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From church records to royal population charts:
The birth of “modern demographic statistics”
in Mozambique, 1720s–1820s

Filipa Ribeiro da Silva*

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Resumo

Neste artigo analisamos o desenvolvimento da estatística demográfica em Moçambique entre os anos de 1720 e 1820. Para tal, reconstruímos a rede burocrática utilizada na recolha e produção de dados e identificamos as fontes de informação utilizadas pelos responsáveis. Examinamos também os critérios adoptados para determinar quem devia ser contabilizado e quais os grupos populacionais que foram arrolados. Em conclusão, analisamos as variáveis demográficas recolhidas e as mudanças que sofreram ao longo do tempo para dar resposta às necessidades da Coroa e das suas redes administrativas. O nosso estudo tem por base legislação, instruções várias, correspondência e os mapas populacionais produzidos.

Palavras-chave: demografia, estatísticas, Império Português, Moçambique, população, século XVIII.

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Abstract

In this article we examine the development of demographic statistics in Mozambique between the 1720s and 1820s, by reconstructing the bureaucratic network used in the collection and production of information. We examine the sources used by data gatherers and analyse the criteria employed to determine who should be accounted and which population groups were enrolled. Finally, we look into the demographic data variables collected, and their changes over time, answering to the evolving needs of the Crown and its administrative networks. Our assessment is based on legislation and instructions issued by Portugal and her representatives overseas, correspondence exchanged, and population counts produced.

Keywords: demography, eighteenth century, Mozambique, population, Portuguese Empire, statistics.

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Filipa Ribeiro da Silva

Introduction

From the mid-eighteenth century, demographic statistical production in Europe increased as a result of the expansion of governments’ bureaucracy and an increase in topographic and cartographic knowledge. In recent years, important contributions have been made to improve our understanding of the use of statistics in imperial spaces, colonial populations and their history. However, most of this scholarship has focused on former British, French and German colonies in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.¹ Besides Brazil, little is still known about the statistics and populations of the Portuguese Empire in the early modern and modern periods.²

In the last three decades, the scholarship on the Portuguese Empire has made some contributions to better our knowledge about the history of its colonial populations.³ A wide range of monographs and specific studies have identified and analysed crude data from several territories, stretching from the Atlantic Islands to territories in the Far East.⁴ Goa, in the Portuguese

¹ Per AXELSSON and Peter SKÖLD (eds.), *Indigenous Peoples and Demography. The Complex Relation between Identity and Statistics*, New York, Oxford, Berghahn Books, 2011; Patrice BOURDELAIS, “The French Population Censuses,” *The History of the Family*, Vol. 9, 2004; David KERTZER and Dominique AREL, *Census and Identity. The politics of race, ethnicity, and language in national censuses*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002; Lilly SCHWEBER, *Disciplining Statistics. Demography and Vital Statistics in France and England, 1830–1885*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2006.

² Dauril ALDEN, “The Population of Brazil in the Late Eighteenth Century,” *Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 43, no. 2, 1962, pp. 177–80.

³ See among others: Paulo Teodoro de MATOS, “As Estatísticas da população no império ultramarino português, 1750–1820,” in *Diafanias do Mundo. Estudos de Homenagem a Mário Ferreira Lages*, Lisboa, Universidade Católica Portuguesa, 2012b, pp. 381–95; António César de Almeida SANTOS, “Aritmética Política e administração do estado português na segunda metade do século XVIII,” in Andréa Doré, António César de Almeida Santos (eds.), *Temas Setecentistas. Governos e populações no Império Português*, Curitiba, UFPR/C SHLA-Fundação Araucária, 2009, pp. 143–52.

⁴ Paulo Teodoro de MATOS, “A Base demográfica do território de Goa,” in Joel Serrão and A. H. de Oliveira Marques (dirs.), *Nova História da Expansão Portuguesa*, Vol. 5, Tomo 2 (“O Império Oriental”), Lisboa, Estampa, 2004.

Estado da Índia, and Macau⁵ have been subjected to preliminary analyses.⁶ But, the Azores are by far the best studied area.⁷ “In Brazil, the leading territory in terms of population until 1822, most studies use demographic history as means to analyse persistent social problems.”⁸ These studies provide a fair amount of information on children, families, and household units, but their chronological and geographic scope are limited. However, the prevalence of case studies, and the shortage of macro approaches, have hindered analysis of the geographic dimension of demographic regimes.⁹ Alden and Marcílio pioneered the development of macro approach in the study of Brazilian colonial populations and carried out surveys of sources for the late eighteenth century.¹⁰

Nevertheless, we still lack comprehensive datasets of the population in various territories as well as information on basic demographic indicators such as sex distribution, age groups, ethnic, social and religious composition or the number of civil servants. These sets of information are essential to draw a clearer picture of colonial populations in the Portuguese Empire, especially after 1822, and allow us to build an overall synthesis on general trends on population behaviour (growth and/or decline).

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- ⁵ António M. Martins VALE, “A População de Macau na segunda metade do século XVIII” *Povos e Culturas*, Vol. 5 (“Portugal e o Oriente: Passado e Presente”), Lisboa, CEPCEP, 1996, pp. 241–54.
- ⁶ Rudy BAUSS, “A Demographic Study of Portuguese India and Macau as well as comments on Mozambique and Timor, 1750–1850,” *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, Vol. 34, no. 2, 1997; Paulo Teodoro de MATOS, “The Population of the Estado Português da Índia, 1750–1820: Sources and Global Trends,” in Laura Jarnagin (ed.), *Portuguese and Luso-Asian Legacies in Southeast Asia, 1511–2011*, Vol. I, (“The making of the Luso-Asian World: Intricacies of Engagement”), Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2011, pp. 155–77.
- ⁷ Artur Boavida MADEIRA, *População e Emigração nos Açores (1766–1820)*, Cascais, Patrimónia Histórica, 1999; Paulo Teodoro de MATOS and Paulo Silveira e SOUSA, “População e movimentos migratórios. A atracção pelo Brasil,” in A. Teodoro de Matos, Avelino de Meneses and José Guilherme Reis Leite (eds.), *História dos Açores*, Vol. I, Instituto Açoriano de Cultura, 2008.
- ⁸ *Counting Colonial Populations. Demography and the use of statistics in the Portuguese Empire*, application submitted to the Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia, Portugal (PTDC/EPH-HIS/3697/2012), 2012, p. 4.
- ⁹ Sérgio NADALIN, “A População no Passado Colonial brasileiro: mobilidade versus estabilidade,” *Topoi*, no. 4, 2003.
- ¹⁰ Dauril ALDEN, “Late Colonial Brazil, 1750–1808,” in Leslie Bethell (ed.), *Colonial Brazil*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987; Maria Luíza MARCÍLIO, *La ville de São Paulo. Peuplement et population*, Rouen, Publications de L’Université de Rouen, 1968; Tarcísio BOTELHO, “Políticas de população no período joanino,” in Ana Sílvia Volpi Scott and Eliane Cristina Deckmann Fleck (eds.), *A Corte no Brasil: População e sociedade no Brasil e em Portugal no início do século XIX*, São Leopoldo, Oikos/Ed. Unisinos, 2008; Altiva Pilatti BALHANA, “A População,” in Maria Beatriz Nizza da Silva, Harold Johnson and Frédéric Mauro (coords.), *Nova História da Expansão Portuguesa*, Vol. 8 (“O Império Luso-brasileiro [1750–1822]”), Lisboa, Estampa, 1986.

In what concerns the African territories formerly integrated in the Portuguese Empire, there has been an effort by several authors to offer the academic community information on population during the colonial era. Attention has been paid in particular to population figures and the analysis of basic demographic indicators for the territories of Cape Verde,¹¹ São Tomé and Príncipe,¹² and Angola.¹³ As for Mozambique, although much research has been conducted on topics directly related to population and its movements (namely migration patterns, labour recruitment and their impact on Mozambican population during the colonial and the post-independence periods) little is still known about the development of demographic statistics in the territory and about the demographic structures of its population prior to the 1940s and 1960s.

In the last 50 years, several scholars have made important contributions to collect and analyse some of the information available on the Portuguese colonial archives concerning the population statistics for Mozambique. Among these are Malyn Newitt, Allen F. Isaacman, Eugénia Rodrigues, Ruby Bauss, and more recently Ana Paula Wagner.¹⁴ Most of these studies have, however, solely focused on the figures provided by the Portuguese source materials, which covered only a small fraction of the population living in the territory that is present-day part of Mozambique. As a consequence, these analyses did not provide the academic community with estimates of the overall population living in the territory during the periods or manage to identify and analyse main demographic indicators.

¹¹ See among others: André Pinto de Sousa Dias TEIXEIRA, *A Ilha de S. Nicolau de Cabo Verde nos séculos XV a XVIII*, Lisboa, Centro de História de Além-Mar, 2004.

¹² See among others: Carlos Agostinho das NEVES, *São Tomé e Príncipe na Segunda Metade do Século XVIII*, Funchal/Lisboa, Centro de Estudos de História do Atlântico/Instituto de História de Além-Mar, 1989.

¹³ See among others: José C. CURTO and Raymond R. GERVAIS, "The Population Study of Luanda during the Late Atlantic Slave Trade, 1781–1844," *African Economic History*, no. 29, 2001; Roberto GUEDES, "Branco africano. Notas de pesquisa sobre escravidão, tráfico de cativos e qualidades de cor no reino de Angola (Ambaca e Novo Redondo, finais do século XVIII)," in *Dinâmicas Imperiais do Antigo Regime Português: Escravidão, governos, fronteiras, poderes, legados (séculos XVII–XIX)*, Rio de Janeiro, Mauad, 2011.

¹⁴ See among others: Allen F. ISAACMAN, *Mozambique: The Africanization of a European Institution: The Zambezi Prazos, 1750–1902*, Madison, Wisconsin University Press, 1972; Malyn NEWITT, *Portuguese settlement on the Zambesi: exploration, land tenure and colonial rule in East Africa*, London, Longman, 1973; Rudy BAUSS, "A Demographic Study of Portuguese India and Macau as well as comments on Mozambique and Timor, 1750–1850," *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, Vol. 34, no. 2, 1997; Eugénia RODRIGUES, *Portugueses e Africanos nos Rios de Sena. Os Prazos da Coroa nos Séculos XVII e XVIII*, PhD thesis, Lisboa, Universidade NOVA de Lisboa, 2002; Ana Paula WAGNER, *População no Império Português: Recenseamentos na África Oriental portuguesa na segunda metade do século XVIII*, PhD thesis, Curitiba, Universidade Federal do Paraná, 2009b.

In the last two decades, historians, economists and social scientists interested not only in the History of Mozambique, but also in the History of Africa (and the development of the continent in the context of the world's economy in the last two centuries) have tried to partially address this problem by offering some of the first reliable estimates and guestimates of the population of Africa and its countries, including Mozambique.¹⁵ More recently, economic historians have also started to explore African archives and available demographic micro-data for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries with the aim of answering important questions concerning the main economic and social developments in the continent in the last two hundred years.¹⁶

In order to enlarge our knowledge of the population trends in the former Portuguese Empire, especially in Africa, in this article we will focus on the development of “modern” demographic statistics in Mozambique between the 1720s and the 1820s. In line with the broader “Counting Colonial Populations” project’s objectives we will pay special attention to the following questions: i) How was the bureaucratic network used in the collection and protection of statistical information organised? ii) What were the sources used by the data gatherers at the time? iii) What were the population groups enrolled? iv) What were the criteria used to determine who should be accounted for (or not)? v) What kind of demographic data variables were collected? vi) How did these variables answer to the needs of the central government? and vii) What were the changes made over time to meet those needs? For this, we will analyse the legislation and instructions issued by the Portuguese Crown and send to its overseas representatives, the correspondence exchanged between central institutions in Lisbon and the overseas governments, and between Crown officials and Church servants in the colonial spaces, the population counts produced and its categories for enumerating populations.¹⁷

¹⁵ Patrick MANNING, “African Population: Projections, 1850–1960,” in Karl Ittmann, Dennis D. Cordell and Gregory H. Maddox (eds.), *The Demographics of Empire: The Colonial Order and the Creation of Knowledge in Africa*, Athens, Ohio, Ohio University Press, 2010; Angus MADISON, *The World Economy: Historical Statistics*, Paris, OECD, 2004, 2 vols. See also: E. H. P. FRANKEMA and M. JERVEN, “Writing History Backwards or Sideways: Towards a Consensus on African Population, 1850–2010,” *Economic History Review*, Vol. 67, no. 4, 2014, pp. 907–31.

¹⁶ Johan FOURIE and Erik GREEN, “The Missing People: Accounting for Indigenous Populations in Cape Colonial History,” *Economic Research Southern Africa*, no. 425, 2014.

¹⁷ Most of these source materials are currently available in the Portuguese Historical Overseas Archive (Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino) and the Portuguese National Archives (Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo), as well as in various collections of source materials published in the late 1800s and the early 1900s.

This analysis is being developed within the framework of a new research project entitled *Counting Colonial Populations: Demography and the use of Statistics in the Portuguese Empire, 1776–1875* which has recently been put in motion with the sponsorship of the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia). This project aims to identify and analyse the dominant demographic patterns in the Portuguese Empire between 1776 and 1875, and to explain how population statistics became instrumental in the consolidation of Portuguese colonies in Africa, Asia, and the Americas. This period was marked by important changes in colonial policies concerning population, including the reinforcement of Portuguese settlement in Brazil in the late eighteenth century and the growth of Portuguese presence in Africa just before the Conference of Berlin in 1884–1885.¹⁸

Territory, population and royal legislation

For most of the eighteenth century, Portuguese presence in Mozambique, being it of officials of the Portuguese Crown, the Catholic Church or private individuals, was limited mainly to several coastal trading posts and a few settlements in the region of the Zambezi Valley, stretching inland as far as nowadays the border regions with Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe. In the late eighteenth and throughout the nineteenth century, Portuguese presence would expand south of the Zambezi River both along the coast and inland, dating back from this period the establishment of the country's capital-city Maputo (former Lourenço Marques). The remaining territory of Mozambique stayed under the control of the local African authorities and, therefore, out of the reach of the representatives of the Portuguese Crown and the Catholic Church.

Between the 1720s and the 1820s, the production of population counts in Mozambique went through several changes in what concerned the people responsible for the data collection, the sources of information used, the methods adopted to do the accounting process, the population groups accounted for, and on the ways in which the results were presented. These changes were to a great extent brought about by four main Royal Orders that requested the production of population counts in the territories of the Portuguese Empire and determined the type of information to be collected.

¹⁸ *Counting Colonial Populations. Demography and the use of statistics in the Portuguese Empire*, application submitted to the Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia, Portugal (PTDC/EPH-HIS/3697/2012), 2012, pp. 2-5.

The initial efforts of the Portuguese Crown to have an accurate account of the inhabitants of its empire can be traced back at least to the 1720s. In the beginning of this decade, the king would demand from the authorities of the various possessions integrated in the Portuguese *Estado da Índia* the production of *Numeramentos*, i.e. enrolments of inhabitants. This order led to the elaboration of several lists of inhabitants and, in some cases, population charts, for various spaces including Goa, Macau and Mozambique.¹⁹ In the case of Mozambique, this resulted in the production of a so-called *Recenseamento* (i.e. Census) of the population of the Rivers of Sena, dating from 1722.²⁰

In 1752, as a result of the political and administrative reforms implemented by the Marquis of Pombal throughout the empire, Mozambique was detached from the Portuguese *Estado da Índia*, becoming an autonomous territory with its own government. On the same occasion, instructions were given to the new governor and captain-general of the territory to promote the establishment of new towns and the development of trade.²¹ This new situation led governors to request the production of population enrolments. The requests resulted in the production of, at least, three known lists: the

¹⁹ Paulo Teodoro de MATOS, "A População de Goa, 1720–2011. Elementos para uma visão global," in *Goa Passado e Presente*, Lisboa, Centro de Estudos dos Povos e Culturas de Expressão Portuguesa, 2012a; Paulo Teodoro de MATOS, "O Numeramento de Goa de 1720," *Anais de História de Além-Mar*, Vol. 8, 2007, pp. 241–324; Maria de Jesus dos Mártires LOPES and Paulo Lopes MATOS, "Naturais, reinóis e luso-descendentes: a socialização conseguida," in Joel Serrão and A. H. de Oliveira Marques (dirs.), *Nova História da Expansão Portuguesa*, Vol. 5, Tomo 2, Lisboa, Editorial Estampa, 2004, pp. 15–70; Ana Maria AMARO, "Contribuição para o estudo da população de Macau no século XVIII," *Boletim da Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa*, Vol. 109, nn. 7–12, Jul.–Dec., 1991, pp. 15–26; A. M. M. do VALE, art. cit.

²⁰ "Consta o recenseamento, enviado para a metrópole aos 24 de Janeiro de 1722, o seguinte quanto a população do Zambeze," in A. B. de Bragança PEREIRA, *Arquivo Português Oriental*, Tomo 4, Vol. II, part 1, Bastorá, Índia Portuguesa, Tip. Rangel, 1937, pp. 89–90. ARQUIVO HISTÓRICO DE GOA [AHG], *Livros das Monções*, no. 87, fl. 96 and ff. See also: Fritz HOPPE, *A África Oriental Portuguesa no Tempo do Marquês de Pombal (1750–1777)*, Lisboa, Agência Geral do Ultramar, 1970; A. P. WAGNER, op. cit., 2009b, p. 157.

²¹ ARQUIVO HISTÓRICO ULTRAMARINO [AHU], *Moçambique*, cx. 19, doc. 63-A (Cópia da Instrução dada a Calisto Rangel Pereira de Sá, que vai por governador e capitão general da Praça de Moçambique, Rios de Sena e Sofala, 7 May 1761); cx. 23, doc. 33 (Instrução para por ela se reger o capitão-mor da Praça de Sofala, ou a quem seu lugar o fizer, 18 April 1763). See also: Eugénia RODRIGUES, "Municípios e poder senhorial nos Rios de Sena na segunda metade do século XVIII," in *Seminário Internacional sobre o Município no Mundo Português, 1998*, Funchal, Actas, Funchal, Centro de Estados de História do Atlântico, 1998, pp. 587–608. A. P. WAGNER, op. cit., 2009b, pp. 167–168.

list of the Portuguese *moradores*²² serving in Mozambique and its districts, dating from 1757, the list of the Christian inhabitants of Inhambane, dating from 1762, and the list of *moradores* and inhabitants of the capital (located in the Island of Mozambique) and its territories in the mainland.²³

In the 1770s, the development of population statistics in Mozambique gained new momentum due to new initiatives on the part of the Portuguese Crown. In 1776, the king sent a new Royal Order to all his overseas officials requesting the production of population counts according to a new specific set of criteria. The new population charts should include information on males and females organised according to determined age groups. Males were to be divided in four main groups from ages 0–7, 7–15, 15–60, 60+ (with specification of those older than 90 years); whereas results for women were to be aggregated into four groups, with the following age breakdown, namely 0–7, 7–14, 14–40, 40+ (with specification of those older than 90 years).

The new age breakdown for males and females imposed by the early colonial administration was directly related to two of its core concerns from the eighteenth century onward: military conscription to guarantee the defence of the territory; and female fertility to ensure population growth—essential to the development of states and economies.²⁴ As a result of these worries, authorities throughout the empire were also requested to provide

²² According to the Portuguese royal legislation, in order to become *inhabitant* and *citizen* (*morador* and *vizinho*) of an urban center one needed to fulfill one of the following requirements: a) be born there; b) have a ‘dignity’ there; c) serve as a royal and/or a municipal officer there; d) have enough wealth to live ‘reasonably’ well; e) have been released or adopted there; f) have married a woman from there; and g) have settled and lived continuously there for at least four years, with family and belongings. In the early period of settlement the status of *inhabitant* and *citizen* were more or less equivalent. However, after the birth of the first generation of locally born people—the so-called *sons of the land*—the distinction started to be more visible and better defined. From that moment onwards, *inhabitants* were all individuals born in the city, as well as those from abroad who had married local women or lived in the city for four or more years; while *citizens* were the wealthy inhabitants of the city and landlords of the farms, plantations and sugar mills in the island’s countryside. This group included either European men—the so-called *whites from the land*, as well as mixed descent people—usually the offspring of the *whites from the land* and African women. Thus, being European was not a condition of being a *citizen*.

²³ As way of exemple, see: AHU, *Moçambique*, cx. 21, doc. 38 (Relação de todos os habitantes cristãos de ambas as secções que ha em Inhambane, 26 April 1762); cx. 24, doc. 19 (Rol das pessoas habitantes desta vila de Sofala e das que assistem fora dela, que remete a Camara, para o Ilmo. e Exmo. Senhor governador e capitão general de Moçambique e Costa da Africa Oriental, 23 May 1764); cx. 26, doc. 82 (Mapa dado ao Illustrissimo e Excellentissimo Senhor Balthazar Manuel Pereira do Lago, governador e capitão general desta Estado de Moçambique, pelo juiz, e vereadores da camara, dos moradores, e habitantes nesta capital e terras firmes, 30 May 1766).

²⁴ See among others: Antonio Cesar de Almeida SANTOS, “Aritmética Política e administração do estado português na segunda metade do século XVIII,” in Andréa Doré and António César de Almeida Santos (eds.), *Temas Setecentistas. Governos e populações no Império Português*, Curitiba, UFPR/C SHLA-Fundação Araucária, 2009, pp. 143–52.

information on the number of births and deaths. These information were to be collected, organised and sent to the secretary of State for Navy and Overseas Affairs on an annual basis.

The issuing of these Royal Orders resulted in the regular production of population counts throughout the empire, including Mozambique.²⁵ Between 1777 and the 1790s, a series of population counts were produced in the various parishes of towns, islands and adjacent territories.²⁶ Although these first population counts would have major flaws, from the point of view of a modern statistician, they were the first systematic effort promoted by the Portuguese Crown to obtain the most accurate information possible at the time, to be used in decision-making at a political, administrative, defensive and economic level.

However, in most cases, the population counts sent by the authorities in the territories would not contain information in the desired format, or sufficient details considered necessary by the secretary of State, and the king. Mozambique was, in this respect, a case in point, as a great number of inhabitants remained unregistered in the counts done between the 1770s and 1790s. Many of the flaws found by the central authorities in the counts resulted from the interpretation of the Royal Order of 1776, specifically in what concerned the meaning of the terms inhabitants (*habitantes*) and vassals (*vassalos*) by the royal officials overseas. But, these shortcomings were also to a great extent determined by the sources of information used to obtain the population figures, as we will discuss further in this study.

In 1796, the king issued a new order to the royal officials overseas. This new diploma had two main goals. On the one hand, it aimed to mitigate some of the flaws found in the population counts produced previously, by requesting details about specific populations groups, so far overlooked by local authorities, namely mulattoes and blacks (*pardos* and *pretos*). On the other hand, it requested the representatives of the Crown to provide information about the territory's geography and topography, its productions, exports and imports, taxes, expenses with the Army, Navy, Justice and Administration, military conscription and promotions, and finally, advice on measures to promote economic growth in the territories. In addition, authorities should also provide information on the number of marriages. Like, in

²⁵ AHU, cód. 1333, fls. 297–301, 300 (Relação que Sua Magestade manda formar do número dos habitantes da Capitania de Moçambique e Rios de Sena, 21 May 1776).

²⁶ AHU, *Moçambique*, cx. 32–70 (multiple lists of the inhabitants of the captaincy of Mozambique and Rivers of Sena, 1777–1796).

the previous diploma, population data should be, in theory, collected and sent to Lisbon annually.²⁷

In Mozambique, unlike the Royal Order of 1776, this new diploma did not result in the immediate production of population counts according to aforementioned guidelines. Due to various circumstances, difficulties and resistances at a local level, which we will discuss further in this study, between 1797 and 1801, the royal officials of the Crown continued to send population counts similar to the previous model. The first population counts that met the new guidelines would only arrive in Lisbon in the first years of 1800.²⁸ Yet, the population figures then provided were still regarded insufficiently accurate by the secretary of State for Navy and Overseas Affairs.

As a result, in 1803, and in another attempt to improve the production of population counts in Mozambique, prince John, in the capacity of Regent of Portugal and the empire, issued a new order demanding the building of new population data.²⁹ In view of this new diploma, the royal officials on-the-spot were forced to take a set of measures to improve the collection and processing of information about the various population groups of Mozambique. These procedures would bring about important changes in the chain of production of the population data, on the sources used to obtain the required figures, on the population groups accounted for and on the types of population charts produced thereafter.

Between 1803 and 1822, the royal officials and town councils in Mozambique would produce a series of population charts containing information about males, females, household structures and property, main ethnic/racial groups (*brancos*, *pardos*, and *negros*), free and unfree population, for both urban and rural areas. Although these maps would still have many caveats from the point of view of a modern statistician, they remain as the earliest known evidence of the introduction of “modern demographic statistics” in Mozambique in the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

²⁷ AHU, cód. 1319, fl. 103 (Carta do secretário de Estado dos Negócios da Marinha e dos Domínios Ultramarinos, D. Rodrigo de Sousa Coutinho, para o governador-geral da capitania de Moçambique e Rios de Senna, sobre informações do estado físico e político dos domínios ultramarinos, 14 September 1796).

²⁸ As way of example, see, among others: AHU, *Moçambique*, cx. 90, doc. 49 (Relação dos habitantes de Cabo Delgado, 25 November 1801); cx. 96, doc. 62 (Mapa das propriedades das casas, com suas famílias, escravatura nesta Ilha de Moçambique, 10 November 1802); cx. 96, doc. 62 (Mapa do número de habitantes Cristãos, que possuem terras do Lumbo, Ilha de Batu, Calunda, Apaga Fogo, Ampapa, Monsuril, Mapeta, Cabeceira Grande e Cabaceira Pequena, Casas, Fazendas, Escravos e gente livre, e Feitores, que ha nas ditas terras as quais são fronteiras a Ilha de Moçambique, 20 August 1802); cx. 88, doc. 27 (Relação do estado das Povoações de Brancos, Pardos e Negros de cada uma das Terras do distrito desta Villa de Tete, 20 May 1801).

²⁹ AHU, *Moçambique*, cx. 100, doc. 89, 9 July 1803.

The production chain

The first known records of population in Mozambique were produced by priests serving in the local parishes, where they registered births, marriages and deaths in the Church books. These records were, very likely, the basis of the first *Recenseamento* of the Rivers of Sena, dating from 1722, previously mentioned.³⁰ Based on Church records were also a set of lists of Christians in the parishes of Quelimane, Tete, Sena, Zumbo and Zimbabwe produced by local clergymen following an Order of the administrator of the Bishopric in 1735.³¹ Thus, from the onset of population counts in Mozambique the Church, both in the person of its highest and lowest rank servants, was at the core of population records' production and supply.

The establishment of the independent government of Mozambique in 1752 and the need to gather information about the territory, including its population, gave, from then on, to royal officials, a pivotal role in the production of population counts. These included not only the governor and captain-general of the territory of Mozambique and Rivers of Sena, but also the captain-generals and factor of Quelimane. The military, like the lieutenant-general of the Inhambane's lands local militias and city councils, like the one of Sofala, also started to play an important role in the production of population data. In the 1750s and 1760s, all these civilian and military authorities would be involved in the production of *Mapas*, *Róis* and *Relações* of the inhabitants of the territory and its districts.³²

The Royal Order of 1776 would to a certain extent change the participation and autonomy of all these royal and municipal authorities in the data gathering process and production of population counts thereafter and, at least, until 1796. On the one hand, the Royal Order was sent only to the two utmost authorities in Mozambique—the highest representatives of the Crown and the Church—the governor and captain-general and the administrator of the Bishopric. On the other hand, it clearly made parish priests responsible for gathering information. The Crown went even further by

³⁰ See note 18.

³¹ AHU, *Moçambique*, cx. 5, doc. 38 (Rol da Cristandade que ha nesta freguesia da Nossa Senhora do Livramento deste Quelimane, 6 May 1735); cx. 5, doc. 4 (Lista dos cristãos e fregueses desta freguesia de São Tiago de Tete da Administração dos Rios de Sena que mandou fazer o Ilmo. e Exmo. Senhor Administrador Fr. Simão de São Thomas vindo em visita a esta dita paroquia, 6 May 1735); cx. 5, doc. 42 (Lista das pessoas que se desobrigam nesta freguesia do Zimbabwe, 8 June 1735); cx. 5, doc. 44 (Os excomungados que se reconciliaram com a Igreja na presença do Ilmo. e Exmo. Senhor Administrador Fr. Simoa de São Thomas no ano de 1725 nesta matriz de Sena, 10 June 1735); cx. 5, doc. 45 (Rol dos fregueses desta matriz de Sena. Lista da Cristandade e baptismos que se tem feito e celebrado de adultos e parvulos, June 1734–June 1735. Os sacerdotes filhos de Goa, 16 June 1735); cx. 5, doc. 45 (Rol da Cristandade que se acha na freguesia do Zumbo na melhor forma que pode ver, 16 June 1735). A. P. WAGNER, op. cit., 2009b, pp. 154–7.

³² See note 21. A. P. WAGNER, op. cit., 2009b, pp. 159.

determining the type of source that should be used—Church records. Both authorities were instructed by the secretary of State to pass on the Royal Order of 1776 to the parish priests, and request the collection of information and the production of the maps on an annual basis.³³

By so doing, the Crown gave great credit to Church records, making parish records central in the production chain of demographic data, and gave to the governor and captain-general and to the administrator of the bishopric a supervising role over these activities. The former would also play a mediating role between the Crown and the local clergymen. In Mozambique, as well as in other territories of the Portuguese Empire, this intermediary role of the governor in the transmission of royal orders would have huge impact on the population groups accounted for and the population figures sent to Lisbon between 1777 and the early 1800s.

The Royal Order of 1776 clearly stated that the king aimed to know the number of *habitantes* of his territories to learn how many *vassalos* he had. In the understanding of the governor and captain-general of Mozambique and Rivers of Sena—Baltasar Manuel Pereira do Lago—as well as of other governors elsewhere in the empire, only a specific population group of the territory was to be regarded as inhabitant and vassal of the king and, therefore, included in the population counts to be produced and sent to Lisbon. In the Order sent by the governor to the parish priests requesting the preparation of the maps, it was made clear that only free inhabitants of mulatto and white descent that were members of the parishes should be accounted. Africans (*cafres*), their children, slaves, even if they were baptised (and therefore Christians and members of the parishes) should not be considered as inhabitants. The followers of Mohamed, the so-called Moors by the governor, were also to be excluded from the annual accounts.³⁴ As a result, the different parishes population charts produced between 1777 and the early 1800s would only include a small fraction of Mozambique's population, leaving unaccounted the majority of the people: Christian Africans, both free and enslaved, not to mention the high number of non-Christian Africans, the Indian Banyan population settled on the coast for trade and the Muslim Africans. As a consequence, population figures in the territory seemed terribly low at the eyes of the central authorities, particularly in comparison with other colonies, as well as in the opinion of the governors

³³ AHU, cód. 1333, fls. 297–301 (Relação que Sua Magestade manda formar do número dos habitantes da Capitania de Moçambique e Rios de Sena, 21 May 1776) and the letters addressed to the governor and captain-general Baltasar Manuel Pereira do Lago, and the administrator of the Bishopric, dating both from the same day.

³⁴ AHU, cód. 1339, fls. 126–126v; *Moçambique*, ex. 40, doc. 61 (Registro das cartas circulares expedidas aos governos dos postos desta conquista e párocos deles afim de se executar o conteúdo de uma relação, 15 April 1777 and Carta expedida a todos os párocos dos postos, sobre as relações dos números dos habitantes, 15 April 1777). A. P. WAGNER, op. cit., 2009b, pp. 177 and ff.

of Mozambique, who kept requesting the Crown shipments of new settlers and, sometimes, convict exiles.

The changes introduced in the production chain of demographic statistics in the 1770s clearly shows, in our opinion, the lack of knowledge about the circumstances in the overseas territories. The Crown relied on a model of data collection used in Portugal during the eighteenth century with relative success given that the vast majority of the population was Christian and, therefore, registered in the Church books. When it tried to export the same model to the overseas territories, the Crown ended up alienating authorities which prior to 1796 had collaborated in the production of population counts or were even the ones responsible for their production, as in the case of the town councils and captain-generals of districts in the 1750s and 1760s.³⁵

During the 1770s and 1780s, the Crown would request royal authorities in various overseas territories, including Mozambique, to provide information on the number of military in service, men capable of serving in the army, total of slaves, land property, as well as on local productions. Most of these information was provided by Brazil, Angola, São Tomé, Cape Verde, Azores, Madeira and Goa.³⁶ The arrival of these sets of information in Lisbon made clear to the central authorities that these types of information were possible to obtain and were essential to administer the territories. Royal officials in Mozambique also complied with these demands and produced population charts for specific groups, such as the Banyan merchants, African population living in the lands of the Crown—the *prazos da Coroa*—and the military. However, the Crown wanted more detailed information about Mozambican population.³⁷ The Royal Order of 1796, made clear to colonial authorities on-the-spot that new and more detailed data was needed,

³⁵ See note 21.

³⁶ As way of example see: AHU, *São Tomé e Príncipe*, cx. 16, doc. 4 (Relação de todas as pessoas brancas, pardas e pretas forras e cativas que existem nesta ilha do Príncipe, 22 June 1777); AHU, *Angola*, cx. 61, doc. 4 (Relação de todos os moradores e habitantes deste Reino de Angola, essas conquistas tiradas no fim do ano de 1777).

³⁷ As way of exemple, see: AHU, *Moçambique*, cx. 34, doc. 41 (Mapa dos mouros e cafres macuas sujeitos a esta capital, 20 August 1780); cx. 32, doc. 103-A (Relação dos comerciantes Baneanes e Mouros atualmente existentes nesta vila com casa e loja aberta com declaração de passaportes com que passaram para estes rios, n.d. [after 1779]); cx. 38, doc. 24 (Relação dos principais mercadores Baneanes que vivem nesta capital, 25 February 1782); cx. 65, doc. 17 (Relação dos Baneanes, que tem suas casas nesta capital, em que residem e outras para recolherem as suas fazendas, 19 September 1793); cx. 69, doc. 95 (Relação dos principais mercadores Baneanes de Moçambique, 14 November 1794); cx. 70, doc. 80 (Relação dos gentios e mouros, 12 May 1795); cx. 53, doc. 7 (Relação dos moradores da terra pertencente ao foreiro Manoel Baptista, 24 January 1787); cx. 55, doc. 16 (Relação dos moradores da Arimba, 5 September 1787); cx. 55, doc. 17 (Relação dos moradores da Amiza, 15 September 1787); cx. 55, doc. 83 (Relação dos moradores da terra pertencente ao foreiro Diogo Domingos Baptista, 23 November 1787); cx. 56, doc. 21 (Relação dos moradores de Ibo, 4 March 1788); cx. 56, doc. 1, several *Relações* of lands of different tenants, all dating from 1788. See also A. P. WAGNER, op. cit., 2009b, p. 217.

in particular about mulatto and black population.³⁸ However, as an answer to the new order, the governor and captain-general re-issued the previous order wrote by the former governor Balthasar Manuel Pereira do Lago, adding that information on marriages should also be provided. In other words, no immediate changes were introduced in the production chain of the information—parish priests continued to be regarded by the governor as one of the main providers of information, and as the chief producers of the population charts sent to Lisbon.³⁹

To obtain the geographic, topographic, fiscal and economic information requested by the Royal Order of 1796, the governors had to turn to other possible data providers, namely military, town councils, captain-generals and commanders of district and to inhabitants themselves. From the late 1790s, these entities were called in to supply information on the aforementioned matters. Yet, they would also give the governor relevant population data. These information would allow the production of several population charts with figures for the population groups devised by the central authorities: whites, mulattoes and blacks.⁴⁰ Yet, at the eyes of the central authorities, the population counts elaborated between 1796 and 1802 were still regarded as insufficient and little accurate, as the Royal Order of 1803 made clear by requesting to the governor the production of new information.

Church records and parish priests could no longer be at the core of the production chain of population counts—these could only provide information about a small fraction of the population. To draw a more complete picture of the territory's population, including the non-Christian free and enslaved Africans as well as the population of Indian descent and African Muslims, was essential to requested the assistance of the land tenants of the Crown—*foreiros dos prazos da Coroa*—in the Zambezi Valley, the municipal

³⁸ See note 25.

³⁹ See note 32.

⁴⁰ As way of example, see: AHU, *Moçambique*, cx. 95, doc. 51 (Relação circunstanciada dos Párcos que ocupam as igrejas das freguesias e capital das vilas do distrito do governo destes Rios de Sena, 4 March 1802; Relação circunstanciada dos moradores de cada uma das vilas e empregos que nelas ocupam do distrito do governo destes Rios de Sena, 4 March 1802; Relação circunstanciada dos negociantes, que comerciam em cada uma das vilas e feiras do distrito do governo dos Rios de Sena, 4 March 1802; Mapa geral dos feitos honoríficos, milícias, ordenanças, e empregos das fazendas da política e civis do governo dos Rios de Sena, 4 March 1802; Mapa geral das tropas que guarnecem as vilas e presídios do distrito do governo dos Rios de Sena, 4 March 1802; Mapa geral das tropas que guarnecem as vilas do distrito dos Rios de Sena, 4 March 1802; Mapa circunstanciado do estado das povoações de brancos, pardos, e negros colonos existentes nas terras da jurisdição de cada uma das vilas do distrito do governo dos Rios de Sena, 4 March 1802; Mapa circunstanciado das únicas Rendas Reais da arrecadação anual de foros e dízimos, que pagam os possuidores dos Prazos da Real Coroa, Fisco Real e Terras Fatiotas nas três feitorias das vilas do distrito do governo de Rios de Sena; Mapa geral dos párcos que ocupam as igrejas das vilas do distrito do governo destes Rios de Sena, n.d.).

authorities and towns' inhabitants, and the captain-generals and commanders of the districts.⁴¹ More importantly, it was essential to devise new ways to collect information and to present it to the secretary of State in Lisbon.

Thus, as a result of the Orders of 1796 and 1803, the authorities of Mozambique not only brought into the production chain of demographic statistics various local authorities and granted its highest representatives the power and responsibility for processing and aggregating the data, but also promoted the development of new instruments for the collection of information.

Sources, variables, charts and the production process

The first known population count for Rivers of Sena dates from the 1720s and was organised at the request of the Crown by the *Estado da Índia* government. It provides us with figures for both males and females of two population groups: 1) Portuguese and their children (*Portugueses e seus filhos*) and Naturals of Goa (*Filhos de Goa*); 2) and number of Christian blacks at parish level. It was, therefore, very likely prepared on the basis of available Church records and enrolments of Christians elaborated by parish priests during the Lent.⁴²

Similar sources were very likely also used to produce the lists of Christians of the parishes of Quelimane, Tete, Zumbo and Zimbabwe dating all from 1735 in answer to a request from the administrator of the Bishopric Friar Simão de São Tomás.⁴³ However, unlike the 1722 *Recenseamento*, these were nominal accounts in which each individual was listed by name according to specific categories, considered important by the parish priests—again following the enrolments of Christians prepared during the Lent.

Among the various categories listed were places of origin with sub-titles such as: *Filhos de Goa* (Naturals of Goa), *Filhos da Terra* (Sons of the land), *Filhos de Bengala* (Sons of Bengala), *Filhos de São Lourenço* (Sons of São Lourenço), *Filhos desta Terra* (Sons of this land) or *Patrícios* (i.e. from this "Patria" or fatherland). Other lists would also make reference to marital status by naming individuals under sub-categories as follows: *Portugueses casados* (Married Portuguese), *Portugueses Solteiros* (Single Portuguese), *Naturaes de Goa Casados* (Naturals from Goa, Married), *Naturaes de Goa Solteiros* (Naturals of Goa, Single). Women would appear either enrolled in association with their husbands or fathers, or would be listed separately.

⁴¹ As way of example, see: AHU, *Moçambique*, cx. 87, doc. 1, several descriptions of *Prazos*.

⁴² See note 18.

⁴³ See note 29.

The enrolment of Christian Africans, either free or enslaved, often occurred associated with the territories where they lived and worked or to their masters, listed also by name. Categories like *cafres cristãos cativos*, *negras cativas cristãs*, *cativos de João Pereira Velho* or *Das terras de Lopo Sanches da Silveira* would be commonly used to organize these lists.⁴⁴

In the population counts sent to the Crown in the 1750s and 1760s data continued to be displayed in the format of nominal lists. Therefore, part of its information was, very likely, gathered from Church records. However, individuals appeared enrolled according to their social and economic standing and/or administrative and/or military posts held. In addition, for each individual listed, per row, a series of information would be provided including place of origin, age, marital status, professions, occupations, and means of living.⁴⁵ In some cases, information was organised according to households, as in the case of the population count of Quelimane produced by the captain-general and factor of this port in 1762—António Correia de Monteiro de Matos—at the request of the governor Pedro de Saldanha e Albuquerque. A similar structure would be adopted in the population counts and *Mapas* made by the town council of Sofala in 1764, and by the municipality of the Island of Mozambique in 1766. In some cases, separate population tables would be provided with these details organised according to population groups, such as *Moradores e habitantes Portugueses e Naturaes* (Portuguese and local dwellers and inhabitants) and *Moradores Naturaes de Goa* (dwellers born in Goa) and *Filhos de Moçambique* (Sons of Mozambique).⁴⁶ These new counts seem to obey to a logic of data gathering and organisation distinct from the enrolments of Christians done by parish priests in the 1730s, reflecting different needs on the part of the representatives of the Portuguese Crown.

A great deal of these information and categories would disappear from the population counts produced in the two following decades, partially due to the guidelines defined by the Royal Order of 1776 and the subsequent Order of the governor and captain-general of Mozambique and Rivers of Sena—Baltasar Manuel Pereira do Lago—sent to the parish priests the following year. Between 1777 and the early 1800s, the final population counts dispatched from Mozambique to Lisbon, contained only information on the eleven classes determined by the Royal Order exclusively for the white and *pardo* population of Christian denomination affiliated to the parishes of the

⁴⁴ *Idem.*

⁴⁵ See note 21.

⁴⁶ *Idem.*

territory. The Royal Order of 1776 main aim was to obtain systematic information about the number of inhabitants of the territories according to sexes and ages groups. Due to the restrictive understanding of the terms *habitantes* and *vassalos* on the part of the governor, important groups of local society until them enrolled in the population counts were excluded thereafter and until as late as the early 1800s. The Christian population of African origin, either free or enslaved, and the non-Christian African population living in the domains of the Portuguese are two cases in point.

Certain governor-generals such as Pedro de Saldanha e Albuquerque made efforts at a local level to gather further information about inhabitants not included in the lists elaborated by the parish priests. They issued orders to the governors of districts, like the Rivers of Sena, and municipalities requesting data on various population groups and others matters, including inventories of the lands of the Crown, their tenants and their property.⁴⁷

The Royal Order of 1776 wished to introduce a new method to organise the population data according to sexes and age groups. However, the absence of any explanation on the diploma about the methodology to produce these new population lists, led many parish priests to adopt formats familiar to them taken from the preparation of the enrolment of Christians at parish level. Therefore, it does not come as a surprise that the first population counts prepared by the priests in the territory took the form of nominal lists. This format was especially common in the years of 1777 and 1778, and in certain parishes, namely Cabaceiras, Sofala, Amiza and Querimba in Cabo Delgado, Mussoril, Island of Mozambique and Zumbo. Even in the 1780s, certain priests continued to send nominal lists of inhabitants per each class mentioned in the Royal Order of 1776. This was, for instance, the case of Luabo, Sofala, Macambura, Amiza, Querimba and Zumbo. Only in the 1790s, the population counts prepared by the priests would systematically provide total figures for each class mentioned in the Royal Order of 1776.⁴⁸

The first counts were the hardest to prepare as priests had to gather information from the Church books—a task not always easy—especially in sizeable parishes. Gathering the information could also be made difficult by the absence of Church books or enrolments of Christians from the Lent.

⁴⁷ As way of example, see: AHU, *Moçambique*, cx. 40, doc. 53 (Minuta de várias cartas expedidas pelo governador geral da capitania de Moçambique e Rios de Sena, Pedro de Saldanha e Albuquerque, para o governador dos Rios de Sena, António Manuel de Melo e Castro, 18 November 1782); cx. 53 doc. 16 (Relação dos moradores de Arimba, 5 September 1787). See also: A. P. WAGNER, op. cit., 2009b, pp. 216–7.

⁴⁸ AHU, *Moçambique*, cx. 32–79. 1777–1796, see the several lists of the inhabitants of Mozambique and Rivers of Sena.

Climate and storage conditions of the books helped its rapid deterioration. These dangers were increased due to lack of care of the priests and their attendants. When faced with missing books, parish priests were forced to find alternative sources of information. Some would resort to their parish members, in particular, the oldest and most trustworthy persons, who could provide a good account of the parish members and their ages.⁴⁹

After two decades producing these population counts (either in nominal or numerical format) parish priests had found ways to reduce the work load associated with their preparation. Therefore, it does not come as a surprise that when the new Royal Order of 1796 and the order of the governor of 1797 requested additional information on marriages and, more importantly, data divided in three main groups: whites, *pardos*, and blacks, many priests showed resistance. Church records have in many cases the necessary information to make the calculations and produce the counts, as we can see from the enrolments of inhabitants produced by several parish priests in the 1730s. However, by the end of the 1790s, some of them would argue that the Church books did not have the elements to produce the required maps.⁵⁰

Thereafter, the burden of producing the new population statistics would, to a great extent and progressively, come under the responsibility of the military and civilian representatives of the State and their subordinates. In addition, these representatives needed to find new ways to gather the necessary data. In the late 1790s and early 1800s, and for the first time, inhabitants were regarded by the authorities as a potential source of information. Certainly, not all inhabitants were perceived in this way, but those that hold a considerable social standing were called to collaborate with the Crown. Among these were, for example, the tenants of the *prazos* of the Crown in the Zambezi Valley. At the request of the local authorities they started to give an account of the lands, the population and the productions of the territories under their administration.⁵¹ To provide an account of the population living and working in the areas of the *prazos*, some of the tenants would consult first with their own dependents responsible for the collection of tributes, who had a better knowledge of the number of villages, and total

⁴⁹ Priests normally reported this occurrence at the end of the *relação*, and in the case of nominal lists the age would be either preceded or followed by the expression *pouco mais ou menos*, i.e. more or less, approximately.

⁵⁰ AHU, *Moçambique*, cx. 92, doc. 36 and 37 (Cartas de Frei Vicente de São José Banino e Silva para o governador dos Rios de Sena, 20 January 1802, and 21 January 1802).

⁵¹ AHU, *Moçambique*, cx. 87, doc. 46 (Ofício do comandante da vila de Tete para os foreiros dos Prazos da Coroa, 21 March 1801); cx. 90, doc. 10 (Ofício do comandante da vila de Sena para os foreiros dos Prazos da Coroa, 4 November 1801).

number of free Africans living under their jurisdiction—the so-called *colonos*—as well as of the slaves working and living under the dependence of the *prazo* tenants.⁵²

The first inventories of the *prazos* land, population and production would take the format of a description. However, over time, *prazo* tenants would also provide royal officials with tables containing number of slaves, their sexes and professions, tributes paid or tables with names of villages (*povoações*) under the dependence of the *prazo* and the number of their inhabitants divided in whites, *pardos*, blacks, including slaves and free *colonos*.⁵³

Despite their flaws and lack of precision (partially due to the extension of these territories and the lack of means at the disposal of tenants and their subordinates to account all population), these *prazo* inventories provided royal officials in Mozambique with precious information to have a better picture of the African population, free and enslaved, Christian and non-Christian, living under the jurisdiction of the Portuguese Crown, at least in theory.

In the urban areas, the municipal authorities at the request of the governor and/or the captain-general or commander of district would develop an ancestral form of the hand-written household bulletins to collect data on population and property at household level, including family members, gender, age, marital status, jobs, property (both real estate and movables, including slaves). The data gathered with these bulletins would be later used in the production of elaborate population charts of the main urban centers of Mozambique, including Tete, Quelimane, and the capital of the territory. In addition to the aforementioned data variables, these general population charts would also present population figures divided according to main groups: Portuguese (divided according to place of origin), blacks, and, in some cases, *pardos*. The population charts produced from the 1810s and 1820s onward on the basis of these bulletins would be the first known

⁵² AHU, *Moçambique*, cx. 92, doc. 2 (Carta de João António de Albuquerque para o governador dos Rios de Sena, 1 January 1802).

⁵³ As way of example, see: AHU, *Moçambique*, cx. 90, doc. 13 (Informações sobre o Prazo de Inhacarangá, 5 November 1801); cx. 90, doc. 42 (Informações sobre os Prazos administrados por João Filipe de Carvalho, 18 November 1801); cx. 92, doc. 88 (Informações sobre o Prazo Sone, dadas por Joaquim de Moraes Rego, Lisboa, 5 November 1801); cx. 92, doc. 88 (Informações sobre o Prazo da Impiria, dadas por Ilena Xavier Vas, 10 January 1802); cx. 92, doc. 88 (Informações sobre o Prazo Mulambo, dadas por Joao Caetano de Souza, 10 January 1802); cx. 92, doc. 88 (Informações sobre o Prazo de Inhamaze, dadas por Luiza Maria Xavier Vas, 11 January 1802). See also: A. P. WAGNER, op. cit., 2009b, pp. 245–51.

modern population charts of the territory, done by Crown authorities using modern techniques of population data collection.⁵⁴

Final remarks

Despite all legislation issued by the Crown defining the type of population information to be gathered, the standard form to collect and organize the data, and the instructions to the officials in charge of this huge and difficult task, the statistical materials produced are far from perfect. They present, therefore, multiple challenges to the researcher interesting in studying the demographic structures and dynamics of the Mozambican population between the 1720s and the 1820s.

The two first major issues raised by these sources are their chronological scope and their geographical coverage. As mentioned earlier, prior to the 1720s no population counts can be found in Crown's the collections of Mozambique colonial papers. For the sixteenth, seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, only brief references to total population figures can be found in the correspondence exchanged between officials and central authorities, as well as in descriptions of the territory and its peoples. After the 1730s the number of sources produced with information on population increased and their production became more regular. However, these materials continued to raise many problems. One of the main issues is the geographical coverage of the data. The information gathered by these individuals was simply limited to the areas controlled by the Portuguese authorities.⁵⁵

However, the problems posed by this type of source materials stretch far beyond the issues of chronological and geographical scope. Even within the periods and territories covered by the data, there is a major question of concern: who was counted, why and how? The question of whom to count in the eighteenth-century population counts is directly linked to another issue: who was regarded as a subject of the Portuguese Crown? And what criteria were taken into account for someone to be recognised as one?

⁵⁴ As way of example, see: AHU, *Moçambique*, cx. 174, doc. 68, several household bulletins from the town of Tete dating from 1820; cx. 183, doc. 89 (Mappa da População da Villa de Tete e seu Termo, 1 March 1822). See also: AHU, *Moçambique*, cx. 179, doc. 2 (Mappa geográfico, Aritmético e político da Capitania de Inhambane que dá o Governador Izidro Manoel de Carrazedo, ao Illmo. e Exmo. Senhor Governador e Capitão General deste Estado, 1820).

⁵⁵ For Africa, in general, and in this particular case Mozambique, this would continue to be a major issue well into the twentieth century, as considerable fractions of the territory and its population, in particular, in the northern regions and in the Zambezi Valley would be granted in management to private companies sponsored by the State.

Having Portuguese origin and/or ancestry appears to have been the principal criterion to be enrolled in this first colonial population counts. These individuals were the ones first regarded as affiliated to the Kingdom and the Empire, and, therefore, subjected to the authority of the king. Most of the individuals enrolled in the first lists of inhabitants were, therefore, born in Portugal or overseas from Portuguese parents. Nevertheless, individuals born from inter-racial marriages (provided that they had a father of Portuguese origin) have also been counted. These individuals could be registered either as “white” (*branco*) or “coloured” (*pardo*), often depending on the economic standing of the parents and/or the posts held by the father in the Portuguese overseas administration. This tell us much about the fluidity of the categorisation used by the producers of these first censuses and brings further complications to any attempt at studying the ethnic background of the population.

Religion seems to have been another major criterion in the enrolment of the population overseas by the representatives of the royal authorities partially because there was a direct association between the Roman Catholic Church and the Portuguese Crown. Being a Catholic was, to a great extent, a requirement to be regarded as a subject. However, the careful enrolment of Catholic population was also a direct consequence of the reliance of officials responsible for the censuses on Church records concerning births, marriages and burials. The population accounted for in the first *numeramentos* and censuses were, therefore, in their majority “Christian,” that is Catholic. Nonetheless, in certain cases, individuals of other religious denominations also appear registered. This happened, mainly, when they lived in spaces directly under Portuguese control and played an important role in the economy of the region—as was, for instance the case of the Banyan merchants of Indian origin, and the African Muslims based in the coastal towns of the Mozambican coast, as well as in the Northern part of the Swahili Coast. African religious beliefs systems, however, were not regarded as a religion and, therefore, in most cases this information was not registered. If enrolled by the Portuguese authorities, non-Christian Africans would appear labeled as “gentiles.”

The majority of the African population, either free or enslaved, were only registered when in relation to the property of individuals of Portuguese or other origin, either in the inventories of lands granted in tenancy by the Crown to private individuals (the so-called *Prazos da Coroa*) or household enrolments, in particular, in the urban centers. This means that the majority of the population of the territory was not included in the first Portuguese

population counts and censuses carried out in the Mozambican territory. Over time, Portuguese central authorities and their colonial representatives would make efforts to overcome this problem, especially because enrolment of labour force would become a matter of great concern in the context of European imperialism in Africa by the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

From all problems listed and briefly discussed above, it is obvious that any attempt to identify and study in detail the population structures and dynamics of Mozambique in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as well as in later periods, puts many challenges to the researcher and any results obtained can be highly disputed. Given these problems, a comprehensive study of the demographic structures and dynamics of this territory and their evolution over time, must be carefully planned, as it is also the case for other countries and regions of the African continent. In view of this, it is paramount to find a methodology that allows us to identify some of these structures and discuss their characteristics in the wide context of the territory of present-day Mozambique—a task we aim to develop in our future research.

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