: 4).

6.2.2.4 Political Scale and Discontinuities regarding the Meaning of Land

The peri-urban land conflicts between different actors have concrete manifestations in space. Individuals and groups with conflicting intentions confront each other at the peri-urban interface. The chance to assert one's own interests over the interests of others is an expression of power. It is contingent on the actors' endowment with knowledge, resources, and the strategic relationships each one can draw on. Beyond that, power results from the complex struggles over meanings that different actors ascribe to their multiple realities (Long 2001: 71). The advantage of a phenomenological life-world perspective is that it goes to the bottom of the meaning attributions. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the meaning that land bestows for different actors and their life-worlds. As Dietz & Engels highlight, "land means different things to different people" (2020: 4), and the roots of most conflicts rest on the inconsistency of those meanings among different people.

For peri-urban small-scale farmers, land sustains their livelihood. It provides an income and a source of food, a place of social and cultural identity. For developers and investors, land represents a commodity, an investment opportunity or an object of speculation. Its meaning is again different for governments and state actors. For the municipality of Maputo, for instance, the land is subject to political control and an object for taxation (Dietz & Engels 2020: 4, Li 2014: 589).

The meaning that each actor group ascribes to the land is different, such as the life-worlds of the individuals belonging to these groups. Regarding the previously discussed conflict context and the struggles between small-scale farmers and investors in Guava, nearby living *Chefe* Eduardo gave me the following summary from his local neighbourhood perspective:

Now, the [...] conflict really is down here in the area because it was machamba, and people who wanted to invest in condominiums and so on appeared. So, I think the biggest conflict is that the man working on the land often doesn't have the opportunity to decide how much he wants and how much he should negotiate. When people come to invest, what happens? They start at the top, negotiate, then come down here and say this is it [...]. Sometimes the [municipal] structure already delivers documents. The individual [investor] then comes here and already has the DUAT for the land in his hand. While you, who was here for 20, 30 years, you never received it. In the end, they give you what they think they should give you as compensation. The ones who gain the most are the [governmental] structures because they can negotiate something at high values, but they get here and give you only 10,000 [Meticais] (interview C-19: 8).

Chefe Eduardo's elaborations on the local points of contradictions provide the basis for further discussing the differing life-world contexts. Above all, the quote points towards two interrelated dimensions that bear gaping discontinuities. First, it con-

cerns the meaning and value of land and second, the political scale of the interaction with the state. As the following paragraphs aim to illustrate, discrepancies in the land value and interaction scale are rooted in the actors' differing distributions of meaning and knowledge and the power and strategic relationships involved

Discontinuities of Meaning and Value

Regarding the farmer-investor contradiction, the difference between land as a resource and means of agricultural production stands out as opposed to land as a tradable commodity. The sedimented stock of peri-urban farmers' knowledge provides them with skills on how to till the soil but not on how to capitalise on it. The investor, in turn, is knowledgeable in making a profit out of land sales but short on experience when he has to make a living based on subsistence farming. The contradicting meanings that land bestows for each are reflected in the extreme discrepancies between the use value of land for farming and its exchange value on the land market. It expresses outrageous life-world discontinuities and represents a source of cascading conflicts.

The construction of the *Circular* and the sudden accessibility of vast areas in prestigious locations led to the rapid valorisation of land. As previously mentioned, prices for regular plots in Triunfo frequently surmount several million Meticaís. The consequent prices for even larger areas of several hectares appear almost immeasurable for local farmers. The market-based exchange values are beyond the life-worlds of traditional small-scale landholders. The respective amounts stand in no relation to any reality, nor exists a notion if a parcel is worth one million, just half of it, or even double or triple. Thus, decisions to sell land are often made overhasty, being blinded by the numbers.

Chefe Eduardo explains that buyers tend to arrive with huge bundles of small notes of 20 or 50 Meticaís to eventually make the total amount look larger. Without bargaining power or knowledge of the real estate market, negotiations proceed under unequal conditions, penalising the most marginalised. Eventually, Jorge (2019: 106) characterised the uneven conditions of the land and property transactions in Maputo as “the resource to violence, dissimulated by the exchange value – especially when the associated transactions involve values never before imagined”.

However, the prospect of quick wealth jeopardises social cohesion within the associations and leads to envy, eventually fuelling internal conflicts. Indeed, while some can make huge financial gains by selling their parcels, others will be left out. Conflicts emerge, particularly between generations. While senior members of the associations, after decades of hard work in the production fields, rather tend to embrace the opportunity of a substantial pension after the parcelling of their *machambas*, the younger one still wants to exert their profession during the coming decades.

For instance, the young father of a family revealed that he did not need any parceling and asked what he would do with millions if he lost his land and source of income. He explained that his colleagues made fun of him becoming a farmer after finishing school. Under the circumstance of chronic poverty and unemployment, he is meanwhile better off than most of them. Ultimately, it is the potential prospect of quick returns and huge profit margins that are the key drivers for bringing in intermediary actors with bad intentions to infiltrate and exploit the good faith of marginalised farmers.

While individuals can make substantial amendments to their personal economic and material situation by selling their parcels, these benefits are often only short-lived. Growing food sustains the livelihoods of peri-urban communities, and farming constitutes the reality of peri-urban peasant families. This is the only reality they know. They experience and live it through, day by day. They take it for granted, while alternative life-world perspectives other than farming are non-imaginable. The situation of *Dona Marta* is exemplary of this contradiction. She lost her peri-urban *machambas* within walking distance from her home. They were situated in the Maguiguana Association, which no longer exists, and the entire area is already built-up. As she points out, she could realise an annexe building on her plot, but despite that, she now has to commute to faraway Boane to be able to produce:

When they took it there [the land], to get us out, it provided for something. So, I could make this little house here [...]. Yes, I made this little house here, but there was a *machamba*, and that's why now I leave from here to Boane because my life lies in the hoe [...]. My life lies in the hoe. You know, when I get a hoe, dig, work with that sand, I can provide something for my daughter, my grandson (interview C-09: 13–14).

Dona Marta's repeated expression, “*minha vida ta na enxada*” (my life lies in the hoe), stands for the many farming life-worlds whose everyday life belongs to their *machambas* and vice versa. Likewise, in the context of the Guebuza Association, where the largest amount of land was detached, Adriano explains that the number of its members did not decrease, and they had to distribute the parcels again among its members. Thus, sudden access to funds was rarely used to invest in other activities or alternative income sources. As Felisberto, a representative of UNAC revealed, “without land, the peasant is nothing” (interview A-13). If farmers agree to sell, however, they remain poor after all since they lose their land, their livelihood, and their existence.

“As the city grows, what do farmers do?” was raised as a question in a study conducted by Follmann et al. (2021). Further, they revealed that “some findings indicate that farmers are not a priori *passive spectators* or even *victims* of urban growth; farmer responses rather depend on their resources and specific local conditions” (Follmann et al. 2021: 10). Indeed, Matias told the story of a farmer who obtained substantial

amounts of money when he sold all of his machambas. However, after some time, he approached the association again, asking to receive some parcels for production since all of his resources had dissipated.

Practising agriculture reflects the life-world of peri-urban farmers. It is what they know. Too often, it also represents the only way they know of how to provide for themselves and their families. Money can buy cars and houses, but it cannot buy a new life-world. It does not replace one's sedimented stock of knowledge. It does not change who you are or how you see the world. To sum it up, disempowering peasants of their land means wresting them from their basis of existence. Removing them from this reality means depriving them of their life-world, eventually leading to acts of desperation, causing violent conflicts.

Discontinuities regarding the Political Scale of State Interaction

When the construction works for the *Circular* commenced, the expectations in the local Mutanhana neighbourhood were high. With the expanding city to come closer, the prospect of jobs and an improved social infrastructure determined the common atmosphere in the community. So far, farming and fishing constituted the only viable income opportunities. While a primary school for the youngest already existed in the neighbourhood, a secondary school and health services like a pharmacy were not within walking distance but urgently desired. Since the completion of the *Circular*, the accessibility of the neighbourhood and opportunities to provide for oneself undoubtedly changed for the better. At the same time, however, the arrival of infrastructure was tied to severe disappointments, if not to say frustrations, since it primarily invoked powerful actors with an interest in land.

The consultation of the local community is a lawful act in Mozambique if an investor is interested in becoming installed. Consultations should respect customary land owners whose legitimate rights barely have a written record. It further should safeguard the social responsibility of the investor for the community to receive something in return, and the entire process is to be mediated by state institutions. However, the neighbourhood authorities in Mutanhana witnessed the enclaving of land in their surroundings merely as passive bystanders. Large-scale land investments with dimensions of hectares instead of square metres are mediated in direct interaction with central state institutions. Although being a legitimate landowner, there is no voice to participate in decisions without a DUAT.

The endowment of power of an actor is reflected in the political scale where an interaction with the state becomes possible. The more power, the higher the level. This points towards the second aspect of Eduardo's elaboration about the discontinuities of the scale where interactions with the state are located. Whereas for local groups and *nativos*, the neighbourhood level with the *chefe de quarteirão* and *secretário de bairro* are the principal institutions for land allocation, financially strong actors

like investors find themselves in the powerful position to override the neighbourhood structures. It allows them to engage in relationships with the state at the municipal or even higher levels. As it was in the case of the Chinese investment, where even the governor paid his welcoming visit to the project site.

Thus, external actors suddenly appear with a DUAT for the areas where local farmers have cultivated all their lives. Although being the rightful landowner according to inheritance or customary law of more than ten years of occupancy, marginalised smallholders are powerless against the sudden appearance of someone with a DUAT. Having a DUAT or not is reflected in the discrepancy between the different hierarchical levels of the interaction with the state. Furthermore, it indicates the social discontinuity between peri-urban vs. urban actors. One of the *chefes de quarteirão* explained this reality for his neighbourhood in Mutanhana:

Most of us here in the Mutanhana neighbourhood don't have DUAT, even I don't have a DUAT. Counting it, here in the neighbourhood, not counting the new ones but the *nativos*, the ones that were born here and grew up here, I don't think there are as many as ten families that have DUAT. Those who have DUATs are the ones who come here, who came to acquire, who came to buy spaces and who have time to legalise them, but those of us who have been here for a long time still don't have DUATs (interview C-01: 3):

For ordinary people, gaining access to a DUAT is full of obstacles, if not insuperable (cf. chapter 6.1.). But foremost, it starts as a bottom-up process at the neighbourhood level with declarations emitted by community authorities. Ultimately, in the case of successfully mastering the bureaucratic and financial hurdles, the DUAT is granted at the municipal level. Contrary to the known reality, the DUATs for investors are attributed top-down and local communities are coerced into accepting someone taking over their land. When I asked one of the responsible technicians at the territorial planning department in Marracuene about the returns for local farmers, he replied that they would receive compensations but that these compensations are not "healthy". When I asked him what this means, he elaborated the following:

For example, if you would come up with amounts to compensate me, I won't accept amounts worth sustaining me for two months or three months. For me, the compensation should be good to be sustained for ten years, I won't have any problems. But what has happened is that they are compensated according to the existing cultures (interview C-04: 6).

When members of the farmers' associations with a DUAT and the institutional support of the association sold their parcels, at least they could make enormous financial gains through amounts oriented at the market value. However, as the quote reveals, farmers without support and knowledge of the land market are put off by the mere

use value of their produce. On the other hand, the enormous margins between the use and market value are intercepted by intermediaries from the political and economic leadership, equipped with knowledge of the market and the power to strategically utilise this knowledge. As a rule of thumb, the larger the area concerned, the more money is involved in the transaction. Likewise, the greater the interest in dividing the profits among a few powerful people, the smaller the amounts that reach the landowners at the local level. To paraphrase with Filipe & Norfolk (2017: 1), who conducted a similar study, “[p]owerful interests are taking advantage of poor communities, who have limited access to information about the opportunities to safeguard that the law should provide”.

As these examples illustrate, there are grasping imbalances of power expressed in the prospect of interacting with the state and participating in negotiations at the scale of the most important decisions. This asymmetry is related to the life-world discontinuities regarding the knowledge gap, the meaning that land bestows, and the discrepancy between its use and exchange values. Although the increase in illicit acts seriously undermines the power of collective action, its potential to confront both contradictions remains unbroken. In this regard and concerning the land grabs in Marracuene, where no farmers’ association was present, *Senhor* Tobias gave the following statement:

The movement has to be strong and cohesive because the more the people remain dormant, this is what happens, and I want to believe that if in places like KaMavota and KaMabukwana, where we are as an association, if it wouldn’t have associations, the same would have happened [...]. But in Maputo City, it doesn’t happen, and in Katembe, it can’t happen because there are already associations. So, this movement of associations is very strong, and it’s very good (interview C-23: 11).

Against this background, the institutional embedding of Maputo’s farmers’ associations and the potential to confront both points of contradiction deserve some final considerations. First of all, *Senhor* Tobias’ statement refers to the supportive environment that the associations can rely on through strategic alliances and partnerships with state organs and civil society organisations. These are analogous to Granovetter’s (1973) “weak ties” and Long’s (2001) “brokers” bridging between different social domains and hierarchical levels. Indeed, between the local life-world of the farmers and the domain of the bureaucrats, the institutional support is scale-transcending, and it bridges the prevailing knowledge gap. It is most remarkable through enabling access to DUATs and other resources outside the reach of a farmer as an individual. Again, land access is formally guaranteed for associated farmers, whereas for most peri-urban households, the DUAT is unattainable.

Without the support of (particular bodies) of the municipality in the acquisition of land rights and in defending them against malignant forces (of other particular

bodies), the permanence of urban agriculture within the municipal boundaries would have to be questioned today. In the peculiar context of Mozambique, where civil society has been suppressed not only during the colonial but also during the post-colonial time, membership in associations provides opportunity spaces. For the urban farmers, these spaces enable participation, empowerment, and secured livelihoods. In the words of Cruz e Silva (2006: 114), “by giving them access to education, technical training, land, credit, and employment, the way for the creation of spaces of liberty is opened”.

In addition, if associations have a DUAT, this DUAT is held as a collective, and technically, no single individual can sell its parcels, nor are any other land use types legitimate. By so doing, the use value attached to the production of vegetables is not undermined by the exchange value subjected to speculations. Indeed, while land sales in the immediate surroundings already amount to millions, small-scale farmers can continue to plant their products, merely paying their annual membership fees of MZN 250. It preserves the value of land and the meaning it bestows on farmers instead of increasing commodification. The power of this kind of collective land rights is invaluable. As Durand-Lasserve & Selod (2009: 125) put it, “[c]ommunity ownership and group titling can also be an alternative to the provision of individual property rights, providing tenure security and maintaining social cohesion”. Finally, it strengthens the horizontal ties among community members, analogous to Granovetter’s (1973) “strong ties”.

The example of Maputo showcases how social cohesion comes under fire. The incursion of adversarial actors is tied to the land market’s radical evolution, and the future persistence of peri-urban agriculture in KaMavota is uncertain. Most farmers continue to live at the margins of subsistence, and with the growing pressure, the power of collective action might reach its limits. Nevertheless, individual farmers would never be able to obtain a DUAT because the financial and administrative hurdles are simply too high. The collective access, however, reveals an alternative approach based on social solidarity and mutualism and lays the foundation for the livelihood of associated farmers.

Finally, the contestations of Maputo’s green spaces and the land use conflicts between peri-urban agriculture and real estate developments express increasingly market-based urbanisation dynamics standing in line with the rapid transition from a former socialist to a strongly neoliberal socio-economic order. Thus, the local struggles go beyond the mere assertion of agricultural territories. Instead, they are rooted in social negotiation processes that manifest in conflicts between the social collectivisation and increasing individualisation of society, as well as between solidarity and competition, affecting nothing less than the most fundamental questions of social coexistence.

6.3 Towards an Antithesis of State-Society Interactions: Revisiting the Theory-Development Dualism

The context of Maputo's peri-urban interface illustrated the complexity of contestations among actors. As the assessment of state-society interactions revealed, the inherent struggles for space go beyond material claims to property and land but are rooted in diverging interests and meanings ascribed to the environment. Regarding the case of *bairro* Triunfo, the promotion of parcelling plans shows inconsistencies since their implementation comes with requirements that do not reflect the lived reality of the peri-urban population, thus promoting serious outcomes like displacements and social alienation. In the context of contested green spaces, the state's involvement tends to perpetuate land conflicts while neglecting the needs of local peasants and disregarding their rights in favour of the interests of external real estate developers. Both examples reveal that antagonistic views of the world characterise the interactions between state and society, both perspectives being interwoven in complex structure-agency arrangements. In line with the earlier thesis on the constitutive dimensions of peri-urbanity (cf. chapter 5.5.), the remainder of this chapter resumes Maputo's peri-urban governance and conflicts as an antithesis of state-society interactions.

Maputo's Illusionary Planning Approach

For a better understanding of the peri-urban conflicts of state-society interactions, it is necessary to revisit the initial discussion on the theory-development dualism (cf. chapter 2.2.). It refers to the contradictions that arise when researching or analysing cities in the Global South with concepts elaborated based on cities in the Global North. To recapitulate the postcolonial critique in a brief sentence: Southern cities are merely regarded by foregrounding their deficiencies, degraded as laboratories for development interventions, whereas the formation of urban theory outside Eurocentric perspectives is short-handed. Peri-urban spaces in the Global South remained most of all excluded from the theoretical debates in academic discourses. They are not only located at the margins of the cities but are also doomed to developmentalism and marginalised by urban studies.

Similar to other African cities, the consequences of the theory vs. development dilemma have penetrated decision-making processes and public perceptions in Maputo. Contrary to Rakodi (2006: 316) call for an understanding of African cities based on "a vision that is rooted in reality and inclusive" (2006: 316), the contemporary governance and planning framework of Maputo is rather "unrealistic and exclusive". Indeed, the Maputo Municipality has largely lost touch with the reality of the lived experiences of the population and finds itself on a path of what I call an "illusionary planning approach". According to the Cambridge Dictionary, the adjective

“illusionary” is defined as something “not real and based on illusion”.³ The noun “illusion”, in turn, means “something that is not really what it seems to be”.⁴ It is foremost manifested in the unrealistic aspirational character of urban plans assuming the sudden transformation of sub-Saharan cities like Maputo into what planners and policymakers have as the vision of how a modern city should look inspired by Western models.

The contemporary planning instruments implemented by the Maputo Municipality reflect the neoliberal rationale imposed by the ideals of the Global North. It is first and foremost expressed in the hierarchy of Urban Structure Plan and Partial Urbanisation Plans. Through unquestioned adoption, it is taken for granted that the world of cities beyond the regions where those norms and models have been developed is not too different, manageable using the same methods and supposed to take up the same development pathways in due time. However, as Watson (2014: 98) adequately depicts, the rigorous reproduction in contexts that are culturally and economically different and characterised by totally different dynamics comes with “disastrous effects on places”. Congruent with the findings of this dissertation, she further points out that “such planning ideas appear to have promoted social exclusion and spatial inequalities, have been insensitive to sustainability issues, and have proved a useful tool for local elites and politicians to acquire and manipulate urban land and its poorer occupants” (Watson 2014: 98).

Particularly in Maputo, promoting individual titling programmes fosters the increasing commodification of peri-urban spaces based on the vision of a homogenous physical order. As the examples of the transformations in *bairro* Triunfo and on the *machambas* clearly illustrate, it leads to the spatial containment of the social and the individualisation of collective life, which comes in line with large-scale displacement processes. Mainly affected are those who not conforming to the illusions of the state of what the city should look like and how its inhabitants should live in it and move through it. In both the neighbourhoods and on the agricultural production fields, the diversity of small-scale interactions is suppressed by the disciplining order of the rectangular grid, enforcing individualisation, enclosed by walls inside the spaces of one's parcel.

The imperative visions of modernity that Southern cities are condemned to strive for are based on the exclusive reality of a few Western cities. It leads to believe in a reality that does not correspond with the reality of most ordinary cities worldwide. For the cities in sub-Saharan Africa that share a colonial history, the prescribed planning norms and standards apply at the outset only to the former colonial city centre.

3 Cambridge Dictionary, “illusionary”, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/illusionary>, checked on 12/15/2023.

4 Cambridge Dictionary, “illusion”, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/illusion>, checked on 12/15/2023.

Thus, only a minimal spatial segment is considered the city proper. In contrast, the bulk of the entire urban territory is treated as a formidable object of development which is still characterised by the absence of the exclusively defined qualities of city-ness (Robinson 2002: 531–532; Roy 2005: 155). This belief is widespread in the Global South, internalised by politicians, planners, and people. Likewise, in Maputo, the establishment of local urbanisation plans, and the parcelling of a neighbourhood go hand in hand with the adjective “organised”, while the spontaneously created and unplanned settlements are considered “disorganised”.

The very same developmentalist narrative also accompanied the interview with the representative of the state’s municipal planning department. When we discussed the implementation of urban plans at the Costa do Sol, he delineated these areas as being in a “state of development”, and as soon as a certain standard of straight streets with a proper surface is realised, the homogeneity of modern house constructions will follow in line with the building codes inscribed in the plan:

The plans end up helping because we know there are disorganised constructions. People will adopt them because in the future, the people will buy cars [...]. These are areas that will develop, so as soon as there is a proper street, for example, there are well-organised constructions (interview C-24: 7).

Apart from leaving the people out of the equation and regarding planning primarily as a matter of sorting things out through the hegemony of geometrics and aesthetics, a second aspect strikes out. It is the emphasis on the future ambitions of widespread car ownership among the population. The obsessive relationship with an aspired future state of widespread car ownership affects all societal concerns. In planning, the accessibility to a street by car dictates the chances of acquiring a DUAT or not. To put it differently, car owners correspond to the municipality’s understanding of what makes a modern citizen, thus being awarded a registered land use title. As the tendencies towards these developments have shown based on the example of the Triunfo case, this vision resembles the antithesis of any sustainability and equity in a societal context where pedestrian movements continue to determine the everyday mobilities of the large majority. Not to mention that the future state of omnipresent car ownership would lead to catastrophic traffic problems and contamination, more than already being immanent.

No matter whether in the colonial past or today’s present, the mobility and liberty of movement of marginalised population groups was and, without doubt, still remains restricted. During the racial segregation under Portuguese colonial rule, pass laws controlled access to Maputo’s colonial town centre, from which the native population was strictly excluded. Today, the market dictates the location of the dwelling place, and only the remote or unpleasant ones are attainable for the most

deprived. Walls represent the crude force and dividing line between the ones with the right to enter and those condemned to stay outside. Whereas once, spatial segregation was mainly made according to race, it is now mostly due to socio-economic functions of life-world and class. Irrespective of the era, disadvantaged groups are confined to living in certain spaces while excluded from accessing particular places. The distinguishing feature of the materiality of the built environment persists throughout. However, whereas it was once marked by *caniço* vs. *cimento*, it is now *casa* vs. *predio*.

Thus, the spatiality of the differentiation meanwhile shifted from its dualistic colonial structure towards the territorial fragmentation of urban and peri-urban spaces. In this light, a further transition from a horizontal to a vertical category of difference has become predominant. The *cidade de cimento* and the *cidade de caniço* were horizontally divided as the colonial town centre to one side and beyond, the vast peri-urban and rural peripheries. Today, the prestigious villas of the elite set themselves up from peri-urban dwellings but foremost through a vertical dimension. Thereby, the size of the building and its number of storeys become synonymous with the social status of its residents.

The verticality is furthermore manifested at the governance level. The ones that can engage directly with the state at the municipal level as opposed to the ones relying and depending on the governance structures on the neighbourhood level. Having or not having a DUAT is emblematic of this relationship. At the beginning of the 20th century, it was about being governed under civil law by the Portuguese colonial administration or under customary law by the customary authorities like the *régulos*. The sudden interest of the current neoliberal state in controlling land access leads to a renewed tendency of bifurcation between the ones with a DUAT and those without it. Ironically, the Mozambican state reproduces what, just a few decades ago, was depicted as the exploitative oppression of society, to be eliminated at whatever costs necessary.

Against this background, the strict opposition between the planned city and the unplanned object of development is inherited from colonial city structures. As Lawhon (2020: 36) asserts, “when many South Africans talk about the ‘the city’ they mean the formerly white areas”. Translated to Maputo, it used to refer to the distinction between the *cidade de cimento* as the colonial town centre and the *cidade de caniço* as home to the Mozambican native population. Until today, a distinction between the planned and organised city centre as opposed to the unplanned and disorganised *bairros* exists. However, in line with the shifting from a dualistic city structure towards more fragmented segregation patterns as well as shifting socio-spatial distinctions from pure horizontal to more vertical categories, alias from *cimento* vs. *caniço* towards *casa* vs. *predio*, the definitions of city-ness vs. not-city likewise did become adjusted.

The Internalisation of Developmentalism

These definitions, just as the imperative of development, are internalised by the ordinary people living in the city and reproduced by them in everyday life. In line with the dualistic opposition, either it is internalised as not belonging to the modern visions and thus being an obstacle to the necessary development or, contrary, belonging to the exclusive chosen circle deserving urban citizenship. *Senhor* Bernardo, for instance, suffers from the stigmatisation of not belonging to the exclusive vision of urbanity living in his ordinary home. He states that “the growth of the city is necessary” and that “the city is welcome for development”. However, he does not identify himself with the city. Rather, he feels misplaced since his peri-urban life-world is not conforming with what is regarded as modern and urban:

I’m not in a position, for example, to make a building like that, I’m not, but the city is growing. I’m not happy being here surrounded by buildings. They’re not happy either [...], I make food, for example, with a fire, with firewood, doing the fumigation, they don’t like it (Interview C-13: 3).

On the other hand, there is middle-class *Dona* Natalia. She lives nearby but was born in the city centre. About her changing neighbourhood and the gradual replacement of ordinary *casas* by modern *prédios*, she declared for herself and the other newcomer residents to responsible for “bringing the city” to the neighbourhoods. Thus, according to this material notion of city-ness, anything previous in the neighbourhood, not interchangeable with a home in an upscale suburb elsewhere in the world, is not worth city status. At another moment during our conversation, she proudly adds that the neighbourhood is meanwhile called “little Dubai” since it has become an “elite area”. Again, this agrees with Watson (2014: 101), that the aspirations towards global cities are no longer found in Paris, London or New York but rather in the superlatives of Singapore, Hong Kong and Dubai.

Likewise, it is no longer only the travelling consultants and planners that promote this city image, but in a world of global capitalism and consumption, it has already become internalised by the ones regarded as the objects of development. Against this background, I also agree with Connell (2007: 189) that “the ideology of modernisation is entrenched in the postcolonial middle classes and the postcolonial state [...] more developmentalist than it was at independence”.

In 2018, the urban population in Mozambique was 11 million, equivalent to 36 % of the total population. By 2050, it will more than triple to roughly 37 million people, accounting for 55 % of the country’s total population (UN-DESA 2019b: 21). Of course, much of this growth manifests itself in the capital’s tremendously expanding peri-urban areas. Already today, the city of Maputo considers 70 % of its population to live in informal settlements, characterised by their “deficiency”, such as the lack of infrastructure and extreme difficulties in implementing interventions (CMM 2021: 1).

Against this background, does it seem realistic that one day every resident will live in an area that conforms with the sanctioned and standardised regulations regarded as officially planned? Assuming that the majority will be driving around in a car is as much an unrealistic illusion as the far-fetched vision of a homogenous suburban-like city landscape with every household having equal access to state-provided formal services and infrastructures. Therefore, following Lawhon (2020: 38), I argue for the necessity of rethinking. Instead of continuing to judge what the African city is not, it is time to recognise that it is not the African city that is wrong, but rather urban theory.

Other authors share similar concerns regarding the illusionary characteristics of Maputo's current developmentalist path. Viana (2010: 185), for instance, argues that the exclusive visions of urbanity through the orthogonal division of land and the rigid rectangular ordering of streets eventually lead to the "socio-spatial alienation of citizens". This argument is congruent with the findings from the radical social and material transformations in the Triunfo neighbourhood. Similarly, Nielsen & Jenkins (2020: 5) emphasise that the commercialisation of land swallows up open space and public places, leading to the individualisation of society while "forms of collective life become subordinated spatially". In the case of the farmers' associations, the sudden valorisation of farmland pushed this tendency towards the most extreme. Not less than fuelling conflicts full of anger and malice between individuals who once were colleagues. Against this background, I agree with Vanin (2015: 164), who delineates Maputo's obsessive orientation on urban plans as the "strong desire to restructure the physical city and the society living there, according to extremely idealized projections of future scenarios".

But even beyond Maputo, prevailing scholarly work on urban land tenure in the Global South takes a critical stance towards the "de Soto approach" of individual titling. For instance, Payne et al. (2009: 459) question its appropriateness for all sections of the population since it is tied to long-lasting financial commitments such as the taxation of land and buildings, which involves significant costs unbearable for low-income groups. In addition to the market-led commodification of original inhabitants, Varley (2017: 385) denounces individual titling as it "propagates the ideology of private ownership, undermines collective solidarity and demobilises social movements". In Maputo, individual titling perpetuates socio-spatial inequalities, enlarging the gap between those with access to a DUAT and those far from it. With urban plans as a basic prerequisite for obtaining a DUAT, many of Maputo's peri-urbanites are not even eligible for tenure formalisation. Although, if they do so, the poorest groups lack the means to mortise the formalisation costs (cf. Durand-Laserve & Selod 2009: 107).

Beyond doubt, political citizenship and abstract formal rights expand as residents of regularised neighbourhoods receive better access to public infrastructure and come closer to the formal state institutions through the emission of legal land use ti-

tles. According to Miraftab (2009: 40), this represents the hypocrisy of the neoliberal moment of modern citizenship, which brings an inclusion that is selective and materialistic and does not guarantee substantive inclusion. Indeed, gaining formal rights can also be regarded as a disguise for economic exploitation through tax obligations while livelihood choices erode. For instance, when farmers had their *machambas* transformed into building plots by the municipality, at the same time, it signified the loss of arable land. Thus, losing nothing less than their basis of existence. Or to say it with Miraftab (2009: 41), “citizens have gained rights they cannot eat!” (2009: 41).

Concluding the section on the shortcomings of the municipality’s illusionary planning approach, it is once more worth quoting Scott’s (1998) seminal work *Seeing like a State*. Indeed, his interpretation of urban plans and the value of the cadastral map serve as the basis for the following last chapter, in which forward-looking elaborations for a realistic planning approach are elaborated:

The value of the cadastral map to the state lies in its abstraction and universality [...]. The completeness of the cadastral map depends, in a curious way, on its abstract sketchiness, its lack of detail – its thinness. Taken alone, it is essentially a geometric representation of the borders or frontiers between parcels of land. What lies inside the parcel is left blank – unspecified – since it is not germane to the map plotting itself (Scott 1998: 44).



Photo 22 Burned vegetation on a cleared plot

Source: Photo by author (2021)

Ironically, Scott's theoretical considerations can also be translated to the pragmatic practice of land appropriation in Maputo's peri-urban expansion areas. When acquiring an undeveloped plot, it is common for landowners to first clear the ground (*limpar terreno*), which means cutting trees, removing meter-high reeds, and burning down any vegetation. A plot owner clears the ground mainly to show presence, enforce his territorial entitlements and eventually acquire a DUAT. A cleared plot means that it has an owner who takes care of it, while wild properties signal desert-ness, potentially being subject to the appropriation of the land by opportunists. In the next step, enclosing walls are erected around the property, demarcating the parcel's boundaries. Walls also serve as a minimum of erected infrastructures, representing the necessary prerequisite for obtaining a DUAT. Finally, what is left is nothing more than Scott's description of a geometric representation of the parcel. As depicted in photo 22, the only remains on the inside of the otherwise blank plot are the black turf of the burned vegetation. However, it obeys the rules of a homogenous and organised appearance: It could not be more abstract, not less individual or realistic.

The concept of space that underlies this illusionary planning approach is the Euclidean concept of space as a container (cf. Buttner 1976: 281). It is primarily mathematical with abstract geometric relations and absolute space and time distances. Since life does not enfold in geometrics but in meaningful experiences, it stands in stark contrast to everyday life's social space. However, the predominating planning approach leads to the elimination of all forms of life on the parcel. The plot derives its value solely from its rectangular shape by fitting into the cadastre. Only an organised rectangular plot is a "proper plot" and recognised by the state as eligible for the DUAT register. The geometric shape allows for an accurate surface area calculation, ready for the state to collect the annual real estate tax. Apart from the quantitative aspects of such a positivist view of the world, the qualitative aspects that distinguish the parcel and confer it valuable are not at all of state interest.

7 Conclusion

a Synergy between Peri-urban Life-worlds and the Actor Perspective

The peri-urban coastal plain of the Mozambican capital, Maputo, took centre stage in this dissertation. Specifically, the life-worlds of local peri-urban communities and their subjective views of the world surrounding them. Two overarching research objectives guided the inquiry. The first was to understand peri-urban life-worlds, and the second was to explain peri-urban governance and conflicts.

Chapter 5 addressed the first objective. The everyday reality of peri-urban life-worlds was presented in all its facets. It focussed on the spatial centredness of life with the dwelling place in its kernel. It further elucidated the prototypical temporality of peri-urban neighbourhoods with their socio-material infrastructures and mobility patterns. Likewise, peri-urban farming with the meaningful place of the *machambas* and, finally, the intrinsic logic of peri-urban sociality was presented. What it means to be a peri-urban dweller and the spatial, temporal, and social dimensions constituting peri-urban life-worlds are by now thoroughly understood.

Chapter 6 addressed the second objective. It started with discussing peri-urban governance arrangements with a focus on land governance and tenure while foregrounding the particular role of community authorities as “twilight institutions”. With the ambiguity of urban plans in Triunfo and the manifold contestations of peri-urban green spaces on the other hand, two exemplar conflict constellations were analysed in detail. Thus, the social discontinuities and conflicts that align with urban expansion processes and state interventions were thoroughly explained.

On the one hand, the reality of living in peri-urban areas on the Maputo coast was described in detail, culminating in the thesis for the constitutive dimensions of peri-urbanity: locality, self-sufficient practice, and community (cf. chapter 5.5.). In contrast, the neglect of this reality was outlined, resulting in conflictive peri-urban governance and state-society interactions. It culminated in the antithesis of state-society interactions: illusionary planning and the theory-development dualism (cf. chapter 6.3.).

In line with two components, this conclusion provides a synergy between peri-urban life-worlds and the actor perspective. First, it draws a synthesis between thesis and antithesis, thus between the constitutive dimensions of peri-urbanity and state-society interactions. It does so by providing a realistic life-world approach to planning, which aims to reconcile the antagonistic relationships between the reality of the people and the reality of planning, between theory and development, and between state and society (cf. chapter 7.1). Second, and in conclusion, a critical appraisal of the combination of life-world phenomenology and an actor-oriented approach is presented. Based on this, this dissertation finally concludes with implications for future research (cf. chapter 7.2.).

7.1 Towards a Synthesis between Peri-urbanity and State-Society Interactions: a Realistic Life-world Approach to Planning

The proposal of a “realistic life-world approach to planning” stands in opposition to the current approach to planning in Maputo, characterised as “illusionary”. In contrast, a realistic planning approach is based on the social reality of the population, which planning processes, after all, are supposed to address. Correspondingly, the Cambridge Dictionary entry for “realistic” depicts it as “accepting things as they are in fact and not making decisions based on unlikely hopes for the future”.¹ Against this background, phenomenology’s fundamental premise of “to the things themselves” ties in. A realistic planning approach has to be grounded in experience and based on the everyday reality of peri-urban life-worlds. After the earlier discussion of the shortcomings of contemporary illusionary planning, entry points for a realistic planning approach are presented based on the findings that this thesis uncovered through its realistic phenomenological perspective. Thus, although already quoted in the theoretical part of this dissertation, it is once more worth emphasising that ultimately, “lifeworld is the ontological reality in which one experiences life” (Budd et al. 2010: 274).

Achieving closeness to reality presupposes a critical realist ontology which accepts both space and places as real (Sack 1997: 31). Neglecting this reality blends out the non-semiotic bodily experiences of places, which are after all, not coincidental since they derive their meaning from the material realness of places. It is the primordial materiality itself that makes the experience of space and place possible at all (Dörfler & Rothfuß 2021: 155). Spatial phenomena are best understood from the perspective of the experiencing subject. Lived experiences are always meaningful and a phenome-

¹ Cambridge Dictionary, “realistic”, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/realistic>, checked on 12/15/2023.

nological inquiry into space and place always generates something significant about the social world (Janz 2005: 90). Approaches in denial of this genuine perspective run the risk of losing touch with the reality of the people, thus leading to the socio-spatial alienation from their surrounding worlds. The superimposition of a coercive spatial order that rejects the people's everyday experiences is deeply patronising and colonialisng. Such perspectives, according to Dörfler & Rothfuß (2017: 416), "delegitimize the subject to make its own experiences and to report about them autonomously, which is a 'hegemonic' stance to the objects/subjects of research".

Returning to Scott's parcel of land with this approach in mind turns the illusionary perspective upside-down. It does not ask about the cadastral maps' objective value for the state but the subjective meaning the parcel bestows on its occupant. It enriches the homogenous geometry through the lived dimensions of space and time, by social space and the manifold typifications of people and things. Thus, it fills the void of the blank parcel with rich experiences, rendering the empty space meaningful. Scott (1998: 44) also points out that "many things about a parcel of land are far more important than the location of its boundaries. What kind of soil has it, what crops can be grown on it, how hard it is to work, and how close it is to a market". Indeed, the blindered perspective, not to recognise meaning beyond the economic value of land mirrors the main cause that provoked the discontinuities and conflicts between the life-world of peri-urban farmers and the market-led urban expansion. Thus, in line with Schindler (2017: 47), the Maputo Municipality has to accept that "political economy is not the overriding context within which urban processes unfold, but that peri-urban processes are entrenched in everyday life's historical rootedness.

With the lived reality of everyday life back on the agenda, what could a concrete programme for a theory from and for the South look like? The unilateral travelling direction of theories from North to South has caused the dualistic opposition between theory and development, between the state and society. We are now fully aware of its disastrous outcomes. However, replacing the theories from the North with theories from the South would mean to artificially maintain the binary confrontation that must be overcome (Watson 2014: 104). Also, neglecting anything stemming from the North would harm any advancement of the theoretical project itself. After all, one-way directions of theory are dead ends for social science. Thus, following Robinson (2006: 63), "a post-colonial urbanism will be open to theory travelling in any direction" and theorising the ordinary city has to allow analyses of all cities by foregrounding their histories and identities. Building on the work of Healey (2012), Watson (2014: 104) suggests for a Southern planning theory to be balanced out between the universal and the contingent features of a given situation. In this regard, understanding the "contingent universals" refers to "what is specific to a place and what can be shared learning across different localities and context" (Watson 2014).

Against this background, the life-world structures represent the universal component, whereas the empirical inquiry through the reconstruction of its spatial, temporal, and social dimensions delivers insights into the contingent characteristics of the place. To emphasise it once again, one of the most basic assumptions of the theoretical consideration underlying this thesis rests on the universality of the invariant structures of the life-world: they constitute the *mathesis universalis* and serve as *tertium comparationis*. This means that every individual in the world has a life-world with structures forming a frame of reference that allows for historical and intercultural comparisons (Eberle 2021: 21). For a realistic planning theory, the structures of the life-world are most appropriate for travelling and application across different localities and cultural contexts, thus also between the Global South and the Global North. Thus, whereas the life-world refers to the “universal” component, its constitutive dimensions of locality, self-sufficient practice, and community form the “contingent” component of a planning theory.

A realistic approach begins with the reconstruction of the life-world. It provides an understanding of how individuals and groups see the world they live in. Embarking on their perspective allows planning to be closer to reality and thus realistic and inclusive. However, the perspective to be reconstructed is based on the relative-natural worldview and differs from the outside perspective of the planner. Thus, for planners and policymakers to reconstruct this world most accurately, it is inevitable to follow Schütz’s “postulate of adequacy” and the “postulate of subjective interpretation” (Schütz 1962: 43–44). It demands putting oneself into the position of the ones’ whose world one wishes to understand and to embark on the inside view of subjects. To meet these methodological challenges, adherence to an appropriate research programme consisting of place-based research and life-world analytical ethnography (cf. chapter 4.2. & 4.3.) is paramount.

The framework of a realistic life-world approach to planning is presented in figure 24. It comprises the institutional realms of the state situated at the top level and the civil society at the bottom level. The relevant actors and institutions are located at different hierarchical levels of the political scale, ranging between the locality of the neighbourhood and the municipality. State and civil society are assembled vis-à-vis each other, not in contrary positions but in dialogue and an interactional relationship combining the top-down and bottom-up approaches to planning. The governance interactions between the state and society are organised around the three constitutive dimensions of peri-urbanity. They represent the peri-urban reality that planning has to take into account to be realistic and relevant. Thus, the life-world approach to planning means for both state and society actors to embrace locality (1), embrace self-sufficient practice (2), and embrace community (3), thus leading to a synthesis between peri-urbanity and state-society interactions.

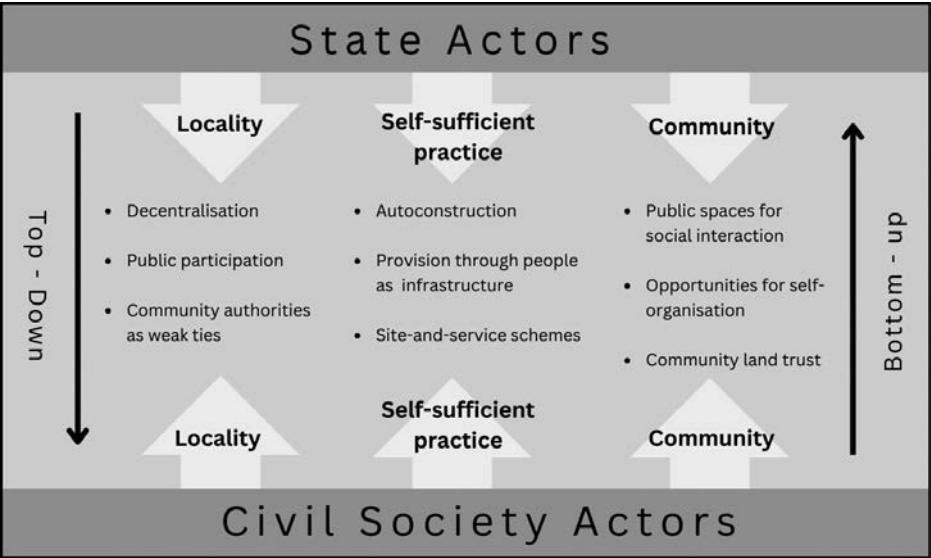


Figure 24 Framework of a realistic life-world approach to planning

Source: Illustration by author

(1) Embracing Locality

Embracing the constitutive dimension of locality represents the point of departure towards achieving realistic planning. It means taking the local needs and desires seriously and appreciating the resource and knowledge base at hand at the neighbourhood level. Embracing locality refers to embracing the local governance system intrinsic to peri-urban neighbourhoods. It is to reconsider the rigid one-way directed top-down approach to planning but to strengthen the role of community authorities through decentralisation and openness for participatory processes.

Today's world is challenged by the uncertainties of adverse future scenarios caused by pandemics, climate change, environmental degradation, and societal transformations. On these grounds, providing locally grown food, reinvigorating the natural resource base, and conserving a sustainable environment have become ever more critical and necessary. The response options to adapt to those global challenges depend on the local knowledge of environmental processes. The community authorities like the *chefe de quarteirão* are aware of the occurrences on the local scale, which is necessary to act upon. When it rains, and the neighbourhood becomes flooded, they know the intuitive way of doing the right thing at the right time, and the community acts in solidarity. Flexible and adaptive solutions to global transformations unfold precisely at the local level of their manifestations and are sometimes even more advanced than the control-oriented approach to planning.

With the municipal structures encroaching over peri-urban spaces, local-level agreements such as the land titling system tend to be absorbed and lose their legitimacy. An urban dweller with a DUAT no longer depends on the community author-

ities as proof of residence. The DUAT register is realised above the heads of the *chefes*, and some don't even know what a DUAT looks like. Urban newcomers do not come to present themselves as new neighbourhood residents, nor do they participate in community life. As some *chefes* revealed, they no longer even know all the residents of the *quarteirão*. This tendency undermines the local governance system and leads to its gradual erosion, as the *chefes* lose their legitimacy and motivation to provide for the community. Meanwhile, it is not unusual for neighbourhood authorities to engage in illicit land sales for personal gain. The overall result seriously affects those dependent on the local governance system, essentially the most marginalised households in need of protection.

Given the state's weak capacities and disregard for the mostly poor population on the outskirts of Maputo, the local twilight system complements the lack of public resources. Peri-urban dwellers rely heavily on this system and the essential services it provides. Without spending much public resources, the *chefes* perform essential governance tasks such as keeping track of local land occupation and demographic developments. They are vital in executing administrative reforms such as reorganising the *quarteirões* and steering infrastructure developments such as refurbishing streets. In the context of the increased pace of urban expansion and population growth, municipal structures alone cannot keep up with these tasks. At last, if the local governance system collapses, the municipal government would be fraught with unpredictable consequences.

The effective transfer of capacities and resources to the local level is pivotal to preventing this worst-case scenario. In contrast to the *secretários*, the *chefes de quarteirão* and *chefes das dez casas* have no office and no salary. Several interviewees expressed resentment about the municipality and the residents' lack of valorisation of their voluntary work. At the same time, it was mentioned that just the provision of name tags to show the institutional affiliation to the government would be effective for feeling valued while granting legitimacy in front of the public. The functioning of neighbourhoods depends much on their leaders' individual capacities. By providing formal training in participatory instruments, teaching leadership skills, and equipping them with resources and a basic salary, the efficient and effective advancement of local governance projects would benefit the community at large.

The institutionalisation of democratic elections of local authorities by the population would create greater legitimacy for the exercise of authority on behalf of the state. So far, some individuals have been in office for over a decade without any regulation. Uncontested mandates, instead of fixed terms, discourage the ambition to fulfil the tasks with motivation. Thus, introducing elections would mean a shift from a lack of recognition to achieving accountability, thereby maximising the degree of representation of the interests of the state and citizens while minimising the risk of engaging in corruption for personal enrichment. It is also an important step forward in incorporating local voices and increasing public participation in decision-making.

Making voices heard and paying attention to what people have to say ultimately reflects embracing locality, as it points to problems as they are experienced. Upscaling the needs of the population and making budgets available at central levels for redistribution to neighbourhood projects is an important step towards deliberative democracy. Although achieving public participation and democratic allocation of resources does not seem to be the goal of Maputo's political leadership, there are internationally recognised examples to follow, such as the participatory budgeting experimented in the Brazilian city of Porto Alegre (cf. Wampler 2007). Finally, concerning the relationship between the central level of the state and the local of the community, it is not just about improving access to services. Following Mitlin (2008: 352), it also involves "more ambitious goals to change the way in which the state functions towards a more decentralized form of operation, with greater citizen control over state resources".

In conclusion, instead of widening the gap between the state and society's perspective and provoking an either-or positioning of the *chefes*, it is essential to make use of their position as "twilight institutions" between society and the state. As "weak ties", they are the essential glue that holds both levels together and makes governance work. Rather than the system of governance at the municipal level absorbing the system of governance at the neighbourhood level, the efficient integration of the latter into the former is achieved through decentralisation and participatory processes that ultimately transcend and bridge scales.

(2) Embracing Self-sufficient Practice

The second component of a realistic life-world approach to planning refers to the second constitutive dimension of peri-urbanity: self-sufficient practice. The self-sufficiency of residents' practices represents a crucial ingredient of peri-urban spaces. It ensures the survival of families at the individual level and the functioning of neighbourhoods as a collective. At the household level, it is expressed by sustaining livelihoods through plot-based activities like farming, service, and commerce. It is also expressed in processes of autoconstruction, not only regarding the proper home but encompassing entire neighbourhoods by the collective provision of public infrastructures such as streets, water, and energy. Where state provision is absent, the delivery of infrastructure and services is complemented by the efforts of civil society. Different actors and institutions play an important role at the peri-urban interface, meandering between the state and society. Thus, dismissing the principle of exclusive sovereignty and, instead, embracing the principle of self-organisation is inevitable. According to Magnusson (2011: 118), it implies "a multiplicity of authorities that operate under conditions of rivalry and interdependence".

Embracing self-sufficient practice means recognising that a city like Maputo is produced and reproduced by both the state's structural planning approaches and the citizens' self-organised everyday practices. Despite all the rivalries, their interde-

pendence in governance, providing infrastructures and solving common problems is pivotal. In Maputo and the broader context of African cities, where the state lacks the capacity or the willingness to provide services for all its citizens, these shortcomings are balanced out by what Viana (2010: 184) calls “chameleonic” principles. He refers to solutions that show changeability and flexibility in adaptation deriving from trial and error experimentations and spontaneous innovations encompassing the collaboration of actors. These take place in spaces where the institutional boundaries are blurred, merging into a process “whose body/torso is as common as a collective, manageable with little hierarchy and stratification, organised in a very flexible and adaptable way – like a chameleon” (Viana 2010: 184).

The so-called site-and-service schemes represent a promising entry point to strengthen self-sufficient practice productively and proactively. The government established the first site-and-service housing projects in the 1970s. However, only on a small scale (cf. chapter 4.1.3.). Thus, although not a novel approach, the basic features of assisting autoconstruction remain extremely relevant for today’s peri-urban realities. According to Norwood (1973: 359), site-and-service housing aims “to facilitate the provision of as many houses as possible, as quickly as possible, and as cheaply as possible”. In light of the unbroken spatial expansion of Maputo and other sub-Saharan cities, any plot provided by the state provides legitimacy for its owner while anticipating uncontrolled growth and the risk of settlement expansions in unsuitable and high-risk zones.

Adopting a site-and-service model would reverse the prototypical temporality of infrastructure provision (cf. chapter 5.2.1.), thereby removing much potential for conflict among neighbours while anticipating the future implementation of infrastructure. It ideally starts with laying out a basic grid of demarcated plots with ready-made access through a network of streets. The lack of such a fundamental substructure is the primary reason for many barriers to effective planning associated with the posterior opening and the obstacles when installing the water provision or the electricity grid. However, after having the area prepared with demarcated plots, the gradual autoconstruction of the neighbourhood can succeed as ordinary. With the overarching principle of “people as infrastructure”, the neighbourhood gradually takes shape, with infrastructures and houses being constructed incrementally according to the individual resources at hand and in line with personal preferences. With the strengthened resources of community authorities, they could assume the role of facilitators to provide technical guidance in the on-site fabrication of cement blocks, how to use construction material properly, and in instructing building techniques that are resilient and adaptive to the impacts of climate change, locally recurrent floods and cyclones. Given the weak capacities of the state, the few resources at disposal are better aligned with contributions from civil society leading to “a shift in planning from (ineffective) control towards (effective) guidance” (Chiodelli & Mazzolini 2019: 167).

Currently, a site-and-service scheme for low-income households is projected to be realised in the peri-urban district of KaTembe. It is associated with the Maputo Urban Transformation Project. The Maputo Urban Transformation Project -PTUM (*Projecto de Transformação Urbana de Maputo*) began in March 2021 and is expected to terminate in 2026. With the World Bank's approval of a financing of USD 100 million, the project aims to implement investments in urban infrastructure projects and institutional reforms. For instance, the revitalisation of the city centre, strengthening the resilience of informal settlements and creating urban infrastructures and a new centrality in KaTembe (CMM 2021: 4–5), a large-scale World Bank-funded programme to be implemented as a follow-up to the terminated ProMaputo project. According to the Maputo Municipality, it will involve the preparation of 1,500 plots and the construction of basic structures of homes aimed at benefiting 100 families living in precarious conditions and high-risk areas (CMM 2021: 10). Qualitatively, this measure represents a step into the right direction, but the quantity of plots to be provided appears no more than a drop in the ocean, and it does not satisfy the real demand of the wider population. In line with the project's overall investment of an astonishing USD 100 million, the provision of merely 1,500 plots is almost insignificant but it reflects the city's actual priorities.

The major challenge for implementing site-and-service projects is the lack of space or, at least, making adequate space available. Although space is sparse in Maputo's competitive peri-urban environment, the numerous large-scale land allocations to private investors reveal that it is less a question of lacking space but rather an issue of how priorities are set. The demand for housing space will grow substantially with demographic developments in mind. Not engaging now with these substantial tasks will exponentially aggravate the challenges to be solved in the future. In line with the neighbourhoods' temporality, the severe problems that densely populated central areas are facing now await more distant emerging areas in the future if no proper action is taken. In short, a realistic planning approach has to be anticipatory and forward-looking towards future states instead of being merely reactive and overstrained if unlikely hopes for the future eventually do not come true.

(3) Embracing Community

Embracing community represents the third component of a realistic life-word approach to planning. Vibrant social interaction between individuals that involve the exchange of knowledge and ideas constitutes the centrepiece of any community. The community has to thrive to be self-sufficient through practice. Thus, it is pivotal to enable opportunities for people to come together in public and create conditions that allow social interaction to evolve. The withdrawal of the municipality from planning has prevented it so far, but it is necessary to create public spaces and install places for meetings and gatherings within the neighbourhoods.

Be it for official reunions organised by neighbourhood authorities or community-based organisations or just for random evening get-togethers. Instead of the hostile environments prevailing in many development areas covered with concrete, the family plots in organically grown areas are exemplars to be translated into the public. There is a need for spaces pleasant to walk through and to pause under shady and comforting trees. Likewise, night-time illumination provides a sense of security for anyone to pass through. In short, it is to create friendly atmospheres of liveability that are welcoming and where one enjoys the presence of others instead of mutual isolation.

The prevailing top-down approach to planning propagates the ideology of individual home ownership with the ultimate promise that all problems are resolved once individual land use titles are attributed. That may be true for the municipality and investors regarding plots primarily as commodities without seeing their multifaceted meaningfulness as a dwelling place. However, against the successive displacement of low-income families, tendencies of social alienation, and the promotion of the social fragmentation of the neighbourhoods, alternative visions exist towards land and home ownership that foster the community's social cohesion while simultaneously providing tenure security.

Community ownership and group titling represent a promising entry point, and the example of the collective DUATs of the farmers' associations provides a potential model to be transferred to the housing sector. By doing so, a contiguous area such as a street or a smaller neighbourhood consisting of several individuals can, as a collective, establish a legal entity that holds the ownership of the land through a single DUAT. At the same time, each family has the autonomy to use the plot individually, while the structure has to be maintained collectively. To foreclose it from the market forces, a mutual agreement to prevent the resale of the plot for profit-orientation is implemented and enforced by the collective. Thus, it ensures that everybody can fulfil their life-long endeavour of the individual dwelling place according to their wishes and resources without worrying about eviction or alienation by investors.

The countless gated communities and real estate developments are examples where a single legal entity is the DUAT holder, subdividing plots and housing units to individual owners. Thus, the legal framework and instrument exist and wait to be experimented with, for instance, by forming community-based housing associations in which each member has a democratic voice. The "community land trusts" model provides guidance towards community-based tenure, and the first experiments on the African continent proved successful in Kenya (cf. Bassett & Jacobs 1997).

The findings have illustrated how the top-down vision of "seeing like a state" fails to meet the actual needs of the population. To make the voices of the locality heard and to represent their vision of "seeing like citizens", the proactive participation of the residents is required. If not facilitated by the state through official mechanisms, the power of collective action can lend visibility to local projects and the audibility of local needs, thus claiming their right to be heard and seen. Beyond community

land ownership, the associations' example as a community-based form of social organisation prevails as a role model for neighbourhood associations to advance locally defined objectives. By sharing responsibility and accountability towards community-based projects, the residents' awareness of their contributions rises. Through the power of collective action, their vision of "seeing like citizens" has the potential to influence policies and drive change. Positive experiences of achievements that derive from collective action strengthen social cohesion and self-confidence, serving as a potential vehicle to promote political agency towards powerful actors (Pieterse 2008: 160). Collective action is vital for generating social capital, strengthening social cohesion and horizontal "strong ties". At the same time, the institutionalisation of an organisation provides the indispensable "weak ties" consisting of strategic partnerships with municipal state entities.

Finally, embracing locality, self-sufficient practice, and community bears the potential to overcome public authorities' shortcomings through community-based governance. According to Fuchs (2003: 63), the "key to the solution of the global problems is the social self-organisation of those groups and individuals that are facing more and more precarious social, economical, political, cultural and ecological conditions today". But rather than shifting the fate to marginalised groups, this means creating opportunities for communities for self-organisation and self-sufficient practice by strengthening institutions at the local level and creating scale-transcending linkages and support networks between local civil society organisations and municipal state authorities.

By so doing, a new and deliberative citizen-led approach to governance emerges, fundamentally questioning the conservative relationship between the state's technical expertise and lay knowledge. It might even induce a shift towards generating bottom-up transformations by using the power of collective self-organisation. The transformative change is then ultimately promoted by the plural understandings of the local community. It reflects their visions of "seeing like citizens", revealing an alternative approach to urban policy-making in African cities and a new relationship between the state and deliberative citizenship.

7.2 Implications for Future Research

With life-world phenomenology and the actor-oriented approach, this dissertation brought two distinct methodological and theoretical strands into a dialogue for a qualitative investigation of peri-urban spaces. By doing so, the epistemological pathway to acquire scientific insights was characterised by two separate operations. On the one hand, the first research objective of understanding peri-urban life-worlds resulted in extensive descriptions of the subjective realities in Maputo's peri-urban areas (cf. chapter 5). On the other hand, the second objective of explaining peri-ur-

ban governance and conflicts produced in-depth analyses of state-society interactions at the peri-urban interface (cf. chapter 6). A synthesis between the empirical components of both operations has just been established. This dissertation concludes with a critical appraisal of the combination of lifeworld phenomenology and the actor approach from a methodological and theoretical perspective, on the basis of which final implications for future research follow.

First, it concerns the adequacy of applying life-world phenomenology for empirical analyses in the Global South. Indeed, the central ideas of life-world phenomenology do not originate from the recent works of scholars with a genuine perspective on the Global South. On the contrary, stemming from the writings of Husserl and Schütz, life-world phenomenology embodies the Eurocentric perspective dating back almost a century. Therefore, it is not unjustified to question this endeavour. However, an alternative approach better apt to grasp the social reality of everyday life in the ordinary city, which is more accurate and realistic than a phenomenological inquiry, does not exist. Life-world theory provides the genuine entry point for what prominent urban scholars from the Global South like Pieterse, Robinson, or Roy call for (cf. chapter 3.2.).

Schütz's life-world does not present a political project but, foremost, a methodological one, targeting the universal conditions of human life. Therefore, it does not represent a normative model developed in the North to be applied in the South but a heuristic framework open for flexible application in different historical and cultural contexts. The life-world theory is not prescriptive but descriptive. It rather is what Watson (2014: 106) demands from a theory, "a perspective or way of seeing the world (in planning)". It also allows for the change of perspective to embark on the position of the experiencing subject regardless of being in the North or the South. Finally, it is its universality which provides the vantage of an inquiry allowing for a "non-Eurocentric de-centered study" (Siriwardane-de Zoysa & Hornidge 2016: 7).

In addition, critical scholars might question the adequacy of life-world phenomenology and humanistic conceptualisations of place as being "essentialist and exclusionary" (Cresswell 2015: 41). Marxist geographer Harvey (1996: 301), for instance, challenges Heidegger and the very nature of "dwelling" in our modern and capitalist world:

We cannot turn back to the Black Forest farmhouse, but what is it that we might turn to? The issue of authenticity (rootedness) of the experience of place (and nature in place) is, for example, a difficult one.

However, as being bodily subjects, human existence is always tied to a specific location. Life enfolds locally, and as long as people continue to live, they will continue to have their life-worlds and continue to inhabit places. Thus, as long as the life-world persists, the concept of place resists. Therefore, it is not to judge Heidegger and his philosophy on "dwelling", which stems from another particular period. Although dwelling in the sense of being rooted still plays a decisive role in the context of

peri-urban Maputo, this does not mean that the way of dwelling in peri-urban Maputo must be universal. What is universal is the life-world and its spatial centredness, based on which an investigation discovers the subject's understanding of what this spatial centredness entails.

Although we may not continue to dwell in the sense of feeling rooted somewhere in particular, it will at least be meaningful in some way. Since the nature of our existence in the world will continuously change in the future, so will the places and the demands to conceptualise them accurately. The answer comes from the living subject itself and its continuous presence in the world. Heidegger (1993: 363) himself wrote that "[t]he proper plight of dwelling lies in this, that mortals ever search anew for the essence of dwelling, that they *must ever learn to dwell*". Then, it is the task of phenomenological geography of place to grasp the renewed essences of dwelling and to conceptualise it adequately and contemporarily.

Even if his original writings are less popular among geographers, Alfred Schütz's legacy is still indispensable in the modern social science disciplines. He influenced Berger & Luckmann's (1966) *The Social Construction of Reality* and is thus the principal precursor of the widespread social constructivist research paradigm. But much more important than that is his contribution to a methodology of the social sciences with the phenomenology of the life-world as "proto-sociology" and a starting point for empirical analyses to be combined with other theories, such as the actor-oriented approach applied in this dissertation. The understanding of the subjective meaning that an action has for an actor precedes an explanation of social events and processes. Thus, explaining presupposes understanding, such as the "second order" constructs developed by the social scientist, presupposes the subjective "first order constructs" rooted in everyday life. The relationship between both levels reflects the relationship between the two research operations. Finally, it reveals two broad strands with implications for future research.

The first strand of potential entry points for future research concerns the operationalisation of the conducted life-world analysis and its reproduction in other empirical research contexts. The understanding of peri-urban life-worlds is based on the heuristic framework presented at the beginning of chapter 5. The step-by-step framework for reconstructing life-worlds entails the spatial centredness of the life-world (1), the spatio-temporal structures (2), an understanding of the life-world's meaningful places (3), and the socio-spatial structures of the intersubjective surrounding world (4). Thus, encompassing the invariant and universal structures of human existence, the approach is applicable in different socio-cultural contexts regardless of being in the Global North or the Global South.

Combining the framework with the analytical and interpretative strategy (cf. chapter 3.5.) enables the reconstruction of (peri-urban) life-worlds in the context of other cities in other countries or rural areas alike. Following the logic of the *tertium comparationis*, the empirical results can be compared and put to test to see if similar

categories apply to, for instance, the meaning of the dwelling and the multifunctional purposes of the plot. Besides, the established categories can be contrasted and refined through analyses conducted in places of an unambiguously “urban” or “rural” type. Particularly with regard to the often neglected dimension of peri-urban sociality, there is a considerable need for research to meet the challenges that the peri-urban future habitats demand on policy and planning.

The second strand of potential entry points for future research concerns the combination of life-world phenomenology with other theories and concepts. For the range of qualitative research approaches interested in understanding subjective meaning-making, it is crucial to understand the proto-sociological underpinnings that the life-world structures provide. Understanding the underlying spatial, temporal and social context imposed on each individual allows for a more accurate inquiry that yields appropriate results. Against this background, “[a] training in phenomenological life-world analysis and the study of the ‘structures of the life-world’ are seminal ways for social researchers to develop a *sensitivity and awareness for context-dependent meaning modifications*” (Eberle 2022: 123). As in the case of this dissertation, the engagement of the subjective life-world perspective and the structurally oriented actor perspective has proven fertile grounds, leading to the mutual enrichment of both. Eventually, the subjective perspective on the lived experiences and the meaning that Maputo’s peri-urban peasants and residents attributed to their changing environment elucidated the social interface and life-world discontinuities in the first place (cf. chapter 6).

A wide range of other theories can harness the life-world’s underlying methodological strength, such as, for instance, the growing number of political ecology scholars interested in human-environment research and environmental change from a perspective critical of power relationships and inequalities. Like the actor perspective, political ecology makes its strongest claims at the structural level, highlighting the politics of scale (cf. Neumann 2009). The life-world provides the supplement of assessing if and/or how the effects emanated from regional or global incidents are perceived locally and how the specific context of environmental change is attributed with meaning.

As always “being-in-the-world”, it is through the corporeality of the subject and the notion of the lived body that the material aspects of the environment are revealed, thus unmasking an understanding of the non-semiotic but ultimately real and effective power dynamics indispensable if wanting to research human-environment-interactions with adequacy. Thus, in line with this dissertation’s introductory call to take the subjectivity of perspectives as its starting point, it concludes with an invitation to other scholars to do likewise. To engage with the real problems of the life-world, to conduct critical realist research rooted in the lived reality of everyday life.

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Annex

Table 4 Detailed register of conducted interviews

Interview-ID	(Name), Position/Organisation, Location	Date
A: Interviews during the explorative field work (October 2019 – December 2019)		
Explorative interviews		
Interview A-01	Academic, UFISAMO project, SLE Berlin	October 11, 2019
Interview A-02	Academic, UFISAMO project, SLE Berlin	October 23, 2019
Interview A-03	Academic, UFISAMO project, SLE Berlin	October 24, 2019
Interview A-04	Academic, UEM, Maputo	October 30, 2019
Interview A-05	Academic, UEM, Maputo	November 14, 2019
Interview A-06	Academic, UEM, Maputo	November 27, 2019
Interview A-07	Academic, UEM, Maputo	December 03, 2019
Problem-centred and semi-structured interviews		
Interview A-08	Academic, UEM, Inhaca, Maputo	November 29, 2019
Interview A-09	District administration, Katembe, Maputo	November 12, 2019
Interview A-10	<i>Secretário</i> , Inguide, Katembe, Maputo	November 12, 2019
Interview A-11	<i>Secretário</i> , Hulene, KaMavota, Maputo	December 02, 2019
Interview A-12	NGO, Chamanculo, NIhamankulo, Maputo	December 02, 2019
Interview A-13	Felisberto, UNAC, Maputo	December 04, 2019
Interview A-14	Carlos Serra, UEM, Maputo	December 16, 2019
B: Expert interviews realised online (October 2020 – January 2021)		
Interview B-01	David Morton, historian, Canada	October 15, 2020
Interview B-02	Ana Beja da Costa, landscape architect, Portugal	October 30, 2020
Interview B-03	Vanessa de Pacheco Melo, architect, Portugal	November 02, 2020
Interview B-04	Arwen Prendergast, architect and urban planner, Maputo	December 06, 2020
Interview B-05	Sílvia Jorge, architect, Portugal	January 13, 2021

Interview-ID	(Name), Position/Organisation, Location	Date
C: Interviews and encounters during the ethnographic fieldwork (May 2021 – October 2021)		
Problem-centred and semi-structured interviews (prearranged, mostly recorded)		
Interview C-01	Arthur, <i>chefe de quarteirão</i> , Mutanhana, Marracuene	July 21, 2021
Interview C-02	Afonso, <i>chefe de quarteirão</i> , Mutanhana, Marracuene	July 21, 2021
Interview C-03	Frederico <i>chefe de quarteirão</i> , Mutanhana, Marracuene	July 21, 2021
Interview C-04	Amadeu, technician, SDPI, Marracuene	July 22, 2021
Interview C-05	<i>Secretário</i> , Mutanhana, Marracuene	July 22, 2021
Interview C-06	<i>Secretaria</i> , Guava, Marracuene	August 04, 2021
Interview C-07	<i>Secretário</i> , Costa do Sol, Maputo	August 06, 2021
Interview C-08	Rolando, <i>chefe de quarteirão</i> Triunfo, Costa do Sol	August 12, 2021
Interview C-09	Marta, <i>chefe de quarteirão</i> , Triunfo, Costa do Sol	August 12, 2021
Interview C-10	Timoteo, <i>chefe de quarteirão</i> . Pescadores, Costa do Sol	August 13, 2021
Interview C-11	Dália, <i>chefe de quarteirão</i> Mapulene, Costa do Sol	August 13, 2021
Interview C-12	Natalia, <i>chefe de quarteirão</i> Triunfo, Costa do Sol	August 18, 2021
Interview C-13	Bernardo, <i>chefe de quarteirão</i> Triunfo, Costa do Sol	August 18, 2021
Interview C-14	Angela, resident, Costa do Sol	August 18, 2021
Interview C-15	<i>Secretário</i> , Albazine, Maputo	August 19, 2021
Interview C-16	Luciana, <i>chefe de quarteirão</i> Guava, Marracuene	August 24, 2021
Interview C-17	Adriano, farmer, Guebuza Association, Maputo	August 30, 2021
Interview C-18	Luisa, farmer, Tomas Sankara Association	September 02, 2021
Interview C-19	Eduardo, <i>chefe de quarteirão</i> Guava, Marracuene	September 04, 2021
Interview C-20	Alberto & Rolando, resident, Triunfo, Costa do Sol	October 02, 2021
Interview C-21	Rolando, <i>chefe de quarteirão</i> Triunfo, Costa do Sol	October 02, 2021
Interview C-22	Faustina, resident, Costa do Sol, Maputo	October 02, 2021
Interview C-23	Tobias, president, Union of farmers' associations	October 05, 2021
Interview C-24	Augusto, lawyer, DMOTC, Maputo	October 07, 2021
Interview C-25	Felismina, <i>chefe de quarteirão</i> , Triunfo, Costa do Sol	October 13, 2021
Interview C-26	Architect Vedor, Maputo	October 13, 2021
Interview C-27	Eduardo & Lucas, <i>chefes de quarteirão</i> , Guava, Marrac.	October 16, 2021
Interview C-28	Adriano, farmer, Guebuza Association, Maputo	September 29, 2021
Interview C-29	Adriano, farmer, Guebuza Association, Maputo	October 18, 2021
Interview C-30	China Jiangxi Corporation	July 22, 2021

Interview-ID	(Name), Position/Organisation, Location	Date
Problem-centred and semi-structured interviews (spontaneously arranged, not recorded)		
Interview C-31	Farmer, Guava, Marracuene	August 04, 2021
Interview C-32	Farmer, Guava, Marracuene	August 04, 2021
Interview C-33	Farmer, Guava, Marracuene	August 19, 2021
Interview C-34	Resident, Guava, Marracuene	August 19, 2021
Interview C-35	Resident, Guava, Marracuene	August 19, 2021
Interview C-36	Resident, Guava, Marracuene	August 19, 2021
Interview C-37	Resident, Guava, Marracuene	August 24, 2021
Interview C-38	Resident, Guava, Marracuene	August 24, 2021
Interview C-39	Resident, Guava, Marracuene	August 24, 2021
Interview C-40	Resident, Guava, Marracuene	August 24, 2021
Interview C-41	Resident, Guava, Marracuene	August 24, 2021
Interview C-42	Resident, Guava, Marracuene	August 24, 2021
Interview C-43	Farmer, Guebuza Association, Maputo	August 25, 2021
Interview C-44	Farmer, Guebuza Association, Maputo	August 25, 2021
Interview C-45	Farmer, Guebuza Association, Maputo	August 25, 2021
Interview C-46	Farmer, Guebuza Association, Maputo	August 25, 2021
Informal conversations and regular encounters with informants		
Interview C-47	Hortencia, farmer, Maputo	Regular encounters
Interview C-48	Rita, farmer, Maputo	Regular encounters
Interview C-49	Students, UEM, Maputo	Regular encounters
Interview C-50	Matias, CMM, Maputo	Regular encounters
Interview C-51	Manuel, agricultural extensionist, Maputo	Regular encounters
Interview C-52	Jonas, development worker, Maputo	Regular encounters
Interview C-53	Antonio, farmer, Maputo	September 01, 2021
Interview C-54	Farmer, Maputo	June 11, 2021
Interview C-55	Vicente, farmer, Maputo	September 29, 2021
Interview C-56	Resident, Mutanhana, Marracuene	July 06, 2021
Interview C-57	Marcelino, taxi driver, Maputo	Regular encounters
Interview C-58	Jeronimo, resident, Guava, Marracuene	Regular encounters
Interview C-59	Academic, UEM, Maputo	October 15, 2021

Table 5 Detailed register of fieldnotes and fieldwork activities

Fieldnotes-ID	Fieldwork activity, location	Date
A: Fieldnotes and lived explorations during the explorative field work (October 2019 – December 2019)		
Fieldnotes A-01	Explorations to district KaTembe	November 08, 2019
Fieldnotes A-02	Explorations to district KaTembe	November 12, 2019
Fieldnotes A-03	Explorations to district KaMavota	November 15, 2019
Fieldnotes A-04	Explorations to district KaNyaka	November 17, 2019
Fieldnotes A-05	Explorations to district KaMavota	November 19, 2019
Fieldnotes A-06	Explorations to district KaMabukwana	November 20, 2019
Fieldnotes A-07	Explorations to district KaMavota	November 21, 2019
Fieldnotes A-08	Explorations to district KaMavota	November 28, 2019
Fieldnotes A-09	Explorations to district KaNyaka	November 29, 2019
Fieldnotes A-10	Explorations to district KaNyaka	November 30, 2019
Fieldnotes A-11	Explorations to district KaMabukwana	December 02, 2019
Fieldnotes A-12	Farmers' meetings, <i>Casa Agrária</i> , KaMavota	December 05, 2019
Fieldnotes A-13	Explorations to district KaMavota	December 06, 2019
Fieldnotes A-14	Explorations to district KaMavota	December 07, 2019
Fieldnotes A-15	Farmers' meetings, <i>Casa Agrária</i> , KaMavota	December 11, 2019
Fieldnotes A-16	Explorations to district KaMavota & Marracuene	December 14, 2019
B: Fieldnotes and lived explorations during the ethnographic fieldwork (May 2021 – October 2021)		
Fieldnotes B-01	Farmer Field School, M. Mbuzini Association	June 06, 2021
Fieldnotes B-02	Explorations to KaMavota	June 11, 2021
Fieldnotes B-03	Explorations to Costa do Sol	June 15, 2021
Fieldnotes B-04	Explorations to Mapulene & Pescadores, Costa do Sol	June 18, 2021
Fieldnotes B-05	Farming fieldwork, M. Mbuzini Association	June 24, 2021
Fieldnotes B-06	Explorations to Guava, Marracuene	June 30, 2021
Fieldnotes B-07	Explorations to Costa do Sol & Polana Caniço	July 02, 2021
Fieldnotes B-08	Explorations to Mutanhana, Marracuene	July 06, 2021
Fieldnotes B-09	Explorations to Mutanhana, Marracuene	July 07, 2021
Fieldnotes B-10	Farming fieldwork, Costa do Sol Association	July 08, 2021
Fieldnotes B-11	Farming fieldwork, Costa do Sol Association	July 09, 2021
Fieldnotes B-12	Explorations to Mutanhana, Marracuene	July 21, 2021
Fieldnotes B-13	Explorations to Mutanhana, Marracuene	July 22, 2021
Fieldnotes B-14	Farming fieldwork, Costa do Sol Association	July 29, 2021
Fieldnotes B-15	Explorations to Guava, Marracuene	August 04, 2021

Fieldnotes-ID	Fieldwork activity, location	Date
Fieldnotes B-16	Explorations to Triunfo, Costa do Sol	August 06, 2021
Fieldnotes B-17	Explorations to Triunfo, Costa do Sol	August 12, 2021
Fieldnotes B-18	Explorations to Mapulene & Pescadores, Costa do Sol	August 13, 2021
Fieldnotes B-19	Farming fieldwork, Tomas Sankara Association	August 16, 2021
Fieldnotes B-20	Explorations to Costa do Sol & Polana Caniço	August 18, 2021
Fieldnotes B-21	Explorations to Albazine & Guava, Marracuene	August 19, 2021
Fieldnotes B-22	Explorations to Guava, Marracuene	August 24, 2021
Fieldnotes B-23	Explorations to Guebuza Association	August 25, 2021
Fieldnotes B-24	Explorations to Guebuza Association	August 30, 2021
Fieldnotes B-25	Explorations to Triunfo & Tomas Sankara Association	September 01, 2021
Fieldnotes B-26	Explorations to Tomas Sankara Association	September 02, 2021
Fieldnotes B-27	Explorations to Guava, Marracuene	September 04, 2021
Fieldnotes B-28	Farmer Field School, M. Mbuzini Association	September 08, 2021
Fieldnotes B-29	Explorations to Guebuza Association	September 09, 2021
Fieldnotes B-30	Explorations to Guebuza & Chissano Association	September 29, 2021
Fieldnotes B-31	Farmers' meeting, CMM, Maputo	September 30, 2021
Fieldnotes B-32	Explorations to Triunfo, Costa do Sol	October 02, 2021
Fieldnotes B-33	Explorations to <i>Casa Agrária</i> , KaMavota	October 05, 2021
Fieldnotes B-34	Explorations to Triunfo & T. Sankara Associations	October 12, 2021
Fieldnotes B-35	Explorations to Triunfo, Costa do Sol	October 13, 2021
Fieldnotes B-36	Explorations to Guava, Marracuene	October 16, 2021

Abstract

The outskirts of rapidly growing cities in sub-Saharan Africa are about to experience the most unprecedented development dynamics. Urban growth rates are exceptionally high due to natural growth and rural-urban migration. With the more central urban structures already being saturated and the capacity of municipal authorities clearly overstretched, the continued growth is inevitably leading to the tremendous spatial expansion of settlements into the rural hinterland, where much of the infrastructure and service provision is realised outside central state control. Peri-urban areas comprise vast zones combining urban and rural features with mosaic patterns of mixed land uses and livelihoods. Where urban and rural features interact and intertwine, new categories of places, and spaces emerge that are the centre of the life-worlds of the continent's future populations.

At the same time, peri-urban areas are characterised by governance arrangements where customary institutions and norms exist parallel to statutory state law, thus representing a particular arena where different actors coexist and compete for resources. However, the persistence of peri-urban spaces and the distinctiveness of peri-urban life-worlds have not received the scholarly attention they deserve. Too often, they are regarded as a transitional phenomenon or reduced by emphasising their deficiencies as a residual category of the urban. The failure of planners and policymakers to understand the perspectives of people living in peri-urban areas neglects local realities and needs. It denies them their existence, ultimately exacerbating discontinuities and fuelling conflict.

Against this background, this dissertation is guided by two overarching research objectives. The first is to understand peri-urban life-worlds, and the second is to explain peri-urban governance and conflicts. In order to achieve these goals, two different theoretical approaches are brought into a fruitful dialogue. On the one hand, life-world phenomenology in the tradition of Alfred Schütz and its primacy of lived experience is best suited to address the reality of what it means to be a peri-urban dweller. On the other hand, with its emphasis on the subjectivity of perspectives, an actor-oriented approach informed by Norman Long and his category of the social interface, provides an adequate complement for assessing governance and state-society interactions.

The peri-urban coastal plain of the Mozambican capital, Maputo, depicts an appropriate study area for examining peri-urban life-worlds and conflicts. In the past, the area was only sparsely populated, characterised by the local presence of farming and fishing communities, which, over time, led to the consolidation of peri-urban life-worlds in the vicinity of the city. However, the recent construction of the *Circular de Maputo* ring road system has paved the way for rapid urban expansion, accompanied by even more profound changes, such as new institutional arrangements and land tenure systems. In line with these interventions, the social composition of the actors has become increasingly heterogeneous, leading to territorial conflicts and contestations over peri-urban spaces and meanings.

Exploring life-worlds requires exploring the subjective meaning that people ascribe to their lived experiences and reconstructing it with the highest possible degree of adequacy. Therefore, this research is based on a qualitative case study design building on place-based research and life-world analytical ethnography. An initial exploratory fieldwork occurred in 2019, and an extended stay of immersive ethnographic fieldwork followed in 2021. The applied data collection methods draw on the researcher's own lived experiences, variations of participant observation, various forms of qualitative interviews and visual methods. The analysis and interpretation of the data stand in the hermeneutic traditions.

The reconstruction of life-world experiences sheds light on the spatial, temporal and social dimensions of everyday life in peri-urban Maputo. The results illustrate how people live in peri-urban areas, and the constitutive dimensions of peri-urbanity are identified, consisting of the three overarching dimensions of locality, self-sufficient practice and community. The conflicts of state-society interactions are analysed through two examples. The ambiguity of urban plans and land use titles between providing security of tenure or serving as a driver of displacement and the role of the municipality in land use conflicts between peri-urban agriculture and real estate developments.

The inherent struggles over space go beyond material claims to land and property but are rooted in the inconsistency of interests and meanings. In line with the theory-development dualism formulated in urban studies literature, it is argued that the Maputo Municipality has largely lost touch with the reality of the lived experiences of the population. However, a realistic life-world approach to planning is presented. It aims to reconcile the antagonistic relationships between the reality of the people and the reality of the state, thus providing a synergy between peri-urban life-worlds and the actor perspective and a contribution to urban theory beyond "developmentalism".

Zusammenfassung

Die Außenbezirke der schnell wachsenden Städte in Afrika südlich der Sahara sind im Begriff, eine noch nie dagewesene Entwicklungsdynamik zu erfahren. Die städtischen Wachstumsraten sind aufgrund des natürlichen Bevölkerungswachstums und der Land-Stadt-Migration außergewöhnlich hoch. Da zentrale städtische Strukturen bereits gesättigt und die Kapazitäten der städtischen Behörden überlastet sind, führt das anhaltende Wachstum unweigerlich zu einer enormen räumlichen Ausdehnung von Siedlungsgebieten in Richtung des ländlichen Umlands, wo ein Großteil der Bereitstellung von Infrastruktur und Dienstleistungen außerhalb zentralstaatlicher Kontrolle realisiert wird. Peri-urbane Gebiete umfassen ausgedehnte Zonen, die städtische und ländliche Merkmale mit mosaikartigen Mustern gemischter Landnutzungsformen und Lebensgrundlagen kombinieren. Wo städtische und ländliche Merkmale interagieren und ineinandergreifen, entstehen neue Kategorien von Orten und Räumen. Sie sind das Zentrum der Lebenswelten der zukünftigen Bevölkerung des Kontinents.

Gleichzeitig zeichnen sich peri-urbane Gebiete durch Governance-Arrangements aus, in denen gewohnheitsrechtliche Institutionen und Normen parallel zum staatlichen Recht existieren und somit eine besondere Arena darstellen, in der verschiedene Akteure koexistieren und um Ressourcen konkurrieren. Der Fortbestand peri-urbaner Räume und die Besonderheit peri-urbaner Lebenswelten haben jedoch nicht die wissenschaftliche Aufmerksamkeit erhalten, die sie verdienen. Allzu oft werden sie als Übergangsphänomen betrachtet oder durch die Betonung ihrer Unzulänglichkeiten auf ein Residuum des Städtischen reduziert. Das Unvermögen von Planern und politischen Entscheidungsträgern, die Perspektiven der in peri-urbanen Gebieten lebenden Menschen zu verstehen, vernachlässigt lokale Realitäten und Bedürfnisse. Dadurch wird ihnen ihre Existenz abgesprochen, was letztlich die Diskontinuitäten verschärft und Konflikte schürt.

Vor diesem Hintergrund wird diese Dissertation von zwei übergreifenden Forschungszielen geleitet. Zum einen geht es darum, peri-urbane Lebenswelten zu verstehen, zum anderen darum, peri-urbane Governance und Konflikte zu erklären. Um diese Ziele zu erreichen, werden zwei unterschiedliche theoretische Ansätze in

einen fruchtbaren Dialog gebracht. Einerseits ist die Phänomenologie der Lebenswelt in der Tradition von Alfred Schütz mit ihrem Primat der Erfahrung am besten geeignet, um die Realität der peri-urbanen Bewohner*innen zu erfassen. Mit seiner Betonung der Subjektivität von Perspektiven bietet andererseits der akteursorientierte Ansatz, der sich an Norman Long und seiner Kategorie des „social interface“ orientiert die adäquate Ergänzung für die Bewertung von Governance und Interaktionen zwischen Staat und Gesellschaft.

Die peri-urbane Küstenebene der mosambikanischen Hauptstadt Maputo stellt ein geeignetes Untersuchungsgebiet für die Erforschung peri-urbaner Lebenswelten und Konflikte dar. In der Vergangenheit war das Gebiet nur dünn besiedelt und durch die lokale Präsenz von Landwirtschafts- und Fischereigemeinschaften gekennzeichnet, was im Laufe der Zeit zur Konsolidierung von periurbanen Lebenswelten in der Nähe zum städtischen Zentrum führte. In jüngster Zeit hat der Bau des Ringstraßensystems *Circular de Maputo* jedoch den Weg für eine rasche städtische Expansion geebnet, die mit noch tiefgreifenderen Veränderungen einhergeht, wie z. B. neuen institutionellen Regelungen und Landbesitzsystemen. Im Einklang mit diesen Interventionen wird die soziale Zusammensetzung der Akteure zunehmend heterogener, was zu territorialen Konflikten und Auseinandersetzungen über peri-urbane Räume und Bedeutungen führt.

Die Erforschung von Lebenswelten erfordert die Erforschung der subjektiven Bedeutung, die Menschen ihren erlebten Erfahrungen zuschreiben, und deren Rekonstruktion mit dem höchstmöglichen Grad der Adäquanz. Daher basiert diese Forschung auf einem qualitativen Fallstudiendesign, das auf ortsbezogener Forschung und lebensweltanalytischer Ethnografie aufbaut. Eine erste explorative Feldforschung fand 2019 statt, ein längerer Aufenthalt mit immersiver ethnografischer Feldforschung folgte 2021. Die angewandten Methoden der Datenerhebung stützen sich auf die eigenen erlebten Erfahrungen des Forschers, Variationen der teilnehmenden Beobachtung, verschiedene Formen qualitativer Interviews und visuelle Methoden. Die Analyse und Interpretation der Daten steht in der hermeneutischen Tradition.

Die Rekonstruktion lebensweltlicher Erfahrungen beleuchtet die räumlichen, zeitlichen und sozialen Dimensionen des Alltagslebens im peri-urbanen Maputo. Die Ergebnisse veranschaulichen, wie Menschen in peri-urbanen Gebieten leben, und es werden die konstitutiven Dimensionen von Peri-urbanität identifiziert, die aus den drei übergreifenden Dimensionen Lokalität, autarke Praxis und Gemeinschaft bestehen. Die Konflikte der Interaktionen zwischen Staat und Gesellschaft werden anhand von zwei Beispielen analysiert. Die Ambiguität von Stadtplänen und Landnutzungsrechten zwischen Besitzsicherheit und Verdrängung sowie die Rolle der Stadtverwaltung in Landnutzungskonflikten zwischen peri-urbaner Landwirtschaft und Immobilienentwicklungen.

Die inhärenten Kämpfe um den Raum gehen über materielle Ansprüche auf Land und Eigentum hinaus, sondern wurzeln in der Widersprüchlichkeit von Interessen und Bedeutungen. Dem in der Literatur der *urban studies* formulierten Theorie-Entwicklungs-Dualismus folgend, lautet das Argument, dass die Stadtverwaltung von Maputo den Bezug zur Alltagsrealität ihrer Bevölkerung weitgehend verloren hat. Abschließend wird jedoch ein realistischer und lebensweltlicher Ansatz für die Planung vorgestellt. Dieser zielt darauf ab, die antagonistischen Beziehungen zwischen der Realität der Menschen und der Realität des Staates in Einklang zu bringen und so eine Synergie zwischen periurbanen Lebenswelten und der Akteursperspektive herzustellen und einen Beitrag zur Stadttheorie jenseits des „Developmentalismus“ zu leisten.

The peri-urban areas of rapidly growing cities in sub-Saharan Africa are the centre of the life-worlds of the continent's future population. Located at the frontier of expanding cities, the rural-urban interface is also characterised by complex governance arrangements, where customary institutions and norms exist in parallel to statutory state law. The persistence of peri-urban spaces and the distinctiveness of peri-urban life-worlds have not received the scholarly attention they deserve, and the failure to understand the perspectives of people living in peri-urban areas ultimately leads to discontinuities

and conflicts. Based on the example of the coastal plain of Maputo, the capital of Mozambique, the author explores the intrinsic qualities of everyday life in peri-urban areas and analyses peri-urban governance and conflicts arising in state-society interactions. By combining a phenomenological life-world with an actor-oriented approach, this book shows what it means to be a peri-urban dweller in Maputo and contributes to urban theory in the Global South. Finally, it presents a realistic life-world approach to planning based on the lived experiences of peri-urban life-worlds.

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