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***Intercultural Dynamics and Development:
Mozambique and Italian International Cooperation***

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Abstract

This study addresses the interrelationships on international cooperation for development that put cultures into motion. I examine this relationship through a socio-anthropological research aimed at outlining the cognitive orientation of both sides in the international cooperation: who provides and who receives the Aid. In this path, I tried to understand how the actors involved in this process conceive 'development'. The *locus* of the investigation is an international cooperation project in Mozambique, along with interviews with practitioners of cooperation from Italian NGOs. Participant observation as well as ethnography were crucial for gathering information and understanding the way the actors themselves see their role in this process.

The thesis argues that international cooperation for development not only provides projects apt to change a situation in developing countries, but also unites cultures that mutually exchange meanings, disagreements, habits, norms of behavior, streamlining and transforming them, in a continuous process of cultural 'miscegenation'. Although most NGOs propose bottom-up approach to development, usually projects start from the top, and they face many difficulties to stimulate a 'will' (or the *agency*) to change from below. Therefore, the proposed changes are hindered by peasants' entrenched cultural traditions and cognitive orientation. However, international cooperation also causes a fusion of cultures generating new lines of thought, which sometimes are critical views about the dominant ideas. Those new ideas are the result of demystification of many myths created by political and historical processes in which international cooperation is operating, and usually give voice and support to counter-current social movements from below, showing that it is possible to make different cultural repertoires coexist, which often give raise to new 'solutions' to old problems.

In a macro perspective, globalization continues to play a dominant and oppressive role in the poorest countries, and Mozambique has not been fully decolonized yet. The thesis also argues that there is no consensus about the term *Development*. However, it is still possible to identify a cultural dominant meaning for it. In fact, it maintains an Eurocentric and evolutionary bias, as the historical process would have invented 'precise' steps to be followed in order to achieve 'development'. However, development should not be anymore associated to economic growth and if we really want to achieve a more equal world, it is not only about empowering the poor: there is also the need to 'disempower' the rich.

Riassunto

Questo studio tratta dei rapporti esistenti nella cooperazione internazionale per lo sviluppo che favorisce lo scambio e la diffusione di diverse culture. Ho analizzato questo rapporto mediante una ricerca socio-antropologica mirata a fornire un profilo esaustivo dell'orientamento cognitivo di entrambi gli attori della cooperazione: chi fornisce e chi riceve l'aiuto. In questo percorso, ho cercato di comprendere come le persone coinvolte in questo processo concepiscano il termine 'sviluppo'. La mia ricerca è stata realizzata su due fronti: in Mozambico, presso la sede di un progetto di cooperazione internazionale in Mozambico, e in Italia intervistando i membri diverse ONG internazionali che operano da anni sul campo. Le osservazione partecipata come anche l'etnografia hanno costituito due metodi essenziali per la raccolta di dati e notizie e per la comprensione di come i protagonisti di questa iniziativa percepiscano il proprio ruolo nell'ambito di questo processo.

La tesi sostiene che la cooperazione internazionale per lo sviluppo non solo propone progetti atti a modificare una situazione nei Paesi in via di sviluppo, ma unisce anche diverse culture favorendo lo scambio di contenuti, opinioni divergenti, abitudini, norme comportamentali, ottimizzandoli e trasformandoli in un processo continuo di '*miscegenation*'. Anche se la maggior parte delle ONG implementa progetti basati sul principio della sussidiarietà (cioè dal basso verso l'alto) solitamente questi iniziano dall'alto e devono affrontare non poche difficoltà per stimolare la volontà (o l' 'azione') di agire per apportare cambiamenti dal basso. Per questo motivo i cambiamenti proposti sono spesso accolti con sfavore dai locali e addirittura ostacolati dalle tradizioni culturali e dall'orientamento cognitivo, radicati nella popolazione rurale. La cooperazione internazionale, però, è anche fautrice della fusione di diverse culture che genera nuove correnti di pensiero, che talvolta sono opinioni critiche nei confronti delle idee prevalenti. Queste nuove idee non sono altro che il risultato della demistificazione di numerosi miti creati nel corso di processi storici e politici, in cui opera la cooperazione internazionale e solitamente danno voce e sostegno ai movimenti sociali di protesta che partono dal basso, dimostrando che è possibile far sì che diversi contesti culturali coesistano pacificamente, dando modo di trovare nuove 'soluzioni' a vecchi problemi.

Considerando la questione in una macro-prospettiva, possiamo dire che la globalizzazione continua ad avere un ruolo preponderante nei Paesi più poveri: il Mozambico, poi, non è stato ancora completamente decolonizzato. La mia tesi sostiene inoltre che non esiste un'opinione unanime sul termine 'sviluppo'. E' tuttavia possibile individuarne un significato culturale dominante, poiché mantiene un pregiudizio evolutivo Eurocentrico, come se il processo storico avesse inventato fasi specifiche da seguire per ottenere 'sviluppo'. Lo sviluppo, però, non dovrebbe essere più associato alla crescita economica, e se vogliamo veramente ottenere un mondo più equo non dobbiamo solo dare più potere ai poveri, ma dobbiamo anche toglierne ai ricchi.

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List of Acronyms

CISPI	Coordinamento di Iniziative Popolari di Solidarietà Internazionale
COCIS	Coordinamento delle Organizzazioni non Governative per la Cooperazione Internazionale allo Sviluppo
FOCSIV	Federazione Organismi Cristiani Servizio Internazionale Volontario
ADPP	Ajuda Popular do Povo para o Povo
AIKS	African Indigenous Knowledge System
AISPO	Associazione Italiana per la Solidarietà fra i popoli
APIBIMI	Associazione Promozione Infanzia Bisognosa del Mondo Impoverito
ARCS	Arci Cultura e Sviluppo
AVSI	Associazione Volontari per il Servizio Internazionale
CAM	Consorzio Associazioni con il Mozambico
CeLIM	Centro laici italiani per le Missioni
CIES	Centro Informazione Educazione allo Sviluppo
COSV	Comitato di Coordinamento delle Organizzazioni per il Servizio Volontario
COOPI	Cooperazione Internazionale
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
Cuamm	Collegio Universitario Aspiranti Medici Missionari
DI	Development instructor
EPF	Escola de Professores do Futuro (Teacher's Training School)
FRELIMO	Frente de Libertação de Moçambique
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IGA	Income Generating Activity
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non Governmental Organization
ISCOS	Istituto Sindacale per la Cooperazione allo Sviluppo
ISF	Ingegneri Senza Frontiere
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
Mlal	Movimento Laici America Latina – Trento
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OMM	Organização da Mulher Moçambicana
PARPA	Plano Nacional de Redução da Pobreza Absoluta
RENAMO	Resistência Nacional Moçambicana
SNV	Netherlands Development Organization
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN-OHRLS	Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States
VAG	Village Action Group
WB	World Bank
WTO	World Trade Organization
IK	Indigenous Knowledge

CHAPTER 1 – Introduction

International cooperation for development not only provides projects apt to change a situation in developing countries, but also unites cultures that mutually exchange meanings, disagreements, habits, norms of behavior, etc. It is a dialectical encounter between ‘agreements’ and ‘disagreements’, and many misunderstandings. This symbolic process creates representations of the *Other* through the worldview lens.

This study addresses these cultural interrelationships that put cultures into motion, streamlining and transforming them, in a continuous process of cultural ‘miscegenation’, that leads to changes and to the advent of different cultural forms. The *locus* of the investigation is an international cooperation project in Mozambique, a country that is currently undergoing an intense process of socio-economic and cultural transformation, and the stimulus from the so-called international cooperation is considerably involved with such events.

This is an investigation that aims to analyze how cooperation projects affect local social dynamics in a rural community, and how social dynamics affect the project: it is a study about the meeting of two (or more) different cultures in the context of international cooperation. Therefore, the thesis is focused on the interpretation the local community gives to the development projects, and vice-versa: I intend to analyze what the practitioners and beneficiaries of the international cooperation think of the development projects, and how international cooperation intervenes in the lives of groups to change their lifestyle, in an attempt to capture the *intercultural dialogue*. Moreover, I tried to understand how the actors involved in international cooperation conceive ‘development’.

This study examines this relationship through a socio-anthropological research that wanted to observe and collect the directly involved individuals’ evidences about the international cooperation, to build a framework of current debates on this subject. Actually, this study is aimed at outlining the cognitive orientation of both sides in the international cooperation: who provides and who receives the Aid. It is important to state clear that this study does not consist in an evaluation of development projects or policies results: it is merely an attempt to contribute to the discussions about these issues.

The leading idea of this study is that international cooperation has a significant impact on the peasants' life in Mozambique, which may have different consequences, i.e. positive, negative or insignificant. In any case this process interferes in what I call the *worldview* and *cultural process*: stirring the people's 'otherness' always entails marks that nourish cultural dynamics. I also assume that cultures neither have an 'essence' nor are *static*. Cultures are dynamic and undergo continuous transformations.

In my writing I will use concepts and categories that acquire meaning within the context I am analyzing. The use of 'single quotes' intend to alert terms and expressions that has a 'built' or 'figurative' character. *Italics* are employed to give emphasis to some peculiar terms. Finally, my interlocutors' real names were changed so as to maintain the privacy of the persons I interviewed.

1.1 Why Mozambique and Italy?

When I came to Italy in 2006, I met for the first time the Old World, from where most of my great-grandparents departed in search of a new life in Brazil. Now it was my turn to look for new experiences and opportunities. In Italy it was curious to observe the already well-established phenomenon of NGOs with the new dynamics emerging in the international scenario, while in Brazil it was only at the very beginning. Then, in 2007, I had the opportunity to do a Master in International Cooperation for Development at the Catholic University of Milan, where I could better understand how NGOs worked and the mechanisms apt to promote international cooperation for development. Since then, I was concerned of understanding more deeply the dynamics related to the meeting of different cultures, and how the development interventions that seemed so perfect to the poor were actually perceived not only by the cooperation practitioners but also by those receiving such aid. During the Master, a NGO offered me an internship opportunity in Mozambique aimed at investigating why women were not frequenting the health center the NGO had built for them. Unfortunately, due to the lack of funding, I could not accept that proposal. Despite my disappointment, since then Mozambique remained in my plans, and I decided to investigate these phenomena through a more critical look at this 'world' of cultural meeting with a doctoral research.

My interest in Mozambique is mainly justified by the fact that it is a country that shares a common historical past with Brazil – the Portuguese colonization. As I am Brazilian I can understand not only what it means to belong to a country that was a former

colony and not a Metropolis, but also the identity dynamics that helped me to interpret the relationship we (ex-colonies) have with foreigner Countries, especially the ‘developed’ ones. Moreover, through the slave trade, the colonial past brought together the African and American continents, and that allowed African culture to become an important part of Brazilian culture. As reminded by professor Zamparoni (2010), with the end of the slave trade in 1888, African culture stayed away from of Brazil ideologically, mainly due to the fact that the biased thinking of the period believed that what came from Europe was ‘advanced’ and what came from Africa was ‘backward’ (Zamparoni, 2010), - and there was a notable resistance to accept the African culture. Today in Brazil (after more than 100 years) we assist to a reverse trend: Africa is becoming more and more popular and is recognized as a constitutive part of Brazilian identity. The interest in learning more about this continent has led many Brazilians to dedicate themselves to the study of Africa.

Besides, my choice to do a research work in Mozambique was also due to the fact that it is a country that receives considerable international aid, and in Italy it is considered as the Italian cooperation ‘pride’ because Italy played an important role in the peace process, and Mozambique is definitely a ‘successful case’ in the international scenario. Above all, my anthropological inspiration was the key element that encouraged me to go on the field, both in Italy and in Mozambique, because the possibility of meeting new cultures was an opportunity to broaden my horizons as well. Due to all these reasons I shaped the idea to understand how cooperation is being designed in Italy, and how Mozambicans are interpreting such aid.

In Italy I was kindly received by 14 NGOs which agreed to tell me how they promote projects in Mozambique, and also the personal path that led each one of my interviewees to do this kind of work. In Mozambique, I was lucky I had full access to the Child Aid project as a whole. It was also very interesting to do research in Tete province, where I saw a very fast changing scenario due to the recent discovery of coal mines and other minerals: so far this province has undergone a notable transformation.

In my journey through Europe and Africa I could build a very interesting picture of two sides of the same coin: the international cooperation. It was also an interesting path that helped me to better understand where I come from, and the dynamics we have suffered within the local and global contexts.

1.2 Intercultural Dynamics

My interest in the cultural encounters led me to think that the cooperation for development is something more than a simple rational relation apt to improve poor's lives. It seemed to me a relationship in which different cultural identities try to establish a dialogue, not through the oppressive voice of colonialism, but providing 'aid', which does not exclude a power relation among cultures. From this starting point I found useful to adopt the term "intercultural dynamics", and, based on the thesis objective it is necessary to explain in which sense I use this expression.

The term "intercultural" regards two concepts: *inter* which means 'in between', or 'among'. I opted for the term 'inter' instead of 'multi' because *multiculturalism* is a very controversial and counter-intuitive term that seems to be an innocuous notion. However, it misleads to an ideal of peaceful coexistence between different cultures, but in fact it is a pernicious concept since it departs from the idea that people from different places, religions, ethnicities, etc. have different cultures, and consequently, to live in a multicultural world we must find mechanisms to *tolerate* these differences.

There is a pessimism related to the fact that cultures are vanishing and there is the concern to preserve cultures, as they have an 'essence' that should not be lost. However, as Marshall Sahlins (1997) argues, culture does not disappear, but is continuously reinvented. Multiculturalism understands culture as a property of specific groups of people, as these traits were innate, and must live with other kinds of culture but not *mix* with them. Multiculturalism owns a static view of culture as an 'essence' of human groups, which is inherited ancestrally, and often correlated to racial and ethnic groups. Today, in the world, such term became very common, most because of the globalization and the facility to move and communicate: people migrate in a faster rate, and countries are increasingly more mixed with new cultures. Despite multiculturalism appear to proclaim an *acceptance* of differences, it actually is asking people to be *tolerant* with cultural differences, "a veiled form of segregation" (Macagno, 2000: 23, my translation). It departs from the idea that different cultures occupy a same territory, and something must be done to avoid a war or a genocide, as previous world experiences, i.e. Rwanda's 1994 and Nazism. It is a way to *ease* the problems of cultural intolerance, as the different cultures figuratively 'sign a contract' to tolerate each other. *Tolerance* is very different from *acceptance* because it does not presuppose that my culture can dialogue to yours, and we are not supposed to mix our cultures and make a different thing. *Tolerance* means *distance*, not *dialogue*: I accept you only if you are far from me, and do not mix with my

life. It is a *forced acceptance* of the ‘others’ who, unfortunately, live in the same territory of mine. Hence, it is not actually an acceptance.

Multiculturalism also assumes that if a person comes from a particular country or have a particular religion, color, or ethnicity, it belongs to a particular culture, which is *naturally* different from other cultures, and therefore conflicting. Today, the discourse of multiculturalism is a hotspot in Italy (as well in Europe many other countries), because there are many immigrants from poor parts of the world, and while many institutions, even multilateral agencies, try to apply a multicultural discourse to make people more tolerant, people are very much suspicious of other cultures, and resist to tolerate them, even with political measures and racist parties that avoid the arrival of immigrants and/or are struggling for their expulsion. For those reasons, multiculturalism does not assume that cultures are dynamic and able to change, hence, instead of demystify the differences and increase the acceptance of what is different, multiculturalism *demarcates* the differences and asks for people to *tolerate* them. It does not proclaim that cultures should dialogue to accept the differences, rather it departs from the settlement of the differences in order to do an *agreement* of tolerance. According Magnoli (2009), multiculturalism is rooted in the myth of race (c.f. Chapter Two).

Given this, I believe that the term *intercultural* is more suitable to give the idea that cultures are *interacting*, and are dialoguing, and are changing due to the very contact with other cultures. Culture, as we will see next, is a dynamic thing. Actually, the other term, *cultural*, is much more complex and need to be explained in details for the purpose of this study. The concept of culture has always been difficult to describe exhaustively because culture is not a well-distinguished element; there are no sound ideas that define it perfectly. However, one cannot deny that individuals, groups of persons and peoples have different ways of seeing the world and the self, and that this is part of human nature.

The difficulty with the concept of culture lies mainly in the fact that cultural forms can be mixed - especially with the globalization, in which isolated cultures do not exist anymore, because in all countries migrations occur (Said, 1996) – and the general trend to spread the most apparent characteristics of a people (or the dominant discourse), often hides what subaltern groups think, and the individuals’ ‘agency’ is not taken into account. This inclination to find an *essence* of culture is also a human trait: usually when we find people belonging to a group we are not very familiar with, or who claim to be different from us, we generally are prone to think about the features that characterize us. This comparison leads us to find the most prominent characteristics that define our culture, an

essence that distinguish ourselves from others and gives us a sense of originality, both for our *origins* and our *distinctions*. The risk the essentialism implies is the adoption of a broad generalization concept covering the richness found in the differences between individuals and subgroups belonging to the same social group.

Generalization can be harmful because it falls easily into the stereotypes that classify people into strict categories that stigmatize population segments, or even whole populations, legitimize ideologies of power, and lead to conflicts. This kind of process is very common in the world, and includes speeches justifying actions of dominance and submission of groups vying for power. According to Said (1996), generalizations attaching 'labels' such as 'Western', 'Confucian', 'Islam', etc., carry meanings that deepen the conflict between civilizations as nationalism and incite hatred among the parties. The author believes that speaking in the name of such abstractions referring to races, ethnicities, religions, etc., causes the emergence of ideologies that eventually locate some cultures at a higher level, because they are considered superior, more civilized, etc. He gives the example of the colonial period, in which European countries made large use of ideological theories of superiority to justify their exploitation as a 'civilizing mission'. They used to claim that some races were better than others, giving the idea that some people were more civilized, more developed etc.. It was due to these ideas that colonization was justified as a 'noble ideal': people who were agents of colonization had an unselfish belief (Said, 1996) in this noble idea, and were willing to sacrifice themselves for that. Said (1996) criticizes any type of orthodoxy that encourages this kind of ideology, whether they are justified by issues of nationalism, religious, ethnic, etc. or not, because they utterly oppose 'us vs. them' dichotomies. He thinks that the better concept explaining these hatreds between peoples is not the meeting of civilizations or cultures (Huntington, 1993), but the encounter of the *definitions*.

There are many discourses widespread as 'official culture', which tend to speak in the name of whole populations. Such discourses may not express the identity feeling of each member of the group, however, in general, they provide a sense of belonging, loyalty, boundaries, and establish a sense of patriotism within nations. These discourses tend to be totalizing because they have become common sense - something taken for granted. However, these 'mainstream' discourses of culture do not highlight two other fundamental truths: the first one concerns the Hobsbown's and Ranger's (1983) interpretation that traditions can be invented, manipulated and articulated, and cannot be taken for granted as absolute truths. The other one is that in every cultural group, there are people and groups

who are not orthodox, but heterodox, which are in competition with the ‘official’ culture: here we find the ‘outsiders’ - poor, immigrants, bohemians, scientists, academics, etc. -, people who are struggling against the dominant discourse.

Notwithstanding, the propensity to discover the ‘essence’ of cultures is an irrefutable fact. People usually tend to express the ‘essence’ of their own culture because most of them believe to be part of a certain way of life that differs from others’, and this constitutes their identities (Maybury-Lewis, 2002). For this reason, the concept of culture in my study is intended in a broad sense related to a characteristic of humans associated with the practices, ideas and ways of life that give meaning to the life itself and the practices of my interlocutors. Culture here is not only understood as a subjectively identity aspect, but I also take into consideration any social environment, and its differences regarding material context, which are also part of cultures, respectively. For example, it is obvious that western societies have a completely different relation with human production of material products, with unceasing invention of new things, and a frantic race towards the technological progress. In rural Mozambique, however, the material context peasants deal with is quite different, and innovations do not take place that fast; rather, it seems that most innovations exist due to the introduction of development projects from the outside. I am also aware that such economic differences are not neutral in the intercultural dynamics because the material and technological superiority of western culture implies power situations in the relation between the examined identities. What I have tried to do in this study is to understand each universe and relate them to the current macro context which imposes – explicitly or implicitly - some rules for the cooperation.

In the analysis of the development cooperation between the rich countries of the north and the ‘other’ less developed countries, culture is embedded in a cognitive framework on which people rely for understanding the world and guiding their actions. However, every culture is subject to changes in relation to the input of the surrounding context, especially when it is in contact with other cultures. Therefore, while working to change the social circumstances considered ‘unacceptable’, international cooperation for development brings significant cultural changes through the introduction of new knowledge, expectations and lifestyles; it thus promotes intercultural dynamics implying exchange of information, products and people.

The fact that I have chosen a course of study considering, on the one hand, two local fields (Italy and Mozambique), on the other, the global field of international cooperation, compelled me to make an effort to understand the way the cultural encounter happens in

both contexts, without overlooking the mainstream discourse of international cooperation that constitutes a dialogue between local projects and the macrostructures of power and also carries worldview values, which do not cease to be cultural. Following this line of thought, I completely agree with José Luís Cabaço (2007) when he states that “the dynamics implicit in the identity processes are intrinsic to all situations in which a culture, through the exercise of power, imposes on the Other values, behaviors, rituals and myths” (Cabaço, 2007:20, my translation). The author is aware of the fact that cultural encounters are not neutral relations, and that there is a strong link among identity, culture and power. Therefore, I deal with intercultural dynamics that comprehend all such aspects.

In addition, this study searched for the statements of people who work or receive international cooperation to understand how they perceive this relationship. This research also considered the main communication channels of international cooperation that publish the official discourse showing ways and methods to be followed, or as highlighted by Dennett (2008), the ideas that were validated as truths. If, on the one hand, I tried to build a theory through a methodology that starts from the field to come to a theorization regarding the current status of cooperation in Mozambique, on the other hand I had to study the history and its ideologies about development to outline a framework of international cooperation as macrostructure of international relations. While studying the history it became clear that the official communication channels play a crucial role in the configuration of the main actions to be taken for cooperation. However, it also highlighted that the emerging phenomenon of NGOs and the bottom-up mobilization of social movements also have a considerable influence in the field of cooperation. There is a dialectical relationship between NGOs actions and mainstream discourse of development: the official channels of communication play an important role in shaping the intercultural dynamics, and have a strong influence on the popular opinion too. Therefore, many critical authors involved with the current system understand the ‘development’ as an ideological feature of globalization, spreading a discourse that leads to the idea that the culture of Western capitalism is essential for developing the underdeveloped countries. As Jean and John Comaroff note (2001), the capitalism “presents itself [through a robust media support] as a gospel of salvation; a capitalism that, if rightly harnessed, is invested with the capacity wholly to transform the universe of the marginalized and disempowered” (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2001:2). Said (1998) gives the example of the North American use of communication resources to create the idea that the Middle East is a dangerous place, where the Americans’ ‘enemies’ live. Said (1998) argues that the American media -

today the most powerful in the world - focus on a single negative aspect of the 'East' - the terrorists - and shows no other good things coming from this part of the world. This sort of manipulation focuses on the threat of Hamas and suicide bombers, images that are delivered as absolute truths, and the Middle East has been conveyed as a place of terrorists and irrational people. According to Sut Jhally (in Said, 1998), "the way the west, Europeans and US, look at the countries and the people of middle east is through a lens that distort the actual reality of those places and those peoples".

The Brazilian geographer Milton Santos (1997) also remarked that the globalization allows to speak about *early constructions* of ideas and *deliberate violence*, through the choices and direction that knowledge is produced and released by large agencies that have the power to publish what they want. So, even if there is an important and critical intellectual production in the world, on the other hand there is a *powerful* intellectual production, which is part of a *marketplace of ideas* where they sell 'truths' often distorted or not fully correct. According to Santos (1997), humanity is poisoned by those who have the task of showing us the world as they *want* us to see it, and not as it really is.

Bourdieu (1986) has written a book about the *distinction*, arguing that *good taste* is legitimated depending on a certain environment, in which it is consecrated. Bourdieu (1986) unmasks the fact of *good taste* as the taste of the ruling class, and this class makes us believe that its taste is superior in quality, but the author argues that taste is arbitrary and has no objective reason for superiority (Warde, 2007). In other words, *good taste* works as an instrument to justify the domination. Despite the criticisms of his theory, it remains a remarkable explanation of the role of cultural aspects in the performance and maintenance of power. The ways through which the dominant class assert its skills - self-confidence, arrogance, casualness, modesty, trustworthiness, embarrassment, etc.. - depend strictly on the market (or environment) in which they are embedded. At the same time, the market puts the emphasis on the dominant manners, and thus "gives those who hold the legitimate ways a completely arbitrary and absolute power of recognition or exclusion." (Bourdieu, 1986: 96). This is what Bourdieu called 'distinction'. In my analysis, these considerations are very useful because just as the good taste is an exercise of legitimacy for the maintenance of power, 'development' reflects a Western model that is considered the only right model to be followed. In opposition to this dominance, Santos (1997) argues that underdeveloped countries should create 'indigenous' theories instead of accepting the North theories. Bourdieu (1986) also realizes the importance of these

countercurrent ideas because they play a central role in claiming for new ways of thinking and doing things, and within this frame we find many NGOs operating.

Actually, some NGOs are trying to reflect and act against the mainstream discourse of development, struggling to gain more space and voice among the international institutions of cooperation, subverting the idea of development intended not as a transfer of western model but as a mutual exchange. Usually these organizations strongly believe in equal rights, open up to other cultures expressing the idea that, instead of continuing to create ‘us vs. them’ dichotomies, people should be more open to the diverseness, have less biased ideas and be able to accept the multicultural world (I would rather say: *intercultural* world) without eliminating cultural differences. In this sense, I believe that the intercultural experience offered by International Cooperation led practitioners of cooperation to be more ‘inter-culturally’ opened.

In the general discourse of international cooperation there is an interesting shift regarding the poor: from a colonial perspective of ‘backwardness’, to a post-colonial (also called post-modern) current view of the poor, perceived as those who need to be ‘empowered’. Thus, the current discourse has replaced the ideology that the natives of the countries dominated by European colonization were not civilized, were considered inferior and could not enjoy the settlers’ privileges. After the Second World War a shift of power from Europe to USA and URSS occurred. As a consequence, the dominated natives were not seen any more as inferior, but as poor (Packard & Cooper, 2005), and they recognized that the poor were poor because they never had access to power. Thus, with the new world order of neoliberalism and the capitalistic system looking for consumers, the poor should not remain unable to get into the market system. Not surprisingly, today the international cooperation states, at least rhetorically, that the poor have to be ‘empowered’ - from the subjects to the nations’ governments.

1.3 Development

The other main concept this thesis focuses on is ‘development’. The attempt of the research fieldwork was mainly to understand what today development means to practitioners and recipients of international cooperation interventions and how this concept is perceived by whom is directly working with it. From the speeches of my interviewees and people from Mozambique I could realize that development is a changing concept.

In this introductory chapter I want to illustrate the main ideas about development that guided me in the observation of facts during my fieldwork. Although I have chosen to pursue a grounded theory approach to my research – starting from the fieldwork to achieve a theorization (cf. Chapter Four), there are some key ideas that helped me to shape the main concepts of this thesis that are fundamental to understand my interpretation of the international cooperation phenomena, as we shall see later. Culture and Development are concepts closely correlated, therefore, what we observe on the field is not a consequence of isolated aspects; rather, it is the result of a long history marked by cultures confrontation and power relations in which ‘development’ has always been used as justification for one people to overlap one another . So let us now see how I addressed the term ‘development’, and how it is used and sometimes ‘abused’ by the institutions that employ it as a motto guiding their actions in international cooperation.

Development here is understood as the way human societies use and change the environment over time, through an accumulation and transmission of acquired knowledge for future generations. The environment is not only physical, but also social, because human interactions are responsible for innovations, introduction of new decisions and new rules such as taboos and cultural habits, while counter-cultural aspects be responsible account for changes in patterns. Today, the globalized world tend to mix more and more cultures, and tries to establish general rules of behavior for all through the human rights, in an attempt to homogenize the world in a global ‘international culture’. The cooperation for development is one of the means rich countries use to transmit the knowledge they have accumulated to the least developed countries, relying mainly on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As *culture* and *development* have a close relationship, I would say that development is part of the culture, and in the context of the western societies it is the result of a “cultural evolution”. Now, the following sections will provide an overview of the history of this concept up to what is currently defined as the quest for human rights.

The Origins of Development

The first modern man (like us today) is estimated to have appeared around 100,000 years ago, when in Israel were found evidences of the *Homo sapiens sapiens*. We know that modern man distinguished himself from the other animal species by its intellectual development (Cavalli-Sforza, 2004). It is estimated that the geographical expansion of modern humans occurred approximately 100,000-50,000 years ago, and scientists argue

that when modern man developed language around 50,000 years ago this expansion became three or four times faster. Diamond (1997) in his important book *Guns Germs and Steel*, called this faster expansion “the great leap forward”, mainly due to the development of language as the likely driver for these migrations. According to Dennett (2008b), language was an incredible revolution because it permitted the raise of culture. In fact, language allowed the first exchanges of ideas and a considerable increase in human inventiveness, which favored the knowledge transmission, the raise of religion, political and economic systems, domination, etc. In other words, it allowed the emergence of everything that influences human life and is not ruled by biological process, but socially produced. The possibility to exchange and transmit ideas enhanced the human settlement around the world, and increased the ability to develop tools that made the human survival easier.

According to archeologists, after language, the next revolutionary human development was agriculture that began approximately 13,000 years ago. Since then, the technological development was notably enhanced when some groups of humans shifted from a hunter-gathering lifestyle, to a food production system. Agriculture developed gradually in different times and in different places around the world, and it was totally a consequence of casual events and fortuity: there is no biological feature of the settled peoples that contributed to the effectiveness of food production. Actually, agriculture was neither *invented* nor *discovered*, but it “*evolved* as a byproduct of decisions made without awareness of their consequences” (Diamond, 1997: 106). People were not aware of what agriculture could bring because there was no previous example to follow. Anyway, this new life arrangement is considered a great revolution because not only it brought the sedentary life with it, but also allowed people to settle permanently in a specific territory where they produced their crops and stored surplus of food¹ (Cavalli-Sforza, 2004; Diamond, 1997). Thanks to agriculture, there were more calories available to feed more people, and human societies became larger, denser, sedentary, and stratified.

This new lifestyle was a key element to technological development, because it allowed the organization of small agro-economies that could accumulate possessions which previously was impossible for hunter-gatherers that needed to move frequently. Moreover, sedentary lifestyle and food surplus allowed people to get ‘specialized’, as they could engage in non-food-production tasks, and use their time to develop new

¹ However, “the shift from hunting-gathering to food production did not always coincide with a shift from nomadism to sedentary life” (Diamond, 1997:106)

technologies. The transmission of knowledge intensified as the neighbors, relatives, friends or even enemies, imitated the newly developed techniques. Further, as people gained more knowledge, they were more likely to use the new knowledge to creatively invent a better technique to further reduce the human effort. Thus, the transition to a sedentary lifestyle led to a radical change in the speed of technological advancement (Cavalli-Sforza, 2004).

Yet, as Diamond (1997) notes, technology production depends not only on its local invention, but also of its diffusion elsewhere. After the development of agriculture and the ability of people to engage in tasks outside the farm production, Diamond (1997) describes how the exchange between neighboring groups fostered the invention of new things. Technology was developed step by step in everyday activities; people discovered more practical ways and new tools to optimize the manual labor. The surplus of food allowed also the population growth because farming could support larger populations, and prevailed over the hunter-gatherer lifestyle that needed to find ways to limit demographic growth (Diamond, 1987). The larger populations were more likely to spread and dominate hunter-gatherers neighbors because they were demographically advantaged, and as Diamond states: “It’s not that hunter-gatherers abandoned their life style, but that those sensible enough not to abandon it were forced out of all areas except the ones farmers didn’t want” (Diamond, 1987:8). After the advent of agriculture, hunter-gatherers tended to shift into food-production under their farming neighbors’ pressure.

Moreover, as human societies counted more specialized persons, some of them were kings and bureaucrats which started establishing different degrees of power among people from the same social populations. This political elite gained control on food production, asserted its right to taxation, and could use its time in political activities, while peasants worked in the fields to feed them. Therefore, only after the emergence of farming, humanity has known the raise of “better-off elites” because the powerful were more likely to take advantage on leisure time, while powerless remained in more backbreaking conditions. Power relations among social classes accounted for maintaining unbalanced advantage, and while elites became better-off, “most people became worse off” (Diamond 1987: 8).

The political complexity enabled those groups of people to organize in chiefdoms that “are much better able to mount a sustained war of conquest than is an egalitarian band of hunters” (Diamond, 1997: 90). The tax income supported professional soldiers. This kind of complex societies developed around the world in different places, and before the

great European discovery in 1492, chiefdoms were widespread in America, Africa, Europa and Polinesia.

However, while agriculture and herding of animals led large populations, the spread of parasites and infectious diseases occurred too (Diamond, 1987). Agriculture made the societies crowded, and the more people got together, the more the sanitation conditions got worse. For example, with many sedentary farmers living close to each other, more feces were scattered around: as a consequence, it was easier to catch a disease transmitted by rodents. Diamond (1997) says that “the rise of farming was thus a bonanza for our microbes” (Diamond, 1997: 205). Besides, domestic animals are intermediate vectors for disease transmission, and as farmers became also animal herders, they were more exposed to infectious diseases. However, the exposition to germs through generations made the Europeans more resistant to these infections. But when Europeans went to the New World, natives had never been exposed to the Old World germs; they were not immune to them, and this caused a tragic mass destruction of Indians.

The development of writing - another important tool to improve technologies through the accumulation of knowledge - “involved socially stratified societies with complex and centralized political institutions” (Diamond, 1997: 236). Writing arose independently only in the Fertile Crescent, Mexico and China, and spread to other societies with similar political organization by trade, conquest and religion. Writing brought more power because it enhanced the possibilities to transmit knowledge, and knowledge brings power.

The process of evolution of technology was possible because human beings have inventiveness. People driven by curiosity can ‘discover’ new possibilities to use an object, not necessarily driven by an initial demand for it. “Technology develops cumulatively, rather than in isolated heroic acts” (Diamond, 1997: 243), and many (if not most) objects are first invented and only afterwards an utility is found for them. After having found an utility for a new technology, it is necessary to convince people to adopt it. However, not all societies are keen to receive innovations, and the innovativeness is determined by independent factors: there are societies that are more receptive to innovations while others are not (even within the same country, cities, groups of people, individuals, etc.).

Another important element that triggers technology development is rivalry. It is particularly interesting that the rival tribes, villages or groups of people were very keen to learn the novelties of their neighbors in order to overcome them. Competition has always been present in all species: it is a fundamental principle to compete for survival. Humans

need to stay inside a group to survive: a person alone has few chances to survive because she/he is much more exposed to the wild environment hostility². According to Ridley (1996), the participation in group activities is always motivated by an individual advantage: sharing food or eating together is an act found in all cultures in the world, and this ritual ensures that in case of famine, those who have cooperated in the past are more likely to receive a reward for their efforts. So being kind and generous can be very useful to ensure survival (or a better life) in every human society. Despite the human generosity and kindness within a social group, individuals are always competing with each other to succeed. Beyond individual sphere, in rival groups people compete openly to get a higher social position and not to be dominated. The rivalry stimulates strongly the evolution of technology, mostly for what concerns strategies to fight the enemy as well as arms innovations.

For example, the competition among European kingdoms was essential to stimulate technological development, because if a neighboring kingdom had discovered a new technology, its neighbors were in danger of falling behind and being dominated, so they always tried to achieve new improvements, not to remain economically weaker, or militarily vulnerable. Also China by 1500 was highly technologically developed as well: it owned large ships and its complex society could afford long overseas voyages. However, China was politically united, and the political decision did not point to navigation overseas. Probably this difference between China and Europe was crucial for the invention of firearms: despite the fact that the powder had already been discovered in China where it has been used to make fireworks, in Europe it was employed in the gun's technology (Diamond, 1997).

Another curious example in Diamond's book (1997) explains that the Colombo's 'discovery' of the New World was only possible thanks to the disunity of and the competition among the European kingdoms. Before he got financed by Spain, Colombo had already tried to convince other three kingdoms to pay for his courageous journey. Only on the fifth attempt (after having failed the first attempt with Spain), he was successful in convincing the Spain's King to sponsor his project. Probably if Colombo was

² Despite I am referring to a wild environment more usual in our past societies, today most societies live in a built environment, predominantly ruled by humans rather than by the force of nature. According to the UN-Habitat's "State of the World's Cities 2010/2011" report, more than 50% of the world's population lives in cities. Unless a natural disaster occurs, usually we succeed in manipulating nature, despite we do not know until when this continuous transformation and increase in population will be possible and sustainable for the planet.

Chinese, he would not have succeeded because China was politically united, and the decision at that time was not in favor of overseas navigations.

Therefore, by 1500, Europe had complex societies with high technologic achievements, germs resistance, political competition among kingdoms, strong religious beliefs that led it to dominate the majority of the other societies in the world. Such development was an adaptive response to the environment in which the European population lived, and environment here includes not only the natural physical aspects, but also the human social environment. After 1500, with the discovery of the New World, the world became interconnected and development of the so called ‘developed’ societies was achieved through a process of knowledge accumulation, better techniques for using and processing natural resources, human competitiveness and great migrations.

Diamond (1997) wrote his book mostly to illustrate with irrefutable proofs that backwardness and developed societies have no connection with biological innate features of races, ethnics, etc., and that the western life style, only because it is more technologically advanced, is not better than another life style. Rather, western societies had suitable circumstances to evolve technologically and achieve a military supremacy. However, his point is that being more technologically developed does not mean being better, nor having innate superiority compared to other people from less developed societies. Humans develop differently in different geographical regions, and despite technologically superior, I do not really believe that westerners are happier, or superior human beings.

Can we Talk About Development as Cultural Evolution?

If we consider development as a result not only of geographical and environmental aspects, but also of social-cultural aspects, I believe it is useful to analyze the development process under the lens of the Cultural Evolution. Most aspects of human development are related to the ways people socialize among their own group and exchange with other groups. Features as language, development of tools, development of agriculture, etc. – are cultural aspects that each human group evolved throughout its history, and that was possible thanks to the inventiveness that human groups used to live in any sort of environment. For this reason, I suggest that human development was in large extent a historical result of *cultural evolution*.

Let's Review the Concept of Evolution

Here, it is particularly important to elucidate the meaning of the word 'Evolution' to understand what I mean by cultural evolution. This concept was described by Darwin in *The Origin of Species* (first published in 1859) to explain that species struggle for life, competing for food and natural resources, and there are variations that can be favorable, or unfavorable, to survival (the unfavorable variations tend to disappear). It is a process over time, there is no 'coming back' (at least till now the time machine has not yet been invented). The fact that it is a process permanently oriented towards the future, it does not mean that it is necessarily a positive process, or that it creates only favorable variations. Evolution means that there are living beings that might suffer variations that create new alternatives and those that survive pass on their inheritance to the next generations, which may undergo further changes and that can be selected *or not* in the future. The variations occur randomly, and it is the natural selection that will determine the success or failure of mutations. Therefore this process depends on the conditions of the surrounding environment of every living being. According to Ridley (1993),

Evolution (...) is a directionless process that sometimes makes an animal's descendants more complicated, sometimes simpler, and sometimes changes them not at all: We are so steeped in notions of progress and self-improvement that we find it strangely hard to accept this (Ridley, 1993: 31)

To our analysis it is important to understand that if a species continues to exist in the environment, this species is evolved, regardless of the fact that it has undergone or not a modification. For the same historical time, a living being that has remained unchanged is to be considered as evolved as a modified being. Therefore, evolution does not necessarily mean change or variation, because an evolved being is the one that exists, and no matter whether its survival is due to changes or non-changes. For instance, Ridley (1993) says that the Coelacanth (Figure 1) is a fish that still lives in Madagascar just like its ancestors 300 million years ago. This incredible fish maintain the same characteristics it had in the pre-history, and this means that the mold with which it was made is so good that it never needed to be modified: it is a utter success, and the Coelacanth is as evolved as any of us.

Figure 1: Coelacanth Fish



“A prehistoric fish once thought to be extinct found living in modern times”
(source: www.dinofish.com)

Evolution was largely misunderstood as a progressive process towards improvements, as a self-improvement ladder, but actually it is not like that. Variations occur without any direction: they go in many directions, and are not necessarily positive. Changes may be relevant or not, or may even worsen the lives of living beings. For example, there are genetic diseases that are also variations, which tend to be eliminated over time. Thus, all sorts of changes - good, bad, neutral or even ‘non-change’ – constitute the evolutionary process.

The ‘non-progress’ or the ‘stability’ of a species are counterintuitive because, unfortunately, the term ‘evolution’ is commonly intended as a granted process of progress and improvements. However, improvements are not an imperative for the evolution to take place. The only imperative of evolution, as cited above, is the timeline: it always turns to the future. However, the chances of survival are random, as well as changes. As Cavalli-Sforza argues, “there is no identity between evolution and progress” (Cavalli Sforza, 2004: 42, my translation).

Even if it is hard to believe, “the process of evolution has no purpose, no intention, is absolute ignorant, is just a mechanical process” (Dennett, 2008b, my transcription from video). Evolution is a quite simple mechanism: in real life, existing species struggle for survival and the characteristics of each species that contribute to its survival is transmitted to future generations. Species gradually adapt to the characteristics of the environment as they change: climate, geography, food availability, predators, and all aspects of the environment where every living being lives.

Cultural Evolution

The evolutionary conception can be applied to cultures because the historical process of human world diaspora eventually distinguished human groups by physical and cultural aspects. According to Brody & Brody (2006 [1997]), the cultural and physical differences have always had important political consequences. Suppose that all of us have evolved in the same geographical area, and that natural selection would not have caused physical or cultural differences among us: we would be part of a same group, talk the same language, share the same religious beliefs and the same physical characteristics. In such case, we would not delight from the cultural diversity we actually have today, we would not enjoy the richness and fascination of our diversity. But even in such hypothetical circumstances, history would certainly replicate itself, and mankind for sure would have found other reasons other than race, religion, ethnicity, etc., to dominate, enslave and discriminate, because, unfortunately, these are human traits too (Brody & Brody, 2006 [1997]).

In the evolution process, as in nature the factor that generates changes are gene mutations, for culture, analogously, there are innovations allowed by the diffusion of ideas. So, the ideas are important to generate innovations to adapt to the environment, and throughout history, each culture has found different ideas and means to survive in different geographical environments. Actually cultural evolution has a close relationship to the historical path. However, as well as genetic variations, ideas can also have many directions: positive, negative, or neutral. Cultural evolution regards the cultural innovations, or the cultural aspects selected by societies to adapt to their environment.

Here, instead of genetic aspects, we focus on the cultural aspects that have a huge impact on the survival and adaptation of humanity. I suggest that cultural evolution must be understood in the same perspective of the Evolution theory described above, i.e. it is not because Western culture has developed so much that it is a more evolved culture, rather, it is one of the cultural possibilities to survive. We cannot neglect the fact that the demographical increase is an indicator of success of evolutionary process (Cavalli Sforza, 2004), and in this sense western culture had a tremendous demographic impact. However, this culture shows a fundamental paradox: while it dominates and transforms the nature, it also destroys continuously nature, and this way of life needs more energy to continue its growth, with the risk of a collapse, in other words, of the self-destruction (Diamond,

2005). What is noticeable in Western culture is that it has undergone more innovation in ideas (and technologies) at the same time compared to other cultures, and these variations have allowed it to spread its model throughout most territories (Brody & Brody, 2006 [1997]), and to adapt to several environments, often at the expense of other cultures.

But it does not mean that other cultures are less evolved only because they kept their way of life unchanged (or with few changes). According to the evolutionary theory, if cultures have survived is because they are well adapted to the environment, so they have succeeded. In fact, I dare to say that the older life style of hunter-gatherers is a highly evolved culture since it resisted until today as a way of surviving, and many hunter-gatherers tribes living nowadays do not want to change into western modernity. But historically speaking, these groups have been winding down and replaced by the replication of the Western model worldwide. However, even if those groups represent few isolated cases, they proved to be much more in line with nature than modern culture that keep running towards progress through nature devastation.

Actually, it is remarkable to observe how Western culture is increasingly giving more value to other cultures usually seen as 'backward', 'primitive', 'less wise', etc., and there are interesting initiatives flourishing aiming at changing radically the progress direction. For example, Serrelli, (2010b) explains the raise of a new field of study called 'Biocultural diversity' born in the 80's, that focuses on studying cultures that have a much deeper and mutual relationship with nature, trying to demonstrate the importance of this type of culture as an interesting choice to human survival, which takes into account the fact that biodiversity and culture are inextricably connected. Paradoxically, the speed of technological advancement and the ongoing destruction of nature are giving birth to these new cultural trends against the disproportionate growth. These movements insist on attaching more importance to nature and simplicity of life, renouncing many technological facilities, as a desire to revive the bond between Man and nature. I believe that many of these countertrends regarding a critical view of the endless technological development are deeply inspired by indigenous peoples' humbler - but not less effective - lifestyle.

I am aware that the term 'cultural evolution' is very controversial because it was widely used in strong misinterpretations, which served to justify many prejudices among human groups. I know that this term was virtually banished from the social sciences, especially rejected by most cultural anthropologists after the conceptualization of Social Darwinism. I also understand that both geographical and biological determinisms postulated that humanity had a unique evolutionary scale, and that some peoples were

positioned at an advanced level while others were left behind. Social Darwinism was also used as an instrument to legitimize the European colonial domination which asserted that some races were more evolved than others: Africans and native people from all around the world were considered far behind western Europeans, thus, the civilization mission was a 'noble' aim to help those 'barbarians' or 'savages' to get civilized (c.f. Chapter Two). I agree that this kind of manipulation of science for political purposes is a powerful way to estipulate social determinisms, and legitimate power positions, and this is also an outcome of cultural evolution. According to Daniel Dennett in his book *Darwin's Dangerous Idea* (1995) "there is no such thing as a sound Argument from Authority, but authorities can be persuasive, sometimes rightly and sometimes wrongly" (Dennett, 1995: 11). Actually, Dennett (2008b) considers that Darwin's idea was a quite simple - but ingenious - idea, easy to understand by most of non-scientist people, while other more difficult scientific theories were hard to be understood by lay people, for instance Einstein's theories. However, the tricked use of words led to erroneous appropriations of the theory. For that reason, the danger of misinterpretations was so eminent.

The answer to such misunderstandings and manipulations is simple: we must devote much effort to explain clearly what Darwin meant when he explained the 'evolution' process, in order to reverse the erroneous ideas about it. Given this, we cannot simply abandon a so well-articulated concept only because it has been deliberately misinterpreted by those who were - not surprisingly - at the higher level of the hypothesized scale. Quite the opposite, I believe that it is far more interesting to open our eyes to the past mistakes in order to act more wisely in the future, and I am sure this is a major goal of science, including Social Sciences.

I decided to discuss the concept of "cultural evolution" because it helps us to understand that the differences in the world today are not the result of more or less evolved cultures, rather, if all cultures exist they evolved to the same degree, but differently. As the idea of evolution of species fascinates me, I thought it would be much more interesting to address my research towards an evolutionary view of intercultural dynamics and development. As discussed earlier, Evolution, as defined by Darwin, has nothing to do with classifying peoples and cultures in classes depending on racial, religious, economic conditions, etc., superiority or inferiority. Rather, it is much more concerned in explaining the condition of species: adapting, changing (or not-changing), and evolving in the environment through their biological and cultural inheritance. The evidence is so ample that such theory includes us, humans, *Homo sapiens sapiens*, as

unique species. Even if among groups of humans we have visible differences in skin color or body constitution, which was the result of our adaptation to different continents with geographical and environmental differences. However, as Cavalli Sforza (2004) explains, while inside human groups there is a considerable genetic variation (which is positive to the species), the genetic differences of our species as a whole are irrelevant to affirm that there are better or worse races, ethnicities, and so forth. Moreover, Serrelli (2010) illustrates that archaeological, biological and linguistic studies demonstrated that we all share a common origin, and our oldest ancestors came from Africa. The diaspora migrations “have generated the kaleidoscope diversity of our species” (Serrell, 2010: 323, my translation).

The Red Queen Evolutionary Mechanism

There is an interesting observation made by Van Valey (quoted in Ridley, 1993: 74), stating that the species do not become better or weaker with time, and their chances of extinction are random. Van Valey inferred that the probability of a species to go extinct does not depend on the duration of its existence. Therefore, the struggle for existence never gets easier, and when one species adapts to the environment, it can never relax because its competitors will adapt as well. The temporary success of adaptation makes the species to evolve a more tempting target for its enemies, which tend to evolve as well. So, it's a zero sum game.

This idea was explained metaphorically through the Red Queen's children's story “Alice in Wonderland”. The scene in which the Queen was running without effectively moving forward inspired Van Valey to adopt the Red Queen as a metaphor for his “evolutionary law”, which stated that the world is competitive until death: the Queen runs but sticks in the same place, then, the world continues to get to the point of departure, there is alteration, but there is no progress at all (Ridley, 1993: 75).

The incredible insight of such proposition is that the existence never gets *easier* with time of survival of a species or family, etc., because its neighbors of its own species, or its parasites, predators, etc., are also on the run to improve their performance, and become more competitive. I believe that this process is very clear today for the human beings when we observe the most powerful nations that keep on running faster and faster towards development, struggling for higher positions among world's powers, and facing environmental disaster that may turn into its most terrible enemy in the short-term. The

development process enlarged in a monumental rate, and the most developed nations are trying to maintain their growth-rate but are also aware of the environmental risks, while poorest nations are struggling to achieve the western standards. It seems that we are running to get nowhere, just like the Red Queen. Ridley (1993) explains our current post-industrial dilemma:

As the end of the second millennium approaches, mankind is in a different mood. Progress, we think, is about to hit the buffers of overpopulation, the greenhouse effect, and the exhaustion of resources. However fast we run, we never seem to get anywhere: Has the industrial revolution made the average inhabitant of the world healthier, wealthier (...)? Yes, if he is German. No, if he is Bangladeshi (Ridley, 1993: 27)

Thus, evolution can be useful to explain the human culture. According to the rationale of the Red Queen theory, in the human species we observe that intelligence and life within the group has been rewarded from generation to generation. However, if our lineage becomes more intelligent, other neighbor's lineages will be as well. Even if we run faster, in general we will always be in the same place compared to them. Man became ecologically dominant for his technological capabilities, and humans turned to be the only enemy of mankind (except for the parasites). Undoubtedly this dynamic also takes into consideration social and geographical aspects, i.e., as discussed above, Europe had this incredible development due to these competitive dynamics, but also to its geographical environment and cultural evolution, and in relation to other geographically isolated groups has tremendous technological advantages.

International Cooperation and Cultural Transmission

According to Balkin (1998), "the most remarkable result of human evolution is that it is in our nature to be cultural" (Balkin, 1998: 5). Culture has a cumulative power, and it can be considered as an extraordinary efficient mechanism of adaptation to the environment (Cavalli Sforza, 2004). Each of us is capable to absorb and communicate a previously developed knowledge, and we carry and transmit a cultural know-how. Since humans started articulating their values, they developed culture, and consequently they made their history. Human beings are made of knowledge: we embody information about

our genes, our culture, our immune systems. (Balkin, 1998). The cumulative property allows that “the process of cultural evolution keeps enlarging both the space of possibilities and the technics for exploring them” (Dennett, 2008b, my transcription from video). Dennett (2008b) argues that “we have become invaded by ideas that we submit ourselves to, and treat the furthering fate of those ideas as more important than even our own lives, and it has a biological explanation. It too, is a fruit of the tree of life” (Dennett, 2008b, my transcription from video). According to the philosopher, humanity is the only species able to do that, but we must be aware that we also descend from the same tree of life just like any other living creature.

Dennett (2008b) makes an interesting analogy between human culture and nature evolution. He says that in the ‘eukaryotic revolution’, a prokaryotic cell invades another prokaryotic cell, creating a new living being: the eukaryotic cell. This event was considered a revolution because once it happened, it allowed the appearance of more complex living beings compared to a prokaryotic cell, because animal cells are eukaryotic cells. Dennett suggests that the same process of the tree of life (that initiated with a unicellular organism, which started a multicellular organism) can be analogously observed in the cultural evolution, mainly fostered by the arise of language. Language favored the appearance of ideas, along with specialized tasks in human groups, and enabled the teamwork: multi-person making complex works that individuals could not do on their own. Dennett argues: “Language is composed of words, and words are memes³: they have their own history, they evolve, and they evolve whether or not people care. The pronunciation and the meanings of words drifts over time and (...) they make many things possible that would not otherwise be possible” (Dennett, 2008b, my transcription from video). Hence, in the cultural sphere, the human evolution underwent an analogous process of the eukaryotic cells: the brain was invaded by hosts called “memes” that made possible many things like creative civilization, more culture, more science, more technology, etc.. This is what Dennett called “the memetic revolution”.

Likewise, Cavalli-Sforza (2004) argues that cultural evolution is possible thanks to the *ideas* (the author prefers the word ‘idea’ instead of ‘meme’ because meme is more related to imitation). He suggests that ideas can be exchanged, and bring innovations. The

³ Richard Dawkins in *The Selfish Gene* (1976) applied the term ‘**meme**’ as a postulated unit of cultural ideas, symbols or practices, which can be transmitted from one mind to another through writing, speech, gestures, rituals or other imitable phenomena. A meme can be part of an idea, a language, a melody, a form, ability, a moral or aesthetic value. Can be anything able to be commonly learned and passed on to others as a unit. (source: Wikipedia)

author believes that innovations are transmitted throughout life, and the transformations during lifetime are also transmitted to the next generations. In this sense, cultural evolution is “Lamarckian”, because while biological evolution regards the genes mutations and can be transmitted only genetically, cultural evolution can change during the lifetime, and changes can be transmitted to the next generations. Besides that, innovations and new ideas among and between cultures work at the same way genetic mutations do: they are random and can be harmful, good, or irrelevant to species. In addition, each innovation can bring benefits, but also costs: usually, new inventions require new procedures, behavioral changes, and frequently imply substantial costs such as energy requirement. An example highlighted by Cavalli Sforza (2004) is the invention of fuel motors: its inventor could not predict the air pollution neither the deaths caused by cars that we experience today. Another bad news for most innovations is that they make us slaves of our creations, and “any loss of comfort [is perceived] as a source of unhappiness, even if our happiness is not actually enhanced by its acquisition” (Cavalli Sforza, 2004: 72, my translation). In fact, more technology makes the man weaker and less able to deal with wild nature and much more hostage of civilized societies ruled by the clock. Likewise, the increase in technology and comfort is not necessarily followed by an increase in happiness. Despite it is really difficult to prove such statement, actually many researchers and travelers have expressed the feeling that even in poor conditions or in other indigenous societies, people do not necessarily is less happy than in western wealthy societies. The difference in cultural evolution does not provide the authority to despise the value of other human groups; rather, each human group, or individual has both values and defects.

Cultural transmission is the vocation of international cooperation. However, cultural transmission works only if there is the ‘will’ to accept or acquire a new culture, because we cannot take for granted that the transmission of an idea guarantees that the host will accept it smoothly. Here we observe how difficult is to practitioners of international cooperation to obtain sustainable results in their projects, because it is not an automatic outcome that poor people will change behavior immediately. Actually, the new ideas that cooperation for development try to introduce in poor communities face many cultural hindrances: especially in rural communities where the cognitive orientation is completely subject to the production mode and environment, it is difficult to achieve a substantial change. The word *idea* is really emblematic for this research because in my case study (the Child Aid project) this word was used as a motto for the project’s actions: it perfectly

captures the idea of cultural evolution intended as cultural transmission through the introduction of innovations (or ideas) from western culture.

So far, the cultural evolution process led the West to become a successful development model in spreading its culture across the planet. The consequence was important because, in general, it has forced other cultures to succumb to it or to try to imitate it to achieve competitiveness. Nevertheless, it cannot be considered as ‘the best’ cultural process of humanity. The strength of Western culture was the technological advancement, which was the result of a specific historical, geographic and environmental background. But no one can argue that the technological superiority was the result of Europeans’ innate superiority. Therefore, we can talk about cultural evolution, but we cannot talk about ‘delayed’ cultures. As we have seen above, it is not possible to talk about cultures ahead or behind others: there are only different cultures with different technological (and cultural) evolutions.

Development Today

In the last sixty years, the term ‘development’ had many explanations up to the meaning that the context of international cooperation attributes to it today. Although there is a general idea of development as I will illustrate below, such concept is still largely questioned.

Until the 50’s, development was perceived almost exclusively as economic growth because the rich countries have been successful in growing economically while social conditions improved for the majority of the population. Then, the most plausible hypothesis to develop poor countries seemed to improve their economic situation introducing them into the market economy, so that economic growth would be guaranteed and social development would arise as a consequence. After the Second World War, the U.S. appeared on the world scene as the new great capitalistic power, while the USSR as the great communist power. The United States realized the need to expand markets as well as to minimize the Communist threat, so they decided to invest in international cooperation for the development of the poorest countries, which could become new consumer markets and allies against the USSR (Packard & Cooper, 2005).

The strong economic investment in developing countries under USA and Bretton Woods institutions (WB, IMF) advices - the so-called Trickle-down mechanism - aimed at strengthening the industrial sector, which experts said would generate growth that would

be translated in social welfare. This idea, still present in some today's development programs, was very criticized and even labeled as one of the *myths* regarding development: the need to grow to create social welfare. According to some authors (Penteado 2008, Latouche 2007, Diamond 2005), this would justify the infinite growth, but, actually, growth is not a real sign of wealth for population. In fact, when economic growth in poorer countries did not improve the lives of the poor, and poverty increased, even with an increase in GDP, it was felt the need to distinguish between 'growth' and 'development'. In the 90's this issue was cleared, and it was concluded that growth was only one of the means to achieve development, and not the only cause.

Some authors such as Serge Latouche (2007) became dissatisfied with the idea of development, and criticized it, arguing that it was a *mirage* for developing countries, because they could never become as rich as rich countries have become: the ideology of *development* caused more damage than relief. Today, this line of thought is even more radical: it proclaims that economic growth is a myth to be deconstructed, and people must start thinking about new alternatives to live in this world. This movement got the provocative name of *Degrowth*, and is increasingly gaining new adherents. One of the arguments this movement advances is that economy, growth, development, etc., are synonyms that constitute the idea of the need for consumption and continuous economic growth. According to such ideas, the current rationale entrap people in a spiral of need for consumptions without exit, and instead of the economy helping people to improve their lives, people are becoming 'slaves' of the economy, i.e. today most people work just because they need, not because they are satisfied with their work. Consequently, instead of the economy serving people's wealth, it's people that serve the economy.

However, although it is difficult to say or define exactly what development is, it is very easy to perceive the differences between a developed place and an undeveloped one. It is easy to see that "in situations of development people have more opportunities, have more choices" (Veiga, 2009). According to Veiga (2009) this is the Amartya Sen's basis to interpret the development as a process of *expansion of human freedom*. For example, higher life expectancy, better access to culture, more chances for a dignifying life, are among the key elements to expand the opportunities for human development. Today, this is the most common definition of development in all the institutions working with cooperation for development. Therefore, the current development concept explicitly takes into account the importance of the human capital and the 'agency' of beneficiaries.

Still, the concept of development continues to be hotly debated, as it is always accompanied by a great ideological load, which according to Juhani Koponen (2004) became a 'developmentalism'. He argues that:

Such developmentalism rests on two ideological premises. The first is that development, whatever the prevailing interpretation of its 'right' social and economic contents, is thought to be achievable and desirable and beneficial to all. The second is the belief that a well-meaning, rationally constructed intervention in a social process will lead to such development, and that it is in everyone's long-term interest to foster such interventions and development. The contents of developmentalism have changed and keep on changing. What remains is the ideological conviction about the desirability of 'development' and the concomitant moral imperative to foster it through development intervention. (Koponen, 2004: 6).

Despite the "desirability of 'development'" highlighted by Koponen (2004), in fact, the great welfare brought by the development is felt only by a small share of the world's population, while most people are still exploited and have no (or few) access to opportunities for improvement. Therefore, the very idea of development is now being discussed by those who operate in the international cooperation, and while there are examples of successful knowledge transmission and creation of sustainable development, there are also many failures, sometimes worsening the balanced condition that existed previously and most of them are due to a disguised dialogue between cultures. There is also a great concern regarding the current tendency to culturally homogenize the world through the globalization process. Serelli (2010) highlights that today there is an increasingly reduction of cultural diversity, and the United Nations stipulated a Convention for the safeguard of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2003, to fight such trend.

Today, there are many authors and scientists who argue that the development of Western societies has led us to such a growth and destruction of the natural environment that we risk to reach a point of non-return that could even compromise our survival. Although these theories seem alarmist and exaggerated, actually, they are strongly based on researches of unquestionable reliability (Diamond 2005, Penteado 2008). Then, the replication of the development model in the poorest countries seems to be the way to continue the destruction and increase the risks for the planet. The problem today is not

only energetic, but it is also material: consumerism is the mainspring of the economic system, but the ‘myth’ of throwing away is not real, because things do not simply disappear (Penteado, 2008). According to Diamond (2005), if we take wise decisions that can stop the destruction and foster truly sustainable development (we can see many examples today), we may not reach the point of collapse. However, the author and other scientists warn us about the danger of keeping alive the ideology of infinite progress.

As a consequence of development, we achieved a paradoxical historical situation: the globalization is on the one hand the outcome of a process of territorial and cultural occupation of the West since 1500 that notably improved with the industrial revolution, and the exponential growth occurred over the last 50 years. On the other hand, this process seems to have come to an impasse, and we are trying to find what to do next. We are not sure anymore if development is worthy, and we started recognizing that other lifestyles are not as ‘backward’ and inappropriate as they were supposed to be; rather, some examples seem much more sustainable than ours’. The main problem is that the current economic system is environmentally degenerative: after the II World War we started producing goods hundred times faster than before. According to Penteado (2008), the current economic growth impact on nature overcomes any technological efficiency. For those reasons, the current scenario of western culture is undergoing a review of the main values that lead us to behave so inconsequently as capitalists, while we are trying to find new alternatives. It is an identity crisis (of course that it does not involve everyone, but we cannot neglect that many people are getting increasingly aware of such issues, and many are actually changing).

The scientific knowledge gained a central position in our society in the race towards development, justified through an enlightened rationality that ‘science’ deserves the status of ‘true’. However, nowadays there are also many “toxic ideas” (Dennett, 2008) that seduce the interlocutor without warning of possible losses accompanying those new ideas. For example, the American way of life – The American Dream -, the triumph of consumerism and waste is advertised as a great way of living, better than any other ever existed in the world. This ‘toxic ideas’ (Dennett, 2008) - that I would call ideologies/myths - were systemically introduced in third world countries by experts of western countries as the ‘right’ measures to take, while in many cases these ideas have proved inappropriate to the ‘real’ development of developing countries. The mainstream discourse of cooperation for development often forget that the development achieved by western societies was available only because they have interacted, dominated and

exploited other societies, that until recently were oppressed as their domains: just think about Apartheid until 90's, many African countries independences between 60's and 70's, and Mozambique that belonged to Portugal until 1975.

I believe that new important values are actually becoming part of many people's values after the Declaration of Human Rights; however, such tendency is always competing with many other countertendencies always present in human societies related to racism, ethnocentrism, nationalism, orientalism, and many other "isms" that have always convinced people that their thoughts, behavior, culture, ethnic group, etc. are more reasonable, superior, better, etc. compared to the 'others'. The increase in world's population and the dispute over power, resources, and territories are usually justified through such ideologies or "toxic ideas", as highlighted by Dennett (2008). According to Hobart (1993) cooperation for development is

A synonym for more or less planned social and economic change. So, defining development as a problem susceptible of a solution, or pathologically as a condition requiring a cure, may well be displaced. (...) As systematic knowledge grows, so does the possibility of ignorance. Ignorance, however, is not a simple antithesis of knowledge. It is a state which people attribute to others and is laden with a moral judgment. So, being underdeveloped often implies, if not actual iniquity, at least stupid, failure and sloth. (Hobart, 1993:1)

Hobart perfectly describes how moral judgments influence the development process, and the intercultural dynamics. Actually, the concept of development has a background of 'values', which presupposes that the progress of advanced technologies has been possible thanks to a great achievement of man, that places the developed societies in a better position in relation to underdeveloped ones. Such assumptions are crosscut by a crucial dichotomy: developed and less developed. Packard and Cooper (2005) also criticize development interventions because they treat people as "target groups", classifying them into generic categories as "indigenous", "community", etc., that do not take into account the peoples complexity.

Cabaço (2007) as well, argues that the development that has been proposed for developing countries assumes a different aspect compared to the one for countries where it was born and grew. The author suggests that in rich countries, the development has been the outcome of a dialogue between creation, history and culture, and since its origins it has

been an unpredictable process, with hardly hypothesizable repercussions. Today, development cross different cultures in different nationalities trying to promote the Millennium Development Goals, that according to Packard and Cooper (2005) are “[not] more than a list of universal human rights” (Packard & Cooper, 2005: 137). The authors argue that the developing world is unpredictable and confusing, which poses many issues to development because project’s “design demand prediction” (ibid: 132).

In sum, after the triumph of American capitalism in the mid-twentieth century, development has become an international goal. The term development has undergone several transformations, from simple economic growth to human capacity development, and the ‘empowerment’ of the ‘powerless’. Therefore, this thesis conceives development as a result of the adaptation of human societies to the environment, through cultural evolution and the transformation of natural resources and the landscape. What is noticeable is that the natural environment is now threatened by the very productive and destructive exploitation investments of human activity. All the advancements attributed to technological development today arrived at a stalemate: how to “degrowth”?

1.4 Actor-Oriented Approach

The second part of the thesis analyzes the process of international cooperation, referring to the "practice theory" according to which historical changes are the result of the local and translocal power dynamics (Sahlins 1981). This perspective is central to the relationship between *subjectivity* and *power*, in which subjectivity is defined as ways of perceiving, thinking, desiring, to be afraid of the social subjects (or actors), which interact in relationships among individuals and groups. The discussion of the ‘agency’ offers an overview of the polarity between *structure* and *action*, effectively expressed by the statement inspired by Marx that "history makes people, but people make history." ‘Agency’ is the will of individuals to put into action projects for their lives, to achieve individual and/or social goals (Ortner, 2006). Here, it is particularly important to consider the conditions under which the *actor* is introduced, that is, the power web of each social context. Such theme is linked with the idea of cultural evolution as to evolve culturally means *having the desire* to change, otherwise changes are not feasible, especially within international cooperation field.

The relationship between the actor and the social structure is dialectical because people are shaped by their culture and their social structure, while their actions are

instruments that influence, in turn, the structure. The relationship between *culture*, *power* and *active subject* is analyzed through the idea of an active subject influencing the social structure: such influence can favor the preservation of such structure or can be against the social structure. Moreover, this interaction is framed by the power structures present in cultures (Bourdieu 1977, Giddens 1979, Sahlins 1981, Ortner 2006).

The theories of agency that is followed by the ‘actor-oriented’ approach influence very much the studies and programs of international cooperation. Cooperation for development shall in many ways mobilize the ‘agency’ of the beneficiaries enabling them to act as protagonists of their own destinies. Consequently, institutions of international cooperation try to implement a participatory model from below, aiming at enhancing the empowerment of local people. According to Packard and Cooper (2005),

Yet development is fundamentally about changing how people conduct their lives, and the very claim for technical knowledge is itself a political act (Packard and Cooper, 2005:133)

The authors suggest that the cooperation is also a political act, hence it is not impartial. Actually, we can say that the relationship between beneficiaries and development institutions is not a neutral one because it never ceases to be a relationship of domination. The theory of the social actor can, in fact, deconstruct the rhetorical discourse of the agencies for the development and suggests that those actors involved in the relationship of cooperation play highly asymmetric roles, reminding that the relation remain a social dialogue between the weakest and the strongest.

The idea of making a ‘new person’ or to turn ‘traditional’ people into something ‘modernized’, is older than the international cooperation for development: as we shall see in Chapter Three, it dates back to the colonization period, when missionaries were keen to introduce catholic religion to uncivilized people. Development ideas cannot be “simply accepted or replicated. They may be transformed or appropriated in ways that were unintended” (Packard & Cooper, 2005).

1.5 Thesis Outline

This thesis is focused on international cooperation through a historical perspective in order to be able to discuss the current scenario of cooperation, and situate the debate about

the implications of bringing development to the poorest countries. My main interest is to understand what currently *development* means to those who are directly involved in the process of international cooperation – beneficiaries and practitioners of development projects - and how this concept is changing according to cultural and ecological issues. Studying the case of Mozambique as a paradigm of this process and studying the Italian NGOs working in the field, allowed me to compose a picture about how international cooperation is perceived by the main actors involved in its enhancement, and what the main outcomes of this dialogue are.

In the next Chapter I will introduce an historical overview of Mozambique. My purpose is to analyze the historical facts that were crucial to understand the current situation of international cooperation in Mozambique. I will examine three main historical periods: the colonization period until the Second World War; the post-war period with the beginning of Cold War and the end of colonialisms; and from the end of Cold War until recent time.

In Chapter Three, I will also situate the Italian International Cooperation in a historical perspective. Then, I will analyze the discourse and impacts of development, and provide an overview of the international cooperation framework in Italy and Mozambique. Here the aim is to raise the debate on aid, and I argue that the international cooperation believes that has the solutions to the poor, but in practice the poor is still poor. Hence, despite cooperation is still aimed to improve poor's life through the transmission of western knowledge, it has an ambiguous role in the current international scenario.

Chapter Four introduces the Research Program and Methods. This Chapter aims to expose how I accomplished the research to allow the data analysis in subsequent Chapters. This research is framed on theoretical and empirical study of the interactions between cooperation projects and the local group. In its experimental part, this research examines a development project in Mozambique, focusing on the interaction between cooperators and local communities. In practice, I tried to examine the cooperation unfolding the strategies and contradictions to observe how external interventions are adopted, ignored, deflected, reassembled and refused, by the 'target group'. The approach in this phase was typical of the socio-anthropological studies with replicated field observations and secondary analysis of studies and research already available, following a constructivist grounded theory approach and an ethnographical path. In Italy I carried out a fieldwork through semi-structured interviews with representatives of NGOs that conduct projects in Mozambique, to collect data about their views on the subject. IN Mozambique I carried out ethnography.

Chapter Five shows the results of the fieldwork in Italy. It examines the Italian International cooperation in Mozambique, its structural framework and what cooperation means to Italian NGOs' representatives. The main purpose of the interviews was to understand how the cooperation agents *act, feel* and *think* about their work. I argue that the rise of a considerable number of NGOs is relatively recent, mostly influenced by the rise of the participatory approach as the new alternative to development. Actually, such trend fostered the emergence of development projects implemented by NGOs in the developing world. I also argue that development projects are designed to achieve specific outcomes, while on the field they find many hindrances to the accomplishment of their goals. Therefore, despite NGOs attempt to conduct the participatory approach to guarantee the sustainability, the international cooperation is continuously reformulating strategies.

Chapter Six presents the ethnographic notes about life in Chiúta, a Mozambican district where this study was carried out. The aim of this chapter is to emphasize the main structural and cultural issues of this society to allow a better comprehension of the cultural interactions with the international cooperation. In Chiúta, social structure is based mostly on the relation between people and the crop cycle. Besides, social reality has also a gender-biased constitution, which faces the arrival of gender empowerment agendas from the modern world. The way peasants deal with their ordinary life shapes their social sphere, including their traditional knowledge system, their beliefs and rites, which demonstrates that the magic-spiritual features are deeply embedded in Chiúta society (as well as in Mozambique), and westerns' institutions that promote development initiatives have to interact with them.

In Chapter Seven, I expose the outcomes of the fieldwork in Mozambique, illustrating how beneficiaries interact with the development project. I argue that despite most people show interest in the new project and apparently agree with it, most of them did not feel benefited by the program and they did not really act in order to accomplish the project's aim. The project uses new ways of thinking and organizing things, and wants to teach new things that would change local people's lives. The participatory model of development inspired by the mobilization of the of individuals' 'agency' to promote teamwork and change their life conditions was not immediately acknowledged by most people. Actually, most beneficiaries imagined that the project would provide 'solutions' for their lives, and development would be possible due to the action of macro instances that would bring resources to the community from outside. Thus, there was a mislead dialogue: while most local people put into action cognitive orientation related to past experiences of

cooperation in which they received things from foreigner's institutions, the local NGO was trying to implement a new way of promoting development from below.

In Chapter Eight, I address the broader question of how different cultures interact. By comparing Chapter Five and Chapter Seven, I suggest that in the frame of participatory model of development 'from below', the poor are not intended as 'agents' as the international cooperation for development supposed they would be. In the intercultural dynamics of the development projects, the development conceptions of both sides seem to have the same assumptions, but beneficiaries and practitioners of cooperation work through opposing *means* to *achieve* development: a top-down versus a bottom-up approach, respectively. I argue that there are implicit conceptions of knowledge transmission that are embedded in cosmological cultural webs, thus, not always the dialogue is able to achieve the project's objective, causing failures and frustrations. I also consider that culture matters in this sphere, but it is not the only issue in to be taken into account.

Finally, Chapter Nine draws the conclusions of the thesis. Here I review the main concepts and discussions arisen during the previous chapters, and outline the core outcomes. I argue that it is still possible to identify a cultural dominant meaning for *Development* as it maintains an Eurocentric and evolutionary bias. Besides that, the encounter between cultures of Italy and Mozambique in international cooperation unites cultures that mutually exchange 'agreements', 'disagreements', and misunderstandings, in a dialectical process that provide new cultural forms in a globalized and unbalanced world. In addition, I describe the strengths and weakness of the study.

CHAPTER 2 - History and Stories: Mozambique and International Cooperation

2.1 Story of Identities

A very interesting vision of Mozambique's history is found in Mia Couto's book, *O Outro Pé da Sereia* (2007), that tells a story through the identity construction of characters with different views of the world, and see 'the other' through different cultural lens. Mia Couto reports on Mozambique telling us about meetings between Africans, Asians and Europeans in two distinct periods: the pre-colonial past (around 1560) and the present international cooperation (around 2002). The parallel between past and present shows how the magic, the religion, the politics and the economic relations mingle together resulting in the unique history of the Country, and deconstructs the Eurocentric idea of a mythic, mysterious and barbaric Africa. In this study, I quote two characters from the Couto's book that show two important situations historically created: on the one hand, the *construction* of a *mythic vision* of Africa, and, on the other hand, the *deconstruction* of the myths.

One of the characters, Benjamin, is an Afro-american that arrives in Mozambique in 2002 on behalf of Save Africa Fund's NGO cooperation project, to find his African origins, on the track of slave's history. Benjamin feels like an African for his color, and he has a romantic vision of Africa intended as the homeland of all blacks - a pan-Africanist⁴ vision. Arriving in Africa he satisfies his most profound dream of getting back to his roots. He thinks about Africa as the world of wanderings, of rites and magic: the exact idea of Africa, which over time has been mystified through the foreign narratives. The foreigner - in this case, Benjamin - represents a source of income to Mozambicans, and they eventually "forge a memory of slavery" (Carreira, 2008:113, my translation), so they can obtain the money, and the Afro-American can find what he is looking for: the *mythic, mysterious* and *barbaric* Africa. So, the Africans reinvent a past through a theatrical

⁴The Pan-Africanism is a doctrine that understands Africa as a *whole*. This doctrine was not born in Africa, but among black intellectuals in USA, England and Caribe, which believed that different races existed, and Africa was not just a continent, but the 'nation' of the blacks: blacks are part of 'African Nation', from where they were taken by force by other race. The doctrine's idea is that the Africans have to unite internationally, decolonizing Africa to transform it in a whole country. So, all the black people should go back to Africa, to their *homeland* (Magnoli, 2009).

caricature of the mythic African world - indeed very real in the foreign popular imaginary – while hiding the truth that in the past the blacks were co-protagonists in the slave market too. Benjamin truly believes he has returned to his origins, to the ‘enchanted’ world that he was so eager to find. He literally jumps into this imaginary world, up to undress and disappear in the bush.

Thus, Benjamin represents the cooperation practitioner that comes to Africa – surviving thanks to the overpriced accounts of the NGO – and ends up finding a ‘constructed’ world that is all he wants to see: a static idea of Africa that perpetuates the myth of Africa as a magic continent, *pure* cradle of the black ‘race’. The idea of Africa as it was conceived in the XVI century persists today because it keeps on telling people that this is the continent of ‘wanderings’, magic, exotic, and a ‘late’ view of the world. Besides, the idea that Africa is the continent of poverty exists as well. These ideas are continuously mystified by the Foreigners, and express exactly what the Westerners want to change with the ‘cooperation’, which is also founded on a mythic narrative.

Actually, the cooperation appears as the ‘only possible salvation’ to Africa, an often paternalist vision where the good purposes and intentions seems to be apparent. The ‘good Samaritans’ presumptuously think they have a solution to save this Continent through the modernization: the alternative is to leave Africa on mercy of itself to find out its ‘natural’ balance (Gentili, 1995:11). The same history that united different peoples was what separated them symbolically, paradoxically by the covert of the very *history*, which ‘remakes’ itself with *stories* told and reinterpreted through mythic narratives about races; tales that live in the cultural imaginary outside Africa.

Manuel Antunes is another character from Mia Couto’s book (2007), a priest that followed the Jesuits’ missionary action performed jointly with the Catholic Church in Mozambique at the command of Priest Gonçalo da Silveira, in 1560. During his journey, Manuel Antunes witnessed the atrocities imposed on slaves by the settlers and so started to question the precepts of Christianity. At the same time, he got in contact with the world of the black people towards whom he developed fellow feelings. Besides, he fell in love with an Indian girl. So, he started to “see the world in a different way” (Couto, 2007: 259, my translation), and on a memorable passage, Antunes began to undress and declare to Priest Gonçalo he was ‘turning black’, and that he liked more this condition of *transition* than the previous one. On this journey in search of the ‘other’, Manuel Antunes deconstructed the myth of ‘Evangelizing mission’ because he stopped believing in the Christian stories invented by the Portuguese colonialism because of the atrocities he saw in the real African

world. According to his ‘new’ view, the Christian faith shouldn’t be accessory with this system, on the contrary, it should condemn it. Moreover, the contact with other cultures changed his view of the world because he realized many different ways of being and living, and this transformed him, turning him into ‘*black*’. Here we see a miscegenation of cultures, and actually, Antunes did not turn into ‘Black’ neither ‘White’, but into a mix of them: ‘Grey’. Thus, he entered in a “cultural miscegenation” zone (Sousa, 2010, my translation).

Benjamin and Manuel Antunes experiences are metaphors of the identity trip that people go through when meet other cultures and different ways of living. In this path to meeting ‘the other’ our deeper convictions can be confirmed, like in Benjamin’s case when he found what he was looking for: a big *illusion*. By contrast, in Manuel Antunes’ case, his firm beliefs were destroyed, and he had such a big *delusion* upon the world he used to live in, that he turned into a whole *new* thing.

Transporting the Mia Couto’s story into my Mozambique’s study on the international cooperation analysis, we can see that the identity process of the characters can be observed in the real history, in which the meeting with the *different* triggers an identity reaction, that can be auto-affirmative, favouring a one-sided vision of the world; or a dialectic comparison among different views, questioning the proper way of seeing things. Actually, many missionaries and cooperation workers questioned their convictions and turned into, metaphorically speaking, ‘grey’ - not white neither black, but a miscegenation of races and cultures, creating the *new*, i.e. sources of social changes that propitiated the questioning of oppression systems such as the colonialism and the slavery. Even today, some of them question the neo-colonist or neo-imperialist uncritical and standardized forms of cooperation. Mia Couto (2007) wrote an emblematic sentence that shows this identity path:

The journey doesn’t begins when we travel distances, but when we
cross our inner borders (Couto, 2007: 65, my translation)

2.2 Mozambique: a Historical Perspective

Given this, in this chapter I make an attempt to give emphasis to the authors that propose critical reading of Mozambique’s and cooperation’s history, which aims to provide a non-unilateral analysis. The emphasis in this perspective is fundamental,

because the discourses that followed the peoples of the various continents in the history are accompanied by mythic constructions of reality, that often justify the *rationality* of actions performed in any historical period.

As I shall illustrate, Mozambique is a country that experienced a colonial period that led to the current categorization of Least Developed Country by UN (UN- OHRLLS List, 2010). During Colonialism, the mythic narratives that guided the Portuguese to Mozambique's colonization was characterized by a racial dichotomization of the world, because at the time races were classified according to different evolution levels (not in the Darwinian sense – as we have seen in Chapter One -, but in a 'progressive' sense). So the race and 'civilizing mission' myths guided the settlers' actions. After the Second World War, the world realized that the races and ethnic differentiation myths led to the greatest genocide in the history of humankind: Nazism. Three years after the opening of Auschwitz gates (1945), UN has proclaimed the Universal Human Rights (1948), abolishing the discrimination of human groups based on race, ethnicity, etc.

With this new configuration of the world and the fall of the myth of the race, a fast advance of the Capitalism occurred, while, simultaneously, the colonial system lost its justification. The necessity of consumer markets and the pressure exerted by the human rights flag along with many social movements in the North and in the South, led to the last colonies' independency that freed them from the European empires domination. Although politically independent, the ex-colonies fell into social and economic dependency. The European countries, in turn, despite losing their colonies, remained still among the richest countries of the world, and although new world potencies dominated the international scenario (USA and URSS), Europe maintained its influence over the world.

After the Second World War, the international commerce became a development source also to the poorest countries, especially in the 80's and 90's. However, when the economic wealth did not turn into social benefits, the world started to see development under a different perspective, it was no more intended exclusively as a result of economic growth, but also as human capacities' growth, a mean to preserve the international security. With the fall of communist regime, the world focused on development through capitalism penetration in all territories, but new challenges appeared on the horizon: the environmental sustainability.

The history of Mozambique is paradigmatic because it underwent several crucial phases: Portugal's colony, independency with socialist and after capitalism regime – and wars – independency war and civil war. Today, Mozambique unfortunately is still a very

poor country, and that's the reason why it is largely 'helped' by the international cooperation. 'Help', as we are going to see in this chapter, is highlighted with 'single quotes' because so far few effective changes have been seen, and despite of million dollars expended on international cooperation, there are still a lot of things to do. According to the Mozambican sociologist João Colaço (2010), none of the eight Millennium Development Goals drafted in 2000 (UN), will be met by 2015. By contrast, according to UNDP's 2010 report (Government of Mozambique & UNDP Mozambique, 2010), two goals are likely to be met by 2015. Therefore, cooperation is constantly subject to questionings, reflections on 'identity' to understand their role, and maybe change attitude.

The change is a crucial factor in the history, but the resistances/ permanencies also play a central role. The encounter of cultures can cause changes or resistances/permanencies, because it's a dialectic process. However, history in time, culminates on forgetting itself and *reinventing* itself, or as Mia Couto tells: "time exists to erase time" (Couto, 2007: 136, my translation). Hence, the cooperation analysis from a historical view shows narratives that rebuilds the past validating the present actions, and it is very useful to understand some mythical constructions that blur the vision of the reality.

The NGOs, my thesis subject, are introduced in the western countries historical scene mainly after the Second World War, during the decolonization of African countries. Initially, they were compelled by ideals of counter-hegemonic views of the world, such as anti-imperialism, anti-apartheid, pro human rights. Today, NGOs are scattered all over the world: they control large financial resources, and employ a large number of people that practise a new profession introduced with the international cooperation. However, there is a strong argument about *how much* NGOs effectively succeed in developing the contexts where they act because they have a limited scope, and in many cases they merely put into practice experimental projects. Today, it is also proposed that the cooperation 'machine' (or its resources) should be let in beneficiaries' hands.

The Pre-Colonial Era

The relationship between Mozambique and other distant Countries dates back to ancient time. Despite Portugal was the first European country to start its overseas expansion in the XV century, it is only at the end of XIX century that an effective Portuguese colonization in Africa took place (Macagno, 2000). Long before that, the

Swahilis⁵ were already performing intense commercial exchanges with African oriental coast and Indonesia, India, China, Arabia and Persia (Rita Ferreira, 1975; Casella Paltrinieri, 2005; Cabaço, 2007). According to the historical reconstructions, it is very likely that in the VI century the gold extraction and the foundation of Sofala began. Due to the large Persian expansion with the Sassanidas, between 226 a.d. and 640 a.d., a notable commerce developed around typical African products: gold, ivory, aromatic woods, slaves, etc..

The maritime traffic across the Indic Ocean further intensified with the technologic advance carried out by China and Persia, around 750 a.d.. Later, under the third Ming dynasty (1403-1424) China was involved in commerce with the Mozambican coast. “Through all the coastline and interior of African southeast there are indisputable evidences of this intense millenary commerce with Asiatics”. (Rita Ferreira, 1975: 18, my translation).

Until approximately 1500, Oman Arabians carried out an intense trade of slaves of Macua origin (in the north of Mozambique) which were taken to Madagascar. Successively, Portuguese came to dominate the Arabian sultanates and monopolized the politics and commerce of Indic Ocean. However, the increasing Oman Arabians’ maritime power led them to be one of the most important shipping companies at the time , except for England and Netherlands. They managed to expel, in 1632, the Portuguese settled in Mascate coast, while Oman domain lasted for other 200 years (Rita Ferreira, 1975).

The first contacts of Mozambique with Portugal occurred in 1498, when Vasco da Gama landed on the south coast of Mozambique. In this period – and during the next three centuries - there was not a massive colonization: only some settlers, together with Catholic missions, tamed some regions of the country.

Colonization

Mozambique became a Portugal colony, with demarcated territories like today, when the *division* of Africa was set in an international conference between 1884 and 1885, known as “The Scramble for Africa” (Figure 2). This *division* started to be discussed in 1876 in an international conference convened by Belgium that joined the main European

⁵ Swahilis were inhabitants of the Indian Ocean coast of Africa, which occupied a coastal territory from southern Sudan to northern Mozambique, and settled on the coast by 500d.c.. Swahilis’ Chiefs dominated and occupied territories as Sofala and areas along the Zambezi Basin, and participated actively in trade of goods, including slave trade (Cabaço, 2007).

countries to compete for African territories not yet explored. Portugal wasn't invited to this meeting, (Cabaço, 2007), which showed its marginal position in Europe. However, it was with the Conference of Berlin in 1884-1885 that the European empires officialised Africa's partition, obviously without the presence of Africans. In this Conference, Europeans divided their 'right' of territories' occupation, preventing a conflict situation between their domains. Since that decision, the wars of conquest against African 'tribal' empires began, and conquered territories were settled by Europeans (Cabaço, 2007b).

Figure 2 - The Scramble for Africa



Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 to Divide Africa

Source: History of Africa (in: <http://history.howstuffworks.com/african-history/history-of-africa4.htm>)

According to Cabaço (2007b), the decision of Mozambique to stay under Portugal domain was due to a dispute between England and France, which were the greatest

empires at that time. At that point, Portugal was facing a crisis⁶, and was forced to accept the rules imposed by other European countries. In 1890, Portuguese that were living in Malawi needed to leave because in the war with the local tribes the English interfered and asked the Portuguese to leave, so Malawi stayed under England domain. But Portugal wanted to unite Angola to Mozambique to create the 'great Brazil' they had lost. From this event, the Portuguese decided to do wars of conquest in Mozambique. The war was against the empire of Gungunhana, a clever man from a diplomatic point of view, who knew how to deal with the English and Portuguese (Cabaço, 2007b). Gungunhana was the king of Gaza and dominated Mozambique's south region. There were lots of battles among Portugal and Gungunhana's 'tribal' empire between 1895 and 1897, with the obvious victory of Portugal. Despite Portugal had a secondary role on Africa's division, after its effective colonization it was the last country to leave, because its colonies were the last to conquer the independency (Macagno, 2000).

The Illuminist Ideas

From the moment the Illuminist ideas gained influence and showed to the world their magnificence, values and 'lights', "a second ideological setting of colonialism, completely disproved of sense, but important from the European point of view" took place (Cabaço, 2007b, my transcription from video, my translation). The Age of Enlightenment was introduced in the XVIII century by French intellectuals criticizing the absolutist politics and the social inequality structures of the Ancient Regime. This new forward-thinking favoured the emergence of liberal ideas, of justice, fraternity and equality, which fuelled the French Revolution (1789-1799). Besides, the Age of Enlightenment opened the doors to the science, rationality, the importance of civilization and the scientific and technological progress the West was pioneer of. It is from this very moment that Colonialism changed its mythological narrative, switching from 'messenger of evangelizing mission' to 'messenger of civilizing mission'. In other words, the Christ's message was replaced by the message of modern Occidental civilization. The colonialism with this brand-new conception did not pretend to save the soul of the savages anymore, but promoted the 'modernization' of the 'backward' population instead.

⁶Portugal in this period was still weakened, by the loss of the Second Empire - Brazil, which won independency in 1822 from Portugal - and also because it was still recovering from the Napoleonic invasions. (Cabaço, 2007b).

The Portuguese Mission of Civilization was essentially promoted through the French concept of “assimilation”, which consisted in raise the progress degree of native populations with the renunciation of their savage practices, and the adoption of the European conduct. According to such view, the civilization of ‘sauvages’ would lead them to progress, and they would be able to ascend on the ‘evolutionary scale’. Actually, the evolutionary view justified the idea of races on a progress scale (on the next section we will examine the myth of race in depth).

It is interesting to observe that the English did not believe that indigenous could achieve the European development level, so they adopted politics of “separate development” like Apartheid, with the aim of civilizing people, but keeping the distances at the same time. France, inspired by the Enlightenment movement, believed there were no differences among human being regarding the abilities, but, based on Evolution Theory, different races occupied different positions in the evolutionary scale, as if they were in “late historical phases” (Cabaço, 2007: 121, my translation), without considering their culture and history. So, as the British chose just to civilize, the French were determined to assimilate, in other words, to incorporate Africans in the French civilization.

The ideas triggering the actions of dominant governments, in general confer superiority to the people from these countries, which imbue them with authority to implement missions to ‘help’ the ‘inferiors’ to improve their lives. Such assumptions are extremely powerful because they work with inner feelings of individuals, and such feelings are expressed through actions and preconceptions legitimated by those deceiving assumptions. For example, today we condemn slavery; however, until the end of XIX century the colonial order implied it extensively, legitimated by an imperial Ethos of “evangelizing mission” which proclaimed Europeans superior race, superior Christian moral values, and superior economic/technologic know-how. According to Elkins (2005) in her analysis of the British imperial order in Africa, the British had the “moral obligation to redeem the ‘backward heathens’ of the world” (Elkins, 2005: 5), and through the British action the natives could step into the modern world. It is interesting to observe how the feelings play an important role because most British did not *feel* as exploiters, but as the vectors of improvements to Africans who had not yet achieved the European degree of evolution, and didn’t know how to do it. In fact, development has been fostered in non-western societies since the colonial period (Elkins, 2005). The inner feeling is the major effect of the myth, because it makes the reality meaningful to the individuals’ action, even if this reality is interpreted by the others in a different way.

The Portuguese followed the French-inspired idea of “assimilation”, based on the myth of the ‘good Portuguese people’, a story about the Portuguese seen as particularly tolerant and affable with the natives (Thomaz, 2001). Indeed, the colonization permanently needed an ideologic apparatus to justify the domination upon other people. The *education* of the indigenous and the *labour* (often forced) were crucial moralizing factors during colonialism, a distinctive characteristic of the Portuguese’s ‘good and noble’ intentions regarding the ‘exotic’ people. The indigenous people were perceived as children: the labour and education constituted the devices needed to ‘civilize’ and ‘assimilate’ them (Cabaço, 2007b). Thereby, settlers could transmit ethnic, moral, religious and civic values, because all Portuguese were ‘good-hearted’. Notwithstanding, according to Cabaço (2007b), actually the settlers that went to Mozambique were much more worried about enriching themselves fastly than civilizing Africans. The dominant idea of assimilation not only was a way to prepare the black people to get accustomed with the concept of “respect, fear and resignation” towards Portuguese settler, but was also an important ideological instrument to constrain the ‘indigenous’ to perform basic tasks (Cabaço, 2007b) in favor of settlers and the Metropole.

Consequently, in the XIX century the local Portuguese elites began to occupy the infra-structures brought from Portugal to Mozambique. Since then, they assigned the blacks to forced labour. Moreover, they collected taxes from those who built huts, and if these people were not able to pay, they were put in jail and forced to work as slaves. When the Portuguese constituted a considerable population in Mozambique, they decided to introduce the *Indigenato*, an assimilationist system apt to distinguish racially people between whites and blacks, through “civilization degree” criteria. In such system, some categories were defined: *indigenous* (black, not ‘civilized’ people), *assimilated* (black ‘civilized’ people), *settlers* (white people living in Mozambique) and *genuine Portuguese* (Portuguese people from the Metropolis).

The *assimilated* usually belonged to African elites, and did not behave according to local “usos e costumes” (habits and customs) (Macagno, 2000), but acquired the Portuguese customs, as if they had a new tradition of their own: abandoning their traditions they accepted the European way-of-life and its beliefs. Cabaço (2007b) argues that it was an extremely perverse mechanism because it replaced the soul of the black with a new one, and the persons would become unbalanced for the rest of their life. It was a violent process, because people wanted to assimilate to escape from the forced labour. The assimilation, however, did not meant to get the same level of an European individual. The

race division remained, together with a complicated process of classification, as in Mozambique there were not only black people, but also Indians, Chinese, Mestizos, etc. Moreover, even among whites existed a distinction between genuine Portuguese and the ones born in Mozambique.

Thus, this “civilizing mission” was the *ethos* colonization in this period when Capitalism began to emerge triggered by the Industrial Revolution in England by mid-century XVIII, while the slavery was declining. When England decided to replace the slave labour by employee labour in 1833, it achieved control over the slave traffic on the African Western coast and in 1850 the slave trade was officially forbidden across the Atlantic Ocean. However, slavery was not over in many countries, thus the English ban raised the slave prices, making the traffic profitable across the Indian Ocean (until then, the slavery was concentrated on Western coast). Then, in the XIX century, the slave ships appeared on the Mozambique’s north coast, skirting the English block. Nevertheless, the end of the slaves’ traffic did not mean an equality between races, as we shall see in the next section.

In such racial polarization, the Assimilated remained in a ‘grey’ zone, where they could define themselves neither black nor white, suffering discriminations from both sides. The confinement in this ‘intermediate zone’ could not last forever, because at a certain point the assimilated should decide on which side to stay - at the time no ‘vague positions’ were envisaged. A third alternative emerged only when a new nationalist strength led Mozambique to independence, and colonial society started to be questioned.

The Myth of Race

Myth is a narrative that tells a *story*. According to José de Paula Ramos Jr. (2009), the myth tells how the primordial times were (without a specific date), and it is accepted as a true and sacred model to be followed. A Myth attaches meaning to the world and value to life. According to Ramos Jr. (2009), the world without myths is a meaningless world. Besides, the myth has a practical function, useful to life: it is fundamental because humanity does not live without it. The *transmitted* word is the base of the myth. For this reason it is important to understand the myth in order to understand how it is constructed and provides meaning to humans’ actions, including international cooperation.

The myth may exist in a ‘pure’ form, like the Greek myth that remains in a religious-magical sphere. However, other myths that fell in the political sphere, and, as

Magnoli (2009) states, these are “impure” myths, like the race myth, or the myth of the nations. These myths were ‘contaminated’ by politics, ‘kidnapped’ by history: a myth that has lost its purity and acts on the human ground, within the sphere of relationships. For example, myths became crucial to the nationalist feeling. This is a narrative that builds individual identities: all nations have a myth about their origin and each individual that identify himself with that nation will believe in such myth. Therefore, the original myth has relevant *political* consequences (Magnoli, 2009).

According to Serra (1997), the myth is a *historical* and *essential* narrative that provides a solution to tensions, as a guide or map for practical actions: it attaches sense to life. It “explains and legitimize the current social order” (Fry, 2007: 71, my translation). Then, the myth I am dealing with it is the *impure* myth, used in political situations, it is not a myth in its unaltered state that explains the human situation - from where we came and where we are going to. Here I am treating the myth in the form it has been constantly formulated and reformulated through the historic contexts and used in social relations as the inspiration source for the practical actions. Carlos Serra argues that the myth is an “*objectively* false belief, but *subjectively* felt as truth” (Carlos Serra, 2003, preface, my translation). Such idea constitutes an interesting starting point to reflect on the concept of myth, and how it can be constantly created and used by social groups. The myth works just inside social contexts, and is close to the Gramscian and Marxian concept of ideology as a “*false conscience*”.

It is worthy to note that the idea of *race* was not used to justify slavery: the modern slavery began in the XVI century and continued until the XIX century. The slavery did not need a moral, racial justification because slavery has always existed in human history. Since earlier times, slavery existed due to several reasons: debt, prisoners of wars, criminals, etc.

Until the XVIII century, before the Enlightenment and French Revolution, no one assumed that human beings were ‘equal by nature’: some were ‘blue blooded’ nobles, others had supernatural powers, other were slaves, servants, etc.. It was ‘natural’ to be different. With the advent of the Enlightenment, the extremely new idea that all human beings are equal by nature appeared, and this concept questioned the colonial slavery and fostered campaigns against it, according to the principle of equality among human beings (Magnoli, 2009).

So, the slaves’ traffic performed by the European colonies began to decrease for two main reasons: 1) Britain was undergoing the industrialization process and needed to turn

the slave labour into employee labour, looking for a new consumer market, 2) the Illuminist ideas had a huge impact that definitely changed the world's view about the condition of human beings. Since then, the conception that human beings are equal by nature was adopted (Magnoli, 2009).

However, while modern slavery was coming to an end, European empires were looking for new colonies in Africa and Asia. The myth of race gained scientific support from the social-Darwinist theories (in 1838 Darwin was developing the natural selection theory, published only in 1859). Thus, the myth of race arose when slavery was ending.

This myth justified the imperial expansion of European potencies searching for new colonies in Africa. According to Magnoli (2009), during the same period (XIX century) there was the rise of the modern media that led to the appearance of the public opinion: the imperialism could not take place without the public's opinion support. Thus, a dilemma emerged: how the imperialism and the domination upon other peoples could be maintained if, according to the new Illuminist ideas, everyone were equal by nature? It was difficult to keep running a clearly oppressive system with this new idea of human beings conceived as naturally equal. The myth of race gained strength as it was able to solve such dilemma: theoretically we are all equal, but in practice we have differences, and such differences derive from the evolution degrees of races. This idea unfortunately rose mainly because Darwin's Evolution Theory has been badly interpreted by the scientists of that time, like there was a correlation between race and degrees of evolution. Hence, gaining scientific support from social Darwinism, the myth of races linked the 'equality by nature' to the 'differences of degree on the evolutionary scale', and ended being instrumentally used as an ideology for the civilizing mission, where the European has the 'mission' to civilize the 'inferior' - but able to evolve - races. The "white man's burden" (Magnoli, 2009) was to raise the 'inferior' people to an European level of culture, through the civilizing mission. That's why the myth of race had a major role in justifying this system that was very noble in the discourse, but in practice perpetuated an oppressive domination.

The myth of race had very important consequences in Asia and Africa: the officials of European government went to the countries and with the aid of intellectuals, biologists, doctors, anthropologists, etc., classified the indigenous populations according to their races, ethnicities, and their 'evolutionary degree'. The names attributed to these ethnicities were the same we use today to designate these populations. These intellectuals created the colonial ethnicities, many times misinterpreting their histories and relations, as in

Rwanda's⁷ case. The colonial management gave name and classification to the ethnicities, and then began to exercise its power over them. The ethnicities did not exist before: the Europeans created them, and it is wrong to say that ethnic wars were due to the fact that these ethnicities always hated each other. This hate was created by recent colonial politics that generated power disputes among ethnicities to gain access to the colonial power (Magnoli, 2009).

End of Colonialisms

By XX mid-century there was a 'desinvention' of the myth of race. When the Aushwitz' gates opened, the humanity understood that the myth of race resulted in the biggest genocide of all time, and it shouldn't be repeated anymore. Three years later, UN declared the Universal Human Rights, which say that people must not be labelled according to criteria such as race or ethnicities. In 1950, UNESCO proclaimed a declaration about race, telling that the word 'race' should be abolished in the political speeches because it produces genocide. Blood produces hate (Magnoli, 2009).

With the end of the Second World War the ideals of freedom, justice and liberty of men, turned into important movements against colonialism. Big colonial powers were destroyed, and two new powers appeared: USA and URSS - Capitalism and Socialism. These entities were imperialist economic powers without a colonial past: they just dominated through ideological and economic hegemony. The new imperial order could not increase, if colonized countries ruled by other powers existed.

Then, both USA and URSS got together to sign the 73th article of the UN constitution letter (1945), declaring – unanimously and quickly – the term that guarantees the principle of total autonomy and independence of nations. The two powers wanted to put an end to the territorial colonialism urging Europe to quit their colonies. This

⁷The Belgians called anthropologists to conduct a study about Rwanda ethnicities, and they identified three ethnicities (Hutu, Tutsi, Twa). They concluded that Hutus were the first inhabitants of the country and Tutsis arrived later through migration (theories already discarded). While Belgians were at the colonial government, the Tutsis had privileges (quotas), because there was the idea that Tutsis were superior, and an Identity Card showing the ethnicity was issued. When the Belgians left the country, the elections were won by the Hutu party that created a dictatorship. With the new Hutu government, the idea of Tutsis as foreigners reappeared, this time with a negative value because the Tutsis were seen as invaders. So, quotas pro Hutus were created. This event, based on an ethnicities myth, culminated with a terrible ethnic genocide: in three months (1994) the Hutus killed almost one million of Tutsis. Afterwards, the Tutsis took the power: they banned the ethnic division and the use of the terms Tutsi, Hutu and Twa (Magnoli, 2009).

atmosphere of liberty and hope gained strength after the war ended.

In 1945, a Pan-Africanist congress for independence of African nations was held. The African intellectuals that studied abroad brought the Panafricanism⁸ to Africa, a doctrine that played an important ideological role in the independence of African countries (Magnoli, 2009). URSS and USA supported the emancipation African movements. In 1956, with the Suez Channel's crisis (when the Egyptian nationalized the channel), remaining colonialist powers carried out a military operation supported by Israel, France and Britain, trying to take the control of the channel. With the USA intervention, Britain and French were expelled. This episode marks the end of territorial colonialism, because that event was the last effort of colonial domination, but it lost its impetus in confronting the new world power (Cabaço, 2007b). The wheel of history changed its side. In the following year the European Union was created, because the Europeans already knew they would lose Africa. At the same time, African countries were becoming independent.

Mozambican Independence and Civil War

In the 50's, Portugal drew development plans for Mozambique and invested in infrastructures as railways and bridges. However, also the white immigration was planned to establish a portion of white population in the country, and consequently its nationalization. In the 60's the development plans continued and many studies were carried out to implement irrigation farming, and further investments in transport and infrastructure (Newitt, 1995). However, most infrastructures were built with British capitals, because Britain was interested in having transport mobility in Mozambique to benefit its own market flow. Thus, the rationale for the investments was in large measure a provision of services to Britain (Newitt, 1995). In 1955 Portugal entered the UN, and due to the pressure of international community, in September 1961 abolished the *Indigenato* (that regulated the "Assimilationism"), so Mozambicans could be regarded as Portuguese citizens. However, in practice, not much changed (Macagno 2000). Besides, decolonization was taking place in British and French Africa, and a growing nationalist movement from the Frente de Libertação Moçambicana (Frelimo) challenging the

⁸Today, Pan Africanism has turned into an ideology to the African dictators that in the end aren't Pan-Africanists, because they don't want to unify Africa, but they justify their countries ills based in a Pan-Africanist speech: everything of bad in the country is product of the colonial past, not government responsibility. The dictatorship's opposition is called ally of the colonial past.

Portugal stay in Mozambique, was increasingly becoming popular. Mozambique achieved independence only in 1975, and when the Portuguese settlers left the country, the new political group had to cope with a country with 97% of illiterate people, and only 15 doctors and 3 architects (Dragosei, 1992). Frelimo ruling elite, much influenced by marxist theories, turned Mozambique into a socialist country.

Soon after independence the government of Mozambique was established by the soldiers of Frelimo and by the small critical mass existent so far. According to Geffray (1991), Frelimo, which included also a small group of revolutionary intellectuals, inherited a country of thirteen million people, mostly living in rural areas with subsistence livelihoods. The elite - mostly from the richest part of the country - barely knew these people. Mozambique is a country with large tracts of land, almost 800 000 km². The new ruling elite decided to implement a developmental plan through the construction of "communal villages" that proposed to organize the work of rural people in a more effective and fraternal communities. Peasants were supposed to leave their homes and plantations to join in those villages where it would be developed the "New Man". Such romanticized idea proposed by the poet Sérgio Vieira, completely ignored the social diversity of rural populations, and was not judged as a good procedure by many peasants (Geffray, 1991).

The idea of the "New Man" was conceived by Samora Machel, and consisted in educating the man in order to create a new society and develop the nation (Macagno, 2000). Such education should have the revolutionary goal to create solidarity among individuals to develop collective work. The 'tribalism' and 'superstition', traditional traits of most Mozambicans, were seen as an obstacle to the achievement of the nation development. Machel aimed at uniting all Mozambicans to build the nation, he wanted to settle nationalism so that all Mozambicans could *feel* as members of the nation. Opposite to the Portuguese culture, the need for a Mozambican culture was deeply felt, and the post-colonial government tried to create it in order to shape the Mozambican 'identity'. It was impossible to have a 'new man' without a 'new culture' (Macagno, 2000). However, such effort ignored the complexity of social groups while creating cultural spots to represent the whole nation.

Therefore, Frelimo promoted a socialist nationalism in which "historical, regional and social differences mattered little, there was little interest in the real motivations of the people on whose behalf - and for whom - the project had been conceived." (Geffray, 1991:16, my translation). The traditional authorities were also disregarded by the new

ruling system. Frelimo government considered the traditional leaders as ‘puppets’ of the colonial power. Actually, the Portuguese had used instrumentally the *régulos* and *cabos* (traditional authorities) as heads of administrative units to collect taxes for the colonial government and to recruit manpower to do many works like the cultivation of cotton. Frelimo viewed these traditional authorities as servants committed with the colonialism and enemies of the independent government, therefore, prevented these leaders to participate in elections and to perform administrative tasks. Neglecting the traditional configuration of its own country Frelimo gave vent to dislikes among rural population. Besides that, Frelimo did not properly consider its stronger neighbors, Rhodesia and South Africa, both capitalistic, racist and anti-communist Countries (Geffray, 1991).

Therefore, some steps taken by Frelimo government eventually worsen relations with the neighboring countries. Many settlers had migrated to these countries, where they formed a racist and anti-communist block, and hired mercenaries “eager to kill the red blacks” (Geffray, 1991: 11, my translation). Indeed, South Africa supported the financing and training of troops. The new Frelimo nationalist government decided to take strict measures against the trade of goods between Mozambique and Rhodesia, given that Mozambique was the main outlet for products from Rhodesia: such decision was crucial to worsen the political situation between the countries.

Thus, Rhodesians allied with Portuguese immigrant settlers created the Mozambique National Resistance (Renamo), and in 1977 they made their first terroristic action. In 1980, the movement became even stronger, and gained international support. However, the crucial factors that actually triggered the civil war and made it last for so long were the "social breakdown and domestic policies of the Mozambican rural societies" (Geffray, 1991: 13), which the Frelimo government neglected.

It is not difficult to conclude that Renamo was able to get support from traditional rural authorities against Frelimo, since the latter had prevented the authorities from exercising their legitimate power in the independent government. According to Geffray (1991), some categories of people were directly affected by the Frelimo policies, and this fact probably was a favorable issue for the development of the war. There were three categories that were most affected by the independence: the traditional authorities; farmers who had been moved to “the people's farms”; and young people who had gone to urban areas to try their luck with no result.

The end of the Cold War

International Debate

The end of the Cold War (1989-1991) had a strong impact on today's world, generating also a hot debate among social sciences intellectuals. Huntington, in 1993 wrote an article entitled "The Clash of Civilizations?", that stirred strong reactions by the leading intellectuals. Huntington speculated "on the future of the global political scene, which he said would divide along the lines of culture differences" (C-Span Library Video, 1992). He argues that in the new international scenario after the end of cold war, civilizations would address new challenges related to cultural clashes. The author, a North American who, in 1992, presented such article in the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, notes that the West is a dominant force, which in future would face what he called a "clash of civilizations". However, he was actually referring to a clash of cultures, understanding culture as different ways of thinking, acting, seeing and relating with the world, which differ according to the region/country of origin. Huntington's opinion was harshly criticized because his message was clearly pointing to the idea that the West should 'fear' other cultures such as Islam culture. Indeed, it seemed that he was describing the very mythic idea connected to fear of other cultures as narratives created without any historical context and based on few isolated events, to create an idea of the 'East' intended as a 'threat' to the 'West'. He did not use exactly these words, but indirectly, he reiterated this myth of 'Orientalism'. I call this 'a myth', because even though it is *objectively* false, it is *subjectively* felt as true by many people (Serra, 2003), especially after September 11th, 2001.

Edward Said, North American and Palestinian, is one of the main opponents to the biased - but very convincing - Huntington's analysis (1993). Said (1996) deconstructed the 'clash of civilizations' argument, stating that the largest issue regarding the new challenges in the world is not the clash of cultures, but the clash of *concepts* of culture, which, unfortunately, has been a clash of mythic concepts, misconceptions, biased views that search an essence of culture, and see it as something static. Many intellectuals, such as Said, made very important effort to deconstruct such ideas to show that the hate and the angry among peoples most of the times are based in *objectively* false ideas. Although such debate dates back to end of the Cold War it is still alive, with an extended use of the debated concept of *culture*, and constitutes a point of reference to interpret the dynamics of current days.

In 1989, with the fall of the Berlin Wall, the bipolar world dissolves, and the era of ‘globalization’ begins. With the end of communism, the world is now fully integrated with capitalism, which has proved to be the only economic system capable of moving the developing world. The triumph of Capitalism is also the triumph of an information Capitalism without borders, able to unite the world through advanced means of transport and communication. The technological advance was the structural base of the Cold War, and internet is one of its legacies.

With these innovations, a considerable increase in international and national migrations in the population was recorded, and the world became more aware of its misfortunes: poverty, social inequality, famine, wars, etc., are now immediately visible thanks to the freedom of press and the advancement of the means of communication. The great waves of migrations to the richest countries generated new debates about the cultural issue, and represented a major concern for international cooperation and national security. Actually, according to Magnoli (2009) over the last three decades we have undergone a process of *reinventing* the myth of race through a biological discourse in which humans show two ineluctable differences: the genes and the culture. Although the geneticists do not defend the idea of race, today the myth of race reappears in the language of *multiculturalism*, in which the differences between people are merely cultural, as if culture was a people’s inner *essence* impossible to disentangle from. As discussed earlier in Chapter One, it is a process of culture ‘naturalization’ as culture becomes something immutable, an inheritance from our ancestors that we cannot leave behind. According to such line of thought, culture is intended as ‘nature’ just like the genes: we are born with the genes, and we live with them as well as with culture. This *discourse* revives the myth of race in the late 20th century and in the beginning of the 21st century, but in a softer way because it says that each race has its own right in a *multiracial* or *multicultural* world. In this context, the nations just gather individuals belonging to different races, which history has placed in the same land (Magnoli, 2009).

Effects in Africa and Mozambique

During the Cold War (1945-1991) Africa decolonized and split into socialist and capitalist countries. The world potencies supported the formation of political factions with weapons and money to fight for the world hegemony (TV Cultura, n.d.). Thus, the ethnic hatred, which did not exist before colonization, grew in this complex dispute over

economic ideologies. Arbitrarily divided African Countries suffered from civil wars driven by tribal hatreds, as a legacy of the colonial system exacerbated by the power struggle between capitalists and communists. With the end of the Cold War, Africa was temporarily ‘forgotten’ and left alone in its ethnic strife for power.

Also in Mozambique, the war between Renamo and Frelimo was a conflict based on opposed ideologies: Capitalism vs. Socialism. While Renamo defended the neo-liberal policies of the West, Frelimo was socialist. However, things have changed in time. From 1987/1988, Frelimo adopted IMF policies replacing the state economy with the private economy, thus ‘surrendering’ to capitalism. In this way an anachronistic situation was set because, the neo-liberal political program actually was a Renamo’s will, while the political power remained with Frelimo. According to Cabaço (2007c), Renamo won the war *ideologically*, while Frelimo won it *politically* since the latter remained with the political power. After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1990, Frelimo abandoned Marxism, and after the peace agreement concluded in 1992, there were no more incidents between Frelimo and Renamo. This piece of history followed the pace of the international political situation, and the collapse of communism meant the collapse of many socialist countries as well. Thus, in Mozambique, although the socialist party remained at the government, the socialist regime gave way to capitalism.

The Past Cannot be Erased

Said (1989) argues that the colonized countries got independence but remained subjected to the Western domination, because the former colonies did not really won national sovereignty and the presence of western power was still notable - physically (through settlers), economically, and culturally. Actually the cultural inheritance of the colonial system did not completely disappear, rather, the label of ex-colonies or independent countries did not represent the possibility to match the supposed cultural superiority of the West. Actually, the ex-colonies were now independent, but still behind under many aspects: economy, culture, education, health, wealth, technology, etc.. As the past could not be erased, the former colonies were destined to continue accepting western rules. Said (1989) explains:

The experience of being colonized therefore signified a great deal to regions and peoples of the world whose experience as dependents, subalterns, and

subjects of the West did not end (...). To have been colonized was a fate with lasting, indeed grotesquely unfair results, especially after national independence had been achieved. Poverty, dependency, underdevelopment, various pathologies of power and corruption, plus of course notable achievements in war, literacy, economic development: this mix of characteristics designated the colonized people who had freed themselves on one level but who remained victims of their past on another. (Said, 1989: 207)

Said explains that the status of people from colonies has been “fixed in zones of periphery, stigmatized in the designation of under underdeveloped, less-developed, developing states, ruled by a superior, developed, or metropolitan colonizer who was theoretically posited as a categorically antithetical overlord. In other words, the world was still divided into betters and lesser” (Said, 1989: 207). The author acknowledges that imperial contexts build with considerable political force scholarships and worldviews too complicated to be deconstructed due to the great persuasive potential used to create an identity that perceives itself as superior compared to others that have ‘abominable’ characteristics, like the ‘savage barbarians’, the ‘terrorists’ from the Far East, etc. - a “partisan ideology” of that kind (ibid: 211).

Today, U.S. dominance is legitimated by ideologies of democracy and freedom that are very similar to the European ideal of ‘civilizing the natives’ - even cooperation often embodies such ideologies. Culture and history, are inextricably linked, as well as the relations of power and ideologies. Therefore, it is impossible to understand the today’s world without taking into account the relationships of the past: actually, both the past European imperialism and the current American imperialism, have a dominant role and this is a cultural factor of political and economic relevance.

2.3 Conclusion

Most people live between structures of domination that were not created by themselves. They also participate in this process, feeling it, feeding it, transforming it, adapting to it, or resisting it. New cultural models originate from this process. The development process fosters a cultural encounter that favors the mix of ideas leading to cultural innovations.

In the latest 50 years we have seen the fastest changes of the globe due to human settlement. We have reached a peak of population, and also the biggest food and industrial

production ever seen. We have learned how to extract, benefit and delivery many mineral resources, and petrol has become our black gold. We have also reached the moon and we are currently searching for water on other planets. With the communication and transport revolution – Internet, cell phone, satellites, all kinds of machines and engines, etc – the world has been transformed in a very integrated place, since distances and communication can be easily filled.

World has become ‘globalized’. Of course, this process regards the feats related to the richest part of the world: unfortunately about 80% of the world's population do not benefit from those achievements at all. How can we worry about other people and neglect them at the same time? The most obvious answer might be that although we have been trying to understand the human nature for a long time, we haven’t found a completely plausible explanation for our *illogic* behavior yet.

This ‘global’ society, nevertheless is interconnected, shows many contradictions not because persons are ‘bad’ or ‘good’ or the world we are living in is dualistic, but because we are plural. We restlessly believe in, create, recreate and deconstruct *myths*. The globalization has hugely increased inequalities, and the international cooperation became multinational, in an attempt to reduce the gaps. However, inequalities have always existed in all human societies because we are use to organize ourselves according to hierarchical rules. On the other hand, it is intriguing to think that humanity has got the nature under control and consequently has become the greatest threat to mankind, as well as humanity inventively has created new ways to help the disadvantaged.

Mozambique is paradigmatic to socio-anthropological analysis of international cooperation. Recently its political and economic configuration has undergone a troubled period that begun in the colonial period. The colonial domination ended in 1975 with the independence declaration. Suddenly, Mozambican government turned into a socialist and ‘anti-colonialist’ party, supported by the Soviet bloc. This fact gave birth to a nationalist ideology, and the government attempted to promote the country’s unification through the creation of a "new man" characterized by a Mozambican ‘Genuine Culture’, and linguistic unification through the Portuguese language diffusion⁹.

After the independence, the country went through a period of civil war that lasted 16 years. The war ended in 1992, and today Mozambique is passing through a post-socialist

⁹ The government wanted to remove the symbols of white colonial and racist domination. The Portuguese was maintained as an auxiliary language in the creation of national unity. Despite the criticisms on that decision, the government did not have another local language with a teaching and writing system that could be used on a large-scale.

period, notably influenced by international cooperation and development. The cooperation, in particular World Bank and International Monetary Fund, imposes much pressure on national policy.

José Luis Cabaço (2007b) reminds us that colonialism was a dualistic form of organization, in which the contrast between colonized and colonizers relied on a myth of race through the *Indigenato* laws. It was a result of the Eurocentric opposition thought. Christianity justified the colonizing action by bringing the ‘light’ of the religion to the ‘barbaric’ peoples. When a chief from indigenous people was converted to the Christianity, he also accepted the sovereignty of the foreigner: each chief converted, represented a further step to the consolidation of the colonial order. According to Cabaço (2007b),

The religion was a way to enlarge the zone of influence, made through this process of persuasion. (...) In its essence, the colonization process is the replacement of an African worldview to an European worldview, which are radically different. (Cabaço, 2007b, my transcription from video, my translation).

The replacement of the local worldview by the foreigner worldview destabilized the ‘native’ people, transforming them in something subjected to the world imperialist order, compelling them to the colonization.

CHAPTER 3 - The International Cooperation

3.1 We, as Humans, Cooperate

According to Sarah Hrdy (2010), human beings have the capacity to understand what others feel, and are very prone to share spontaneously, since childhood. Human beings are cooperative. Actually cooperation is something apt to improve the survival of humans, but the aid *institutionalization* is particularly documented in western history. Peter Burke (2010) describes the history of Europeans institutions, which since the Middle Age have ‘taken care’ of the others. The ‘others’, in the beginning of such social history, were vulnerable people from social groups such as kids, diseased, elders, and poor. Usually, the first social unit that takes care of the ‘weakest’ ones is the family. Burke (2010) explains the history of England which since the Middle Age has institutionalized ‘care’ outside the family: initially the care was provided by parishes, and the concept of *mercy* was very strong, and was related to *pity* and *generosity* idea that today permeates the action of helping the disadvantaged. In the end of Middle Age also monasteries and hospitals took care of the needy. At that time, hospitals were not only for ill people, but for anyone that needed help. One paradigmatic example is given by a hospital in Britain that used to distribute food to poor people since 1132, and this reveals the strength of the *tradition* of care (Burke, 2010).

Then, since the Middle Age, the Western world has developed care institutions. Today, ‘care’ is much more related to State and private initiatives, such as several, recently established NGOs which try to solve social disguises in national and international contexts. Since the 16th century Governments have increasingly played the role of caregivers. In the XIX century Sweden created the welfare state, which spread in Europe at the end of that century. Many more social problems affected the families due to the increasingly urbanization following the industrialization; thus the urgent need for appropriate solutions to such new social problems was felt.

Later on, there has been the internationalization of care - the Red Cross, for instance, was founded in 1863, and Medicins Sans Frontieres in 1971 (Burke, 2010). Today, after the internationalization of the aid and care, and the increasing number in programs,

projects, institutions fighting against poverty, there is the emergence of new categories of professions and experts that work for those structures: the army of ‘care managers’.

3.2 International Cooperation and Mozambique

The international cooperation dates back to the beginning of colonialism in the XV century. The Jesuits brought to the New World the ‘word of Jesus’ through the ‘evangelizing mission’, aimed at ‘saving the souls’ of native people. At the time, native people were considered as pseudo-humans by Europeans. As we have already discussed, with the advent of the capitalism, the French Revolution in 1789 and the raise of new ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity, the West became civilized, and missions were no more conceived to save souls, but to ‘civilize’ native people. The first missions from the Catholic Church with such aim started in the XIX century (Resti, 2009).

To Zamparoni (2007), international aid often leads to the idea that the foreigners presumptuously believe that they have the solution to the peasants’ or the poor’s problems. The experiences of international cooperation have shown to the world that the Europeans did not have the solution to all the problems of the poor. Despite their initial ‘good’ intentions, many development projects failed because the world, outside the West, is not organized according to Western logic. This happens because the world is wider than our ability to comprehend it (Zamparoni, 2007). When people are able to see beyond their own worldview, they are able to see other intelligent ways of living too.

Therefore, the intervention of international cooperation for development must be seen in the historical and cultural context in which it works. As we have seen for the cultural evolution (Chapter One), the evolution must also be intended as a historical process, without which the culture cannot change and evolve. Similarly, the intercultural dynamics of cooperation cannot be understood without realizing that cultures are dialoguing and changing. Otherwise the dialogue will become a monologue, as it often happens in many projects where the foreigner dictates the rules, and the ‘counterpart’ has no choice but to accept that (or resist).

The international cooperation considers Mozambique as a ‘successful case’, and according to Anna Maria Gentili (2010), Mozambique is seen as “a good pupil” of the international community. But how come that we find precarious situations everywhere in Mozambique? And then, it might be asked: what is successful? If we look at the economic indicators of growth in Mozambique, “between 1996 and 2002, Gross Domestic Product

(GDP) growth was about 8 per cent annually on average, and 6 per cent per capita. Agriculture, which constitutes 24 per cent of GDP, grew between 6 and 8 per cent annually in the same period” (Gentili, 2004: 154). Neo-liberal experts consider such growth as a positive sign of the steps “towards the take off of a modern productive economy” (ibid: 154) to integrate African economy into the international market, and then achieve development. However, since independence, civil and social citizenship was a promise that Frelimo made to Mozambicans without actually accomplishing it, and such growth respects only a small share of population and Mozambican territory: the south. The distribution of wealth was made according to individuals’ specific features, following their positions “in terms of power, regional ethnic origin, religion, education, wealth” (ibid: 154). Actually, growth has not improved social integration, did not reduce poverty nor brought more equitable access to resources.

A paradigmatic example of the international cooperation uncertain role is given by Astréia Soares (2006) who wrote a thesis about Sweden cooperation in Mozambique. One of her interviewees who worked for Sweden cooperation in Mozambique for 25 years, since the Mozambican Independence (1975), said that he “decided to fight for those peasants to have at least hoes and seeds. As he said, he worked as an ‘idiot’, and 25 years later, there are still no hoes to the peasants in Mozambique. Where is the incompetence? Where is the difficulty?” (Soares, 2006: 222, my translation).

After Mozambican independence, the political dominant group, which was the elite of “assimilados”, formed a one-party state, and democracy remained an “unfulfilled promise” (Gentili, 2004: 155). Mozambique has remained a very asymmetrical country, and the harsh reality of Mozambique could not be suppressed by the euphorical liberalization independence period. The political independence did not mean economical independence because most African countries were economically too fragile and still dependent on raw material exports, and there was no choice but continue with the same productive structures inherited from the colonialism. Actually, the only option was choosing one of the *dependency* alternatives available: capitalistic or socialist? Mozambique chose the second.

The Discourse of Development

The rhetoric of ‘success’ for Mozambique, may be analyzed through the *discourse* of development, which tends to solve problems in a neutral and purely instrumental way. The discourse is usually full of *vague* and *blurred* ideas, *empty phrases*, with extensive use

of euphemisms, and tautology. They are very similar to political discourses, which do not always aim that the *real* purposes of a policy is understood. This type of manipulation is very common in situations where politics objectives are not morally acceptable, such as bomb attacks, discriminatory or racist policies, domination on other peoples, etc. Therefore, this kind of discourse is largely implemented when politicians want to name things without arise mental pictures referring to them, as *invaluable ambiguity* of language.

As we have seen, the colonialism in Africa made extensive use of a discourse on race to promote the ‘civilizing mission’. Similarly, we can still observe today a kind of development discourse that keeps on going, but seems to go nowhere. The most evident development discourse is the firm belief that the economic growth and the free-trade are the poor’s ‘salvation’. It is interesting to analyze this as a myth, because international cooperation also acts through consolidated myths, which are *objectively* false, but *subjectively* felt as true (Serra, 2003).

Among the several modern myths in the political field, the myth of *free market* is the one that led to the development policies of the ‘trickledown’, which increased poor’s poverty and improved the rich’s wealth, that is, a policy that benefited the elite and worsened the situation of the poor. According to Chang (2008), the myth of the origin of the Neo-liberalism was invented upon a false reconstruction of its raise in England - the so called ‘nation of Neo-liberalism’, the precursor of modern capitalism and mercantile liberism. This myth was based on the idea that England became wealthier thanks to the opening of its markets to other countries, and no government intervention in the economy. However, as demonstrated by Chang (2008), this myth was created only after the consolidation of English economy as hegemonic power. Before that, the English government had largely invested in domestic industries through great subsidies from the State and economic protectionism, but this part of the *history* did not appear in the *story* that Neo-liberalists told to developing countries. When England strengthened its industries achieving a high technological competence and competitiveness, the myth of the *opened market* became true, and poor countries were advised to open their markets in order to develop ‘just as’ England did.

After the disasters caused by the developmental policies based on this myth of ‘*laissez-faire*’, development institutions began to review their development strategies to improve interventions. However, another myth was created: the *participatory community*. According to Gentili (2004),

Community and customary authorities are generally conceived as genuinely 'African' and as such relatively homogeneous entities, with members' shared characteristics, capable to act collectively towards common interests. This sounds like the myth of the African 'village' community, which has informed so many of the paternalistic discourses on Africa, including some of its most well-known and already failed ideologies of development. (Gentili, 2004: 167-168).

Also Bennell (1999) considers that "misconceived notions of community are widespread" (Bennell, 1999: 39). According to the author, policymakers of development cooperation work through many idealizations and sometimes romanticized ideas; one of them is the idea of 'community' intended as a homogeneous body. Such idea is false and often influences many policies.

In general, the myth of development seems to be founded on the idea that the West was constituted through steps that enhanced people's ability to live in a better way: much knowledge has been accumulated, and the West achieved the highest levels of human development, so they have to transmit it to others. The idea that the West *mission* is to help other people to develop is still alive: only the defining words are different. Certainly, such *mission* is 'noble' because the West trajectory is 'exemplary'. The narrative is mythical because of a strong idealization and the true process nations undergo to enrich and develop does not appear in the dominant discourse; by contrast, the key aspects are hidden or 'forgotten'. Actually, the discourse focuses on the positive aspects, leaving behind the real historical context of exploitation and domination over other peoples. Therefore, the development discourse becomes a matter of *knowledge*: we, the Westerners, have the know-how to 'save' the poor- it is a matter of fact; no questioning about that.

It is of some interest to observe that this discourse is not far from the discourse of the 'civilizing' and 'evangelizing' missions of the colonial past; it actually seems to be a new version of them. The idea that development can be "predicted, managed and controlled" constitutes the beliefs in the "planned intervention" (Bergendorff & Marcussen, 2003: 304). This notion breaks with the past, as the miserable situations of developing countries today would be stationary, starting from a 'tabula rasa'.

Marcussen and Bergendorff (2003) criticize the development strategies postulating that the aid reflects a western "ideal-type" conceptualization of society that is exported to poor countries. According to the authors the international cooperation is based on myths of

western societies' idyllic past: "aid practices are guided by 'mythological' notions of history, grounded in an idealized conception of 'Western'/Danish society" (Marcussen and Bergendorff, 2003: 321). According to the authors, development institutions work most for the empowerment of three main institutions: State, Market and Civil Society. Today, "the power of the people", or the civil society, is more than ever the hope for a better world, after the myth of free-trade was unmasked.

In the mainstream literature of international organizations for development (UN, WB, etc.) and in many documents we see that the word *myth*, is used to describe the traditional worldviews and traditions of 'native' populations. On the other hand, in the critical literature of development, where many authors analyze how the cooperation operates, we find an extensive use of the word *myth* to illustrate how organizations are operating through idealized concepts of development and 'target group'. Recently, we also notice the trend to include the *indigenous knowledge* (IK) in the system of cooperation in order to achieve better effective results with interventions. Hence, the mainstream institutions operate as they are *not* guided by a mythological thought; rather, they believe they are driven by a rational, economic, metric, perfect (or at least nearest to perfection) etc. model, which in their view is the best one to follow. However, those who criticize the developmental mechanisms, unmask many myths present in the programs of cooperation for development that guide their actions. For instance, Marzia Grassi (2009) talks about "the myth of development". She argues that:

Discourse on the inevitability of this global development model is hence assumed to be a circular process that seems only explained in line with a *global identity* inherently bound up with the myth of this development, the economic imaginary of this need for economic growth synonymous with development. (...) The most recent crisis that began in the most developed parts of the world in 2008 starkly demonstrates the negation of the developmental myth proposed by contemporary globalization. The worsening of social and economic indicators and the current crisis denounce a system only able to produce rising poverty in both the poorest and the richest countries. For the African continent, frankly, there is nothing new about this. (Grassi, 2009: 56-57)

Thus, according to many authors, like Grassi (2009), there is a "mythology of aid" (Marcussen and Bergendorff, 2003). The evidences of it are found in the very discourse of cooperation: policies for the development aim to fill up some deficit, their *apparent*

intentions seem to be ‘natural’ and ‘unquestionable’, and they offer solutions to peculiar problems as they have the perfect ‘remedies’. As well, the intervention strategies outlined have also an ‘irrefutable’ nature, because they are based on ‘scientific data’ (Apthorpe, 2005). Within this logic, anything is doubtful or debatable, and the hypothetical, final solution turns into ‘steps’ to be taken. According to Apthorpe (2005), development discourse manipulates the *description* of the problems to be solved, and then finds solutions that must be the best ones to put into practice. Problems are seen as ahistorical and are classified into categories, or areas of intervention: agriculture, economics, politics, etc. As Long (2004) suggests, the aid is done to solve a problem with results programmed *a priori*, before the intervention (Long, 2004).

Problems are diagnosed as pathologies to which there are ‘obvious’ solutions. In such rationality, problems become ‘technical’ issues, depoliticized, generally quantitative deficits, to which the development institutions have the ‘therapeutic solution’ through services provided by experts in specific projects. There is a *promise* that cooperation for development will provide solutions, but according to Apthorpe (2005), institutions for development already have the turnkey solutions because they have the responsibility to ‘identify the problems’. Hence, it seems that the only possible solution for poor countries is relying on the support of international expert institutions which have the power to ‘heal the hurt’.

As affirmed Mia Couto in an interview (2006), in life mistakes are fundamental, but our society repudiates the error. According to the author, the very evolution that led us where we stand today, was full of mistakes and fortuities. Accordingly, in transposing such idea to the international cooperation, we observe that the latter also rejects the error, and creates another important myth: the development intervention is so rationally ideal that it does not envisage the possibility of a mistake, thus, when errors occur – the so called undesired ‘side effects’ – the system flops, and loses its orientation. In fact, when a project is drafted, the general and specific objectives (preferably quantitative ones) must be *a priori* highlighted, in order to decrease the likelihood of ‘mistakes’. However, when we talk about *sustainable* development or *qualitative* outcomes, it is very difficult to predict results.

Apthorpe’s criticism regards the fact that the discourse of development is always worried to find ‘problems’ to be solved, but these problems are only superficially considered, without a deep investigation on their real causes. Therefore development institutions propose ‘solutions’ often merely palliative, and, instead of solving the *causes*,

they only relieve the *consequences* (sometimes even worsening the previous situation). As development institutions are included in a frame of the 'project cycle', the philosophical framework is predicted by the idea that 'there is no time to loose, we must start with the *actions*'. Such framework makes the discourse of development very persuasive because it appeals to the 'need of action', the idea that there is no time to waste, that we have to do something. Indeed, this discourse is mainly rooted in the ideals of 'donation', and this not only morally compels individuals to act for 'noble' purposes but, in a sense, it is teleological too.

The narratives of development purpose is to persuade that other ways of solving problems are not as qualified as the Western ways. The discourse of 'donation' seems to be 'practical' and targeted to 'concrete actions'. Thus, the development operates through 'economics arithmetic' depriving policies of their actual political sense, because problems are seen as deficits to be filled. So, it is a discourse that creates historical myths, depoliticize the problems, suppress the history, and dehumanize people who become abstracts 'agents' and/or 'beneficiaries' of development.

For that reason, international aid acts as a 'moral authority' intended to change the way of life, including cultural traditions of the poorest, with the firm belief that this promotes the welfare of populations (Casella Paltrinieri, 2000). Development institutions are focused on the 'need', to find needs to be fulfilled, and this process has become a huge 'industry'. Actually, according to Malighetti (2005), the economy of international cooperation could stand as the 8th largest economy in the world, above Spain, Russia and Canada with 10 million local NGOs; 40,000 international organizations; 30 million employees; and an income of 1,110 billion dollars.

With such apparatus it is difficult to understand why there is still so much poverty in the world that keeps on increasing instead of diminishing. Many authors sustain that the causes of underdevelopment and the failure of development projects are closely associated to the dependency relations established with the West. The flow of projects that we see today, despite being much larger in number, is not a post-colonialism novelty because it dates back to the colonial period, when experts and technicians prepared many plans for social change. Mozambique today can be seen as a 'mosaic' of cooperation projects: everywhere there are several NGOs carrying out projects of different kind, each aimed at solving a specific problem: AIDS, agriculture, microcredit, gender, orphans, etc.. The country is a kind of a 'laboratory' where development experiments are made, sometimes

with good outcomes, sometimes not (if the latter is the case, however, the ‘lessons learnt’ remains).

This sort of discourse feeds the very process of cooperation, and instead of bettering poor people’s lives, it rather improves the careers and the ‘machine’ of international cooperation. In this sense, it can be seen as a perverse mechanism, assuming that the development can be brought from the outside, just like a cultural project. The system ‘iniquity’ lies also in the fact that it has to find ‘needs’, which sometimes generate first the solutions and then the need - in other words, the *inducted needs*. However, since development in Africa is not a *cultural result* as it was for the West, now it has become a *cultural project* aimed at developing Africa (and other developing countries too) (Cabaço, 2007). The trajectories of Africa and western societies underwent different processes, and now it seems that western societies have the ‘recipe’ for development, neglecting the fact that their histories are different and their model of development is not the same as the poor societies’ model. Therefore, ideas from the south, ‘native’ ideas to find suitable solutions are absolutely needed (Santos, 1997).

The Impacts of Aid

There are many theories and debates about the development of poor countries. These discussions make an effort to understand the impacts of the aid, in order to know if it really works. On the one hand we have a global aspect of cooperation that exposes a geopolitical scenario in which aid is immersed. On the other hand, we have a local aspect of cooperation consisting in projects locally carried out by NGOs and local governments.

Within the global context, in the geopolitical scenario we observe political interests and a moral/ethical discourse regarding international cooperation. There are many authors trying to analyze the impacts of aid, and some of them are criticizing cooperation because it causes more dependency and instability than development, reducing the government incentives to adopt good policies as well.

A recent Dambisa Moyo’s publication (2009) sustains that aid to Africa should be cut, because not only it has failed to work but it has compounded Africa's problems too. She argues that aid worsens governance, and impoverishes because it merely consolidates the power oligarchies. Paul Collier (2009) agrees with Moyo (2009) that aid tends to worsen governance, but he argues that “cutting aid may not be the best response. My preferred alternative is to strengthen its potential for ‘governance conditionality’: aid

agencies should insist on both transparent budgeting and free and fair elections” (Collier, 2009).

This strategy proposed by Collier is criticized by authors like Ha-Joon Chang (2002) and Hanlon and Smart (2008), who sustain that rich countries require ‘good’ policies as a way to move out of poverty, but in their capitalistic history there has been many ‘bad’ industrial and commercial policies as protectionism and State’s subsidies. As a result, rich countries did not develop on the basis of the policies and the institutions that they now recommend to poor countries.

While Moyo (2009) rejects the disproportional and sloppy donations, other authors think differently. Gentili (2009), for instance, argues that Moyo is not right because poorest countries are in such poverty situation much due to a historical process of exploitation that left them behind. Therefore, according to Gentili (2009), fifty years of cooperation have not worsened the situation of the poorest countries, because it is important to observe the facts occurred centuries before. Gentili (2009) suggests that cooperation should be improved in both directions: more financial resources associated to more *good* interventions.

Hanlon (2010) as well, asserts exactly the opposite of what Moyo (2009) advises. He suggests to “just give money to the poor” (Hanlon, 2010, my transcription from video). The author argues that the resistance of the international cooperation in doing so is because “in the north, we really don’t believe that poor people are going to use the money wisely” (Hanlon, 2010, my transcription from video). However, he demystifies such idea explaining that in the North, governs *give* money to people through the welfare system, and nobody asks people if they are using the money wisely. North countries are giving people money. If we look historically, in Europe “pensions and social protection came before economic growth” (Hanlon, 2010, my transcription from video), and one of the reasons is that they reduce the risk, since social benefits increase labor mobility. According to Hanlon (2010), the rich countries “didn’t raise money to do social transfers; [they] did social transfers to create economic growth” (Hanlon, 2010, my transcription from video).

Robert Cooper (2002) explains the relation between rich and poor countries as a post-modern imperialism. He argues that colonization is unacceptable to postmodern states and so: “what is needed then is a new kind of imperialism, one *acceptable* to a world of human rights and cosmopolitan values. We can already discern its outline: an imperialism which, like all imperialisms, aims to bring order and organization but which rests today on

the *voluntary* principle” (Cooper, 2002, my emphasis). NGOs play a peculiar role in this context because many of them are working on the field in developing countries.

As we have seen, there is a significant amount of literature denouncing the negative impacts of international cooperation in the poorest countries, even describing it as a new form of imperialism, based on voluntarism (Cooper, 2002). Critics also argue that cooperation is a kind of machine used to run projects that raise huge amounts of money and pay high salaries to Western cooperators, while, actually nothing arrives in the beneficiaries’ hands. Indeed, many projects have failed due to the lack of attention to environmental and cultural features (Caselli, 2002).

Missionaries and Practitioners of Development

The Nordic European countries were those which invested more in human resources and in the welfare state, with high outcomes in the social sustainability area. The Sweden model of development inspired the government of independent Mozambique. Since 1975 Mozambique and Sweden have formalized their relation of cooperation with an anti-imperialist posture (Soares, 2006). Actually, the Sweden model of cooperation is recognized as a good example all over the world (Soares, 2006). The nationalist leader Eduardo Mondlane appreciated very much the Sweden policies, and in the 60’s, Sweden started helping Mozambican refugees in Tanzania (Macagno, 2000).

As discussed earlier, during the colonial period, Mozambique was under the *Indigenato* rule, in which indigenous people to ‘assimilate’ Portuguese culture should leave behind their “*usos e costumes*” (customs and traditions) (Macagno, 2000). Then, to form the colony, Portugal exported administrators, jurists, military, settlers and last but not least, missionaries. At the end of XIX century, also protestant missions landed in Mozambique. Missionaries played a fundamental role in evangelizing and educating indigenous in order to ‘assimilate’ them in the colonial system, mainly as facilitators in the emancipation of tribal ‘usos e costumes’. Most missionaries left Europe motivated by the same inspiration they had in Europe, where they used to help the poor. However, their interventions were not limited to people’s evangelization and education because some of them started elaborating ethnographic material about indigenous people, sometimes worried about the loss of their ‘usos e costumes’. Most of these ‘anthropologists’ missionaries defended the maintenance of local culture aspects, as they perceived a link between the indigenous situation with the loss of cultural diversity in Europe with the

advent of capitalism and the arise of national languages that threatened the survival of language diversity (Macagno, 2000).

The catholic missions were responsible to spread Catholicism and Portuguese morality among the Mozambican ‘masses’ (Macagno, 2000: 71). In 1941, the Catholic Church established the Missionaries Rule (Estatuto do Missionário), and its 66° article stated that the education of indigenou should be a missionaries’ task. Hence, missionaries were important vectors of cultural change, but were also prominent defenders of African culture and denounced the conditions under which the settlers kept the natives. Many missionaries brought with them a critical conscience of the social changes in Europe, that led to a dramatic rise in poverty due to massive industrialization, which fostered the exodus from the countryside to the cities where people lived in terrible conditions. Some missionaries actively promoted campaigns for the abolition of slavery too. Therefore, many missionaries in Mozambique formed a critical class that did not conformed to the colonial system, and took on the defense of the indigenou culture.

Despite protestant missions were undermined by the Portuguese, they also had an important role in the assimilation of indigenou people. Henry Junod (1863-1934) was an important missionary interested in ethnography. He lived in Mozambique from 1889 to 1920, and he also wanted to be buried there (Macagno, 2000). He was a keen observer of the cultural dynamics during colonialism, and constituted an important link between local culture and colonial government. His opinion oscillated between good and bad aspects of the process of civilization imposed to the natives. If, on the one hand, Junod carried with him the motivation to ‘free’ natives from paganism and obscurantism through Christianity and European education, on the other hand, he criticized the ‘civilizing mission’ describing how the Southern African indigenou had lost more than won with the civilization advent. He argued that native people had lost both their interest in politics and their sense of responsibility, and there was a decline of morality with the introduction of detrimental vices and illnesses such as alcohol, syphilis, tuberculosis, etc.. Junod realized that the loss of traditional rules as harmful to the ‘tribe’ since there had been a fast physical and moral decay (Macagno, 2000).

Notwithstanding, Junod did not condemn the colonial process as he considered it important to ‘meet the needs’ of all peoples of the globe. The missionary believed that the white race, being more advanced, could use its skills in extracting and processing raw materials to improve the lives of those who were not able to. Therefore, ‘whites’ should bring to the indigenou their material and spiritual values of civilization: in this sense

Junod considered 'civilization' very useful. Certainly, Junod was not so naive to misapprehend that colonization was only good. He also realized that most settlers were selfishly interested in exploiting the colony territory for their own wealth and the enrichment of the Metropolis, in detriment of indigenous lives. In this regard, Junod was very critical, claiming that it was morally unacceptable (Macagno, 2000).

The example of the missionary Junod is paradigmatic because it allows us to make a parallel between the main *values* that led many of the missionaries of the colonial past to be part of the 'civilizing missions', with the missionaries that today work for the international cooperation. Despite the missionaries today have a new and more technical name - practitioners - and their motivation is not based only on the Christian faith, the view that cooperation is a sort of redistribution, rebalance, teaching what 'white people' know to improve the 'natives' life, is still the essential motivation for cooperation, as we shall see in more details in Chapter Five.

Just like the missionaries of the past, aid workers today are aware of the problems of cooperation and are not so naive to think that this relationship between beneficiaries and development institutions is totally equal. Most of them are perfectly aware that cooperation has many gaps and that projects not always run exactly as they expect, because it is often difficult to achieve planned results. They are also aware that their aid implies implicit and explicit power relations. Despite the similarities between past missionaries and present practitioners, now there is a huge difference regarding the time-space dimension: everything is faster, technologies promote the flow of information overcoming hindering bureaucracy (Pandolfi, 2005).

The parallel of the missionaries of colonialism with the today missionaries (practitioners), can be transposed anthropology. Everyone knows that during colonialism in Africa many anthropologists were essential in "helping the technicians and planners to make the interventions [of the colony] more effective" (Malighetti, 2005: 10, my translation). Although criticized for working too uncritically, and often classifying people into ethnic groups that Africans had not even known (a factor that caused, after the independence, many wars and dictatorship based on ethnic myths), we cannot generalize that all anthropologists acted in the same way. As well as Junod was a great defender of indigenous rights, many anthropologists also acted against the ruling power of the colonies. Today, there are many anthropologists who work with institutions of development, but by no means all of them do their job uncritically. In fact, many are working to enforce the voice of the 'natives', and instead of promoting the unilateral

model of ‘westernization of the indigenous’, many of them promote ideas and models of the ‘South’ and the ‘poor’, definitely against the mainstream flow.

Therefore, it is possible to realize that there is strong missionary link between past and present international cooperation, even by the conversion and adaptation of past missions to the new scenario of intervention. Thus, with the independence of African countries declared by UN in 1960, missionaries in Africa broke their old link with the colonial government and new religious organizations were created to support such independencies called “base aid organizations”, focused on fostering the colonial liberalization (Resti, 2009). Later on, many NGOs were born from such movements. Consequently, international cooperation became a new field of work, with the increasing professionalization and creation of a wide range of new jobs, as we have seen above, it could be considered the 8th economy in the world.

NGOs

In the last decades we have seen a notable increase of NGOs either in number and size. Actually, they are present in all countries giving their contributions in many fields and constituting a recently established social phenomenon. NGOs are essential for grassroots mobilization and have a peculiar sensitiveness in identifying new possibilities to enhance development, without exclusively following the western model. The contact with different realities is extremely enriching and suggests new ways to solve problems (Gama & Meirelles, 2010).

International cooperation is largely implemented by NGOs worldwide, and these organizations are becoming increasingly important in the politics of developing world (Reimann, 2006). Such grow in number and importance is closely related to a suitable environment propitiated by rich countries and international multilateral agencies which are financing and delegating more duties to the third sector. For that reason, Reimann (2006) argues that the great expansion of NGOs in the last three decades is a consequence of politics “from above” (Reimann 2006: 46). As well, Kaldor, et. al. show this current tendency:

There is a vast array of NGOs, voluntary associations, non-profit groups, charities, and interest associations, in addition to more informal or less permanent ways of organizing (...). INGOs account for a large part of the formal part of that

infrastructure. (...) The growth of INGOs and their organizational presence is, of course, not equally spread across the world. Not surprisingly, Europe and North America show the greatest number of INGOs and higher membership densities than other regions of the world. (...) The infrastructure of global civil society has not only become bigger and broader, it has also achieved greater density and connectedness (Kaldor, et al, 2003: 10,12,14)

In many developing countries, Non-Governmental Organizations are also gaining importance because they are now being involved in the development process as primary actors. According to Bellucci (2002), there is a sort of institutionalization taking place within NGOs. In the case of Mozambique, where the Government proclaims freedom of association, local NGOs are recently becoming empowered instruments apt to promote popular participation. This trend is growing because there are many countries and funding institutions that finance them. According to Kaldor, et. al. (2003),

Institutions like the World Bank, the United Nations, or the European Union together with bilateral donors and many developing countries are searching for a balance between state-led and market-led approaches to development, and are allocating more responsibility to INGOs (Kaldor, et al, 2003: 8)

Such international institutions (WB and UN) are now working on strengthening civil society, hence deepening the relationships with NGOs at different levels. In the UNDP document regarding its engagement with civil society we found many evidences of these relations:

UNDP civil society partnerships are quantifiably deep, complex and evolving. (...) The UN Country Teams, provide the UN and civil society actors with a forum for dialogue and exchange at the country level (...) to understand and analyze the role and contributions of civil society in the changing development process of a country. The overall goal is to facilitate a synergistic relationship. (UNDP Country Level engagement with civil society, 2009: 4)

It is apparent that United Nations are recognizing the strong value of NGOs by involving them in their programs and the government decisions: “Importantly, UNDP, working with the Government, involved NGOs in the discussion through conferences and

workshops. It is key that NGOs be involved in processes of legal and regulatory reform, as they are the intended beneficiaries and must also ensure that new or revised laws do not atrophy.” (UNDP Country Level engagement with civil society, 2009: 8)

The World Bank also is enforcing relations with NGOs, as reported in its 2009’s Civil Society Book. They conclude the document stating that WB and NGOs have developed more effective instruments and venues for policy exchanges:

Bank–civil society relations have continued to improve and intensify over the last three years. These improvements occurred in terms of both more regular and systematic policy dialogue and consultations, and greater opportunities for operational collaboration (World Bank Civil Society Book, 2009: 73)

Besides the strengthening of the ties between NGOs and key international institutions, there are a lot of interesting initiatives regarding new possibilities to achieve sustainability or a more equal world, such as new technologies, advocacy influencing in the political scenario, social movements, movies, alliances, global forums, fair trade, etc. These initiatives are carried out by a wide range of NGOs, individuals, small and large groups and organizations.

However, NGOs face many concerns that hinder the achievements their actions. As most NGOs are no profit organizations, they are barely economically independent, so they are often forced to accept the donors’ terms and conditions. Another concern regarding NGOs is that many of them have limited reach among population, due to the scarce economic resources. NGOs work well in micro environments, but they do not have the power of multinational companies. Even the biggest NGOs that already work as multinationals are limited by financial resources and rely on the voluntary work.

NGOs in Italy

Today, despite International cooperation is made up by institutions and organizations of different kind, in general all of them pursue the same driving objective, which is the ambition to change the situation through inputs from the outside. Italian NGOs also adopt a wide range of approaches and methods, but in general their aim coincides with the Millennium Development Goals, and their mean to achieve development, in general, is through Education for Development (Secci, 2006).

According to Secci (2006), in Italy there are a large number of small NGOs with low visibility and low political influence. Actually, since the 70's the number of NGOs has increased exponentially and often chaotically. In Resti's words:

The number of NGOs began to grow exponentially and often disorganized, leading in some cases to a paradox in which NGOs, because of the public funds that support projects, become performers of state projects losing their vocation of "NGO" that distinguished them at the very beginning. (Resti, 2009: 3, my translation).

NGOs are usually divided in Humanitarians and NGOs of Development, but some of them work within both fields. In Italy, NGOs are organized in three main Federations (CISPI, COCIS and FOCSIV). Usually, NGOs have to carry out three major tasks: Fund raising, Education for development and Project Plan (Resti, 2009).

This study focuses on the NGOs which implement Development projects in Mozambique because, while Humanitarians NGOs work to solve serious human crisis, usually in emergencies, the Development NGOs work on improving poor's life, mainly dealing with the lack of sanitary conditions, Human Rights, and so forth. Development NGOs carry a much longer relation with 'target groups', therefore they have a crucial role in cultural transformation, which is the core target of this study.

Italian Cooperation in Mozambique

As I will treat exhaustively the Italian International Cooperation in Mozambique in Chapter Five, in this section I will merely outline the history of Italian International Cooperation and its ties with Mozambique.

According Resti (2009), international cooperation for development was born in the world and in Italy after in the Second World War and underwent five main phases:

1. A phase driven by the idea of 'new' world resulting from the echoes of the war devastation, the threat of an atomic war, and the emergence of the Human Rights (1945)
2. A phase driven by economic growth to drag out the poorest countries from the 'backwardness'.

3. The 60's was a phase driven by social-ethical motivation, when social movements played a central role in influencing the policies of Western countries (and Italy did not constitute an exception). The first NGOs were organized, and the first laws on international cooperation were promulgated
4. During the 70's and 80's cooperation took a marketing drive, in order to adjust economies, and to control the international markets.
5. In the 90's, with the increasing migration flows from poor countries, cooperation became a *security* matter, aiming to solve the problems in such countries in order to avoid the migrations uninterruptedness. The sustainability of capitalism and consumerism was also at issue.

Although Italy was not a colonial country like other European countries, it had some colonies in Africa. Indeed, as a very Catholic country, had participated in many missions in the processes of evangelization of the indigenous world. In Mozambique, for instance, the Catholic University of Mozambique, was founded by a missionary from Italian mission Consolata, in 1996 (Carpaneto, 2003). Despite today only two of the NGOs I interviewed still follow the Catholic doctrine (AVSI and Fondazione Tovini), most of them, which today are lay, performed a missionary activity in the past: Progetto Mondo MLAL, Manitese, Celim, COOPI, AISPO, CELIM, COSV, ISCOS, MLAL, Terres des Homes.

However, the Italian massive participation in international cooperation for development starts at the end of the 50's, as stated by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2010):

In its historical experience, the Italian Cooperation has developed since the fifties with a range of assistance implemented in countries with previous colonial ties with Italy. Later, Italy started a more systematic cooperation aimed at contributing to international efforts to relieve world poverty and help developing countries to strengthen their institutions “ (Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2010, my translation).

An Italian non-governmental association - the Club of Rome - which included intellectuals, businesspeople, social movement activists and scientists, had a crucial role in

the international development debate. In 1972, the Club of Rome published a report on the limits of development, asserting the impossibility of extending the Western development to all peoples, because it would threaten the survival of the whole Earth (Resti, 2009).

In the 1980's, the Italian NGOs multiplied, and new paradigms of development were raised (cf. Chapter Five). Besides, in relation to Mozambique, today Italy is included in the group of the G19 (a group formed by 19 donors - currently 20 - providing General Budget Support) as member of the Program Aid Partnership, which means that it generously finances the development projects in Mozambique.

Italy plays a special role in the international cooperation (cf. Chapter Five), especially in Mozambique. In the years following the independence of Mozambique, Italian movements of different nature (government, political parties, associations) established a solidarity network with this country. These social movements eventually influenced Italian foreign policies, because they strengthened the international cooperation. Some actors played an important role, such as parties, the Catholic Church and the Association IPALMO (Institute for Relations between Italy and Africa, Latin America, Middle and Far East) (Ercolessi & Gentili, 2002). It was with the help of Italian mediation that Frelimo and Renamo made a peace agreement in 1992. Curiously, some important leaders of Frelimo had a solid relationship with the student and labor movements in Italy. According to Dragon (1992),

Samora Machel, independent Mozambique's first president, was a sympathizer of the Roman left; the Ministry of culture and secretary of Frelimo, Chissano, had studied sociology at the Trento University. Such elite, after having read and discussed for years the classics of Marxism-Leninism with the Italian friends, found themselves to administer a country all of sudden. (Dragosei, 1992, my translation)

After the death of Samora Machel in an aircraft accident in 1986, Joaquim Chissano became the president of Mozambique. Chissano decided to accept the support offered by Comunità di Sant'Egidio (Italian NGO), which was already present in the country to provide help in areas affected by the civil guerrilla. Since the Peace treatment, Italy has established a 'tradition' of cooperating with Mozambique (Dragosei, 1992).

Framework of Cooperation in Mozambique

Mozambique has an unpleasant situation: it is a country with 21.1 million inhabitants, and occupies the 172th position in the rank of UNDP's (United Nations Development Program) Human Development Index (177 countries were considered in the ranking 2007/2008). Life expectancy is 42.8 years, and is the 171th out of the 177 countries considered (UNDP, 2007/2008 Human Development Report¹⁰).

International cooperation is very much present in the country through a range of institutions and projects from governments of the richest countries, multilateral organizations (World Bank, UN), civil society organizations working directly with the local population, etc. Non-governmental organizations hold a great share in this process. In 2004/2005 Mozambique's National Institute of Statistics conducted a survey to figure out the number of non-profit institutions working in the country. The final report shows that there are almost 5,000 non-profit organizations. Table 1 shows the data of this census.

Table 1: Non-Profit Organizations in Mozambique, by institutional form, 2003

Type of Institution	Number	% Total
Associations	4457	91,8%
Religious	2590	53,4%
Political	1224	25,2%
Educational	96	2,0%
Other Associations	547	11,3%
Foundations	20	13,2%
National NGOs	152	3,1%
Foreign NGOs	188	3,9%
Other	36	0,7%
Total	4853	

Font: developed by the author with data from the report: "As Instituições Sem Fins Lucrativos em Moçambique Resultados do Primeiro Censo Nacional (2004/5)", 2006 National Institute of Statistics, Maputo, Mozambique, http://www.ine.gov.mz/noticias/censos_dir/cinsflu

¹⁰ http://hdrstats.undp.org/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs MOZ.html

Table 1 shows that most of non-profit institutions, 92% out of the total, are Associations, and the majority of them are religious groups (53.4% out of the total). Besides that, NGOs are 7% of total non-profit institutions, and amount to 340 units as a whole. Considering all NGOs, almost 55% are foreign institutions, corresponding to 188 units in the country, while national NGOs count 152 units, about 45% of total NGOs. These organizations play a key role because they work in direct contact with the local population, and survive thanks to donor governments, private donations and multilateral development agencies.

In order to draw a picture of the aid received by Mozambique, we can observe the following tables which show the flow of money from donors.

The table below (Table 2) outlines the amount of money that the entire world spends with Official Development Assistance, and what percentage of its total goes to Mozambique.

Table 2: Official Development Assistance Disbursement (ODA) by all donors, total, 2007 (current prices USD millions)

	2007 (USD Millions)	% Africa Total	% All Dev. Countries
Mozambique	1776,74	4,6%	1,7%
Africa Total	38720,45	--	36,9%
All Developing Countries, Total	105055,89	--	--

Font: OECD, DAC, Query Wizard for International Development Statistics, January, 2009 (<http://stats.oecd.org/qwids/>)

The data show that All Developing Countries received more than 100 billion dollars from official development assistance (ODA). Moreover, nearly 37% of all Aid was allocated to Africa, and 1.7% of this total went to Mozambique. Considering the total disbursement for Africa - around 39 billion dollars - 4.6% was directed to Mozambique. Hence we can state that Mozambique is a country highly dependent on foreign aid. Furthermore, these data give us a good idea of the international cooperation influence in Mozambique.

Table 3 illustrates the connections of Non-Profit Mozambican Institutions with External Countries.

Table 3 - Number of Non-Profit Mozambican Institutions affiliated to a foreign Organization, by foreign country, 2003

Foreign Country	Number of Non Profit Mozambican Institutions
United States	184
Switzerland	61
South Africa	60
Brazil	54
Italy	50

Font: Developed by the author with data from the report: “As Instituições Sem Fins Lucrativos em Moçambique Resultados do Primeiro Censo Nacional (2004/5)”, 2006
National Institute of Statistics, Maputo, Mozambique,
http://www.ine.gov.mz/noticias/censos_dir/cinsflu

This table (3) lists five countries Mozambican Nonprofit Institutions have more affiliations with. It is interesting to observe that even though United States have more relations with Mozambican Non-profit Institutions compared with all other countries (184 in total), Italy occupies the 5th position, with 50 links. Thus, it means that Italy plays a significant role into Mozambique’s society, while being a source of aid to the General Budget Support, and keeps important relations with nonprofit civil society organizations.

Therefore, the study of Italian NGOs’ work in Mozambique is relevant both to understand the international cooperation dynamics, and capture the way they deal with Mozambicans in this context.

3.3 Conclusion

In the debate about development we find lines of thought which consider the international cooperation as a continuation of the colonization only with a new configuration. Actually, the current scenario of international cooperation for development holds many concerns and unsolved questions regarding the difficulties in reaching development according to an idealized western model of development. In the era of Human Rights, we find the western economic system that undergoes a reconsideration process relative to its sustainability, while 80% of the world's population aims to reach this standard.

Some critical authors, like Escobar (1992), believe that development interventions caused devastation since the end of Second World War, because it pursued colonizing mechanisms to develop, and many authors from developing countries do not see fascination in coping western societies anymore. However, despite many authors consider the development model insolvent, in the imaginary of development institutions, it still figures as the great aim (Escobar, 1992).

Such heated debate on the development process proposes a critical view of the mainstream models like the World Bank's. Critics are directed to the approaches adopted by these institutions, which do not stimulate genuine political participation, because they are static, and imply fixed practices and metrics targeted at specific goals. The main issue is that the mainstream institutions are 'absorbed' by the idea that the developing world is 'backward', and has difficulty to disentangle from this condition. Therefore, they are trying to 'fight' against those traditions which hinder 'progress'. Thus the opposition between 'backward' and 'modern' still follows an evolutionary thinking, through the discourse of modernization (Arce & Long, 2005). Accordingly, Escobar (1992) understands development as a new political economy ideology that preaches the achievement of development through economic growth as fundamental and as the only 'truth' ever possible. For these reasons, development is criticised as a power relation discourse that defines a Third World's representation as 'underdeveloped', in which individuals, governemet, communities, etc., are seen and *treated* as 'underdeveloped' (Escobar, 1992).

In Italy (and in many other western countries), there has been an increasing appearance of NGOs in the last decades, especially INGOs. This trend is significant because is a sign of a social phenomenon and shows that the so-called third sector is becoming essential for the societies to work well. It also shows that the capitalistic model of development has many gaps that need to be fixed, such as the huge inequalities among people, social classes, etc., and also carries out paradoxical objectives like profit, extracting energy resources and finding new technologies that in most cases damage the environment and represent a medium/long term risk for us.

It is really interesting to note that INGOs are present in both rich and poor contexts, trying to fix such inequalities. This aspect is really important, because those organizations have the potential to struggle against the segregating system and to raise awareness about the issues related to the western development model that is implemented in developing countries as the 'best' model to follow. Practitioners of development have a dual role on

this process: on one hand they agree with ‘developmentalism’, on the other, they criticize it.

Development is the key word for Mozambique and many other countries today affected by poverty and social inequality. Mozambique is paradigmatic because most of its population lives in rural areas and carries a subsistence life style, depending completely on the harvest outcomes (thus depending mostly on the climate), a way of living that hinders the development of human capacities. Despite the immense flow of resources, projects, interventions from international cooperation, that made Mozambique literally a ‘mosaic’ of projects, it is very difficult to assess the human development, and actually the life of the poorest does not seem to have improved in these decades of cooperation.

CHAPTER 4 - Research Program and Methodology

A verdade organiza-se, a verdade constrói-se.

(The truth is organized, the truth is constructed)

Carlos Serra, *Cólera e Catarse*, 2003, prefácio

The choice of the methodology to adopt for implementing a research is not a random process because it depends both on the subject, and the aim of the investigation. The decision process then, is not a taken for granted issue, rather, it is important to evaluate all the available possibilities and choose the most suitable procedure to the kind of research one aims to do (Dalmolin, Lopes, & Vasconcellos, 2002).

For that reason, in this Chapter I intend to illustrate the methodological steps undertaken in this research, to allow the reader to understand the following Chapters in which I discuss the results. During this chapter I will describe the principles of the *constructivist grounded theory methodology* that inspired me, the *ethnography* carried out in Mozambique, and explain my research plan with each useful method applied to any phase.

If we want to understand cultural dynamics, we most commonly take into consideration *qualitative* approaches to conduct a research. Anthropological studies have a long tradition of qualitative researches, because anthropology makes strong effort to understand traditional cultures and their changes, especially in a 'globalized' world. For that reason, the anthropological aspect plays a crucial role in this study.

The aim of this research is to best understand the *people's view* on the theme I analyze. For what concerns the *epistemological* setting, I do not enclose myself in an exclusive paradigm since I share assumptions from three major paradigms: Social Constructionism/Interpretative, Critical Paradigm, and Postmodernism (Daly, 2007). However, I identify myself mostly with the Constructionist/Interpretative paradigm, then I will focus on the explanation on such model.

Social constructionism is concerned with understanding social phenomenon through

the evidence of the participants'¹¹ experiences. It focuses in the primary data coming from the speeches of persons who directly live the social situations which are the objects of the study. Hence, the researcher is very interested in understanding the phenomenon as a whole, including all his/her sensorial abilities: that's why, *ethnography* is a suitable way to get completely immersed in the context, and perceive it as a whole. The "thick description" suggested by Geertz (1973) is one of the most important methods used to achieve a deep understanding of the phenomenon.

According to the Constructionist/Interpretative paradigm, the reality is constructed because there are prior frames of reference from which the researcher cannot disentangle: his/her previous experiences influences the current intellectual formulations. This paradigm accepts that there is an "external reality that is subjectively perceived and understood from the perspective of the observer" (Daly, 2007: 32). The main idea is that researches construct "meanings on the basis of socially available, shared understandings of reality" (ibid: 32), and they construct such meanings over the interaction with their object. According to such position, there are several possibilities to understand the same phenomenon of social reality, depending on the principles, viewpoints and positions of the author (Daly, 2007: 33).

Therefore, I am aware that my comprehension is limited in a sense since my examination is one interpretation subject to my prior experiences, background and position. Such awareness does not, however, invalid the research, since all knowledge and beliefs are circumscribed in specific historical and social contexts which include previous experiences, standpoints, and specific perspectives. The process of framing the data of a research through a constructivist course undergoes an interpretative path influenced by the researcher (or research team). The constructivist approach searches also the tacit, liminal, latent aspects of the situations analyzed that certain behaviors and positions tend to adopt (Charmaz in Puddephatt, 2006).

Identifying the most suitable methods to conduct a research is an exquisitely organizational aim that is extremely important to improve the chances of success. Notwithstanding, the methods adopted for a research should be adequate not to create "a tractor to harvest lettuce" (Carmen Junqueira *apud* Andrade, 2002: 15, my translation). Throughout the research pathway, sometimes I wondered if I was creating the "tractor", since I used different methods to collect data, especially in the fieldwork in Mozambique

¹¹ Participant is intended as the subject (or object) of the research. During the Chapter I will call them also 'subjects', 'objects', 'interviewees', 'natives' or 'insiders'

where the context dictated some constraints and I had to change strategies to go on with the research. I tried to use many qualitative methods available to “harvest” information as much as I could in the time available for that. Even in Italy, I used different, but similar, methods to interview my informants. Finally, I found myself with a valuable, but huge amount of information to be interpreted, and I conjectured if all the methods I have used were liable to be compared.

In the first year of my Ph.D. (2008) I decided which methods I would employ for this research. During a course on Qualitative Research Methods, I was fascinated by the *grounded theory*, and I decided to follow it to conduct my research. This methodological approach allows the use of a wide range of methods. Thus, I concluded that, despite the different methods (procedures), the methodology was always the same: *ethnography* inspired by the *constructivist grounded theory*. Hence, all the data collected could be used to increase my understanding of the subject of this research. I believe that my decisions were crucial to raise credible data, and trusting also in my own critical sense, I think the methods and methodology adopted were reliable for this research.

4.1 Research Path: Constructivist Grounded Theory

This study took into consideration a wide range of possibilities to consider in the methodological path to the research. The main methodology I chose was the *ethnography*, as in Mozambique the field work should be carried out with qualitative approach, and the most important methods were the *participant observation* and *interviews* (semi-structured, non-structured and informal). In order to understand the current scenario of international cooperation, the *constructivist grounded theory* was chosen as a philosophical approach to build my understanding of the fieldwork from the data collected. However, not only primary data were collected, but also secondary data, and their analysis was conducted in parallel with the analysis of my primary data, comparing them in order to build and/or confirm the theories regarding my theme.

The grounded theory was launched by Anselm Strauss and Barney Glaser with the book *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (1967) focused on the discovery of a theory starting from the data. The grounded theory method suggests an inductive way to generate understanding of a social context through the analysis of the data. It is an approach focused on providing new explanations about the phenomenon studied, departing not from the literature review, but from the collected data. The main idea is that the researcher has a

general subject he wants to investigate, and he first goes on the field to see ‘what is going on there’ instead of going to the field with hypothesis to verify or falsify. He does not have to go on the field aiming at finding evidences to prove (or question) his previous hypothesis, rather, he has to go there without preconceptions, in order to raise evidences, and only afterwards build a theory on that (Tarozzi, 2008). Thus, there is no preset in grounded theory. For that reason Glaser and Strauss (1967) critique substantially the researches aimed at *verifying* a theory, and suggest that the researches should *produce* a theory (Tarozzi, 2008) - in such sense the process is *inductive*. However, while producing the theory, the process is also *deductive* because, despite the analysis is rooted on the observed data, “it also involves the deductive testing of various ideas that either existed prior to the research” (Daly, 2007: 227).

Therefore, the grounded theory methodology requires that the researcher makes an effort to start a research with no preconceptions at all (Gibbs, 2010). For that reason, Glaser suggests that the literature review should be done afterwards the research fieldwork (Glaser, 2010). However, on this point the authors’ opinion is controversial as it follows two lines of thought about the grounded theory. Glaser has the traditional positivist view in which the researcher should have as few preconceptions as possible, while Strauss, with whom Corbin wrote *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory* (1st published in 1990) builds a constructivist idea of grounded theory acknowledging that the role of the researcher, his choices and background experiences also influence the research results, because it is also a constructivist dynamic. What we define real and true may change, because it depends on social, historical context (Charmaz in Puddephatt, 2006). According to Strauss and Corbin (1994), “theories are embedded in history” (Strauss & Corbin, 1994: 280).

Besides, in the grounded theory, the analytic work should start along with collecting data (Gibbs, 2010). In order to perform the collection of data it is important to realize who are the persons to observe or interview, and diversify the sources of information to compose a complete (and not biased) framework on the phenomenon. “The grounded approach advocates the use of multiple data sources converging on the same phenomenon and terms these ‘slices of data’” (Pandit, 1996). There are five analytic sequential phases which are important (but not strictly mandatory) to build a grounded theory: research design, data collection, data classification and analysis, literature comparison and writing (Pandit, 1996).

Despite the use of *Ethnography* was the main methodological drive, and the

grounded theory the main philosophical path to build the concepts of this research from the data, I also set the research through a *Constructivist* view, regarding constructivism not as a well-defined theory, but as *critical posture about the world* (Méllo, Silva, Lima, & Di Paolo, 2007). The social world here is intended as dynamic, with different processes of changing, moving, animating, and life experiences that historically change. In the constructivist perspective, the *discourse* and the *action* have a central role because they reveal the worldview of the interviewees, letting them *talk* to capture the inner perceptions of the subject's own life, which is historically framed. Through this approach it is possible to deconstruct the 'essentialized' discourses to understand how individuals are socially constructed. In other words, it assumes that persons are circumscribed in specific social contexts with which they dialogue, resist, transform, or reaffirm themselves, and their discourses show such intrinsic relationship, which is essential to analyze social interactions and transformations.

The perspective proposed by the *Constructivism* approach is very insightful as an epistemological fundament also for grounded theory. According to Mills et. al. (2006), Constructivism is a research paradigm that denies the existence of an objective reality, because the reality is a construction of the mind, and such realities are influenced by the context. Mills et. al. (2006) suggest that:

Epistemologically, constructivism emphasizes the subjective interrelationship between the researcher and participant, and the co-construction of meaning. Researchers, in their "humanness," are part of the research endeavor rather than objective observers, and their values must be acknowledged by themselves and by their readers as an inevitable part of the outcome (...). In seeking a research methodology that would provide an ontological and epistemological fit to [constructionism] (...) researchers need to immerse themselves in the data in a way that embeds the narrative of the participants in the final research outcome. (Mills, Bonner, & Francis, 2006: 31)

Accordingly, the constructionist grounded theory allows us to analyze the very speeches, actions, behaviors, experiences of the participant to provide a theoretical interpretation.

Hence, although I chose *ethnography* as the main methodological approach to my research, the *constructivist grounded theory* remained a model of reference, and I set the phases of the research following Glaser and Strauss' (1967) and Charmaz (2006)

suggestions. Therefore, I tried to follow such phases, but I also made some literature review before designing the project: hence I did not arrive to the fieldwork completely free of preconceptions¹². However, only after having processed the collected data I proceeded with the thesis draft.

Now I will describe the phases suggested by the authors of the grounded theory, illustrating how I pursued the study, with its concerns, obstacles, and solutions.

Research Design

As stated in the Introduction of this dissertation, the theme of my doctoral thesis was envisaged during the Master in International Cooperation for Development (Catholic University of Milan, 2007). During the Master I noticed that international organizations put into action projects with a very defined and cohesive logical framework, facing difficulties regarding cultural issues such as communication gaps and hindrances to transmit the messages and to meet the social changes they propose. For that reason I decided to investigate in the core of a developmental project to try to understand those difficulties.

Thus, my research *problem* was defined: I intended to understand how cultural interactions took place in the international cooperation projects, and I would like to understand how beneficiaries perceived the arrival of a development project.

To accomplish such aim, in the experimental part of the research I considered that it would be impossible to understand how a project really works without being immersed in the surrounding reality. Then I first decided to pursue a fieldwork in Mozambique inside a development project, in a rural area. At the same time, as I was living in Italy, I decided to start a fieldwork among NGOs in Italy, interviewing the representatives who manage projects in Mozambique, to collect information about their experiences and impressions about cooperation and development.

The decision to observe a project in a *rural* area was due to the fact that in Mozambique and in the Least Developed Countries (UN- OHRLLS List, 2010) most of the population depends on subsistence agriculture and live (Word Bank Indicators, 2010) a

¹² Actually it is impossible to do a research completely starting from a *tabula rasa* because the researcher has a previous theoretical and empiric background from which is difficult to disentangle (Cf. Glaser & Strauss, 1967: 3, footnote 3). However, it is possible to make an effort not to influence much the research process, and to rationally be open-minded to welcome opinions that differ from ours.

very humble life in rural areas. The discrepancies with the modern reality of wealth practitioners of cooperation could not be greater, and I hypothesized that the cultural dynamics would certainly be greater as well. Then, the choice of studying a development project in a rural area was made because I expected to find a rich scenario, suitable to collect relevant data on the phenomenon of intercultural dynamics.

The choice to study NGOs was based on the fact that they are the executors of interventions, and they work directly with beneficiaries, on the field. I decided to focus on the NGOs which implement *Development* projects in Mozambique because, while Humanitarian NGOs work to solve serious human crisis, usually in emergencies, the Development NGOs are dedicated to improve life of peoples in poverty, lack of sanitary conditions, Human Rights, etc.. Development NGOs hold a much longer relation with ‘target groups’, their projects are long-lasting compared to emergency interventions¹³, resulting in a deeper relationship with the beneficiaries. Therefore, they are sources of social changes and play an important role in the cultural transformation, providing interesting material for a socio-anthropological analysis, which is the subject-matter of this study.

Of course not only NGOs are sources of social changes and intercultural dynamics; however, as the research must fit in a frame of ‘availabilities’ (as researcher’s specific timetable and resources) I was forced to restrict the fieldwork, and I decided, on one hand to interview Italian Development NGOs which carry out projects in Mozambique, on the other, to deepen the ethnographic study through *one* case study in Mozambique.

The research project was planned in two parallel parts/fieldworks: one in Italy and one in Mozambique. In Italy, the project consisted in contacting NGOs which carried out projects in Mozambique and conduct semi-structured interviews with one representative (interview script in Appendix I). In Mozambique, the project was more complex to plan, because it was divided in two expeditions at one year distance, in order to observe the changes after one year has passed since the beginning of the development project (the case study).

The research was then structured on the empirical and theoretical study of the interactions between co-operation projects and the local group to raise data on the thematic. The research methods implied a qualitative study on the subject, with fieldwork to *gather primary data*; *gathering secondary data* about the situation of international

¹³ In Italy, for instance, Development projects carried out by NGOs are usually at least 3 years based.

cooperation in Mozambique and in Italy, and finally a *literature review* of the most relevant bibliography.

During 2008, I developed contacts with Humana People to People (in Italy), an NGO which implements various development projects in Mozambique. They accepted my request to follow one of their projects in Mozambique, thus I had a case study. The Project to be followed through ethnography is entitled "Child Aid" in the province of Tete - Mozambique, which began in January 2009.

The fieldwork in Mozambique relied on a first 3 months stage (April-May-June/2009) to begin with the ethnographic path. Later, I pursued another 2 months stage (between April-May-June/2010), planned to deepen the ethnography and observe the project's interactions within the community. The idea was to observe the Child Aid Project at the very beginning, and to make a comparison with the initial phase after 1 year.

In order to organize the field work, I planned to follow some of the Village Action Groups (VAG¹⁴) to see how the population reacted to the NGO project. Simultaneously, I interviewed 7 Area-Leaders (interview script in Appendix III).

In 2009, the observation covered all the project areas (the project works in six areas). As the purpose was to learn about the entire project and deepen the analysis, I chose to focus most of the time on two areas of the project. In the second fieldwork period (2010), since the project was already known, I decided to proceed with an ethnographic analysis centered only on a small community (called Missuko) from one of the areas observed in 2009, to obtain an in-depth case study. In this second phase, the formal interviews were restricted to project staff and other key social actors such as the Régulo¹⁵. In the two periods of fieldwork, I also observed the project's function, and its main activities. Moreover, other key actors were identified and interviewed during the field experience.

I read many literature about methodology, and about Mozambique (including novels) to collect secondary data about my fieldwork and arrive there with a clear vision of the social reality. However, I limited the literature about the interpretations of international cooperation, aiming to read them after the fieldwork, as suggested in grounded theory. I decided to proceed with the ethnography, including different techniques to collect data: in-depth and semi-structured interviews, participatory observation, and visual anthropology (I

¹⁴ As I will discuss in Chapter Seven, VAGs are groups of local population that has a key role in the project's functioning because they are the driving force of it.

¹⁵ The most important local traditional authority

will discuss them in item 4.2).

Data Collection

According to the grounded theory, the most common methods to conduct a qualitative research are “intensive interviews, often combined with participant observation. But, any type of data can be used, including quantitative” (Simmons, 2009). Besides, during the field work, new things can come up and show new directions and new methods to apply, depending on the comparison scenario. For that reason, the data collection is continuing while dialoguing with analysis throughout the research process.

For my data collection, in Italy, I contacted Development NGOs and applied a semi-structured face-to-face interviews (Appendix 1); I also pursued a focus-group with one of the NGOs which is a Consortium of 6 NGOs that carry out projects in Mozambique. Besides, as one of my respondents was not in Italy, I could not do the face-to-face interview. However, he kindly accepted to answer the questions by e-mail. Despite the attempts to contact most NGOs with projects in Mozambique, I received positive feedback only from 14 NGOs¹⁶. Nonetheless, I think it is a reasonable number because according to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there are about 30 Italian NGOs working in Mozambique (Ambasciata d'Italia in Mozambico, 2008).

In Mozambique, the approach adopted was typical of the socio-anthropological studies with repeated field participatory observations. During periods of observation in 2009 and 2010, I was hosted in the structure of the NGO Adpp (member of Humana People to People group) which conducts also a Teacher Training School project to train rural primary school teachers (EPF-Escola de Professores do Futuro). I hold a course about qualitative methodology for the students from EPF (one course in 2009 and another in 2010, with two different groups of students, accounting for a total of 200 students¹⁷). One of the proposed activities was to experience the fieldwork, and I asked them to conduct a brief semi-structured interview (interview scripts in Appendix II) with project's beneficiaries. The students were divided in 3 members groups. Each member had a specific task: one should make the questions, the second should write down the answers,

¹⁶ The interviewed NGOs were: Celim, AVSI, COOPI, Humana People to People, MLAL, CAM, Manitese, COSV, Terres des Homes, Fondazione Tovini, CIES, ARCS, ISCOS, AISPO.

¹⁷ In 2009, the course involved 100 students and lasted 7 hours of classes (in 8 weeks), with a field activity on the techniques of qualitative interviews of 4 hours. In 2010, the course involved 100 students and lasted 7 hours of classes (in 6 weeks), with the field activity on the techniques of qualitative interviews of 4 hours.

and the third should make the ethnographic fieldnotes. Their interviews were used in this research as a data source, despite not all of them were of good quality because some answers were too short.

The same procedure with students from EPF was adopted in 2009 by the Area-Leaders of the Child Aid project and me. I asked them to conduct interviews with VAG-Coordinators (interview script in Appendix II). The data from those synthetic interviews were analyzed more as quantitative data, since I had a reasonable number of interviews (126 in total) carried out with the same method, and some interesting themes emerged from them. Besides, the opportunity to discuss with students and Area-Leaders the reactions of local people towards the project was really enriching, and allowed me to compare my own ideas about what local people was actually thinking and feeling about the project. Some students and Area-Leaders reported their impressions about their interviewees, and such comments enriched my research a lot, since they participated as researches too.

Thus, during 2009, the ethnographic research had the objective to understand the local context and observe the project's initial activities. The examination was conducted at the beginning of the development project: I visited all the six areas, interviewed beneficiaries, and followed most of its activities through ethnographical observation both in the local communities and in the project's headquarters. Accordingly, I could observe the dynamics that emerged from the contact between local communities and the inclusion of the project in that context. Due to constrains related to transport and time, despite visiting all areas, I focused the 'shadowing' on two areas, in which I could observe more closely and continuously the project activities and the reactions of beneficiaries.

In 2010, the project was already known, and I conducted a fieldwork in a shorter time (about two months). Besides that, I noticed that the semi-structured interviews with beneficiaries had many concerns (cf. sections 4.2 and 4.3), so I decided to change strategies in the second fieldwork. To overcome the difficulties with the face-to-face interviews and meet the goal to understand how the project influenced local's people's life, the choice was to deepen the ethnography focusing on only one village, and following the life of 4 families, with the help of visual anthropology (cf. section 4.2). However, I did not quit the other methods: I continued to conduct semi-structured interviews with key informants, and perform participatory observation among the project's activities and meetings.

To sum up, with respect to data collection, in Italy 14 NGOs were interviewed. In Mozambique, I interviewed beneficiaries, project's VAG-Coordinators, influent headmen, and the entire project's staff (even if in some cases it was informal interviews and/or conversations). Besides, other local relevant stakeholders such as representatives from local government, NGOs, Research Institutes, and Academicals, were consulted to capture their positions on the subject. In the first fieldwork phase (2009), me, Area-Leaders and students from Teachers Training School of ADPP interviewed a total of 12 VAG-Coordinators and 52 beneficiaries. In 2010, we held 62 interviews with beneficiaries, and an ethnographic analysis focused on four families in the community of Missuko. Among the other key actors, I interviewed three local political authorities of Chiúta, a school teacher, four political representatives of the Tete district and three representatives of NGOs (interview script Appendix IV).

Data Ordering and Analysis: Atlas TI and Excel

From this part of the research onwards it is possible to talk about a grounded theory method. After coming back from Mozambique in June 2009, and 2010, I experienced a full immersion in the data analysis, and with the use of the software Atlas TI, I could bring out from the data the main themes to build the framework of the situation studied, and in this sense it has been an *inductive* process.

The fieldwork analysis was conducted mainly with the help of the software Atlas Ti and Excel. Atlas Ti was conceived to analyze qualitative data, and is mainly based on the way grounded theory set the research. Actually, the grounded theory constitutes the methodological framework for the functioning of many qualitative analysis software (Nunes, 2005:50). Atlas TI allows summarizing the empirical elements, catching the substance of field data (Simmons, 2009). It also permits to put the subjective contents of fieldwork together with the 'raw' data, and such perceptions are crucial to the analysis of the data and to build the conceptualizations.

I made most of the transcriptions, and then I started quoting, coding and developing concepts through the analysis of the main themes emerged from the data. The choice to transcript interviews directly in Atlas TI was made in order to write ideas just as they came to my mind during the transcription, because ideas are fragile (in the sense that if we do not note them quickly, we may forget them later) and must be written as earliest as possible (Simmons, 2009).

I could analyze with Atlas TI my fieldnotes (from 2009 and 2010) and all the in-depth interviews carried out in Mozambique and in Italy. The software helped me to organize the data, as I codified them according to the main themes expressed by the interviewees. It is also enabled me to start building the concepts through the introduction of comments about main important quotes. Then, I could also relate the interviewees ideas with mine's, and make a sort of a 'map of ideas', culminating with the rising of concepts 'grabbed' on the data.

Notwithstanding, to analyze the 126 shorter interviews carried out with beneficiaries of the project (made by me, EPF students and Area-Leaders), I used Excel tables with the summarized answers. Despite I used another program, the grounded theory process was the same: I analyzed them extracting the main ideas, and started from the interviews content to write-up the concepts. I divided the answers into 3 main themes: ideas about the project; changes in the social/environmental context; ideas about development. I attributed to each idea one color, and I colored the answers to have a colored map of the main ideas, and a visual notion of the importance each theme had among the answers. I also made a quantitative analysis, observing how many interviewees gave a positive or negative evaluation about the project. Besides that, I also individuated the most deep and interesting responses and used them as hot spots for the rise of concepts.

Writing and Literature Comparison

Despite the authors of grounded theory divide 'Writing' and 'Literature Comparison' in two distinct phases, I started the writing of the thesis following my data analysis and only then I compared my findings with the theoretical bibliography on the subject.

Actually, the first chapter I wrote was Chapter Six, in which I describe the Mozambican site where the research took place. I started from that chapter even before performing the analysis of the data, since it was a chapter much more related to the ethnographic notes about the structural context. Then, I wrote Chapter Seven immediately after having processed the data, just after my coming back from the second fieldwork in Mozambique (2010), when things were still fresh in my mind. This chapter reports the results of the fieldwork in Mozambique, and in the writing phase I compared my grounded findings with the literature review, identifying authors and theories that fit to my study.

Afterwards, I wrote Chapter Five, which reports the outcomes of the Italian fieldwork. Then, I made Chapter Eight, which is the most theoretical chapter of my dissertation, since it analyses the intercultural dynamics of international cooperation: in this chapter I developed the core results of this thesis by comparing the grounded findings from Chapters Five and Seven.

The literature review was carried out along with the writing, and it was very useful to compare my ideas with previous ones, which enriched much my writing process. For that reason this was a path with both *inductive* and *deductive* procedures.

4.2 Ethnography and its Methods

The essence of ethnography is understanding the standpoint of the ‘other’, how he/she conceives the world, i.e. which his/her worldview is. According to Malinowski (2008 [1922]), the Ethnographer

Should never lose sight (...) to grasp the native’s point of view, his relation to life, to realise *his* vision of *his* world. We have to study man, and we must study what concerns him most intimately, that is, the hold which life has to him. In each culture the values are slightly different; people aspire after different aims, follow different impulses, yearn after a different form of happiness” (Malinowski, 2008 [1922]: 25)

Hence, the most important aim of the Ethnographer is providing a satisfactory representation of the culture he/she is studying, in accordance with the natives’ standpoint. It is impossible to formulate a theoretical frame without first making a deep observation of the subject reality, and for the study of cultures, *ethnography* is particularly appropriate. To make a good ethnography, is not enough to immerse in a different culture, but it is important to be open to and appreciate it. As we all belong to a specific culture and line of thought, when we are confronted with different worldviews usually we use to act according to ethnocentric convictions and devalue the other’s culture in relation to ours’. For that reason, if the ethnographer wants to capture the other’s worldview, he/she must be able to question his/her own ways of perceiving the reality, relativize it and to be *open* and understand the way the *other* sees the world, without any judgment of value. This is the biggest challenge the ethnographer faces.

Methodologically, ethnography consists in observing as impartially as possible the other's culture while being immersed in its reality (*impartially* means that the observer should 'undress' his own cultural 'lens' to see the 'other' without prejudices). The observation should focus on understanding not only the way they live, but also their definitions, evaluations, interpretations of their surrounding world. Thus, to accomplish a good ethnography, it is fundamental to *participate* in the life of the studied subjects and keep a close relation with them: the experience inside another culture is the key to give a description of the observed facts through the native's view, logics and meanings (Pinto & Santos, 2008).

The fieldwork usually combines observation with in-depth interviews to catch the native's point of view, and in such process all the sensations of the researcher are relevant. Even the emotions play a fundamental role, since they express the 'strangeness' that the researcher undergoes in relation to the 'different'. In this process the ethnographer usually starts to question his own culture, relativizing it.

The Ethnographer, once is placed in the culture he/she wants to study, can make use of a wide range of methods. Below, I report the methods I used during my ethnographic fieldwork in Mozambique: fieldnotes, interviews, participant observation and visual methods. As my interest was understanding the interaction existing between development project and local community, I was hosted in the project's structure: during the day I went to villages to follow the project's activities and interview beneficiaries. In 2010, I decided to study deeply one village, and I used to go there every afternoon, when people were at home after the work in their crops during the morning. I talked to them, trying to understand their way of living and if and how projects affected their lives (cf. Chapter Seven).

Participant Observation

To observe and participate in the insider's life is fundamental to the ethnographic study because it allows us to capture the meanings from his/her standpoint. In my research, I was particularly interested in understanding the dynamics enhanced by the project in the lives of its beneficiaries, and the participants observation was useful to understand the cultural dynamics triggered by this relation. For that reason, I was immersed in the project's context participating in many of its activities, and following beneficiaries' realities to understand the project's implications in their lives. Actually,

being hosted in the project's structure sometimes was not positive because local people usually thought that I was working for the project and it was really difficult to make them understand that my role was merely observing the project's impacts on their lives. For that reason, I was often asked to bring things for them, and how the project would improve their lives.

Despite such misunderstandings, during my fieldwork I had to understand the local's worldview to realize how the project was influencing –or not- their lives. For that reason, I also visited the villages to participate in their everyday's life. This task was not that easy because I had limited time, and I was not actually living among them: I lived in the project headquarters and visited the communities during the day. However, the project was placed inside the rural context, and it was located near some villages (while others were very far from it). My interest was then understanding the perspective of the beneficiaries had of the project, and also the project's vision of the beneficiaries.

The participant observation permits to understand everyday life about social groups, framed in specific *here* and *now*. It provides raw material, i.e. “facts gathered in concrete settings of human existence” (Jorgensen, 1989: 14) to allow further analysis and theorization of the studied phenomenon. When participating in the usual activities of Chiuta's life (where the fieldwork took place), and in the project's activities, I could report the empirical facts of my personal experience (including feelings) regarding my relation with the subjects of my research. The use of all of our senses is important to “comprehend the fullness of experience we are seeking to understand” (Daly, 2007: 131). Thus, only with direct observation of customs, behaviors, statements and interpretations, it is possible to collect reliable material to construct the ethnography.

Fieldnotes: a Thick Description

Fieldnotes contain the description of observed things during the research. As stated above, when we do an Ethnography is extremely important to record everything, even the feelings and sensations regarding the subject of study. The fieldnotes is a key document that will record a chronological description of the fieldwork, explaining each event, and all impressions of the researcher. It is really important because is the base for the ethnographic analysis, in which the researcher start framing his/her reflections and critiques, possible concepts and theorizations.

It is really important to transcript in the fieldnotes exactly how things happened and

how the subject argued the way he/she believes things are ‘correct’ or ‘wrong’. It ‘gives a hand’ to the memory of the researcher and allows him to reconstruct important events in the analysis phase (Jackson, 1990). The researcher must pay attention to understand how the ‘other’ perceives things around him/her. Besides, nothing should be taken for granted.

Clifford Geertz, in his book *Interpretation of Cultures* (Geertz, 1973 [1962]) gives insightful ideas regarding the importance of fieldnotes. According to his ethnographical method, it is particularly relevant to make a “thick description” from the observations, with the aim of a deep description of the culture the ethnographer is involved with. Everything observed must be interpreted inside a context of significance. This kind of description goes far beyond the sole detailed description of facts because it also seeks the inner, latent, and symbolical meanings that make sense for whom lives inside that culture. It needs to register not only what the researcher sees but also to content what is immanent to that culture, the real meanings for local actions, behaviors, expressions, etc.. Thus, in the fieldnotes the anthropologist register what is under the surface (Pinto & Santos, 2008).

Substantially, fieldnotes are a kind of memory for the researcher, since it is really difficult to rely exclusively on our memory. Hence, it is a valuable instrument to record the research and start the interpretations from it. In this process it is important to pay attention to the details, and report in the fieldnotes all the information as soon as possible. During my fieldwork I used to note everything in my fieldnotes at the end of the day, and not to lose sensitive data regarding subjective information from interviews. Once they were over, I used to take some minutes to write in the fieldnotes my personal impressions about the relation with my respondents and the dynamics emerged during the interview.

Interviews: Focus Group, Semi-structured, Unstructured.

“Interviews are conversations with an agenda” (Daly, 2007: 139). The interviewer usually shapes the direction of the conversation by making questions, and collects knowledge about the studied subject. However, the content of interviews is treated as a representation of the interviewee reality. For that reason, it is important that the interviewer is as much as possible objective, distant, and neutral in order to allow the emergence of the interviewed positions.

According to Bourdieu (1993), the interview is always a social construction: then, reflecting on such construction is important to be aware of such feature. In fact, as the author proposes, the communication should be non-violent: as the researcher has a *domain*

on the interview (he has a higher cultural capital, and in such circumstances occupies a supremacy position), he has the possibility to generate *symbolic violence*. To reduce this *symbolic violence* and eliminate as much as possible the *distortions* of the interview, Bourdieu (1993) suggests that the researcher should enhance a relation of *active* and *methodic listening*, in which the interviewer should be completely available, open and accept the conditions of the interviewee, who has to feel comfortable. In this perspective, the interviewer should be able to engage in the points of view and feelings of the interviewee, creating a sort of *mimesis* with him/her.

It is not possible to understand the ‘other’ if we do not understand his living and social background. For that reason, the interviewer should be aware that each human experience is unique, so as he can understand the personal drama of the interviewee (Bourdieu, 1993). Who conducts the interview should ‘forget’ him/herself and open up to the ‘other’.

In this research I interviewed many persons, using different methods, but always keeping in mind Bourdieu’s suggestions. Most of my respondents were interviewed through semi-structured interviews, while in one case I conducted a focus-group with an Italian NGO. In Mozambique with some key actors I adopted a more in-depth unstructured interview to better understand their life histories. During my fieldwork, sometimes I felt frustrated because of the social construction (Bourdieu 1993) that the interviews engendered. Especially in Mozambique among the beneficiaries of the project, my role as a researcher intimidated the interviewed because it seemed that I was putting them to a ‘test’: this was felt like a *symbolic violence*, so I had to review my methods (cf. next section).

Visual Anthropology

In the first stage of this research (2009) I used semi-structured interviews to collect data regarding the opinions of beneficiaries about the project in Mozambique. However, during the fieldwork, I realized that such method did not help me raising as much information as I expected, so I decided to change strategy for the second fieldwork in Mozambique. Thus, I readjusted the second phase of fieldwork (2010) regarding the beneficiaries of the project. I proceeded with the ethnography (making use of participant observation, and interviews only with key respondents) and introduced visual anthropology methods.

In this second phase I decided to focus the observations only on one small village (about 650 inhabitants), and to follow 4 families in their daily activities- 2 men and 2 women. Despite carrying out informal conversations and spending some time with them during the first weeks, later on I asked them to take photos of their lives. I lent them my photo camera, and I said to take pictures about things that in their opinion were special. I guided them only providing some general themes: home; family; places I like; places I dislike; main important services in the village. The aim was to understand their lives in depth, and observe if there was any sign of the project's presence in their daily lives.

After the photo sections, I came back to interview them with the printed photos (unfortunately I could print only Black and White pages, but I gave them the copies), trying to understand their relation with the environment and the traits of the project in their lives. The photos undoubtedly were a good incentive to the interviews. However, no one told me spontaneously things about the project. Only under my stimulus they gave some little opinion about it, and one of my respondents wanted to know more about it (suggesting that he did not know anything about that).

The use of visual methods helped me to enter in the local social context, because photo's sections was an entertaining activity, which stirred the emotions of the interviewees, so they became more open and less shy (especially women). It was as a way to *ease* the contact and 'broke the ice'. Although the photos themselves revealed important local social dynamics, they did not have relevant information about the relation between project and beneficiaries, and thus they did not became part of my analysis. However, they were very useful to deepen my relationship with the beneficiaries of the project, and stimulated in-depth interviews. In this regard I could find useful evidences of the relation between beneficiaries and the project.

Hence, making an overall evaluation on visual methods, I think they deepened the ethnography, and were much more suitable to understand the relation between beneficiaries and the project compared with semi-structured face-to-face interviews. However, the core methods of my research remained the participatory observation and the fieldnotes, where I could write everything I observed, even the 'non-responses'.

I report here some photos from my respondents, and I describe some of the local dynamics they revealed.

Photos of Visual Anthropology and Local Dynamics



Figure 3: Photo made by a woman (1)

The importance of this photo regards the gender dynamics: my respondent was the wife of the man with the kid on his lap. She was afraid to take a picture of him, because according to local dynamics, women cannot approach men without previous authorization, in sign of 'respect'. However, when he realized that she was taking pictures, he was keen to be photographed, and indeed took his son in his arms, showing a father's affection to the child which is not very common in local daily life.



Figure 4: Photo made by a woman (2)

This place is where the woman (2) uses to prepare 'Pombe', a local beer very appreciated that is also an important source of income.



Figure 5: photo was made by woman (2)

My informant wanted to photograph the tree that is the symbol of the community, and the local shop (white house), the most important market in the village.



Figure 6: Photo I took of the woman (2)

When asked to take photos of the main collective services in the village (common goods), women chose the Milling, a very important innovation, especially for women who use to mill maize manually. It shows the slowly arrival of modernity, an important local dynamic.



Figure 7: Photo made by a man (1)

The barn reveals the 'wealth' of a family: if it is full after the harvest, it shows 'wealth', and represents a successful crop cycle, which relies on the family's status.



Figure 8: Photo made by a man (2)

My informant photographed his wife's family, with whom he lives, because in Chiúta, families follow a matrilineal lineage: the husband join the wife's family.

4.3 How Methods Helped Overcoming Difficulties?

While in Italy the main fieldwork constraint was obtaining the NGOs' consent to interview them, in Mozambique the challenges were quite many. In this section I report the main issues I had to deal with during the fieldwork, and how the chosen methods helped me to overcome (or minimize) them.

Local Language

First, I did not know the local language (Chichewa), and it was my first time in Mozambique, and I had to overcome the lack of personal experience in the country. To interview people I had to employ interpreters¹⁸ (sometimes the project's staff helped with translations, but usually I had the interpreter with me). However, the interpreters had never done this work before, and the responses at the beginning were too short. On the other hand, the interpreters became a good source of information because we spent a lot of time together in the pathway to the villages, and our close relationship permitted a more spontaneous and fluid conversation about local life, which was very useful. However, having male interpreters did not help with the dialogue with women, as I shall expose below.

Gender Differences

The other main issue was the gender differences, constitutive trait of rural Mozambican life. The fact that I was a woman was not seen as negative: I was always welcome anywhere and I felt safe (perhaps because I am an outsider). However, the local women are not used to express their opinions, and interviewing them was almost an impossible task because usually they gave very short answers. However, such difficulties tended to decrease where women were more familiar to western culture, had a higher degree of study, or with older women, who were able to provide a deeper discourse.

For that reason, semi-structured interviews failed with almost all women. With the visual methods things went a little better: I could interact more with women during the shooting sections, even though during the interview with pictures I felt frustrated, because

¹⁸ In 2009 I had a male interpreter, and in 2010 the project's leader indicated me another man to be my interpreter. However, the second interpreter had personal problems, and I turned to the first interpreter.

- despite they were better than semi-structures interviews - the presence of the interpreter, and in another case, of the husband had a negative influence.

With one of the women I observed in 2010, things went fine during the days I visited her and during the shooting section. However, when I returned to interview her with the photos, her husband was there, and I could get barely few words from her: only he talked. With the other women, the interview went definitely better, however, she was preparing the lunch for her family, and was very worried with her husband, so she was not really willing to answer my questions. I reasonably insisted with her (trying to make her eager to answer), but after a while she stopped talking, neglecting me, and I had no choice but finish the interview.

The Distances from the Western Model of Research

In order to feel closer to the reality of rural Mozambique, before starting the fieldwork I prepared myself talking to some people that had been there, read many books and articles from local authors, and several writings on the subject. However, for the first phase of the Ethnography I planned semi-structured interviews with project's beneficiaries. Such method was very suitable for the interviews with Italian NGOs because it is commonly used in western contexts. However, as noted earlier, in Mozambique this method did not showed very useful.

Thus, I realized that it was really complicated to use face-to-face semi-structured interviews with the recorder to interview local people, because the *symbolic violence* (Bourdieu 1993) took place, and people did not feel really comfortable with such inquiry method. Besides, sometimes it was difficult to make myself clear, mostly because my assumptions were based on my worldview. A good response for such problem was discussing the questions I have prepared with the project's staff and students of EPF. As they also conducted the same interviews, they suggested some major adjustments of the script.

Social Distances

The idea of being *neutral* is a very complicated one in studying rural peasants from Mozambique. Only the very fact that I am a foreigner constitutes a *contamination* from which is impossible to disentangle. The 'white foreigner' in that context is immediately

linked to 'wealth', and many local people assume the stigmatized role of the 'poor' whenever they get in touch to the 'foreigner'.

Besides being perceived as 'wealthier', when I was interviewing them, they usually supposed that I was from the project, and in general they tended to answer what they imagined the 'white man' wanted to hear. This represented a hindrance to my aim of capturing their 'real' perceptions about the project, in an attempt to understand whether it really impacted on their lives or not. Only through the participant observation this complication could be reduced. According to this attitude, the interviewee was usually concerned with telling me that he agreed with the project, and that it was very good for the community. However, this acquiescence 'betrayed' the ethnographic observation that was telling me different things, but confirmed the theory of domination in that context.

4.4 Conclusion

The anthropologist goes to the fieldwork with a clear plan, but he/she faces a reality that forces him/her to redirect the decisions made 'a priori'. 'Being on the field' is a unique experience: you are part of a special relationship with the 'other' in a specific time and context. This dialectical relationship with the object of study may introduce new alternatives and interests, and perhaps the researcher is driven to new courses and strategies for the investigation (Bollettin, forthcoming).

In my fieldwork, qualitative research methodology allowed me to shape a more comprehensive sight because subjective matters were relevant to understand the relationships I was interested in. Doing field work in 2 different countries forced me to use multiple qualitative methods. On the one hand, in Italy I decided to use deep semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions applied to representatives of Italian NGOs working in Mozambique, to understand what they think about development issues. On the other hand, in Mozambique, I decided to observe an international cooperation project through an Ethnographic path and follow its activities to get information from direct beneficiaries to comprehend their opinion about the project.

The methods had to be varied because the context in Mozambique was much more complex: local people were not familiar with western researchers, and the scheme of the interviews with the project's beneficiaries was not satisfactory because it resulted in poor information. Besides that, just few people knew Portuguese, and the need of an interpreter weakened the interview content. Ethnography and key actors' in-depth interviews proved

very suitable to compensate the unproductiveness of semi-structured interviews with beneficiaries of the project, allowed more exhaustive information to be collected, and helped further considerations. Another solution was the use of visual methods: project's beneficiaries were asked to take pictures of important things in their lives; subsequently, I interviewed them under picture-stimulus. These methods revealed to be crucial to understand the local situation and the subjective relationship of the beneficiaries with the project.

In Mozambique, the main challenges of the fieldwork were the social distance between the researcher and interviewees, in this case represented by the stigma of 'rich foreigner' and 'local poor'. This kind of relation implies a sort of predisposition of Mozambican interviewed people to answer what they imagine that 'westerner' would like to hear, and reveal a compliant attitude, that on a large scale reflects the economical submissive relationship between developing and developed countries.

Last but not least, an additional challenge was being *neutral*. Due to the fact that I was doing a research in the context of an international development project, Mozambicans immediately thought that I was part of the project, so it was difficult to obtain critical views about it. Hence the effort to adequate qualitative methods regarding cross-border research issues was fundamental to collect high-quality data.

CHAPTER 5 - Italian International Cooperation - Fieldwork in Italy

This chapter examines the Italian international cooperation in Mozambique: its structural framework and what cooperation means to Italian NGOs. During the fieldwork in Italy, I interviewed fourteen NGOs that carried out development projects in Mozambique (cf. Chapter Four). The interview script (Appendix I) was prepared to collect information on the way NGOs work, understand the desk officer's personal experience, and the interactions between project and local communities¹⁹. I structured my investigation by examining interviews with key respondents of NGOs working in Mozambique, and I shall explore the reasons why they implement cooperation, their ideas of development, and how they deal with the relationship within local communities.

In the first section of the chapter, I explain how Italian International cooperation is structured and the role of NGOs within this framework. I argue that in recent decades the NGOs actions have received more consideration and such trend fostered the emergence of development projects implementation by NGOs in the developing world. Furthermore, despite Italian International Cooperation is not disbursing the amount NGOs expected, in Mozambique it plays an important role, and has a significant relationship with the country since it had a key role in the 1975 peace treatment through the NGO Comunita di Sant'Egidio.

In the later sections of this chapter I will outline how NGOs are currently acting on the international cooperation scene. I will focus on the outcomes of the fieldwork carried out in Italy that runs projects in Mozambique, to understand how the cooperation agents *act*, what they think of their own practices, strategies and contradictions and how they interpret the aid. I argue that development projects on the field are much more complex than the project design, and such discrepancy needs a continuous reformulation of strategies. The current scenario can be described as an attempt of NGOs to conduct the participatory approach to guarantee the sustainability. However, despite few examples, almost all NGOs are struggling to reach such sustainability, and many of them stated that

¹⁹ When I talk about local communities, most of times I mean Mozambican communities where NGOs have projects.

this is very difficult to achieve or measure. The idea that projects are designed to satisfy local populations needs is widespread among NGOs, even if they say that it is difficult to know what local people, the main beneficiaries of the projects, think about them.

This chapter has an essential role in the dissertation since it proposes to analyze how development is thought by whom is currently practicing it from the “developed world”, with all the resources, capabilities, competences, etc. needed to carry out such procedures. The aim is to perform a further analysis in Chapter Eight in which I propose a comparative analysis of how development is conceived on the opposite sides of a cooperation structure: from whom prepares the aid to whom receives and interpret it according to local views (Chapter Seven includes further discussions on the subject as it describes what project’s beneficiaries think about the NGO intervention). Chapter Eight will then talk about the considerations proposed in this chapter to elaborate the thesis of this dissertation on current development issues.

5.1 The Italian International Cooperation in Mozambique

A range of institutions form the International Cooperation for development, such as governments of the richest countries, multilateral agencies (as World Bank), civil society organizations working directly with the local population, etc. Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) hold a great share in this process. As previously stated in Chapter Three, in the past three decades, worldwide international NGOs “have proliferated in number and become increasingly influential players in world politics in the past three decades” (Reimann 2006: 45). According to Reimann (2006), globally NGOs could emerge in the first place mainly due to a suitable environment stimulated by states, international organizations and other structures that “promoted NGOs from above” (Reimann 2006: 46).

In Italy, such phenomenon is not an exception given that most of the Italian non-profit institutions are recently established. Actually, a total of 78.5% of Italian nonprofit institutions were founded after 1981: of these, 55% after 1990 (ISTAT Non Profit 1999 and CNEL / ISTAT 2008). In 1999, the nonprofit institutions in Italy were 221,412, and the 0.6% of them (1,433 units) operated in the International Cooperation for Development area (CNEL/ISTAT 2008). According to the Green Paper of the Italian Third Sector (2010), the laws n.49/1987 and 383/2000 constituted an important political instrument that

formally recognized the third sector and contributed to the growth of international cooperation and solidarity organizations.

In spite of the increasing number and volume of the International Italian NGOs, actually, most NGOs have a small structure with few resources available and rely heavily on volunteers' work. The method NGOs use to raise funds for projects vary according to the type of organization. For instance, there are NGOs that refuse to get funds from Governments because they want to stay independent for what concerns the decisions on their operation modalities, so they usually are financed by private funding from individuals or foundations (i.e. Medecins Sans Frontières, Greenpeace, etc.). In Italy, however, the gross amount of NGOs has been raised due to an increase in national government financial resources, mainly after the financial reform of 1987 cited above. Actually, in the period following such reform a boom in the number of nonprofit organizations was reported. According to the web site of Associazioni ONG Italiane²⁰, NGOs “carry out their projects with their own resources (fund raising, supporters, donations, campaigns, etc..) and public funding, in most cases by the European Union, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (according to the rules dictated by law 49/1987) and Decentralised Cooperation (Regions, Provinces, Municipalities)”. Many NGOs are financed by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and European Union, and, for this reason, they have to work in the same conditions, that is projects lasting about 3 years, and in partnership with other NGOs to obtain more financial resources.

Many NGOs are organizing themselves to put the Italian government under pressure to keep the promise of giving 0.33% of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) to International Cooperation. Italy, as a G8 member, has always been committed to help poorer nations as a donor. However, the Italian performance within the framework of international cooperation does not match the target provided by the agreement with the UN to fight world poverty. Within Millennium Development Goals agreement (UN 2000), while poorer countries are committed to achieve development goals, rich countries should increase development aid to poorer countries, starting allocating 0.33% of GDP in 2006, increasing the amount of 0.56% of GDP in 2010 until they reach the amount of 0.7% of GDP in 2015 (Action Aid Report 2007). However, according to the Action Aid Report (2010), the Italian government is not fulfilling its promise of 0.56% of GDP allocated to Official Development Assistance (ODA). On the contrary, Italy shows one of the worst

²⁰ <http://www.ongitaliane.org/>

donation ratio, as percentage of GDP, not even reaching the 0.2% of GDP in 2007 (Action Aid Report 2007). Italy is showing to the international community to be an unreliable partner. According to most Italian NGOs, which work for cooperation, Italy should restore its credibility, and grant the promised funds.

Despite the general lack of financial resources to International Cooperation, Italy holds strengthened ties with Mozambique, committing significant financial resources to it. According to Anna²¹, representative of one of the NGOs interviewed for this study, Mozambique is an important target to Italian International Cooperation, and an important link between the two countries was established at the end of Mozambican Civil War in 1992, when the Comunità di Sant'Egidio mediated the peace treaty signed in Rome. My informant explains how Mozambique is perceived by Italian cooperation:

Mozambique is seen as flagship of international cooperation, in part because Italy's role in the peace process was notable. There was no resurgence of the war, so it seems that in a sense, the cooperation has worked. And so, there was a very big investment, even by Italy, and there is still a strong presence, of both Italian and international associations. (Anna, 2010, my translation)

Therefore, she thinks that Italian Cooperation has been effective in Mozambique. Actually, according to the Italian National Program Plan for Aid Effectiveness (2009), Mozambique is a priority “1” to Italian international cooperation. Its policies do not differ that much from the political directions of other rich countries or international development agencies, involved with the Millennium Development Goals. For the years 2009-2011 Italian International Cooperation intends to continue with its aid policy in Mozambique, giving special attention to decentralization, primary and high education and support to the administrative capabilities.

The Action Aid Report 2010 explains that in Mozambique, the Italian Cooperation is working with 51 projects and an investment that has doubled in 2008-2009 with approximately 41 million dollars a year, and then dropped to approx. 20 million in 2010. Over 50% of the resources are devoted to health initiatives and access to water. These data show a solid relationship between Italy and Mozambique.

²¹ In this chapter, I report quotes from interviews with Italians' NGOs that work in Mozambique. The respondents' names were changed because of privacy.

Italy is providing an important aid support, and according to Table 4, this country contributed in 2007 with 0.5% of Mozambique’s GDP (OECD 2009). In addition, by the end of 2008 there were about 30 Italian NGOs working in Mozambique²², a significant number if compared to the total of foreign NGOs in the country (188 units, according to the non-profit institution survey - INE/2003), amounting to nearly 16% of the total NGOs. According to the Mozambique’s Italian Embassy website, “Italians NGOs’ initiatives are concentrated in the areas of agriculture and rural development, health, environment and sustainable tourism, social problems, education and training, good governance and human rights”.

Table 4: Official Development Assistance to Mozambique, by donor, and % of GDP, 2007 (current price USD millions)

Donor(s)	2007 (U\$D Millions)	% of GDP
Italy	42.58	0.5%
Multilateral Agencies	681.12	8.8%
DAC* Countries	1073.21	13.8%
All Donors, Total	1776.74	22.9%
GDP**	7751.98	

*Development Assistance Committee

**Gross Domestic Product

Font: OECD Query Wizard, 2009, <http://stats.oecd.org/qwids/>, and World Development Indicators, 2008

Table 5 shows in detail the 12 Mozambican’s major donors (Mozambique Donor Atlas 2008)

22 <http://www.italcoopmoz.com/ong.htm> (last up-date May 2008)

Table 5 - Total Aid Flows of Donors to Mozambique (current price USD Millions), 2007

Donor	2007
Worldbank	239.7
EC*	195.8
United Kingdom	111.9
USAID**	106.1
Sweden	98.0
Netherlands	84.2
ADB**	79.5
Denmark	65.9
Norway	65.5
Ireland	60.6
Germany	51.4
Italy	42.6

*European Commission

**United States Agency for International Development

***African Development Bank

Font: ODAmoz, Mozambique Donor Atlas 2008

<http://www.odamoz.org.mz/reports/indexsub.asp>

This table shows the Aid Flow to Mozambique from donors in 2007. Italy occupies the 12th place among the donors, and if we consider just single countries that represent donors (that are highlighted on table 5), we observe that Italy is in the 7th place, thus can be considered a very important donor.

So far, Italian International Cooperation has completed 49 projects. Currently it is carrying out 52 projects, of which 20 are carried out by Italian NGOs (Oda Mozambique query, data processed by the author, September 2010²³), counting a total disbursement of USD 186 million approximately. Of these 20 projects, 10 are from NGOs interviewed for this study, counting seven NGOs (AISPO, CELIM, CIES, COOPI, COSV, ISCOS, MLAL). In this study I have interviewed 14 NGOs working in Mozambique, and the other seven NGOs that are not among those 20 projects have different funding or work as partners of Mozambicans NGOs that receive Italian funds (NGOs: ARCS, AVSI, CAM, Fondazione Tovini, Humana People to People, Mani Tese, Terres des Homes). Thus, it means that Italy plays a crucial role within Mozambique's society, while being a source of aid to the General Budget Support, and it holds an important relationship with nonprofit civil organizations.

²³ <http://mozambique.odadata.ampdev.net/reports/custom/new>

I shall now discuss the current scenario of cooperation through the following questions: why cooperate? Who are the NGOs working on the field, how they operate, and what *development* means to them? Who are the key actors of international cooperation and development? With these crucial questions in mind I will address the Italian NGOs representatives' ideas about development projects.

5.2 Main Outcomes from Interviews with Italian's NGOs

This section focuses on interviews with Italian NGO representatives who work for Development Cooperation of Mozambique. I only interviewed NGOs involved in development, and not emergency, projects. As argued in Chapter Four, this choice was made because the development projects imply a longer implementation within local communities, and are sources of social change, so represent interesting material for a socio-anthropological analysis.

Identifying the NGOs relationships with development projects, I argue that today the scenario of International Cooperation for development shows a reflection on *how* cooperate in a sustainable way. Past mistakes, and failures concerning the continuity of a project, and even the Millennium Development Goals and the international agencies influence, have forced organizations to rethink their procedures, reflecting upon the best way to improve the effectiveness of projects. By effectiveness and sustainability, I mean the success in changing local people's lives through a durable up-grade in living conditions.

One of the fundamental concepts at the core of projects planning is that projects are for the local community and not for the NGO. Then, despite the fact that the idea of development seems very similar among NGOs, each one is trying to improve its own achievements through implementing different procedures they conceive the best they can do. Actual examples analyzed in this chapter will show what is going on in the Italian International Cooperation scenario. Although some NGOs have more strict ways to cooperate, because they suppose the way they do it is the right one, most of them are more thoughtful upon their own procedures. This also reflects different ways of being part of such development, since operators can have different views on how to get involved with the developing world. Those who showed more open minded, were those who wanted to adopt a more participatory process to achieve development, through the involvement of the local beneficiaries in the actions.

According to one of my respondents (Teo), people involved in the cooperation can behave in two different ways. The first consists in establishing a more objective and professional relationship, somehow detached from local cultural issues, aimed at achieving goals. The second implies a more personal involvement, in which the person devotes him/herself to this challenge of changing the local communities' lives, interweaving with local culture, trying to understand and take it into consideration - within this context one have to put much more effort. According to Teo:

Surely there are two different levels at which the person who wants to work with developing countries can be involved: either as a foreigner, who lives his life on the edge of Mozambican society or trying to get into the social framework and understand its mechanisms. For the first one, working in cooperation is like any other job that allows him/her to know the world. For the second, the effort and the research are restless, and this requires a very strong acceptance of *the other*. On the contrary, the mental and social processes are quite different.. (Teo, 2009, my translation, my emphasis)

From his point of view, people working in NGOs have two different levels of relationship with the projects: one is less concerned with the local configurations while the other is much more associated with local reactions and intimacy aspects. This kind of personal attitude reflects also the type of cooperation a NGO carries out, since usually one looks for a work within an NGO that reflects his/her own ideas. Agents of international cooperation act according to strategies ranging from a model of knowledge and resources transfer from the north to the south of the world - a kind of approach that considers the Western model as an ideal to be adopted by the developing countries - to a model that aims at creating development starting from the assets provided by the local reality. The second strategy assumes that local communities should decide what it takes to improve and be the protagonists of such process. This approach is much more complex because not only aims at transferring things, but also provides pathways to change, so it requires a greater commitment in cultural mediation, and open-mindedness to adapt to the unpredictable results that the relationship implies. Here, I am talking about two different starting points of view, one more objective and detached from the local social reality, and another much more intertwined with local issues. The NGOs that privilege a more participatory method, find more difficulties, and the outcomes are not easy to identify

because they cannot be expressed numerically. Geraldo explains that the implementation of a participatory method requires much more time, money and effort (skilled and trained people), therefore it is not always financed or carried out, even though, according to his view, it is the best way to understand if local people have actually joined the project.

The observed framework showed that NGOs' activities have been by no means homogeneous, since each one tries to find the best way to act. The most significant difficulties are related to local situations, and changes in the international arena, such as changes in financial resources, which limit the NGOs actions. Nevertheless, all NGOs considered their work fruitful. Besides, NGOs have gained much more space in international cooperation along with the increase in importance of the idealized participatory way to conduct development projects. Despite the participatory method is an international goal, since it has become known it has brought more sustainable results, in practice it is the most difficult objective to accomplish.

Why Cooperate? Unfair Modernity

While in some places modernity reigns and living standards have risen and keep on raising, in other places those signs of infinite prosperity are absent. Such consideration is part of the inspirations for international cooperation between poor and rich contexts, according to my interviewees. As I have argued in Chapter Three, the roots of international cooperation date back long ago due to main historical reasons. First the colonial period in which religious missions were trying to “civilize” colonies’ aborigines. This is one of the reasons why many NGOs have a historical past related to missions (actually “missions” remained in the cooperation vocabulary, and expatriates use to say that they go “on mission” when they go to target countries). In some cases the main religious objective of the past has become a “development” goal, more appropriated to current times. Second, the modern era and the Post Second World War, with the declaration of human rights, a historical period that provided a favorable environment for concerns about social inequality in the world to be raised, and prompted the end of European colonies. Some people from richer countries no longer tolerated social inequalities and proclaimed the socialist ideal of resource sharing in the modern world. (for further discussion about development see Chapters One and Two).

Maria told me about her motivations to do this work, describing an uncomfortable feeling about the western society mainly focused on rampant consumerism, while in many

parts of the world people still live based on subsistence, with lack of resources. She was the youngest person I have interviewed, and her speech proved to be pervaded by a non-compliance feeling, typical of a young individual with strong ideals of social equality. The initial motivation of many operators working for cooperation for development originates from a critical view of western society and capitalistic system: many of them consider that high living standards should be available to poor people as well. Therefore, the main ideological framework regards the equal rights and justice for all, a typical socialistic view.

The idea of reducing the unbalance between the north and the south of the globe is almost a constant in respondents' speeches. Throughout my fieldwork, I heard many descriptions of the cooperation as one of the ways to redistribute resources around the world, and a way to build relationships among states based on solidarity, instead of making war.

The main notions delineating the respondents' profile derive from a critical view of the outcomes of the system that guided the world to the current extremely unbalanced situation, in which the gap between poor and rich has become unbearable for a share of the population. Within the intellectual sphere, a new front of thought making a critical complain of world system has been developed, and this trend regards a theory of Degrowth (Latouch, 2010) which explains that rich countries must stop to grow their economy and start allowing poor countries to develop, to re-equilibrate the world. It is a deliberately provocative theory that tries to fluster the cognitive orientation of Western consumerist rationality, and start to think about other possible future scenarios. Despite this is a radical review of the world system that seems something utopist to the current world since it literally proposes a "degrowth", it largely respects my respondents' ideas. Latouche (2007) makes a step forward compared to my interviewees, because he states that we are living in the "religion of growth", and within this framework, growth, western society, capitalism and development²⁴ are synonyms. He proposes that we should leave this rationality, otherwise humanity will walk to a self destruction. Among his ideas, we can highlight that economic growth cannot be infinite, that our world system may collapse if proper measures are not taken, and the western living standard would not be sustainable to the whole world's population (Diamond 2005). Latouche is the protagonist of this anti-capitalist movement, and developed his ideas through the experience matured in African

²⁴ *Development* in this framework is conceived as *economic growth*, a common term of current society.

countries, which led him to conclude that the Western model of development will not be sustainable for long. Accordingly, the Degrowth is a proposal directed to developed countries, while in developing countries it is expected that they grow to have more resources to live with dignity, and leave poverty. Such ideas have a close relationship with my respondents' ideas, although they are still working in the international Cooperation for Development²⁵, which seems contradictory with Latouche's theory. However, some of my respondents disagreed with development in the sense of growth, and were much more worried with the development of human capacities. Besides that, despite interviewees did not showed any direct link with the Degrowth movement (at least during interviews), they were concerned with the idea of equalizing the world, and many of them were not compliant with the capitalistic system since it increases the gap between rich and poor.

The idea that the world has become intolerably inequitable is an uncomfortable reality that compels development operators to rethink the aim of their projects and motivates their work. Many respondents described an initial strong motivation related to the will of helping the poor, but the experience of years spent on the field make them more mature and realistic about the local and global mechanisms, that are realities not easy to change. Analyzing such initial motivations helps to understand that those who have worked for a long time in the cooperation area, usually change the prospective without losing motivation. The motivation shifts from an idealized transformation of the world to a realistic operative work that contributes to improve the life of poor villages. Teo gave his contribution showing how he changed his view:

I personally chose this job because I wanted to help the poorest (at the beginning). Now this feeling has matured and changed, and now my logic is to feel that I can contribute with my skills and my will, to the development of projects that I work for. (Teo, 2009, my translation)

According to his words, he is matured and feels different compared to the initial phase. As I heard the same words also from other interviewees, it is reasonable to assume that the more experienced respondents tend to explain that initially their motivations were more emotional, aiming at a complete transformation of the world. Then, after many years,

²⁵ Within this frame, *development* is carried out with another meaning, regarding the idea of Human Development, which considers not only the economic growth, but mainly the aspects of human capacities improvement.

they developed a more realistic view of things, becoming more ‘engineers’ than “heroes” (in the sense that the individual feels that she/he can change the world). However, motivation is always there, as it is the most important aspect of this job since the career of international cooperation does not offer much incentive in relation to other more promising careers, at least for those who work for NGOs, which according to interviewees provide few opportunities to improve in the career.

Cultural Confrontation

It is mutual. On the one hand I bring something, on the other I receive something. There is a relationship. Even within the cultural aspect, the music, people's lives, how they are organized, I like to understand. (...) So, it is a reciprocal relationship to me: I feel that I give something and, at the same time, I receive something. It enriches me. (Bernardo, 2009, my translation)

Bernardo tells us about how he feels doing cooperation, as an enriching activity. Actually, cultural confrontation was a theme emerged during most interviews, and often my respondents were satisfied with such relation. According to all interviewees, working for international cooperation is an enriching experience because it shows the value of other cultures. As the contact with other cultures is one of the main motivations to work in international contexts, usually development operators easily perceive that other people has good things to share and teach. In fact, most respondents realized that not only westerners have things to offer, stating that cooperation makes sense because is an exchange, and not a one way road.

Cultural confrontation represents a positive element of international cooperation because it offers an intense exchange of experiences, and people participating in such activities have the opportunity to learn new things, improving their cultural background. Working with developing countries also helps to debunk the idea that in the West everything is “better”. According to Gabriella, humility is essential for this task because many people working in this area are arrogant because they think they have the means to develop the third world and they are in some way superior. She noted that women that came from Mozambique to visit Italians centers of violence against women got surprised when they realized that violence against women is found also in Europe, and it is a

crosscutting theme, regardless of nationality. Working in the international cooperation is a way to understand that human reality is transversal, and problems are everywhere. Tina described the development fostered by cooperation as a dialectical process in which she delivers her skills while receiving benefits from the others, as a non powered biased relation. She reported her ideas on such relation:

It is not true that if I've collected the money and because I come from this part of the world that I have all the answers in my pocket. Absolutely not! I mean, I have skills, if I don't have them I will search them. [on one hand] I communicate things, and [on the other hand] I benefit from the others' expertise. The partners will use what they receive to achieve what they have in mind. (Tina, 2010, my translation)

The main concept of this excerpt is that westerners do not own the truth only because they are richer, and partners are expected to receive the skills and use them at their best. My respondent's quote reveals much about the cooperators' desire to see the world of cooperation as a game without winners and losers, but equal. Therefore, the continuous confrontation with different values, ideals, and ways of seeing the world turns the development operators into persons more open to diversity, with a wider vision of the world and more tolerant.

Another important statement is related to the exchange of knowledge. Interviewees who have lived abroad showed a lot of sensitivity about the new things that they have learned, such as a new way of solving conflicts and to raise funds, and many other issues that they have never imagined. Carlo explained that his NGO was carrying out a development project in a Mozambican prison, and according to him this knowledge should also be spread in Italy and in other rich contexts:

There are some experiences from the work in the prison that could be useful in Italy. (Carlo, 2008, my translation)

Likewise, Tina sustained that the exchange is fundamental, and the key concept in International Cooperation consists in recognizing that other cultures have different ways to solve problems, sometimes better than NGO proposals. Another important issue regarding

the differences among poor and rich countries is the way people live, because according to some of my interviewees, we cannot take for granted that life in the West is better than elsewhere. Life in the west might be better under some respects, such as a longer life duration and easy access to medicines and products, but under other respects (as consumerism) life is definitely worse. Many respondents brought the idea that in many villages where people lived in extreme poverty, they could perceive an absolute generosity and dignity that are local values already disappeared in the West, and they seemed sorry for that.

Other ways of living in rural areas of Mozambique touched Italian aid workers. Respondents commented on the freedom and joy in the eyes of children, who seemed much happier than European children. The simple life that Mozambicans lead is also very much worthy and emphasizes the core values that any human being should live, showing how life in rich countries is futile with excessive concerns and distorted values.

The work of NGOs is related to a dialectic relationship with projects' target group. As much as development operators work within other cultures, they learn that the poverty is not as homogeneous as they thought, and that local people are not as they imagined. The close relationship debunks the idealized view of the poor. For those who work against poverty is easier to realize that the poverty is not as it is imagined in rich countries where people thinks that everybody in Africa is starving and living in extreme poverty conditions.

On the other hand, project's beneficiaries usually conceive western people as superior human beings, more intelligent, and mistakenly consider West culture as the best in the world. Along with this conception, there is the imagine of the West as a world with infinite wealth available. Most interviewees argued that these misconceptions are a standard, and sometimes they influence negatively the project's action, since beneficiaries expect that the project is an infinite source of money. Eduardo explains how he deals with this kind of situation:

Since the [beneficiaries'] concept is that white people are somehow wallets with legs, I try to make them understand that things are quite different. The money the NGO has, (except for public institutions funding, which are a small portion), mainly comes from respectable individuals who decided to donate 5 euros, 10 euros, or even 10,000 euros. People do that in good faith and it is clear that they also make sacrifices, because it is not true that all those who donate have

money to burn. (...) Anyway, the vision [beneficiaries have of white people] maybe is associated with the television broadcastings. They see a beautiful world, a world where anything is easily accessible, and then assume that our wealth is redundant. (Eduardo, 2009, my translation)

In the excerpt above, we can identify two important elements: The first is the false idea that beneficiaries usually have of the West, that is, a very rich world. The image of the white man seen as a “wallet with legs” perfectly fits to describe such conception. The second is the fact that beneficiaries do not realize that people from rich countries, who decide to help poor people donating money in “good faith”, most of the time are not rich: they don’t have “money to burn”, and make “sacrifices” as well. This shows how idealized the West is by the beneficiaries of a project. They can realize that the West is not that bed of roses only when they have the opportunity to experience it, as those Mozambican women did when visited Italy thanks to the Gabriella’s NGO project.

Related to this misconception of the white man²⁶ viewed as someone “superior”, there is another interesting outcome of cultural-economic confrontation regarding the way people from rural poor environments receive the foreigners - usually with a lot of ceremonies. Eduardo said that he was not interested in watching the traditional dances and songs that Africans used to show every time he went to see how the project was going on. He explained that he often goes to countries to visit the projects, monitor the activities, and that he goes for mere operational reasons, and not to have fun. Thus, he got tired of that excessive amount of ceremony expressly dedicated to him. This is a result of cultural confrontation, and while the development operator wants to be practical and objective to accomplish his/her work, local people, the beneficiaries of a project are usually willing to show the best things they own to thank and please the foreigner, often in a position of submission before Western people.

Besides these facts, there is another interesting element regarding cultural confrontation emerged during a focus group with an association of six NGOs working in Mozambique, called Consorzio Associazioni con il Mozambico (CAM²⁷). The focus was conducted with seven members of the consortium, four of whom were representatives of

²⁶ *White man* regards the idea of *Western*, since in Southern Africa local people use to distinguish white from black as completely different things.

²⁷ CAM: Consortium of Associations with Mozambique, is composed by the following Italian NGOs: APIBIMI; A Scuola di Solidarietà; Cuamm Medici con L’Africa; ISF TN (Engineers Without Borders - Trento); Progetto Mondo MLAL; Sottosopra.

three NGOs: Engineers without Borders of Trento, APIBIMI and Scuola e Solidarietà. During the focus, some of the interviewees perceived another interesting side of the Mozambican culture, which is the difficulty in being close to each other. According to their view, in Mozambique, despite the fact that in rural communities there is a huge social control that forces people to behave according to strict social rules, a fact stressing the cohesion of the social group, is that in practical daily life people think selfishly: each one is worried about his own production, his own gain, since in a subsistence economy the individual work is sufficient to guarantee the survival. This social dynamics differs considerably from the life in industrialized societies, and it seems odd to development operators that rural people have great difficulty in doing cooperative and association work. The following quote illustrates this situation very well. Pedro explains that in rural contexts in Mozambique people use to join themselves in certain occasions, and it is good to promote parties, but when they have to work together, things are quite different:

When they throw parties they do it, but I feel that there is not much sharing, or solidarity among them. (...) The experience we had, trying to promote the aggregation of groups, associations, cooperatives, etc., did not have the expected outcomes, all had serious problems because (...) probably it is not part of their cultural background working together at aggregation level. (...) Therefore, all those experiences had, and have to cope with big problems. At the end, they see the team work from a personal interest point of view, and they don't do it for the group or the community sake ... but only because they want to obtain something at the end ... and then when they are given a chance, they to do it only for self interest" (Pedro, 2009, my translation).

Accordingly, life in a small community does not foster a great cooperation among people; indeed, people unite themselves only in certain occasions such as celebrations, moments of fun, to dance, to sing, etc. However, team work is not usual in daily life, because personal interests prevail. This is an interesting paradox, because there are strict social rules that everybody has to respect, even forcing people to leave the community in some situations such as witchcraft (indirectly there is a positive side, because they compel people to be generous because of the fear of being witchcraft victims) - under this respect the community is very united. On the other hand, it seems that individualism reigns in economic life, because here the individuals and families must fend alone to survive. In

fact, the difficulty in uniting is mostly dictated by structural economic factors rather than by a cultural trait. In rural areas of Mozambique, individual or family work is enough to guarantee the reproduction of the subsistence system and the survival. In an industrialized society like Italy, groups of people are crucial for the system to work, and the specialized division of labor has become necessary to guarantee the reproduction of the system. Further, people along the history have learned to unite to fight for their rights. Therefore, when those different cultures implement projects of development, the outcomes are not always as expected, and the Pedro's testimonial gives us clues on such phenomenon.

Gaia felt that in poor contexts, people have difficulty in long-term thinking. She sustained that in rich societies it was the bourgeois class that first was able to think about long-term future, because basic needs were satisfied. In the following quote, she explains her theory:

The ability to see a mutual interest, may be not immediate... i.e. sometimes working together does not give immediate results, but you have to work... and this probably regards other approaches of values. (...) But it is probably one of our features. We could do voluntary work probably because some basic needs were already satisfied. (...) I believe that in our society is the bourgeois class that first had the ability to think about the future, the children, preparing them to study, make long-term plans. If you belong to the proletariat, or even peasants', you will consider merely your own needs - people are not accustomed to project, to make long-term projects. It is a whole world on its own. (Gaia, 2009, my translation)

The inherent idea in this excerpt is that the development project puts together two completely different societies and two different histories that try to build something together, but have different worldviews. On one hand we have a society used to make long-term projects and to work in groups to achieve long-term results; on the other hand there is a society that does not look at the future in the same way, but is searching immediate results because the annual cycle rules subsistence life. While in developed countries people are much more used to design long-term plans, in rural Mozambique areas people find it hard to consider the long term profits that the team work implies. Thus, this contact results in a conflict between "two worlds apart" since people act and think without sharing the same logics. The logic that guides the actions of the NGO does not necessarily correspond to the logic with which Mozambicans think. Therefore, the

difference in planning future is a major obstacle for development projects, as development is a long-term process.

NGO's Ideas of Development

The conception of development is a fundamental element that structures the way NGOs work to achieve effective results. Although the term "development" is currently criticized by some schools of thought, as the above-cited Latouche's movement called Degrowth, during the interviews it was possible to observe that all NGOs aim at bringing positive changes in the communities where they work. It is in the light of this logic that most of them prefer to define the term "development". Now I will outline the main concepts interviewees articulated about "development" in an attempt to capture current trends in Italian international cooperation within the development scenario.

According to the interviewees, broadly speaking, development concept falls under three main headings: education, community participation, and opportunities to improve the life of poor. Such headings reflect a development departing from the basis, through the mobilization of the local community to drive changes through the existing assets. The NGOs' work would aim at strengthening the local resources - usually human - by providing education to multiply its power and effectiveness. The starting point for development is that people have strengths and capacities that can be amplified (Mathie and Cunningham 2005).

For that reason education is the key factor for development of human capacities, and all NGOs work through trainings aimed at building ability to local population. The main idea is that NGOs should be an instrument for Mozambicans to help them to get opportunities, as states Teo:

Throughout my experience I have gained the idea that wealth is "having the opportunity to choose," "have a chance". (Teo, 2009, my translation).

Although most of the NGOs agree with this statement, however, some of them disagree, or do not employ the same means to achieve development. According to interviewees, it is possible to identify two broadly different orientations in implementing development projects. The first is more related to knowledge and resources transfer, while

the other to foster development processes already on the field. In some NGOs these orientations intertwine because some things are transferred while others are built locally.

Another way NGOs define development regards the idea of the improvement that not only changes the community positively but it also is durable and sustainable. In order to do that, all the NGOs are aware about the fact that giving money does not solve any problem; rather, it creates more dependence. Therefore, NGOs are concerned with providing aid in the areas that local people recognize as a priority. In this sense the role of the local partners is fundamental to identify the major issues the local people are interested in as well. Thus, the program has to be discussed with the local partners, and things have to be done only under local people's approval: the NGO is not the only one who determines what has to be done. Geraldo explains how he conceives development and the importance of local people involvement:

The project offers opportunities, and to build up this thing (...) there must be their interest and desire to work, to change, to transform a situation. (Geraldo, 2009, my translation)

According to his view, if local people do not show interest in the project, it will surely fail. Therefore, people must join actively the project to make sense, otherwise the process of development does not start-up. Besides joining the project actively, another important issue is the aim of improving the community, i.e. local people should have the desire to improve their own community. This is feasible only if people perceive the benefits the project can bring. This conception is based on the fact that if everyone cooperate working for a common goal, the result exceeds the sum of its parts. This is what is called in socio-economic jargon the "positive-sum game". Accordingly, instead of a zero-sum game, in which any person is self-centered and in competition with each other, the ideal situation is when everyone can benefit from the profits of cooperative work. ISCOS is an NGO which works mainly to improve Mozambicans trade unions, and it firmly believes that if politicians, businessmen and workers talk at the same level, everybody take advantage of it. Such idea aims at a social dialogue between government, unions and businesses, in the attempt of strengthening the bargaining power of the unions, through training on negotiating techniques: this, according to a holistic view of the NGO,

is a way to improve not only the workers' situation, but of the society in general, as it decreases social gap.

Therefore, projects train individuals so that they can work in a social context, for the common good. They create local capacity in people boosting the capacity of civil society. For this reason, sustainable development means capacity building, empowerment of local structures, and self-reliance. Within this frame, giving things is out of the question. Therefore, to obtain a development process, the NGOs provide the initial input, providing skills, materials and structure needed, but the local people's and local partners' participation and involvement is essential to follow the path together. Anna recalled the importance of establishing mutual trust between the ones who drives the path and the ones who receive the aid, otherwise projects will not entail positive changes.

Two of my interviewees were very reluctant to describe their NGOs' idea of development. They felt uncomfortable about the word "development", and argued that they were not in favor of a transfer of the Western model as an ideal model for development worldwide. One of them, Gabriella, replied that she preferred to use the word "solidarity" rather than "development" because we all live in the same world and her NGO fights to put everybody on the same level. The other interviewee, Eduardo, who gave a noteworthy contribution, emphasized the idea that there is no "standard procedure for development" to be implemented in poor countries, and his NGO tries to propose improvements based on local conditions. According to him, there is no way to transfer the development from one part of the world to another. He said:

My NGO has a critical opinion of the development concept (...) We cannot carry development from a place to another around the world. (...) We don't have this idea of transferring knowledge, transferring technology, transferring democracy, or other types of goods. We want to support those structures, ideas, heads that are in place, to open a development path for people (...) starting from a cue that local society gives you. **There is no standard path to apply** [my emphasis] (...) We intend to check whether there is potential for development in one area, and sustain such development, collaborating with that reality. (Eduardo, 2009, my translation)

This quote emphasizes the idea that development must originate from local reality, and that western models should not be transferred because they might not be suitable for

other social contexts. This is a crucial condition for achieving sustainable development. Due to the fact that also the others NGOs are willing to impact effectively on local communities, most respondents were keen to claim that their work is performed jointly with the population, and decisions are taken together with the target group. Moreover, all interviewees stressed that their work is completely addressed to the local people, and they do only what local people want, ask or agree with. Below I report pieces excerpted from respondents' speeches that highlight those features:

Our Projects are not ours, are theirs (...) NGO's work is very close to the population's needs. As we work among the people, our job is quite different from that of the United Nations, for example, in which officers stay in their offices and are unlikely to have contact with the territory. Instead, we stay with the people, working side by side. By staying in touch with the people obviously we perceive their needs. (Gino, 2008, my translation)

We build this idea of cooperation with people who work with us - we don't do it alone. Especially in a continent like Africa that we do not know. Our idea of cooperation in Latin America was built with our partners. We have not built it by ourselves. I mean, we worked together and then the idea came up. (Carlo, 2008, my translation)

I see our project as a very difficult task, much harder than any other project, I believe. We try to guide these people through changes. (Pedro, 2009, my translation)

Some NGOs attach much importance to the local partner and decide not to work directly in the country, assisting with resources and some skills, but relying on the local partner to manage the project. This type of relationship was adopted by two NGOs interviewed. This relation however has its risks, for example to create a relationship for a simple transfer of resources, ()with the role of donor. This happened with an Italian NGO and the Mozambican Red Cross, and their relation broke because the Italian NGO did not agree with the kind of cooperation the local partner was implementing, like assistencialism and distributing things. Another reason lay in the fact that the relation had turned into a

mere transfer of money, and the management of the money by Mozambican Red Cross was not transparent. Therefore, despite the Italian NGO privileges the local partner as the projects protagonist, it has to detect in which extent the partner works with them or if he is just a recipient of funds, and requires a solid relationship of trust. Anna described her NGO work as well, trying to improve local structures. Anna said:

We do the project in partnership with the association that is already working with children, and the project is like an injection of more resources and perhaps more incentives to create new things that have not been done yet. (...) Previously, with an extremely weak civil society in the early eighties in Mozambique, the relationships were held with local institutions. Recently, we have chosen to interact with the Mozambican civil society and work with associations and NGOs. Thus we strengthen NGOs, and now we work completely in parallel - it is an equal exchange. (Anna, 2010, my translation)

Anna explains that their partnership focus has changed from govern institutions to civil society organizations (CSOs), since the CSOs gained capacity and were slightly empowered. Also Camilla said that their partner have grown a lot and their strength is working with local partner. Other religion-inspired NGOs have as partners local churches or church-related institutions such as Caritas.

The Need of New Requests

Cooperation for development is always looking for someone who needs the services offered by NGOs, and this sometimes is experienced with a certain regret by the NGO's operators. NGOs need to provide aid, therefore they always have to "identify new requests" through the help of local partners. However, my respondents seemed really worried about evaluating the "real" necessities, to act only according to those evidences. One crucial concern regards the acknowledgement that NGOs should not do something just because funds are available for that. The passage below explains perfectly the meaning of "induced need", an expression suggesting that some needs are not commonly eminent in poor communities but only when there are funds available to cope with them. Many organizations start working with them, wasting time and resources, and most importantly, do not creating sustainable outcomes. Eduardo exposes his view on such issue:

Another feature that I consider important is to try not to get into the spiral of donors' funding. I mean, in this world [of cooperation], especially in Africa, African [organizations] tend to respond to induced needs: if I travel around Africa and say that I have lot of money to spend on blind children, many organizations will propose to solve the problem of blind children, although nobody have ever posed such problem until the day before. The induced need is something that cooperation does often. So, this is something that drives me a bit - try not to decide what would be good to do there just because people would finance it. (...) Everything that you see concerning [poor] children is done because we know that people would give money for that stuff. If you go to Africa, you realize that children are not as idealized as they are here (...) I mean, I don't want that induced needs become a routine practice, then we need to be careful. (Eduardo, 2009, my translation)

His statement highlights one of the distorted mechanisms of cooperation: a project is implemented only where funding is available. However, this instrument can induce needs that are not really essential. Another important point (of his speech) regards the idealized image of poor children delivered in rich countries, which is a form of fundraising, widely used by NGOs dealing with distance adoption. His NGO is against such kind of action because it promotes a false image of the children just to get money from individuals, while not implying distance adoption programs.

Therefore, NGOs are concerned with the need to find "new requests", and this is a perplexing outcome related to the fact that many NGOs realizes that they **also** need the poor people to continue their work. As Gino says,

[There are] mistakes that we do in cooperation, (...) [as] we need to find someone who needs us. (Gino, 2008, my translation)

The challenge of this system is being careful not to find those needs that are not urgent, and not to propose useless projects. For this reason, some NGOs change their focus in time, because once a problem is solved, there are still (many) others pending. For example, Anna's NGO has changed its focus since it had to adapt to the new local conditions that the project created in the community. Working with children improved

their lives, but did not guarantee their insertion in the labor world. As a result, Anna's NGO decided to focus on the insertion of young people in the labor world.

The framework described above is linked to the recent trend in International Cooperation to review its strategies to accomplish its goals. In the last 3 decades, from 80's until today, the participatory approach was highlighted mostly because top/ down approaches were not successful in developing poor countries. Along with this trend, an increase in the number of NGOs operating at the grassroots has been recorded as well. The change in the view of how to raise development, created an appropriate environment for NGOs to spread, since NGOs work among local communities and have the means to promote local mobilization. Then, the shift in the paradigm of development from a top-down model to a bottom-up approach, was suitable to the emergence of NGO that became partner of governs and Multilateral agencies. However, working at the grassroots to mobilize people with the aim of improving their own lives, adopting a participatory method, is far from being an easy task: rather, it demands a lot of effort, flexibility, and frustrations. In the next section, I will discuss some disappointments exposed by respondents.

Some Disappointments

Although all respondents argued that this work is mostly rewarding, and even though one respondent said that this is the best job in the world, it has its downsides as well. On the one hand it seems that Europeans do everything they can to implement a good project, rethinking their actions, trying to find new solutions, new strategies, giving themselves bodies and souls with the noble intention to relieve poverty. On the other hand, development operators usually get disappointed when they realize that Mozambicans (target group) do not make the same effort, and do not attach the same value to their effort. In this sense, it seems that while Europeans do their best to carry out the project (which is often well financed too), beneficiaries wait idly for the outcomes.

Some respondents complained about the fact that local people in poor countries are too much accustomed to receive aid, therefore respondents feel that sometimes beneficiaries "wait" passively for NGOs to solve their problems (and this is also in part a consequence of the fact that NGOs have to find those who need their help, as discussed in the section above). This kind of attitude is seen as a bad sign, however it is clear that such outcome is a result of the biased relation established between the one who owns resources

(or the one who has more power) and the other who receives it (the weaker one). Respondents also stressed that in Mozambique local people always agree with foreigners who provide aid, and this fact, on the one hand is positive when NGOs have to initiate a project because this attitude favors the beginning of a project. On the other hand, it becomes harmful because it is really difficult to understand if local people are telling the truth. According to Gino:

They are too accustomed to being helped. If there is something you do not provide, then there will be someone else who comes to give it. So, they're not motivated to find solutions by themselves. (...) Mozambique is one of the most "helped" countries, so they are very happy to see someone who works *for* them, not *with* them. We represent a project, it is much easier for us, in the sense that... unfortunately they always say you're right, whatever you say you are always right, even if sometimes you're wrong. (...) There is no peer-to-peer relationship. (Gino, 2008, my translation and emphasis)

The fact that “they always say you are right” is in part a colonial legacy reflecting the unbalanced power relationship. However, accepting western advice has become a routine for developing countries within a macro-structural context. Actually, micro-contexts also reflect such trend and poor people are accustomed to accept everything that Westerners say, without questioning it. Such issue constitutes a source of frustration since development operators cannot know the beneficiaries’ real opinions of the project because local people always agree with them.

Gino also stated that Mozambicans are too accustomed to foreign aid, and consequently they do not seem very involved in doing things to change their lives by themselves. By implication, I suggest that NGOs’ representatives are not convinced that project’s beneficiaries share their development assumptions of local community active participation. The idea that Mozambicans “are happy to see someone who works *for* them, not *with* them” perfectly fits to describe that upsetting feeling, and demonstrates that NGOs’ representatives are concerned with that.

Disappointment should not be considered only as a negative factor. Actually, it helps to reflect on the operators’ cooperation work, to mature their assumptions, and to persuade them that they won’t be able to change the world. Respondents who have matured ideas, commented that previously they had a very idealized concept of cooperation work, like the

idea of helping the poor, but in time their perspective has turned into a more realistic idea of the poor, and they have realized that their work had its limits. Gino explains his maturing process along the years:

My initial motivations were obviously these: sharing, a strong desire to participate in processes... Today, of course, after all these years there is probably less emotion, all this remains very strong with the initial push... Let's say that I have become a bit more realistic. (Gino, 2008, my translation)

This quote illustrates that in any case development operators still believe in their work, the motivation persists, and they try to adjust their work according to the matured experiences. As a result, the Cooperation's "world" has this catchword: "lessons learned", since efforts not always achieve the proposed objectives, and then have to be reconsidered. Eduardo reassesses how to communicate things to beneficiaries to do not allow people to remain inactive waiting for help instead of acting:

Mozambique is a country where (...) there is an old idea of cooperation deeply rooted in people, in which people think that something will come, sooner or later someone will come to bring some things... And this has created a sort of resignation, the fact that people rather than do something, wait for it. Therefore, in my opinion, we should try, (...) not to communicate that [the project] will do much, or that [the project] will be there for a long time. That is, one must be very realistic about this not to foster expectations. (Eduardo, 2009, my translation)

He pointed out a new strategy to tackle the problem of local people's resignation: instead of saying exactly what the project will do and how long it will last, he prefers not to say everything openly, otherwise people would sit and wait for the results to come. According to his experience, in Mozambique (as in many other poor contexts), poor people are aware that there are organizations that want to help them. They have realized that they are "unlucky", so they have become self-complacent of their own problems, even though before the arrival of such organizations they have never taken those problems into consideration. Therefore, Eduardo was eager to take a more realistic view of cooperation, in an attempt to fight the pietism and the idealized charity's world. In addition, he also

distasted another usual misunderstanding, when people suppose that the NGO is like a political institution that has the duty to bring things to the community.

Another relevant source of disappointment is constituted by the non-ethical attitudes of the target group such as the tendency to steal and the difficulty to trust in local people. According to my respondents, in rural Mozambique white people are almost always seen as an "opportunity", as the ones who have resources to offer, and the project contact implies consequences not always pleasant. Pedro explains that unfortunately people steal if they have the opportunity to do it:

Unfortunately, I think there is a blend of our culture and their [Mozambican] culture, two cultures that are immensely far apart, and clearly our culture is dominant. Therefore there is a contamination of their culture, which also leads to enormous imbalances. For example, the attachment to money ... stealing to get money. (...) Even among themselves they do, and especially if they have the opportunity to steal a white man... that's a "must" (Pedro, 2009, my translation)

My respondent's idea goes beyond cultural differences, and regards the consequences of economic differences. The merge of these two cultures reveals on the one hand a stronger and dominant culture while on the other hand a culture that must adapt to these innovations. The cooperation structure is a complex reality that arrives in local poor communities that barely know it, imposing a work procedure and ways of thinking quite distant from the peasants' world. The outcome is a flood of projects that turned the African continent into a mosaic of projects carried out by different NGOs. Local people end up accepting these micro-structures without many chances to question their fragmented existence, sometimes inconsistent with local reality.

This kind of work also does not seem to be much rewarding from a financial point of view and the prospective for career-plan is limited: there are few career opportunities, and my respondents told me that they keep on doing this job mostly due to their strong motivation. They reported the problem of the lack or uncertainty of funding that also causes frustration, and it is difficult to know for sure if a project will be financed or not. This is partly due to the Italian government that should provide more financial resources.

A common issue described by respondents is that the idea of the project is reasonable since it is concerned with the real impact such as the sustainability because all actions are thought for beneficiaries and are discussed with local partners. However, in

practice projects not always work as scheduled. The concern with scarce beneficiaries' participation is a source of frustration because project managers work hard to satisfy the alleged beneficiaries' requests. However, as Chinsinga (2003) states, "when the participation is viewed as transformational, the non-participation of the beneficiaries is a structural barrier" (Chinsinga 2003: 133). According to Gaia:

The diversity that sometimes we do not understand, leads us to be very disappointed compared to our expectations. We need to reckon with it, because it frustrates us, and maybe it is the same to them as they see our disappointment. It is a very subtle game of mutual respect, but often it is difficult, and frequently we get disappointed, especially in the educational and social fields (Gaia, 2009, my translation)

Such aspects are important because they make us reflect on the facts that did not result in positive outcomes, since the Europeans' hard work did not represent a change as it was expected.

Achieving Sustainability

According to some interviewees, it is difficult to be sure about the sustainability of the projects. As explained by Leandro, the effective changes achievement requires a long time - it might take generations. Maria also stressed the fact that a change in awareness, which in great measure is many development projects' goal, is something difficult to assess. The difficulty in gathering such kind of information is most NGOs' concerns, first because development is a long process, and secondly because it is difficult to guarantee that beneficiaries' testimonies are trustworthy, since many of them always agree with westerners' point of view. Geraldo stated that local people in Mozambique usually agree with what he says, and are always worried to give a positive answer. Thus, he prefers participatory methods when they have funds and time to do that, since with this method it is possible to understand better local dynamics, the beneficiaries' real impressions and to understand the real impact of a project.

A relevant concern regards the fact that written projects not always follow the expected "direction", consequently they do not always result in sustainable development to local population. According to Fabio:

When we talk about sustainability... it is a beautiful word, but you can hardly achieve it... Why? Because – attention! – not always a development project goes well. Sometimes you make mistakes, and this can result in a worse situation compared to the previous one. So, it is not always a bed of roses ... (Fabio, 2009, my translations)

Despite the fact that it is not easy to know how the project will really impact on a local context, there is an issue related to the fact that sustainability depends on local people's change and continuity of what was initially proposed. Geraldo argued that it is difficult to guarantee that people who underwent training will continue the project proposal since some of them move, or even die, mostly from AIDS.

Many respondents were concerned about the fact that cooperation causes imbalance in the community where they work. Respondents of NGOs are aware of such fact, and reported that the very presence of the project is already causing an imbalance in the sense that it touches local structures, destabilizing the previous social balance. NGOs representatives are aware that the project has its limits because is never able to please the whole community, satisfying only part of it. Carlo explained that the project the NGO was carrying in prison in Mozambique had not included the jailers in the programs. Then, while the prisoners were having improvements in the quality of food, for the jailers there were no improvements. This caused great problems to the project, and they had to change strategy and include jailers in the programs.

Another classic example of harmful impact is related to the high salaries that INGOs used to pay to local people, which were unbalanced in relation to local market, and created (and still creates) many conflicts among social structure in developing countries. Today we observe that most NGOs are aware of that issue, and try to pay salaries in accordance with local standards. As an interviewee stated:

(...) There are some sanitation NGOs that arrive at a place and hire local doctors paying 3 or 4 times the salary of a local doctor, in order to ensure the most qualified personnel in the area, but impoverishing the public institutions that already have poor staff. (Gino, 2008, my translation)

Gino and most of my interviewees were aware of such problem. However, the presence of the cooperation is not inert since it brings to local people stereotypes of western life.

The Consortium of NGOs interviewed is the most recent initiative that seems to bring an innovation in the way to do cooperation, since it was jointly brought into light by other six NGOs already working in Mozambique. The advantage of this consortium is that it aggregates more than one NGO, and it work only with Mozambique, in one specific area, which permit a deeper and solid intervention, much more fruitful if compared with NGOs that imply one Desk-officer to work with other 3, 4 or 5 countries, and cannot give special attention to each project. This consortium of NGOs (which I am calling an NGO) promotes long-term projects and is a pioneering example of cooperation among Italian NGOs to achieve the commitment to a sustainable community development. This NGO has 10 years' experience in duly developing the projects, performing a more complete and long-lasting work, with long-term results. Pedro explains the way they work:

Now we have nine years of projects, next year will be the tenth. And we'll go on until we feel that there is something to do, that all this makes sense... And until our good province finances us, because the Provincia di Trento financed the 60-70% of the project, while the remaining 30-40% was donated by private sponsors. (Pedro, 2009, my translation)

Therefore, this example seems to be closer to a pragmatic realization of the development idea that prevails in the current scenario of international cooperation.

NGO Personnalisé (or Custom NGO)

This section is entitled “NGO Personnalisé” because I would like to give the idea that NGOs are working in local communities and for each community the NGO needs to approach in a “customized” manner to take into account local features, and make something specific and adapted for each context where they are working with. Otherwise projects will not produce the desired effects. During interviews, most respondents tried to expose the idea that their NGO were making considerable effort to promote the aimed sustainable development, therefore they use to rethink, rebuild, think about other strategies

to impact effectively on local communities. I suggest that this happens due to the earlier failures of development projects, the current trend to implement participatory development, and the competition among NGOs for resources.

In the current scenario of international cooperation we observe a shift in the paradigm, and NGOs seem to look for “making the difference”: for that reason they criticize the other NGOs that insist in carrying out a non-effective cooperation, doing projects just because there are funds, but not bringing real changes about. My interlocutors were very proud of their NGOs, and highlighted some of the aspects that create a customized feature of these organizations.

Therefore, NGOs seem really worried of producing a real impact at the grassroots. This means that many NGOs want to make the difference, so they observe how other NGOs work, and understand many failures of the "traditional" way to do cooperation. In this sense, it seems that they are looking for more suitable and effective means. The following quote highlights such aspects:

Our relationship [among local community] is totally different from what occurs in a traditional project. I think that we can be proud, because we tried to draw a different history of cooperation, in relation to the bilateral cooperation of states and also the cooperation of NGOs. (...) [Our approach reveals] a kind of cooperation that is unprecedented, we do not know other examples of it, so we practically have to build it slowly, day by day. (Pedro, 2009, my translation)

According to Pedro, the way his NGO works is an attempt to do something innovative, to create a new model of cooperation based on the idea of "making the difference," to achieve sustainable results in time. Their proposal does not entangle a traditional way to cooperate or other existing examples of cooperation, rather, it opposes the international cooperation commonly known. In order to highlight his proposal, Pedro criticizes the work of other NGOs, saying that they are "distant", because they are not on the field, and do not make the needed effort to create tight ties, promoting a kind of cooperation that is not sustainable and that cannot actually develop the community.

I observed in the Italian NGOs fieldwork that the current trend in international cooperation is an inventive environment, open to new approaches and experiments. Almost all respondents were concerned in building the cooperation through the dialogue with partner, and learning something from them. Participatory methodology, trying to

persuade the Mozambicans that they are placed at the center of the project and at first they must benefit, are some of the main ideas supported by NGOs' representatives. For these reasons, I suggest that their strategies show some similarities since they are all going in the same direction, to promote a more participatory method for projects, that try to take even more in consideration local partner's opinions, and imply sustainable outcomes.

5.3 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the main ideas presented by NGOs representatives in an attempt to draw a profile of the current scenario of the International Cooperation. Such profile highlights that NGOs criticize past failures, and most respondents stressed strategies apt to give more space to local partners, and to understand local cultural dynamics.

I have shown that Italian NGOs have many different ways to approach the beneficiaries. Actually they are trying to find better ways to impact positively on local communities, and due to this fact, many NGOs seem to review their own strategies to fit better real contexts. This is an on-going process, a reflexive work with the aim to achieve sound results. The approach has changed to adapt to local realities as much as possible. Such tendency is not a NGOs exclusive, but also other multilateral agencies, like UN and World Bank, which are experimenting new ways to achieve development. This means also a change from a top-down approach in which the institutions and organizations use to arrive with the project framework ready, to a bottom-up approach that is more inclusive and adjustable to local situations and culture features.

Through the interviews analysis I suggest a preliminary conclusion: it is a changing scenario, and such organizations are rethinking their way to work at grassroots. The contact with poor population, people from other cultures and identities, generates an interesting outcome for those who initially went to help them. Some respondents were very concerned with the cultural acceptance, and explained the difficulties in understanding such differences. Pedro remarkably highlights such facet:

The cultural difference is really deep, much deeper than what you see, because it is something relative the inner personalities. So, this makes you think and act through your own culture. (...) We tend to judge what others do according to our own culture. And (...) maybe these reactions are quite different

from what we interpret. Thus, in approaching other cultures, we create great tensions. We then need to respect them, and make an effort to understand, but not always we are able to do it. (Pedro, 2009, my translation)

The interviewees' statement highlighted fundamental feelings that arise from the contact with other people, which are not always easy to deal with. Most of my respondents have illustrated the coexistence of positive and negative sensations regarding 'the other' culture. Actually, the advantages outweigh the deficiencies, otherwise cooperation would have no sense. The conclusion drawn from this experience is that relationships with others involve thinking about what affects our worldview, and it is useful for reflecting and reorganizing the work to be done.

The concept of development is, on the one hand, linked to capacity building for local people, in other words, enhance their *agency* and their possibilities to promote their own development path. However, some respondents did not like to use the term 'development' as a transfer of things; rather, they preferred to understand such process as a form to work together and build things from the resources available on the field of intervention. Actually, both positions end up in the idea that development should be a bottom-up process, and there is a robust idea on the strength of the 'agent', that local people can be empowered.

CHAPTER 6 - Characterizing Life Style: how is life in Chiúta?

Ethnographic Notes

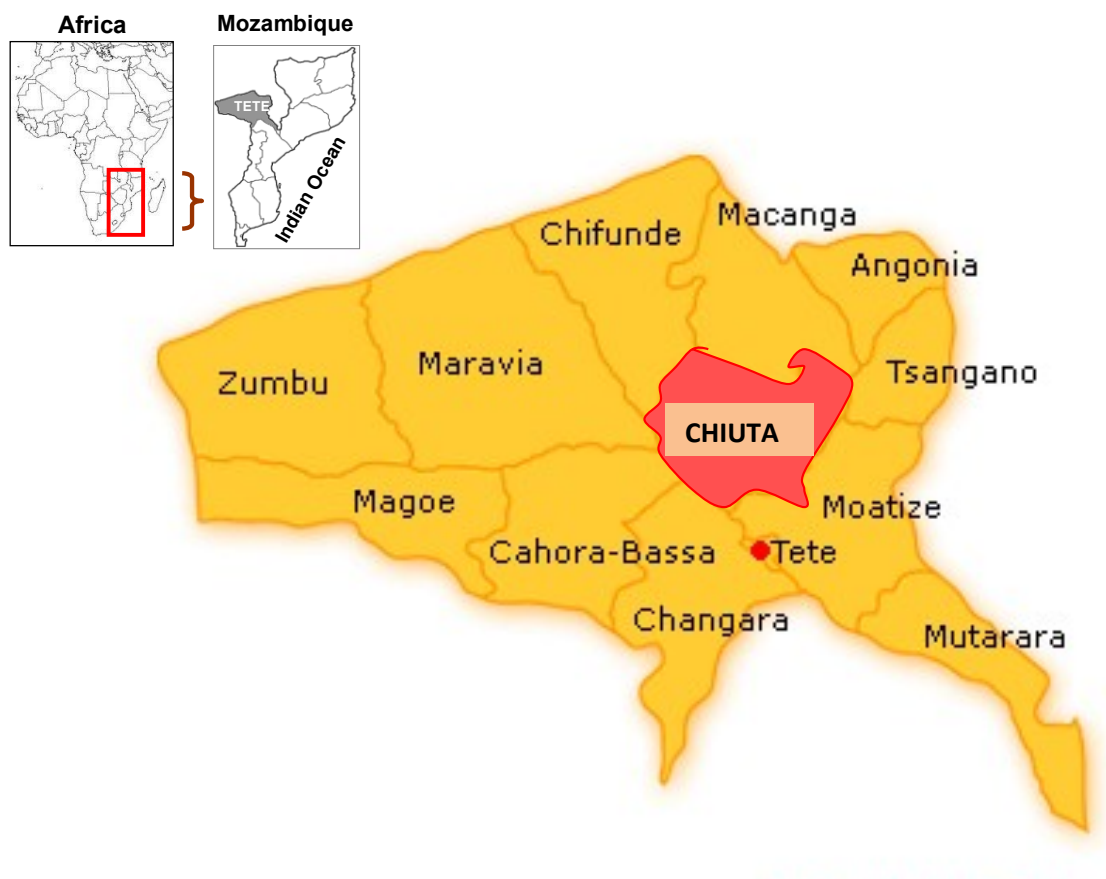
This chapter looks at Chiúta people, how they are organized, what are their social political and economical structure, and their cultural features. For this reason, the chapter makes an effort to illustrate the local culture, its practices, beliefs, norms, and social structure, to enable the further analysis about the local people reactions to this new concept of development, introduced by NGOs.

6.1 Infrastructure and Economy

Peasant's Life and Cognitive Orientation

The research fieldwork was conducted at Chiúta, in Mozambique. Chiúta is a district of Tete Province, north Mozambique (see figure 1). The Chiúta's district headquarter is situated 75km far from Tete city, the province's capital. It is divided in 8 localities, occupying 6.887 Km². The population in 1997 counted 50,300 inhabitants (UNDP, 2005), while in 2007 was 75,910, hence in 10 years we have observed an increase of 40%. The population density is eleven people per Km², and people are predominantly rural and young, with 50% below 15 years old.

Figure 9: Map of Chiúta District, Tete Province – Mozambique



Source: Government of Tete Province Website: <http://www.tete.gov.mz/>

The rain season goes from the end of October to April, with the most intense period between November and March. The dry season lasts 205 days; there are 40 days of interlude between dry and wet season, and 120 days of wet season. Due to global climate change, this pattern has been altered in recent years, thus, it is not constant. The district is rich in aquifers, but many rivers remain completely dry during the dry season. Consequently water is scarce, and almost all households lack water supply: some people have to walk more than 5 km to reach the nearest water source. The temperatures vary from an average minimum of 18.3 °C, to an average maximum of 31.4 °C.

There are two major roads crossing the district, and many other small roads linking villages, but some of them almost do not exist anymore. Electricity is not widespread,

even though a new power station started its operations in 2009, but it will take long to arrive into local people's houses because most people cannot afford it.

Agriculture is the most important activity. Almost all household families are peasants and live thanks to subsistence agriculture. For peasants, one year includes the harvest cycle and regulates their sense of time. The cycle starts around October/November when maize is sown. Then, the rain season starts and it will last until March/April. They use a kind of maize that takes about five months to grow, and after this time the harvest time begins. During the year there are moments of abundance and periods of scarcity, depending on the quantity of maize a family has stocked. For example, people are full of food immediately after the harvest, while around the end of the solar year (December/January) until February/March, it is usual to find persons that eat once a day or spend days without eating, especially when rains during the year have been scarce.

Nevertheless, there is also an economic reason for the lack of food. Maize is the staple of everyone's diet and it is one of the few ways to make money as well. For that reason, when maize granaries are full immediately after the harvest, many farmers sell it at low price to earn some money, while at the end of the year, if they do not have sufficient maize to feed themselves, they are unable to buy it because the price is too high. Hence, the economic model of price determination, dictated by the relation between the supply of product - or its availability - and the demand, influences the price of maize on Chiúta local market. In circumstances in which the need of maize increases while its availability decreases, famine is a constant threat, so the social mechanisms become fundamental to life continuity, and many people have to ask for help to neighbors, relatives, and in the most harsh situations, relief institutions.

Consequently, we can identify in rural context two different periods during the year: a "rich" time with plenty of maize, and a "poor" time with shortage of it. Lack of rain is the main reason for lack of food; however, a bad management of maize (or food) stock also causes it. During "rich" times, besides selling maize without a plan for the future, people use to be abundant in meals: they fill up their plates and eat enormous amounts of food, wasting a lot. Actually, in fieldwork, most people got surprised when I invited them to put less food in my plate; later I realized that it is considered rude for guests to decline food. It was somewhat embarrassing for me, first because I did not want to be impolite, even if in practice I was not able to eat that amount of food. Second, I realized also that plates heaped with food carry an important meaning in that culture: wealth. Moreover, even if many of them were also unable to eat everything, the abundance of food is an

event that happens for few months in the year, thus, is something to celebrate, and a way to show that people are generous.

In every human society generosity is an important social mechanism that helps to reinforce the integration within a group, especially when it regards sharing food. Because of such social fact, an implicit concern permeates each human mind: *if I give you a lot of food when I am able to do that, it is expected that you will return the favor and do it another time as well*. This dynamics reinforces the sense of solidarity among people, which is fundamental during the famine period in Chiúta society.

As a foreigner, the first impression is that in Chiúta people seem to waste a lot, without thinking about the future, and the immediate conclusion is that they are not so worried about the scarcity period- they are not able to plan the future. However, analyzing the importance of the abundance period, and the mechanisms of solidarity that it is responsible for, and observing accurately the local social dynamics, and consider that in Chiúta there are few technologies capable of preserving food, it is possible to conclude that there is a reason for that, as filling the dishes is not a decision as inconsequential as it might seem. Since “giving” practically is an assurance of “receiving” in the future, the predominant rationality related to food is “sharing”, not “saving”.

According to Ridley (1996), sharing food is a human trait, an evolutionary trend derived from our ancestors that used to hunt big mammals in groups of men and share the meat with the whole community. Reciprocity meant an insurance against a future bad luck, a way to reduce the risk of famine. The author writes:

To offer and share food is simply a human instinct. (Ridley, 1996: 87)

This legacy seems to be true in Mozambican rural contexts²⁸ where people not only offer you food, but also do not understand or dislike when you refuse it. In fact, at the beginning of my stage on field I felt strange because I imagined that those persons were poor and suffered famine. For that reason I was amazed in 2009 that people in villages used to offer me many kinds of food as peanut, pumpkin, chicken, pop maize, cucumber, fruits, etc., because in this period they had food in abundance, even if some people said there would be hunger. During the fieldwork in 2010, the situation was almost the same, they continued to offer me food despite the fact that by this time *many* people were

²⁸ Analogous dynamics is also present in many other cultures, if not all, where we observe the importance of sharing food and eating together.

predicting famine. Indeed, I used to hear that rain had been scarce and the harvest was not enough, hence the threat of hunger was much more evident by this time. Reflecting upon such generosity, we could consider that, if even under the threat of starvation people are still providing food, sharing food seems to be the most selfless and communitarian thing they can do.

Another sign of “good times” was the happiness peasants used to show during the pathway to harvest. I saw trucks full of people and kids going to plantations to harvest maize: they were singing loudly, showing their contentment for the abundance time. During this period, Chiúta people can be considered as “rich” because they have everything they need to survive, at least under their perspective.

In this sense, poverty in such a society is more correlated to specific periods of the year, so it is a relative concept, depending on the resources available. Clearly, people in Chiúta live in difficult conditions with permanent lack of many resources. If we compare a well-off Metropolitan citizen’s lifestyle with a peasant’s from Mozambique, the outcome will be a diametric opposition: the Metropolitan will be in trouble if suddenly finds him/her self without a supermarket, electricity, or petroleum derivatives. All that aspects are intrinsic to his/her way of life; it is almost “natural” buying food from a supermarket without worrying about how it arrived there. On the contrary, peasants from Mozambique do not have access to such comfort, they eat what they reap, and a comfortable life means having water, wood, a full barn (enough food), a simple house and, preferably, a large family. Things like energy system and water supply are “dreams” that slowly are becoming true for a small share of rural population.

The consequence of such discrepancies is that to a “western” person - or someone who lives with all modernity comfort - it is like a shock observing how is life in Chiúta. Besides being impressed, the westerner usually feels compassion, and impulsively thinks that rural farmers in Mozambique are extremely poor and need help. However, such differences are the outcome of a historical process in which societies developed different ways of living in specific territories. Even though, we cannot take for granted that every rural individual is completely poor and really needs help, rather: there are many persons who carry a good life, despite the fact that everybody faces a lot of problems related to the lack of hygiene and other issues regarding health, as well as AIDS.

In rural Mozambique a wealthy life, from a peasant’s standpoint, in all probability, will be different from the a Metropolitan citizen’s standpoint. For instance, having a car is not a priority for a rural Mozambican - at least for none of my interviewees, who first

listed a big farm, or a small market, when asked about their wishes for the future - while for a metropolitan citizen it is probably much more relevant. The worldviews are different because while a peasant works to eat, the westerner works to create wealth. Working to eat and not to produce wealth means that the peasant's universe is enclosed in the harvest cycle, which rhythms his/her ordinary lives, and has limited resources: working more does not mean creating more wealth. According to Foster (1965), in peasants' societies, an individual's success is only possible at the expense of another. The author sustains that in peasant societies, people's worldview is related to the 'Image of Limited Good', an image that all desired things in life are finite, thus if someone improves, another one worsens. Such universe regards a closed system that includes social, economic, and natural interrelated instances, in which things are predetermined, and then, Goods cannot grow and must be divided among all the people. Foster (1965) writes:

The model of cognitive orientation that seems to me best to account for peasant behavior is the "Image of Limited Good." By "Image of Limited Good" I mean that broad areas of peasant behavior are patterned in such fashion as to suggest that peasants view their social, economic, and natural universes - their total environment - as one in which all of the desired things in life such as land, wealth, health, friendship and love, manliness and honor, respect and status, power and influence, security and safety, exist in finite quantity and are always in short supply, as far as the peasant is concerned. Not only do these and all other "good things" exist in finite and limited quantities, but in addition there is no way directly within peasant power to increase the available quantities. It is as if the obvious fact of land shortage in a densely populated area applied to all other desired things: not enough to go around. "Good," like land, is seen as inherent in nature, there to be divided and redivided, if necessary, but not to be augmented. (Foster, 1965: 296)

The author argues that wealth, according to a peasant's view, has no relationship with work since it is conceived in the same way as land: a finite resource that has to be shared among people. In such rationality – that the author called The Image of Limited Good - all things in the universe are finite and cannot grow. Such reflection is relevant because explains why peasants do not consider "work" the same way it is considered in modern societies, because it is not compatible with their world economic, social, and natural system. For that reason, wealth and hard work are not correlated in such line of

thought because if someone works too much, another one will work less. Foster continues his argument:

In fact, it seems accurate to say that the average peasant sees little or no relationship between work and production techniques on the one hand, and the acquisition of wealth on the other. Rather, wealth is seen by villagers in the same light as land: present, circumscribed by absolute limits, and having no relationship to work. One works to eat, but not to create wealth. Wealth, like land, is something that is inherent in nature. It can be divided up and passed around in various ways, but, within the framework of the villagers' traditional world, it does not grow. (Foster, 1965: 298)

The same reasoning can be applied to health issues. In rural Mozambique, if someone lives much longer than the average, he/she might be considered a "witch" and be accused of killing children to be able to continue living with their souls (Fieldwork notes, 2010). Unfortunately, this type of complaint usually regards women, specially the oldest ones (Serra, 2006, *Diario de um Sociologo*, blog). It is possible to analyze this phenomenon through the theory of the Image of Limited Good: if people perceive health as a "limited good", when someone lives longer than the average, this can only be possible at the expense of another. In this sense, the older ones can stay alive only by "stealing" someone else's life. For that reason, Foster's theory seems to realistically explain social dynamics of Chiúta.

It is also important to consider that within traditional rural communities, families are the production units, and there are families who produces more, but cannot enrich much more than the others: on the contrary, they are more likely to suffer social reprisals, such as accusation of witchcraft. Notwithstanding, rural people are progressively getting in contact with people from cities and wealthy foreign people, and slowly new values, ideas and cognitive orientations are arriving and influencing their lives. Today, the western standard is very much appreciated, and many peasants aspire to improve their lives, aiming at western achievements they cannot afford yet.

When a stranger arrives in a rural area of Mozambique, immediately realizes many problems of hygiene and health, which in Western societies have been overcome. Such impression is common because the stranger has a different worldview related to his or her experiences, which is different from the worldview of someone from Chiúta. A wealthy life in Chiúta context is much more related to a full barn and a big family than to a job in

the city. This is not because people in Chiúta do not want to carry a high standard life, but because they are constrained by the local conditions to figure out what is better for them. People from different social realities have different horizons for their lives. Besides that, in each social context there are differences among individuals and groups of individuals, which is inherent to human social organization.

We cannot neglect the problems related to local living conditions. It is a fact that during the months of December/January/February, families are more likely to have scarce food, “because the stocks of maize are depleted and the new crop is not ready to harvest” (Kaspin, 1996: 565). Although almost nobody dies directly from hunger, many are badly nourished and develop more illnesses, especially children and the elderly. Moreover, the cold season starts from May, and the precipitous drop in temperature results in an increase in the incidence of respiratory diseases— it is common to hear people telling that someone died from “cough”. In fact, infant mortality is a harsh reality, even among those belonging to a higher social level. I was surprised during an interview, when the Régulo of Chiúta - a traditional authority recognized as a King in that locality, the most influential person of Chiúta - told me that he had 11 children (with his first wife), of whom 10 died: 1 hit by a car, and 9 because of diseases. Some of them must have died from disease as adults. This shows how much everyone is vulnerable in such society.

Therefore, it is important to bear in mind that in the rural context in Mozambique, life is not easy; rather, there are many issues to take into account if we make a comparison with a wealthy western society. However, it is also relevant to observe the local dynamics to attach the right importance to real problems and not take for granted that everybody needs help or to be naïve to think that anyone is starving. It is important to study the reality to consider local discrepancies regarding social classes or power distribution, and do not come to hasty conclusions such as the idea of widespread absolute poverty. This is also important for thinking about the appropriate “aid” that such societies receive, because if the assistance regards only superficial aspects, i.e. “stop hunger”, it will never solve the causes of hunger.

Sense of Time

In low-income economies, people do not program the future in the same way as western individuals in general do. According to Chang (2008)

In a slowly changing economy, there is not much need to plan for the future; people plan for the future only when they anticipate new opportunities (e.g., new careers) or unexpected shocks (e.g., a sudden inflow of new imports). Moreover poor economies offer few devices with which people can plan for the future (e.g., credit, insurance, contracts). (Chang, 2008: 195)

Chang argue that poor conditions prevent people from planning the future. In Chiúta, the relation with time is different from that occurring in rich and developed societies where an industrial sense of time reigns. People in Chiúta (and in general in all rural contexts in African poor countries) are in most cases unemployed (peasants work the land for their own subsistence, they are “autonomous” - they do not work for someone nor receive salary), or underemployed, without a full-time job. Much of them have difficulty to think about a future longer than 1 year (the crop cycle). In their speeches during interviews, when asked about how they imagine their community in the future after 5 years of project (the project started January 2009, so in 2013), many interviewees thought for a long time before answering, and some of them did not (even) understand the question. As a result, long-term planning is not that elementary as it might be to an European.

I asked project’s area leaders to conduct the same interview I was doing with beneficiaries. After being showed the question: ‘*How do you imagine your community in 5 years?*’ the leader of Area 6 argued that it was really difficult to think how they imagine the community in 5 years because it is a long period of time. He said, warning me: “it is almost a prophecy!”. I got surprised because I am used to think, imagine, or aspire something for the future. This fact is essential to understand how perspectives can be different depending on the context.

Chang (2008) affirms that in a slowly changing economy there is not much need to plan the future. This seems an obvious remark, although it was not so clear to many development institutions that attributed underdevelopment to cultural traits, such as laziness, “the most cited ‘cultural’ trait of people in poor countries” (Chang, 2008: 194). Chang launch a clever explanation about laziness:

People from rich countries routinely believe that poor countries are poor because their people are lazy. But many people in poor countries actually work long hours in backbreaking conditions. What makes them appear lazy is often their lack of an ‘industrial’ sense of time. (...) It is true that there are a lot more

people ‘lazing around’ in poor countries. (...) It is mainly because poor countries have a lot of people who are unemployed or underemployed (i.e., people may have jobs but do not have enough work to occupy them fully). This is the result of economic conditions rather than culture. The fact that immigrants from poor countries with ‘lazy’ cultures work much harder than the locals when they move to rich countries proves the point. (Chang, 2008: 194-195)

Hence the author argues that economic conditions are fundamental to regulate the pace of life. In fact, in Chiúta most people seem to “laze around”, except for women that are always doing something for the house, such as cleaning, cooking, getting water, etc. Actually, living in a poor village, without energy or water system, people have to spend a lot of time to do activities that in an urban city would require a short time. For example, getting water is an elemental necessity that in Chiúta requires a considerable amount time of a woman’s journey, while in places with water supply the same activity takes just a second: it is enough to open the water tap. This archaic way of living is not a consequence of cultural traits; rather, it has to do with the available conditions in that particular geographic land, and with the political and economic development.

Chang (2008) argues that cultural traits can be changed if economic conditions change. In Chiúta, where most people are still living a rudimentary economic life based on agriculture and with few opportunities to improve income, traditional culture is predominant to regulate social dynamics. The fieldwork showed that these dynamics have been changing due to the recent government politics (policies?) guided by external donors that are financing many local projects to improve Mozambique living conditions. Certainly, it is not simple to change cultural traits, and it is particularly difficult to change their social conditions simply asking them to send their children to school, because they lack resources. For a farmer who spent all his life in a rural world, who learned from his ancestors how life should be, the advantages of sending his kids to school are not so obvious, because there are no tangible short-term outcomes. Therefore, the difference of the economic conditions reflects also a different perspective of time.

Consumption versus Subsistence Societies

Today, on the one hand there is in the world a technological society with high standard of living based on consumption that dominates the economy of all countries and richest countries are very influent in political decisions. On the other, people living in

really poor conditions, lacking all kinds of comfort, and many of them are still living like in ancient times, just like Chiúta people.

Why are there such differences? In his book “Guns Germs and Steel” (1997), Diamond argues that human societies living in different geographic regions developed different life styles, cultures and economic systems. The author delineates four set of factors that have advantaged some societies over others. The first set of factors is related to animal and plant species available as starting materials for domestication, and local conditions for food production. The accumulation of food surpluses allows, for example, the development of other occupations and a sedentary life style.

The second set of factors is the diffusion of knowledge within different societies, for example the diffusion of technological innovations. Diamond argues that in Eurasia, knowledge diffusion was faster in comparison to other continents because of the suitable environment conditions. The author affirms:

Diffusion was slower in Africa and especially in the Americas, because of those continents’ north-south major axes and geographical and ecological barriers (Diamond, 1997: 407)

The third set of factors regards the exchanges of technologies and knowledge *between* continents, because some continents are more isolated than others, thus some continents were slower in creating innovations. The fourth set of factors “consists of continental differences in area or total population size. A larger area or population means more potential inventors, more competing societies, more innovations available to adopt (...) Societies failing to do so will tend to be eliminated by competing societies” (Diamond, 1997: 407). Therefore, considering human history, we can see that some societies have succeeded, others have failed, and others have even disappeared. Diamond (1997) tries to explain that the reasons why some societies were more “fortunate” than others are not related to innate characteristics of the people, because any human society has the capabilities to develop in the same way. Diamond states that

All human societies contain inventive people. It’s just that some environments provide more starting materials, and more favorable conditions for utilizing inventions, than do other environments. (Diamond, 1997: 408)

The central argument is that Eurasian societies have succeeded because they had the

most suitable conditions to do so. As the book's title suggests – Guns, germs and steel – these 3 elements were the key factors to Europeans' success, including the development of arms that allowed conquests, the resistance to some germs that have decimated other populations not used to them - as the native American Indians - and steel that allowed the creation of metal tools and weapons. Diamond says:

The nations rising to new power are still ones that were incorporated thousands of years ago into the old centers of dominance based on food production, or that have been repopulated by peoples from those centers (Diamond, 1997: 417)

Today if an observer from Europe goes to Chiúta, Mozambique, s/he feels like going back in time because life conditions are still based on food production and they have not succeeded in having food surpluses due to the environment conditions. Their history shows that Portuguese people colonized Mozambique, hence they were in part civilized. However, in the rural context, ancient life style is still predominant and people still work the land with their own hands. Visiting a local village, we observe that more than 90% of houses are made of local materials: earth, wood and thatch. People spend their day at agriculture fields, or outside their houses doing many domestic activities as taking water, milling maize, washing clothes, taking wood, cooking, creating utensils or tools, or simply they seat and talk. Children are everywhere, and it is impossible for a white person to walk without raising curiosity and exciting their cheer.

Besides agriculture, few other economic productions complement subsistence agriculture. In Chiúta, those activities are small industries like carpentry, fishing, handcraft, milling maize, and commerce of clothes and industrialized products in small shops. In addition, in Chiúta there are two important profitable agricultures: tobacco and cotton. There are some multinational companies working directly with local peasants and teaching them better agronomic practices. Most families usually rear domestic animals as chickens, ducks, goats, pigs, and sheep.

6.2 Political Background and Current Organization

Brief Political History

In 1498 Mozambicans have seen for the first time Europeans arriving on their coast.

Since then Portugal started exploring for gold, silver and ivory. In 1885 Portuguese settlement was large enough to establish a formal colony, called Portuguese East Africa, and Mozambique was considered as a province - part of Portugal's territory. Portugal dictated the rules, but since 1950, native people started protesting against Portuguese political domination.

In 1962 Frelimo party (Front for the Liberation of Mozambique), a socialist Mozambican party that fights for the independence, was founded. OTAN partners supported Portuguese resistance, and Frelimo had to associate with East block (then Soviet Union and China) to get help. In 1975, Mozambique got its independence from Portugal and the government followed a socialist line.

Right after independence, Mozambique faced a civil war initiated by a resistance movement (Renamo) organized by South Africa and Rhodesia, white governments supported by Britain. After the colony war and the civil war (that lasted 16 years), Mozambique was left completely destabilized with no industries, infrastructures, and people living in difficult conditions. For that reason today Mozambique is struggling through a post civil-war democratic transition, and Frelimo party, which has been governing almost all provinces since 1975, controls its politics. *Democracy* has been always the motto of the government, despite the fact that Frelimo party dominates, opposition parties have difficulties in occupying power positions, and it is really hard to talk openly of political issues, or debate critically on Frelimo government. Actually, it seems a disguised democracy.

Official and Traditional Authorities

Samora Machel was a revolutionary leader during the independence war of Mozambique. He was known as the "Nation's Father" (Pai da Nação) and became president of Mozambique in 1975. He occupied this position until 1986, when he was assassinated in an airplane crash. Machel, inspired by socialist-marxist principles - was responsible to nationalize health and education systems to make them available to the whole population. The idea of an independent government was to educate people and create a "New Man" with a "Mozambican" culture to unify the nation. Portuguese language was the only remnant of the former colonization and it was imposed to be the national language as an instrument of socio-political unification. This idealized goal of unification led the government to avoid particularism, localism, tribalism, and

consequently its traditions.

In order to institute nationalism and unify the country, Frelimo tried to impose cultural traits that could join people through a “Mozambican culture”. However, Mozambique consists of a range of ethnics with different languages and habits. Hence, the “New Man” should represent a rupture with bourgeois culture, colonial culture and traditional culture. Nevertheless, breaking with traditional culture meant going against Mozambican own original social-political structure, habits and natives forms of living. Renamo used this against Frelimo during the civil war, and convinced many local traditional leaders that Frelimo despised them.

This fact was a great fault because Frelimo deemed the traditional authorities as obstacles to development and government enemies. However, in rural contexts, the traditional chieftaincy played, and still plays, an important role. *Régulos* are the highest Mozambican traditional authorities, but were considered by Machel as colonial collaborators and their practices feudal and backward. According to Kyed (2007),

Abolishing everything ‘traditional’ and belonging to the magico-spiritual world view was seen as a means of modernizing society and creating national unity. Scientific socialism and national education were to replace spiritual beliefs. Thus, not only chiefs, but also traditional healers, spirit mediums and religious associations were deprived of any role in the public domain. (Kyed, 2007: 66)

Although Frelimo was trying to create a democrat government, in rural contexts traditional authorities still had important influence, then, in practice, the ban on 'traditional culture' was an unmet goal. The traditional authority as the *Régulos* “enjoy huge prestige with the population and they are the ones that guide important aspects of traditional life” (Kyed, 2007: 99). Those chiefs have the task to solve conflicts among families, conduct religious-spiritual ceremonies, deal with plagues, rain, and harvest, solve criminal cases, and help to preserve the traditional culture.

Through the years, traditional authorities gained political visibility and reached political positions, mainly because chiefs were recognized by political institutions as a key factor for promoting development (and Frelimo party). In particular, chiefs are very capable of mobilizing local population to government’s program. For those reasons, in 2000 the national state passed a law to recognize the traditional authorities (Decree 15/2000).

Today, a hybrid form composed by traditional chiefs and local state officials structures the political system in Chiúta, “with high levels of uncertainty in the exercise of authority” (Kyed, 2007). Among traditional authorities, the State has recognized *Régulos*, *Secretários de Bairro* and *Chefes* (village chiefs). There are other traditional authorities such as community personalities respected and legitimized according to their social, cultural, religious, or economic role. For example, a *Nyau* (see “Traditional Culture”) chief is an important authority, because he represents the most significant cultural expression in Chiúta.

After the 15/2000 Decree, government and foreign institutions have to act in accordance with traditional authorities. It means that if someone wants to work with local people in Chiúta, s/he has to talk to local leaders and ask them for permission. One of the conflicts between project and local people regarded the acceptance of village leaders. The project is a new proposal to develop the locality, and it is a novelty to the population. Thus, the first challenge of the project is explaining what it consists in, how it is going to work, and - most difficult - showing that it can bring good results. Besides that, the project works with area leaders: these persons in general become an important reference to local people, and have to face the traditional leaders to explain that their work have nothing to do with political power positions.

Blend of Politics with Cultural Traits

It is interesting to note that in Chiúta, cultural traits are blended with political issues. When political or traditional authorities convene the local community for meetings, they often evoke traditional themes like gossip and envy during their speeches. In June, the twenty-fifth, 2009, was the Mozambique’s Independence Day. During the celebration, the Chiúta’s district Administrator (an official authority) started her speech with an interesting motto: “Down to Envy! Down to Gossip!”. Gossip and Envy remark the “African tradition” even though they turned into a political goal, at least in rural environment. It seems that if Mozambicans succeed to repress gossip and envy they will live in a peaceful society.

Tradition and modern governance walk side by side in that context, and local social issues related with traditional beliefs became a political target. It may be asked what gossip and envy has to do with political goals? Such features are extremely important to Chiúta’s people because are constitutive of their social life. In a rural context, populations

are smaller and people know each other: as a result, gossip and envy are social mechanisms that regulate individual actions. According to Foster (1972), envy is a pan-human phenomenon found in every society. While in western societies envy is the most shameful and reprehensible of all emotions, in peasant societies envy behavior is particularly apparent (Foster, 1972). Thereupon, in Chiúta it is common for people to be envious and fear others' envy. When the majority of population lives in poor conditions, if someone improves his/her life, the others will envy him/her, causing a rupture in a delicate social equilibrium based on a stabilized share of poverty. As Foster writes:

The important point in such societies [peasant poor societies] is that all resources – all of the good things in life – are seen as constituting a closed system, finite in quantity as far as the group is concerned, incapable of expansion or growth. Hence, any advantage achieved by one individual or family is seen as a loss to others, and the person who makes what the Western world lauds as “progress” is viewed as a threat to the stability of the entire community. (Foster, 1972: 169)

The author argues that in such societies people fear the consequences of *progress*, so they are socially compelled to remain within the same social position, “enforcing an egalitarian poverty for everyone” (Foster, 1972: 185)²⁹. While in more complex and competitive societies people are encouraged to improve their lives as well as inhibit their true feelings about envy, in deprivation societies, where resources are scarce, “people are reluctant to advance beyond their peers because of the sanctions they know will be leveled against them” (Foster, 1972: 169). For these reasons, envy is an important social element that became also a political concern in Chiúta, and as gossip is one of the tangible manifestations of envy, it also should be avoided. The use of such mottos by politicians and influent authorities is an important social device to control and reduce envy.

In Chiúta, people consider envy as a threat because it triggers the use of magical forces to prevent that a successful individual continues his/her progress. For that reason, many illnesses and deaths are attributed to witchcraft that envy instigates. Envy is an unpleasant emotion regarding the feeling of inferiority with respect to another. When someone possesses something that you want, usually the question arises: “why can't I have it?”. It provokes insecurity, urges the need to control it through social engines. Foster

²⁹ This *egalitarian poverty* has nothing to do with communism or socialism regimes, rather, it has to do with a social arrangement, a social device emerged in such circumstances.

(1972) sustains that the individual fears envy, so she/he attempts to avoid it behaving according to a specific sequence of choices. The first choice is concealing his/her good fortune and, whenever it is not feasible, he/she denies that there is reason to envy him. If the second choice is not possible, he symbolically shares³⁰, and the last choice is the actual sharing. In Chiúta, where social economic conditions are poor, the objects that rank far above others in terms of producing envy are: food, children, and health (Foster, 1972: 169). Such envy-causing items are responsible for the survival of the family, and the continuity of life. In such context, it is practically impossible to conceal the good fortune because huts are made of clay and thatch, and people spend much of their time outside the house, visible to the others. It is impossible to conceal when someone has a good production because his granary is full and everybody can see it. Therefore, in order to reduce envy for food, the local community has adopted an interesting social device regarding the last choice proposed by Foster (1972): real hospitality and actual sharing of food. In fact, people usually eat with relatives or neighbors, and it is considered bad manner to eat alone. Besides, there are negative sanctions against *not* sharing food. Even though such measures may seem selfless solidarity, they actually are a smart mechanism to alleviate envy in the society. As a result, since people share food by turn in each other's house, no one gains or loses - there is parity. "Do not envy" has become a fundamental value in such society, a value contributing to the maintenance of the social system since it set off means to cope with the threat of envy. Moreover, the lack of scientific knowledge strengthen the sense of beliefs surrounding the envy, and it all ends up being justified by the magic.

Thus, Government of Mozambique must be aware of such rural dynamics to work better to improve populations' quality of life. It seemed that the Chiúta's district Administrator proclaimed herself against envy and gossip because she was aware of such issues.

Political Elite Detached from Rural Reality

It is true that the government is increasing its interest in rural situation, even

³⁰ Foster writes about symbolic sharing: "In common English usage a 'sop' is a token item given to assuage the disappointment of someone who has lost in a competition, or who has not had success comparable to others. We 'throw a sop' to placate such person. A sop can thus be thought of as the loser's compensation, a symbolic sharing of good fortune by the winner with someone who does not in fact share the good fortune. In other words, the sop is a device to buy off the possible envy of the loser" (Foster in: *The Anatomy of Envy: a study in symbolic behavior*, 1972: 177)

aggregating traditional authorities to the current political system. This is a recent years' trend, much related to the external aid, which is increasingly pressuring the government to take actions against poverty in rural areas. Nevertheless, Mozambique is a country ruled by a small wealthy elite, while the majority of poor population lives segregated from both the power and critical assessment (Mattes and Shenga, 2007). Besides, there are huge socio-economic differences between south and north. However, the political elite is the inheritor of the colonial tradition where the richest maintain its power at the expense of poor people and then it does not seem to be committed to a real change in the social situation.

When Mozambique became independent of Portugal there was not a consolidated political-economical elite to manage the country. Actually, as Sumich (2007) states, "Frelimo desperately turned to anyone who had the necessary skills and education to ensure that the new nation could function" (Sumich, 2007: 3). Despite the fact that the independent government wanted to get rid of the colonial past, it had to find solutions to put in action politics to government. The previous administrative model was the only known model by the majority of officials. Therefore, it was impossible to completely disentangle it from the colonial government form, because the new rulers had been educated under such government. Besides that, the new officials barely knew their own country and had no idea of the ethnic diversity on the national territory. Although the Marxist ideology has guided the new government, what we actually observe is a classic form of a governing represented by an intellectual elite absent and ignorant about the vast majority of peasants who live on subsistence farming. Thus, the social inequality remained unchanged because there is an abyss between the poor and the ruling elite, despite a socialist government.

To the new nationalist government of Frelimo, rural populations possessed an archaic existence, and were shameful for having an inertial way of thinking (Geffray, 1991). The leaders were not concerned in creating mechanisms to know the rural population in detail, they simply decided that it was necessary to organize peasants, and considered the 80% of the Mozambican population – approximately 10.5 million people - as individuals without any social ties, or cultural discrepancies. With such arrogance and ignorance, the government created the idea of a "new man" that would compose this idealized country through a nationalist project that was really inconsistent with the social reality. Such measures showed a bad preparation and a lack of perspective by the ruling elite.

In recent times, we still observe in Mozambique an elite detached from social reality of rural areas. This minority often studies abroad and has a western high standard of living, enjoys many comforts and privileges, and has little real interest in understanding and/or changing the rural situation. Most of the graduated people prefer to work in cities or abroad rather than in rural areas, due to higher salaries and better living conditions.

A typical example, showing the political representatives' distance and negligence, occurred during a meeting between the rural community from Chiúta and the Mozambican First Lady, in April 2009. In her speech, she said that people should wash their hands under the water tap, and - most important -, use the soap. Her intention was to educate people about the fact that washing hands is a simple measure able to avoid many diseases. Although she had spoken with good intent, she did not realize her faux pas. The point is that she did not take into consideration that peasants in that village do not have a tap at home, neither easy access to soap, which is a precious good, and people need money to buy it. Such example demonstrates how government elite seems miles away from the rural reality. It also shows how the actual model of governance resembles colonial aspects of colonial forms of power (Sumich, 2007).

Multiple Actors Guide Local Policies

The recent years' increasing interest in improving social conditions rose with the Millennium Development Goals proclaimed by ONU in 2000, and with the massive arrival of External NGOs in the country. The ruling elite and the middle class take advantage on their established network to maintain its control position, even among the international community. As Sumich explains,

Members of the elite can call on a wide range of friends and family who hold, or have held, high positions in aid agencies, newly privatised businesses and the government on an almost rotating basis. These networks form structures of power that link elites, the government, business and international agencies in mutually beneficial and self-sustaining ways. (Sumich, 2007: 6)

Hence, what we observe today in rural Mozambique reflects its past marked by colonialism, socialism, a recent concealed democracy, and neo liberalism. However, living standards in rural environment did not change as much as the independent government imagined. Nowadays, with the international pressure, it seems that life is starting to move

beyond subsistence, towards better standards; however, it will probably take long to achieve this result.

The current political situation in Chiúta district is a heterogeneous set consisting of traditional devices, governmental institutions, and non-governmental organizations, which promote the regulation of social life. Traditional authorities are primarily responsible for maintaining local order, solve conflicts, and lead community about modes of conduct. Besides, they are also the main responsible for the maintenance of the traditional culture and the ties between the rural population and the government (despite it is a *payment of taxes* relationship). Government institutions are promoting the Parpa³¹ policies, and are slowly promoting the development of the district. Non-governmental organizations work more directly with the people through smaller projects, trying to promote and support the work of government in the social area, to fight against poverty.

The general impression of the political institutions is that the traditional ones enjoy greater prestige and credibility among local populations, while government policies are still poorly perceived within the community. The national government, with the support of multilateral agencies and major donors, is investing in infrastructure to facilitate access to electricity and piped water these are recent facts that impact strongly on the local population.

The non-governmental institutions are perceived as sources of help through donations and social assistance, but their credibility is questionable because most of their interventions are short-term and most institutions do not establish long lasting relationships with the local population, continuously alternating old and new projects. Today, one of the most credible organizations is the Red Cross because it has been on the territory for a long time and everybody knows it, despite the fact that it promotes more first aid actions than sustainable development targeted mostly to the vulnerable people such as orphans, elderly, or disabled. The arrival of the Escola de Professores de Futuro (Future School Teachers), an ADPP NGO project, was felt as a great achievement for the district since education is perceived as a possibility of improving its inhabitants' life. Many local people think that the arrival of new teachers constitutes the opportunity of investing in a more prosperous future for their children.

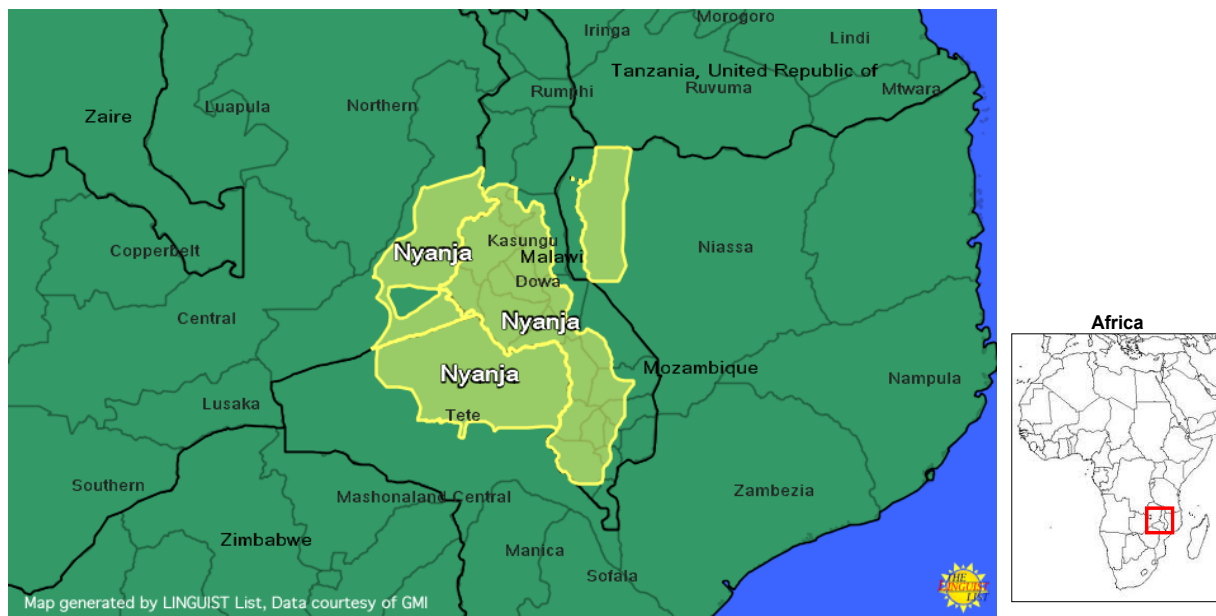
³¹ Parpa: Plano de Ação para Redução da Pobreza Absoluta (Action Plan for the Reduction of Absolute Poverty)

6.3 Social structure

Language and Matrilineal Lineage

In Chiúta, a majority of Chewa people, descendants of the ancient Chewa kingdom, composes the population. According to e-museum of Minnesota State University³², Chewa people originated in the Democratic Republic of Congo, but they emigrated to Zambia, northern Mozambique, and central Malawi, where most of them they live now. Their language is Chewa³³, a dialect of Nyanja, and linguists show that at least upward 6 million people have fluent command of Chewa/Nyanja³⁴. The figure below shows the territory occupied by Chewa descendants, according to Nyanja language domain.

Figure 10: Map of the Territory occupied by Chewa people, according to Nyanja language domain



Source: MultiTree: A Digital Library of Language Relationships. Website: <http://multitree.linguistlist.org/codes/nya>

³² Website: <http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/cultural/oldworld/africa/chewa.html>

³³ Other possible names: Chichewa, Chinyanja.

³⁴ Font: Humanities UCLA Web Page: <http://www.humnet.ucla.edu/humnet/aflang/chichewa/background.html>

The Chewa first kingdom was established around 1480, and according to Banda (2008)

Between 1400 and 1800 the monarchies of Africa were organised and consolidated into kingdoms and chieftaincies. The Chewa kingdom is one of the oldest kingdoms in Africa. The Chewa people belong to the Bantu language group found in Sub Sahara Africa. (Banda, 2008: 103)

In Mozambique, there is a range of ethnic groups. Those tribes can be divided into two societies, i.e. matrilineal and patrilineal. In Chiúta, Chewa people is characterized as matrilineal, consequently the inheritance of property, land rights and ownership of children is in power of the mother and her brother, the uncle, who exercises authority over the his sisters' children. Besides, whenever a couple break-up, all property belongs to the woman and her family, so the house, agriculture land and children follow the matrilineal lineage. Banda (2008) explains:

In this arrangement, a nephew can inherit the kingship, chieftainship or village headship of his uncle. The Chewa people justify their world view by arguing that when it comes to inheriting rulership, they do not want a foreigner to rule them. So they are much more comfortable with a nephew because a sister's child will always and truly be hers. As for the man, he can never be sure. The Chewa people's world view is that it's only a woman who knows the real father of her child. (Banda, 2008: 108-109)

However it does not mean that this society is matriarchal or feminist: on the contrary, it is extremely sexist (see next section: "Gender Roles"). Women do not have power to decide, they are completely submissive to their husbands and other family's men. Another traditional trait that influences the local dynamics is the importance of children in a family. A woman gives birth to at least 3 children, and more than 5 kids per woman are common. For that reason, families are usually large, and according to traditional rules, girls after first menses are ready to marry and have children. In general, girls feel a strong desire to marry and have children because there is a social pressure on this issue, and there is a great expectation on that. Usually, a girl observes that others are pregnant or have already a baby on the back; they talk about that and compete to see who is going to do it

first, and that makes them want to imitate each other not to stay out of the group. Besides that, when the pregnancy occurs or the baby is born, in their traditional language they say that the woman is “lucky” (In Chichewa: *alimwai ameneo*), and instead of saying “my first child”, they say: “my first luck”. When a woman have difficulties to give birth, or cannot have children, they say she is “unborn” (In Chichewa: *nsikana acanati kukhala mpathupi po iambdirira*). Therefore, we can see how birth is a fundamental value in such context, and it is possible to deduce that a woman who has no children will be stigmatized in this society.

However, there is also a high child mortality rate, and almost everybody who lives there can tell you that has lost a baby. I have heard about many deaths during my fieldwork, and I have been to a funeral of a 6 months child, who has died from respiratory infection (“cough” as they say). Therefore, they have many kids, although a relevant number of them die before completing his/her 5th year of life. According to official statistics, in Mozambique the under-five mortality rate is 154 children per 1000 live births. Tete province has a higher rate, counting for 174 deaths per 1000 live births under 5 years old. The main causes of death in Tete are: malaria (28%), acute lower respiratory infections (14%), AIDS (9%), and diarrhea (8%) (Ministry of Health, Mozambique, 2009).

Chiúta, people believe that more children mean more help and more arms to work on crops; they hardly realize that more children will bring also more costs (more mouths to feed), and often these new needs are greater than the help a child can give before his/her marriage. In their cultural context, life is lived in the present, there is no great prospect for the future, and, as we have seen previously, life follows cycles: mainly harvesting and human reproduction.

From a western point of view, it seems that the decisions taken by a peasant are at least inconsequential. A western person remains really astonished reading those statistics and hearing of so many deaths among the population. Notwithstanding, inside local community it seems that child mortality is a sad truth which people have to live with. In fact, my feeling as an observer was that local people do not perceive this crude reality as something completely strange because it is part of their everyday’s life.

At the same time, giving birth to many kids means also more persons helping parents when they get old, because life in the countryside is almost totally unrelated to the State, and the government of Mozambique does not support any kind of social security for this population - nobody gets retirement pension. Actually, all the family members help each other as much as they can. In daily life, we can see most elderly active, going to

crops, cooking, preparing traditional beer, etc., with their sons and daughters around them, helping.

The cooperation among family members follows the rules of matrilineal kinship. After the marriage, usually the couple builds a hut near the bride's mother hut, and often they share the same kitchen located in another hut near the two houses. Hence, the husband leaves his family and aggregates to the wife's family (in case of polygamy, men usually live with the first wife, but also spend some time with the other wives). Each nuclear family (husband, wife, and kids) has its own *machamba* (farm), but it usually remains to the woman in case of separation.

The *machambas* are growing areas requested to the village headmen. In Mozambique the land is in the government domain, and it cannot be sold. In traditional contexts, everybody has the right to own a piece of land and usually the headman has the power to distribute it. In general, when people need to start a new crop they ask to the headman the amount he/she would need. Kaspin (1996) studied the Chewa people from Malawi, and despite they live in a different country, their life is very similar to the Chiúta people's. She writes about land distribution:

Land is held in trust by territorial chiefs (...) and partitioned among numerous village headmen who claim land on the basis of ancestral ties to the land and clan ties to the territorial chief. The village headmen in turn grant tracts of garden land to their matrilineal kin, to affines, and to occasional strangers. Although in principle trust land is available to any Malawian who asks for it, rising population in the fertile central region has increased land pressure and placed a premium on the most productive land. Village headmen and their close kin thus enjoy a distinct advantage, claiming the best land for their own uses and allocating marginal land to more distant relatives and strangers (Kaspin, 1996: 564).

This excerpt illustrates how land is distributed among farmers. It also shows signs of on-going changes in the society. Indeed other sorts of transformations can be found in Tete. In recent times, the matrilineal society is undergoing some changes due to many influences of other cultures, such as patriliney and westerns societies. The rural villages are usually small, with an average population of 600 to 1000 inhabitants, and most residents have some degree of kinship among them, usually following the maternal lineage. Despite family ties, many people migrate in search of opportunity or for necessity the hard life

conditions compel people to emigrate, and there is also a considerable number of people who came from other neighboring areas. There is an intense movement of people between those regions, and Chiúta is near other three countries, Malawi, Zimbabwe and Zambia, so it is not difficult to find people who live abroad or come from these countries. Such exchange (among individuals) is increasingly mixing different cultures and influences changes in local culture.

Chewa people have historically been matrilineal in their practices (Mtika and Doctor, 2002). However, patrilineal practices are becoming more and more common in Chewa societies due to influences from other patrilineal cultures and the advance of capitalistic mode of production. Christian religions are good examples of influence because they preach the father's importance in a family, emphasizing the paternal authority and the husband as the head of the family. The introduction of cash crops like tobacco, mostly grown by men, gave them more economic power over their wives. Although the responsibility for growing children is still with the mother, the mother's brothers and the elder sons, currently we detect a change in the father's responsibility for raising children, and observation on the field showed that some fathers feel their children as *theirs*, and some are helping to raise them too.

Production Mode and Social Life

As we have seen in the introduction, a peasantry society has a manual mode of production while in industrialized societies the industrial mechanical mode prevails. Such mode is closely related to the ways of living and perceiving the world that significantly differ from the industrial societies way of life. During the fieldwork, an old woman told me: "we work with our hands while you have the machine." According to her standpoint, in western societies everybody sits and waits for the machine to work for him/her, and people are extremely lucky with that. She seemed sorry for the fact that in her society people have to work with their own hands, and insisted on remembering me that I owned many objects while she had a hard life. In such perspective, it is possible to identify a partial interpretation of reality, a skewed vision departing from a life immersed in rural world and few spots of western societies that composes the idea of the "modern world". Each of us sees and interprets things through our background spectrum. The more people have experiences, including living in different cultures, studying different things, etc., the more the background spectrum enlarges, and leads to a more complete vision of the

reality. What the old woman said is not wrong, but reflects how she, as a peasant woman who always lived in that environment and always did the same work, sees a person from western society. The same dynamics related to partial and skewed vision of reality is very common in western societies, i.e. if we think about the way many people imagine a rural peasant in Africa, generally it is based on spots of charities campaigns. Hence, limited horizons do not depend neither on the culture nor territory, but on a set of experiences and background that allow us to take a view beyond our own “world”, beyond a superficial reading of reality, to make our sight boundless to understand how the “others” are in their complexity.

Certainly, living standards in rural African societies are completely different from those of the industrialized societies, and one of the main differences perceived between “Westerners” and African peasants is the opposition between mechanical and manual work. Consequently, such life style influences very much the local social structure. Examining more closely the issue, it is possible to affirm that the crop cycle rules people’s lives, and their physical relation with the world around them is intrinsically correlated to the year cycle. According to a study carried out by Kaspin (1996) about the body representation among Chewa community in Malawi, in such context the social life is governed by the rhythms of agriculture, and reflects cultural expressions represented mainly by the male figure of the rainmaker and the female figure of the midwife who receives instructions from elder women. The production and reproduction of life are closely related to agricultural production and creation of children, thus, in the Chewa culture there are many expressions that reflect the relationship between body and nature ruling the social structure. Therefore, in Chewa cosmology there are elements of nature that metaphorically represent parts of the body or body processes. Kaspin (1996) explains,

The linkages between physiology and ecology are in part metaphorical: the womb is like the garden, semen is like the seed and the rain, menstruation is like the fire that cleanses and kills. But the metaphors are in turn sustained by a theory of life-generating potencies contained in fluids, activated by warmth, and transformed-or killed-by extreme heat; identical, not analogous, potencies are found in the body and in the world at large. (Kaspin, 1996: 568)

The author argues that according to the calendar cycle, seasons alternate wet and dry periods, and the human body is subjected to the same process. Kaspin (1996), points

out how life cycle expressed through the pregnancy and birth is strictly related to the crop cycle. If womb is like a garden and semen is like a seed, body and nature are metaphorically the same. Understanding such features is extremely important to understand such culture from another perspective: its own cosmology. Hence, the relationship with the mode of production is expressed through the culture, and it is intrinsic to the way people think, so it structures their social life.

Social Concerns

In general, this society has lived in relatively harmony and peace since the end of the civil war, but there are some social problems highlighted by alcoholic beverages consumption, small thefts, clutter in the home, drugs (mostly marijuana), prostitution, and violence, that disturb social life. Such social problems are present in most societies, although on different levels. Local leaders try to control the situation through information campaigns. Nevertheless, there is an increasing alcohol abuse among people, especially men, even among local leaders. Although the production of homemade beer is a very old tradition, the money coming from the cash crops has increased the purchasing power, consequently increasing the consumption of industrialized alcoholic beverage. Small parties are often held where people usually drink a lot so fights are frequent due to high alcoholic level, augmenting the social problems. According to the Régulo of Chiúta, his community is "drunk" and he considers that this is the biggest social problem today.

Gender Roles

Since childhood, boys and girls learn the difference between gender, because Chewa community has emphasized such roles from an early age (Moto, 2004). In rural Mozambique, a girl cannot be distinguished from a woman except for the size. You see a girl carrying babies on their backs with *capulanas*, washing clothes on the river, getting water, helping to prepare food, etc., while boys are just watching or playing around. Since early, they learn how to behave, while women learn that men are the "bosses" (Fieldwork Notes, 2010).

The gender roles are very clear and distinguished by activities predominantly exercised by women or men. For example, women usually are responsible for many domestic duties as water supply, cooking, raising children, milling maize and wood

supply. Men usually are responsible to make domestic utensils as mat, pestle, barn (and its maintenance), and are responsible for the political organization of villages. Both women and men make some activities in partnership, such as working the soil, harvesting, and house building. In rural contexts, women are placed in the household environment and on crops, while men are mainly on the public scene, that is, males own the power of decision and maintain the village order.

Families do not have only one possible structure such as the nuclear family composed by mother, father and children. Actually, men are authorized to have more than one wife, depending on different factors such as woman sterility and misbehavior, among the other reasons. For example, a man can marry a second wife because the first one did not give him a child during the first year of marriage. Usually the first wife is older and the most important and she is the one who authorizes the marriage with the others (Manjate, 2009). The number of wives can vary also depending on a man's status. For instance, if he is an important man, as the *Régulo* or the village chief, he can have even 10 wives, as I observed in Chiúta. As a rule, the husband lives in the house of the first wife while the other wives live with kids near their mother's house. The husband visits his wives by rotation, living for a period of time with each of them.

According to interviewees and my observations during fieldwork, women respect men and fear them. Violence within couples is common, because men feel entitled to correct the behavior that they consider wrong, and according to their point of view, they can punish a women if she "fails". I myself witnessed many situations in which women were "respecting" their husbands according to the local culture: one of my female interviewee did not want to approach to her husband to ask to take a picture of him during the visual anthropology fieldwork (cf. Chapter Four). She was afraid of his possible reaction, and to respect him, she did not approach. Another example occurred during an interview with a man: her wife remained standing for long waiting the allowance to leave the house, and he told me that it was sign of respect.

Hence, women in general behave according to men's rules and allowance. If a woman does not act in accordance with the partner's expectations, he may have an unpleasant reaction. During the fieldwork, I witnessed an embarrassing scene that revealed how gender violence is a harsh reality there. My interpreter was angry with his girlfriend. She left him and found another man because she did not accept the fact that he had other women. Actually, he was married to another woman and probably had other girlfriends. One day, while we were going by bicycle to Missuko (the village were I conducted the

second phase of field work), he stopped in front of her, started discussing and in the end he hit her right in front of me. I got shocked, and my reaction broke our work agreement.

This single event is emblematic because it shows how the girl is struggling against the traditional order. She does not want to accept violence or a polygamist man. She is receiving influences from outside the rural life, and is opening her eyes to new horizons, realizing that there are other ways of living, other possibilities. However, a social change necessarily means roles' conflict and power dispute, hence, she is suffering for that in first person to open the path for other women.

Early marriage is another common practice, mostly among girls. According to the traditional rules, girls soon after the first menstruation are ready to marry, and are instructed during a ceremony called *Chinamwale* (see section above: "Traditional Culture") to be submissive and passive with their husbands. Although this tradition has a strong disparity trait regarding gender roles, and male dominance is still found in almost all structures (social, political, economical), there is a great campaign enrolled by the government and national and international institutions to promote gender equality through women empowerment.

Almost everybody in Chiúta is aware - or at least has heard - that women have to be empowered, and the local government and NGOs are trying to stimulate boys and girls to study, explaining the benefits to improve their lives. However, traditional features are still stronger than innovations: girls still marry young and women are still submissive and without voice to decide or claim their rights. It is really difficult to fight against a very sexist social culture. To understand how these sexist concepts are embedded in the society, we can read some proverbs in Chewa language that emphasize the submissive role of women:

- *Anthu achikazi ali monga matako, Siyakhala kusogolo* (females will always be behind and never in front, like buttocks)
- *Mwana wa mkazi mapikiti siyapitilila mutu* (A woman is like shoulders. They never go over the head [the man]).
- *Mwana wa mwamumna asamalila monga mkazi* (A boy child must be strong and should not cry like a woman)
- *Mwana wa mkazi ni thumba*. (A girl child is like a bag; meaning is producing and keeping children)

(Banda, 2008: 131)

In all human societies, there has been a sexual division of labor. With the advent of modern times, things have changed and women and men can work equally to the economic system. Especially in urban environments, gender roles tend to equalize gradually. However, as women are biologically made to reproduce and have babies, the total gender equality is naturally impossible. In western societies, women are gaining more and more space even in the political scenario, and becoming more and more influent in all structures. The same pattern is craved in developing countries, and in many of them it is becoming true. On the contrary, in rural environments there are still strong traditional rules, which hinder behavioral change.

It is important to notice that there is a Frelimo institution promoting women's rights, the Mozambican Women Organization (Organização da Mulher Moçambicana - OMM). The problem is that this organization works theoretically very well, whereas in practice few effective changes are visible. In Chiúta, there is a commission that represents such institution, and its leader is - to my astonishment - my interpreter's mother. However, it is not correct to say that nothing is changing, because there are many small signs of change, as in the example cited above, demonstrating that some women begin to modify their behavior. Still, it is a long process that will take time and depend on many variables such as support from information campaigns, and how women and men receive and elaborate these new ideas.

The debate on gender roles is an open window where the international pressure regarding gender parity claims for human rights, which are in conflict with traditional habits. The tradition here does not mean "backward" or a repugnant concept against human rights. Tradition means a societal structure that built a social balance, and if it persists, means that the society has its own equilibrium, even though such equilibrium is gender or power biased. If we consider the cosmological features of the relation between body and nature, we understand that each cultural trait has its profound root in individual minds, and if such set of behaviors is completely in harmony with their cosmological thought, it makes sense for their lives. The changes in gender relations would provoke a convulsion in Mozambique rural society. In fact, it is difficult to change such relations where there are few on-going changes in the traditional mode of production, even if people are more aware that women have their rights. The relation between mode of production and body representations is extremely tight and a change based only on women's rights does not seem to have enough strength to transform gender relations. Promoting a real change effect, would require a total change in social structure, but that would mean a

change from subsistence production to a capitalistic mode of production.

An interesting sign of change regards the introduction of farmer income projects, such as tobacco, cotton and sesame, that are already altering the scenario of production from a totally subsistence agriculture to a capitalist income generation mode of production. The immediate consequence is the money arrival in the rural villages, accounting for an economic movement that boosts the local market, increases the demand for new products and improves the offer of small jobs, causing a structural change in local society. It was really enlightening during field work, when talking to a young women, the fact that she told me that she was starting an income production of cotton. She was investing into that business alone, because her husband did not want to help, even if she told me that she intended to share the profits with him. However, crop-generated profits are not directly related to the society development. Many men who earn money from farm cash crops, spend it without planning their future, sometimes drinking, or buying dispensable stuffs, so the money of one year's hard work vanishes in few weeks, not bringing a real change or development in farmer's life.

We cannot deny that gender differences are found in all societies: the gender division of labor is everywhere since the human being is on the earth, and that is a consequence of the physical biological differences between men and women. The fact that today we fight for human rights and for gender parity does not make the differences between us disappear. Even if in the past such differences were exaggerated to establish a masculine domination, and many prejudices have been created on the basis of these ideas - for example the belief that women were unable to think - it is not correct to affirm that differences do not exist. Men and women are naturally different, and the gender parity is no doubt in conflict with human nature.

In Chiúta, the idea that men are superior and women must respect them is the predominant social rule. With the new gender campaigns, women are getting aware that they also have rights, and must not accept violence. In 2009, a campaign about violence against women conducted in Chiúta had a curious result: instead of reducing violence against women, it increased violence against men beaten by their own wives. The campaign aimed at reporting on gender equality, but its message was taken literally, and many women felt that if rights were equal, then women could also hit men. The violence was not seen as something undesirable, but as a form of fighting for equal rights. For that reason, such campaigns must take into consideration many aspects regarding *how* to inform people about their rights to avoid a misinterpretation.

School System

As a majority of Chewa people is from matrilineal kinship system, in Chiúta the mother's brother is the one who takes care of his nephews, including education tasks, like the decision to send them to school. However, it is important to note that Chewa people, like many African tribes, "had their own African Indigenous Knowledge system (AIKS) long before the imposition of missionary education by the European Missionaries" (Banda, 2008: 107). Thus, people transmitted traditional knowledge through rites, ceremonies and meetings (see "Traditional Culture"). The most important rites of Chewa people are *Nyau* (dance with masks practiced by man) and *Chinamwale* (initial rite for girls after first menstruation). That traditional culture rarely has been considered by westerners as a knowledge system.

Even with centuries of Portuguese political domination that repressed traditional AIKS, so far it is a fundamental feature of Chewa society. Banda (2008) reports in detail some features of Chewa AIKS as follows:

The focus on family is a starting point of a child's education among the Chewa People. (...) The Chewa AIKS had its socialisation agents such as ceremonies, dances, peer groups, the environment, and cattle rearing places, boys and girls dormitories (gowero), water drawing places, funeral gatherings or places and around the fire. (...)

Its methodologies included songs, folktales, proverbs, riddles, figures of speech and oral literature. In addition, imitation, play and participation in adult activities such as fishing, hunting, agriculture, bee-keeping and house keeping were also important.

(...) In the Chewa AIKS, notable also is the use of a variety of educational senses by the children to learn about the world, (...) senses of taste and even smell are educational senses as well (...).

In the Chewa AIKS, taboos, beliefs and superstition are used to reinforce the knowledge acquired. Breaking a taboo had well defined consequences that were feared and respected by all. This means that punishment and fear were widely used as motivators for learning and behaviour. This may suggest that a Chewa child goes to school rich with indigenous knowledge that is never made use of by teachers (Banda, 2008: 109-111)

However, the western knowledge method became the formal scholastic system since colonization missions. After independence, “Education for All” was a political aim of Frelimo party, and the western scholastic system was spread everywhere (Macagno, 2000). Nowadays Mozambique is submitted to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to be reached by 2015. Among the MDGs, the second goal is “Universal Education”. Nevertheless, rural people still practice AIKS: even now traditional ceremonies have an important role in the local social structure, although most institutions are unaware about AIKS relevance as a knowledge diffusion system.

Furthermore, formal Institutions have difficulties in convincing Chiúta rural people that studying in schools is fundamental for development. Some local people do not agree that schools are good for their children, arguing that they are still alive even if they have never studied in schools. This argument is really difficult to oppose, simply because it is true. It is challenging to convince parents that studying could be a better choice for their children than marriage and/or *machamba* (cultivated area). Actually many parents prefer that their kids work on crops or marry because they do not realize what are the advantages of sending a kid to school. This is understandable because it is part of their tradition and has also an economic reason: people in Chiúta have lived so far cultivating the land that is the only mean of subsistence they know, and their ascendants had lived in the same way for centuries. This is their model of life and they do not have many other examples of life styles. Besides, school lasts too long and it is also a long term investment, so it is difficult to realize and concretize the results of this process, especially within a poor family, that can not make long term plans due to lack of economic resources.

If parents have to choose between sending their children in school and waiting for some years until they learn to read and write, or having more hands to work the land and earn in one year a bigger production - which means more maize for everyone - it is not difficult to find out which one they would prefer. Thus, this decision is more related to an economic rationalization rather than a traditional custom. Short term thinking is a consequence of the economic conditions, hence sending a child to school is not many parents’ wish in Chiúta or any other African poor country because it does not constitute an immediate economic advantage. In brief, it is apparent that economic circumstances play a central role and force certain choices and decisions, in detriment of others (Chang, 2008).

Notwithstanding, the scholastic scenario has been changing, at least in the Child Aid project beneficiaries’ mind. During the interviews many of them said that their dream for their kids is letting them study so that they find jobs as teachers, doctors, because these are

the examples they have in the community. Almost all the people who work there as teachers, doctors or public employees have studied and come from the outside. Few of them are from Chiúta. These examples are important because show them new economic possibilities and represent real incentives to send kids to school. However, the school system in rural Mozambique is still very scarce, and many children drop out not only due to their culture and parents' influence, but also for reasons related to the school system, such as teachers' lack of commitment, lack of infrastructure quality, and distance from schools.

6.4 Traditional Culture in Chiúta

This research does not aim at explaining the traditional culture in Chiúta in depth. Such work would require a detailed research dedicated to it. However, understanding cosmological features as beliefs, rites and ceremonies of Chiúta's people is indispensable to identify and analyze the dynamics emerged from the contact between foreign aid and local people. For this reason, in this section we will describe the relevant cultural characteristics of Chiúta, regarding its beliefs, rites and ceremonies, to better analyze the conflicts that arise from the relationship between international projects' rationalities and traditional wisdom. Hence, cultural traits have to be taken into consideration by development workers because they influence people's daily life.

The cultural traits in Chiúta follow the Chewa traditions. Chewa people still preserve much of their culture. They are predominantly quiet and peaceful, willing to avoid direct confrontation, rarely causing conflicts openly (unless they are drunk) and for this reason they never say "no". A man of few words is considered wise, and a woman is expected to stay at home under her husband's authority. People normally speak softly, showing respect for others. Women are not encouraged to formulate or expose their viewpoints, and it is difficult to involve them in development projects. (Delaplace, 2010)

Envy is a social phenomenon, and people are assumed to be extremely envious: for this reason, individuals are compelled **not** to be different or better, everybody must be as equal as possible. Since people do not face openly their conflicts, the manifestation of envy usually is a hidden attack, i.e. setting the envied person's thatched roof on fire, or using witchcraft that causes diseases and deaths to the envied one. Whoever improves its life may be threatened by envious individuals.

Village headman is the guardian of the tradition; he connects alive people with the

dead people's spirits. The spirits may get angry if people do not respect the tradition. During life, people treat their most important relatives very well due to the fear of their spirit after death. The mother's brother, who is responsible of his nephews' care, is a very important person that is very much respected.

When someone dies, most of the times the death is attributed to witchcraft. The funeral is an important event that all relatives must attend not to be accused of witchcraft. People are expected to give a symbolical amount of money to the parents or closely relatives of the victim. As Delaplace states,

Once dead, the spirit of the victim may threaten his murderer. So the murderer is scared to go to the funeral. So as not to be suspected of being the murderer, all the relatives have to attend the funeral. As everybody is related within a community, the whole community attends the same funeral. (Delaplace, 2010: 2)

The "witches" usually have a close relationship with the victim, i.e. mother, uncle, daughter, nephew, etc.

The belief in Witchcraft is a good example of conflict among cosmological perspectives. In Mozambique, witchcraft and superstitions related to the "African tradition", called "*usos e costumes*" (usage and customs), are widespread and, at the same time, are in perpetual conflict with the "European Modernity" that emphasizes a scientific culture based on rational thinking. Delaplace explains:

People still go a lot to the traditional doctor (*Sinanga*). It is not necessarily a matter of money (it may be more expensive than the hospital). It is firstly because the "medicine of the white man" cannot cure all the diseases of the black man. It is also a matter of distance (*Sinanga* are commonly found in rural areas) (Delaplace, 2010:2)

From the interviews with the Child Aid project area leaders, I could infer that they are in a key position between the local knowledge and the western knowledge. They are messengers of project guidelines, and their main task is reporting to local population what they have learnt in the project meetings. Nevertheless, even them - that are closer to the "western" rationality - believe in witchcraft. Hence, the development project has to face those features and elaborate strategies that take into account such issues.

How does witchcraft work? Usually witchcraft is detected when someone dies in an unexpected way, and the death is caused by the will of someone else, called “feiticeiro” (sorcerer) who in many cases is someone from the dead person’s family. The “curandeiro” (healer or witchdoctor) is the one who is able to find out who the “feiticeiro” was. While the “feiticeiro” is evil, acting in secret and anti-social way, the witchdoctor uses his knowledge to relieve people and society (Manjate, 2009). In the past, due to the tradition, whenever a “feiticeiro” was discovered he was suddenly assassinated by the “curandeiro”. However, nowadays things are different, and according to testimonies from the field the “feiticeiros”, when discovered, usually are forced to abandon the village and escape abandoning all his/her goods (sometimes they are lynched). It is important to note that in most cases the accused sorcerer is a woman (Serra, 2009)

We can say that the magic features have great importance in the Chiuta people’s social life, because the fear of witchcraft or reprisals not only is an inhibiting factor for some behaviors, but also forces people to behave with solidarity to avoid bitterness. Thus, magic features such as witchcraft mechanism and envy are potent constituents of social control.

Rites and Ceremonies

Many things in life need the permission of the spirits to succeed. For example, the pestle, a daily tool used by every family is made by someone who is prepared to, and has the allowance of the spirits. Houses are made only after a ceremony to ask for permission to the spirits. People who come from abroad are expected to attend local ceremonies if they intend to stay there for a long time, otherwise local people may become suspicious. For this reason, when the project started its activities up, local traditional authorities made a ceremony to ask for permission to the spirits so the project could be started.

Further important cultural traits from Chiúta are the initiation rites and ceremonies related to its traditional culture. Those activities are manifested mainly by *Nyau* and *Chinamwali*, which so far have been in use.

Nyau

Nyau is a dance exclusive for men. It can be found in Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Zambia, within Chewa people. In Mozambique, this cultural expression is

concentrated in Tete Province. *Nyau* has a magic-spiritual characteristic, and its preparation has a secret aspect, because uninitiated boys, women, and strangers are not allowed to participate in training nor be aware of its content. Despite the fact that women are prohibited to participate in the initiation meetings, they have an important role in the *Nyau* structure, because they sing, clap hands and dance as spectators while *Nyau* is performing. They also provide food, and material for masks manufacturing. Hence, men and women have a complementary relation in *Nyau*, despite the fact that women are “excluded from privileged information of *Nyau*” (Banda, 2008: 117).

Nyau has another denomination: “*Gule Wamkulu*”. *Nyau* in Chichewa means *figure* or *mask*. *Gule Wamkulu* is another term to designate *Nyau*: it means *big dance*, and appeared later, when women decided to create their own *nyaus* as a way to challenge men. This kind of *nyau* was called “*Chingondo*” and it is also used during girls’ initiation rite “*Chinamwale*”.

The masks used during performances usually are hideous and full of mysteries; they represent zoomorphic figures, related to an ancient culture. *Nyau* is a dance carrying a high cultural and artistic value as well as it is a symbol of protest and resistance against Nguni (African ethnic group) and Portuguese invasions. Some masks represent an affront to colonial order (i.e. the black monkey), or Catholic Church (i.e. the white monkey wearing glasses) (Manjate e Nhussi, 2008: 26), and their intent was ridicule colonial administration in order to preserve traditional culture.

Many songs of the *Nyau* performance have an erotic meaning: they are full of metaphors, and often are provocative and mock. However, they also communicate local knowledge about community life, covering aspects related to social life, politics, economy and spiritual esthetics of Chewa people. These songs help remembering the knowledge acquired during initiation teachings, but also entertain people with their comic essence. Among the traditional knowledge, *Nyau* songs pass on rules as the chieftaincies lineage, elderly power, women submission, productive activities organization (Manjate, Nhussi, 2008: 34).

This traditional trait is one of those that instead of loose strength due to societal changes, is gaining more space in the society not only because it is really important for them, but also because it was recognized by Unesco as a humanity cultural heritage as a communication mean. Men who are not part of the dance group live in fear of finding *Gules* on the way since they may suffer retaliation, or may be attacked just because they have not participate in the rituals of the group.

Those who have passed through the initiation rites from *Nyau* tell that after spending one week on the jungle among Nyau group they are *free* to walk everywhere, and if they respect all the rules, they do not fear any kind of contact with magical dancers. Despite the fact that initiation rite for young boys who enter in Nyau group are secret, it is known that they attend lessons in which they are taught how to behave in society, and the respect for parents and also undergo some physical ordeals which prove their masculinity. After that week, they are free, and not obligated to dance in all ceremonies - only if they decide to. One interviewee told me that getting through this week was like conquering a *Perpetual Passport of Freedom*.

Many circumstances require the presence of Nyau. For example, if a person is dying, s/he might call the Nyau and requires that in her/his ceremony the Nyau dance to her spirit. Nyaus usually dance in funerals. Moreover, they are called on special occasions such as receiving guests in the village, and many other celebrations and important dates during the year. Besides, the Nyaus from all Chewa territory meet themselves in Festivals and Competitions, where they prepare well to show their best features.

Chinamwale

Chinamwale is an initiation rite related to girls' passage from adolescence to adulthood. Like Nyau, Chinamwale is a Chewa cultural tradition. While Nyau is restricted to boys, Chinamwale is only for girls. During ceremonies, Nyau dancers possibly appear to congratulate the young girl, and according to Manjate and Nhussi (2008) Nyau presence is a social mean to intimidate girls to maintain a subordinate position in relation to men.

Chinamwale happens after the first menses, and celebrates the arrival in the adult's world. When the girl notices her menses, she reports it to her aunt or grandmother. Parents designate a trustworthy woman to be the girl's "madrinha" (godmother). This person is responsible to instruct the girl about many requirements related to female sphere, for example, how to pull her vaginal labia - this is practiced to "enhance heterosexuality and the practice is described as 'holding onto one's partner'" (Bagnol and Mariano, 2008). Then, the girl passes through a seclusion that lasts all menses' days long. Along with the godmother, elder women advise how the girl must behave when menstruated, hygienic care, what are her household obligations (cooking, washing, rising fire, etc.), good manners concerning future husband (including how to please her husband). During the second menses the girl undergoes a 2nd seclusion and elder women continue with

instructions. After Chinamwale ceremony, the girl's parents are ready to receive suitor requests.

Chinamwale is important because it yields resistance and cohesion to the community, ensure the population reproduction, and hand on relevant knowledge that improves women's quality of life. Beyond objective purposes, Chinamwale has a magic-mystic feature that symbolizes life continuity because it means a new beginning for the girl that is ready to give birth, and hence, it is the sign of the community permanence.

Contrary to Nyau dance, Chinamwale is gradually losing strength among local people. According to interviewees in Chiúta, many women are not practicing the entire rite as they used in the past, and there are many spots of behavioral changes among women, as we have seen in the "gender roles" section. Hence, this tradition has been losing ground in recent times, and this fact reflects the trend of this changing scenario.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter has examined thoroughly the way of living of Chiúta people. First, it analyzed their actual situation regarding infrastructure and economy that has been a consequence of history events. Then we could observe how the political scene is a mix of official institutions and traditional authority that still plays an important role, especially in rural contexts, due to the high level of credibility among local population. Third, we have seen the Chiúta social structure mainly based on the relation between local people and the crop cycle. Social reality has also a gender-biased constitution, which faces the arrival of gender empowerment agendas from modern world. Last, but not least, this chapter showed traditional cultural traits to explain what Chewa people perceive as reality, and the reason why their thoughts seem to be different, and sometimes conflicting, with western's thoughts, behavior, beliefs and habits.

The Chiúta people have a rural way of life that has to be taken into account by the development projects to understand that their culture is still important to them. Although the arrival of development projects, energy system, and the contact with modern world, in Chiúta, life is currently based on agriculture subsistence; their traditional political structure has survived the political changes after independence and gained political space. Besides, their social structure, including their traditional knowledge system and their beliefs and rites, has always been the way they deal with ordinary life. Magic-spiritual features are completely embedded in Chiúta society (as well as in Mozambique), and

westerns institutions have to be aware of their relevance.

CHAPTER 7 - Fieldwork Under Analysis: what emerges from the contact?

7.1 - Introduction

This chapter will illustrate the results of the field work carried out in Mozambique in 2009 (three months, between April and June), and in 2010 (two months, between April-June), to analyze how the beneficiaries of the development project perceive it, and what are the dynamics that emerge from this relationship. The Child Aid development project is carried out by ADPP NGO (Ajuda Popular do Povo para o Povo) and constitutes my case study. The ethnographic observation enabled the researcher to go deep into the reality of the project and realize that working for local development is a complex enterprise that faces many obstacles, especially the delicate intercultural confrontation. Working with people from completely different cultures requires a constant intercultural mediation, which is a factor that imposes more barriers to the continuity of work, because it needs frequent adjustments to synchronize with local realities. Thus, the field work intended to understand the difficulties faced and the solutions adopted by the project, and allowed to understand how the target population reacts to this new experience.

Therefore, this chapter will show how the Child Aid project works, the results of the field research in Mozambique, the main ongoing changes that influence the relationship between project and community, and the beneficiaries' conceptions of development. This will facilitate the further analysis in Chapter Eight that will compare the field research in Mozambique with the one conducted in Italy (cf. Chapter Five), to analyze the concepts of development and intercultural relationships in the context of international cooperation for development.

7.2 - The Child Aid Project

The present scenario of international cooperation is composed by different types of actors: national, international, bilateral and multilateral institutions, which aim at improving the situation in many developing countries. Within this framework, there are many ongoing projects , most of them managed by local and international NGOs. At a

global level, there are the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to be accomplished by 2015. The main institutions representing such sphere are United Nations, the World Bank, Europe Union, and the international cooperation of the richest countries.

At national level, in Mozambique, which is one of the least developed countries (UNDP - Human Development Index) there is a intense flow of aid coming from all around the world, a national plan for development (PARPA- National Plan to reduce Absolute Poverty), decided in accordance with main donors, and many ongoing projects to carry out the fight against poverty. At local level, that is, where the projects are executed, there are many NGOs who get funds from donors to promote various types of projects that have to be consistent with the PARPA and the MDGs. Those projects work in partnership with Mozambique Government and are accountable to donors who fund the project. Here, at local level, we place the Child Aid project, which is financed by the Holland government.

Child Aid is a project created by the International NGO Humana People to People, which has a Mozambican NGO called ADPP (Ajuda Popular do Povo para o Povo), as an operator in the national context. Mozambique is not the only country with a Child Aid project. The international NGO Humana People to People carry out activities all around the world, and “at present, operates 52 Child Aid projects in 15 countries in Africa, India, China, and Latin America. Child Aid has 290,000 active member families and its activities reach out to more than 500,000 families” (The International Humana People to People Movement website, N.D.35).

In Mozambique, the ADPP NGO has other projects, and in Tete - Chiúta, besides Child Aid project, there is a Teacher Training School project to train rural primary school teachers (EPF-Escola de Professores do Futuro). Both projects headquarters are located in the same place, and help each other. Child Aid is a social project from which the Mozambican sample of this study was derived. It is important to be aware of how the project works, because it carries significant social impacts, and together with other development programs, has been promoting changes in Chiúta in recent years.

The “Child Aid – Tete” project has begun in January 2009. It was planned to work directly with 3,000 families (acting in an area with approximately 20,000 inhabitants), and indirectly with 20,000 families. The project framework is developed with the aim of lasting 5 years; however, in the case of this study, the project will probably be closed by

35 <http://www.humana.org/Articel.asp?NewsID=358>

the end of 2010 because there are not enough financial resources to go on. This fact was felt with great sorrow by those who operate the project because it demonstrates a serious limit on NGOs action, which depend on donations to maintain the projects alive. It will probably undermine also the objectives proposed by the project, because in two years you cannot achieve the sustainable development scheduled in the space of five years.

The project works in six different areas: each of them has its own Area Leader, and 10 Village Action Groups (VAG). Each VAG is composed by 50 families, and two volunteers are the VAG coordinators, who represent the link between the project staff and local community. Each VAG have 5 Committees to mobilize the population on five main themes: health, education, agriculture, orphans and environment.

It is important to emphasize the role of VAG-coordinators, because they are key actors for the operation of the project. They are volunteers who must be active in the community, calling each family registered in the VAG to attend the meetings proposed by the project. The meetings are moments in which the project can communicate directions and knowledge, organize actions, and promote debate among local population to individuate the main problems they would like to solve. In every VAG there are five committees, and each committee is supposed to have two volunteers responsible for teaching the contents of trainings to the other VAG members. In total, the project structure counts about 720 volunteers. With this large number of volunteers, we can have an idea of the difficulty of maintaining the level of motivation needed for the work to continue, since volunteers earn no money. During the first period of fieldwork, many volunteers asked if they would earn something, and in the second year, some of them quit the project while others were very disappointed about not getting anything.

Child Aid works not only with children: actually most activities are carried out with adults, to improve the families' lives. It works most on the base of training the local people, in 10 major lines of development - Line 1: Strengthening the economy of the family; Line 2: Health and Hygiene including HIV and AIDS; Line 3: Preschools; Line 4 Children as active citizens in the political, social, cultural and economic spheres of society; Line 5: Children without parents; Line6: Education; Line 7: District Development; Line 8: Environment; Line 9: Food Security; Line 10: from subsistence agriculture to commercial agriculture - with the aim "to empower and organize every child and family so that they may take matters into their own hands, taking action as a community to improve the lot of the children. The Action Groups constitute the core structure of Child Aid" (The International Humana People to People Movement Website, N.D.). The Action Groups

should hold meetings once a week.

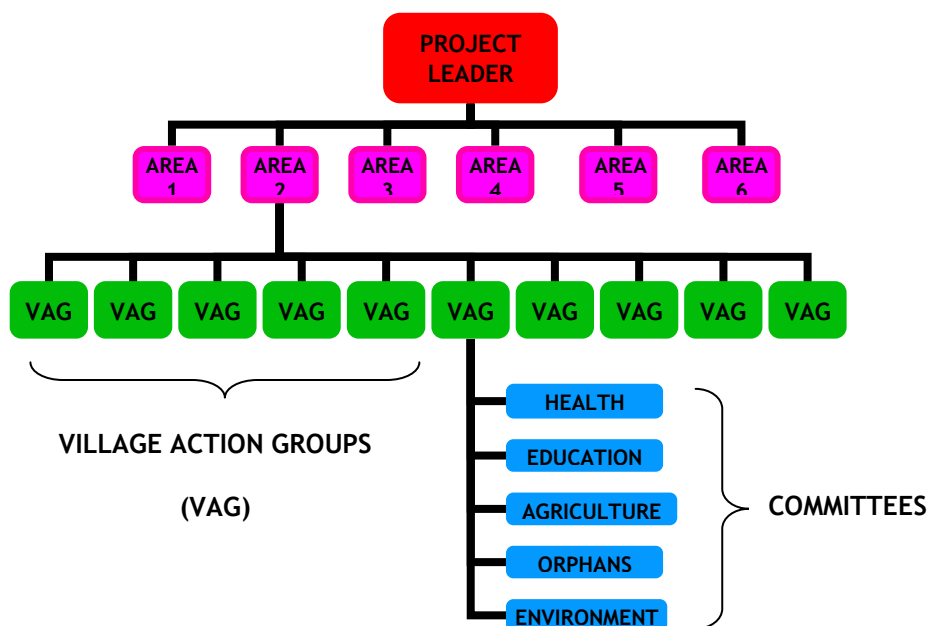
In sum, the project structure is composed by a Project-Leader, a Co-Project-Leader, six Area-Leaders, 120 VAG-Coordinators, 600 Committees-Coordinators, working with 60 VAGs with 50 families each. Besides that, the project hire experts in different fields, and involves two Development Instructors each six months, who are international volunteers strengthening the program by bringing their international experience of cooperation in the area where they operate.

According to the Child Aid Third Quarterly Report (2009), Child Aid is likely to improve quality of life in rural communities by organizing families in small groups,

Child Aid can help these communities. The main problems occur because of the poverty (lack of conditions) associated by the lack of knowledge. By organizing the families in small groups and offering them ideas to improve their lives, by improving the agriculture methods (which is very interesting for them), we also create conditions to promote discussions and clubs where we talk about different subjects, such as health, the importance of education, sanitation, gender equality, culture and many other issues important to change behaviour and promote development. (Child Aid third quarterly Report 2009)

The Figure 11 below illustrates the project scheme.

Figure 11: Project “Child Aid – Tete” organization chart, Mozambique



Font: Developed by the author from: “Activity Plan for Child Aid - Tete” (Mariana Meirelles, 2008)

Idea of Development

The development concept of Child Aid can be summarized by *knowledge transmission*. The NGO has the purpose to “teach how to fish, instead of giving the fish” (ADPP Child Aid Manual, 2009), thus to pass on knowledge that local people are supposed to assimilate, to imprint first a change in behaviors, and then, bring development. The main idea is that the NGO is the vector which gives the initial input, then, local people should follow those guidelines, and “take the reins” of their own development. According to the Child Aid Report, “the idea of the project is to organize the families in Village Action Groups, and in this way mobilize and teach them to be able to identify and solve their own problems” (Child Aid Third Quarterly Report, 2009).

Hence, the process departs from the NGO that encourages new behaviors, trying to promote work in associations, unite the individuals’ strengths to build a path to development. This view reveals the idea of empowering the bases, because it considers that it is through social mobilization that local life can be improved. The word “local” is fundamental in such context because the project reaches approximately 3000 families,

promoting activities within this range, and for that reason aims at implementing a local development. Thus, the project is structured to organize community Action Groups that should be the driving force of the community's own development. Therefore, we can consider that the NGO works with a Bottom-up approach to development, "in which people work together to solve their own problems." (Diamond, 2005: 278)

7.3 - How Mozambicans Perceive the Cooperation?

Given the project structure, now we are able to analyze beneficiaries' opinions about it, and proceed with further analyses about their development conceptions. For that reason, this topic aims at analyzing the fieldwork that had the objective to observe how a development project works on the field and, foremost, understand how project's beneficiaries perceive the cooperation and conceive "development".

The process of field research was designed to follow the action of Child Aid project in two distinct periods including a space of one year between them. During the first research phase, the project was at the very beginning, and local people was getting in contact with it. The first observations were made approximately one month after the project's opening campaign. The presentation of the project consisted of meetings held in almost all communities where the project works directly. In such occasion, the team was introduced, cultural groups danced, and activities for the kids were carried out: after all this, there has been the process to enroll all the families present there, filling up a form with some basic information (Child Aid Half Year Report 2009). Shortly thereafter, the community development mobilization activities began.

Therefore, the initial phase of the field research coincided with the time when the communities were being organized in community Action Groups, counting about 50 families each. Then, in 2009, the observation was made in a period of great excitement and expectation on the novelty just arrived in the community. The idea communicated by this initial campaign was that the project would be a promoter of social mobilization, with the aim of encouraging people to work in groups, with the promise of promoting development through specific actions. According to the VAG-coordinator's manual, "the Child Aid's program aims to bring improvements in the community by organizing and mobilizing the families in the community to pay attention to their own problems" (VAG-coordinator's manual, Child Aid-Tete, 2009).

One year later, in 2010, on the second research phase, the relationship between

project and local community intensified. Despite the fact that the initial euphoria no longer existed, the project was carrying out many activities, and there were many people involved directly with them. Hence, it was possible to observe in first person the community development process.

The research process resulted in an extensive study that produced different social actors' opinions. Thus, the intent of this section is to expose the interpretation that people from Chiúta has on cooperation made by the NGO project. In order to accomplish this task, first I will expose the farmers' ideas about the project. Second, I will analyze how the influence of Western culture, which is intensifying every year, is changing the population's profile and interferes with the continuity of traditions and in people's opinions. Last, but not least, I will focus my attention on beneficiaries' conceptions of development, which are closely related to the project effectiveness. The most important ideas expressed during field work are cited below, and illustrated by excerpts from the interviews.

Opinions About the Project

The main idea people have about the project (and in general of all development projects) is that it brings resources to the population, i.e. that it is a support for the community through material goods. This idea passes (or has passed) through the mind of virtually every person who knows the project, therefore, can be considered an opinion of the collective. The name of the project, Child Aid, suggests that children will receive things, then it is understandable that people think of it as a chance to get something: this fact in part explains the relative initial euphoria that the project brought to the communities.

Actually, the name is a relevant factor of controversy, since both the words "child" and "aid" bring with them immediate concepts that induce people to think that the project came to "help", in the sense of "giving" something material for children. The word "child", automatically recalls the idea of children's world, disregarding that the project purpose is to improve the lives of the entire community. This idea remained very strong both in 2009 and in 2010, and many interviewees stressed that they hoped the project would help with school supplies, clothes, and food for children. It may sound trite, but it is not, because in fact, the name of the project influences the opinion of many people who know little or nothing about it. The word "aid" may have slightly different explanations in

several languages, and even in the local language different translations can be assigned to it. However, the most diffuse meaning in Chichewa is "to be given" (*cuthandiza*), i.e. that the person or the child will receive something. This concept is extremely widespread among respondents, and creates great expectations in people.

This expectation people have about Child Aid project is probably linked to experiences people had with previous welfare programs, mainly associated with periods of war and famine, in which people used to receive aid through food and clothing donations, among other primary goods for survival. People rely on known experiences to formulate ideas and expectations about the current project. The Red Cross is a representative case in Chiúta, because it plays an important role among the orphans and the disadvantaged, and it currently distributes food to them. Despite being an important work, it is linked to assistencialism, and the major criticism of this system is that it does not create development, but dependence: when the aid stops, people cannot count on the donations anymore, and may remain in worse condition than before.

Nevertheless, the idea of "winning" things not only is a consequence of confusing project name and the past experience with previous NGOs projects. There is another factor linked to communication that greatly influences the beneficiaries' perception, since it is very difficult to effectively communicate what are the objectives of the project (this theme will be discussed in detail in Chapter Eight). For example, in the initial information campaign, the project informed that its aim consisted in giving ideas for people to initiate a development path, because the project was proposing a sustainable development, so that people would learn things they could carry on even when the project would no longer exists - and this should be a long-lasting effect. Thus, the project stated that would not distribute material goods, and the population were not expected to wait for this kind of help. But in practice, when the project said it would give ideas, people did not really understand, and kept wondering how the project will help.

One concern regards the fact that the information the project communicate is complete only to the few that are directly linked to the project. A slightly larger fraction of people receives partial information, understanding more or less the purpose of the project. However, this is a condition apt to raise doubts and suspicion. The problem is that for most people, the information received is too little or altered before reaching each single person. Consequently, the ideas disclosed by beneficiaries are often wrong, incomplete or altered, and this causes frustration and disappointment about to the project.

Another cause of confusion among people was the fact they believe that the project was conducted by the Teachers Training School, which actually is part of ADPP, but it is a training program for teachers of 1st and 2nd grade. One Development Instructor who worked for that school raised fund to build a primary school in the village, and many people thought that it was related to the Child Aid project.

Associated with the prevailing idea of "receiving", there is the idea that this project proposes improvements to the community in the areas of education, health, human rights, agriculture, prevent hunger, etc.. Actually, most people are aware of what a social project is, and hope that it actually improves the harsh life on the fields. It is easy to understand that a project consists in assisting people in social areas because in this district other NGOs working in social field, such as Red Cross and World Food Program, already exist and existed in the past. There is a second factor related to the awareness about social programs, since improvements in health and education has already become a cliché, and this is constantly reminded by the government's slogan "luta contra a pobreza absoluta" (fight against absolutely poverty) included in each speech of government representatives.

It was also found that there was a small share of beneficiaries well aware of the project, participating actively, and aiming at continuing it to benefit their lives in future. Since the beginning of the project, I could see tangible results and satisfaction expressed by interviewees. One of the first actions of the project was to organize groups to make community actions, aiming at doing things for the community. These activities immediately showed that the project was serious, and people could trust it, thus, it began to get credibility. Another relevant factor was that some people noticed the strength of working in groups to improve common goods. One respondent commented on the construction of barns, stating that before the project it took three days to build a barn while with the groups formed by the project, they managed to build up to five barns a day. There have been also other common actions, such as the manufacture of bricks to build schools, and the cleaning of meeting places. All these facts gave immediate visibility and credibility to the project. Some vulnerable people thought they could benefit from that kind of work; two women, a widow and an other one with physical problems, said that with the common actions they might be able to build a home. These initial actions were fairly reflected in the interviews; many respondents mentioned the importance of teamwork and realized that if they were unite, they would be able to change the local situation.

Thus, the idea of working in groups was very motivating for local people, creating great expectations for the future. They imagined that if the community was capable to follow the project's directions, they could develop a lot. For that reason, many interviewees showed great expectation in the continuity of the project, wondering if it would accomplish its goals, fulfilling what it has promised. This shows that some people welcomed the idea of starting the development from the community work, through the organization of groups, as a desirable bottom-up approach to achieve development.

Such awareness marks an important starting point for the community development. However, real transformations are a challenge for local community, since many respondents stressed the difficulty of working in groups. It may be asked: why it is so difficult to change? One answer might be related to the complexity of overcoming the socio-cultural barriers. In Chiúta, people will not modify their lives by themselves because the local conjuncture does not encourage changes. In fact, one of the main problems of working in groups is related to the lifestyle they lead, where each family has its own subsistence production so they are able to survive alone or within the family help, and this is a factor interfering with union. Solidarity mechanisms exist when there is famine or difficult times, and there is a social fundamental rule regarding hospitality and food sharing (discussed in Chapter Six) to relieve such periods. However, such social rule works with people who belong to the same family group while people who have no kinship between them seldom unite to work together. Thus, they show a kind of social resistance in joining with others. During the fieldwork, many interviewees commented on this difficulty, and although people perceived the group work as a welcome novelty, they complained that it would be an almost impossible task due to local resistance.

Although there are other NGOs who work (or have worked) with the population of Chiúta, their presence is not as experienced as in another regions of Mozambique yet. In Chiúta, I could observe only one example of NGO that in the past carried out a program of sustainable development, called "Ajuda Popular da Noruega - APN." (Norwegian People's Aid). By sustainable development I mean the accomplishment of improvements in local community, which are durable in time. Such NGO implemented workshops for farmers training with participatory methodology from 2000 to 2003, where people were trained in carpentry, building, turnery, beekeeping, soldering, blacksmithing, as well as building schools, training centers, and teachers' homes (Correia, 2005). Although the training center no longer exists, some results were sustainable: today some of the people trained are still active, practicing those professions offered by the program. Some interviewees

remembered that program and said that it was good for the people, realizing its sustainability.

While in 2009 the project was at the beginning, promoting some trainings, in 2010 there were already many activities. The main actions consisted in pre-schools, creating gardens for sale of products, establishment of income generating projects for groups (a kind of micro-credit), support activities to HIV positive "living positively", latrines building, garbage pits and firewood saving stove in the home, and community center for children in Manje (Chiúta's center village). By the number of such activities, it is easy to understand that there were more people directly involved, with different degrees of interest in participation. It was interesting to note that even though many more activities were in progress, the general impression was that whoever was directly connected to the project was still the minority of the population, and many still did not know well what was the project: they were curious to know, but did not understand much. In 2010, I asked what they thought about the project and whether they felt benefitted. Students from EPF that were in the communities to conduct interviews, reported that the population did not know the project very well. They carried out 62 interviews, out of which 16 respondents expressed a negative opinion, saying that the project has done nothing for the community, and some did not feel benefitted.

Despite the doubts and misconceptions about the project, we observed that most interviewees gave a positive opinion and were hopeful about the project. A fact that showed the seriousness of the project occurred on 1st May 2009, when the main local institutions marched on and promoted activities to celebrate the date and give visibility to the actions that each one was carrying out in Chiúta. The Child Aid project had distributed T-shirts to volunteers, and this had a great impact since the whole population could see the project with their own eyes (Figure 12). Local people began to realize that the project was a real thing, and that it could give things for volunteers: hence, it was not true that it would not give anything. Actually, the project proposed to work in a way that things were supposed to be given only to those who wanted to work and showed that effectively were active. This was a basic principle to ensure sustainability. However, such logic was not clear immediately, and only after a certain time, some people started to understand this mechanism, while others did not feel benefitted because they did not realize why some were getting things from the project and they were not. Since the logic of the project was not evident to many people, in some interviews the idea that the project was there to help

only few people, or that the project was working with a closed number of children, emerged. Hence, Child Aid should expand to cover more people, and should be continued.

Figure 12: Project volunteers in the 1st May 2009 parade, Labor day



Source: Chiúta's Fieldwork photo

Therefore, we see that this lack of clarity regarding the project seemed to have built a kind of mystery about what it actually was. In the second year of fieldwork, it seemed that doubts about the project have grown, and some people even doubted of its existence. A common question pervading many heads in Chiúta was: "How will this project help us?". Such inquiry can be considered as lack of information or even lack of understanding of the project proposal. Since the project is structured with the aim of developing ten lines, in six different geographical areas and working directly with 3,000 families, it is dispersive, and the information arrives to most people as "separate pieces of information that some people know" (Freedman, 1998: text online³⁶), but most people does not really understand it. Freedman (1998) explains that "in pieces, knowledge is static, a congerly of separate inconclusive mysteries, but knowledge shared fully among a concerned group of people turns readily into a plan of action" (Freedman, 1998: text online³). The author

³⁶ http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-88059-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html

sustains that one of the main challenges faced by development projects is to accomplish an effective sharing of knowledge, to guarantee that most people understand at least the necessary information to engage in the project instead of mistrust it. In Chiúta, such task would probably be accomplished, if the project would complete its duration of five years. Nevertheless, with only one year of operation, few can discern what it really is, and it seems that information comes in pieces, so people are too suspicious to embrace the project. For those who work directly with the project, and indeed have received things such as tools to open latrines, manuals, folders, etc., the project's idea is more realistic, but even among them there is much doubt.

On the one hand, to the researcher who monitored the project from inside, and followed the board of directors meetings, it was obvious that several activities were being undertaken, there were many people involved in the project, and the project was slowly bringing development for the community. On the other hand, from the most local people's standpoint, who, theoretically, were also part of the project, those activities were not felt at the same way. When people perceived that there were persons who were getting things while others were not, some remained puzzled. Although such "things" may seem almost insignificant in the eyes of a Westerner (such as a pen, a shirt, a notebook, etc.), inside the context I am studying, which is constituted by totally disadvantaged society, any external object (intended as not produced locally) that one owns, is envied by the others. All extraneous objects get a very high value because they are difficult to acquire. For example, during the fieldwork, when I made pictures with people, if they had a pencil, a pen, or any exogenous object, they were keen to show it in the pictures (see Figures 13; 14; 15).

Figures 13 – 14 – 15: Local People and Exogenous Objects



Figure 13

Boy who had received a pencil was keen to show it in the picture with his family



Figure 14

Lady took the researcher's notebook to show it in the photo



Figure 15

Cotton producer, was keen to show pesticide used in planting

The pictures above illustrate the attribution of value to foreign goods, and it is possible to understand that even a single pencil may have a significant value for local people. For that reason, when the project distributed things, the ones who did not receive anything wondered when the project would achieve him/her. In 2010, during the second period of fieldwork, the project seemed to have lost credibility among persons who have not seen anything tangible, and some people showed lower interest in attending meetings, some VAG-Coordinators were unhappy, some gave up, and there were still many mysteries around the project. One of the VAG-Coordinators was particularly sore with the project because he thought the project had *lied* to him. His case was particularly interesting because he was participating actively as a volunteer and even as manager of an income generating activity. In the following excerpt, taken from his interview, he stressed the weakening of the project over time, and his personal dissatisfaction:

Previously, families seemed gaining strength when they heard the name of ADPP. Over time it weakened. [People] used to say: *How this project is helping these children?* Yet, we as Vag-Coordinators are also members, they [the project's staff] said that we are volunteers, but do not give us any help. They say they will help us with ideas. Then, we worked, worked... but for us... there, on the office, they were lying to us. [The project said]: *from August, you will receive passwords, and when one Vag-Coordinator reach a certain number of passwords, will gain a subsidy.* They told that there... And we waited, waited... but till now [April] we have never received those passwords. (Interviewee M08, my translation)

His testimony threw light on some important points. First, he was discouraged with the project because he had been struggling to mobilize families to attend the meetings, but he did not see any recognition by the project, and he felt betrayed because they had not complied with the promise to reward those who really worked. Second, he highlighted another widespread idea, especially among Vag-Coordinators, that they work for the project. The project tries to emphasize the idea that the activities are for the community, then, Vag-Coordinators are expected to dedicate themselves to improve the community, and such effort will promote outcomes that will be fruitful for them. In fact, the project is not a company that needs to exploit workers for profit, however, as its budget is limited, it pays only the Area-Leaders and other few employees. Therefore, it needs the work of many volunteers to perform all activities. In such circumstances, there is an ambiguous

and delicate relationship: the Vag-coordinator feels part of the project because he was trained and received a T-shirt and other material to work on the field, but at the same time, he feels excluded when he expects to receive something in exchange for his work, while he receives nothing.

I know that the project was there with the good intentions to promote community development, but the idea that volunteers should work to improve their own community and this would be also their reward, is not enough to maintain their enthusiasm for long time. The project marked a new event in the community, and Vag-coordinators barely knew who was carrying out the program, they were not sure if they could trust it. Then, when the Vag-coordinator stressed that his expectations of receiving gifts were not met, under his point of view, the project did cease to be credible.

Project's Income Generating Activities

Among the activities promoted by the project, Income Generating Activities (IGAs) had a significant impact on communities. Here, it is important to highlight that in 2009, income generating activities were proposed to groups of people who showed interest in starting a small business, with the aim of boosting the local economy. People have been taught about economics and then twelve IGAs were instituted³⁷: for each of them the project offered the initial material to start the activity, and group members were supposed to keep the business working, and generating profit. In 2010, the program was re-proposed in a new version with the help of an international volunteer (Development Instructor – DI), and it was intended for women's groups. In this year, the training was improved and had a very positive impact on the communities.

The IGAs meant the possibility to obtain material goods from the project, and in 2009, most members of the IGAs' groups were formed by (or at least had as leaders) Vag-coordinators. However, such program caused confusion among the local population. I will analyze two examples to explain the impact of IGAs in one community, to understand how the local people reacted.

In Missuko, where the second phase of this research was conducted, there are only 670 inhabitants. In 2009, one IGA of three persons was sponsored by the project for the production of bread, one of them was a Vag-coordinator. This new activity disrupted the

³⁷ According to the Child Aid Tete Year Report 2009, there was “12 Income Generating Activities running and people trained in basic notion of management: 5 bakeries, 1 cloth selling, 1 shoes selling, 2 goats creation, 1 carpentry, 2 tailors”

delicate local social balance. To begin with, the IGA received raw material to make bread. This made some people in the community think that the project was helping children through the production of breads at last, and they have interpreted the initiative as a community's bakery where kids could freely take breads. According to the testimony of the Vag-coordinator who was a member of this group, when the group received the flour to make breads, people started asking why did they have received that material for free. He tried to explain that there was a condition to respect: keep the business working well. Even with such explanation, some people were suspicious. He commented what did local people told him:

When we received that material [flour to make bread], people were saying that as the Vag-coordinators received the flour, now the project would finally help the children. [They used to ask]: *But why don't you want to give bread for kids??*
(Interviewee M08, my translation)

Here, the Vag-coordinator found himself in a difficult situation because he had to face inquiries from the community, and he felt under pressure because people asked questions that he was not able to answer. Besides, such questions led to the idea that the project was contradictory, since it offered to help children and all community, but seemed to help only few people. Such reasoning raised the idea that the project was useless, and this fact seemed credible to the local community, even to the Vag-Coordinator. One of the main doubts in this case, was the reason why he had received free flour and children could not eat free bread. After the flour have finished, he quit the IGA. Of course we cannot affirm that the failure was caused only by the social pressure, because he also faced other problems, such as the waste of flour at the beginning when he was learning how to make bread; he sold the bread on credit and could not recover the debt; and the lack of capacity to manage the business. However, certainly the social pressure was a major difficulty.

In this same community, I could observe another case of Income Generating Activity (IGA) in which the local dynamics influenced in the outcomes of the program. In this example, the activity was initiated after the bread's IGA, because was part of the second wave of IGAs, planned by the DI and targeted only to women. On this second wave, in Missuko there was only one group of 3 women who decided to sell codfish. While in other communities such program had a great success, in Missuko had not. When the women received the codfish, the local population started wondering if that fish was for

everybody, like a common good. In one of the informal conversations during the ethnography, a Missuko dweller told me that he had heard something about such program, and he knew that those women have received 4 fish sacks, which according to his calculations, should value about eight thousands Meticaiss³⁸. Then, he asked me if that fish was only for those women, and he did not realize that such material was private property, with the aim of profit, and not for sharing among the whole community. Actually, people have heard about the IGA program, but it was not clear what exactly it was. When the codfish sacks arrived, everyone was aware of that, however, nobody was sure that such material was only for those women to start a small business. The confusion was related to the fact that they imagined that the project would help all the community, and was almost a surprise that that fish was only for the women. Besides that, the local leader, who is the husband of one of the group's member, practically demanded that the goods were stored in his house because the door had a key to protect it against theft. This fact reduced the autonomy of the other women participating in the group since they were unable to closely monitor the product. When they started the small business, those women did not have profit, showing that people were eating the fish without paying, or they were donating it. Hence, they did not have profit, and at the end of this study, they were trying to reformulate the program to promote a profitable business.

In both IGA's cases illustrated here, we see that in such small community we could find many local dynamics that influenced negatively the achievement of the project's goals, because many social established relations such as gender relations, kinship, and power, represented major obstacles to overcome. For that reason, such examples highlight the way the information comes in pieces to those who are not participating in the trainings, and each person tries to join those pieces of info and formulate a hypothesis about what is going on. In the cases examined, it seems that the sum of information was:

(Child Aid aims help the community) + (Child Aid gave fish and flour to IGAs) = (Fish and flour are Common Goods)

Accordingly, the result of such sum was the idea that codfish and flour should be shared among everybody. However, when people discover that the given material was for only a few people to generate income, some of them remained indignant. Here, I observe

³⁸ In truth, this group received 74 kg of codfish in the value of 3,330 Meticaiss.

the problem of lack of clarity that fostered the raise of doubts and expectations. In Missuko, there was a situation in which people got confused about the project ideas, and people began to lose confidence because they were thinking that the project would help everybody, but it was giving things only to few ones.

Conversely, in another community called Nhambira, the IGAs had a great success. Indeed, one of the most visible impacts of the project was related to IGAs, because women were really happy to participate, and felt empowered. Compared to Missuko, this community was different because people were much more used to commercial activities, and when the project started the program, the women's groups showed a strong will to cooperate, and all groups were mutually stimulating to continue: there was a relatively higher openness in gender relations, in which women were authorized to work independently and some husbands helped to accomplish the project's conditions (i.e. building latrines, etc). Besides, this community was placed on the border of the main road of Chiúta, a positive factor to enhance commercial activities. Another fundamental factor for success was the solid training prepared by the foreigner Development Instructor (DI), who scheduled one week of training with strong tools to deliver clearly all the messages. For those reasons, in Nhambira I could observe the interesting phenomenon related to copy and competition: the project put some conditions to achieve the credit, such as building of latrines, garbage pits, and shelf. This caused a chain reaction, with a multiplier effect. As the first groups began to meet those conditions, other groups copied it, and other community members also followed suit. This example shows how it was possible to trigger the development process where there was a favorable scenario.

I noticed that in one year the project has changed, has increased its activities, has involved much more people, and in part has also generated frustration among some volunteers who initially hoped to have some recognition for their efforts. Actually, in the second year, the project was better because the structure was more consolidated, people were acting, the staff was more confident with the hang of working. However, despite the headquarters of the project were improved, people in the community were still with the same idea that the project should give things, always waiting for orders or directives of the project to act. Most of them were thinking that the project had the recipe to development, and they were waiting anxiously for that, most of the time waiting to see what the project would do while remaining on the "defensive". The big challenge was effective communication, because disinformation still reigned.

Table 6 below summarizes the major findings during the research fieldwork in 2009 and in 2010. In general, the ideas expressed in 2009 continued in 2010, but many of them showed significant changes. Therefore, each row of the table refers to ideas that relate to each other, that were modified or maintained in time.

Table 6: Main ideas expressed by Beneficiaries during field work in 2 different periods: 2009 and 2010

2009	2010
▶ Great Expectancy for the next 5 years of project, related to the idea that it is going to give things to children	▶ Still much expectation, but more measured, the donations did not arrive, some are still waiting that the project comply with what they said
▶ Many people are happy with the project, and get enrolled	▶ the number of people in direct contact with the project raises, increasing consciousness
▶ The project will develop the community	▶ Same idea, more strong in people who are connected, more weak in those who do not feel benefited
▶ "The project will teach many things, new experiences, we'll learn many things"	▶ "We have learnt new things, and will learn much more"
▶ Ideas well introduced, now will depend on us: challenge of working in groups. Bottom-up idea of development	▶ The project need the collaboration of the community to work
▶ The arrival of the NGO means job opportunities	▶ same idea
▶ Project will help against laziness	▶ same idea
▶ Organizes community groups, fact that help a lot	▶ same idea
▶ If it comply with what it promised will change the society	▶ same idea
—	▶ Wish continuity
—	▶ Wish to be expanded
▶ Is an intermediary to help boost agricultural commerce, occupy idle youths, train teachers, etc.	▶ Make business (IGAs)
▶ Don't know the project	▶ Have heard about it, but never saw it
▶ Initial enthusiasm	▶ Frustration, delusion of volunteers and people who have not benefited
▶ Many people are interested and curious, but suspicious to get involved	▶ Many decided to join the project, despite the fact that some quit
▶ Wrong ideas: the project is only for children, aid means donation	▶ Yet the same ideas, but for who are closest to the project, those who know they have to work to receive, there are more awareness. However, Increased doubts among those who did not understand the proposal
▶ VAG coordinators have confused ideas about the project, wait to receive things	▶ Some quit because realized that would not receive anything.
▶ The project will help giving things	▶ If the project won't give anything, <i>how</i> it will help? Why some people have received things, and other haven't?

Legend:

Positive Idea
 Neither Positive nor Negative (or Positive and Negative)
 Negative Idea

The first column on the left was colored in green, yellow and red to show if the ideas were positive, neither positive nor negative (or both positive and negative), or negative, respectively. The color serves as a visible effect to give a clearer idea of how people were thinking about the project when interviewed. It is observed that most ideas regard a positive opinion. In general, people were happy with the arrival of the project and believed in the possibility of change. In the second year (2010), I observed that while some people decided to enter in the project, others quit, in general it had more adhesions than withdrawals, despite the complaints of Vag-coordinators who wanted to earn money for the job.

Changes due to Western Influence

As we have seen, many transformations are happening in Chiúta, especially the modernization and arrival of new projects and international NGOs, which impact considerably on the local way of living. Let us point up what are these innovations, what are the most important changes and examine how the influence of western culture entails direct changes in peasants' lives. I will then focus on how Chiúta local people, beneficiaries of these new arrivals, are responding to that. This will be extremely important for the subsequent analysis of cultural confrontation in Chapter Eight.

Chiúta peasants know that they are in absolute poverty condition, mostly because they heard that from government campaigns or NGOs' activists, but virtually there are no change initiatives in rural environment. Actually, to start a change it is necessary to have suitable conditions for that, otherwise the farmers will continue leading the life they always led, with a mode of production that has existed centuries ago. Since its independence, the government of Mozambique has been widely promoting the “fight against absolute poverty” campaign, and its importance has increased significantly because it became one of the Millennium Development Goals. The Administrator of Chiúta District said that many young people are “involved in community development projects. There is great expectation of young people joining the program to reduce absolute poverty” (Interviewee RP01, my translation). Education is one of the strongest points of such programs and campaigns. However, the western model of education has never been a priority in peasants' lives, as they have always lived with the knowledge passed orally from generation to generation, sufficient to learn the mode of production and reproduction of life in the field. Yet, due to the impact of historical events, rural

communities began to undergo changes with the arrival of missions, schools, and the current development proposals: hence, people were gradually gaining awareness of other possibilities in life besides working the land. Today the school is perceived as an opportunity to get a job, something that few years ago was almost unthinkable in Chiúta, and now young people are optimistic towards education. For that reason, interviews showed that almost all parents would like to send their children to school to ensure them a better future, preferably as employees, so that they could help their parents. This shows how the new Western values have been gaining ground and people in rural society are gradually changing their behavior. This is mainly due to the fact that new job opportunities have become a reality. There are teachers, doctors, mechanics, carpenters, and employees of NGOs, etc., in the community, and those professionals represent a tangible evidence that the school can be the passport for getting a job. In Chiúta, there is the Nyau dance that is considered a traditional knowledge system very much appreciated by local people, it is cause of school dropout in some areas. However, the school system has gained more space in several communities, and tends to become a new habit for everyone.

In general, the arrival of a project causes euphoria because it means the arrival of money, and many people think of the possibility to have a job. During the fieldwork, many people asked me if the project had vacancies. On the one hand, people perceived that the project was a source of possibilities, on the other hand, due to the fight against poverty, people began to feel really “miserable” and have become accustomed to always ask for all kinds of things - from a simple coin to computers. Indeed, some local people are hired, and this cannot be understood as an isolated fact as it causes an imbalance in social relations. When someone of local community works for a project, his/her relatives imagine that s/he is rich, despite the fact that salaries are not as high as people imagine. Usually, many employed person’s relatives ask for money, and hired people find themselves in difficult situations, but they can not deny help because there are local beliefs related to witchcraft and instituted social rules that force them to be supportive, to share their “luckiness” as much as they can.

Besides the fact that local employees are the lucky people with a salary, they benefit of a new *status* among local community, and this is a proper situation to raise envy. In general, in Chiúta people do not differ so much among them, they maintain a social level and almost everyone follow that: some are a bit higher and some a bit lower, but on the average, everybody lives in poverty. Usually, people condemn who goes beyond the average: if someone is successful in improving his/her life through hard work, the main

idea is that she/he is successful at the expense of someone else. For that reason, many people say that an “African does not like when others have more than him/her” (interviewee C05, my translation). According to Foster (1965), “peasants see their universe as one in which the good things in life are in limited and unexpandable quantities, and hence personal gain must be at the expense of others” and “in the average village there *is* only a finite amount of wealth produced, and no amount of extra hard work will significantly change the figure”, so “it seems accurate to say that the average peasant sees little or no relationship between work and production techniques on the one hand, and the acquisition of wealth on the other. Rather, wealth is seen by villagers in the same light as land: present, circumscribed by absolute limits, and having no relationship to work. One works to eat, but not to create wealth.” (Foster, 1965: 297-298)

However, when success is generated by an external factor, such as the arrival of an NGO, or people who migrate and achieve success, local people does not interpret that wealth at the expense of another because it is not inside the ‘closed system’ of rural village. Foster (1965) states that “the common peasant concern with finding wealthy and powerful patrons who can help them is also pertinent in this context. Since such patrons usually are outside the village, they are not part of the closed system. Their aid, and material help (...) are seen as coming from beyond the village. Hence, although the lucky villager with a helpful patron may be envied, the advantages he receives from his patron are not seen as depriving other villagers of something rightfully theirs” (Foster, 1965: 306).

Hence, when there is a project, people are much more interested in taking advantage of its wealth, than worried in changing local situation. In the peasant’s prospective, the project is an “outsider”, almost uninfluential for local dynamics, and it is allowed to work for it without sanctions by local community. Besides, local people want all the modern things they imagine that the project can provide and for that reason, they are always asking for super technological goods, such as diesel water pump and expensive equipment for agriculture, because they want the best of what western world has to offer, even if they cannot afford its maintenance.

The contact with western culture makes them be even more aware of what their culture is, because they realize that “whites”³⁹ do not behave at the same way the “blacks”

³⁹ During fieldwork local people usually talked about “black” and “white” people, showing that there is a deep dichotomy between them. This was their explanation about differences between cultures: the “white” means the Western culture, and the “black” is local, or African culture.

do, and perceive the contrasts among cultures. They understand that “white” people want to modernize Mozambique, but they feel that they are totally different from “whites”, and many people do not believe that it is possible to be like a “white” person. In other words, it seems that for rural people is almost impossible to achieve western development standards. Many believe that “blacks” and “whites” are different because of different innate characteristics. It is common to hear in Chiúta that “blacks” are different from “whites” in honesty, and “blacks” are a race with “problems”. During an interview, a project area leader stated:

In Africa, we like to hate each other... only we, the blacks... You whites have no problems... Because we, the black people, don't like to see that someone have what others don't have (Interviewee C05, my translation)

Such phrase reflects not only the worldview of local people in Chiúta, but also the way they perceive the stranger, as something separated from their world, from their culture. Peasants obviously show respect and admire the western way of living, and they know that being in contact with that can bring rewards, but they conceive it as something abnormal, unable to change their local dynamics. This biased view between “blacks” and “whites” reflects a misconception considering the “black” peasant as someone still living in his/her closed system (Foster, 1965) in contrast with the “white”, which is no longer represented by the figure of racist colonizer, but by “good people” who now make social projects. Yet, we must not forget that the Chewa culture also has a sarcastic attitude toward the whites represented by Nyau dance. This cultural representation was considered repugnant and violent, and the colonial government decided to repress that. The Chewa, in sign of resistance, continued their practice in secret places, and created masks representing the “white” man as a form of confrontation and ridiculousness. Today, this cultural peculiarity became a Cultural Heritage of humanity (recognized by Unesco), and the relation with “white” people is free of conflict, although the dose of sarcasm persists. However, the idea that white people do not “hate the others” and just want to help poor people is widespread among people, and might be the consequence of the early presence of missions, the recent presence of NGOs, and many projects coming from abroad, with many “white” people engaged in helping Africans to improve their lives. As people from Chiúta do not know what happened historically in western countries, they have scarce knowledge about it, then, they imagine “whites” as persons with “good will”. In terms of

honesty and envy, they think that “white” people are “free” of such bad behavior and feelings, justifying this false idea with the “nature” of races.

Apparently, this reality is changing, and many young people in Chiúta hope to improve their lives through studies. People expect that campaigns for development bring to them the achievements of the West, such as more schools, hospitals, jobs, houses of brick and especially improvement in agriculture. Though many interviewees said that the teamwork is a challenge and that the change will depend on themselves, in practice, few believe that they, alone, can change. As we have seen in the section above, people wanted to know *how* this project would help if it would not give things. During the ethnography, I had a candid and open conversation with an ex-VAG coordinator, quite disappointed with the Child Aid project because he could not understand what kind of ideas the project could give them to solve their problems. He told me that, as a VAG coordinator, many people asked him how the project would assist them in ordinary things - for example, how to get sheets of metal for the roof of the house. He said he has already asked to the project leader, but she answered that they had to seek solutions within their own community. Then he replied indignantly: *how this project will help us with ideas, if ideas to solve our problems must come from our own community? So, why this project??* According to his view, it is unconceivable that the change starts from the community itself, because they always had their ideas and have always survived reproducing the same lifestyle. People want to solve common personal problems, most related to the difficulty of buying things from abroad, which are not made from local materials, but in reality, few have money to buy such things. So, in their view, the most obvious solution would be the project give them those things, but the project would not do it because it is aimed at providing sustainable development.

The actual difficulty or impossibility of reaching the Western standard generates frustration, especially in people who have studied, because they realize that even with the studies life does not change easily. One of the strategies to reach western standard is using illicit or unethical means, such as lying or stealing when one finds an appropriate occasion for that, as the arrival of a project. In the Child Aid project, there have been cases of people who tried to benefit from using uncivil means, and even the police got involved. These facts are much more common in disadvantaged societies, and show that usually people perceive the project as a source of wealth and resources. For instance, people do not understand why an employee of the project could have a bike while others get nothing. According to an area leader,

We, Africans, are used to always want what the others have, and cannot see that if a person has got a bike from the project there is some reason for it. This is our tradition, [if] one was benefited, the other not, there's a lot of conflict. (Interviewee B11, my translation)

In fact, the project area leaders had to face local people on the field, and if they were not able to make everything clear, explaining that a bicycle was important to do specific tasks, they were likely to suffer reprisals.

The co-project leader explained:

Here in Africa, if a person does a good job, the others want to remove her/him from that position (Interviewee A01, my translation)

According to his statement, local people have no incentive to improve much their life due to the fear of reprisals from the others. The contact with the project is something completely new since it proposes that people improve their lives, and give incentives to that. Nevertheless, local people seemed incredulous about the idea that the project could solve the issues of magic and sorcery, since they are matters that people do not control rationally. On the one hand, local beliefs give sense to rural life, on the other hand, they are incompatible with the changes proposed by development projects that aims at working based on cooperation among people. In rural societies, where individual/family type relationships prevail, it is difficult to propose the teamwork if people do not change their cognitive orientation (Foster, 1965). If “the calamities continue to be intended as the actions of spirits and sorcery” (Fry, 2000: 82, my translation) it will be difficult to change the local situation. Therefore, Foster (1965) suggests that to engage peasant society in development, it is important to show that western accomplishments can be real for them, showing actual possibilities:

Peasant participation in national development can be hastened (...) by creating economic and other opportunities that will encourage the peasant to abandon his traditional and increasingly unrealistic cognitive orientation for a new one that reflects the realities of the modern world (Foster, 1965: 296),

In other words, when people see new chances, have a tangible incentive to change. An important example promoted by development programs was the entry of cash crops, which meant an important step for local economic growth. Today, we see many farmers who are investing in this type of farming that allows an extra gain. This example shows that to achieve development is necessary to change the production system.

There are many other examples showing that actually we see a changing scenario in Chiúta district, which is constantly in contact with other cultures. Many novelties are arriving as projects and modernization, i.e., now they have access to mobile phone and energy system. Western projects have a structure based on time and outcomes and hierarchy are based on merit, so the good stay and the bad leave - a typically structure of a capitalistic company. In Chiúta, western work almost does not exist, and the way the projects work, with timetables, goals, and deadlines, contrasts with local people way of life. One relevant disparity regards the concept of time, because in Chiúta time follows the crop cycle and reproduces each year, while for the project it is linear, follows the future and is always productive.

As to changes in social relations, the Régulo of Chiúta recognizes many of such differences and transformations. When asked about the main changes in local communities, he commented on the recent demands for gender equality:

In our African environment, we never attached importance to women. They used to say the women are good only for looking after the home, and making babies. But today, there is transformation of the women's role and they are equal to men, everyone enjoy the same rights. And indeed there are things that sometimes men cannot make while women do. (Interviewee RP07, my translation)

Interestingly, he starts the sentence delineating the “African environment”⁴⁰, as it would be completely different from the external environment which brought these new ideas of women's rights. Besides the fact that he distinguishes between African world and western world, he realizes that transformations were possible thanks to such influence of foreign relations, and that his society is undergoin some changes. Although he acknowledged the women's rights, he showed paradoxical opinions regarding influences

⁴⁰ In Portuguese: “no nosso meio Africano”

of western culture, such as the fact that women do not “respect”⁴¹ men as before, and this is not a good sign according to his sight. While he wants the development of the community and acquire assets that exist in Western societies, he also has the responsibility to preserve traditional culture. For that reason, the Régulo represents a mix of cultures: although he finds good for women to achieve rights, he does not consider good to lose the traditional values. Besides, while he sees the arrival of the EPF (Escola de Professores do Futuro/Teacher training school) as the realization of a dream, a paradise, he is against several changes in the local cognitive orientation (Foster, 1965).

Another interesting observation regarding the relation between tradition and modern changes is the issue of local beliefs. The Regulo commented that there is a thing called obscurantism, which is when the person does not understand why did he/she is affected by a disease: hence, it probably was caused by witchcraft. But when one has knowledge about the disease and refuse to heal with the scientific means (read *western means*), that is “ignorance” (in Portuguese: *ignorância*). He assumes that there is a dark side which no one knows and that is not rationally explicable; but when the knowledge is already spread among local people and, nevertheless, the person still chooses the traditional mean, it is “ignorance”. He explains:

One thing is “ignorance” and another thing is “obscurantism” [what is the difference?] The difference is that sometimes the person doesn’t know that what s/he is saying isn’t true, because there is a base: *I’m sick, but I’m not convinced that this disease is normal* (...). In the tradition, right there, in the depth of the tradition, when you get sick, it is because someone in your family is bewitching you. (...) Because you have a bicycle, you have that good house, so that one [the “witch”] is not quiescent, and you have to disappear. [You] are a bad example, (...) The person [the “wifth”] identifies you as a bad example. That is the obscurantism.

Yet, the “ignorance” is [when] I know very well that I am affected by Malaria. The hospital treats Malaria, but I don’t go to the hospital, I go to the traditional healer [curandeiro]. And I know that if I go into hospital I will heal, but I’m looking for a lie there. (...) But then I don’t heal. (...) So, eventually I die. But I die in my ignorance...

The “obscurantism” is lack of knowledge. Then, [in] “ignorance”, I know, but I don’t want to use that knowledge. (Interviewee RP07, my translation, my

⁴¹ The use of quotes serves to relativize the concept of *respect*. In Chiúta, local culture teaches women to obey her husband and parents. She is considered inferior to man. By contrast, human rights proclaim that all are equal before the law, so *respect* must be mutual, and women must not be submissive

underline)

It is difficult to identify the difference between “obscurantism” and “ignorance”, because in both cases, traditional beliefs are distant from modern scientific rationality. The frame of “Ignorance” approaches to scientific knowledge but does not follow it, because traditional beliefs are stronger. In the frame of “Obscurantism”, science cannot explain the disease, so the traditional explanation is more real. However, in the eyes of a westerner, obscurantism and ignorance are on the same level. The Régulo’s explanation, although confuse, highlights the vision of someone inside the traditional culture that at the same time is aware of modernity impacts. This reveals that the traditional beliefs and scientific rationality can walk side by side. According to Régulo’s sight, the person who refuses to go to the hospital knowing that s/he could heal, is "ignorant". In other words, when someone refuses to accept the knowledge acquired regarding well known diseases, the “ignorance” becomes the reasonable explanation. On the contrary, he sustains that sorcerer is a fact that cannot be explained scientifically, since envy between people is an “African reality” that indeed causes diseases. Here, according to his view, the most suitable explanation seems to be “obscurantism”. For that reason, the "obscurant" explanation loses its value when a disease is most likely to be cured in the hospital. Malaria is a good example of the “ignorance” explanation since it is a very widespread disease, and, although many people continue to prefer the traditional healer (*curandeiro*), and proceed according to an “ignorant” pattern, there is abundant information on how to prevent and cure the disease, thanks to the government and development agencies information campaigns. Through the testimony of the Régulo, it became clear that Local Beliefs and Western worlds are mixed together, science and tradition walk together, and he is an iconic figure that mediates the on-going changes. In summary, in Mozambique, currently we see that while some cultural traditions have undergone changes, others remained intact.

Development Concepts

Main Development Conceptions of Beneficiaries

In the first section of this chapter, we have seen how Child Aid project works and what its idea of development is. Earlier, in Chapter Five, we could observe the Italian INGOs conceptions about development. Before I devote the next chapter to understanding

how ideas about development are intertwined, in this section I will introduce the development conceptions of Child Aid Project beneficiaries.

To begin with, I shall delineate the most recurrent ideas of development found in the field work. In general, most respondents exposed a broad idea of development related to a change of condition - from a worse to a better situation. Such better situation would probably be close to what they know about western living standards. According to a beneficiary, “development is when the community changes from one state to another, while a not developed community does not change its initial state” (Interviewee EA10, my translation). This conception emphasizes that a community that does not change is still living the same life of their ancestors, a reality of several neighborhoods in Chiúta. Despite changes are coming quickly in the district headquarters, in more distant areas, life has not changed that much. The district headquarters changes are visible to all, regard things that did not exist in the community before, and only recently arrived, i.e., schools, hospital, brick houses, electric energy, antennas for mobile phones, etc. Such things come from outside, and could not exist traditionally because are the achievements of western societies. Beneficiaries cited many aspects regarding the appearance of things that, in their view, promote development. They are listed bellow:

- Access to more **infrastructures**: water pumps, paved roads, hospital, electric energy, schools, etc.
- **Improvement in Agriculture**, to allow people sell surpluses. In order to do that, they need material things such as: hoes, seeds, water access, pesticides, etc.
- **School** will change their future: studying to become a doctor, a teacher, etc.
- **Capitalist improvements**: industries and jobs. The agricultural industry has become an important source of income to many peasants that now produce not only for subsistence.
- The arrival of **NGOs** promote development. NGOs help in many aspects: access to infrastructures, training of local people, distribution of things such as ox, plow, goats, money, food, etc.
- **Increase local market**: Money is scarce, and industrialized goods are really expensive to them. Hence, many people ask for products with low prices, to allow more people to buy them.
- **Changes in traditional culture**: in order to develop, people should switch from a subsistence economy to a income generating economy, and that would surely change traditional culture.

All such ideas reflect, on the one hand, the current changes in Chiúta, on the other hand, reflect a development model based on western achievements, that will probably guide local community to a complete change in social structure. In fact, such aspects seem to cover the main perceived possibilities to transform the subsistence farming economy in a more dynamic economy that follow the western model of development. For example, when project's beneficiaries list *infrastructure*, it is fundamental because it provides conditions for a deep transformation that allows the community to have opportunities beyond subsistence farming. Another example regards *improvement in agriculture*, which many respondents highlighted, since agriculture is the main local activity, i.e. a fully barn means a successful crop, that allows to sell the surplus, earn some money to buy things that, otherwise, would not be possible to purchase. Hence, the boost in agriculture would trigger the development process because it could cause a capital turnover and a consequent economic growth. We find the same logic related to a change from subsistence agriculture to a market economy in the idea that *Studying* can promote development: as we have seen in the sections above, studying is perceived as a way to change life, because, theoretically, open up the possibilities of finding employment, and it may be more advantageous than subsistence farming. Besides, also other listed aspects such as *NGOs*, *capitalistic improvements*, *increase in local market* and *cultural changes* are daily experienced by local people, and are tangible on-going changes that demonstrate the influence and power of western economy in local community.

Bottom-up and Top-down Approaches

Although the opinions listed above are common knowledge among local population, and most people answered something similar or very close to that, not everybody expressed the same way to achieve development. Broadly, according to fieldwork analysis, I could identify two major lines of thought about development stressed by beneficiaries: one closest to the project's proposal, regarding a bottom-up approach that highlighted the importance of local teamwork to trigger development; the other, related to a generic local view about development which reflect a top-down approach to achieve development, since it is expected that development will come due to the actions of macro institutions.

Here, it is particularly important to distinguish respondents in different categories according to their degree of attachment/detachment to/from the project. During the fieldwork, it became clear that those beneficiaries more involved with the project's activities presented a view about development much more similar to the project's view. Thus, due to an analytical purpose, I will divide our respondents in two major categories according to their involvement in the project. The first category includes respondents with a high degree of involvement in the project's activities, and the second, those with a low involvement.

Project area leaders are locally hired people, consequently, they are also beneficiaries of the project. They represent the category most involved in the project issues, because they have underwent trainings, meet the project leader and co-project leader every week, and work on the field every day. After them, there are Vag-Coordinators who have also underwent trainings about the + project operation, and they are also working on the field voluntarily. The third category of involvement regards the head members of committees, who are also volunteers and underwent training. Some beneficiaries are very active and often participate in the projects actions; hence, they are also deeply involved in the project. The other interviewees are people from the community who are less in contact with project operation (generic beneficiaries). Table 7 below shows interviewees according to their degree of involvement in the project.

Table 7: Degree of involvement in the project according to the respondents' category

	Respondents' Category	Degree of involvement in the project
1	Area leaders, Vag Coordinators, Head members of Committees, active beneficiaries	High degree of involvement
2	Generic beneficiaries	Low degree of involvement

Such distinction is important because, presumably, those who are closest to the project are more influenced by the development view spread by the NGO. Besides, the research outcome showed ideas of development either very near to the project's conception, or absolutely far from it, and I realized that, frequently, such differences

varied according to the degree of participation in the project. A good example of such phenomenon is shown by a Vag-Coordinator who explained why did he decided to join the project: “I decided to volunteer because the project aims at bringing improvements in the community ... through the organization and mobilization of community families to pay attention to the existing problems in the community” (Interviewee M02, my translation). If we go back on the second section of this chapter (“Ideas about the project”), we will find exactly the same sentence in the VAG coordinators’ manual. He said that without the manual in his hands, and he seemed really committed and hopeful about the project ideas.

Hence, each category reflects one of the lines of thought identified in the fieldwork. The main difference between the two categories lies on the discernment of *how* changes can happen. While the first category believes that changes can start from the mobilization and organization of the community, the second interprets the changes as something brought from abroad and possible only due to outsiders’ action. Thus, it reveals two different starting points: a bottom-up versus a top-down approach. That is, while a bottom-up approach considers that a social movement can promote changes if people from a local community is well organized, a top-down approach assumes that development is due to macro-structure decisions, such as government, multinational companies or International NGOs, which arrive on the field and bring transformations, so development departs from the top instead of from the basis.

While the first line of thought follows the Child Aid idea of development, the second line conceives local changes as a result of top decisions. Thus, while people continue doing what they always did, development seems to come due to a “force majeure”, and local people have no control on it: as a result, there is no other alternative but to expect this development to continue. For that reason, many people show a passive attitude in relation to the on-going local changes because they believe they are not protagonists, but merely recipients of such development. Such view reflects the opinions of the beneficiaries who are not so close to the project (2nd category of respondents, see table 7) or those who do not believe in the project’s conception of development. I believe this category is important because it represents the majority, and, most important, it fits better to local cognitive orientation.

Hence, when Child Aid project comes to mobilize local community to promote development from the basis, it finds a line of thought hard to fight. If local people think that development is due to the arrival of external institutions which bring infrastructure and material buildings/stuffs such as schools, hospitals, roads (paved or not), school

material for kids, donation of food or clothes, etc., that will permit the growth of local community, there is no reason to consider the empowerment of local people to promote development. That is why the project has to struggle, at least at the beginning, against such line of thought. The biggest challenge is to show that improvements can succeed if the population is organized and willing to change. However, most of the local population believes that local people will never change on their own. During an informal conversation, one member of a project committee said: “It’s Good that you came here to control, because we have no strength” [to keep activities running]. According to his sight, the project’s activities needed a constant supervision to succeed, otherwise people would gradually drop out and go back to their ordinary lives. Hence, according to this line of thought (second category on table 7), change can effectively happen when there are external factors that provide improvements. For that reason, project beneficiaries often relate the concept of development to profit and public initiatives, such as tobacco, corn or cotton industries, and also public supply such as energy system, and to the fact that are macro institutions that arrive to push local development. Besides, within this frame, the main idea about NGOs is that they come to give things, to avoid absolute poverty by providing things to eat, wear, move, go to school, etc., that is, the idea of “aid” as “donation”. Consequently, within this line of thought, notions like “ownership”, “empowerment” and “self-reliance” are far from local community, remaining encapsulated in the project’s conceptual framework.

On the contrary, the first broad line of thought regards those beneficiaries who are more closely related to the project. For those respondents, development can be fostered through community work. People who have seen or experienced projects activities that had positive outcomes, realized that community work can accomplish tasks that no individual can do alone (or finds many difficulties to do). These experiences show that the individual/familiar work is not as fruitful as organized groups’, hence it seems to go against the traditional practices. For that reason, those who agree with the project, start to see beyond their usual horizons, and they aim at bringing changes in the society. The main ideas related to a bottom-up approach that mark the differences between the first and the second respondents’ categories, are listed below:

- **Community participation** in activities promoted by NGOs or government: organizations provide the initial input such as knowledge; then, the communities have to carry alone;

- A developed community is the one that **does the work together**: teamwork and collaboration between people is essential;
- Development is **not laziness**;
- Development begins with our effort;
- **Thoughts foster development**: if it is the knowledge that makes you think, then education is the strength point to development;
- **NGOs help in organization and mobilization** of community: communities where there is an operating NGO are more developed;
- **Copying mechanism**: when someone sees the other's achievement is motivated to copy. It is already happening in Chiúta, where people started building latrines, garbage pits and firewood saving stove;
- **Sustainable development**: if the project can bring permanent improvements, it is not mere transient aid.

Those items show an approach to development considering local people as *agents* capable to carry out actions to improve their own lives. In such frame, knowledge is fundamental because it provides the means to achieve development, and each social actor plays an important role. The notion of *agency* can be synthesized by the following idea: the history make persons, and persons make history (we will see this argument thoroughly in Chapter Eight). One beneficiary who participated in health training said that a *community develops where knowledge is present*: when people know how diseases are transmitted, they have the means to prevent them. She commented that there are people in the community who think that the latrine is where diseases are transmitted, so they refuse to build it. During the training, she learned that washing hands in a basin with dirty water can cause disease. She was surprised with this information. With these examples, it is possible to understand that real knowledge is a key factor in recognizing that with simple actions it is possible to improve life quality. Therefore, knowledge can make a difference in local people's lives; however, besides having the knowledge, people must practice it.

The aim of the development project is not transform the rural community in an urban super developed environment, but to improve as much as they can while remaining local peasants. This is the communitarian development, mainly regarding a mobilization of local community, with a bottom-up approach, taking into consideration the possibilities that local environment have to accomplish that.

Usually, local people from Chiúta who have already seen other examples of NGOs'

projects in other places, agree with this idea. Some respondents highlighted past examples of NGOs that promoted sustainable development, and for that reason they seemed very enthusiastic about Child Aid project. Conversely, others recognized that there are NGOs that work more based on donations, and do not promote a true development, promoting more dependency. Such critical respondents perceive that if a project is not well structured, it risks to help those who do not really need it causing more unbalance, and not achieving sustainability. Besides, when people realize that projects are giving things, the temptation to lie and slander against those who received something increases, fostering social conflicts. The Régulo was very contrary to organizations that donate things, he commented:

I condemn the distribution of food to people [For what reason?] First, there might be infiltration of persons who bring children with parents alive for benefits. Second: it produces laziness in society... Third: when they are not covered, they create slander. (Interviewee RP07, my translation)

He was happy with the ADPP project because it does not intend to distribute free products to local population. It's Interesting that he also spoke about the problem of laziness, because if an NGO donate things, people lose their will to work.

Another good example of bottom-up approach to achieve development regards the changes in women's attitude which is something at the very beginning in Chiúta. Usually, women do not express their opinions, but when they are stimulated they start to feel that can do that, and that it is good for them. Yet, they do not conceive women's independency as a development, however, when they experience emancipation - even in small doses - new alternatives appear. For that reason, each small step is very exciting and it is emblematic to observe changes in gender roles. Such phenomenon was initiated in Chiúta by campaigns against household violence and pro women's rights. Also Child Aid project carried out a microcredit program for women in the second year, and soon they realized the benefits of such action because suddenly they could improve their earnings with small business. In one village, the impact of that program was so strong that women decided to create a local market, which marked a visible change and made them feel even more enthusiastic and empowered.

In sum, I have found different approaches to achieve development in the fieldwork.

Such division in two lines of thought was a conceptual tool suitable to organize tendencies and analyze the situation. However, it is important to emphasize that such division does not rule out the possibility that those ideas are mixed, neither that people can think both at the same time, because in real life, people are continuously elaborating new thoughts, especially in contexts full of change spots. For example, in the first category of respondents (table 7), many of the responses reflected what the project proposed to them, and we cannot conclude that interviewees really think only in that way. We cannot neglect the fact that interviewees usually are very concerned in giving the “correct” answer that in their minds must be what the project said because they assume that it is what the researcher wants to hear. Hence, we may understand that face to face interviews have some limits within the research. In any case, I suggest that, some of them will really change their minds with the project’s new ideas, and that change is an on-going process in that society. Besides that, the project's idea of development captivated many people that thought that it would be a very difficult enterprise, mostly because they did not believe in this opportunity, even though they wanted to. Thus, for some people from the first category, the idea of bottom-up development remains in the realm of desire, and not a tangible choice to achieve.

7.4 - Discussion

Fight Against Poverty and Local Traditions

As we have seen in the first section of this chapter, according to the project structure, the teamwork and the cooperation among members is fundamental to achieve sustainable results. However, on the field I found many people complaining about the fact that in Chiúta people have many difficulties to unite themselves to work together. They usually unite when there are cultural events, which follow specific social rules. Foster (1965) have studied rural populations and proposes a plausible explanation of the fact that in subsistence agriculture societies, unity among the people to perform everyday tasks is not as necessary as in other types of societies. According to the author:

Economic activities in peasant societies require only limited cooperation. Peasant families typically can, as family units, produce most of their food, farm without extra help, build their houses, weave cloth for their clothes', carry their own produce to market and sell it—in short, take care of themselves with a degree

of independence impossible in an industrial society, and difficult in hunting-fishing-gathering societies. Peasants, of course, usually do not live with the degree of independence here suggested, but it is more clearly possible than in any other type of society. (Foster, 1965: 301-302)

Further on, the author affirms that to achieve cooperation it is necessary to have leadership, and in rural societies there is a lot of difficulty in assigning leadership, because people are quite individualistic, and this causes more suspicion and mistrust among community members.

Besides, the author explains that the western scheme of development has little sense to peasant societies, since it is completely far from subsistence agriculture society. Hence, at least at the beginning, all development projects in rural areas find a worldview contrasting the project's program. For example, "The Anglo-Saxon virtues of hard work and thrift seen as leading to economic success are meaningless in peasant society" (Foster, 1965: 308). The author sustains that development projects must show an actual new opportunity for peasants to have a real impact in rural societies, otherwise rural people will not abandon their beliefs and habits, and will not change their lives. The author writes:

If the "good" in life is seen as finite and non-expandable, and if apart from luck an individual can progress only at the expense of others, what does one stand to gain from a cooperative project?

I believe most strongly that the primary task in development is (...) to try to change the peasants' view of his social and economic universe, away from an Image of Limited Good toward that of expanding opportunity in an open system, *so that he can feel safe* in displaying initiative. (...) Show the peasant that initiative is profitable, and that it will not be met by negative sanctions, and he acquires it in short order.

This is, of course, what is happening in the world today. Those who have known peasant villages over a period of years have seen how the old sanctions begin to lose their power. (Foster, 1965: 310)

Peasant societies (...) are conservative because individual progress is seen as (...) the supreme threat to community stability, and all cultural forms must conspire to discourage changes in the status quo. Only by being conservative can peasant societies continue to exist as peasant societies. But change cognitive orientation through changing access to opportunity, and the peasant will do very

well indeed. (Foster, 1965: 310)

The author argues that as peasant societies are conservative, the only viable alternative to change such scheme seems to be show that the change could mean profit. In fact, microcredit for women was a successful Child Aid program because it was very easy to see the advantages.

For those reasons, the fight against poverty seems to be the fight against local traditions. The development has to change the mode of production and this would change the mode of being and the local cognitive orientation. The protagonists of the fight against poverty in Mozambique are not international organizations, but people who are on the field, working directly with changes in rural areas. This is where I find the great battle between western mentality and rural worldview. One example of such confrontation are the new Teachers who are supposed to bring education to rural people in Mozambique. They are deeply involved in the struggle against poverty. They fall in the second Millennium Development Goal, which is “Achieve universal primary education”. According to their testimonies, after finishing the ADPP teacher’s training, they must face the reality of rural areas. Although representatives of modernity and vectors of wisdom, they suddenly realize how difficult it is confronting local traditions, because convincing people that studying is important is not a simple mission in an environment in which people are much more worried of marrying, making children, and reproducing subsistence agriculture. Therefore, although they are people of prestige for the local communities, the school system they represent is in conflict with local traditions.

Child Aid Project is trying to overcome the difficulties encountered in relation to the difficulty of maintaining volunteers active, because many lose motivation because they think that they have nothing to gain by continuing in the project. The sustainability of the project depends on the statement that the results of these efforts will be profitable, and that people will have something at the end. These are the great dilemmas of cooperation.

7.5 – Conclusion

This chapter is fundamental because it is an attempt to show the `insider’s` view through the analysis of their own words. The interviews and field observation configure important means for verifying how the beneficiaries of the project are thinking and/or feeling the INGO intervention. The field work highlighted the difficulties that emerge

from the contact since the project and local people belong to different realities. The interpretations Chiúta people gave about the project should not be considered as the opinion of each single person, because in a large project like Child Aid we find people of all types, i.e., those who do not care about the project, those who want to take advantage of it, those who feel like victims of poverty and think they must be helped, those who do not form an opinion. However, the findings of this study reflect the most important trends found on the field.

According to the fieldwork in Mozambique, beneficiaries showed a lot of interest about the project, even if in the beginning they did not really understand it. While in 2009, it was known that few people would understand the Child Aid project, in 2010 it was expected that people already had a good idea about it, and indeed we observed that, in general, all persons had at least heard about the project. Even though some people claimed to know nothing, in 2010, everyone had expressed an opinion, sometimes negative because they did not feel benefited by the program, and many people hoped that the project could also reach their families.

Among those who understood the project's objective, many agreed with its idea of development, and believed that it could be achieved through community organization. On the contrary, many people did not conceive the project at the same way the project managers did, mostly because local people were not yet familiarized to that, and imagined that development would be possible due to the action of macro instances that bring resources to the community, intended as something independent of their actions, revealing a top-down approach to development. The main interpretative keys used by local people were related to previous experiences with international cooperation, for example the World Food Program, Ajuda Popular da Noruega (NGO APN) or the Red Cross.

Beneficiaries indeed showed interest in improving their own lives, and many considered the foreign NGO as one of the main actors to promote development, as the 'solution' to their problems. Nevertheless, they also demonstrated a lot of difficulty to understand the project's proposals because it used a completely new 'language' to them. It remained something untangible to them since international cooperation has a completely different way of organizing, structuring, and thinking things, recommending the community union and team work as the main means to empower people to achieve better living conditions. It pursues a different cosmology (or cognitive orientation). Therefore, when the project proposed, for instance, that people had to think about micro projects of income generation (Projeto de Geração de renda), local people got confused because they

did not have any reference regarding these new concepts. So, this unusual relationship is biased because foreigners arrive with the power (resources) to build a project, and what they say is usually accepted as absolute truths (at least apparently), even if most do not understand or agree with what they are talking about.

In general, a development project tries to deliver knowledge and practices to improve people's lives. Local development depends on the degree of absorption of that new knowledge through the use of them in everyday's life. The knowledge accumulated in Western societies was largely responsible for the development of the richest countries, and greatly increased life expectancy. For instance, people in the West receive knowledge since early about how do we contract a disease and how to avoid it. We know that scarce hygiene, lack of water, and poor diet, strongly influence the health, and cause diseases. However, in Chiúta, diseases receive another interpretation. One of the most widespread beliefs, as we have seen in Chapter Six, is that many diseases are the result of magic caused by the envy of another person. The challenge for development organizations is to demolish such concepts and make it clear that many diseases can be avoided if precautions are taken although many peasants refuse to accept or believe in them. With this idea of intercultural conflict and attempt to dialogue in mind, we move forward to the next chapter.

CHAPTER 8 - Inter-culture and Development: Mozambique and Italian International Cooperation

This chapter addresses the broader question of how different cultures (read also: different socio-economic realities) interact. Following the Chapters Five and Seven, here the aim is to highlight the more pervasive limitations of communication that are underpinned by two distinct culturally embedded contexts that try to dialogue. So far, the study has described how Italian NGOs are working to promote development in the poorest countries and how beneficiaries are receiving such aid and understand it. Now I shall examine how the difference in cultural background and the power disparity influence the framework of international cooperation for development.

To explore these issues, the chapter is divided in four main sections. In section 8.1, I revisit the literature referring to power relations between dominant and dominated social actors, arguing that in international cooperation for development, despite the mainstream discourse represented by international organizations such as UN, World Bank - that not surprisingly reflect the interests of western societies - assert to promote 'participatory' development 'from below'. I suggest that this current view implies a biased relation in which the poor are not as 'agents' as they are supposed to be.

In section 8.2, I compare Italian development practitioners' development conceptions with the Mozambicans farmers from Chiúta. I then analyse how the hegemonic discourse about development is present in the process of development projects. I argue that the development conceptions of both parties start from the same assumptions, while the means to achieve it diverge.

In section 8.3, I analyse how the dialogue is built in this context where we find the intercultural dynamics. The point is to describe the intercultural dynamics in this process and the knowledge transmission within the project. I point out the cultural dynamics that intermediate this channel of communication. I argue that implicit conceptions of knowledge transmission are embedded in different cosmological cultural webs, then, the dialogue is not always able to achieve the project's objective, causing failures and frustrations.

In section 8.4, I make a step further in trying to understand why cooperation does not change radically poorest situations, arguing that culture is not the only hindrance that cooperation for development faces.

In line with my overall analytical framework, this chapter aims at understanding how discourses are constructed and how they provide meaning to the actions of international cooperation. In addition, I also address the inter-cultural relation in International Cooperation, considering that although culture matters in this sphere, it is not the only issue.

8.1 Biased Dialogue

Unquestionably, international cooperation for development has a key role in the independent Mozambique. As shown in Chapter Two, while under Colonial domain the colonial society showed a dualistic nature, grounded in the racial ‘white-black’ opposition (Cabaço 2007), in the post-colonial phase, after a cruel 16 years’ civil war (1976-1992), Mozambique became independent from Portugal, but dependent on international cooperation. During the colonial rule, Portugal used many cultural strategies to “support its ‘imperial’ vocation” (ibid: 13), and it was a period of racial and cultural polarization articulated through dichotomies such as ‘native-settlers’, ‘civilized-primitive’, ‘tradition-modernity’, ‘society without history-society with history’, etc.

The current framework of cooperation, despite set in a Human Rights era, has unmistakable similarities to the pre-colonial discourse that first was an evangelizing mission, then, a civilizing mission. Today, the most common opposition of rich and poor countries is identified as ‘developed’ and ‘developing’ countries, measured through sophisticated socio-economic indexes, as the Human Development Index (UNDP 1990). This representation outlines that while some nations (and groups within nations) are ahead, others are left behind. The aim of international cooperation, at least rhetorically, is to undermine the disparities on such scale. Although times have changed, the structure of thought that supports the rationale for cooperation is still based on a hierarchical dichotomy of *developed* and *underdeveloped*, and carries the idea that the most developed ones have the ability to help those who are less developed. Likewise, the dichotomy ‘expert’ versus ‘lay’ (Long, 2004: 30) seems to respect the relation between NGOs and local community. Since colonial period, in all those dichotomist formulations (i.e. ‘civilized-primitive’, ‘developed-developing’) we find the implicit idea that the ‘salvation’

of humanity is subject to Western knowledge and must follow the footsteps of Western civilization.

West Macro Strategies

Historical past and current world configuration has maintained the western supremacy, and the dialogue with other cultures and civilizations has never been totally equal. In fact, within the mainstream ideas of development we find that poor countries must develop under the recommendations of world's most developed side (North or western⁴²) by following the strategies outlined by the international community. In this regard, I find the approach to the Western domination by Samuel Huntington (1993) useful to understand some of macro dynamics of the mainstream thought in the current world. His article "Clash of Civilizations?" (1993) was a very provocative because he discusses the new world order since the end of the Cold war, stating that the cultural issues would be relevant to the new world configuration. This article received many critics because Huntington generalizes the most prominent civilizations in major groups of cultural framework, such as the West (represented by USA and Europe), the Latin-America, the Islamic countries, and Confucian countries. Besides that, he points the idea that non-western civilizations have increased their power in the world (carrying with them religious ideologies) and it seemed that Huntington was almost suggesting what western countries should do to avoid that other cultural civilizations gained space in the world power, putting much accent in the dichotomy of West and other kinds of cultures such as Islam and Confucianism. However, some of Huntington's ideas are interesting to understand how western policies developed in recent years. He suggests that the West presented pro-Western policies as positive measures for the entire world, and the inspiration of a 'universal culture' as a Western idea (Graham, 2004). Huntington (1993) suggests that the differences between cultures⁴³ are fundamental because culture is part of the constitution of civilizations. Huntington states that people of different cultures have "different view on the relation between God and man, the individual and the group, (...)

⁴² I personally do not like both "West" nor "North" definitions and divisions of the world. I use them because they are commonly employed in the current literature about development, and because they are terms that refer to the richest and wealthiest contexts in the world. However, they are too much simplistic and generalized, and do not define correctly the geographical situation of the globe today.

⁴³ In his text 'Clash of Civilizations', Huntington uses the term 'civilizations', but the concept he stresses is related to the aspects that are inherent to each social group, that are culturally constructed and are imprints of different societies. For that reason I use his idea of civilization as 'culture'.

parents and children, husband and wife, as well as different views of the relative importance of rights and responsibilities, liberty and authority, equality and hierarchy” (Huntington, 1993: 25). He thinks about culture as something inner to individuals, as a static thing. However, Said (2009) contrasts Huntington’s ideas stating that there are cultural traits that prevail as a *stereotype* of groups of people, but this does not mean that everybody in that group think in the same way. Rather, as stated earlier, culture is dynamic, it changes all the time, and there are no ‘ancestor’ cultures that link groups of people in a same category (Magnoli, 2009). However, the dominant classes usually affect the ideas of the majority through perverse manipulation of ideas, as we can see today with the media: the television is a powerful instrument that respect the mainstream thoughts, and manipulate ideas of majority, and often use the idea of culture as an ‘essence’ of human groups, which is really dangerous because it trigger the feeling of superiority and inferiority, consequently the hate among groups, even with possible catastrophic results (as genocides, and so forth).

Therefore, culture matters when societies get in contact. Actually, it matters very much since the ‘discovery’ of the New World. Such remarkable event stated who was advanced and who was ‘left behind’, and powerful colonialists felt much more evolved compared to New World natives. During this period, the undisputed technological and military Europeans’ supremacy, along with the ideology of cultural (and racial) superiority resulted in the domination over other peoples. With the end of the colonial era and the rise of Human Rights, ex-colonies were not seen as dominated anymore, but as poor. Some explanations for the condition of poverty rely on the idea that indigenous people are intrinsically different from westerners, and such cultural differences hinder the development process. Chang (2005) refuses those explanations arguing that despite culture matters in a development process, it can bring about change through ideological persuasion accompanied by “changes in policies and institutions that can sustain the desired forms of behavior over an extended period of time so that they turn into ‘cultural’ traits” (Chang, 2005: 200). Here we return to a Foster’s idea (Chapter Seven) related to the fact that peasants will change their cognitive orientation only when they can perceive the real possibilities and advantages that changing their lifestyle implies. However, culture is a concept very difficult to define, and even among same groups of people there is difference in ways of thinking, despite there is always a mainstream dominant line of thought, which

represent the thought of the dominant class, it does not eliminate the possibilities of conflicting thoughts.

The current process of globalization fosters even the smallest communities to adopt measures related to the capitalistic economic system and such economic modernization (that in rural Africa is arriving most through cash crops), implies a social change that separates people “from longstanding local identities” (Huntington, 1993: 26). Actually, the development model that privileges the ‘local knowledge’ is, at least, contradictory in its propositions.

Fernando (2003) studied a micro-credit project in Sri Lanka and found that while the NGO predicted local ‘self-reliance’ and ‘ownership’ to decide the main issues to solve, the microcredit program followed the precepts of capitalism and the project planning did not take into account the farmers’ considerations. He said:

I was seduced to believe that they are trying to initiate a new counterhegemonic revolutionary process of development from the grass roots (Fernando, 2003: 59)

Soon after he realized that this ‘revolutionary process’ from below did not become true. Rather, farmers became dependent on “transactions with corporations” (ibid: 67) and “had no choice but to meet the deadlines set by the corporations” (ibid: 66). According to the author, the current development model has undergone some changes compared to the previous one (based on a top-down approach of Trickle-down theory) due to omission of local cultural values. Therefore, the emphasized position of ‘participatory’ paradigm was an attempt to settle the past ‘fault’, and most people got convinced that such change would work perfectly. This ideology is internalized in the cooperation practitioners’ mind who truly believe in their work, and sometimes excessive sentimentalism ‘romanticizes’ the importance of indigenous knowledge and cultural traits to achieve development. Actually, indigenous knowledge and way of life conflict with development pursuit because they have different rationales.

According to Huntington (1993), Western societies are responsible to plan international cooperation to cope with the new global configuration, and the West is investing in institutions that reflect and legitimate Western interests to promote the involvement of non-western contexts within those institutions. The international organizations in the West, admitting or not, are bringing Western values to the non-

western contexts to promote a change, whether or not driven by the ideology of 'egalitarian world'. We cannot dispute the fact that the West has invested in 'itself', to keep its sovereignty.

Huntington (1993) was aware about the growth of civilization-consciousness: while the West is at its peak, other civilizations have the will, desire - and some of them have also resources - to "shape the world in non-Western ways" (Huntington, 1993: 26). The author suggests that countries with non-western cultural traits, as Muslim and Confucian states, want to modernize without "Westernizing" in an attempt to have technology, goods, and capitalism, while maintaining the cultural background. He explains that Elites that previously were educated in West institutions now tend to privilege their own culture. Mozambique is not yet this case, as Sumich (2007) explains in his thesis about Mozambican elites, arguing that in Mozambique local elites are willing to 'westernize' as much as they can, and is increasingly detached from rural traditional communities where the 'backwardness' prevails.

Huntington (1993) suggests that the West tries to promote democracy and liberalism as universal values. The West uses international institutions (UN, FMI, WB) along with military power and economic resources to run the world and maintain domination by spreading Western values and protecting its own interests. Culture here is being used as a political instrument to maintain the western culture on the top, as the vector for the 'new' noble values such as the Human Rights. In many developing countries western values have strong impact on people's perceptions. For instance, in my country (Brazil), I find the widespread idea that the First World is 'fantastic' while Brazil is still behind, and local people is not as good as westerners (this ideology is beginning to change due to a recent increase in Brazilian wealth and resonance in world's economy). In Mozambique I perceived the same idea related to a local 'backwardness' and a low self-esteem compared to the Western world. Actually, many Mozambicans do believe that their country harsh situation is due to a racial matter, even people among the elite, as quoted by Sumich (2007) in one of his elite informants discourse: "The problem is [that] we blacks are still two hundred years behind" (Sumich 2007: 88). It seems that the fate of people from developing countries runs far behind the Western progress, which is at least two hundred years 'ahead'.

Practitioners of development are aware of the western domination, but most of them believe in the possibility of an 'equal' world and are imbued with this ideology. The idea that there might be a 'universal civilization' or an equal world, as some of my respondents

emphasized, is a western idea too. In the political sphere the West tries to convince other cultures to adhere to its values as democracy and human rights. The cooperation also acts accordingly, even though it tries to do it in a 'participatory' manner. Thus, Huntington's point is about the rational thinking of the West which traces strategies in an attempt to keep ruling the geopolitical order, and new strategies are raised to face the new globalized context.

Huntington (1993) also argues that the West should know more about other cultures and learn to live with them if it wants to coexist without conflicts. Here, we observe how the author is dealing with a preconception of culture as a static element, as something that will persist, and that western societies should become habituated. This the idea reflects what Magnoli (2009) calls the multiculturalism, which presumes that cultures are constitutive part of certain peoples, if not races, that people carry with them as a natural inheritance from their ancestors, and cannot run out from it.

However, it seems that the cooperation is just doing that, no more imposing a model to copy (as the trickle down model), but trying to make civilizations show their interests, and try a more 'participatory' methodology, as I have found in the NGOs discourses. However, some NGOs' practitioners demonstrated a strong critical view against the idea that the development should be transferred from the north to the south, defending the idea that development should born from local knowledge and skills, that with the help of foreign aid would be improved. I believe most of them are inserted in a non-mainstream framework, trying to raise the voice of local poor communities in order to really hear how they would like to do their development. And also NGOs are gaining more and more potential to influence multilateral institutions decisions, and most of the 'new strategies' to achieve development comes from the experience of NGO's workers.

Still, cooperation projects are designed mostly according to western rules, even though local people are invited to say what and how they want to improve. Moreover, most NGOs tend to follow the donors' guidelines, and there is the assumption that what the West proposes is good for poor countries and project's beneficiaries. Consequently, the dialogue is biased because relationship is still based on domination: an idea that 'one knows' and 'one doesn't know'.

The Importance of the ‘Agency’

The international cooperation is very much influenced by actor-oriented theories, in which the role of subjects (individuals) is fundamental to a historical turn. Marx stated that “man makes his own history” (Marx, 2009 [1897]:9) within the conditions given by history. Weber (1978 [1922]) also attached importance to individual choices when he traced the theory of the meaningful action. According to Weber (1978 [1922]), individuals give meaning to their actions since they act according to specific purposes, which are shaped by historical and cultural background. His most notable study, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, suggests that Protestantism, as a model of consciousness of modern subjects, has installed a structure of feelings inside the individuals. This culture and religion have produced subjects with a particular social economic and religious position that was suitable to the capitalistic system reproduction (Weber, 1958 [1904]).

Therefore, the ‘agency’ of subjects is important for social transformation. According to Ortner (2006), culture is important because *social transformation* not only means the reorganization of institutions, but also a culture transformation. It is impossible to implement a social transformation without a cultural transformation. Ortner (2006) points out that there is a mix of cultures in any power situation. Accordingly, Katz (1991) gives a good example of cultural transformation led by social-economic change introduced by a top-down capitalistic project. Katz (1991) conducted a study about social transformation in a rural Sudan community called Howa. He observed that the arrival of a powerful capitalist project of agricultural development (state-sponsored) that involved local farmers had a great impact on peasants’ lives, especially among children. The project had a significant impact on the local environment, and “had a market effect on human-land relations” (Katz 1991: 492). According to his findings, before the arrival of the huge project, children had significant knowledge of the local environment and used to learn about their local socio-economic system through jokes, leisure time, and “children’s work was often fused in play time, space and meaning” (ibid: 503). Such knowledge was fundamental to the production and reproduction of social and economical rural subsistence life. With the introduction of the agricultural development project, “children’s environmental and other work had increased because of the larger economic changes associated with the project. Not only did the Project bring about enormous changes in the relations of production in Howa, but it heightened the integration of the village into the national cash economy” (ibid: 507). Consequently, children’s work increased because they

had to help meeting the growing need for cash. His research highlighted that development projects can have deep effects on social structure, and that although they might have solved the problem of lack of money, they brought important issues such as the increase in children's work time.

Now that the participatory approach is prominent, international cooperation aims at transforming local structures through the mobilization of local 'agencies', without neglecting cultural traits. The issue under discussion is the role of the individual identity as an *agent* that moves within a social structure, and acts in accordance with his/her cultural background. Ortner (2006) argues that to understand these relationships it is important to analyze the subjectivity of individuals: the importance lies in the fact that people can formulate and put projects into action that can transform themselves and have an impact on the social structure, strengthening or transforming it. Likewise, Long (2004) pointed out that people, throughout their lives, build a path with personal experiences that remain in their memories, and they construct their projects relying on those livelihood concerns. The actors and groups in the "socio-spatial networks" (Long, 2004: 26) are continuously influencing such process that shapes subjects' consciousness and identity. Hence, the individual is placed in a well-defined culture, social and natural environment. At the same time s/he is able to exercise his/her 'agency' within this framework, being very much influenced by that too.

International Cooperation considers poor countries as developing countries. Such assumption has repercussions on the subjectivity of who give this process a sense. If the practitioner of cooperation assumes that s/he or his/her society is more developed, it is understood that it has 'something else', is advantaged, and I do not exclude the implicit idea that it is more 'evolved'. Such assumptions impact on the practitioners' standpoints, and all his/her actions will probably be influenced by the idea that the West has the 'key' answers to solve poor's problems, as the dichotomy between 'expert' versus 'lay' cited earlier.

However, the classification of more and less 'developed' inevitably leads to the idea of more or less 'evolved', but, as I have argued in Chapter One, all the societies have same level of evolution, simply because they are alive in the same historical time. As Ridley describes life process: "there is change but not progress" (Ridley 2003: 64). If some countries are richer and others are poorer, this is a matter of social and/or environmental circumstances. 'Social' because within all societies there are hierarchical rules, and domination is always present, so humans societies are always biased or stratified

according to specific social rules: gender, class, caste, etc. 'Environmental' because we depend on natural resources to survive; hence, today there are rural contexts where people struggle to survive because they still depend on rains, while in urban contexts there are problems related to the pollution emergency. However, evolution is not about stages to complete; it rather depends on casual events and on the outcomes of competition between and among species and their predators, in specific environments. Observing humanity from an evolutionary perspective, it is possible to infer that western societies have succeeded in settling most regions of the world and imposing their supremacy over other cultures. However, as evolution is a process in which all subjects are constantly communicating (and competing), today other cultures are increasing their economic power and starting to undermine the western hegemony. Those societies, although not capitalism pioneers as the West, have interacted with the West and competed with it reaching almost the same level of development (Huntington 1993). Such dynamics show that societies are trying to adapt the best as they can to environmental circumstances: social, economic and natural. Notwithstanding, the more the West runs to the infinite progress, aiming that all other societies follow its model, the more the nature reacts negatively showing that the runaway growth is not sustainable.

In the area of cooperation towards poverty eradication, the 'agency' of practitioners of cooperation is clear, visible, and very much empowered by their convictions. The cooperation practitioners perceive the poorest societies as entities that can develop, and give sense to their actions through the idea that they have the ability to deliver development. Intercultural dynamics derive from this process because the project arrives bringing the idea of being more capable, so that also local communities are convinced of that. Thus, the decision to adopt and follow the project or reject it is up to local communities (which might activate the "weapons of the weak", forms of resistance that I will discuss on the next section). In Mozambique, I observed that in the successful IGAs, women were given an opportunity, were endowed with power, and they really exercised their 'agencies', strengthening the project's success. In other project's actions, however, local people did not seem aware of the empowerment potential the project was offering them, and despite some people have engaged in the project actively, some of them simply accepted the project's propositions without questioning them, while others didn't even seem to attach much importance to it. Most people deferred to the program set by the project, without realizing that they should participate in the decision process regarding

how things should be done, and usually waited for ‘orders’ coming from above - thus, not practicing their ‘agencies’.

The idea of ‘agency’ is useful to explore the NGOs’ and beneficiaries’ roles as ‘agents’ within the development dialogue. NGOs are expecting to encourage local people to act in order to change their own lives. They are exercising their ‘agencies’ as active promoters of inputs for development, and as owners of much power, they aim to give opportunities to local people to share - at least a small part of - this power. Rhetorically, this process is designated through catchwords as ‘self-reliance’, ‘empowerment’, ‘capacity building’, and other “empty phrases” (Bergendorff and Marcussen 2003).

8.2 Confront of Development Conceptions: Italy and Mozambique

In the relation between who provide and who receive aid, obviously, there is a stronger and a weaker side - dominant and dominated. What I analyzed in Chapters Five and Seven was the different ways of thinking of the dominant international cooperation and the dominated local community. The fieldwork in Mozambique has shown that for project beneficiaries it is almost impossible to achieve western standards through their mobilization. In fact, many of them kept wondering how the project would help them if they had to raise the ideas within their community. However, the current mainstream ideas among development NGOs about the ‘participatory’ development have already penetrated into some local farmers’ minds, and they apparently conceive development in the same way as the dominant thought. An indisputable fact is that beneficiaries usually agree with projects’ proposals. This does not prove that their conceptions are the same of the project’s, but suggests that there is a general trend to accept this intervention without contesting it, typical of who is in a subordinated position, with few instruments to evaluate the possible costs and benefits an innovation implies (Richerson and Boyd, 2005).

Not only the current relationship reflects the dichotomy of powerless poor and powerful rich, but ethnographic observations also evidenced a reminiscent factor related to the unequal relation that dates back to the colonial period. Large part of the rural population of Mozambique has still in mind the dominant-servant relations that characterized the colonial order (Cabaço, 2007). I have found a submissive attitude by many peasants towards people hierarchically or supposedly ‘superior’ (treated with great ceremony and obedience), and such behavior was also stressed by some of my Italian

respondents, who were concerned with the fact that local people usually answered “yes” to agree with their statements. Besides that, even among the Child Aid project’s staff, people were prone to answer *only* the questions that the project leader posed. They almost never dared to say a word if the ‘boss’ had not asked; they used to communicate what they thought the project leader would like to hear. Such facts show that there is a distorted communication (Crocker, 2007) between those from local community (even those working for the project), and the managers that are more distant from local reality. Hence, it is really difficult for project leaders to understand the real impacts of their interventions.

Despite some beneficiaries had partially absorbed the same conceptions spread by the ADPP NGO, and were aware that they had to employ their ‘agencies’ in order to accomplish a sustainable development, most of them still perceived development as a structural change that would be fostered by external agents. Wallace (2007) conducted an interesting study of rural education and training systems in sub-Saharan Africa and remarked that one of the interventions weaknesses is the fact that local people think they have to wait for outside help to succeed. In Chiúta too, I noticed the same trend reflecting that local people was not feeling self-reliant either empowered to conduct a revitalization process on their own. Wallace (2007) found many promising interventions, but he stressed that they are “often restricted to isolated case studies at the micro-level, frequently donor-led initiatives, and hence neither replicable nor internally sustainable” (Wallace, 2007: 583). According to his conclusions, international cooperation interventions have great success in few one-off cases, but have low probability to broadly replicate, “invariably supported either by international donor agencies or by international NGOs, or both” (ibid: 585).

One of the main issues related to the differences among development conceptions between NGOs and beneficiaries is that it causes frustration on both sides. Local people wait for what they imagine NGOs will bring, while NGOs are not willing to bring things - they teach how to *do* things. As a result, while NGOs expect the active engagement of local people, the latter wait for the transformation power of NGOs. Although local people are given opportunities, they are not completely aware - or sure - that those opportunities will really change their lives.

These opposite practices reveal a twofold paradox inherent in the relationship between practitioners and recipients of international cooperation. On the one hand, we see cooperative actions profoundly laden with a real feeling of helping ‘the others’. The ideological and emotional burden seems to overshadow the pernicious side of Western

domination. On the other hand, beneficiaries seem to be content and gladly accept the proposals of being ‘agents’ of their own development, while in practice, they continue acting according to their cultural background, and do not seem to take the reins of these projects, behaving mostly under the rules and instructions of the NGO. Despite those ideas seem opposed, they share a common denominator, which is the assumption of a western idea of development, regardless of the fact that it is reasoned through a bottom-up or a top-down approach.

Same Conception, Different Rationales

As stated earlier, NGOs aim to reinforce local resources, starting from the idea that people’s abilities can be amplified. However, despite their emphasis on ‘listening to the people’, the interventions work only if there are “‘enlightened experts’ who make use of ‘people’s science’ and ‘local intermediate organizations’ to promote development ‘from below’” (Long 2004: 31). This excerpt shows the incongruity of projects discourse, since it proposes to start development from the community, while power is being introduced artificially by foreign institutions to ‘empower’ local people. Such idea is confusing not only for beneficiaries, but also for NGO’s workers, who advocate the enhancement of ‘agencies’, while in practice, the NGOs dictate actions and propose things framed on a model of western ideology. Long highlights this point stating that:

Such formulations, however, do not escape the managerialist and interventionist undertones inherent in the idea of ‘development’. That is, they tend to evoke the image of more knowledgeable and powerful outsiders helping the powerless and less discerning local folk. (...) No matter how firm the commitment to good intentions, the notion of ‘powerful outsiders’ assisting ‘powerless insiders’ is constantly smuggled in.” (Long 2004: 32)

When we observe that many beneficiaries conceive development as structures and services brought by power institutions, i.e., NGOs, government, international agencies, etc., we realize that in the ideological sphere, NGOs idea of development and beneficiaries’ culminates at the same point, because both sides understand the development as an imitation of the European/western model of welfare. Therefore, the conception inherent in the idea of development is melted. However, the ways to reach this

development are diametrically opposed because peasants do not perceive themselves - at least not yet - as the protagonists of this process, and always wait for directions coming from organizations.

During the fieldwork in Italy, one of the problems raised by NGOs representatives regarded the fact that Mozambicans are too much accustomed to receive aids, hence they are not really involved in the projects' activities. According to some of my respondents, beneficiaries are happy to see that there is a project that does things *for* them. Such complaint reveals that the development idea supported by those carrying out the project is quite different from that expressed by those receiving: despite the fact that both agree to remove poverty and world inequalities, Mozambicans do not participate as they are expected to, and do not embrace the idea that the project needs their active involvement to succeed. On the other hand, Mozambicans are mostly worried that the project will give them things, and if they do not see those things, they think the NGO is not working for them, so it is useless.

Besides, another opposing point reflecting the different rationales is that while the NGO make a project for beneficiaries, in the beneficiaries' view, the project is an NGO's exclusive property - it is not for them. Thus, as beneficiaries believe that the project is for the NGO, instead of becoming protagonists of their lives improvement, they try to follow the guidelines and do exactly what the NGO says. In Chiúta, I realized such discrepancy when one of my informants, a beneficiary who was also a VAG-Coordinator, told me that the project proposed to build latrines, and one of the VAG-Coordinator's tasks was to invite people to build their latrines by themselves, explaining all the advantages from a health point of view. When he tried to mobilize people to do such work, many wondered why he did not build the latrines for them, if he was so convinced that they would bring benefits. He told me that he got puzzled with those statements, and explained me that building latrines was not written in the VAG-Coordinator's guidelines, so he refused to build latrines for them. He asked me if he was right, to make sure that he had done the right thing (and I told that he was right). This event suggests that local people are not really aware that the project aims to make them self-reliant, and maybe they are not even prepared to deal with a western model of development. Projects always need a Western scheme of training to make the development process succeed: it needs to be implemented with the greatest care and dedication. Many failures result from beneficiaries' lack of perception of the opportunities the project offers, lack of vision of the common good, lack of understanding. The latrines example shows that many project volunteers make great

efforts to do what the project proposes, but find themselves in difficult situations, and the confidence in the project is questioned.

8.3 Intercultural Dynamics in the Aid System

Project Dynamics

For some practitioners of cooperation, working with poor communities brings out those values of life that in today's modern society are lost. In their speeches we sense fascination feelings related to the spontaneous happiness of Mozambicans, even living in severe poverty: the easy smile, the brightness in children's eyes, the dignity of the families who, although living in extreme poverty conditions, manage to keep the house clean and organized, the friendly way of welcoming guests, the ease of turning all into dance and music, etc.. In sum, Europeans get surprised when they see that Africans live their life with peace of mind, even though in extreme conditions. Such feelings lead to a sort of Romanization of African poor, and, together with the feeling of social injustice, constitute the most important motivations to work in such field. The project field demystifies this romantic view because practitioners realize how local dynamics are not that idyllic. The high frequency of thefts, the difficulty of working with others, the lies, the false compliance, etc., are all factors showing how the economic-cultural relationship is much more contentious than expected.

The field research in Mozambique showed that in practice the project opened up dynamics demonstrating that the socio-economic cultural aspects are relevant issues in the new relationship between local reality and NGO. One of the most common mistaken beliefs among farmers is that the NGOs' work is to replace the lack of the State delivery, so the NGO has the 'duty' to provide things. This expectation may be related to the Mozambique recent past, when there was civil war and many refugees received free material relief from charities for years. However, there is also a strong belief that foreigners will 'solve' the Mozambican poverty.

Another interesting dynamic enhanced by a development project regards the interactions with local leaders and authorities. Local important people play a fundamental role when a project is to be implemented. First because projects need the allowance of local leaders to be performed; secondly because leaders are influent and their influence can be used in favor of their personal sphere of relations, since they are usually employed

as key informants and collaborators. To illustrate such phenomenon, I will describe an example excerpted from the case study of this thesis. The ADPP NGO was running a lot of actions in the villages, but in one village near the project headquarters, through their DIs, they built a school that often receives maintenance. The school was built in that village mostly due two main reasons: the close physical proximity with the NGO premises that were located - not surprisingly - in the same village where the local Régulo lived. The Régulo kept a straight relationship with the NGO, and when I interviewed him, he was really grateful for the NGO's help. Thus, local important persons are usually in close relationship with development projects; however, this does not guarantee that all beneficiaries will benefit in the same way. Actually, in Chiúta, one of the most common beneficiaries' complaints was related to the fact that the project did not touch their lives. Fernando (2003) also reported a case study in which the village elite was the "key contact" that helped planning the NGO project and "beneficiaries were handpicked by the village elites based on patron-client relationships" (Fernando 2003: 64).

Another issue related to the projects on the field is related to human resources. One problem already discussed is the lack of local people's skills: even those who have studied are not prepared to follow the project guidelines as they were supposed to do. In the Child Aid project, although the project leader was responsible for improving ability, actually only few months of trainings were not enough. As a result, the project leader was overloaded because he did not want to quit the project's purposes. Besides, it was really difficult to identify persons really committed to the project principles, and the impression was that few were really interested in achieving development: it seemed that they were much more worried about keeping their jobs. Area-leaders used to say that in their areas the project was running quite well, with few problems and good results. However, as we have seen in Chapter Seven, things seemed quite different on the field, and only few people showed active and constant involvement in the project. The problem here is that local people do not seem much interested in mobilizing themselves to promote a development from the basis, because they are merely waiting for the help to come.

The local workers' greed sometimes goes beyond good sense when some of them decide to act selfishly instead of cooperating with the project (making intrigues, power struggles, telling lies, etc.). Such behavior can be intended as a form of resistance to the project, because they were not really interested in seeing the results, but want to take advantage of the wealth that 'foreigners' represent. It can also be understood through another interpretation regarding the dilemma of cooperation: people evaluate if it is better

to work honestly for the project, or to benefit immediately through sneaky means. For those who think that it is better to have immediate high earnings, the relation with the other part will not go so far because also the other part considers if it is reasonable to keep on working with an untrusted person. This kind of situation was quite usual in the project studied (and also other interviewees told me their frustration with such unpleasant behavior), and it demonstrates the opposing awareness of cooperation on both sides: who receives the project is more interested in taking advantage selfishly while the NGO wants to give resources to everyone for the common good.

Agency and Knowledge Transmission

International cooperation for Development aims at establishing a vector of communication in order to promote actions for transformations in poor contexts. Opening channels for dialogue is fundamental as it is the way through which the information will flow. Cooperation for development works mainly based on delivering knowledge, but also on behavioral patterns that reflect the western developed society. However, the concepts of knowledge and learning are not neutral: they are embedded in cultural, historical, social framework. NGOs seem to take for granted that western knowledge is a key element to achieve development, regardless of the social context in which it is applied (McFarlane, 2006). This assumption is based on the idea that ‘scientific knowledge’ goes far beyond cultural barriers and stands as a universal truth. Hence, the contents of trainings for development projects are given as essential for humanity, and it is not questioned that knowledge is circumstantial and associated with specific rationality and culture.

However, in practice when development projects try to introduce new ‘scientific knowledge’ in non-western contexts, they find many hindrances, of which culture is one of the most prominent. Culture is essential for human survival because it creates a system of significance, such as language, which organizes the life and eases the anxieties the human fear of chaos generates (Geertz, 1973 [1962]). Besides, culture affects individuals’ behavior, and it is something acquired from other members of the society “through teaching, imitation, and other forms of social transmission.” (Richerson and Boyd, 2005: 5). Even though, humans are “relatively open creatures” (Ortner, 2006:119) and culture can be understood as a *process* that emphasizes the construction of meaning through the process of socialization in the world. Accordingly, the contact with different cultures implies dialectic dynamics of joint and resistance.

According to Peterson (2004), a change in one individual's behavior depends, first of all, on the decision or the will to learn something. Once that step is completed, the process of building awareness and knowledge is facilitated: the person is able to do something 'new' and change his/her behavior only when the acquired knowledge is put into practice. Following these steps is fundamental to achieve sustainability in development projects, and this is the most challengeable aim for most of them. The concept of 'agency' in this context is essential, because the *desire* to learn not only is the key issue to compel people to change their behavior, but also the starting point to enhance a personal project that follows the NGO project toward development.

However, there are several interesting features that hinder such process. Some of them are cultural and others belong to human nature. According to Richerson and Boyd (2005) humans generally tend to adopt the opinions of "the majority of those around them (...) [and] individuals adjust their behavior to that of the others" (Richerson and Boyd, 2005: 122). The authors argue that there is not only an inclination to conformism among people, but also a tendency to conformist learning, i.e. imitating the behavior of the majority of a social group. When an outsider arrives and teaches new things, s/he will have to cope with such conformist tendency to accomplish his/her aims.

According to Richerson and Boyd (2005), poor and less educated people try to follow the path that high status opinion-leaders have passed through. The authors suggest that prestige plays an important role in social learning, and the prestigious persons from a local community are examples (and from this point of view it is valuable that development projects work in straight relation with them). People typically imitate who has a *local* high social status, rather than distant elites. In rural Mozambique, a farmer is much more prone to imitate the practices of his wealthier neighbors than accept the advices of experts from elite or from foreigners.

An interesting fact highlighted during my fieldwork was that even the Area-Leaders (especially the older ones) of Child Aid project did not change completely their behavior according to the NGO's recommendations, and still behaved according to their cultural setting. The project leader used to call for their attention explaining that they should be examples of behavior to local population: as they were spreading the instructions of the project to the others, they were the main vectors of innovation to local community. However, they did not actually change their own habits. This example highlights that local people still behave according to a conformist pattern, following the actions of the majority and those nearer his/her social context, rather than abruptly adopting the outsider's

recommendations. For that reason the project to succeed needs a considerable amount of time.

Long (2004) suggests that we should ‘demythologize’ the idea of intervention as a simply execution of a protocol with expected results, and recognize it as a “socially-constructed and negotiated process” (Long, 2004: 27). To understand this process, it is important to be aware of the cognitive map (Bauman, 1999: 20) through which knowledge pass in the project interface. Understanding the culture is a fundamental step because the intervention is embedded in a cultural framework, and there are power aspects that influence the social groups. If the intervention is a simple execution of pre-established formulas, “they are more likely to reflect and exacerbate cultural differences and conflict between social groups than they are to lead to the establishment of common perceptions and shared values” (Long, 2004: 31). And if today the international cooperation tries to train local people through the execution of a standard protocol, it is quite difficult to suppose that projects will really work in a ‘participatory’ way and equitable modes, and actually will empower local people. Here we have a paradoxical idealized, romanticized conception of development; thus, the clash of cultures causes more misunderstandings than ‘understandings’.

There exists an extensive literature of knowledge and learning in development projects, most of them discussing how institutions should increase its capacity of learning from ‘lessons learned’, and be more effective in its outcomes (most of them produced by multilateral agencies as UN and WB, as well as INGOs). For example, the MDG Outcome Document (MDG summit 2010, September 17th) stresses many times the need to raise capacity, enhance skills and implement technical training programs, making an extensive use of terms like *Knowledge-sharing*, *know-how*, *training*, *information*, *education*, *capacity*, etc., in the whole outcome document. However, only a small part of literature has discussed about the way local people assimilate (or not) the knowledge delivered by development projects.

During the fieldwork it became clear that the biggest challenge for the development to be accomplished is the knowledge transmission, or knowledge ‘absorption’. The problem lies in the fact that knowledge transmission does not guarantee that it will be assimilated by those who receive it. The relation between *Knowing/learning* something and *doing/practicing* something is not a taken for granted issue, because there are different possibilities of behavior that people adopt according to many factors that depend on different reasons: cultural background, how they received the information and how they

interpret it and/or decide to practice it or not. The development project provides important information and good practices aiming that beneficiaries adopt them. In such path it is completely relevant *how* the messages are passed because that will influence very much *how* people will internalize them.

Child Aid project considers fundamental to “teach how to fish instead of giving the fish”, then, the main objective is to transmit knowledge hoping that people will change their behavior. It is important to analyze local people interpretations in relation to the information received and observe if a behavior change will take place or not. Obviously behavioral changes do not occur overnight, and encouraging new patterns of behavior, such as teamwork, hygiene measures, etc., will depend on several factors beyond the competence of the project, that usually are associated with the socio-economic and cultural dynamics. The mere presence of a project is an important input because constitutes an example that things can be done differently, and can lead some people to begin a gradual change to achieve others imitators and foster a transformation chain. For that reason the subject (the ‘agent’) plays a key role in this process to increase the chances for interventions continuity in time (namely after the NGO departure). Another important issue of information acquisition is the decision to put it into practice, and we cannot take for granted that when someone understands the importance of a new knowledge s/he will automatically implement it.

Knowledge Transmission Challenge

When a person receives information that may be useful to his/her life, s/he can react in different ways and show different behaviors, including a non-response, or the total ignorance of the knowledge. Another possible reaction, usually unwanted by the ‘educators’, is a negative response that occurs when the response to a new knowledge cause controversy or destabilize local dynamics. This is apparent in campaigns for gender equality, as they influence the dominant male’s power sphere, and destabilizes the tradition that previously legitimized the biased relationship. As I have argued in Chapter Six, the gender campaign in Chiúta was interpreted in an unexpected way by ‘educators’, and instead of diminishing, increased violence as some women acted violently against their husbands because now they knew that the “rights were equal”. It is true that every change implies giving up something you used to do before in favor of something new, and this can produce a crisis, even small, in the personal or social context, depending on the

magnitude of the change. In the example of the gender campaign, women received information against male violence, then left to accept that violence, and pay back Tit for Tat.

The changes proposed by most NGOs working with peasant societies envisage a change in behavior, or new habits adoption: the moment the new knowledge is 'embedded' in the society a sustainable development has become true. In African rural societies, most knowledge is still transmitted through ancient social learning rules: most people know what their old relatives tell them, and in Chiúta, for example, in the more distant villages, people behave in the same way as they did centuries ago. On the contrary, people who have experienced new things, who have travelled or is in contact with another realities and have already seen examples of other NGOs' projects, understand better the Child Aid proposals and attach great importance to them, because they know and believe in the transformation power NGOs bring. However, they are few people, and they know that is not easy to persuade the others that a change in their behavior can bring benefits.

Lets us now describe how this research perceived the process of knowledge transmission in the case studied. The research in Chiúta allowed direct observation of the knowledge transmission process. This dissertation will investigate four possibilities detected in the fieldwork that reflect the relation between *knowledge* and *action* (intended as the action generated by the information received). Such responses to a new knowledge are useful to understand how people perceive the project arrival. Here, it is particularly important to stress that these inter-relations are what I call inter-cultural dynamics. The core of a development project is the transmission of knowledge, and knowledge here is not dichotomized as 'everyday knowledge' and 'scientific knowledge' (Bauman, 1999), but it is conceived as a social representation of reality that carry cultural values that are historically well-established. In such sphere, the interpretations that different culturally embedded persons give to the meaning of 'right' and 'wrong' may considerably vary.

When a peasant receives information from a development project s/he may react in different ways, and this reaction demonstrates the relationship between the person and the project. During the exchange of knowledge, there are several possibilities of response. It may happen that the project passes the information in an inappropriate manner, so the person does not receive the necessary input to change behavior. It may happen also that the person does not change behavior because of other factors that impede change, such as cultural matters.

Cultural factors are often cause of resistance to new knowledge. For example, it is much more difficult to change an adult's habit than teaching a habit to a child, because adults have well-established habits and mind set, while a child is still shaping them. The difficulty to change is usually related to a social pressure: one person alone seldom dares to change his/her behavior for fear of others' reprisal . The fact that most people opt for (or adopt) a conformist position is attributable to the human tendency to imitate the dominant trend. Henrich and Boyd (1998) suggest that an adaptive cultural behavior proved to be adequate to guarantee survival, and according to an evolutionist perspective "there is a tendency to acquire the most common behavior exhibited in a society" (ibid: 215). This conformist factor is even stronger in rural communities, in which there is higher coercion that forces the individuals to obey the rules imposed by the social context. The Agadjanian (2001) study shows the behavioral difference between urban and rural areas of Mozambique. He observed that social cohesion in rural areas is more prominent because social ties are stronger and more stable, while in urban areas social bonds are weaker while contacts with different people are stronger: hence in urban areas it is easier to find more open-minded persons. These factors favor behavioral change in urban areas, while in rural areas it's harder to change the people's consciousness. In rural deprived societies, equality among people is almost a must; the prevailing rule is behaving like the others, so it is very difficult to introduce changes.

During the fieldwork I noticed some responses to knowledge introduced by Child Aid project I consider relevant to analyze their implications in the intercultural relations. Below I list the four most prominent responses to knowledge inputs I observed:

1) Lack of knowledge

Although the project spread information through the population, some people may not receive any information at all. These people really do not know that certain actions can improve their lives. A trivial example: in Chiúta many people do not know that washing hands can prevent diseases.

2) Misinterpretations

This category includes those people who might receive or interpret information in a wrong way - the information can even be distorted due to the passages it undergoes before reaching the person. In this response category, if people change behavior after having

received the information, they will probably act according to misconceptions. We can say that people act wrongly (or not according to the project protocols) because they know wrong or distorted things - for instance, they believe that washing hands in the same washbasin used by other people is enough to prevent diseases. Actually, the best way to prevent illness is washing hands under running water. Consequently, a misunderstanding can be harmful to a social context (or does not solve a problem). The example above is very trivial, but misunderstandings can produce more drastic results, as I shall illustrate.

In this second response category to a new knowledge, the person receives wrong or distorted information, therefore does not respond according to the project expectation. This is one of the major problems faced by NGOs that fail to spread correct and credible knowledge to everybody in the same way. A good example of this phenomenon comes from my fieldwork. I attended many trainings in which groups of people received important new knowledge about health, economics, education, etc.. Each group underwent a specific training (i.e. health issues, economics, and so forth). Afterwards, trained people were expected to pass these new ideas to the others. Through this 'snowball' method, the whole community should raise awareness about new issues. I noticed that when trainings were prepared by people who were very committed to the values of the project, had a consistent intellectual background and *will* to hold classes, the result was satisfactory. However, in other cases the same success was not reported. There were trainings in which Area-Leaders and even supervisors told distorted, partial, or even wrong messages, like the idea that the project was there to help orphaned children (actually, the project aims to help the whole community, as noted earlier) (Fieldnotes, 2010). We can assume that if the area leaders were disclosing partial or distorted information, local people were taught fragmented contents. Thus, the 'snowball' method seems more likely to confuse than to clarify, and increase the risk of misunderstandings. Indeed, as shown by other studies (Freedman 1998, Bennel 1999, Peterson 2004) the well transmitted information is crucial to the success of a project. When messages are partially delivered, or provide several pieces of information, they give rise to speculations and generate many doubts and suspicions among people. Thus, if most people have a partial knowledge of the project proposals, it will be difficult to put the new knowledge into practice, and this can foster conflicts too. The following example shall illustrate how disinformation can fuel people anger.

In 2002, the Netherland Development Organization (SNV), an NGO working in Mozambique, called the Mozambican sociologist Carlos Serra from the African Studies

Centre (Mondlane University – Maputo) to analyze the reasons why SNV workers along with members of government and local authorities were the target of popular anger in Nampula, Mozambique. Serra (2003) carried out a study about the belief among poor population that the government was introducing Cholera through the chlorine with the intention of killing people. This belief was related to a range of crossed misinformation between government, NGOs and rural people that led to conflicts between them, and local people manifested their discontentment through violent episodes against local leaders and NGO's workers. One of the main problems that enhanced the conflict was the lack of clear information regarding the importance of chlorine to prevent Cholera, along with the increasingly disappointment with government and NGO lack of social delivery. The climate of critical distrust, and the succession of events that worsened the social conditions, boosted violent responses. According to Hanlon (2009), the “shocking finding” of Serra's study was that “poor people strongly believed that the rich and powerful wanted to kill them” (Hanlon 2009: 3), assuming that government representatives and NGOs workers were putting cholera (instead of chlorine) in the water to kill them. The NGO campaign that should inform about the chlorine importance to prevent Cholera was not effective and gave ground to ambiguity and misinterpretation of the chlorine role, culminating in the belief that government and NGOs were responsible for the Cholera outbreak in the community. This example highlights that distorted information can turn into a real belief, as Serra (2003) argues, “the belief was *objectively* false, but *subjectively* felt as true” (ibid: Preface, my emphasis and translation).

The popular protest, despite its violent outcomes, transmitted a warning message “against insecurity and especially against growing social inequality” (Hanlon, 2009: 4). Hence, it is important that the dialogue between local people and delivery institutions is a frank and open , as both sides need to hear (or interpret rightly) each other's messages. The Carlos Serra's study (2003) gave a significantly enlightening and reliable interpretation to the phenomenon observed in Nampula, while local leaders interpreted those facts superficially, complaining that poor people were ignorant and unable to understand the reality. According to local leaders, poor people were making use of rules of inference “with a kind of pre-logical mentality that generates a misleading interpretation of the real” (Serra, 2003: 16, my translation), then explained things from a traditional, magic-spiritual, unfounded perspective.

Yet, it seems that local authorities did not realize the usefulness of Serra's and Hanlon's (2003 and 2009) studies. Despite the Serra's book “Cholera and Catharsis” was

published in 2003, recent outbreaks of violence against wealthiest and powerful persons in Nampula, as well as in other parts of the country⁴⁴, continue to demonstrate that the population is not satisfied with social inequality, showing that they also want the desired and advertised 'development'. This example is interesting for this thesis, since it highlights not only the difficulty of dialogue between cultures, but also the risks a strong unequal society implies. In the example of Cholera, manifestations were intended as a discontent for things the organizations had promised but not accomplished. People were not rejecting those things (i.e. the prevention of Cholera), but there was a "disquiet lack of confidence in the state" (Hanlon 2009: 4). The popular anger was not against the state, NGOs or modernization: it was indeed against the failures of those institutions in providing better standard of living, and the distance between them and the poor (Hanlon 2009; Serra 2003).

3) Resistance

People receive the complete and correct information, without misinterpretations, but still does not assimilate that. In this case, people gain a new knowledge but do not either introspect or practice it. They might not understand what are the advantages a new knowledge implies or do not trust the NGO information. For example, many people received the information that is important to make latrines to prevent disease. Some people believe that it is in the latrine that transmits diseases: in this case, people may believe the NGO and go build a latrine, or may not believe in NGO because the previous knowledge is more reliable to them. Alternatively, they do not build the latrine simply because they have done their needs in the bush through all their life, so they don't understand the reason for a latrine. Here there are difficult issues to deal with. One is related to habits. Another is related to the project's credibility, which takes time to be built. There is great difficulty in getting people's confidence as the project comes to change their lives without the time

⁴⁴ Popular riots and manifestations in Mozambique in recent years (in Hanlon 2009 and Carlos Serra Blog):

- Nacala-a-Velha, September 2006: a mob of 70 people armed with knives and machetes attacked an anti-cholera brigade of Save the Children, accusing them of putting cholera in the wells;
- Maputo, 5 February 2008: riots were led by semi-employed youth from the informal sector.
- Pemba, 6 January 2009: an angry mob burned down three cholera treatment tents on the beach;
- Mecúfi, 18 January 2009: anti-cholera brigade was attacked and beaten accused of spreading the disease.
- Nampula, 25 February 2009: two Red Cross volunteers publicising anti-cholera messages, which include putting chlorine in wells, were beaten to death, accused of poisoning the wells with cholera;
- Maputo, 31 August- 04 September 2010: Popular manifestation against the rising of living cost (Not surprisingly, in 2009 Carlos Serra have already predicted new riots like the 5th February 2008 in Maputo (Hanlon, 2009)).

needed to win their trust: the project has a strict schedule, that must be followed to ensure that objectives will be met in a certain time.

In this response category, I suggest that forms of *resistance* contribute to understand the reasons why people act accordingly. I consider the Scott's (1986) concept of resistance a consistent representation to analyze the dialogue issue in international cooperation. Scott (1986) discusses the subtle, but powerful, forms of resistance of the 'weak', mainly from the poor peasant's perspective. He argues that the powerless groups use 'everyday' forms of resistance, usually non-confrontational, sometimes invisible or imperceptible; ordinary 'weapons' that hinder powerful groups' projects. According to Scott (1986), peasants use those forms of resistance in their ordinary life: "a constant struggle between the peasantry and those who seek to extract labor, food, taxes, rents, and interest from them" (Scott and Kerkvliet: 6). Peasantry resistance "can even have unintended consequences" (Scott and Kerkvliet, 1986). It is a passive resistance. In general, peasants are very suspicious about the real interest of the NGO, and are not convinced about its selfless purposes. Thus, they usually make broad use of resistance mechanisms which Scott calls "the weapons of the weak": "foot-dragging, dissimulation, false-compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, sabotage, and so forth" (ibid: 6).

Therefore, resistance here is conceived as a barrier to absorb the new inputs that development projects propose. The cause of the resistance can be cultural, i.e. when acquired cultural habits prevail over new habits, or cultural beliefs are stronger than new ideas

These forms of resistance were observed among the dynamics between Child Aid project and local people from Chiúta. In our case study, the NGO thought that it was providing a service for peasants without asking much in return. Peasants were expected to work voluntarily to follow their path to development, through the 'empowerment' of their human capital, and had to attend training courses, meetings, etc.. The Vag-Coordimators used to complain about the fact that they were doing the same work as the Area-Leaders (employees of the project) without earning money, and they felt exploited. Not surprisingly, during my fieldwork in Chiúta I observed some of those mechanisms listed by Scott and Kerkvliet (1986) in action, and I realized that they represented a form of resistance. One example was the case of the Income Generating Activity that had no success, already discussed in Chapter Seven. I consider this example again to examine the resistance forms adopted by local peasants in depth. The women in this group (3 in total) were called to attend a training course on economics and had to walk about 5km to reach

the meeting place. They began to say that the DI was making them 'suffer' to go to training. The DI was very surprised by this comment because she was doing her best to help women to start-up a small business. Then one of them said that she would go with the DI to the city to buy the material to start her business, but actually she did not go. Despite those signs of resistance, the DI gave them another chance because they used to say they really wanted to start the business. Then, they bought the codfish, but there has been no profit at all. In this example we can identify mechanisms of resistance such as slander (because the DI made them 'suffer' to go to trainings), and false-compliance because they always agreed with the DI, but did not acted accordingly.

In Chiúta, apparently, people were compliant to the project. As time went by, despite most people stopped following the project's instructions, many of them still played a false-compliant role: they wanted the project but at the same time, they did not want to do what the project was proposing. Even when they had understood the contents of trainings, they put into in action these subtle forms of resistance: it apparently seemed that everything was fine, while actually not much was done. In practice, resistance hinders the accomplishment of the new inputs. I argue that people acted like that because there were internal power relations that got unbalanced, and also because they were not fully motivated to do what the NGO proposed.

Within Child Aid project, many of the knowledge delivered was new, whilst some contents were already known, but few people put them into practice. Some people tend to justify the difficulty of changing behavior by laziness. Speaking the truth, in general laziness is found in most of us to a varying extent, because it is a human trait: just think about the quest for technology, which is mostly based on increasing comfort for humans to reduce their effort. The 'myth of the lazy native' (title of Alatas' book, 1977), is a colonial ideological construction, and here again we find reminiscences of the colonial period that strongly inculcated false awareness in the Mozambicans' perception. During the colonial period, colonizers considered the natives as incapable of hard work, and as Alatas states,

The degradation of the native could be considered as a historical necessity. Once their country was taken they had to accept a subordinate place in the scheme of things. They had to be degraded and made to feel inferior and subservient for otherwise they would have cast off the foreign yoke. (...) But the colonial writers who degraded the natives implicitly or explicitly did not pose the question of its necessity. In their lack of awareness they did not even

attempt to pause and think of the image they had created. (Alatas, 1977: 24-25)

This quote shows that the image of the 'lazy native' was created by a dominant system that spread this idea. It was the Colonialism economic system that created such ideology, and what writers from that period used to write about the natives was not an instrument to create adomination, because domination already existed. However, those ideas fit like a glove for the system, so it quickly became the mainstream ideology that strengthened the colonial authority, because legitimated Western economic system as superior. As a result, the natives were considered as 'naturally' inferior since they were unable to work hard, and obedience was the only option they had.

Notwithstanding, it is interesting to note the historical irony. In the colonial past, the dominant Western society created the myth of the lazy native that today, although still attested by many, is being countered in the international cooperation that promotes the 'agency', or the desire to do things, instead of being lazy. In this personal 'evaluation', some people actually prefer to take advantage of other people's work as a mean to obtain things without struggling very much. However, this attitude is human too, even though in most societies it has been replaced by more collaborative habits.

Laziness, I think, is very far from being the cause of the unchanged behavior in development projects. People find difficult to change their habits because they have other habits inherited from their ancestors. As a result, they do not change because they have different and well-established customs. However, when people understand the reasons for a change and see the result on the neighborhood, they consider what could be better for them, and then they might change.

Resistance may also be explained by an individual choice: despite the person understands the advantages of a new behavior, s/he does not change. This attitude is difficult to explain without the intriguing Freud's hypothesis of 'death drive' (Freud, 1922). This is one of the most original and bold explanation of human behavior. Freud (1922) argues that human life instincts are innate and drive for self-preservation. However, based on observations that humans adopt a self-destructive behavior he suggests that beyond the 'life drive' there is an even more primal drive toward self-annihilation: the 'death instinct'. In his book *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud (1922) raises a well-

reasoned argument about how humans act not only toward pleasure and through the 'pleasure' and 'reality' drives, but there are also an innate component leading people to act toward degeneration. Although his explanation of 'death instinct' is somehow vague, it is an interesting insight of human motivation, apt to explain, at least theoretically, why sometimes people behave against themselves.

Therefore, within this category of response analyzed according to this study, the individual understands the importance of a new knowledge, realize the motivation and benefits, yet s/he does not put it into practice. This is probably one of the most inexplicable facets of humanity: for that reason I suppose that the most plausible explanation is that people actually act against the life instinct. Smoking is an example of this attitude. Anyone in the world knows that smoking is harmful, but still they keep on doing it. Another example more chronic and urgent, very common throughout Africa is the difficulty of changing attitude towards condom use to fight the spread of HIV. Here, the difficulty is partially attributable to cultural traits. However, much is due to an individual choice, and this is inexplicable because although the people are aware of the benefits that a certain behavior implies, they continue to put their lives at risk, acting against themselves.

4) New Knowledge Assimilated

Finally, this is the most positive answer to a new knowledge, when people receive the correct information and put it into practice.

Therefore, a new knowledge can have different answers, and it is not certain that the person who receives knowledge will put it into practice immediately. This happens in all societies, but in this study the dialogue takes place between two totally different societies: a traditional rural culture with an oral transmission of knowledge, and a project based in the Western mold of development. According to the possibilities of interaction between *knowledge* and *action*, we realize that the chances for knowledge to be successfully delivered by a project are not so many. In the categories mentioned above, in the first case of interaction, the person does not receive the knowledge. When s/he receives knowledge, s/he has one of the other three response alternatives. Among them, only in one case the person receives the knowledge and changes behavior as expected. Of course, this is not a statistical trend, but usually people show a lot of resistance to change, at least in the first years of a project. This gives us a good idea of the difficulty faced by the projects, and we

realize that it is not so obvious that a disclosed information will surely change the other's behavior. Rather, it will probably find many hindrances.

The Communication Gap

Besides the difficulties in transmitting knowledge to beneficiaries, there are also some communication gaps among practitioners of development projects, specially when the messages from 'below' are not assimilated. One example from Chiúta regards the fact that many farmers used to say that they were not able to work in groups. The project never took this message into consideration, or tried to find another ways to work with people, since all its framework is based on cooperative work, and all activities are planned for groups of people. The assumption of the project is that if people work as a team they will be strengthened, and it does not matter whether they are or not used to work as well.

The project framework, besides many adjustments to adapt to local situation, is rooted in a western idea of organic solidarity, in which the 'whole is greater than the sum of its parts'. However, as Carlos Serra (2003) has reported in his study, poor people were tired of not being listened by the powerful. Therefore, the lack of dialogue can constitute a gap that the theories of the participatory model of development try to overcome rhetorically: in practice, however, due to the way the system is being developed with the assembled structure, the participation is still much more theoretical than actual.

8.4 Intercultural Dynamics are not the Only Obstacle to Achieve Development

The idea of fostering development from below, through a participated method, can have captivated and convinced the operators of development as the best option for those who work directly with rural farmers, and achieves substantial results in a micro sphere. Besides, development projects from NGOs consider new issues that the previous mainstream interventions of development did not take into consideration (because privileged a structural top-down reform of states and the openness to capital - mostly foreign - based on the theory of 'trickle-down' growth and development"): to promote the development from below, through the participation of local poor people. However, in a macro-economic context, a nation cannot rely only on micro-interventions to achieve development. Poorest countries usually depend largely on sales of raw materials, and if

development projects focus mainly on rural development, they will probably remain dependent on raw-material exports. Accordingly, poorest countries will hardly achieve competitiveness in manufactured products trade, remaining at the lowest level of the development scale. There is a sort of taboo by mainstream institutions to talk about the importance of consolidating a national technological *native* industry for poorest countries, as they are unable to do so through development cooperation, or as they are so far of achieving development that they still need to undergo many development stages.

This ‘taboo’ seems to follow the idea that developing countries are not successful in developing because they are different realities. However, as Chang (2008) argues, the ‘official discourse of globalization’ shows that rich countries have become hegemonic after industrialization due to neo-liberalism and the adoption of free trade. As we have seen in Chapter Three, according to such perspective, in the 18th century Britain adopted free-trade and free-market policies, and by middle 19th century the success of such policies became so obvious that other countries should follow the same path. However, in fact, what really made the supposed exponent of ‘free trade’ have a spectacular economic success was the protectionist policies adopted until middle 19th century. Actually, Chang sustains that Britain “was one of the most protectionist countries until it converted to free-trade in mid-19th century” (Chang, 2008: 25). The author highlights that the official discourse and recommendations that Breeton Woods Institutions use to give to developing countries, do not reflect the real path followed by richest countries, and such recommendations hinder the development process of poorest countries. Scrutinizing the historical path of enrichment of developed nations, Chang (2008) bring out a variety range of measures that are not divulgated in the official discourse, as the protectionist measures, and the several biased treats which favored rich countries enrichment during the colonial era, which are rarely mentioned by the mainstream discourse. Hence, while rich countries have developed at the expense of other nations through their natural and human resources exploitation and protectionist policies, developing countries should adopt the strategies that now are supposed to be those taken by developed countries: neo-liberalism. One good example is the patents’ laws, which have largely privileged rich countries so far. In 1997, when Brazilian government decided arbitrarily to break Aids-drugs patents to produce much cheaper national generic drugs, it assumed a bold position in spite of intellectual property rights law of WTO. Interestingly, the Brazilian government was in great measure helped by foreign advocate NGOs, which supported this campaign and gave international

resonance to it, demonstrating that NGOs can play an important advocating role for poor countries against mainstream development discourses.

According to Chang (2008), the global economy is in the hands of richest countries, since they account for 80% of world output, and such countries compel poorer countries to adopt certain policies, sometimes offering preferential economic agreements in return of their ‘good behavior’ (adoption of neo-liberalism). The author argues that:

Bretton Woods Institutions have produced slower growth, more unequal income distribution and greater economic instability in most developing countries. (...) How on earth can the IMF and the World Bank persist for so long in pursuing the wrong policies that produce such poor outcomes? This is because their governance structure severely biases them towards the interest of richest countries. (Chang, 2008: 35)

He continues explaining that the Bretton Woods institutions tried also to promote the ‘local ownership’ in their programs. He argues that such step “borne few fruits” because many developing countries “lack the intellectual resources to argue against powerful international organizations” (ibid: 35). Hence, according to the author, following the recommendations of richest countries was not a suitable choice to achieve development and become competitive on the international scenario. For that reason, Chang (2008) argues that poorest countries should not accept sight unseen the suggestions of the international mainstream institutions.

A recent publication of Joseph Hanlon and Teresa Smart (2008) describes a quite complicated situation of Mozambique concerning its development and policies. The book’s title - *Do Bicycles Equal Development in Mozambique?* - reflects the reality observed by the authors in the country: at present there are more bicycles than in the past, but in fact this aspect does not represent more development. Hanlon and Smart (2008) sustain that international cooperation created a myth that foreigners can bring the solution to the poverty problems, and unfortunately many Mozambicans believe in this invention. They also argue that the Mozambique’s government policy has adopted the Bretton Woods institutions’ strategies (World Bank and International Monetary Fund), which consist in waiting for foreign investors to come and put an end to poverty. According to them, this strategy is not working because it exclusively favors the rich Mozambican elite and donors. In fact this plan does not develop the poorer areas adequately. They say:

"There are more bicycles, but most people still walk" (Hanlon and Smart, 2008: 430, my translation). Local elites, who are concerned with their status and wealth instead of the national development, usually follow the guidelines of the rich countries that help to plan the PARPA, while they should be more concerned with local development. Then, the authors advocate that Mozambique should be the author of its own development policy, which not necessarily must follow the Bretton Woods Institutions' principles (non-intervention, free markets, foreign investment) and generate a more interventionist government, with a development strategy that uses local resources and persons - not outsiders.

Everybody wants to answer the question why the local projects can not completely change the situation of developing countries. It is true that the cooperation projects have an important role to show new possibilities to enrich the people skills, bring new resources, and improve local market. But the empowerment of the bases can not compete with the country's openness to foreign capital that is not much interested in moving people out of poverty. The basic rural development is essential to improve rural people's⁴⁵ lives, but it will barely ensure that national development can be competitive on a global level. Certainly agriculture is fundamental to a country economy, but depending on raw materials export does not guarantee the achievement of the development level of industrialized countries, which reached a high standard of living thanks to high technology.

The local development programs can not produce a result greater than the sum of its parts because most of them are isolated, and their reach is limited. According to Chang (2008), the developing countries' governments should invest in private capital, but should also stimulate domestic industry, and not be fully open to foreign capital, otherwise the bulk of the profits will go back to the richest countries (or emerging markets, like China and Brazil, that currently are investing more than ever in Mozambique).

Obviously it is easier to open the national market to foreign Companies because they already own technology and capital to exploit other countries. But Chang (2008) considers that if a country intends to develop, it must invest in its domestic industry, aiming at a high technological level, otherwise will remain dependent on other countries. The official discourse of cooperation proclaims that opening local market to foreign capital will help to increase employment. This statement is not false, however it omits that rich countries have

⁴⁵ I am considering most rural population since they are majority of poor people in the world, specially in Africa.

succeeded mainly through the strengthening of domestic industry, tax on imports, and protectionism, and only when local markets were strengthened enough they opened to the world. Hence, there is a perverse hinder mechanism of development cooperation that does not declare openly that in order to be competitive, a nation should invest in technology, through a solid educational system, and investment in research. Moreover, social deliveries are not to be neglected, because capitalism must be also socialist in the sense that it needs to provide opportunities for all, granting decent wages.

It is true that World Bank and many NGOs are investing in the educational system in Mozambique, but an example from my fieldwork showed how such measures were manipulated to arrive earlier to the Millennium Development Goals in 2015, instead of prioritizing the quality of instruction. I was hosted in a Teachers School Training course during my stage in Mozambique, where local Mozambicans are trained to become new teachers for kids up to secondary school. This course, carried out in partnership with ADPP and Mozambican government (which guarantee the salaries of new teachers), used to be a 2 years course. In 2006, the training course duration was reduced to one year only, so that more teachers could be trained in a shorter time, and arrive nearer to the goal of primary school access for all children by 2015. The pressure of international community was responsible for the decreasing of education quality standard, and recently the Ministry of Education declared that this one year course is not sufficient to guarantee an acceptable quality standard, and proposed to turn the system into a three year course (March 2010, blog “Relfetindo sobre Mocambique”).

Today, developing countries have been investing mostly in high tech, challenging the rich countries and WTO intellectual property Laws (literally producing imitations of high tech products from rich countries), such as China, Brazil and India - the so called emerging countries. Although they have still many social problems, they are countries that have decided to invest in the manufacture sector to become competitive at international level, following in the footsteps (and not only the advices) of the richest countries, mostly by "borrowing" their ideas (Chang, 2008). Thanks to this audacity, today China ‘is a threat’ to North American sovereignty. And with those examples, Chang (2008) sends out the message that technological development is not a mission impossible.

8.5 Conclusion

The power relations among poor and rich countries influence much their dialogue in international cooperation for development. This happens both in the local and global fields. The development is structured by a macro system where the decisions are taken and almost all development actions are planned. Hence, it is culturally embedded. Power relations are relevant in such circumstances, so there is not a 'peer-to-peer' dialogue as most international institutions assert, and local populations are not exactly exercising their 'agencies' as they are supposed to do.

While Italian NGOs generally express the current mainstream ideas related to the bottom-up approach to development and are struggling to do their best to mobilize the target groups, beneficiaries usually express willingness to change according to proposed projects, and apparently reproduce the western ideology of cooperation. At the same time, the ethnographic experience showed that in their daily experiences, beneficiaries think and behave differently in respect of the project's recommendations, acting much more in accordance to their cultural background. For these reasons, the development conceptions seem to coincide as to the purposes, but local people have not yet understood that their participation is fundamental, because they are firm in their old idea that NGOs are there to 'give' things. In fact, a WB Report on Indigenous Knowledge recognizes that to have a good participatory process, the poor need to make experiences outside of his/her social context, because "being an insider is not sufficient to bring about social and economic change. The insider needs at least to have had some external exposure, stimulus, and the ability to demonstrate that it is possible to merge local and external knowledge into a working model" (World Bank, 2004: 7). Besides, Korten (1980) argues that NGOs on the ground should face the problems openly, and not pretend that everything is all right, or consider a mistake as an insuperable barrier. On the fieldwork I found NGOs which are concerned a lot and reflect deeply upon the best way to be effective, because the relationship is far from easy to deal with.

To use a metaphor suggested by Ortner (2006), we can talk about a 'serious game'. If we consider the cooperation as a serious game, we need to identify its ideological base, as stated in section 8.1: the spread of the Western ideology through the world, by the way, with a high content of 'kindness' after colonialism and post war. The players have a biased relationship because they are rich and poor, economically dominant and dominated. Playing this game is about maintaining the ideological basis of one's own game: at the same time the game promotes modern practices, transforms the ideological basis of the

‘dominated’ player, eliminating the traditional ‘backwardness’. So playing the game means reproduce the Western society. However, from beneficiaries’ perspective, this game means imbalance and transformation. The subjective side of the actors involved (their desires and intentions) is important because it shows how s/he positions him/herself in this game: if s/he sticks to the new model, then s/he plays in favor of *power*; if s/he plays against, promotes *resistance*. If s/he abstains is because s/he has no intentions to follow a project, and let him/herself be ruled by the ‘winner’ (or dominant). In sum, since agency can also be conceived as an *intention* or *desire* to enhance ‘projects’ (a personal project), whenever the actor’s project is dominant in the social context, his/her agency means power; whenever his/her project is a struggle with the dominant structure, his/her ‘agency’ means resistance. NGOs seems to act sometimes in accordance to the mainstream discourse of development and sometimes against it, promoting projects that try to resist the dominant power, as in the case of break of intellectual property rights.

People in Mozambique, due to the lifestyle they lead, are aware of their poverty and that life is hard, and imagine that the West is an endless source of wealth. With the arrival of development projects they realized even more how poor they were, perceiving problems they never dreamed they had. People that decide to get involved in the project and act accordingly, do that mostly because they expect to gain something from it. However, when they perceive that the project is not there to do what they expect, they start complaining and then quit. The idea that Mozambique is a poor country is inborn in peasants, and led them not only to feel self-complacence, self-pity, but also to try to fool the ‘westerner’. Actually, within the field experience of international cooperation, many expatriates change their initial idea and realize that local reality is not that cruel as they imagined, and that not all of the beneficiaries are struggling to live.

Moreover, there is a critical macro-scenario of cooperation for development to be considered. Macro-structure issues have great impact in the local sphere: dynamics that happen in a local scene reflect what happens on the international scene: they are not only cultural, but also mirror the world power situation. Local people in Mozambique really believe that foreign aid will solve their problems, because they were convinced about that. On the other hand, foreign NGOs try to mobilize local people to work for their development and find many local hindrances. Therefore, despite the local community development projects are very important, they will not be responsible for the largest national industrial development that will allow Mozambique to reach Western levels of development.

CHAPTER 9 - Conclusion

Descolonizar é olhar o mundo com os próprios olhos, pensá-lo de um ponto de vista próprio

(Decolonize is watching the world with own eyes, think about it by a own standpoint)
Milton Santos, in *Encontro com Milton Santos*, a Silvio Tendler film, 2006

Throughout the thesis, I have shown that there is no consensus about the term *Development*. However, it is still possible to identify a cultural dominant meaning for it. In fact, it maintains an Eurocentric and evolutionary bias, as the historical process would have invented ‘precise’ steps to be followed in order to achieve development. In our era the discourse of ‘evolution’ is still mistakenly intended as ‘progress’. As I have argued in Chapter One, evolution is not a matter of progress in the Darwinian sense, as it is rather related to adaptations in a competitive world where changes may occur, but not necessarily ‘good’. In the history of western world we see a cultural evolution resulting from an *unique* process. Notwithstanding, this unique history should not be understood as the ‘best’ process: it is merely one of the possibilities. As I have tried to demonstrate, this process also caused many contradictions and perverse outcomes in the poorest societies. Moreover, the western development is virtually impossible to be achieved in the same way in other societies, because it will never be a result of a cultural evolution, or an *endogenous* process as it has been in the West. So far, in developing countries, it has been proposed as a cultural project, an *exogenous* process, and actually it has not worked for social concerns. In poor countries the same Western process did not take place because of other processes presence, usually controlled by the richest countries. In Mozambique, the colonization had a decisive impact on the current configuration of the country, even for what concerns the social poverty.

The encounter between cultures of Italy and Mozambique in international cooperation is publicized by the official reports of international cooperation as a ‘metric’ relationship proposed by well-defined projects, with visible quantitative outcomes. On the other hand, this relationship is deep, with dialectical processes crossing individuals’ identities in a continuous comparison with personal values, customs, failures, lack of mutual understanding, and changes in individuals’ worldview. Sometimes is difficult to

realize those features because they often remain concealed, tacit, implicit or invisible. As a consequence, this research followed a qualitative methodology, in order to capture these deeper aspects of intercultural dynamics. According to my investigation results, beneficiaries usually ends up accepting the projects from abroad (given their weaker position), even if sometimes they somehow try to resist them. Although most NGOs propose bottom-up approach to development, usually projects start from the top, and they face many difficulties to stimulate a 'will' (or the *agency*) to change from below. Actually it is difficult to show the benefits of changing peasant's ancient habitudes - which at least ensure some kind of subsistence - for an 'uncertain something' that farmers are not sure if it can work or not.

Therefore, the proposed changes are hindered by peasants' entrenched cultural traditions and cognitive orientation, and it is very difficult to go against these traditions. A typical example observed in this study was the proposal of collective work that the Child Aid project implemented in communities: apparently, everyone was eager to participate, but in practice, the active participation level was very low. The difficulty in proposing work collectivization in rural areas comes mainly from the fact that rural communities organize themselves and reproduce their survival according to more individual logic (or it is restricted to family members), and common activities are employed only in specific occasions such as celebrations, funerals, etc..

Although in rural Mozambique people are more individualistic in the production and reproduction of living, the community requires that everyone keeps the same social level, because individual success is perceived as a mortal threat to the rural community stability. As discussed in Chapter Seven, the conservative feature of peasant society remains a social device that discourages individual progress in favor of the community. This occurs because according to the local worldview, the enrichment of a person is seen as an impoverishment of another - this is called the Image of Limited Good (Foster, 1965). However, this local rationale totally differs from the logic of individual success that Western societies propose to their citizens. Therefore, the idealized cooperative model of development that projects offer to improve living standard of poor peasants, fails within local traditions. To make the project work, NGOs must prove that with a life-changing behavior peasants can obtain profits. If the peasant is not sure about that profit, he will not quit his way of life.

Therefore, in this dissertation I have tried to demonstrate that international cooperation is much more complex than projects introduced into logical frameworks.

Intercultural relations trigger several dynamics that often are invisible to practitioners because they do not know in details the cultural specificities of the communities they are working for.

In addition, international cooperation covers other activities that go beyond the projects of NGOs. In rural areas, economic forces of capitalism - for example the cash crops - are introducing significant changes, causing a rapid growth in the capital of the peasants and achieving a faster economic success compared with medium/long-term development projects (as noted in Chiúta). The problem of cash crops lies in the fact that they introduce money in rural societies, without caring about the social welfare. As a result, among peasants a very irregular economic growth occurs, increasing local inequalities.

While the economic power of cash crops is more effective in changing local traditions because it provides a fast inflow of money which represents a strong incentive for the peasants to get involved with this new activity, development projects changes are harder to achieve. Development projects try to demonstrate that the peasants' team-work will enable a better bargaining power, better profits, etc., in the future. However, this proposal faces more resistances because it requires a greater effort and a medium/long-term work not only for those who implement a project, but also for the recipients. Hence, within the intercultural dynamics of a development project (at least in the early years), while the project wants to demonstrate that people will take advantage from working as a team, local people (at least the majority of them) think about the immediate chances of getting things *easily* from the project. This was the reason for the fast success of micro-credit projects in Chiúta, where changes could be observed in a few months because groups of women received money and immediately started their own small business. However, other results from Child Aid project required more time to be observed, and many local people claimed not to understand the project aim, or did not feel benefitted, hoping to 'win' something as well (this trend is often associated to previous Humanitarian programs which distributed things for free during the war and post war periods).

Such difficulty to change people's consciousness is often defined by other causes, like projects' timetables, and the limited financial resources, which hinder the accomplishment of a bottom-up approach for development. For these reasons, many projects are *weak* because, instead of introducing sustainable outcomes and being successful in changing the peasants' cognitive orientation, they only brings new things as water pumps, latrines, and other material things (which often cause disagreements among

local people), without accomplishing a deeper transformation (or effective knowledge transmission). In fact, they do not empower the local ability to improve peasants own lives. Under such circumstances, the enhancement of the *agency* of local people remains an untouched goal that does not become true. Hence, it is needed a *better* aid, with practitioners and financial institutions more involved with the objective to actually change things, and more resources for that.

This investigation also revealed that the beneficiaries use to say that they were pleased with the project's initiatives. However, such compliance should be placed in a historical framework, so that it is possible to realize that this behavior is somehow conditioned by the inheritance from colonial era in which 'accept' what 'white' foreigners said was almost an obligation. Today, international cooperation is also part of a power relations context: foreigners obviously still rule, and despite locals approach projects with suspicion, they often are subservient to them. This is an additional issue that puts the *agency* achievement at risk.

Cooperation practitioners usually fully understand the rules of the development projects, while recipients at first accept them to try to understand what they are about. However, these 'rules' are often publicized as 'superior' truths, as development institutions own the 'right' knowledge to solve 'problems' of the poor. The idea of foreigners holding the 'supreme wisdom' is a legacy in which many Mozambicans (and cooperation institutions) still believe in good faith. According to Cabaço (2007), the Mozambican identity was historically constituted and the legacy from this history still influences the current Mozambican identity process, because it refers to a continuous dialogue with the *Other* which includes past and present rationales (Cabaço, 2007). Thus, the dialogue between practitioners and beneficiaries is biased, paradoxically because and in favor of the first.

A crucial concern of this thesis has been to understand such intercultural dynamics, which are still challenged by various forces: inevitably there is the stronger one and the weaker one, and this relationship became very clear during my fieldwork in Chiúta. This is important because development institutions have to be aware of this biased relation if they are really interested in implementing the bottom-up approach for development. In fact, according to practitioners, the implications of such continuous acquiescence from beneficiaries, becomes a major hindrance to the powerless 'empowerment' - i.e. *Agency* does not disclose.

Even though today the religious aspect of the cooperation for development is less preponderant, it seems that practitioners work fueled by faith: a faith that something can be done, and that things can change. However, as I tried to demonstrate, the international cooperation not merely consists in altruistic aid; it is also set in a power framework that must not be ignored. Faith is very important in life because it gives meaning to the individual's actions: it is not only a religious matter, because people may have faith in many other things such as international cooperation, science, knowledge, love, etc.. The emotional drive for cooperation practitioners is the main reason that motivates them to keep on doing their work, as I argued in Chapter Five. In the process of cooperation for development, the operators' *agency* is as fundamental as the recipients'.

Mozambique, despite being a poor country, represents for most of my Italian informants a place full of magic and existential vividness that in their home-country seem to be vanished. It is a contradictory feeling, since practitioners aim to change local situation with improvements provided by their 'developed world', forgetting that if developing countries become more similar to Europe, they will probably lose most of their magical aspects.

9.1 International World Order

As I have already argued, it would be impossible to understand the current social configuration of international cooperation in Mozambique without an exhaustive examination of the historical circumstances that set the scenario of interactions among countries within the 'globalized' world. To take this into account, I framed my investigation by examining the historical past, and a current project of international cooperation as a case study in Mozambique, along with interviews with the practitioners of Italian cooperation. Participant observation as well as ethnography were crucial for gathering information and understanding the way the actors themselves see their role in this process.

In order to locate this research in the broader realm of global set, I considered the implications that modernity ideologies had in international cooperation. Following the insights of Milton Santos (in Tendler, 2006), who noted that 'decolonize' means "thinking with own ideas", and Carlos Serra (2010) who said that "a mind colonized by the reverence of the foreigners gods only believes in the efficacy of external miracles" (Serra, Santos de casa não fazem milagres? (10), 2010, my translation), I concluded that in many

poor countries the State independency did not mean effective decolonization. Thus, globalization continues to play a dominant and oppressive role in the poorest countries, and Mozambique (as well as other African countries and other underdeveloped countries) has not been fully decolonized yet. The dual essence of colonialism represented by many binary oppositions like black/white, civilized/backward, modern/traditional, etc., remained in the post-independence period, and Mozambican elites keep on trying to copy the Western model of development through the introduction of modernization (Cabaço, 2007), reiterating the opposition developed/developing, without even considering the local alternatives and strengths.

According to Santos (in Tendler, 2006), the globalized world, can be viewed in three ways:

- *As they want us to see it*: a world told through mythic narratives, like a fable. The myth is that in a globalized world people are as totally free: they can travel, buy what they want, work at what they like, fulfill all desires through consumption. 'Owning' the newest and the most advanced things is a must. The free-market is the promise of wealth and happiness. In this perspective, the productive system is beneficial for all since it generates job positions and the progress in technology keeps the economy going and makes everyone's life easier.

- *As it is*: the globalized capitalist world is evil. It creates and exacerbates inequalities and exclusions. Democracy exists only rhetorically: it has become apparent that those who really decide the politics of the world are not the representatives democratically elected by the people. The multinational corporations and world economic institutions (as WB, IMF, WTO) are actually at the world's command, acting according to the logic of the profit and free market. Most people work for them, and are afraid of losing their jobs, the decrease in salaries, the increase in migrations from the south to the north - among many other current 'fears'. Those features are all consequences of this excluding 'globalized' system, which Milton Santos (in Tendler, 2006) call *Globalitarism*, and Galeano and Zeigler (in Sacaluga, 2006) call the *Criminal World Order*. These authors suggest that while for money and goods there are no hindrances, for people there are walls, barriers (physical and mental), and poor people have lost the right to benefit from the triumphant globalism. The Human Rights are not a reality for most people in the world. In fact, 80% of the wealth of the world is in the hands of 20% of the richest population, that does not seem willing to share it with the

disadvantaged: it is better to keep the poor at distance, segregating, expelling them, excluding them.

- *As it can be*: The world can change to a different kind of globalization, made through solidary social movements, united against the exclusions and inequalities imposed by the current system, in a quest for a *true* democracy. According to Agnoletto (in Estévez, 2006), the world can change if globally things change. Most NGOs are working for a different, less unjust and less exclusivist world, and perhaps for that reason some of my respondents did not conceive development as reproduction of western model. Most of them are wondering how to get a better world that takes into consideration the poor people's dignity and problems while finding a different economic system that would allow a real democratic world.

Consequently, this has led to the conclusion that the world is undergoing a blurred phase about *what to do next*, because it seems that even in the richest contexts things are somehow worsening, and many people start thinking that the consumerism and free market are not as good as it seemed. For example, even in the 'north', the labor force is becoming more vulnerable and immigrants continue to arrive looking for better life conditions. The only share of population who seem to improve is the richest one, which maintains such unfair modernity.

One of the consequences of such new raised questions about the current world is that development, intended as economic growth, is discredited among many intellectuals, social movements and NGOs that promote international cooperation. However, in development programs promoted by the main world economic institutions (WB, IMF, WTO), this view of development is still employed at the macro level as a *sine qua non* for the development of developing countries. Mozambique constitutes a good example of it, with many foreign industries arrived to exploit its territories. The remaining *old* question is: does this 'development' will improve social conditions?

This model of development proposed by mainstream institutions conceives poverty more as a consequence of developing countries failures, often neglecting the historical process that led to such situation. Accordingly, cultural traits, 'bad' governance, corruption, lack of capacity, etc., all such features attributable to local governments and peoples from developing countries are understood as local hindrances to the achievement of development. The mainstream institutions do not consider that their 'recommendations'

may have something wrong. The fault is almost always due to ‘incapacity’ of developing countries, and improvements are still measured mostly through economic growth.

According to the way “they want us to see” the world, it seems that poverty has no connection at all with the rich’s world. However, poverty is not a consequence of the ineffectiveness of Africans (or the poor); it was historically instituted by the excluding economic system. In his experience with the bank of the poor, the Nobel Peace Prize Muhammad Yunus (2006) realized that “poverty is not created by poor people. It is created by the economic and social order. So if we want to put an end to poverty, we must make changes in that order” (Yunus, 2010, my translation). Mozambique's economic growth is defined mainly by exports of raw materials. As currently many companies are coming to Mozambique to exploit its natural resources, the majority of the profits will be exported as well as resources. In fact, the Mozambican condition of exporter of raw materials has been expanding (Serra, 2010). With the recent discover of huge charcoal mines, Mozambique is the target of investments for the emerging economies like China and Brazil. Such economic impulse is very important for the country: however, as it is not endogenous, implies the risk to enrich the local elite while the poor remain poor. The myth of the economic growth which tells that capitalistic investments will provide the suitable conditions for the development of the whole population - i.e. the trickle-down mechanism - still persists today. However, it never became true for developing countries, and this situation does not seem to be different for Mozambique (Hanlon & Smart, 2008).

The mainstream international cooperation institutions state that Mozambique is a successful case. If we consider the GDP annual growth in recent years, we may agree with such statement. However, visiting the country, especially the north, it may be very difficult to believe that, because nothing has changed. One immediate question one can ask is: why international cooperation for development in Mozambique has had so little effect considered that in the last 50 years this country has received almost 29 US\$ billions from Official Development Assistance? (OECD, Qwids, 2010).

In order to try to give an answer to this question, it is important to consider that if governments of developing countries keep on reproducing the western model instead of promoting the development by its own ideas, it will be difficult to change the situation. There is the need to listen to ‘native’ ideas: solutions coming from the poor, from whom is continuously struggling for living with dignity, and surely understand what does it mean to be poor (Santos, 1997). Indeed there are local solutions and many small social solidarities between disadvantage people are arising mobilized against the oppressive system. Many

of them, however, are not accredited, and have no (or few) incentives. Thus, as long as the economic power rules, it will be difficult to give voice to the poor.

Globalization today is considered also a kind of new imperialism: the victims of globalization are called ‘the developing countries’ and international cooperation is called the ‘charity’ of modern times, serving only to relieve the *consequences* rather than act on the *causes* of the system that generated this biased world. Unfortunately, an effective solution for poor countries has not been reached yet (Galeano, Saramago, Santos and Borishade, apud Tandler, 2006; Ziegler, apud Sacaluga, 2006). These authors literally say that the new world organization of the market economy is a *criminal*, cynical, and hypocritical, which intentionally kills. According to such view, the problems of poverty are not inevitable, but a direct result of this system where money and profits have more value than individuals.

Opposite to the ‘Global’ order, there are several movements aiming at achieving a world “as it can be”, where the cooperation is implemented at the roots, within the poor, on a micro scale. Here NGOs have domain, and promote very interesting initiatives, even fostering the ideas from below, shaping their activities based on education and strengthening local people to fight for their rights. The problems these NGOs face, however, regard their limits: in fact NGOs have limited reach and limited economic resources. When NGOs have sufficient resources, engaged people, and time available, they do a great job usually reaching a bottom-up sustainable development. Notwithstanding, they still are not able to change a whole country: this task is not among their priorities since each NGO has its own peculiar expertise and works with certain sectors. For that reason, local governments, which have the power to involve the whole population and to improve the social conditions of all, must be engaged in the transformation of their own countries, and not only follow foreign dictates.

The intercultural encounter promoted by international cooperation often cause a fusion of cultures generating new lines of thought, which sometimes are critical views about the dominant ideas. As discussed in Chapters Two and Three, those critical ideas are the result of demystification of many myths created by political and historical processes in which international cooperation is operating. Those counter-current ideas usually give voice and support to social movements from below, understanding that it is possible to make different cultural repertoires coexist, which often give rise to new ‘solutions’ to old problems.

In a world effectively controlled by corporations, the ideology of free markets represents the main ideology controlling the press and public debate and emptying most people awareness, as if it would not have other solutions for development. The colonial legacy is still dictating rules, and deciding what is 'prudent' and what is not 'wise' to do: it produces *fear* of the different proposals, as if it is impossible to change, or act differently as regards the dictated rules. According to this 'realistic' view, the laws of the 'natural' free market are conceived as the 'best' solution for the enrichment, while new alternatives are 'risky' and cannot work. According to Galeano (in Sacaluga, 2006), this imperialist discourse sets the *fear of freedom*. The response to this 'killer' system can only come from below, from the outraged social movements.

It is no longer enough to fight in favor of the poor, there is the need to fight against the rich, against the system of privileges that maintains and exacerbates inequalities. It is a matter of fact: the World Bank itself still announces the increase in poverty instead of its decrease (World Bank, 2008), while IMF announces the successes and the positive results of the economic growth in Mozambique (International Monetary Fund, 2010). We see the mainstream institutions announcing that it is good to continue with economic growth and free market policies, while the number of poor rises. It seems that something is wrong. Besides, rural communities' living standard in Mozambique have reported a little improvement (if any), therefore, economic growth does not seem to be unfolding positive outcomes for the poor. Moreover, according Colaço (2010), Mozambique will not meet any of the Millennium Development Goals (UN, 2000) by 2015. Therefore, it would be wiser to face the reality *as it is*, and not *as they want us to see it*, looking for new possibilities and not to keep on 'flogging the dead horse'.

Hence, although it seems irrational, cooperation for development should work also against the development (in the sense of growth) or rich contexts, because in our globalized world everything is interconnected, and the evidences are clearly proving the need to 'degrow'. International institutions should act not only on the local poor communities because to achieve a more equal world it is not only about empowering the poor. There is also the need to 'disempower' the rich, warning that they need to stop growing hypocritically forever, while poverty increases.

Moreover, development cannot be anymore associated to growth. More and more people are wondering how to replace capitalism because they are realizing that this infinite growth seems to be unsustainable: new technologies create new needs and problems; the economic growth and consumerism do not necessarily mean more happiness. As a result,

those who are criticizing this system are changing behavior and considering new principles. Most of them are aware and disappointed with the social unbalanced order and the humans' habitat damage. Also the 'North' is facing this impasse, and needs to review its own values that sustain the brilliant, but also dangerous, capitalistic system: its basic mechanism –consumerism – must be replaced by something else not yet 'discovered'. Meanwhile, in the 'Third World', many countries are struggling to grow and achieve the western standards.

9.2 Limits and Strengths

O que escrevo apenas tem uma virtude: a de ser um produto defeituoso e sempre inacabado

(What I write has only one virtue: to be a defective product and always unfinished)

Carlos Serra, Blog *Diário de um Sociólogo*, 26 November 2006

In Mozambique, the access to the fieldwork was facilitated by the contacts with a local NGO. However this does not mean that I had full access to beneficiaries' lives. Actually, my research suffers from many real limitations regarding the understanding of local dynamics. Although I tried to overcome my lack of knowledge of Chiúta reading the literature of Chewa people and talking to people that knew them previously, there were parts of beneficiaries' lives that were closed to me in many ways. For example, the fact that I could not speak the local language made me unable to capture the meaning of their speeches as a whole. A second permanent problem was the lack of reliability in the answers of most beneficiaries, because they tended to answer what they imagined I would like to hear. For that reason, the ethnography and participant observations were suitable methods to overcome such limits. As I argued in Chapter Four, such acquiescence 'betrayed' the ethnographic observations, but confirmed the power unbalanced relationship between foreigners and beneficiaries.

Finally, although this study was an attempt to produce knowledge and contribute to the current debate about the intercultural dynamics of the international cooperation for development, I am perfectly aware that, paraphrasing Carlos Serra, "if there is truth, it is a battlefield" (Serra, 2003, preface, cited by Bourdieu, my translation). Therefore, far from being a final product, this thesis provides a rather accurate reading of the reality, which belongs to an era, but its results show "trans-epochal social situations" (Serra, 2003,

preface). The final part of my study, which I believe can be the starting point for wider discussions, deals with deconstructing consolidated thoughts such as the ‘essentialized’ ideas of international cooperation. Demystifying myths contaminated by the political order (or by the dominant discourse) is an exercise that helps to observe things from a new perspective, creating a higher awareness about the world around us, breaking boundaries of the conventional wisdom, opening the mind to new horizons (Serra, 1997). To sum up, with this thesis it has become clear that ‘truth’, besides being a battlefield, is constructed by ourselves, and accordingly, can be reinvented by us.

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Appendix I

Interview script applied to Italian NGOs from International Cooperation for Development

A) The work of the NGO and framework for interventions

1. When did you start working in Mozambique, with whom did you start the relationship, what was the first project about?
2. Could you describe the NGO motivation to cooperate with developing countries?
3. What are the priorities for action? Who has established them? Who writes the projects?
4. What is your idea of development? How do you put this idea into practice?
5. How do you evaluate the results of your projects in Mozambique? How a project impacts in the Mozambican society? What are the changes observed?
6. What do you think when we talk about international cooperation in Mozambique? Thinking within the framework of international cooperation in Mozambique, could draw a map of development interventions in Mozambique today?
7. Thinking in the Mozambican situation today in the global context, what do you think it will become with the international cooperation help? In your opinion, how should it be?

B) Personal Involvement and Ideas about Mozambique

1. Tell me about your work experience. Describe your work.
2. What are your personal reasons to do this job?
3. Report at least three features of your way of working that you consider important for this kind of work? What a person who wants to work in cooperation should take into consideration?
4. Tell me about your experiences in Mozambique? What remained impressed? What did you like or dislike? Explain.
5. How do you feel working as a bridge between two different societies? Being a foreigner in Mozambique has some kind of benefit or disadvantage in your work?
6. What kind of relationship have you created with Mozambicans? How do you feel in relation to them? (Near/far, only business relationship or even friendship)
7. Have you ever had particular difficulty with the beneficiaries of the project? In being understood, or relationships? Explain

C) Interaction between the project and local society

1. What do you think about whether a foreign project to become part of everyday life of Mozambicans? Does it change their way of life? Does it have some influence on their conscience?
2. Thinking about your projects in Mozambique, how people react to your actions? Do they express any opinion with respect to the project? How they see the project?
3. What difficulties have you faced to initiate the project?
4. In your opinion, Mozambicans do understand the motivations of your projects? From the very beginning? Understand it completely?
5. Have you ever been in difficult situations regarding the progress of a project? Can you give me an example?
6. What kind of message do you try to transmit to people? Are there problems in transmitting these messages, or communication difficulties?
7. What are the aspects to consider when you want to send a message to Mozambicans?
8. In your opinion, is the NGO idea of development shared by Mozambicans? Do they use the same interpretative keys? Explain.

Appendix II

Interview script applied to Beneficiaries of the Child Aid Project in Chiúta - Mozambique, carried out by EPF students (2009 and 2010) and Project's Area-Leaders (only 2009)

Interviewed Data:

Name _____ Sex: (F) (M) Age: _____ Marital Status: _____
Number of children: _____ Literacy: _____ Neighborhood: _____
Religion: _____ Data: _____

2009

1. Why did you join the Child Aid Project? Which were your personal motivations?
2. What do you think could be improved in your community?
3. How do you think the Child Aid project is going to help your community?
4. How do you imagine your community in five years? What do you expect to your future?
5. What do you understand by *development* of your community?

2010

1. What is your opinion about the Child Aid Project? Why?
2. Which things the project has been doing in your community? Do you feel benefited? Explain.
3. What do you expect from the Child Aid project? What do you think still can do in your community? Do you think it could be improved? How?
4. Do you think there will be changes in your life in the next four years? What are your wishes for your future, and for your children?
5. What do you understand by *development* of your community? How do you think it is a developed and non-developed community? Give examples.

Fieldnotes (2009 and 2010)

Comments with a description of the conditions of the interview, telling what happened. The comment should inform:

- *The physical scenario of the interview: describe the place where it took place*
- *Description of how was the interviewed: nervous, shy, calm, stressed, talked too much or meanly, etc.*
- *Note if the interviewed avoided any question, if he was sincere, if he had difficulties to understand the questions, or other issues.*

Appendix III

Interview Script applied to Child Aid project's staff and Local Authorities from Chiúta (in-depth interview)

Module I - Family of Origin

- Tell me about your life. To begin, how was your family: parents, brothers...?
- Did someone from your family encouraged you to study?
- Tell me about your childhood: relation with parents, their occupations, how many brothers and sisters, how do they live, etc.
- Changes: from childhood up today, how did your life evolved? What changed from the past?

Module II – Current Family

- Marriage: how did you know your wife/husband? Do you have more than one wife? How was the wedding? How is your married life? How many kids? Who take care of kids?
- What do you wish for the future of your children?
- Is it normal to separate? Does it cause social stigmas?
- How do you live with your partner? How is the division of tasks?

Module III – Gender Relations

- In general, how do you evaluate the relations between men and women?
- How is your relation with men? And with women?

Module IV – Occupation

- How long did you study?
- What kind of work did you do in your life? Do you have machamba (crop)?
- What you and your family do for a living? Men and women work?
- Tell me your hobbies, what do you do on your free time?

Module V – Beliefs

- Which is your religion?
- How is your relation with the ancestors?
- Did you or someone from your family suffered sorcery? How was it for you?
- Do you go to curandeiros (witch doctors)? How is it for you? What do you think about them?
- What are the traditional rituals in your community? Did you have personal experiences with them? How was, how did you feel?

Module VI – Relations with Development Project (or international cooperation)

- Why did you join the Child Aid Project? How was your life before working here?
- What do you think about the way this project work? Would you do something different?
- Do you know other NGOs here in Chiúta? What do they do? What do you think of their work?
- What people in general are talking about the project?
- How do you imagine your community in five years, when this project will finish?
- What are your aspirations for your future? What do you wish for you future?
- What do you understand by *development*?
- Tell me other people you think would be interesting to interview.

Appendix IV

Interview script applied to other Key Actors in Mozambique (politicians, local authorities, community representatives, academics, etc.)

- Do you know which NGOs work in Chiúta? What kind of project they have?
- Since when the government has NGOs as partners?
- What kind of results do you evaluate regarding the work of NGOs? Do you think it is still a fundamental support to local government?
- In which way the partnership between government and NGOs is done?
- Do NGOs overlap each other? Do they do the same things, or there is a coordination?
Explain.
- Who are the main donors? Do they require achievement of goals?
- Do you look for more donors? How?
- Which social activities the government promote?
- Do you perceive changes in the last years? What are them?
- What do you understand by *development* of local communities?
- How do you think such *development* should be done? How to improve social conditions in Mozambique?

