Top-down low-cost housing supply since the mid-1990s in Maputo: bottom-up responses and spatial consequences

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Abstract

Top-down or state-driven low-cost housing supply in most African cities occurs in contexts of rapid urbanisation and great socio-spatial disparity, where the majority of low-income populations reside in areas without adequate living and housing conditions. This article critically examines this kind of intervention, focusing on bottom-up responses to it, expressed in appropriation processes at different levels, and the spatial consequences, exploring how they contribute to potentially reducing these disparities. Taking as its case study the Mozambican capital, Maputo, in the current neoliberal context, the article argues that the results of these top-down or state-driven interventions are contradictory and do not always translate into the reduction of socio-spatial disparities. Results depend on factors such as the motives behind each intervention, their process of implementation, characteristics and phase of development. It concludes that low-cost housing supply in Maputo functions firstly as a way of minimising the hardships of the displacement processes that usually lie behind its provision. Although the subsequent upgrading of these areas, and of the surrounding areas consequently occupied may contribute to the reduction of social-spatial disparities, it also tends to promote gentrification processes and exclude the urban poor.

Introduction

The low-cost housing supply in Maputo, which can be state-driven or not, is numerically small but significant: on the one hand, it results mainly from relocations, which are always more or less violent processes; on the other hand, it is related to the subsequent occupation of surrounding areas and to different kinds of upgrading
interventions. As such, this article is an empirically-grounded contribution to knowledge of top-down or state-driven low-cost housing in Maputo, which is still under-studied.

It takes as its point of departure what Lefebvre (2009) expressed in 1968, when he first conceived and elaborated the concept of the ‘right to the city’: if global processes (economic, social, political and cultural) ‘have influenced urban rhythms and spaces, it is by enabling [social] groups to insert themselves, to take charge of them, to appropriate them’ (Lefebvre 1996:104-105, emphasis in original). As suggested here, appropriation, which is a concept most used by Lefebvre (1991, 2003, 2009), is related to the ability to take possession of space (beyond property rights) and of its production processes. The article analyses bottom-up responses to some paradigmatic interventions of low-cost housing supply in Maputo, expressed in grassroots appropriation processes at different levels, in different ways and with different spatial consequences.

The analyses also takes into account the socio-spatial disparities that arise from rapid urbanisation under the capitalist mode of production, particularly in the current neoliberal context. In Maputo, as in other southern African cities, a large percentage of the population resides in areas without adequate living and housing conditions. In contexts like these, the provision of low-cost housing tends to be understood as a way to improve such conditions, even when it is preceded by relocation processes. Thus, the article explores how such housing, supplied since the mid-1990s, may have contributed or not to the reduction of existing socio-spatial disparities in Maputo. It argues that the consequences of these interventions are contradictory and do not always translate into this reduction, but depend on aspects such as the motives behind each intervention, their process of implementation, characteristics and phase of development. The article starts
with a presentation of how the housing problematic is approached in a broader sense, before analysing the Maputo case study in particular.

**The housing problematic**

Contemporary urban housing problems have their roots in the industrial revolution and are intrinsic to two interrelated transformations that derive from it. One is the ‘Great Transformation’ described in 1944 by Polanyi (2001) through which the market economy (or the capitalist mode of production) became increasingly dominant over other types of economy. The other is the urbanisation process which in 1970 Lefebvre named as the ‘Urban Revolution’: ‘the transformations that affect contemporary society, ranging from the period when questions of growth and industrialization predominate [...] to the period when the urban problematic becomes predominant’ (Lefebvre 2003:5). According to him, such processes will end with complete urbanisation, which has been more recently designated as ‘planetary urbanisation’ and is an object of reflection by authors such as Brenner (2014) and Brenner and Schmid (2012). In the nineteenth century, the impacts of the industrial revolution on urbanisation were most striking in Great Britain, giving rise to the areas which were then designated as slums (Cowie 1996, Gilbert 2007). Engels also characterised this period as ‘predominantly the period of “housing shortage”’ in his reflections on ‘The Housing Question’ (1887:np). Nowadays, when Hodkinson (2012:433) elaborates on ‘the return of the housing question’, he refers to the ‘ever-presence of housing crisis under capitalism’.

Authors such as Lefebvre (1991, 2003) and Harvey (2001) argue that in the capitalist mode of production space becomes increasingly important in the process of profit formation. The fact that urban space is both the ultimate object and place of
capital accumulation has been one of the main drivers of the current urbanisation process at a global level, primarily based on land value, since land became a fictitious commodity, as defined by Polanyi (2001). This process tends to promote growing socio-spatial fragmentation, which Lefebvre (1991, 2003) associates in a broader sense with notions of explosion, implosion and dispersion of urban space, as well as of separation, segmentation, segregation and discrimination, promoted among other things by gentrification processes. Urban interventions aimed at creating new speculative opportunities, in the form of urban renewal and some road infrastructure interventions, also associated with gentrification and the move to the peripheries, are part of the processes of ‘creative destruction’ and ‘accumulation by dispossession’ described by Harvey (2005, 2008).

At the same time, housing becomes one of the most important commodities in this regard. Although (and because) its ‘use-value’ is crucial to human life, the access to approved housing is increasingly governed by its ‘exchange-value’, excluding lower strata of the population who cannot afford it through official market systems or even when some sort of state support is provided. The intensity of urban housing problems has shifted geographically over time, being now more acute in countries with low economic performance, such as most southern African countries. These tend to reflect rapid urbanisation processes and urban realities marked by great socio-spatial disparities. Areas without adequate living and housing conditions, usually on the periphery of urban centres, occupy significant portions of the territory, as in Maputo.

Housing is thus viewed as an essential element to be addressed in the attempt to reduce existing urban socio-spatial disparities. As described by various authors – such as Chiodelli (2016), Croese, Cirolia, and Graham (2016) and Jenkins, Smith, and Wang
(2007) – in Southern Africa (and in the Global South in general), official direct actions to deal with the increasing urban housing demand, especially from lower income groups, constituting the urban majority, take one of two main forms: top-down housing provision; and aided self-help, which includes site-and-service schemes and upgrading. Both these actions are usually undertaken by the state, but can also involve other agents. As pointed out by Jenkins, Smith, and Wang (2007), in these post-independence contexts, limited financial capacity and, sometimes, also political interest, resulted in the involvement of other agents, besides the state, in funding and determining different approaches to housing. International agencies in particular were most influential in the promotion of aided self-help initiatives, especially between the early 1970s and early 1980s, after which there was a shift towards what is considered rather an ‘enabling’ approach (Jenkins et al 2007, Chiodelli 2016, Croese et al 2016).

Since these official strategies are unable to respond to the great urban housing demand from low-income populations, which is proportional to the current rapid urbanisation process in these countries, a third alternative is created by the poorest sectors: that of land occupation and housing construction by various processes established by the grassroots, some of which are described by Bayat (1997) as the ‘quiet encroachment of the ordinary’. The variety and complexity of these bottom-up processes, which can also be named as the self-production of urban space (Melo 2015),

1 The use of this term has also been debated and adopted by other researchers of the Urban Socio-Territorial and Local Intervention Study Group (GESTUAL), of the Research Centre for Architecture, Urbanism and Design (CIAUD), of the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Lisbon (FA-UL).
have been studied and reflected upon by various authors (see for example Hansen and Vaa 2004, Huchzermeyer and Karam 2006, Roy and AlSayyad 2004).

This scenario expresses different levels of appropriation of space and of its production processes by low-income populations, as conceived by Lefebvre (1991, 2003, 2009), in this case through housing. The top-down provision of housing, especially when performed at scale, is an example of what Lefebvre associates with a habitat ‘imposed from above as the application of a homogeneous global and quantitative space, a requirement that “lived experience” allow itself to be enclosed in boxes, cages, or “dwelling machines”’ (2003:81). These spaces, which emerge within the capitalist mode of production, are frequently associated with ‘dormitory’ areas located in distant peripheries.

As also referred to by Huchzermeyer (2014), for Lefebvre (1991, 2003, 2009) such housing production tends to repress fundamental characteristics of urban life – such as the diversity of ways of living and cultural aspects, values and rhythms of everyday life – and to be poorly related to people's desire for creative work, which is associated with grassroots appropriation of the production of space. Lefebvre mentions that a human being cannot ‘possess a dwelling in which he lives, without also possessing more (or less) than himself: his relation to the possible and the imaginary’ and ‘[i]f we do not provide him with […] the possibility of inhabiting poetically or of inventing a poetry, he will create it as best he can’ (2001:82). As such, top-down or state housing supply tends to be gradually the object of different levels of appropriation by their inhabitants.

By contrast, for Lefebvre, in self-produced areas ‘appropriation of remarkably high order is to be found’ and social order is translated ‘into the territorial reality with or
without direct orders from economic and political authorities’ (2001:374). Aided self-help areas, either site-and-service schemes or upgrading, in which official authorities’ interventions also take into account the housing construction undertaken by the low-income population, present different levels of appropriation between top-down housing supply and self-production.

In Mozambique, top-down low-cost housing supply was anticipated in housing policies, programmes and guidelines. In Maputo, since the mid-1990s – a period in which, as usually accepted, the current neoliberal context has been consolidated in the country – its provision increasingly involved other agents besides the state and tends to originate more frequently from displacements (due to specific urban interventions or natural calamities) and less from the aim to address low-income population housing needs alone. However, low-cost housing supply has not been extensive. In this context of limited resources, housing policies, programmes and guidelines have always paid special attention to aided self-help housing, promoted especially through the provision of parcelled-out land, with different levels of infrastructure, as described in the next part. Both direct housing supply and aided self-help housing, neither of which are able to address the low-income urban housing demand, are thus followed by a significant process of self-production of space.

More recently, in some southern African countries, top-down low-cost housing supply has been the object of some research and reflection – see for example Boshoff, Kachepa and Pienaar (2013), Charlton (2010, 2014), Croese (2013), Goeble (2007), Gooding (2016), Landman and Napier (2010), Otieno (2014) and Viegas (2015) – maybe due to a relative increase in this type of housing provision in the last two decades, particularly evident in South Africa. Yet, in Mozambique, the rather limited
occurrence of top-down low-cost housing supply may be one reason why these experiences have been under-studied, in comparison to more extensive aided self-help or self-produced areas which have been the subject of recent studies (eg Lage 2001, Raposo and Salvador 2004, 2007, and the ‘Home Space’ research – Jenkins 2013 and http://www.homespace.dk).  Even so, examples of a few works can be pointed out: Jenkins (1998) focuses on shelter policy initiatives in close association with housing the urban poor on the periphery; Tique (2007) on operational criteria and methodological instruments for planning housing for the low-income; and Melo and Viegas (2014) analyse public housing initiatives in Maputo in comparison with Luanda.

This article discusses the theme from a different perspective to these previous studies, but builds on them and draws on empirical material to illuminate the areas of low-cost housing supply in Maputo, bottom-up responses to them and their spatial consequences. The article is based on information gathered during fieldwork undertaken in Maputo between 2011 and 2013, which entailed two main actions: interviews – 48 of which with knowledgeable informants and 40 with residents in top-down low-cost housing supply interventions and neighbouring areas – and surveys in these areas to register and then map their housing characteristics. The argument is developed in two parts: the first presents a brief overview of top-down low-cost housing supply in the Mozambican context, with special attention to the current neoliberal context; the second analyses bottom-up responses and territorial consequences in different development phases of such interventions.

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2 ‘Home Space’ research was developed between 2009 and 2012 and was a collaboration between several institutional partners and researchers.
Low-cost housing supply in the Mozambican context

Since Mozambican independence, housing policies were never explicitly consolidated as such, but short term programmes and main guidelines were established and various initiatives regarding housing took place. These are reviewed in the next two sections, with the objective better to understand the current nature of low-cost housing supply in Maputo and introduce some paradigmatic experiences in this domain.

Low-cost housing supply and housing policies, programmes and guidelines

In the first years of independence, Mozambique was governed by the socialist single-party Frelimo and the reduction of socio-spatial disparities inherited from the colonial period was considered a priority with regard to urban development. Right after independence, land was nationalised, as well as rental and abandoned houses and apartments. Simultaneously, aided self-help housing was the most promoted response to the housing shortage that affected especially low-income populations, in the face of limited resources and increasing economic decline, fuelled by the prolonged civil war that started in 1977 and ended in 1992, and in the face of the weakening of public institutions and their capacity to intervene.

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3 By the first Constitution of independent Mozambique, of 1975, and latter reaffirmed by the first Land Law (Law n.º 6/1979) and the current Land Law (Law-decree n.º 19/1997).

4 By Law-decree n.º 5/1976 (as quoted in Raposo 2007).

5 As in the III and IV Frelimo Congresses, in 1977 and 1983 respectively, and in the 1ª National Reunion about Cities and Communal Neighbourhoods (I Reunião Nacional sobre Cidades e Bairros Comunais), in 1979 (CEDH 2006; Jenkins 1998).
The opening to the market economy, and the political decentralisation process that started in the mid-1980s, promoted significant socio-economic and political changes in Mozambique and led to the consolidation in the country of the current neoliberal context. With regard to housing, new agents besides the state emerged in the formulation of policies and programmes. As mentioned by Tique (2007), aided self-help housing was still acknowledged by the National Housing Policy, elaborated in the late 1980s with the participation of the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements. The same happened with other short-term programmes implemented during the transition period of the late 1980s and 1990s, namely: the Urban Rehabilitation Project, financed by the World Bank, which integrated the 1997 Government Programme; and the National Programme of Social Housing, elaborated by the Ministry of Construction and Water (CEDH 2006).

Although these two programmes also promoted the supply of some low-cost housing, Jenkins (1998) points out that the National Housing Policy was more focused on the privatisation of state housing stock and on building new housing units, but did not attend in practice to the needs of the majority of low-income residents.

The supply of low-cost housing has also been encouraged since the mid-1990s and in the first decade of the new millennium by the Mozambican Housing Development Fund. This institution was created in 1995 (Decree No. 24/1995) to

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6 Jenkins (1998) mentions that this policy was approved in 1990, but Tique (2007) elaborates that although it was reviewed in the Mozambican Parliament, it was not voted upon and never came into force.

7 The privatisation of rental and abandoned houses nationalised in 1976 was declared by Law No. 2/1991 and Law-decree No. 5/1991 (as quoted in Raposo 2007).
provide financial support to government housing programmes, with a special focus on low-income populations. The revenues from state housing stock privatisation played an important role in this regard and reduction in such revenues led to changes in the Housing Development Fund legal framework, in 2010 (Decree No. 65/2010). In the context of recent and uneven economic growth, promoted by the discovery and exploitation of natural resources, and in line with the now consolidated neoliberal ideology, the Housing Development Fund currently does not focus on low-income populations in particular. Instead, it embraces various domains of housing promotion and is firstly concerned with gaining revenues through housing projects directed at the middle class, which it then intends to reinvest in site-and-service projects or low-cost housing supply (interview with Housing Development Fund official, October 1 and November 12, 2012).  

Towards the turn of the new millennium, Jenkins (1998) observed that, in spite of political motivation and technical assistance, there was little development of housing policies in Mozambique. This observation remains valid today, since the Housing Policy and Strategy, approved in 2011 (Resolution No. 19/2011), is limited in terms of both content and operational potential. Moreover, state discourses on housing related to low-income populations, which characterised the guidelines formulated in the first years of independence, have been gradually overshadowed in the neoliberal context by market-driven strategies directed at other income groups. Although aided self-help housing never ceased to be considered and promoted, top-down low-cost housing supply tends to be relegated to second place. In addition, the circumstances in which

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8 The limitations and failures of this strategy are analysed by Melo (2015) and are now further challenged by the economic difficulties Mozambique started to face once again around 2015.
such interventions occur are rarely motivated by the single aim of addressing housing shortages of low-income populations, as discussed in the next section.

**Current top-down or state practices of low-cost housing supply**

Despite the programmes and initiatives that initially promoted top-down low-cost housing supply, the areas where it took place since the mid-1980s are not extensive. Although some strategies may have been developed to respond strictly to low-income populations’ housing needs, the majority and the most significant interventions are above all a response to displacements related to: (1) urban renewal and road infrastructure interventions; and (2) natural calamities and disasters. As with housing policies and programmes since the mid-1980s, such low-cost housing supply initiatives increasingly involve not only the state, but also other agents.

**Low-cost housing supply in response to housing needs**

Information is scarce regarding both the amount of low-cost housing supplied and the motives. For example, in spite of the emphasis on aided self-help housing during the socialist period, the Local Organs Reform Programme\(^9\) mentions that about 3,000 houses were built by the state for low-income groups in Greater Maputo\(^10\) (as quoted in Oppenheimer and Raposo 2002:85), but there is no indication where precisely or under which circumstances. The same is true of the 2,000 low-cost houses supplied across the country, between 1995 and 2005, by

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\(^9\) Programa de Reforma dos Órgãos Locais

\(^10\) As mentioned above, the socialist period in Mozambique began just after independence, in 1975, and lasted until mid-1980s.
the Development Housing Fund (Tique 2007:113). Yet, the Project 100 Houses, developed since the mid-1980s by public and religious entities and foreign donors, can be identified as an example of low-cost housing supply which responded exclusively to the housing needs of low-income populations. The project, located in the northern neighbourhood Zimpeto, intended to improve living and housing conditions of the farmers of the General Union of Cooperatives by providing 100 houses, although only about 60 units were built.

Low-cost housing supply resulting from urban renewal and road infrastructure

The opening to the market economy and the subsequent consolidation of the neoliberal context had particular consequences for Maputo’s urban development. As pointed out by various authors (Jorge 2016, Melo 2015, Raposo et al 2012), a series of market-driven interventions (re)emerged, involving central and local government entities and both national and international investors, moved by different interests: more central and valuable areas are the object of urban renewal interventions and there is a growing investment in road infrastructure. Most of these interventions imply displacement processes of different scales and characteristics, some involving low-cost housing supply in new localities, especially in the 1990s.

With regard to urban renewal interventions, it is worth mentioning three specific provisions of low-cost houses to families displaced from: (1) apartment buildings in the city centre, due to their renewal under the Urban Rehabilitation Project (Jorge 2016) – 370 houses were supplied in Maputo and Beira, subject of a similar intervention (CEDH 2006:10, Tique 2007:93); (2) an area in the northern Albazine neighbourhood, where a
Military Neighbourhood was built – about 20 houses were provided;\textsuperscript{11} and (3), in 2001, an area of a neighbourhood closer to the city centre, where a religious entity intended to build a social facility – 32 houses were provided. As for road infrastructure interventions, the most paradigmatic experience results from National Road Nº.4 upgrading, in the mid-1990s, which aimed to boost the economic expansion pole of the Maputo-Witbank Corridor. It involved the National Road Administration and the construction company CMC, which supplied approximately 350 houses in Maputo,\textsuperscript{12} in an area of Magoanine B neighbourhood now called CMC, after the construction company, or White Houses, a characteristic of the houses supplied (Figure 1). In all of these interventions the displacement process tends to entail some sort of prior negotiation with the affected families, but in general they are little involved in the process and move to the new place just after the houses are built.

*Low-cost housing supply as a result from natural calamities and disasters*

Maputo has been frequently exposed to floods, but those in 2000 were particularly severe, with a high number of victims stimulating a significant amount of low-cost housing supply, especially in the northern neighbourhood Magoanine

\textsuperscript{11} The number of houses supplied was estimated according to information collected during the fieldwork and through Google Earth satellite imagery observation. The same applies to the subsequent numbers presented in this and the next paragraph.

\textsuperscript{12} In the neighbouring city of Matola, a similar number of houses was also supplied following National Road Nº. 4 upgrading.
C, in an area now called Matendene,\textsuperscript{13} but also in the surrounding districts of Matola (eg Khongolote neighbourhood) and Marracuene (eg Mumemo 4 de Outubro neighbourhood). In Maputo, the process was conducted by its municipal council, according to Raposo (2007) with the support of the NGO Care International Mozambique, but also involving multilateral organisations, agencies from foreign countries, various civil society organisations and the beneficiaries themselves. The beneficiaries were particularly involved in: organising the relocation of the affected families and their reception in the new locations; parcelling out of plots; plot cleaning and delimitation; and definition and construction of some of the low-cost houses supplied. Approximately 560 of these were provided in this city (Figure 1) and the numbers were similar in Matola, where the Housing Development Fund was also involved, and in Marracuene. Although numbers are not available, it is also worth noticing the supply of some low-cost houses by the Ministry of National Defence to families who were greatly affected by the explosion of the Malhazine military magazine, in 2007.

**Bottom-up responses to low-cost housing supply and spatial consequences**

*Under the hardship of displacement processes*

The violence level of displacement processes is related to various aspects, such as: their causes and implementation processes; the distance of the new houses to employment,

\textsuperscript{13} Matendene – Shangaan borrowing meaning ‘tents’ or ‘place of tents’, since these were the first shelters provided in that area to the displaced families.
income generation opportunities, services and social facilities; the extent of rupture with ways of living and with social and economic networks; and the amount and value of goods lost and gained, among others. The areas available for low-cost housing supply tend to be distant from the city centre, where the majority of economic activities occur, in little-occupied peripheries, with limited infrastructure and social facilities or with none. The areas presented in the article (Figure 1) are located about 20 km away from the city centre. In the beginning of the occupations, meagre road infrastructure also makes it difficult to access the city centre and maintain social and economic networks.

Adding to these aspects is the fact that the houses supplied, in general detached or semi-detached (Figure 2), usually have small dimensions and may present construction problems. The houses supplied can either be seen as a gain or a loss, depending on the housing conditions the beneficiaries had before, but the fact that the houses are supplied in rather large plots of about 450m², in a few cases even bigger, is usually considered a positive aspect. The size of the plots also facilitates the anticipated future improvement and extension of the houses.

In the beginning of the occupation such displacement hardships tend to motivate some beneficiaries to rent or sell their houses and return to areas closer the city centre or to where they lived before. Interviews with residents who remained (January-March 2013), confirm a first negative perception of the new place of residence, due to its distance from the city centre and isolation, scanty infrastructure and social facilities, as well as construction problems with the houses. In the displacements that resulted from urban renewal and road infrastructure interventions, developers’ failure to attend to

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14 Some authors, like Bredenoord and Lindert (2010), may consider such small low-cost houses as core housing, therefore as part of aided self-help schemes.
some aspects initially negotiated, as well as loss of goods due to lack of support during the transference, are also causes for discontent that the interviewees have indicated.

In the case of the floods of 2000, dissatisfaction also arose from irregularities within the process, such as the undue allocation of plots and houses to families who were not affected by the floods. Yet, in this case, such motives tended to be softened and justified by the difficulties inherent in a context of calamity and lack of resources to intervene. This also highlights some positive aspects in the eyes of the residents and other agents involved, such as: organisation of the process, in spite of the difficulties; the Maputo Municipal Council effort to dialogue with the communities and to promote their involvement in the process; and the exemplary land parcelling and occupation norms prescribed and disseminated.

*Territory occupation, upgrading and adaptation: the appropriation process*

With time, a process of progressive space appropriation began, at different scales and at different levels. This appropriation entailed the simultaneous occupation of the surrounding territory by new incoming residents, which was encouraged by low-cost housing supply interventions and subsequent upgrading interventions, again driven by various agents, which made these areas more attractive, as well as by the widespread effects of the floods of 2000.

On the one hand low-cost housing supply tends to promote the subsequent occupation of the surrounding territory – expansion of the original settlement area both through aided self-help housing initiatives and processes of self-production of space – by offering greater legitimacy and incentive to such occupations, which become opportunities for people to find a place to live (Figure 3). As stated by one resident,
people began to see that the bush can turn into city’ (interview January-March, 2013).

This legitimacy is also supported by the relative leeway given to grassroots urban interventions in Mozambique, as pointed out by Melo (2015), expressed for example in:

1. the recognition of land occupation through customary rights and *usucapião* 15 after ten years of occupation in good faith, by the Land Law in force (Law-decree No. 19/1997);

2. the various experiences that aimed to disseminate norms to guide such grassroots’ intervention, through *planning instruments* – eg the manual produced by the Ministry of Public Works and Housing in 1976, largely disseminated within the Communal Villages (Nielsen 2011, Raposo 1988) and more recently, in 2006, the Manual of Basic Techniques of Territorial Planning (MICOA and DINAPOT 2006) – and *practices* – eg during the exemplary upgrading experience of Maxaquene and Polana Caniço neighbourhoods that occurred between 1977 and 1979, funded by the United Nations (Jorge, 2016), and the transference process to Matendene of families affected by the floods of 2000, led by Maputo Municipal Council, as mentioned before;

3. and the promotion of aided self-help housing by housing policies, programmes and guidelines, as well as consequent practices of providing plots for this purpose, whether as displacement interventions or not. [fix layout indent above]

On the other hand, the occupation of surrounding areas is also supported and accelerated by the neighbourhood upgrading that accompanies most significant

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15 In Roman law, *usucapião* refers to ownership acquired by use or by length of possession. In this case it refers to the right acquired to occupy and to use land, if the occupation has not been challenged by any other entity or person with legal right to do so.
interventions of low-cost housing supply, as in CMC and Matendene (Figure 3). In these two areas some water supply points were installed through boreholes, the first rough improvement of main road infrastructure was provided, and, in Matendene, some social facilities were built. These interventions served the beneficiaries of the low-cost housing, as well as the residents who occupied the surrounding territory afterwards.

As the area expanded in physical size and in population, residents were able to press for the installation of electricity, through individual requests addressed to Electricity of Mozambique (EDM) or to the neighbourhood administration, which then sent them together to EDM. Electricity supply networks were installed when the number of residents was considered significant, as mentioned by one resident ‘they waited to see the neighbourhood with more people’ (interview January-March 2013). With electricity, water supply networks, based on boreholes with electrical pumps, were also installed more extensively, both by the Investment Fund and Assets of Water Supply (FIPAG) and private investors, sometimes the residents themselves. An official of Maputo Municipal Council explained that, although energy and water supply should accompany such kind of interventions led by the public sector, they tend to be installed afterwards, when the number of residents assures the return of the amount invested in the networks: ‘it’s a commercial question’, he stated (interview January 10, 2013).

In addition to these upgrading interventions, main access roads were paved, enhancing their previous improvement (Figure 4), and some social facilities were built. Yet, accessibility to Maputo centre remains critical and residents complain, among other aspects, about: long and costly commuting times, due to traffic and inadequate road infrastructure; and insufficient means of transportation – ‘the central problem is transportation for our trips to town’ (interview January-March 2013). As mentioned by
the residents interviewed, social facilities also remain insufficient, especially health facilities but also educational ones – ‘schools we have, but they cannot take all children each year’ (interview January-March 2013).

At the same time and according to each family’s economic resources, an improvement process of the houses supplied takes place, which includes different kinds of intervention: simple gardening; exterior painting; housing extensions and the construction of annexes. In some cases the original house may become unrecognisable and the improvements conducted may evidence exterior signs of relative wealth (Figure 5). In others, some of the interventions may relate to the development of various economic activities: trade of food products and smaller consumer goods, hair salons, tailoring and carpentries, among others. Such economic activities, besides generating income, provide some goods, services and, especially, employment, which are still reduced in these areas.

Occupation of land and upgrading, housing improvements and the gradual remaking of social ties and life in these areas and its surroundings are accompanied by an adaptation or habituation process, mentioned by various residents: ‘you end up getting used [to the place]’ said one (interview January-March 2013). Under this process and as time passes, the dissatisfaction and the difficulties felt in the beginning tend to be gradually overcome and to give place to a positive evaluation of the area. This is expressed by the majority of the residents interviewed, some showing even unwillingness to leave the place: ‘I love it here’, ‘no one can take me out of here’, explains one of them (interview January-March 2013).

The reasons for such positive evaluations are more related to the characteristics of the area where they live and not so much with the houses themselves. Of the various
aspects mentioned by the residents the following stand out: (1) some related to rural areas, such as the large size of the plots, the possibility of having vegetable gardens and animal husbandry and the freshness of the area – ‘here we are wide’, ‘here is fresh, is calm’, ‘I like to live outside, not only inside the house’ (interviews January-March 2013); (2) others related to the urban development of these areas, which now have electricity and water supply (although with a few limitations), some social facilities and markets, as well as an orthogonal layout (common in these areas and related to state led interventions), security, organisation, better accessibility and urbanity – ‘here is organised by government itself’, ‘the parcelling out is well done’, ‘[it] has a whole city map’ (interviews January-March 2013). The improvements to the houses supplied, as well as the freedom to perform them, are also pointed out by some residents – ‘I have a space only for my self-management’, ‘here a person is able to do what a person wants, a machamba,16 even if the house is small [we] extend’ (interviews January-March 2013).

Subsequent gentrification processes

The population which occupied these areas in a first phase was generally low-income. Families from this social group are the most affected by displacements and the ones most likely to live in areas with little accessibility, infrastructure and social facilities (or none), due to lack of other options, although some may also want a more rural way of life. Nevertheless, with the increase in land occupation and upgrading, as well as with the greater legitimacy of the occupation, now also enhanced by upgrading interventions led by the public sector, these areas become more attractive and are consequently subject to growing value. In a second phase of the occupation, they are thus sought by

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16 Machamba – derived from the Shangaan, meaning in this case a vegetable garden.
families from social groups with greater resources than the first ones. Some of these families rent their apartments in the city centre for lucrative values and others even sell them to come to these further away areas, seeking to gain additional income and reduce their housing costs or even searching for a different kind of life style, among other motives. Both pressure over land and its increase in value promote the beginning of gentrification processes, with different intensities according to each area’s characteristics, in which ‘[the] market dictates its rules’, as noted by one official of Maputo Municipal Council (interview January 10, 2013).

This difference between areas is evident in two examples of the most significant interventions of low-cost housing supply, CMC and Matendene. In CMC, where low-cost housing was supplied in the late 1990s due to National Road No.4 upgrading, in an area now more valuable since it is close to a main access road that was subsequently paved, the number of beneficiaries who traded houses is much higher than in Matendene, where houses were provided after the floods of 2000 in an area with worse accessibility (Figure 6). The arrival of new residents with more resources has consequences for the territory, increasing the number of houses improved or even demolished and rebuilt. In CMC, the number of houses demolished and rebuilt or that evidence greater improvements in a finished stage of construction also tends to be higher than in Matendene, where such interventions are usually more modest or still incomplete (Figure 7), expressing higher levels of gentrification in CMC.

In addition to the accessibility of the area, such differences may be motivated by other factors, like: the age of the occupation, the motive of the relocation, more or less participatory processes of occupation, the distance between each area and the city centre, the quality and intensity of the upgrading process, the quality of the houses
supplied and the beneficiaries’ socio-economic profile. However, more studies need to be conducted to fully understand these dynamics and the level of influence of each of these motives.

Beyond the fact that some of the initial low-income population is being replaced by social groups with more resources, more research also need to be developed to better understand how such replacement is being performed and which are the impacts on the poorest ones. Yet, these processes are usually associated with socio-spatial exclusion or segregation, which result from structural economic forces and socio-economic inequalities, as mentioned by Thomas Schelling (1980, as quoted in Lehman-Frisch, 2009) and Cavalcanti (2009). Lemanski (2014), when confronting gentrification, more linked in Anglophone literature to the Global North, and downward raiding, usually related to the Global South, identifies in both displacement and exclusion processes. This exclusion is partly related to an imbalance of power during the negotiation process, as Harvey (2008) points out. This led, for example, to transactions performed below market price in other areas in Maputo, where gentrification processes have been identified by Jorge (2016) and Melo (2015).

Conclusions

In independent Mozambique, top-down low-cost housing supply was always limited by various aspects, among which the state’s reduced economic resources and lack of institutional capacity to intervene stand out. Even so, housing policies, programmes and guidelines have promoted some interventions of this kind, involving various agents besides the state, although the Mozambican Housing Development Fund played an important role in this regard, especially until 2010. In the neoliberal context,
low-income housing supply tends to be relegated to second place. Simultaneously, it is less motivated by the single aim of addressing the housing shortage that affects low-income populations and more associated with a form of compensation for displacements. These are associated with both urban renewal and road infrastructure interventions, performed within an urbanisation process moved by the capitalist logic, as well as natural calamities.

Displacements are always to some extent violent processes that affect especially lower social strata, already the most vulnerable and most affected by existing socio-spatial disparities. Top-down low-cost housing supply as a response to displacements, usually in distant areas with various insufficiencies, is a way of minimising the hardships of the process but not the socio-spatial disparities. The beneficiaries’ negative perception of these areas in the first phase of the occupation and the abandonment of some of the houses in this period is a consequence of the difficulties intrinsic to this kind of intervention.

As time passes, socio-spatial disparities begin to be reduced to a certain extent, as a result of a process of progressive space appropriation, not only of the houses themselves, but also of the surrounding territory as more people move to the area. Further occupation of the territory occurs through either aided self-help housing or self-production of space and is accompanied by upgrading interventions and the remaking of social ties and life. With this, beneficiaries' levels of satisfaction, pressure over land and the ‘exchange-value’ of land and housing rise, consequently inducing gentrification processes of different intensities, which are motivated by different factors. As such, part of the low-income population who benefited from top-down low-cost housing provided as compensation for the displacements that originated the majority of
these areas, and from the improvements introduced over time, tends to be dislodged again, a process usually associated with exclusion.

In this context of rapid urbanisation developed under the current capitalist mode of production, and having in consideration the socio-spatial disparities it keeps promoting, it remains important to question and better understand not only how interventions of top-down low-cost housing supply can contribute to effectively improve the housing conditions and quality of life of the urban poor, but also by which mechanisms the permanence of the initial beneficiaries in the areas subsequently improved and valued may be promoted.

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Figure 1. Location of some top-down low-cost housing supply interventions in Maputo

Note: 1 – low-cost housing supply in Magoanine B (CMC), due to National Road Nº. 4 upgrading; 2 – low-cost housing supply in Magoanine C (Matendene), due to the floods of 2000; 3 – low-cost housing supply in Albazine, due to the construction of a Military Neighbourhood; 4 – low-cost housing supply in Magoanine C, due to the construction of a social facility; source – author with satellite imagery from Google Earth © 2015 DigitalGlobe

Figure 2. Examples of detached and semi-detached houses supplied in Maputo
Note: from left to right, first row – detached houses in Matendene in the beginning of the occupation* and detached houses in CMC**; second row – semi-detached houses in Matendene**; source – © 2001/2003 NGO AMDU*; © 2011/2013 Melo**

Figure 3. Occupation of Matendene’s surrounding areas between 2004 and 2015
Note: first row – 2004; second row – 2015; source – author with satellite imagery from Google Earth © 2015 DigitalGlobe

Figure 4. Examples of upgrading interventions
Figure 5. Examples of housing improvements

Note: from left to right, first row – gardening in Albazine (number 3 of Figure 1) and housing extension in Matendene (number 2 of Figure 1); second row – housing extension with construction of annexes in CMC (number 1 of Figure 1) and housing improvement that evidence exterior signs of relative wealth in Matendene (number 2 of Figure 1); source – © 2013 Melo
Figure 6. Original housing beneficiaries’ permanence in CMC and Matendene spatial samples

Note: from left to right – CMC and Matendene spatial samples;  original housing beneficiary,  sold house,  house passed by unknown processes,  rented house,  plot not assigned to housing function,  without information,  plot that does not belong to low-cost housing supply area; source – author with underlying satellite imagery from Google Earth © 2015 DigitalGlobe
Figure 7. Housing improvements in CMC and Matendene spatial samples

Note: from left to right, first row – CMC and Matendene spatial samples; second row – two story house built in CMC after the demolition of the original low-cost house supplied and housing improvement in Matendene; not extended low-cost house, extended low-cost house, demolished low-cost house and construction of new one, two low-cost houses supplied in one plot, one extended and one not, two houses in one plot, one supplied and extended low-cost house and one aided self-help house, two houses in one plot, one supplied and not extended low-cost house and one aided self-help house, unaided self-help house, empty plot, plot not assigned to housing function; source – author with satellite imagery from Google Earth © 2015 DigitalGlobe
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Note: from left to right, first row – gardening in Albazine (number 3 of Figure 1) and housing extension in Matendene (number 2 of Figure 1); second row – housing extension with construction of annexes in CMC (number 1 of Figure 1) and housing improvement that evidence exterior signs of relative wealth in Matendene (number 2 of Figure 1); source – © 2013 Melo
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