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Revealing a Life-World Perspective for Urban Planning: Conceptual Reflections and Empirical Evidence from Peri-Urban Maputo (Mozambique)

Axel Prestes Dürrnagel [1,*], Eberhard Rothfuß [2] and Thomas Dörfler [3]

[1] Department of Natural and Environmental Sciences, University of Kaiserslautern-Landau, 76829 Landau, Germany
[2] Department of Geography, University of Bayreuth, 95447 Bayreuth, Germany; eberhard.rothfuss@uni-bayreuth.de
[3] Department of Geography, Friedrich Schiller University Jena, 07743 Jena, Germany; thomas.doerfler@uni-jena.de
* Correspondence: a.duerrnagel@rptu.de

Abstract: Cities in sub-Saharan Africa are growing at an unprecedented rate, resulting in the significant expansion of peri-urban spaces. Postcolonial planning reflects the instrumental rationale continued by colonial legacies and largely fails to take the realities of the peri-urban population into account. As the example of Maputo, the Mozambican capital, demonstrates, the consequences are far-reaching. Implementing individual land titling programs promotes the commodification of space and the individualization of collective life, while the modernist vision of a homogeneous physical order leads to the socio-spatial alienation of existing residents and large-scale displacements. Employing a life-world approach in Alfred Schütz's tradition, this paper brings the everyday reality of peri-urban dwellers into focus, offering a renewed planning agenda. Building on place-based research and life-world analytical ethnography, the reconstruction of practices and experiences illuminates the "paramount reality" of everyday life in Maputo as necessary entry points for an urban planning agenda that reconciles both the life-world of the people and the instrumental realities of state and planning actors. Applying a life-world perspective to urban planning reveals a realistic and inclusive approach grounded in the experience and social reality of the people living in the "ordinary city".

Keywords: urban studies; phenomenology; life-world analysis; place; space; planning; postcolonial; peri-urban; Maputo; Alfred Schütz

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1. Introduction: Exploring a New (Peri-)Urban Challenge?

Alfred Schütz is considered the founder of "Phenomenological Sociology" and has become known for his work on the "life-world", in which he developed concepts that have gained importance within the context of the social sciences and social theory, but are still largely underutilized in the field of spatial planning. This is surprising, as both life-world analysis and spatial planning concern the relationship between people and their built environment, as well as their perceptions and actions in space. Furthermore, the assumptions of a "mundane sociology" are also compatible with more recent insights within the context of the *spatial turn* in social and cultural sciences, which assume people's active role in establishing their spatial structures, and take into account the conditions of spatio-material and social environments and how everyday actors manage them. In this article, we argue for expanding perspectives in spatial planning rationalities (particularly

in the colonial and postcolonial contexts) to highlight the inequalities and adverse effects of distorted power relations in the urban context of Mozambique.

Life-world phenomenology constitutes a comprehensive discipline for the theoretical apprehension of urban everyday life. The empirical focus of this article is on peri-urban places and neighborhoods that represent the "paramount reality" in a world of "multiple realities" [1] (p. 267) for the inhabiting population. It is the "finite province of meaning" that beholds the unquestioned accent of reality with its particular style of (peri-urban) lived experiences [2] (p. 23). Thus far, this perspective has scarcely met approval within the (peri-)urban studies field despite its potential to provide well-warranted and promising contributions. Pieterse [3] (p. 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. [4] (p. 236) refer to the life-world as a fundamental 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 programs or the mundane ordinary practices associated with reproducing livelihoods and 'lifeworlds' in the city". This call has been reproduced in other scholarly works [5–8]; however, it remains rather superficial, since reference is merely made to Long [9], whereas the more profound (life-world) phenomenologists like Edmund Husserl or Alfred Schütz remain widely overlooked (an exception is the seminal work of Simarmata [10] on a "phenomenology of adaptation planning" concerning the urban poor).

However, the reality of urban planning in the Global South is often different. Instead of focusing on the challenges populations face in exercising mundane practices in pursuit of everyday life, the instrumental realities of state and planning actors reflect the imperative vision of modernity to which Southern cities are condemned to strive. According to Robinson [11] (pp. 531–532), theories developed for understanding cities are primarily drawn from the experiences of a relatively small group and based on the exclusive reality of only a few Western cities [12–15]. This is manifested in the aspirational character of urban plans, assuming the sudden transformations of sub-Saharan cities like the Mozambican capital, Maputo, into what planners and policymakers envision as a Western city. For cities sharing colonial history, the prescribed planning norms and standards apply at the outset only to the former colonial city center. In contrast, the majority of the population resides in areas that are characterized to foreground their deficiencies as lacking the qualities of the exclusively defined "city-ness" (see Kohima et al., 2023 for the former South African "Township" and Valladares 2019 for the "Favela" in Brazil) [16,17].

Following the "peripheral turn" [18] in urban studies, a convincing perspective was developed by Caldeira [19]. She argues that most cities, especially in the Global South, have been largely constructed by their residents, who build not only their own houses but also produce their situated neighborhoods. This "peripheral urbanization" happens neither clandestinely nor in isolation. In and through processes of "autoconstruction", residents interact with the state and its institutions, but in a transversal way. While they have their own logic and plans, their actions typically escape the framing of official planning. They operate inside land markets, credit systems, and consumption, but usually in unique niches of everyday life—bypassing the dominant rationalities of formal real estate, finance, and commodity circulation.

Similar collective action strategies resulting from the ordinary everyday life challenges of marginalized city dwellers are meanwhile well understood and captured as "urban self-organisation" [20], "popular urbanization" [21], or "self-governance in spatial planning" [22]. Encompassing the entirety of the Global South's geographical horizon, such collective initiatives serve not only as a complement but also as a substitute for insufficient state services and infrastructures. However, their relationship with dominant

institutions is often rather combative, such as exercising acts of everyday resistance in informal settlements [23] or collectively defending customary land use rights [24].

Urban studies research emphasizes the need to build theory based on people's everyday practices and experiences in the "ordinary city" [25]. Through this perspective, an understanding of city-ness does not become exclusive but remains relevant for the majority of the population [11,26,27]. The transition into the 21st century has seen the bulk of the urbanizing population shift from the Global North to the Global South [5,28,29]. In particular, the outskirts of rapidly growing cities in sub-Saharan Africa are on the verge of experiencing unprecedented development dynamics, which will lead to the emergence of extensive peri-urban areas combining urban and rural features with mosaicked patterns of mixed land use practices.

Where urban and rural practices and habits interact and intertwine, new categories of places and spaces emerge; these new environments will become life-world-centers of the continent's future populations. Peri-urban spaces are located on the frontier of the Global South's fast-growing and expanding cities, especially those in sub-Saharan Africa. They are and will be, the "Arrival Cities" [30] that will absorb the bulk of arriving populations. Moreover, concurrent with general population increase, areas occupied by settlements will grow even more rapidly. According to a study of 120 cities sampled worldwide, between 1990 and 2000, the settlement areas of these cities grew two-thirds more quickly than the overall rate of their populations [31] (p. 2). According to the estimates of Cattaneo et al. [32] (p. 1), one-fourth of the global population is already living in the peri-urban areas of smaller cities. In this regard, Ravetz et al. [33] (p. 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". 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 [34] (p. 15).

The challenges of dynamic developments on the outskirts of rapidly growing cities in the Global South began to attract the attention of scholars and international development agencies towards the end of the 20th century. Consequently, the need to overcome the simplistic dichotomy of being either "urban" or "rural" gave momentum to the terminology of "peri-urban" [35,36]. The research program from the UK Department for International Development (DFID), with its focus on the two case study city-regions of Kumasi (Ghana) and Hubli-Dharwad (India), was seminal for contemporary conceptualizations [37] (p. 238).

However, the phenomenon of peri-urbanization is not limited to within the sub-Saharan African contexts. New terms expressing the complexity of urban–rural linkages have begun to emerge illustrating the globality of developing peri-urban landscapes. For example, the Indonesian term "*deskota*", composed of the two words "*desa*" (village) and "*kota*" (town), describes the appearance of these new landscapes in Southeast Asia [38]. Similarly, the Chinese expression "*chengzhongcun*" as "urban village" or "village in the city" refers to rural settlements that have been absorbed by the expanding city and are characterized by a lack of services and interest from state institutions [39]. Also, within the Latin American context, particularly in the case of Bolivia, the peri-urban areas resulting from rapid and unplanned growth go beyond the capacities of planners to deal with them [40] (p. 286).

In fact, across the Global South, peri-urban spaces are still largely overlooked by scholars, planners, and policymakers; this has had far-reaching implications for the millions of people residing in peri-urban areas. Carrilho and Trinidade [36] (p. 21) highlight the need to move from centralized master plans to strategic, locally rooted planning, where the residents of peri-urban areas and their views and perspectives are integrated alongside the government's. Correspondingly, Roth and Narain [41] (p. 176) criticize the fact that in the

past, "governmental engagement (or rather non-engagement) with the peri-urban seems to be part of the problem rather than of the solution". Within the context of sub-Saharan Africa in particular, this failure to accept the peri-urban's persistence as an inseparable ingredient of African urbanization processes denies the social dimensions of *peri-urbanity* as a habitat of the future.

Instead, most contemporary conceptualizations describe the peri-urban in terms of their territorial dimensions and functional characteristics or foreground their transitional character [42] (p. 5). Simon [43] (p. 168), for example, criticizes 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" [33] (p. 14) and their deficiencies, for example, the loss of rural features (e.g., biodiversity, fertile soils, or cultivable land) or by their lack of urban characteristics (e.g., infrastructure, or services) [44] (p. 136). Thus, it is necessary to look not at peri-urban areas exclusively in terms of their negative features but also to foreground the opportunities and benefits of their growing populations [33] (pp. 13–14).

We do this by regarding peri-urban areas primarily as meaningful places and as homes to peri-urban life-worlds, by uniting two approaches—(peri-)urban studies literature and life-world phenomenology—whose mutual interaction provide promising entry points for rethinking urban planning approaches which have been thus far largely neglected. Therefore, our objective is to reveal the utility of the life-world perspective in urban planning based on saturated empirical evidence from peri-urban Maputo.

Following this introduction, we outline the current state of urban planning in Maputo (Section 2) before presenting our theoretical approach to life-world phenomenology and the experience of place (3), and a qualitative methodology for reconstructing lived experiences (Section 4). Maputo's peri-urban life-worlds in the Triunfo neighborhood and the experienced loss of place caused by dramatic socio-spatial transformations represent the empirical part of this contribution (Section 5), upon which we suggest a life-world perspective to spatial planning (Section 6) and finally, a conclusion with further implications (Section 7).

2. The Current State of Urban Planning in Maputo, Mozambique

The example of Mozambique and its capital, Maputo, is emblematic of development in sub-Saharan Africa. Mozambique's independence from Portuguese colonial rule was achieved in 1975, following a decade of armed struggle under the efforts of the Mozambican Liberation Front—Frelimo (*Frente de Libertação de Moçambique*). Ubiquitous nationalization was one of the first actions taken by the government, with the nationalization of all Mozambican land as central to the agenda [45,46]. Mozambique's current planning context and urban policies (presently in effect) can be traced back to the late 1980s when a gradual shift towards market-oriented liberalization was initiated. Accordingly, international donor organizations like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) played a key role in dictating the restructuring of the economy through Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP) [47,48]. Following the "neo-liberalization of customary tenure" [49] across the continent, the 1997 Land Law reflects the subsequent consolidation of neoliberal policies; while the law maintains the principle of state ownership of land, individual use rights are attributed by the state. The DUAT (*Direito de Uso e Aproveitamento de Terra*) represents the official title document approving the formal right to use and benefit from the land. On the international stage, the law was praised as progressive, recognizing customary land rights while simultaneously promoting foreign investments [50].

However, within the local, urban context, the 1997 Land Law currently fails to address the needs of most of the peri-urban population. A decade after the initial legislation was

passed, the Regulation for Urban Land and the Territorial Planning Law were approved in 2006 and 2007. The Regulation for Urban Land was developed from a technical viewpoint. It only recognizes properties legitimate for a DUAT, if a local plan has been drawn. The establishment of urban planning, however, is contingent on a strict top-down hierarchy of urban plans on three levels [51] (p. 6). The Urban Structure Plan—PEU (*Plano de Estrutura Urbana*)—represents the master plan, covering the entire territory of Maputo City, followed by Partial Urbanization Plans—PPU (*Plano Parcial de Urbanização*)—covering the area of neighborhoods, and the Detail Plan—PP (*Plano Pormenor*)—only depicting certain neighborhood sections [52] (p. 139). The prerequisite for obtaining individual land titles involves the surveying and parceling of the plots in the neighborhood, the demarcation of streets that are accessible by car, and the development of basic infrastructures. For the residents of spontaneously grown settlements, however, these conditions are far from reality, and in self-produced peri-urban areas with narrow alleyways, only a few plots fulfill the technical requirements [53] (p. 169).

The current Urban Structure Plan of the Municipality of Maputo—PEUMM (*Plano de Estrutura Urbana do Município de Maputo*)—dates from 2008 [54]. It proposes upgrading various neighborhoods through a series of Partial Urbanization Plans. Thereby, the state's top-down approach to planning received substantial support from the World Bank-financed program ProMaputo (1997–2007), which involved the massive regularization of land use titles, issuing more than 40,000 DUATs between 2007 and 2017 [55] (p. 6). The ongoing urban interventions promote the commodification of urban space and have little benefit to the majority of the urban population. The "de-Soto approach" of individual titling poses significant threats to the land that is occupied by lower-income groups and reveals the ambiguity between providing tenure security on the one hand and market-driven displacement on the other [56]. Vanin [57] (p. 164) delineates Maputo's urban structure plan as "the desire to restructure the physical city and the society living there, according to extremely idealized projections of future scenarios". Indeed, roughly a decade ago, it was estimated that only 5% of Maputo residents had a DUAT [58] (p. 18), and, additionally, the percentage of households with a DUAT decreases significantly between the city center and the peri-urban periphery.

3. Life-World Phenomenology and the Experience of Place

Schütz's theory of the "life-world" focuses on the subjective perception of the social by the individual as well as on the social interactions that take place in the everyday world, based on individual agency. Without everyday life there is no society and without society there is no everyday life, a reciprocal establishment of society. Competent actors perform their lives on the basis of learned, socially shared knowledge, and this knowledge serves as a condensed life-world composed of different kinds of social (practical) knowledge. To this end, it is necessary to examine how people understand, interpret, and act within their social reality by accessing a "life-world" that is shared on the basis of relevance, comprising both the individual and social dimensions. If one wants to understand the logic(s) of actors/subjects (in the emphatic, Weberian sense: as a comprehension of its meanings), then one must analyze who does (or refrains) from certain actions, and for what reason(s). Once the logics of a social field, in which power structures are naturally also incorporated [59], have been understood and *reconstructed*, life-world analysis can be established as "adequate-to-meaning" ("sinnadäquat") interpretation of these structures [60,61]; in relation to the spatial dimensions, see Dörfler and Rothfuß [62].

This approach goes far beyond a mere "deconstruction" or simple "construction" of life-worlds as it emphasizes the difference between actor logics and observer logics, e.g., inhabitants (or planners) and scientific interpreters. It is therefore necessary to un-

derstand and interpret in the most correct sense possible the "meaning structures" that guide life-world actors. That is, in the core sense of the word, a methodologically covered *re-construction* of rationales structuring the life-world in certain fields.

For Schütz, these "structures of the life-world" [2] are a "self-evident" world that exists in advance of the individual; life-worlds are established through the practices of past social ancestors and continue to be reproduced through ongoing social relationships. The life-world is shaped by the experiences of people made in their quotidian sphere and by the way in which these experiences are interpreted and translated into actions [63,64]. People act within their "frames of reference" (see also Goffman's "frame analysis" [65]) within this life-world, orienting themselves to social norms and (spatial) structures that are often not explicitly reflected upon, as they are "implicit" or "tacit", i.e., they mainly appear through the way they are incorporated into practices, not necessarily as explicit laws or rules. It is thus an "intersubjectively shared world", a "stock of knowledge" consisting of typifications, skills, relevant knowledge, and recipes for looking at and interpreting the world and acting in it [66] (p. 201). The individual is situated at the center of the life-world, surrounded by spatial, temporal, and social layers, and its "lived body" constitutes the essential medium through which the surrounding life-world is experienced [2,67].

The spatial, temporal, and social stratification of the life-world is one of the central components of Schütz's theory, and *place* corresponds to the geographic concept that describes the spatial aspects of the life-world most accurately. Defined by Seamon [68] (p. 2) as "any environmental locus that gathers human experiences, actions, and meanings spatially and temporally", the spatial, temporal, and social structures of the life-world *enfold in place*, which, as the center of meaning in space, constitutes the (spatial) stage for the everyday life-world of the experiencing subject [69] (p. 22). Without places, no social action is rooted, which means that nearly everything we do and perform *takes place*, and it needs and establishes socio-spatial structures [68].

For the individual immersed in the life-world, space, time, and the sociality of the world are not experienced as separate entities, but are interwoven and always experienced simultaneously in a space–time–society homology [70]. However, it is misleading to imagine the life-world as Euclidean isotropic space, as it is often treated in rational planning approaches which are based on a positivist ontology of abstract geometric relations and absolute distances in time and space [63] (pp. 281–282). Life does not unfold in geometry but through meaningful experiences. Rooted in humanistic geography, a phenomenological investigation of space and place in this sense generates significant knowledge of the social world [71] (p. 890). In reconciliation with rational planning approaches, it can enrich its homogeneous geometry with the *lived dimensions* of space and time, by social space and the multiple typifications of people and things. Since our "being in the world" and our relation to land, environment, and places is, without doubt, a two-way and reciprocal dependence [72], the emerging peri-urban spaces also shape specific peri-urban life-worlds and vice-versa.

To summarize these insights of "life-world analysis" for urban and regional planning, we identified four operational fields for a new planning methodology:

I. Perception and experience of space

Schütz's theory suggests that space not only consists of the objective characteristics of a shared social world, but that it is also perceived subjectively. Spatial planning must, therefore, consider how people experience certain spaces, what meanings they ascribe to them, and how social practices mediate these meanings. A private building or a public space, for example, is perceived differently by different groups, depending on their personal experiences, social backgrounds (class affiliation), and the power relations that go along

with these places (e.g., newly erected housing, as symbols of an affluent Bourgeoisie, or neglected public space as an indicator of dysfunctional administration).

II. Social interactions in space

Although not the primary focus of Schütz's work, we would like to emphasize nevertheless the importance of social interactions as they occur in particular spaces. In spatial planning, this means that space should not just be seen as an isolated area, but as a *place* where social relationships are formed and practiced. Homes, public squares, community facilities, and traffic routes, for example, are all social spaces where people live and work together. 'Good'—in the sense of democratic and enabling—spatial planning promotes positive social interactions and creates sustainable communal living environments.

III. Unconscious knowledge of residents

In alignment with Schütz's theory, we can understand the living and lived environment as characterized by the *implicit knowledge* conveyed through daily interactions and habits. In spatial planning, planners must take the "unconscious" knowledge of residents and their class structure about their surroundings, their social spheres, and the power relations they are involved in into account. Over the past decade, a common critique of urban planning has been that it too often employs a "top down" knowledge while neglecting the "knowledge of the streets". However, a sensible approach would be to *reconstruct* this tacit knowledge as a container of practical, successful daily life-routines.

IV. Space and place constitute identity

In accordance with a methodology based on Schütz' life-world analysis, one realizes that people define their social identity via their relationship to their living environment and the socio-spatial structures it contains (e.g., the structures of subsistence they rely upon), based on a "lived body" ("Leib-centred") experience [73]. One needs to establish *place identity*, a sense of belonging (or expulsion) from places, to maintain a successful approach to society, and this identity is also, therefore, a genuine part of every individual knowledge base. Reconstructive planning approaches can incorporate the perspectives of local communities and their everyday experiences with spatial structures into accounts of modern planning. It is, therefore, crucial within the context of spatial planning to understand how certain spaces contribute to the identity of communities and to understand community needs; a reconstructive methodology is inevitable [60], as we demonstrate in the next chapter.

4. A Qualitative Methodology for Reconstructing Lived Experiences: Place-Based Research and Life-World Analytical Ethnography

The primary focus of life-world analysis rests on researching lived experiences. An inquiry into the life-worlds of Maputo's peri-urban dwellers therefore aims to reconstruct the spatial dimensions of lived experience to understand the meanings people adopt within and ascribe to their surrounding world.

Ethnography informed by phenomenology with fieldwork grounded in place and social space represents an appropriate research approach for life-world analysis and reconstructing the meaning of urban lived experiences. According to Honer and Hitzler [74] (p. 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".

Schütz's legacy within contemporary social science research remains profound, particularly in the ethnographic approaches to conducting empirical research developed by his successors in the field of sociology [75]. The methodological approach employed in

this research is primarily guided by the "life-world-analytical ethnography" of Honer and Hitzler [74], including a strong connection to Schütz's mundane phenomenology, which is best suited for researching peri-urban life-worlds. Life-world ethnography has also been further developed in different directions and is also known under the labels "life-worldly ethnography" [76] or "life-world analysis in ethnography" [75,77].

Life-world-analytical ethnography aims to reconstruct the actors' inside or emic view as closely and accurately as possible. Therefore, it seeks to describe the subjective meaning of people's experiences and actions, 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" [78] (p. 68). To accomplish this, place-based fieldwork represents the utmost 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" [79] (p. 18). This requires the temporal dislocation of the researcher within the places of study and requires the researcher to dwell with the people of interest. Through place-based fieldwork, the researcher aims to partake and witness as much as possible of the lived spatial, temporal, and social dimensions of people's 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" [80] (p. 260).

However, in addition to researching other people's lived experiences, life-world analytical ethnography encourages researchers to explicitly and reflexively use their subjective experiences in the field to collect meaningful data. In doing so, "the genuine form of an experience" [81] (p. 195) is not lost through the reconstruction or transcription before it is brought into an objectified form. Since the researcher's own experiences of place are potentially the experiences of others, the ego-logical perspective represents a pristine methodological starting point for life-world research [82] (p. 54).

The empirical research, based on the principles of life-world-analytical ethnography and the place-based research approach outlined above, was realized by the first author during two fieldwork visits to Maputo (for a more detailed account on the applied methodology, see the dissertation of the first author, Prestes Dürrnagel [83]). The first fieldwork was realized between October 2019 and December 2019; this fieldwork was explorative, with the primary objective of selecting an adequate case study area. An extended stay of immersive ethnographic fieldwork was conducted between May 2021 and October 2021. Long-term fieldwork enabled a mutual understanding and engagement with the people and their places which was further facilitated by the researcher's fluent Portuguese language proficiency. The realization of research within a cross-cultural and postcolonial context revealed the position of the researcher towards the research field as "outsider" which was gradually elucidated by engaging in reciprocal and dialogical relationships.

The empirical data collection was based on the lived experiences of the researcher, participant observation, and different forms of qualitative interviews. Open-ended questions characterized the interviews, and explicit attention was paid to the socio-materiality of the spatial surroundings of each interview situation. Although phenomenological research aims to reconstruct lived experiences and interpret meaning, Spradley [84] (pp. 81–83) reminds us not to ask for the meaning of things directly but to pose descriptive questions to discover locally relevant issues. Thus, the interviews aimed to gather extensive narrative accounts of experiences, concrete stories, and particular events as the basis for phenomenological reflection and later interpretation [85] (p. 314).

A total of 59 interviews were conducted during the second fieldwork stay. The interviews conducted were in-depth and problem-centered [86] and are outlined as follows: 30 were arranged in advance, being realized with neighborhood authorities (18 interviews),

members of civil society organizations (5 interviews), officials in the areas of urban planning (2 interviews), private companies (2 interviews), and residents (3 interviews). Each interview ranged in duration between 20 and 90 min; 23 interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using MAXQDA 2022 software. The majority of the remaining 29 interviews were conducted during spontaneous encounters with residents during the fieldwork. These interviews were relatively short (up to 20 min) and not recorded, but notes were taken. The subsequent interpretative procedures stand in the hermeneutic tradition [87,88].

The principle objective of "social scientific hermeneutics", developed by Soeffner [87] (p. 97), emphasizes "the discovery of the constitutive conditions of 'reality' and the demystification of social constructs". The analysis of the interview transcripts aimed at reconstructing an objectivized ideal "peri-urban type", favoring the discovery of case-transcending patterns of extensive singular cases over the identification of the singularity of subjective perspectives. The analytical and interpretative work was further informed by "thematic analysis" [89] to identify and interpret shared patterns of meaning among several data sets, achieving the stepwise aggregation of meaning from the elaboration of inductive codes, to the elaboration of overarching themes, until the construction of an ideal life-world type.

5. Socio-Spatial Transformation and Loss of Place in the Peri-Urban Neighborhood of *Triunfo* (Maputo)

The empirical case study of Triunfo, a peri-urban neighborhood north of Maputo's city center, is undergoing a radical transformation (see Figure 1). Characterized by wetlands and intermittent flooding zones, the area was only sparsely populated until recently. With an increase in population since the 1980s, local farming and fishing communities grew significantly, leading to the consolidation of peri-urban life-worlds in the city's vicinity. Neglected by the state and municipal planning instruments, the area is an exemplar for the broader context of peri-urban Maputo, where the provision of services and infrastructures is largely realized outside state control, resulting from the collective efforts of peri-urban life-worlds.

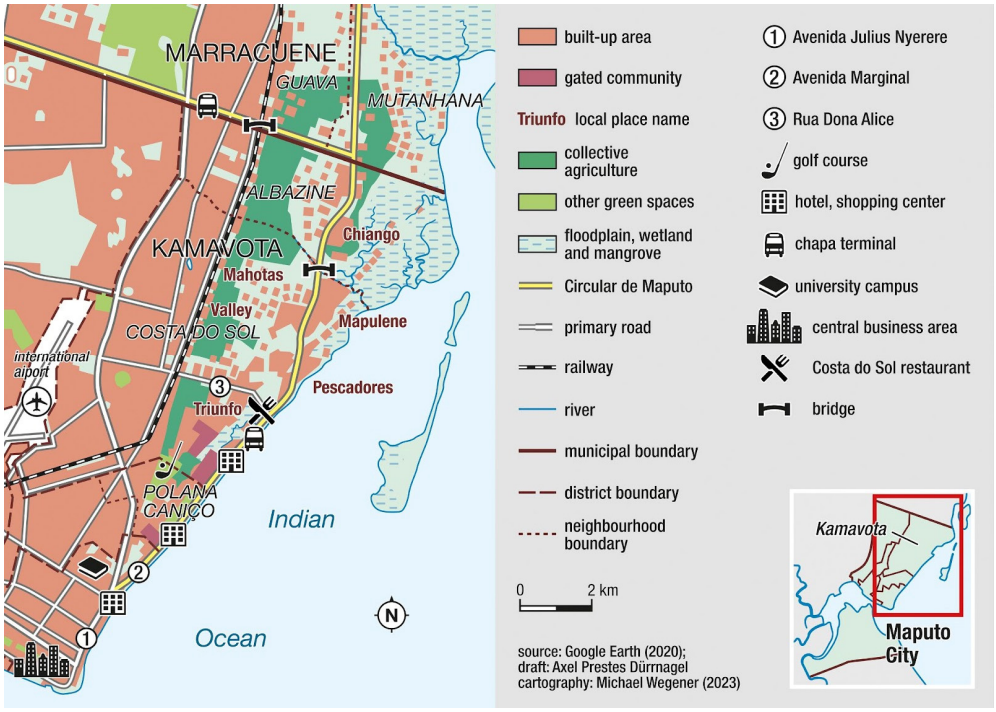

Figure 1. The empirical case study area.

However, recent access through the construction of the Circular de Maputo, a ring road, paved the way for the successive expansion of the city towards the peri-urban coastal plain. In proximity to the pristine coastline of the Costa do Sol, it became a privileged place for the secluded homes of the upper middle class and elite, gradually replacing low-income housing structures and their inhabitants. However, the luxury way of life only reflects a small fraction of Maputo's urban fabric, and the local elite's life-worlds stand in stark contrast to the living environments of most of the ordinary peri-urban population. The life-worlds of long-time peri-urban dwellers are confronted with the emergence of new actors such as middle-class residents and investors whereas the developments are accompanied by new institutional arrangements and land tenure systems. Therefore, Triunfo depicts an ideal case study for examining the distinctiveness of peri-urban life-worlds and their difference from urban/suburban life-worlds that residents experience in the face of dramatic socio-spatial transformations.

Against this backdrop, the remaining long-term residents, however, still remember Triunfo in a very different way: their memories are of one-story brick buildings with irregular alleys and small sandy streets, reflecting the characteristics of Maputo's self-produced and spontaneously created neighborhoods. *Dona* Natalia moved to the neighborhood in the late 1990s, and remembers the following:

> *"We had a lot of sand. We didn't have walls in those days. Here, it was really caniço (reed) houses, precarious houses, and the fence made of that thing called [. . .] espinhosa (A local type of thorn hedge is typically used to demarcate the boundaries of properties), 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".*

This quote reflects the prototypical temporality of infrastructure provision inherent to Maputo's peri-urban areas (see Figure 2). The construction of the house is the first step. In line with the temporal consolidation of neighborhoods, roads are established as the second step, followed by water infrastructure as the third step, and energy provision as the fourth step, gradually implemented in an incremental process. However, the provision of urban infrastructure and services in peri-urban spaces has never been a priority of the state but is based on the self-organization and collective contributions of residents following the principles of "autoconstruction" [20,90] and "people as infrastructure" [91]. Still, the efforts of residents to achieve legal land use titles remained unsuccessful. Thus, the community finally decided to contract an architect and to entrust him with elaborating a local plan for the neighborhood to achieve tenure security through land use titles. The realization of the project took as long as two years until it was ratified by the Municipal Council in 2009, transforming the neighborhood from an assemblage of irregularly allotted properties into an organized spatial form consisting of parallel streets and rows of rectangular parceled-out plots.

Roughly ten years have passed since the project's conclusion, and in this interim, unimaginably drastic changes to the neighborhood's material and socio-spatial structures have taken place. Comparing two aerial images from the time of the project's realization in August 2009 to the time of the research in May 2021 reveals striking differences (see Figure 3). The provision of infrastructure and streets led to the immense valorization of the neighborhoods along the Costa do Sol, due to its pristine location and sudden accessibility through the Circular road. The implementation of individual land titling, however, also led to the commodification of space and the individualization of collective life with far-reaching consequences for peri-urban life-worlds. The following discussion illustrates how the implementation stands in extreme contrast to the four operational fields of a new planning methodology. It illustrates how the modernist vision of a homogeneous physical order leads to residents' socio-spatial alienation and large-scale displacement.

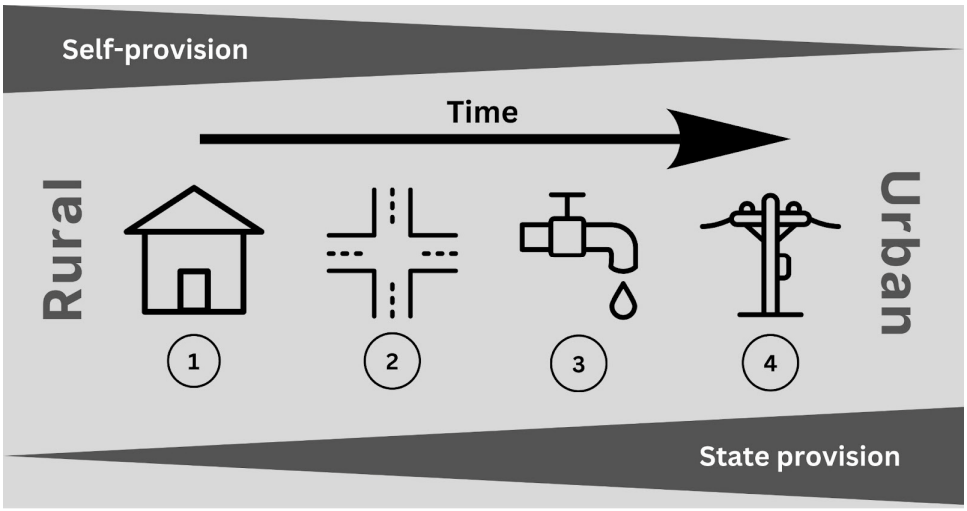

Figure 2. The prototypical temporality of peri-urban infrastructure provision (Illustration by authors).

Aerial images of Triunfo neighborhood in 2009 (left) and 2021 (right).

Source: Illustration by author, made with Google Earth, satellite imagery by Maxar Technologies.

Figure 3. Aerial images of *Triunfo* neighborhood in 2009 (**left**) and 2021 (**right**).

I. Disrupting the experience of space: *"I am doing fumigation, they don't like it"*

For Maputo's peri-urban dwellers, the outer space of the personal plot forms an integral part of the home. It is experienced as the extended living space where much of everyday life is spent. It reveals multiple meanings and purposes, not only as the place for leisure but also for vital domestic, social, and economic practices (see Figure 4). For instance, one of the encountered residents explained, "*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*". However, as within the context of *Senhor* Alberto, the everyday experience of space inherent to peri-urban life-worlds becomes disrupted. He is the last of the original inhabitants of his street and the only one who still lives in a single-story casa surrounded by the mansions of his neighbors (see Figure 5).

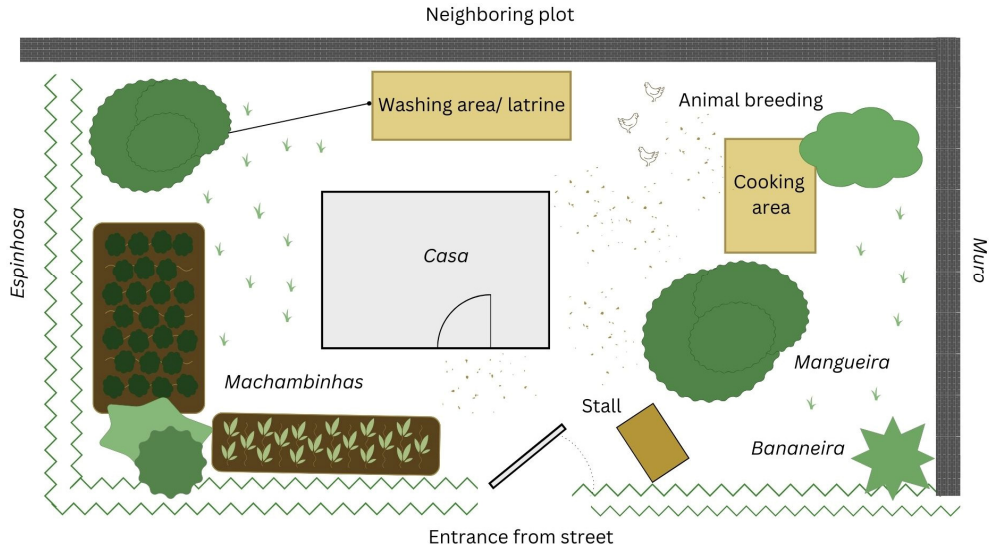

Figure 4. Typical spatial layout of a peri-urban plot (Illustration by authors).

Figure 5. *Senhor* Alberto's plot surrounded by the mansions of his neighbors (Photo by authors).

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. Their houses now occupy entire plots, eliminating the typical spatial composition consisting of vegetable gardens, shade trees, and open space for vital socio-economic activities. Consequently, the typical plot-based everyday activities like cooking, washing, and educating children have become exposed and visible from above. If the bathroom has no proper roofing, even the most intimate moments of everyday life that no one would willingly share are no longer private. *Senhor* Alberto feels misplaced since the spatial practices he realizes on his plot do not conform with the ones of his neighbors:

"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 fumigation, they don't like it".

However, even worse is when personal social spaces come under attack. *Senhor* Alberto reports that the drainpipe from his neighbor's veranda causes sewage water to drip directly onto his property. But when confronted the neighbor displayed no sense of sympathy or understanding. Moreover, the neighboring children once threw banana peels out of their window while his children were playing below on the property. *Senhor* Alberto can no longer cultivate his plot-based activities in an open space like he used to without feeling watched, estranged, and out of place, rendering the meaningful everyday social practices no longer feasible

II. Disrupting social interactions in space: *"You can't even borrow some salt from your neighbor"*

In the place-based social environments of Maputo's peri-urban neighborhoods, the intersubjective understanding between individuals derives largely from interactional face-to-face relationships. 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. In *Senhor* Alberto's street, however, no like-minded neighbors are left to greet him across the fence to his left and right (See Figure 6).

Figure 6. *Senhor* Alberto's street, a labyrinth of walls (Photo by authors).

To the front, the family faces a wall of at least five meters. It is whitewashed, windowless, and protected by an electric fence. The "felt 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 at eye-level, neither socially nor physically. The only direction to look is above from where you are looked down upon.

The physical changes to the built environment of the surrounding world are colossal and are accompanied by changing demands on everyday social life and interactions, which are by no means less radical. Consequently, peri-urban dwellers are subject to the socio-spatial structures of a 'Western' 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. The mobility of a suburban car owner differs radically from that of a peri-urban dweller. Instead of the small-scale movements realized by foot within the neighborhood, suburban households carry out most daily tasks by car. Groceries and household goods are brought from supermarket chains in the modern malls offering prestigious shops along the Circular.

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, "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 would not even have to leave her children alone, but nowadays, nobody circles the neighborhood 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 existed on every corner. He complains that nowadays, the new residents only build their homes and do not even leave a small market. There is no way except walking long distances since "*you can't even borrow some salt from your neighbor*", and his nephew, Rolando, further adds, "*you even have to dislocate to buy a match somewhere*".

Lively exchanges and interactions through face-to-face relationships and commercial activities from plot to plot once characterized the vitality of neighborhood 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 in adverse conditions. However, this vivid peri-urban social life has been effectively eradicated. Shaded streets where children once played, are now treeless and deserted, and constricted by walls on all sides; they are merely empty spaces for passage. Once hospitable streets are now only to be traversed by cars traveling from place to place, now hostile environments of treeless and heated concrete channels that do not invite one to linger, much less offer a comfortable, convenient path to a pedestrian.

Walls impede mobility and create distance and social exclusion. Fortified enclaves, like in Maputo, are, following Caldeira [92] (p. 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 divisions within a population. They protect the social space of one while limiting it for the other [93] (p. 158). In Maputo, the social space of a peri-urban dweller suffocates from being forced into the mantle of the physical space of a (sub-)urban world.

III. 'Unconscious' knowledge of residents: *"Feeling 'looked down on' from above"*

Triunfo's natural environment is determined by its location on the coast. Built atop a dune landscape with arenaceous subsoil, the passage of time has led to the substantial subsidence of the older houses (see Figure 7). Due to their elevation difference, the aged houses appear to be sinking into the ground amongst the more recently built high-rise buildings. Residents like *Senhor* Rolando, who have witnessed this process of dramatic change, allegorically describe how the new buildings are eventually built on top of the ruins of demolished homes. For peri-urban residents, the one-story *casa* (house) with its open space represents the typical peri-urban type of dwelling and an important distinguishing feature differentiating them from the urban-derived residents living in their two-story *prédios* (buildings). With original residents suddenly becoming the minority in the neighborhood, this new distinguishing feature becomes imminent.

Instead of merely considering social proximity and distance in terms of the horizontal dimension of physical space, the vertical is now experiencing increased importance. The physical level of the house has become a metaphor for the social level of its inhabitants. *Senhor* Rolando, for example, keeps insisting that "*these levels don't match*" in an effort to express his resentment toward the new elite class—alias, the buildings—that are slowly

encroaching and gradually replacing his neighbors' houses. *Dona* Felismina, who lives nearby, also distances herself from her new neighbor, using the same language to refer to the vertical distinction of the house type:

> *"They are very arrogant people, that is the most negative thing. Very arrogant, and I think that's her level; when she looks at my house like that, because her house is a little bit higher, [. . .] the level of the house makes her level rise too".*

The atmosphere of departure has become widespread. Families are merely holding out on their plots. Many are desperate to sell, observing with melancholy the changing surroundings and the approaching buildings successively becoming closer and growing larger. A feeling of insecurity dominates everyday life. Not to lose the house or be evicted, but also the need to not be paid too little so a fresh start is possible elsewhere. The sense of place, attachment, and belonging have faded, even within the context of *Senhor* Bernardo, who has lived in the area since 1984—indeed for almost forty 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".*

Many other families share the fate of *Senhor* Bernardo and his family, consisting meanwhile of three generations all living together on the same plot. He feels displaced and has lost touch with his home in the city, and he faces his fate with resignation, neither with half-heartedness nor with resistance. Ironically, the last sentence of his quote is close to Bourdieu's [59] (p. 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".

Figure 7. Subsidence of older houses in Triunfo (Photo by authors).

During Portuguese colonial rule, the racial segregation of urban space was expressed through a dualistic urban structure, which was further manifested in the materiality of the built environment. The colonial city center was the so-called *cidade de cimento* (city of cement), where the Portuguese colonizers lived in houses made of permanent materials such as concrete. In stark contrast, the Mozambican population lived outside the city center

in houses made of wood, tin, and reeds in the so-called *cidade de caniço* (city of reeds), where construction with permanent materials was strictly prohibited. Meanwhile, the spatiality of the differentiation has shifted from this dualistic colonial structure towards the territorial fragmentation of urban and peri-urban spaces. Today, the prestigious villas of the elite set themselves apart from peri-urban dwellings foremost through vertical dimensions. Thereby, the size of the building and the number of its stories become synonymous with the social status of its residents.

Against this backdrop, the strict opposition between the planned city and the unplanned object of development has been inherited from colonial city structures. As Lawhon [94] (p. 36) asserts, "when many South Africans talk about 'the city' they mean the formerly white areas". When this same phrasing is translated into the context of Maputo, it is used to refer to the distinction between the *cidade de cimento* as the planned colonial town center and the *cidade de caniço* as the unplanned and disorganized neighborhoods. Until today, this historical distinction persists, albeit the definitions of city-ness vs. not-city-ness have been adjusted. Concurrent with the shift from a dualistic city structure towards more fragmented segregation patterns and the shift of socio-spatial distinctions from pure horizontal to more vertical categories also comes a shift from *cimento* versus *caniço* towards *casa* versus *prédio*.

IV. Loss of place identity: *"There's nothing here anymore"*

Whereas urban life is individualistic, peri-urbanity is characterized by communal living, belonging to a group, and belonging to a place. Although peri-urban neighborhoods are not homogenous, peri-urban dwellers nonetheless share a collective life-world. A sense of belonging to a place and membership within a group persists through reciprocal encounters and collective obligations. This feeling of belonging, however, only emerges through the collective dissociation from strangeness, through the differentiation from a reality that does not correspond to the collective peri-urban life-world. There is a "We" of the "peri-urban in-group"; there is a "They" with the strangers of the "urban out-group". The faceless neighboring alter ego of the out-group is not apprehended as an in-dividual person but as "anonymous in the sense that its existence is only the individuation of a type" [95] (p. 228).

Long-term peri-urban residents clearly distinguish themselves from newcomers, making a differentiation between "us" and "them". "*Those from outwards*" or "*those from the buildings*" are common typifications under which the individuals are subsumed. With the out-group gradually becoming the majority within the neighborhood, 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 as a situation of "existential outsideness", characterized by "an alienation from people and places, homelessness, a sense of the unreality of the world, and of not belonging" [69] (p. 51).

Indeed, *Senhor* Alberto's surrounding world shifted from a once meaningful place to a meaningless space. "*There's nothing here anymore*" is how he described his surroundings, and the physically close but socially distant neighbors are what Schütz [95] (p. 221) would call mere "points in social space", apprehended as a *type* but not as a concrete individual. Instead of engaging in face-to-face interactions, the intersubjective understanding between individuals rests on denying each other's subjectivity. The consequences are dramatic for peri-urban dwellers, who are heavily dependent on inherent sociality and place-based interactions. If the surrounding world loses the qualities intrinsic to peri-urban life-worlds and indispensable to existence, individual residents are literally being (emotionally) displaced without changing their physical location. Thus, they have no other option than to move somewhere else *to get back into place*.

According to Appadurai [96] (p. 184), "meaningful life-worlds require legible and reproducible patterns of action". While the neighborhood represents the context of 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 aluminum. What makes the neighborhood a place that becomes peri-urban with its particular identity is lost since the radical changes of the environment "render it inadequate for the purposes of social interaction and individual behaviour" [69] (p. 60). For the original peri-urban dwellers, the loss of the place identity comes with what Relph [69] calls "placelessness".

6. Applying the Life-World Perspective to Spatial Planning

The shortcomings of contemporary planning approaches are rooted in the neglect of the intrinsic logic of peri-urban areas and the life-worlds of their inhabitants. The prevailing top-down approach propagates individual home ownership with the ultimate promise that all problems will be resolved once individual land use titles are granted. Thus, the cadastral map has an objective value for the state, and the geometric shape of plots allows for accurate surface area calculation allowing the state to collect real estate tax adequately. For real estate investors, plots are primarily regarded as commodities and no regard is given to their multifaceted meaningfulness as dwelling places. It leads to the successive displacement of low-income families and the fragmentation of neighborhoods. However, we argue that spatial phenomena are best understood from the perspective of the experiencing subject. 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 of peri-urban residents from their surrounding worlds. The superimposition of a coercive spatial order that rejects the people's everyday perception and experience of space is deeply patronizing and colonizing.

However, bringing the lived reality of everyday life back on the urban agenda provides valuable insights for the incorporation of the life-world into contemporary planning. The life-world structures are universal, and the successive reconstruction of their spatial, temporal, and social dimensions has the potential for practical implementation through planner. Reconstructing these socio-spatial structures provides an understanding of how individuals and groups see the world within which they live, delivering insights into the characteristics of worldviews and places of interest.

First, reconstructing the spatial structures implies focusing on the relationships that individuals and groups enter with the places and spaces that surround them, the meaning that they bestow on their dwelling place, and how they appropriate the immediate surroundings in their neighborhood through various practices. Second, for the reconstruction of the temporal structures, planners have to observe how time gives an orientation to life, how the available time is enabling and constraining, structuring people's routinized everyday activities and mobility patterns, and the spatial distances of dislocation. Third, reconstructing social structures sheds light on the intersubjective categories of everyday life. It requires considering how people interact with each other in the public sphere of life, on streets and in squares, and designing the urban built environment accordingly.

A life-world analysis can provide important impulses for spatial planning, especially regarding how spaces and places are perceived, established, and used by individuals or social groups. Of course, this also applies to (social) space, i.e., the spatiality of social life-worlds. Certain areas (e.g., building law or traffic circuits) are strongly regulated by norms and/or distorted by sometimes blatant power relations (for example, corruption). Spatial planning is not only a technical discipline based on such power relations but is

also a social practice that strongly influences life-worlds. An important focus of everyday analyses (hermeneutically 'understanding life-worlds') should be to analyze the forces shaping such environments and to direct their effects, for example, on the everyday lives of dependent actors who are "powerless" against such institutional powers.

Engaging with subjective perspectives allows planning to be closer to the 'lived' reality of (peri-) urban worlds and thus more realistic and inclusive. 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, they must inevitably follow Schütz's "postulate of adequacy" and the "postulate of subjective interpretation" [60] (pp. 43–44). It demands putting oneself into the position of the one whose world one wishes to understand and engage with the "emic view" of the subject [97]. However, these implications are also challenging, since the dense empirical knowledge of the urban social researcher is generally not accessible to the urban planner, as the time constraints and planning rationalities do not allow for this "thick description" [97] of life-world experiences in urban neighborhoods. Furthermore, hermeneutic processes of understanding and reconstruction of (collective) meaning structures are very time-consuming and methodologically advanced.

With the lived experience of everyday life back on the agenda, what could a concrete application of the life-world perspective to spatial planning look like? The life-world analysis conducted in Maputo (see Prestes Dürrnagel [83]) reveals three constitutive dimensions of peri-urbanity, which planners must consider: locality, self-sufficient practice, and community (see Figure 8).

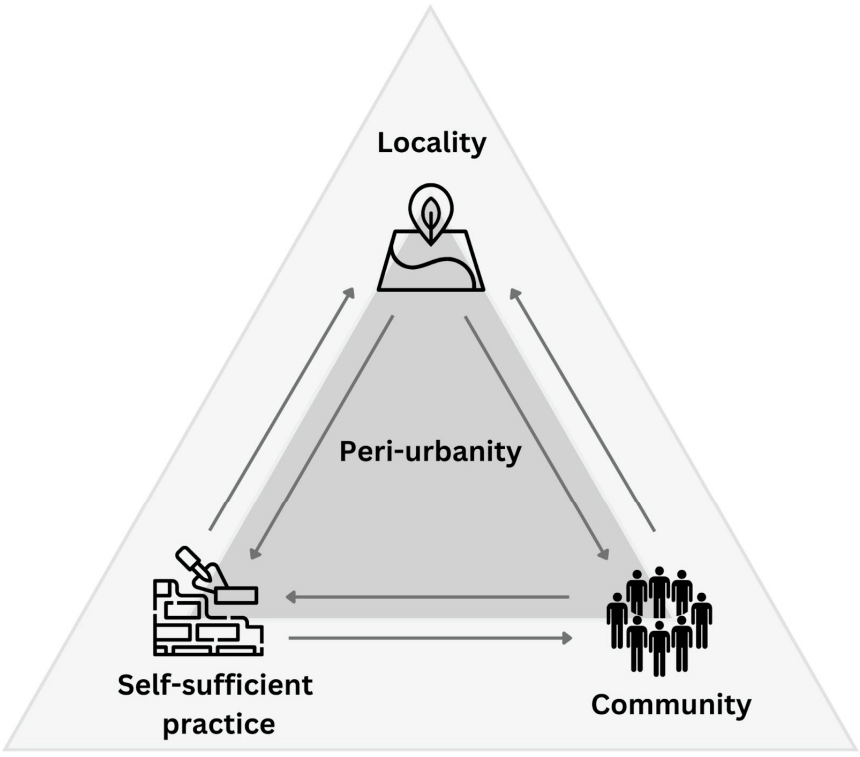

Figure 8. The three constitutive dimensions of peri-urbanity (Illustration by authors).

Locality is essential to peri-urban life-worlds. It refers to the vital importance of the spatial centeredness of peri-urban life with the dwelling place embedded in the familiar surroundings of the neighborhood. As a peri-urban dweller, the plot, with its multifunctional purposes, is indispensable, as are the social interactions that occur within space through face-to-face interactions. The project of building a house and selecting its location is nothing

circumstantial. Instead, it comes with the fundamental decision of where the life-world will have its centre, of where to be rooted in a place and community. It is necessary for planning to be realistic and inclusive, to engage with the ways that residents experience space and make sense of their environment and everyday plot-based practices.

Self-sufficiency in residents' practices represents a second crucial ingredient of peri-urban spaces. It ensures families' survival at the individual level and the functioning of neighborhoods as a collective. At the household level, it is expressed by sustaining livelihoods through plot-based activities like farming, services, and commercial activities. It is also expressed through processes of autoconstruction, not only regarding the proper home but encompassing entire neighborhoods by the collective provision of public infrastructures such as streets, water, and energy. Embracing self-sufficient practice means recognizing that a city like Maputo is produced and reproduced by both the state's structural planning approaches and the citizens' self-organized everyday practices. The so-called site-and-service schemes represent a promising entry point to strengthen self-sufficient practice productively and proactively. 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. Having areas prepared with demarcated plots, the gradual autoconstruction of the neighborhood can succeed as ordinary. With the overarching principle of "people as infrastructure", it gradually takes shape, with infrastructures and houses being constructed incrementally according to the individual resources at hand and in line with personal preferences.

Community, which depends on place and locality, constitutes the third dimension of peri-urbanity. Within this context, community represents the primal prerequisite for self-sufficient practice. In urban environments, the spaces surrounding the home do not necessarily coincide with the spaces where relationships are cultivated. The correlation between spatial and social proximity and the relationship to the place itself is not a given. For instance, in Maputo's Triunfo neighborhood, which is currently experiencing the transition from a peri-urban to an urban settlement, new urban residents have no ties to the neighborhood where they live. They do not interact with their neighbors as they walk by their plots. They merely traverse the neighborhood spaces anonymously as faceless individuals in cars. In peri-urban areas, however, self-sufficient practice is the product of the self-organized community, and the formation of a community depends on individuals sharing locality and place. Through the life-long commitment to a place and its community, cultivating a collective "sense of place" is inevitable.

The community must thrive and 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. In contrast to the hostile environments that prevail in newly developed concrete-covered areas, the organically formed (in spatial composition, organization, and environment) family plots should serve as examples of hospitable, livable spaces. There is a need for spaces that are pleasant to walk through and for people to pause under shady and comforting trees, creating a friendly atmosphere of livability that is welcoming and where one can enjoy the presence of others instead of mutual isolation. In contrast to the top-down planning ideals focused on attributing individual land use titles, community ownership and group titling represent a promising entry point for peri-urban areas. Instead of fostering commodification, alienation, and displacement, there is the need for alternative visions toward land and home ownership, fostering social cohesion while simultaneously providing tenure security.

7. Conclusions

Alfred Schütz's life-world phenomenology does not present an entirely novel approach. However, by drawing on his work to emphasize the spatial structures of everyday life and the lived dimensions of space and place, we have revealed a hitherto neglected but highly innovative approach to spatial planning, ultimately based on the realities and needs of the population. Because instrumental realities of state and planning actors fail to pay vital attention to peri-urban life-worlds, the colonial neglect of marginalized spaces and their residents is reproduced through the postcolonial planning apparatus. Rakodi [98] (p. 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 practice reflects the social reality of urban populations in the "ordinary city", not on power games by elites nor state or national structures alone. It, therefore, represents an alternative vision to neocolonial imaginations of city-ness [11] (p. 546), rejecting both colonial legacies as well as simplified postcolonial critique, but fostering the perspective of the *sense pratique* (practical sense) [99] of urban dwellers faced with massive changes through urban planning and urbanization over the last decade(s).

An awareness of social actors' *sense pratique* could focus on an often-neglected aspect of the social world: The mode of its 'functioning' in daily life. However, though most of these arguments claim to take the life-world into account, most fail to consider such an in-depth perspective critically. Many of the voices criticizing colonial or postcolonial heritage in the above sense, for example, overlook how residents, due to their everyday pragmatics, also settle into living environments that are, to a certain extent, 'objectively' bad or politically 'wrong' (from an academic observer's viewpoint). However, this does not change the fact that the everyday pragmatism of their *sense pratique* generally represents a successful coping strategy, especially for underprivileged actors, to adapt to difficult situations and life-worlds successfully.

To do this, however, they must develop a sense of what is impossible, unrealistic, or not opportune to avoid conflict with dominant structures. Far from representing weakness or even 'cooperation' vis-à-vis the powerful, a practical sense of cleverness is needed to successfully master the adversities and opportunities of the concrete living environment because one knows how its actors, profiteers, or power structures 'tick'. The same also applies to the other side: Of course, local profiteers and parties often know how to exploit 'colonial' structures to their advantage, much to the annoyance of Marxist or postcolonial theories. Accordingly, the *sense pratique* can be the key to understanding the social logics of a certain field while avoiding 'scholastic' vantage points.

Exploring the *sense pratique* in research and theory is particularly employable in (peri-)urban studies of the Global South, which are often dominated by abstract concepts and theory and benefit less from local perspectives, such as the saturated empiricism offered in this article. The empirical material demonstrates that this planning rationality introduces a disruption to a local "practical sense", once adopted to and derived from peri-urban dwellings in the postcolonial era: inhabitants are no longer able to operate successfully on their routines and convictions as the new (material and social) structures devalue and suppress their practical and socio-moral knowledge imposed by the newcomers in the status of an affluent Bourgeoisie.

The *sense pratique* of peri-urban dwellers is embodied by three constitutive dimensions of peri-urbanity: locality, self-sufficient practice, and community (see Figure 5). Stemming from the rigorous methodological reconstruction of the ideal meaning structures of the peri-urban type, these dimensions, expressed in the multifunctional purposes of the plot or the prototypical temporality of peri-urban infrastructure provision, are transferable to other peri-urban areas across cities in sub-Saharan Africa beyond Maputo. Representing the

"peri-urban type", however, the results are less valid for rural places or densely populated urban areas. The findings also show that the generalization of certain rational planning instruments—based on examples of Western cities—reach their limits when traveling south, where they neglect local life-worlds and their *sense pratique*.

Drawing on the work of Healey [100], Watson [101] (p. 104) recommends that a theory of planning requires an understanding of the "contingent universals", alias, "what is specific to a place and what can be shared learning across different localities and contexts". Whereas the life-world structures with their spatial, temporal, and social dimensions represent the universal ingredient (as everybody has a life-world), their reconstruction uncovers insights into the contingent characteristics of places, such as the dimensions of peri-urbanity (the respective life-worlds of different societies). The universal structures of the life-world constitute a *mathesis universalis*, making life-world analyses possible in other social and cultural contexts. At the same time, they also serve as a *tertium comparationis*, thus allowing for comparing the empirical results [75].

Schütz's life-world approach can, therefore, act as a pivotal change in analysis, providing urban and regional planning with concepts and methodologies that can catch up with (city) life from the quotidian sphere and analyze such conflicts and disruptions to develop a sense of the dissimilarities and injustice they can implement. Planning processes still struggle with incorporating perspectives that oppose their power structures. Schützian concepts, however, deliver a theory and methodology that can enlarge the scope of urban and regional planning analysis, while contributing to social justice and the empowerment of unrepresented actors and groups.

Thus, Schütz's life-world concept 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. It provides a heuristic framework allowing flexible application in different historical and cultural contexts. The life-world theory is not prescriptive but *reconstructive*; it aims to explore and describe the rationalities of different life-worlds methodologically. It is instead what Watson [101] (p. 106) demands from a theory, "a perspective or way of seeing the world (in planning)". It tries to achieve an *understanding* of the world of actors in certain fields, trying to see what is relevant to them through their eyes. As life-worlds are always characterized by "multiple realities" [1], it also sharpens the analysis of contested arenas, as in the example we provided. Different rationalities guided by different morales, and occasionally different antipodes, in class structures can reveal the fault lines of social conflicts and how they might be avoided or at least mitigated by an adequate understanding of what is at stake for the actors. Through this, it also allows for a change in perspective to engage with the position of the experiencing subject regardless of being in the North or the South, being a planner, or a new or old resident—the perspectives are yet developed in a *relational* perspective, being entangled with other logics of the field.

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