# Sure road? Nationalisms in Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique

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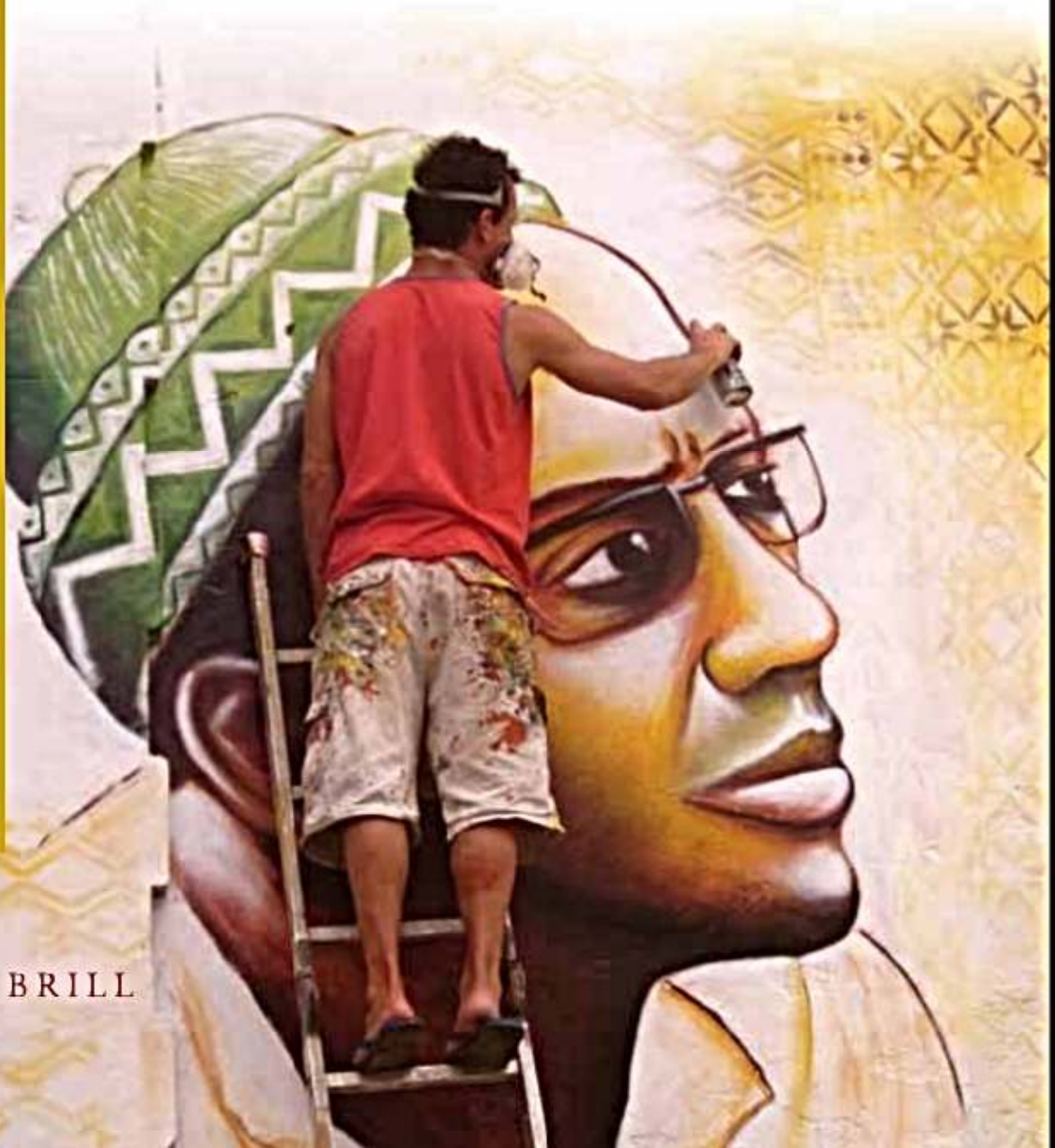
*Subtitle*

**Eric Morier-Genoud**

*(editor)*



BRILL

AFRICAN SOCIAL STUDIES SERIES

**Sure Road? Nationalisms in Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique**

**Eric Morier-Genoud** *(ed.)*

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INTRODUCTION

# THINKING ABOUT NATIONALISMS & NATIONS IN ANGOLA, GUINEA-BISSAU AND MOZAMBIQUE

*Eric Morier-Genoud*

Our sure road is pain and blood
Straight road to the sun
The sun of our freedom[1].

Nationalism is back in force in Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique. While the years 1990s saw a rise in public debates about the liberation struggle and national heroes, the 2000s saw a flurry of official commemorations and the building of many monuments to celebrate nationalist achievements. In Angola, three new memorials to national heroes and martyrs have been built by the Ministry of Public Works since 2003 as well as a Cultural Centre to the memory of Angola's first president Agostinho Neto. In Mozambique, all formers liberation war's military bases have been turned into monuments, and a National Liberation Museum has been created in the northern village of Chai in 2005. Smaller memorials to specific nationalist figures have been inaugurated all over the country as well as many monuments to the first postcolonial president, Samora Machel. In Guinea-Bissau, the on-and-off civil war since 1998 has absorbed most of the government's energies. But an interesting initiative has still emerged in 2004 joining former African nationalist guerrillas and former Portuguese soldiers to hold a conference, restore a military base and establish a museum at Guiledje – the conference was held in 2008 with the support of the Mario Soares Foundation[2]. In Cape Verde, the government and the Amílcar Cabral Foundation were active the same year in celebrating the memory of the national hero of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde who should have turned 80 that year. In all these countries, the

[1] Sampadjudo, "Our sure road" in Margaret Dickinson (ed.), *When Bullets Begin to Flower*, Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1980 [1972], pp. 106–107.
[2] See the website: http://www.guiledje.org/ (accessed 3 August 2010).

inauguration of monuments, museums and centres, and the celebrations of anniversaries, have been accompanied by a bout of nationalist discourse geared towards today's youth who is asked to cherish the past and faithfully continue the work that heroes have begun.

Needless to say, these nationalistic activities have led to much controversy. In Mozambique, the hottest discussion has been about who is, and who should be, in the crypt at Heroes Square. Individuals buried there before 2003 were all Frelimo liberation fighters and this came to be seen as problematic, even within the party in power, for two main reasons. First, because the heroes were all armed fighters. There was no civilian, and particularly none of the artists who had done so much to create a national culture and consciousness. Second, the individuals in the crypt were all members of Frelimo, the party in power since independence. There were no nationalists not affiliated with the party in power, no armed fighters from other Mozambican liberation movements, and none of the Frelimo dissidents who played a fundamental role in the foundation of the front. In 2003 and 2004, President Joaquim Chissano addressed the first line of critique by including two more personalities in the crypt: the poet José João Craveirinha and the composer of the first national hymn, Justino Chemane. But Chissano did not tackle the partisan accusation, nor has his successor since 2005. This has led some opposition parties, such as Renamo, to boycott official ceremonies at Heroes Square which they argue is a partisan locale. Is this the case? Is Heroes Square merely a Frelimo place? Are Mozambique's *official* heroes only from one political party? By extension, is today's official history and commemoration selective and biased? If so: how, why, and since when? What is being left out, what kind of nationalism is being promoted (and obscured), and what impact does this all have on the national imagined community? To put it in broader terms, what is the history of the formation and politics of nationalisms and nations in Mozambique and, by extension, Angola and Guinea-Bissau?

There is today a strong interest in nationalisms and nations in Portuguese-speaking Africa, both in society and in academia. This renewed interest can be traced back to the 1990s, and its cause to three main factors. First, the authoritarian decompression which took place in the late 1980s-early 1990s led to more open and pluralist political systems, something which permitted the emergence in the public realm of new voices and new testimonies about the war of liberation and the history of nationalisms. Voices dissonant from the official scripts begun to be heard

publicly in the 1990s and this fostered much curiosity. As founding myths were shattered, a demand for "truth" emerged. Second, time has passed since the liberation struggles of the 1960s and 1970s and a younger generation has come of age with no direct experience of the period while the men and women who lived through these events are gradually disappearing. This results in the old generation wishing to leave a testimony of its experience, in particular war veterans, while the new generation wishes to know more about a period which is clearly fundamental yet not properly recounted. A third and final factor is the emergence of new state nationalisms in Portuguese-speaking Africa. Indeed, while the authoritarian decompression fractured national myths, democracy and neo-liberalism simultaneously forced states and their elites to develop new forms of "patriotism"[3]. These new patriotisms generate their own set of discussion and debates (about what the nation is, what it should be, where it comes from, and where it should go) and this sparks ever more interest in the topic within society.

Surprisingly academic research on nationalisms and nations in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau has remained limited during the last twenty years – particularly in English. Few academic works have revisited the liberation struggles, have focused on the history of nationalisms, or analysed the formation and make-up of contemporary Portuguese-speaking African "imagined communities". There are of course some worthy exceptions in English[4], as well as in French and Portuguese[5]. Still, one can say that, overall and comparatively to the interest developing in society, little has been published on the subject, and we are still very

[3] Among others, see Sara Dorman, Daniel Hammett & Paul Nugent (eds), *Making Nations, Creating Strangers. States and Citizenship in Africa*, Leiden: Brill, 2007 and the special issue "New Nationalism and Xenophobia in Africa", *Africa Spectrum* (Hamburg, Germany), Vol.41, No. 1, 2009.

[4] Mustafa Dhada, *Warriors at Work: How Guinea Was Really Set Free*, Niwott: University Press of Colorado, 1993; Patrick Chabal (ed.), *A History of Postcolonial Lusophone Africa*, London: Hurst & Co, 2002; Marissa Moorman, *Intonations: A Social History of Music and Nation in Luanda, Angola, from 1945 to Recent Times*, Athens: Ohio University Press, 2008; and Paolo Israel, "Utopia Live: singing the Mozambican struggle for national liberation", *Kronos* (Cape Town), Vol.35, No. 1, 2009, pp. 98–141.

[5] Christine Messiant, "Sur la première génération du MPLA: 1948–1960. Mário de Andrade, entretiens avec Christine Messiant (1982)", *Lusotopie 1999*, Paris: Karthala, pp. 185–224; Jean-Michel Mabeko-Tali, *Dissidências e poder de estado. O MPLA perante si próprio (1962–1977)*, Luanda: Editorial Nzila, 2001, 2 vols; Michel Cahen, *Les bandits: Un historien au Mozambique, 1994*, Paris: Centre culturel Calouste Gulbenkian, 2002; Luís Reis Torgal, Fernando Tavares Pimenta & Julião Soares Sousa (eds), *Comunidades Imaginadas. Nação e Nacionalismos em África*, Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra, 2008.

dependent on the material produced in the 1970s and 1980s on, if not by, the MPLA (*Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola*), FRELIMO (*Frente de Libertação de Moçambique*) and the PAIGC (*Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde*). Yet very important new archives have opened in the last twenty years in Portugal as well as the Portuguese-speaking African countries: the PIDE secret police archives, the colonial military archives, Frelimo's archives (partially), MPLA' archives (partially), etc. Moreover, the worldwide historiography on nationalisms and nations has evolved considerably and the theoretical approaches on the subject have changed greatly (see more below). There is therefore not just a quantitative lack of investigation on nationalisms and nations in Portuguese-speaking Africa, but also a qualitative issue. There is an urgent need to revisit the subject of nationalisms and nations in Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique to enrich and verify empirically *as well as* theoretically what we already know of the subject. The present collection of essays aims to move in this twofold direction: bringing in new sources and renewing our theoretical approaches.

Doing research on nationalisms and nations in Lusophone Africa today is a complicated affair. States and parties-in-power, as we have noted, are very active in developing and deploying new forms of patriotism and nationalisms. Linked to this, there is a spell of new public history projects on the "liberation struggles" and there is a flurry of publications by former actors of the liberation/colonial wars about "decolonisation". Historical projects have been launched in the last ten years by no less than the *Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa* (CPLP), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Mozambican Ministry for the Affairs of Former Combatants, the MPLA and the Frelimo parties among others – see more in table 1 and 2 below. On the former colonial side, some military scholars have published analysis of the African "campaigns" and former soldiers are investing ever more in the writing of their memoirs (in paper as well as online)[6]. While this spate of research and writings is most welcome and useful, it brings a range of problems connected to the particular vantage point and objectives of the authors and researchers involved (e.g. veteran fighters) and their often uncertain

[6] For military scholarship, see for example Aniceto Afonso & Carlos de Matos Gomes, *Guerra Colonial*, Lisbon: Notícias, 2000; Carlos de Matos Gomes, *Moçambique 1970. Operação Nó Górdio*, Lisbon: Prefácio, 2002; and Rogério Cardoso Teixeira, *Angola* (*n'gola*). *História do Batalhão de Caçadores 109*, Lisbon: Quarteto, 2008. For soldiers' memoirs, see the very rich website of the "Overseas wars" at http://ultramar.terraweb.biz/

academic method and rigor. From the material already published, we can say for example that a majority of the work reads back into the past and produces a teleological narrative of "decolonisation" or "national liberation"[7]. Yet we know that there never was, nor ever is, any "sure road" or "straight road" to national formation and national liberation, the alleged "sun of our freedom" as the opening militant poem states, or to "decolonisation". The academic scholarship has already deconstructed much of the official nationalist narratives and paradigms in relation to Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau[8]. The purpose of the present volume is therefore not to repeat or continue such deconstruction, but to open up instead the subject by asking new questions and pointing new directions for research and debate. By looking at the nature and dynamics of "marginal" nationalisms, the role of culture, the way nationalist movements fitted into international networks, or how particular nationalist movement failed, we hope to restore the uncertain, convoluted and conflictual trajectories of nationalisms and nations before and after independence.

Table 1. International Research projects on Nationalism.

| Institution | Project name | Begun in |
|---|---|---|
| Nordic Africa Institute | "Nordic Documentation on the Liberation Struggle in Southern Africa Project" [to "fill the gaps that might exist in the search for a new liberation history"] | 2003 |
| ALUKA | "Struggles for Freedom in Southern Africa" | 2003 |
| SADC | Hashim Mbita Project ["to document the history of the liberation struggles"] | 2004 |
| CPLP | Joint Historical Archive of the National Liberation Struggles | 2005 |

[7] See for example Lourenço do Rosário (ed.), *II Congresso sobre a Luta de Libertação Nacional-Guerra colonial. 27 anos depois, a reflexão possivel*, Maputo: Edições ISPU, 2004; Helder Martins, *Porquê Sakrani? Memórias dum Médico duma Guerrilha Esquecida*, Maputo: Editorial Terceiro Milénio, 2001.

[8] Among others, see Carlos Pacheco, *MPLA. Um nascimento polémico*, Lisbon: Vega, 1997 ; Michel Cahen, "The Mueda Case and Maconde political ethnicity. Some notes on a work in progress", *Africana Studia* (Porto), No.2, 1999, pp.29–46; and Christine Messiant, "'Chez nous, même le passé est imprévisible'. L'expérience d'une recherche sur le nationalisme angolais, et particulièrement le MPLA: sources, critique, besoins actuels de la recherche", *Lusotopie 1998*, Paris: Karthala, pp. 157–197.

Table 2. National Research Projects on Nationalism.

| Country | Project run by | Begun in |
|---|---|---|
| Angola | Arquivo Histórico de Angola | ? |
| Angola | MPLA party | 2004 |
| Mozambique | Ministry for the Affairs of Former Combatants | 2001/2008* |
| Mozambique | Frelimo party | 2000s |
| Guinea-Bissau | Various | 2004 |

* 2001 is the date of new state policy which aimed at fostering investigation; 2008 is the date of the creation of the *Centro de Pesquisa da História da Luta de Libertação Nacional*

## *Analysing Nationalisms and Nations*

The historiography of nationalism and nations has evolved importantly over the last two decade. The 1980s and 1990s saw intense debates between "primordialist" and "modernist" authors, the first arguing that nations were "ancient" and "natural" while the second put forward that nations were "modern" and "imagined", if not "invented"[9]. The debates drew much interest and have led to a growth of the field as well as the development of new institutions and journals – the primordialist launched for example the Association for the Study of Ethnicity and Nationalism in 1990 and the journal *Nations and Nationalism* in 1995. Debates bore many intellectual fruits as new questions were raised, much research undertaken and new answers proposed. By the 1990s both the primordialist and the modernist approaches had absorbed some of the critique made against them and had evolved as a result. Primordialists recognised an element of imagination and invention in nations and nationalisms and they now argued that nations were imagined, if on the basis of something natural such as "ethnic cores"[10]. Modernists, on their side, conceded that there could be no pure invention and went on to argue in favour of an idea of a "construction", "imagining" and "formation" on the basis of history and pre-existing identities (thus still arguing these processes were genuinely modern). By the late 1990s, the two schools still differed over the amount

[9] For the classic primordialist approach, see Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Revival in the Modern World*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981. For the classic modernist approach, see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso, 1983 and Eric Hobsbawm & Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

[10] Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1986.

of imagining/primordiality they saw in nations and nationalisms, but they reached a consensus that imagination was at work and that the latter was not performed "out of the blue" – there is always much history and politics involved.

Coming from subaltern studies, Partha Chatterjee made an important contribution in 1993 when he criticised the above-mentioned approaches for giving too passive a role to non-elite actors and non-Europeans[11]. He attacked Benedict Anderson in particular for claiming that the European model of modern national imagined communities had been merely exported and reproduced overseas. Chatterjee argued in favour of an analysis of the specific historicities of national imaginations, at the intersection of a hegemonic Western normalizing project, various frontal and fragmented resistance, and diverse dynamics of re-appropriation. The aim, he claimed, was to reclaim the "freedom of imagination" of those once-colonized in the making of their own identities[12]. Chatterjee was rapidly joined in his deconstruction and complication of the history of nationalism(s) by other authors. Coming from a gender perspective, Susan Geiger showed importantly in 1997 that not only had women been active in nationalism in Tanganyika, but that they had often set the pace which educated male politicians had mostly followed (if not taken advantage of)[13]. Authors like Elizabeth Schmidt pushed this line further and went on to study nationalism "from the bottom up" – how the mobilization of the masses shaped elite nationalism[14]. Such "decentring" was reinforced in the 2000s with a recourse to the anthropology of consumption which argues that consumption is part the total production of commodities (because consumption is an act of appropriation and alteration). Authors like Kelly Askew thus looked at how the nation was *performed* in Tanzania, that is *formed* through (in her case musical) performance[15].

By 2012, the study of nationalisms and nations has swung from an analysis of export and imposition to one diffusion and re-appropriation, from an analysis of Western and elite nationalism to an investigations from below and the periphery, and from an analysis of production to that of

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[11] Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments. Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.

[12] Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments, op.cit*, p. 13.

[13] Susan Geiger, *TANU Women. Gender and Culture in the Making of Tanganyikan Nationalism, 1955–1965*, Oxford: James Currey, 1997.

[14] Elizabeth Schmidt, "Top Down or Bottom Up? Nationalist Mobilization Reconsidered, with Special Reference to Guinea (French West Africa)", *American Historical Review*, No.110, October 2005, pp. 975–1014.

[15] Kelly M. Askew, *Performing the Nation: Swahili Music and Cultural Politics in Tanzania*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2002; see also Moorman, *Intonations, op.cit.*

reception and performance. While authors might prefer one approach to another (and there are disciplinary, theoretical as well as political issues here), a full understanding of the "historical formation" of nations and nationalisms will eventually need to encompass all angles[16]. And the fact is that much still needs to be done in terms of an analysis of nationalisms as social movements from below and of nations as cultural productions, among others, before we can talk of totalities and before we can reconstruct adequately the span of diversities and historicities of nations and nationalisms – and this is particularly true of the cases of Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique. This said, substantial theoretical lessons have been gained already and it is worth discussing some key advances now so as to enrich our understanding of the subject in general and in relation to the cases which interest us here, as well as to highlight some of the contributions which the present book makes. The list of advances will not be complete, nor tightly reflect the chapters that follow. Instead it will highlight certain aspects in the hope of offering structural foundations to a critical understanding of the subject of nationalisms and nations, and in the hope of providing a stimulating perspective on how to read the chapters that constitute the present volume.

The first such advance is conceptual: a clarification of concepts and a realisation that one has to be *very* careful with definitions and vocabulary. One needs to be attentive not to conflate words and concepts such as "nationalism" and "nationalist movements" for example. The two are not only different, but there is usually more nationalism in any society than what exists in any nationalist movements (as representative as the latter may be). Susan Geiger has shown this, as we mentioned earlier, in relation to Tanganyika where women promoted nationalism before any nationalist movement was formed as well as outside and beyond existing political unions and parties when the latter came into being[17]. Similarly, we need to distinguish between the concept of "nation" (a particular form of imagined community) and the concept of "nationalism" (an ideology or a political project which aims at creating, defending or working in this imagined community). The history of a nation is not equivalent to the history of nationalism: nation formation is a long-term society-wide development while nationalism can be short term and can be the affair of a small group only, or even an individual. The difficult part here is not to distinguish and

[16] On the concept of "historical formation", see Bayart, Jean-François, *The Illusion of Cultural Identity*, London: Hurst & Co., 2005, especially ch.2.

[17] Susan Geiger, *TANU Women, op.cit.*

unpack these concepts: it is to analyse the intricate relation between the two and their evolution over time – how a nation comes into being and how nationalists build on, and contribute to shaping, a community imagined by a much wider and diverse set of people.

Still about concepts, one needs also to avoid conflating nations and nation-states as Michel Cahen reminds us in his opening text (chapter 1). The two can go together, partly or fully, but they rarely coincide – in fact they sometime do not correspond at all (in spite of what actors may say). In the same vein, anti-colonialism and nationalism need to be distinguished even if, again, the two can go together, partly or fully. Anti-colonialism is more encompassing than nationalism and it is reactionary (a reaction to colonialism) while nationalism can be that too, but it is also and above all a forward-looking social and political project. Last but not least, Cahen introduces in his chapter a new concept, "nationism", so as to distinguish between a form of *nationalism* which would build on or reflect an existing nation, and *nationism* which does not build on or reflect an existing nation but aims at creating a nation (by force if necessary). Such concept and distinction help us think more finely about nationalism and its relation to the nation and other forms of imagined communities. Like the preceding distinctions, the difficulty of these concepts does not lie in their definition, but their application and our using them rigorously in our analysis – too often authors and theorists slip, conflate or confuse terms and concepts.

A second advance made in the last twenty years relates to how we understand the history of nationalisms and nations. Much early literature focused on elite and the Western origins of nationalisms and nations as we have seen, and it tended to view change in an evolutionist fashion. The understanding of the history of nationalisms and nations was progressive and teleological: a succession of stages which inevitably led to the liberation of all un-free nations. History was seen as linear and causal: change was produced by antecedent causes, outcomes seemed by and large determined, and progress followed a straight and sure road between all points[18]. Nations were seen as actors of history who aimed at their own liberation and one could as a result practice history as an investigation into the origins of a pre-determined outcome, reading back into the past the origins and development of nations. The post-structuralist and

[18] For a good deconstruction of such linear nationalist history, see Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation. Questioning narratives of Modern China*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.

postcolonial critique of this type of history has been very perceptive and its lessons need to be integrated into our analysis. Without obligatorily adopting the postcolonial approach, we need to reject linear, evolutionist and teleological narratives and restore diversity, complexity and uncertainty. This means, first, to integrate all currents of nationalisms in our analysis, not just the dominant ones or those who won historically. Taking an extreme case, Fernando Pimenta analyses in this volume (chapter 7) the case of leuko-nationalism in Angola. After showing how nationalism emerged within some sectors of the white population, he discusses the formation of a white nationalist movement whose outcome was failure, but whose history tells us much about Angola and African nationalisms in that territory. In his contribution, Didier Péclard (chapter 6) analyses the roots of UNITA's nationalist movement. He shows how a particular social and historical trajectory led not just to a particular form of nationalism in central Angola, but also to a paradoxical success for the party which emerged there, i.e. its collapse at independence allowed it to rebuild more successfully after independence.

A third advance in the analysis of nationalisms and nations in the last twenty years has been in relation to culture. Culture is not understood today as a founding-block of nationalism anymore nor as a mere trait of a people. Culture is seen as a human production which has its own history which needs to be unpacked and analysed. Nationalism in turn is now seen as a cultural production among others. Following this approach, Maria-Benedita Basto analyses in her text (chapter 4) how Frelimo, the dominant Mozambican nationalist movement, related to culture. She reveals spontaneous and organised literary production in the "liberated areas" during the war and she proceeds to analyse how the Frelimo leadership tried to establish a nationalist canon through selection, correction and exclusion. Dealing with the same period, Georgi Derluguian revisits Mozambique's famous intra-nationalist conflict of 1968 (chapter 3). He looks at the cultural background, and the habitus, of the two factions of Frelimo at the time and how these tied, successfully or not, into the global network and structures of power of the time. Finally, dealing with a different period, Jason Sumich (chapter 5) looks at the meaning and form which nationalism has taken after independence in Mozambique. He shows how it has changed among the elite and how the latter uses it today as a sign of distinction and a mean to continue their domination.

A final contribution in the last twenty years has to do with the history of nations, as opposed to nationalisms, that is the history of "imagined communities". Michel Cahen in his opening text (chapter 1) shows the

very diverse historical trajectories of the nations in Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and other Lusophone countries and the implication that each route has had for the formation of a particular imagination. Following on this macro-analysis, David Birmingham looks in his contribution (chapter 9) at the particular case of Angola. He analyses the historical development of culture and identity in that territory and he wonders thereafter, considering present connections and imaginations, if today's culture does no contradict, and possibly even undermine, any national, nationalist or nationist agenda. More pessimistically (or realistically) yet, Philip J. Havik considers (in chapter 2) the state of the nation in Guinea-Bissau, a country marred by civil war since 1998. While the liberation war in that territory was the most successful among the Portuguese colonies in the 1970s, the national imagination seem to have receded to the point that the author asks whether it is not a myth or even a curse! Finally (in chapter 8) Justin Pearce looks at the latest development of nationalisms and nations in Angola. While he concurs with most authors that the nation in Angola is weak and nationalism is dominated by the party in power, he reveals lively debates under the surface of formal politics, showing that the idea of the nation is still alive, debated and a bone of contention and competition.

In the last chapter of the book, Gavin Williams provides an overview of the chapters and cases dealt with in the book. He offers a comparison of the dynamics of nationalisms and nations in Angola, Guinea Bissau and Mozambique, and he brings the state and the economy back into the discussion. This is particularly useful since structural dynamics, notably economic, always constrain historical developments and the action of individuals. Bringing the state back in the discussion is similarly important since it is a fundamental actor in all the developments related to nationalisms and nations. The state may be an idea, even a collective misrepresentation of capitalist societies, but it still generates practices and institutions which are central in shaping people's thoughts and actions, not least because it holds the monopoly of legitimate use of force over a territory. These elements and the analysis which Gavin Williams brings help move the discussion towards a greater level of generalisation and, at the same time, bring us back to fundamental issues of the social sciences.

To conclude, the chapters of this edited volume will not provide a history of nationalisms and nations in Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique. They will not provide an encompassing picture on, or an updated systematic view of, the subject. What it will do is reveal new

facets and dimensions of the history of nationalisms and nations thanks to access to new primary sources. And just as importantly, it will raise new questions and propose new approaches on the subject, all in the hope of opening up the topic for an informed, critical and open-ended discussion. In opposition to returning "patriotic histories"[19], this book intends indeed to contribute at restoring the complexity of the historical process in question, reveal the various roads which were possible at all times, and show the choices which actors made and bifurcations they took, for better and for worse, within the constraints which existed at the time, in the name of "the sun of our freedom". Contrary to what the opening poem stated, there never was nor ever will be any "straight" or "sure" road to nation formation and a nation's independence. There are other legitimate forms of political organisations as well as many hybrid forms; there are many roads as well as some dead end; and all outcomes are eventually the result of historical processes which are contingent, contextual, and fought over – alongside their memory and their history.

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[19] Terence Ranger, "Nationalist historiography, patriotic history and the history of the nation: the struggle over the past in Zimbabwe", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 30, No.2, 2004, pp.215–234.

making of the book. Behind Gavin Williams stood the spirit of Thomas Lionel Hodgkin, Gavin's mentor, and the pioneer of studies of nationalism in Africa[20]. While in Oxford, I held the post of "Thomas L. Hodgkin Research Fellow" and Gavin Williams was my mentor.

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[20] Thomas L. Hodgkin, *Nationalism in colonial Africa*, New York: New York University Press, 1957.