



# “*Não há Nada*” (There is nothing)

## Absent Headshots and Identity Documents in Independent Mozambique

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**ABSTRACT:** By 1983, Mozambique was seven years into independence from Portugal, and at war on two fronts. Under the control of the former liberation movement *Frente da Libertação de Moçambique* (Frelimo), Mozambique experienced military attacks at its borders from neighboring apartheid South Africa. Inside of Mozambique, populations confronted famine and long lines for government services. Compelled to act, Frelimo launched *Operação Produção*, a program that relocated populations from overcrowded cities to the countryside in the northern province of Niassa. Two weeks into the program, state officials required people to present photo IDs. Not only were people without accepted forms of identification but many had never seen a headshot of themselves. Too often the literature on bureaucracy and technology focuses on South Africa, not Mozambique, and it undervalues the importance of photography. Similarly, photographic studies assume that photographs exist in printed form and that state governments all have the same capacities to archive and retrieve IDs. Breaking with these bodies of literature as well as Mozambique’s nationalist historiography, I prioritize photography. Through oral interviews and visual analysis of news coverage, I historicize the introduction of IDs in Mozambique after independence and explain how state and non-state actors addressed photography’s absence. The unavailability and irregular use of headshots and IDs during *Operação Produção* allowed state and non-state actors to design new technologies and strategies for visual representation that defy academic and conventional

**NOTE: THESE ARE UNCORRECTED PAGE PROOFS. NO IMAGES HAVE BEEN INCLUDED.**

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understandings of bureaucratic technologies of surveillance and photographic representation.

## Introduction

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In May 1983, Mozambique's government announced plans to alleviate overcrowding in cities. Newspaper headlines referred to this project as "volunteers for production," "evacuation from cities," and "Operação Produção" ("Operation Production"). The inside pages of newspapers featured photographs of Mozambique's president and government officials announcing the policy at meetings and rallies.<sup>1</sup> The initiative involved relocating populations from major cities, like the capital Maputo, to rural areas. The goal was for selected populations to work on underdeveloped farmlands. For the first two weeks of July, the government invited people to volunteer. Thereafter came the compulsory phase.

At any point during Operação Produção, government officials could request an individual's identity documents. Absences or irregularities in documentation led officials to classify people as unemployed (*desempregados*) or unproductive (*improdutivo*), categories that warranted relocation. However, civilians had limited access to the accepted forms of identification. In fact, many people had never used photo identification let alone seen their faces through headshots. In a five-year span (1983–88), Operação Produção displaced an estimated 100,000 people.<sup>2</sup> But, its effects were more widespread when taking into account contemporary debates over the need for identity documentation. In this article, I explore the roles of headshots and identity documents and how their absence impacted Operação Produção.

Operação Produção was part of broader histories and processes of state formation and surveillance that marked Mozambique's territorial standing as a colony and as an independent nation. The documentation and policing of Mozambicans dated to colonial rule. Portugal had classified populations according to race and birthplace and had instituted a pass system to police racial hierarchies. The exiled liberation movement *Frente da Libertação de Moçambique* (Frelimo) launched a war for Mozambique's independence in 1964 from exile in Tanzania. Over the war's duration, the Frelimo's leadership and affiliated soldiers used the *guia-da-marcha*, a typed paper document without a photograph, to identify and track the movements of its members. After the decade-long war, Mozambique achieved independence from Portugal in 1975. The independent state

1. "Beira: Voluntários para a produção," *Diário de Moçambique*, 24 Maio 1983 (Accessed through the Center for Library Research); and, "Directiva ministerial sobre evacuação das cidades," *Notícias*, 20 Junho 1983, 3 (Accessed through Mozambicanhistory.net).

2. Colin Darch, "Operação Produção, May 1983–May 1988," Mozambique History Net, [http://www.mozambiquehistory.net/op\\_producao.php](http://www.mozambiquehistory.net/op_producao.php).



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apparatus under the control of the political party Frelimo continued to accept colonial-era documentation, like the passport and identity cards. Also, the state under Frelimo introduced new forms of photo identification, including the worker's, ration, and residency cards, all modelled after the liberation-era *guia-da-marcha*.

There was no nationwide effort to ensure that everyone in independent Mozambique had photo identification. Indeed, public skepticism had greeted the government's attempts to register populations. In 1980, the state conducted a census. According to people's reported experiences, the census replicated colonial-era identification practices.<sup>3</sup> Operação Produção occurred eight years after independence amid the introduction of new forms of state identification and, more broadly, when South Africa escalated military attacks on Mozambique. By 1983, the Mozambican government had relied on practices of representation and surveillance associated with popular uses of photographic documentation and the surveillance practices that the colonial Portuguese state had adopted.

Operação Produção intensified the public's demand for headshots since the government required headshots as part of the issuing of photo identification. The process for obtaining photo documentation was multi-fold and without state directives. People located studio-or street-based photographers. Yet, many sitters ventured to retrieve their headshots only to discover the photographer disappeared or that the studio lost their prints. If a person picked-up their headshots, then he/she still needed to visit the civil registry. Bureaucratic mishandling ensured that people waited years to receive photo identification. Moreover, attempts to adjoin the headshot to paper cards, whether on the part of sitters or state officials, introduced sites of defacement and absence. Ultimately, the verification of documents during Operação Produção was not about verifying who was productive or not, but who was lucky enough to get documents.

Before and after Operação Produção, Mozambicans from across the country wrote to the weekly state-run magazine *Tempo* to complain about photographers losing their headshots and the government's mishandling of their paperwork. Even so, photographers affiliated with *Tempo* photographed photographers taking the headshots of people seated in the street before a camera (See Figure 1). This style of imagery dated to the colonial period. The publication of these prints showed that it was acceptable to be seen seated before the camera or observing someone having their photo-

3. Portugal's colonial state in Mozambique used a census as a tactic to recruit workers. In 1980, also in need of population data, the independent state under Frelimo performed its own census. At this time, Frelimo officials found themselves having to combat skepticism over the census. Efforts to facilitate participation revealed how representatives of the colonial state had accused populations native to Mozambique of falsifying their birthdates as a supposed strategy to evade taxes. See, "Recenseamento de Ensaio no Maputo: Entusiástica participação popular," *Tempo*, No. 476, 25 Novembro 1979, 6 (Accessed through JSTOR ALUKA Database).

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graph taken. Nonetheless, press photographers elected to picture the street photographer and the sitters and not the actual headshots that resulted from exchanges between photographers and their clients. Therefore, these types of published photographs also alluded to the widely-accepted reality that headshots and photo documentation were inaccessible. The inability to see the physical headshot and identity documents within published photographs raised the prospect that people deemed it disadvantageous to display their headshots and/or personal photo identification.

Literature on technology and bureaucracy undervalues the content of photographs and the roles of photographers, photographed subjects, and the observers of photographic processes.<sup>4</sup> This scholarship situates the photographic image within institutional systems and practices of registration, identification, and surveillance.<sup>5</sup> Underlying these studies are assumptions that the photograph always existed in print form and that state instrumentalization of photography entailed the design and oversight of structures involved in the archiving and retrieval of these prints. In these studies, the identity document overshadows the individual headshot attached to it. This framing of photography as a surveillance technology has favored the study of South Africa, where the apartheid regime constructed a state apparatus centered on a passbook and used the passbook to enforce racial segregation.<sup>6</sup> Other studies on photography in Africa, which have steered towards West Africa and South Africa, locate the studio as a site of resistance to the state's use of photography. In effect, the studio is the site where documentary photographic practices, which inform this popular resistance, originate.<sup>7</sup> In studios, sitters supposedly participated in acts of self-fashioning, and they used the prints they purchased to contest state surveillance. This literature leaves unexplored the role of photographers based in studios in state documentary practices and the types of images

4. See, Akhil Gupta, *Red Tape: Bureaucracy, Structural Violence, and Poverty in India*; Brinkley Messick, *The Calligraphic State*; Matthew Hull, *Government of Paper: The Materiality of Bureaucracy in Urban Pakistan*; and Gabrielle Hecht, eds., *Entangled Geographies: Empire and Technopolitics in the Global Cold War*.

5. See, John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories*; Allan Sekula, "The Body and the Archive"; Keith Breckinridge, *Biometric State: The Global Politics of Identification and Surveillance in South Africa, 1850 to the Present*.

6. See, Breckinridge, *The Biometric State*; Lorena Rizzo, "Visual Aperture: Bureaucratic Systems of Identification, Photography, and Personhood in Colonial Southern Africa"; Wolfram Hartmann, Jeremy Silvester, and Patricia Hayes, eds., *Colonizing Camera: Photographs in the making of Namibian History*; and Okwui Enwezor and Rory Bester, eds., *Rise and Fall of Apartheid: Photography and the bureaucracy of Everyday Life*.

7. See, Liam Buckley, "Self and Accessory in Gambian Studio Photography"; Jennifer Bajorek, "Of Jumbled Valises and Civil Society: Photography and Political Imagination in Senegal"; Heike Behrend, *Contesting Visibility: Photographic Practices on the East African Coast*.


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that circulated at the state and popular level. Operação Produção, and the uses of photography mobilized through state enforcement and popular compliance, present several counterpoints to these bodies of scholarship.

Mozambique's proximity to South Africa ensures that its histories of photography and colonization are compared to South Africa's history. Unfortunately, the current historiography neglects to recognize that South (-ern) Africa does not share in the same modes and systems of documentation and surveillance.<sup>8</sup> To this point, studies of early twentieth century labor migration from Mozambique to South Africa suggest that South Africa modelled its pass system after similar institutional practices in Mozambique and not vice versa.<sup>9</sup> In fact, Portuguese colonial administrators communicated with counterparts in South Africa and Rhodesia regarding Mozambique's passport and border control regulations.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, when South Africa was beefing up its efforts to sow racial division, Portugal's colonial administration in Mozambique dismantled previously-enforced racial hierarchies. This dismantling had a range of implications on the organization of photographic production, and furthermore, after 1975, South Africa viewed an independent Mozambique as a political threat.

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The ubiquity and centrality of the actual pass documents did not carry over from colonial rule to periods of independence in Africa. In fact, a particular absence of the headshot and pass documents defined Mozambique after its independence. A situation developed where, on the one hand, Frelimo accepted documents issued by the colonial state, and on the other hand, it could not issue photo identification to all population segments. To address this condition, Frelimo's officials designed strategies to deploy the limited documentation available. These attempts fashioned the independent state as more organized than its predecessor.

Indeed, Mozambique's postcolonial photographic practices along with those associated with state surveillance were quite distinct from the practices that unfolded elsewhere on the continent following decolonization. The photographic practices that developed after independence in East and West Africa were foreign to Mozambique.<sup>11</sup> After 1975, photographers in Mozambique faced supply shortages that hindered the production of headshots. In order to provide headshots, photographers ceased taking photographs of families, baptisms, and weddings. There was no shadow archive, as understood by cultural theorist Allan Sekula, that allowed there to be

8. Breckinridge, *Biometric State*; and, Rizzo, "Visual Aperture."

9. See Jeanne Penvenne, *African Workers and Colonial Racism: Mozambican Strategies and Struggles in Lourenço Marques, 1877–1962*; Patrick Harries, *Work, Culture, and Identity: Migrant Laborers in Mozambique and South Africa, c. 1860–1910*.

10. Chief of Partition of Office, Correspondence to the Consulate of Portugal in Leopoldville, May 31, 1951, Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique, Maputo, Mozambique, 1.

11. See, Buckley, "Self and Accessory"; Bajorek, "Of Jumbled Valises"; and Behrend, *Contesting Visibility*.



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many types of photographs through which honorific and oppressive uses of portraiture functioned in tandem.<sup>12</sup> All that was present with regards to photography was an absence, hence the Portuguese phrase “*Não há nada*” (“There is nothing”). State representatives alongside civilian populations used the unavailability and irregular uses of headshots and identity documents in Mozambique to design new strategies, in effect technologies, of visual representation.

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Countering the existing historiography on Mozambique and despite the absence of photo identification, I argue that *Operação Produção* was a visual phenomenon. More broadly, the absence of identity documents and headshots is an undervalued visual technology. Strikingly, the Mozambican state’s reliance on identity documents to implement *Operação Produção* enacted past histories of visualization and representation associated with the nation’s colonization and independence. Indeed, the state found itself involved in the looking, touching, and sounding of identity documents, what Tina Campt refers to as the haptic register.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, the logistics of obtaining headshots and the bureaucratic paperwork associated with retrieving identification consumed the daily lives of Mozambicans.

Efforts to procure identity documents forced people to assume positions waiting in lines in front of photography studios and government offices. These actions visually manifested the failures of the independent state. People standing in lines drew public ire. Not surprisingly, the state faced pressure to diminish the occurrence of lines. *Operação Produção* was fundamentally about the erasure of these lines. The article’s first section seeks to accomplish two objectives. First, I use the physical and discursive concept of the line to historicize the introduction of identity documents after Mozambique’s independence. Secondly, I highlight the changing roles of photography within these documentary regimes. Then, I shift to the enforcement of *Operação Produção*. Here, I attend to the methods of identification developed by state officials in response to the government’s inability to provide identity documents. The third section explores how Mozambicans substituted and/or rejected identity photographs and documents and the strategies of representation they adopted as a result. I conclude by turning to contemporary developments, one of which entailed the adoption of the biometric identity system. I consider the utility and implications of seeing this recent development as an innovation and as part of a historical continuum.

12. Sekula, “Body and the Archive.”

13. Tina Campt, *Listening to Images*.



## Headshots, IDs, and Lines

On three occasions, news publications and a political pamphlet published the same cartoon titled *Xiconhoca* (See Figure 2). The setting was a store where people purchased rationed food. Store shelves were empty. The spider webs suggested that there had not been food for a while. A sign on the counter read, “There is nothing,” a reference to the empty shelves. A man pointed to the sign and behind him stood men wearing shoes and bare-footed women with children on their backs. On the other side of the sign were two large figures. The figure behind the counter leaned in to whisper into the ear of the other. According to the text, there was food that the figure was willing to sell secretly. The waiting men and women were literally speechless, left to observe the exchange. They were rendered in ways that suggested expressions of disappointment, frustration, and puzzlement. The cartoon's scene resonated with the daily experiences of Mozambicans in terms of how the public visually experienced ‘nothing’ from the state—in terms of their material needs, the production of lines, and how they expressed frustration with the situations before them. The scene also alluded to the roles of photographs and identity documents in such encounters.

Mozambicans used the word “*bichas*,” which translates into English from Portuguese as “lines,” in their daily conversations to define their socioeconomic and political positions and to interpret the daily life situations that they encountered.<sup>14</sup> “*Bichas*” were part of the visual culture and material experiences shared by the state and populations. “*Bichas*,” or lines, are not the same as the Anglophone word “queue,” sequences of people or data awaiting attention. According to anthropologist Tim Ingold and art historian John Berger, lines are markings that define an image like Figure 2 as a cartoon and define its producer as a cartoonist.<sup>15</sup> Lines of ink give the figures their form and structure their interactions. There are also linguistic variations on the word “*bichas*” within the context of the Lusophone world. For example, in Portuguese spoken in Brazil, the word for line is “*fila*” and not “*bicha*,” which refers to a person that identifies as “queer.”

Mozambicans stood in lines to access food rations, government services, and identity documents. Also, some people stood *off* or to the side of these lines. These lines introduced possibilities and promises that often went unfulfilled. While waiting on line, people viewed the state. Being seen in line also had social implications for how people viewed and thought of each other. Various spoken and unspoken, seen and unseen, interactions happened in lines that remained invisible to those standing off or to the side of them. Images like Figure 2 bring to the fore these visual and (un-)spoken exchanges.

14. I credit Joshua Grace with introducing me to this concept of the line, and the writings of Katherine Verdery on this topic.

15. See, Tim Ingold, *A History of Lines*; and, John Berger, “Drawing is a Discovery.”



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The use of the ration card resulted in the exchanges illustrated in the cartoon (See Figure 3). The cartoonist positioned the people in a line, which extended beyond the entrance way. From a regulatory standpoint, the ration card sought to prevent the sale of food on black markets. Ration cards permitted Mozambicans to purchase food according to their household size. Designed more like a booklet than a “card,” the document consisted of typed and handwritten text in addition to a space for headshots. The text listed under the heading “Important” clarified that the “card” permitted shopping at a particular supermarket and that shoppers received goods only after payment. The state and supermarket reserved the right to see the document and to confiscate it if falsified. The document featured space for two headshots, one of the document holder and the other of the document holder’s spouse. According to the typed text, the spouse could use, or “substitute,” the card’s original holder in “cases of impediment.” On this card, handwriting designated the other members of the household, in this case the children, according to their names and ages. In reality, households fed many more than the persons listed on the document. Additional handwritten text identified the document holder’s and his spouse’s names and their places of work. The document also included stamps, which denoted the document’s validity.

The ration card was one document circulating in Mozambique after 1975. Holdovers from the colonial period included the identity card and passport. Between 1975 and *Operação Produção*’s start, the state introduced the worker’s and residency cards, the party card, and the *guia-da-marcha*, a document used to track people’s movements during the liberation war. The political party Frelimo introduced the worker’s card in 1978, and the year afterwards abolished colonial-era professional cards.<sup>16</sup> The introduction of new forms of identification served to dismantle colonial institutions and their legacies. However, in the process, the state ignited individual memories of colonial-era identification systems. For example, the colonial state had used documents like the passport and identity card to enforce and reconfigure its racial policies. These histories of oppression influenced photographic production and the appropriation of photographs along with creating a general confusion about the proliferation of types of identity documentation.

Histories of photography in Mozambique ignore *Operação Produção*, and the limited scholarship on *Operação Produção* does not include an analysis of photography’s role.<sup>17</sup> Photographers who practiced in the inde-

16. “Carteira Profissional: Instrumento de Sindicatos Coloniais,” *Tempo* No. 515, 24 Agosto 1980, 44–48.

17. See, Carlos Quembo, *Poder do poder: Operação Produção e a Invenção dos ‘Improdutivos’ Urbanos no Moçambique Socialista, 1983–1988*; and, Omar Ribeiro Thomaz, “Escravos sem dono”: A experiência social dos campos de trabalho em Moçambique no período socialista.”





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pendence period had experienced the documentary regimes enforced by the colonial state, and, in some instances, they produced the photographs that the colonial regime had used to issue photo identification. One of these photographers whose professional work dated to the colonial period was Henriques Fernando Cuco. In the early 1970s, Cuco worked as a cook. Cuco was of Chinese descent but the colonial Portuguese state had classified him as *indigena*, or black. As a result, he carried a passbook that permitted him to move around the city after 9 p.m. The passbook and larger colonial documentary regime created opportunities for Cuco to pursue a career in photography. Through his friend, he found a job as a laboratory assistant position at a photography studio.

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Portugal's administration initially used the passbook to enforce the racial hierarchies of white, mixed-race, *assimilado*, and *indigena*.<sup>18</sup> Male members over the age of eighteen and those employed between twelve and eighteen years of age received passbooks. American anthropologist Marvin Harris visited Mozambique in 1957, and he addressed the use of passbooks in his field notes.<sup>19</sup> "Natives," as Harris referenced black subjects, were required to carry the book on their travels, which featured salary, employment history and reasons for employment termination, tax records, a photograph, and thumbprints. The passbook included pages to describe its holders' reasons for traveling and spaces for stamps obtained after arrival at a destination. Harris cited an unnamed official, who said the following about passbooks, "Thus it will be practically impossible that an *indigena* who has been living in the city illegally or who has abandoned the service of a former employer might avoid the vigilance and supervision of authorities."<sup>20</sup> The carrying and verification of passbooks served to make black subjects more visible to colonial authorities.

The submission, retrieval, and acquisition of identity documents were part of an individual's progression through colonial-era racial hierarchies. Oddly enough, people classified as *indigena* were left without documentation. In order to move from the category of *indigena* to *assimilado*, a person had to be fluent in Portuguese, employed, and to disavow the behavioral habits associated with *indigena* culture. In order to formalize one's standing as *assimilado*, an applicant submitted a birth certificate, certification of primary school examination, and payment of property tax. Upon approval, the applicant received a document that included name, parents'

18. Portugal under the leadership of the Prime Minister António Salazar adopted a policy of "Lusotropicalism." Even after other European powers had accepted the geopolitical reality of decolonization in Africa, Portugal reaffirmed its colonizing commitments in Africa. Salazar's government purported the notion that Portugal's proximity to Africa had placed the nation and its people in the best position to colonize the continent.

19. Marvin Harris, "Social Structure and Labor Policies in Colonial Mozambique," In *Two Struggles: Mozambique (Part I)*, Centro de Estudos Africanos, Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, 17–18.

20. *Ibid.*



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names, marriage status, profession, birth date, place of birth and residency, bodily features (i.e., height, eye color, mouth, skin color, nose, and hair), a photograph, and a signature.<sup>21</sup> The colonial state duplicated submitted documents and used them along with issued passbooks as monitoring tools. A small fraction of Mozambique's *indigena* population achieved *asimilado* status. However, most *indigena* were without passbooks, birth certificates, and employment verification.

Headshots were fundamental to the operation of these identification regimes even after 1960 when Portugal attempted to abolish imposed racial hierarchies. A photographic industry consisting of studios and darkroom laboratories flourished in colonial times. Cuco's financial standing precluded him from purchasing a camera. Instead, he found a job at a photography studio which serviced white and non-white communities. There, he accessed photographic equipment and perfected his skills in the laboratory. In contrast, his contemporary Mário Ramos used his earnings from selling newspapers to purchase a camera.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, José António Machiça, also a member of the *indigena* class, used his salary from working on South Africa's mines to purchase a camera.<sup>23</sup> In the case of Ramos and Machiça, each operated their own studios. Ramos located himself in the colonial capital's central garden, and Machiça operated a studio outside the South Africa mine where he worked in the years before Mozambique's independence.

In contrast to neighboring South Africa, photography studios in colonial Mozambique produced headshots and provided opportunities for (un-)documented black populations to picture themselves. For example, Ramos's clients were city dock workers. During their lunch hours, the workers exchanged their uniforms for pressed button-down shirts and slacks and headed to Ramos's studio at the city gardens. There, against the backdrop of cement steps and trees, clients assumed a variety of seated and standing positions. Machiça and Ramos also offered their clients the option of purchasing full-body photographs. Often the workers sent these photographs as personal mementos to their families.

Both Ramos and Machiça relied on printing studios to develop their films (See Figure 4).<sup>24</sup> Studios in Mozambique also allowed individual

21. Chief of Partition Office, Correspondence to the Consulate of Portugal in Leopoldville, 1, Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique, Maputo, Mozambique.

22. Mário Ramos, Interview by author, Maputo, Mozambique, October 2010.

23. José António Machiça, Interview by author, Maputo, Mozambique, September and October 2010.

24. There were instances in Mozambique's colonial history, when members of the *indigena* populations managed to purchase cameras and used them to take pictures. However, certain professional disadvantages prevented these photographers from being in a position where they could develop and print their own films independently of professional studios. Traditionally, in colonial Mozambique, photographers and lab technicians developed and printed films. Few photographers and lab technicians in colonial



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clients to have pictures taken and provided services that cropped and reprinted these photographs. Within darkrooms, the films of *indigena*, white, and mixed-race populations intermingled. Many clients used these purchased studio prints as headshots. This interchangeability of family photographs for individual headshots ended at independence.

After 1975, the Mozambican government was under the control of the former liberation movement Frelimo, which fashioned itself as a political party. Frelimo officials struggled to operate the vast and dispersed photographic apparatus that came under its control after the end of colonialism. After assuming power, Frelimo nationalized photography studios. Government laws prohibited departing settlers from selling their businesses and from taking with them their equipment. Furthermore, currency devaluations exacerbated the government's nationalization project. In the interim, pre-1975 relationships with global photography manufactures, like Kodak, Polaroid, and Fuji, ended.<sup>25</sup> New equipment, like color films and automatic cameras, were too expensive to import.<sup>26</sup> One immediate impact was that the state officials were unable to either duplicate or archive the paper documents the colonial-state had required in order to issue identity documents. In effect, the state representatives could not provide populations with adequate identification. These developments were especially inopportune because the government faced public and internal pressure to identify the people under its control.

The nationalization of the photography industry created supply shortages. Also, in order to access food rations and other government services required people to have photo identification. The simultaneous occurrence of these phenomena revealed that the colonial state's documentary regime had left many undocumented. Additionally, individuals that the colonial regime documented were without the paperwork that the independent

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Mozambique fell into the racial and political category of *indigena* or black. The photographic economy in the colonial period offered members of the *indigena* populations jobs as cleaners and apprentices.

25. In the early 20th century, executives at the Kodak Corporation questioned the company's business model and its profitability in South(-ern) Africa. In fact, George Eastman advocated against opening Kodak-owned and-operated shops in South Africa. Eastman worried that the overstocking of equipment due to South Africa's location would generate financial losses. See, George Eastman, Correspondence date September 17, 1902, George East Legacy Collection, George Eastman Museum, Rochester, New York.

26. In 1975 and the years after Mozambique's independence, Kodak's black-and-white photographic films were as expensive as the company's color films. The cost of these films, regardless of whether they were black-and-white or colored, was prohibitively expensive for a nation like Mozambique. The Frelimo government lacked the cash reserves to purchase Kodak films, in part because of the devaluation of Mozambique's national currency and the nationalization of private industry. In order to supply Mozambique's photographic and film economies, Frelimo purchased on credit materials from its Eastern European allies. See, Pedro Pimenta, Interview by author, Maputo, Mozambique, December 2009.



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state had required for its own forms of identification. Black populations constituted the group that the independent state needed to identify, and they were not only undocumented but also without the requisite headshot. To add to problems, many people neither saw nor considered the possibility of seeing an image of themselves in headshot format.

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People were unable to redevelop the photographs that they had been able to maintain in their possession. The reuse of everyday photographs for identity documents never was an option. People needed to find a photographer to take a completely new picture. Limited materials also meant photographers who advertised their services for photographing weddings, baptisms, and birthdays redirected their attention to “photographs for documents.”<sup>27</sup> Unlike elsewhere on the continent of Africa, Mozambique’s independence ushered forward a period where populations were unable to procure photographs of themselves independently of those required for identity documents.

The changes associated with independence and the introduction of new identity documents materialized through the form and frequency of lines. For the photographers of headshots, lines outside of studios signified popular demand and professional success. In 2010, studios from the independence-era closed with great frequency. Reflecting on these closures, studio- and street-based photographers remarked on the ubiquity of lines in the 1970s, 1980s, and to a certain extent the 1990s.<sup>28</sup> Jumping forward to 2010 and the moment in which photographers from the colonial-era increasingly reflected on the independence-era, these identification and status markers disappeared. Nevertheless, lines were important discursive and spatial metaphors around which photographers and their clients experienced *Operação Produção*.

After independence, Alfredo Mueche trained as a photographer for a government news agency. When asked about his experience as a wire-service photographer, Mueche responded:

You [had] money, but there was nothing to purchase. There were endless lines to purchase food . . . there was no fixed food. You did not have the possibility to choose. I remember in this period [that the United States] sent a lot of cheese. How do you eat cheese without bread? We went to the store [that] sold the same thing to everyone.<sup>29</sup>

27. *Foto Sandra* and *Foto Vista* Advertisements, *Diário de Moçambique*, 21 May 1983 (Accessed through the Center for Library Research).

28. Eduardo Matlombe, Interview with author, Maputo, Mozambique, June and November 2010 and June 2012; Henriques Fernando Cuco, Interview by author, Maputo, October and November 2010; José António Mahiça, Interview by author, Maputo, Mozambique September and October 2010; Mário Ramos, Interview by author, Maputo, Mozambique, October 2010. Also see, Abibo Selemane, “Modernização tira pão a retratistas,” *Domíng*o, 21 Março 2010, 18–19.

29. Alfredo Mueche, Interview with author, Maputo, Mozambique, March 2010.



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Mueche referenced lines within the context of standing in them. The act of waiting in lines to discover no bread brought into relief the ironies of his profession and daily life. Qualities of necessity and the lack of choice characterized lines, and these characteristics contrasted with Mueche's supposed ability as a photographer to freely choose his subjects. The aforementioned cartoon (See Figure 2) echoed Mueche's sentiments.

The state used *Tempo* magazine to publish the cartoon *Xiconhoca* (See Figure 2) and to ridicule behaviors it deemed as subversive.<sup>30</sup> The cartoon's title *Xiconhoca* consisted of two words, "Xico" and "nhoca." "Xico" was an abbreviation of "Xico-Feio" ("Ugly Xico"), a phrase referring to individual collaborators of the colonial Portuguese regime. "Nhoca" translates to "cobra" in many eastern and southern African languages. Published from 1975 to the early 1980s, the cartoon series included scenes, like lines, that resonated with daily experiences. Although not its intention, the cartoon also reflected the modes through which people from within the context of lines interpreted interactions with the state.

*Tempo* published *Xiconhoca* alongside readers' letters. In correspondences predating Operação Produção, people addressed their experiences in lines. In one example, a person recounted staying in line "for a lot of time," watching people "arrive, enter, and exit with products." Left to conclude "you knew that it was the more known (privileged)" who left with food, the reader asked rhetorically, "Who is not known will not be able to eat?"<sup>31</sup> While purchasing bread, another person discovered a woman had fainted and observed a man leaving "with no money and no bread" because he had his wallet stolen.<sup>32</sup> Reaching the front of the line revealed that the ration card did not guarantee food. Sometimes, people had discovered that bakeries had secretly sold all the bread the night before.

*Xiconhoca* reflected the scenes people viewed from lines and by looking at illustrations of them. For example, the people in the cartoon in Figure 2 were possibly unable to read the sign ("There is nothing") either because they were illiterate or because the sign was out of their view. However, their positions allowed them to see the empty shelves and to observe the two men talking. In the exchange, which viewers of the cartoon read and the illustrated figures overheard, the shop keeper relayed, "For you, that is a civilized person . . . come here later—I will arrange for you: 50 kilograms of rice, 50 kilograms of potatoes, 20 kilograms of sugar, 200 soaps, and 50 liters of wine . . . do you need anything else?" For the reader and people standing in line, the large figure of the two men in relation to those standing in line identified them as *Xiconhocas*. There were not only the

30. See, Maria Paula Meneses, "Xiconhoca, o inimigo."

31. Sansão Nhazilo, "Só comem os privilegiados," *Tempo*, No. 495, 6 Abril 1980, 49 (Accessed through JSTOR Aluka Database).

32. Manafa Dalibo Sagal, "Padaria Bessa," *Tempo*, No. 482, 6 Janeiro 1980, 57 (Accessed through JSTOR Aluka Database).

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illustrated views from the line but also popular opinions developed about people who stood in line. In another article, the *Tempo* journalist inquired about the occurrence of lines at bread shops.<sup>33</sup> Because there was no official declaration of food shortages, the article concluded that bread shops failed to make enough bread based on popular demand. People also perceived lines to reflect the time people lost in trying to purchase food items.

Mozambique's president, Samora Machel, distanced his party and government from responsibility for lines. In fact, President used their occurrence to critique Mozambicans' work ethic, economic productivity, and Mozambique's reliance on South Africa. In a 1980 press conference, Machel attributed lines to an unfair labor economy that required Mozambique to purchase food harvested in South Africa by Mozambican migrants. He further suggested that the way to end the lines was through the development "of big projects that permit[ted] the utilization of labor that [Mozambique had] and that [was] going to South Africa to work on the iron and coal mines."<sup>34</sup> By associating lines with the concept of labor, Machel introduced the possibility for state intervention and left untouched popular associations between unemployment and standing in lines.

The occurrence of lines ultimately necessitated state intervention in the form of *Operação Produção*. Machel himself stated, "When all the labor stays to work in Mozambique, there will be no more lines. We [Frelimo] think that the big projects, especially agricultural ones, will resolve the problems of lines."<sup>35</sup> In order to identify who to push out of the cities, the state authorities relied on the absence of identity documents. In the process, the state and popular responses triggered past histories of visualization and representation associated with headshots, identity documents, and lines. Yet, the headshot and identity documents were new objects to many Mozambicans after independence. Without headshots, there were no identity documents, and the acquisition and use of identity documents generated lines. Once acquired, the circulation of identity documents continued to burden Mozambicans.

### Operação Produção as Visual Technology

Under *Operação Produção*, the state officials' first priority was to identify populations who inhabited cities without justification of employment and residency.<sup>36</sup> To accomplish this, the ministerial directive invited pop-

33. "Aumentar a produtividade nas padarias para acabar com as longas bichas," *Tempo*, No. 310, 12 Setembro 1976, 49–53 (Accessed through JSTOR Aluka Database).

34. "Construiremos o Socialismo, construiremos a felicidade-Presidente Samora Machel na Conferência de imprensa concedida à Informação estrangeira," *Tempo*, No. 494, 30 Março 1980, 8 (Accessed through JSTOR Aluka Database).

35. *Ibid.*

36. "Directiva ministerial," 3.



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ulations to identify themselves for relocation. Then it launched a phase of checking identity documents. Yet, the aforementioned shortages in photographic materials posed limitations for administrative offices when it came to issuing proper documentation. These conditions also inhibited state officials from creating an archival system consisting of people's paperwork and copies of their documentation. Cultural theorist Allan Sekula argued that modern systems of surveillance developed because institutional structures discovered ways in which to use honorific portraits for oppressive purposes.<sup>37</sup> Scholars of photography in Africa and the Diaspora have recently contended that Sekula's assertion has gone largely unchecked.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, Sekula's observations and continual citations of them have reproduced the notion that states like those in Africa are "un-modern" because they fail to maintain similar types of photographic archives.

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In the case of Mozambique, identity documents required individuals to acquire new headshots for each form of documentation.<sup>39</sup> There was no way to repurpose old photographs for purposes of identification. Even after obtaining the headshot, state agencies did not retain copies. In addition to the absence of photographs, there was an absence of archiving. The honorific and oppressive functions of the headshot function independently of each other. In fact, the absence of the headshot and copies of identity documents displaced the reproducibility and seriality that accompanied the physical archiving of headshots. The absence of archived copies of headshots and identity documents forced the government officials to develop alternative visual technologies through which to execute Operação Produção.

The enforcement of Operação Produção required people to carry the worker's card, the residency card, and an identity card.<sup>40</sup> An irregular situation surfaced when a person's documents were missing or unverifiable. When traveling outside of their neighborhoods and cities where they lived, people used the *guia-da-marcha*. People supposedly presented the *guia-da-marcha* to local officials within 48 hours of arriving at their destination. The *guia-da-marcha* lacked a space for a headshot. The presentation of the *guia-da-marcha* provided officials with opportunities to verify the documents in the person's possession. The legal and organizational directive behind the reform program intended for the absence or irregularities in

37. Sekula, *The Body and the Archive*.

38. See, Camp, *Listening to Images*; Krista Thompson, *Shine*; and, Patricia Hayes and Gary Minkley, eds, *Ambivalent*.

39. The cameras that street photographers used in the 1970s and 1980s did not generate plastic negatives. In instances where automatic cameras were available, there were limited supplies for the redevelopment of film negatives. As a result of these technological conditions, many sitters deemed their negatives unimportant, and left them in the possession of photographers.

40. Non-Mozambicans needed a passport and immigration papers. See, "Directiva ministerial," 3.



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documentation to allow officials to identify individuals as unemployed or non-residents, categories that merited relocation.

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In order to address “irregular situations,” the state created verification centers. People transferred to these centers faced questioning. In some instances, officials provided detained individuals with a *guia-da-circulação*, which allowed them to temporarily leave in order to obtain documentation or to find a person to verify their status. Often though, officials had no access to state registration records and frequently designated detainees for transferring to evacuation centers, where they stayed until relocation.

There was no recourse after officials designated people as unemployed or as non-residents. Detainees were unable to alert family members or gather their belongings. Officials were supposed to issue the *guia-da-marcha* to evacuees, which authorized their relocation. This document did not guarantee the future acquisition of government-issued documentation and it did not prevent further displacement. Ironically, the agricultural labor evacuees were to perform on the state’s behalf did not entitle them to workers cards. In fact, there was no distinction between those evacuees who had volunteered or those persons detained.

At the beginning of the compulsory phase state officials conducted home searches. These visits aimed to ensure legal occupation of housing by documented persons. Photographs of the searches included with news articles showed state officials in private houses waiting for residents to show their identification or writing down information (See Figure 5). The occupants of the house gathered around a table where one official stood and another sat. Both figures consulted a piece of paper, the contents not visible to the camera. During document inspection, officials displayed their distrust of the headshot. Officials and inspected individuals recalled similar accounts related to the questioning of the document’s authenticity. Colin Darch, a historian living in Mozambique at the time of Operação Produção, remembered officials placing documents next to people’s heads in order to verify the person’s identity.<sup>41</sup> Oddly though, in one case, officials invalidated the document not because of the headshot but instead because the administering agent placed a stamp next to and not on top of the signature.<sup>42</sup> In another example, the state-run newspaper reported an incident where the signature on a worker’s card was unrecognizable, which left them to conclude stamps on it were illegally obtained.

In the search depicted in Figure 5, a framed photograph hung on the wall. It is unclear from the printed halftone whether the framed photograph is of one of the people present at the home inspection. According to the accompanying text and image, the framed picture was of value neither to the residents of the house nor to the inspection brigade. Instead, the

41. Colin Darch, Interview with author, Cape Town, South Africa, February 2015.

42. Ibid.





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standing and seated figures focused their attention on the table suggesting that the text gathered through writing was of greater importance than looking at the attached photographs. There was no evidence of fingerprinting or use of photography other than the reporter on hand to photograph the house inspection. The inattention to the hanging photograph and officials' tendency to invalidate documents suggests the futility of photographs, like the one hanging on the wall, with regards to the verification and evacuation processes.

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News coverage overwhelmingly centered on irregular situations. Available reports also measured the initiative's success with respect to the disappearance of lines.<sup>43</sup> In 1983, *Tempo* published the article "With Operation Production, a city begins to stay unclouded" accompanied by two photographs (See Figure 6). The images were positioned one on top of the other, a before-and-after juxtaposition. The photographs were of the same location in the city and taken within "some weeks" of each other. People crowded the foreground of the top photograph. In the photograph below, there were fewer people visible. The caption celebrated the disappearance of the crowds by saying it represented *Operação Produção's* success. The lines and crowds displaced by the publication of these particular frames appeared in different configurations elsewhere.

The state's documentary apparatus was left to photograph displaced individuals sometimes for the very first time. Verification brigades generated written registries as they gathered undocumented people. Over *Operação Produção's* duration, the state introduced no new forms of identification that would have created a documentary trail and possibly facilitated institutional archiving. Instead, those responsible for *Operação Produção* relied on forms of documentation introduced in the colonial-period or during the seven years after independence. The photographs that resulted of *Operação Produção* shifted the background against which state officials pictured themselves and their interactions with displaced populations.

Verification brigades served to identify the "unemployed" or "unproductive." The absence of identity documents or irregularities in them proved a productive strategy. In the absence of identity documents, another photographic genre surfaced. Photographers affiliated with the state-run media authored these pictures (See Figures 7–8). On the one hand, these photographs were the result of a particular irregularity, a type of unproductivity that verification brigades perceived in headshots and identity documents. On the other hand, they reflected a point of interaction between officials acting on the state's behalf and those displaced by state action.

For there to be a photograph of unproductives worthy of press publication, IDs as images and objects were missing. Two months into *Operação Produção*, *Tempo* ran a story titled, "Operation Production: Nampula

43. "Com a 'Operação Produção': Cidade começa a ficar desanuviada," *Notícias*, 11 Julho 1983, Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique, Maputo, Mozambique.



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in the time of success” (See Figure 7).<sup>44</sup> Under the headline was a multi-column photograph paired with a long text box. The caption is unnecessary when trying to distinguish between state representatives and the “unproductives.” Clothing and positioning were the distinguishing factors. Another of the article’s photographs (See Figure 8) showed that the photographer positioned himself between the state officials and the unproductives. Here the caption informed readers that officials listened to the experiences of those evacuated. A second look at the photograph shows one official held a notebook and pen to write down his observations. Acts of seeing and listening influenced state decision making.

Despite their public presentation before government officials, the camera lens, and then *Tempo* readers, the unproductives remained unidentified. Their position in the formation of a line presented possibilities for speaking while imposing silences. Unproductives were better seen than heard. For state officials to appear alongside the unproductives required the photographer to stand behind state officials and picture them with their backs to the camera. State official’s faces were only visible when the photographer shifted to the side or stood in line with the unproductives. The formation of the line positioned the unproductives in the camera’s angle. Whether they looked at or away from the camera was of their own choosing. This positioning in the line reflected the multiplicity of views unproductives had on Operação Produção and state surveillance practices.

### Popular Response

During Operação Produção, press photographers documented the evacuation of people from city centers and the procedures involved in the relocation process. Even for a state-run publication, Operação Produção was a controversial subject to cover. Alongside its coverage of Operação Produção, the weekly magazine *Tempo* featured photographs of individuals seated on the street in front of a camera (See Figure 1). Bystanders watched as sitters had their pictures taken. Absent was the privacy of the studio setting and elaborate backgrounds and props. In this moment, the headshot was neither guaranteed nor visible. Identity documents required the regular taking of new headshots, proving costly and of little guarantee.

An economic situation developed where there was a need for photographers. The demand for headshots made it possible for photographers, such as Mahiça, Cuco, and Ramos, who started their professional careers in the colonial-era to continue practicing in the moment of independence. There was also the possibility to enter the profession of photography were a person able to locate a camera. Interestingly, these photographers, ‘old’

44. Felipe Ribas, “Operação Produção: Nampula em tempo de acertar,” *Tempo*, No. 675, 4 Setembro 1983, 22 (Accessed through Mozambiquehistory.net).



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and ‘new’ alike, found themselves producing a very different type of image. For example, during the colonial era, Mahiça, Cuco, and Ramos produced pictures for personal and not official use. If people needed a headshot, they sometimes used their personal photographs as substitutes. After independence, these ‘types’ of photographic use and ‘practices’ of photography were no longer possible. Instead, photographers produced photographs in the headshot format.

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Photographers developed untraditional techniques in order to minimize supply shortages and to meet public demand. For example, the studio-based photographer Eduardo Matlombe regularly faced fifty to sixty people wanting their photographs and had only three to four films available.<sup>45</sup> One *Tempo* reader complained about three photography studios refusing to take a full-body photographs.<sup>46</sup> These studios only photographed the half-body, leading the reader to ask: “Do these studios only receive photographic materials in order to make “half body” photographs? Why do they show in their windows full-body photographs? What are the purposes of these photographs when [studios] do not take full-body photographs.”<sup>47</sup> Colin Darch recounted a similar incidence. Darch wanted the elderly Portuguese photographer who took headshots of his family members for identity documents to take a family photograph. The photographer refused and said “that he did not have the ability to produce a satisfactory picture of a white person and a black person in the same shot as the lighting was too difficult.”<sup>48</sup>

For many photographers practicing in the late 1970s and early 1980s, there was minimal room in their professional lives for the debates over identity documents and photographic equipment happening within government. Of greater importance were finding ways to develop films in the dark because of electricity shortages and using chemicals from local pharmacies to create developing and printing solutions.<sup>49</sup> Besides being viewed as inaccessible, photographers confronted accusations of stealing people’s “faces” after receiving money. *Tempo* readers’ letters featured a cartoon (See Figure 9) of a figure, resembling *Xiconhoca*, that looked through a camera. Positioned on the camera lens was a bird and a cartoon balloon with the statement “This camera has no film and this man is not a photographer.” There was public sentiment that photographers failed to recognize the importance of providing headshots and that the camera was an instrument of deception.

45. Eduardo Matlombe, Interview with author, Maputo, Mozambique, June and November 2010 and June 2012.

46. “Foto de corpo inteiro,” *Tempo*, No. 482, 6 Janeiro 1980, 58 (Accessed through JSTOR Aluka Database).

47. Ibid.

48. Colin Darch, Interview with author, Cape Town, South Africa, February 2015.

49. José Machado, Interview with author, Maputo, Mozambique, 2010–2011; and, Eduardo Matlombe, Interview with author, Maputo, Mozambique, June and November 2010.





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Despite the anxieties created by the need for headshots and proper identification to avoid relocation, city residents had great expectations for the 1982 residency card. The residency card “confirm[ed] the status of the resident in a city and [gave] access to all the facilities that the city offers.”<sup>50</sup> In fact, in the midst of *Operação Produção* people expressed anxieties over increased crime, diminished security presence, and concerns over how unemployed people ate and dressed. People anticipated the residency card to control the people moving to cities. Three days after announcing the residency card, the state-run daily newspaper *Noticias* featured the opinions of city occupants under the headline “The residency card will discipline the city.”<sup>51</sup> Celestino Artur, a fifteen-year old secondary student, astutely displayed the absorbing and hegemonic functions of identity documents that the state required and popular expectations of them. He commented:

In fact, the residency card is very important because there has been a lot of marginality in the city. Here in Catembe, many children disappear and they crowd the city without family, without any fixed place. Now perhaps, with the [issuing] of the residency card, all these marginal [people] will think to evacuate the city of Maputo, for their lands, for centers of production. I think this card is not only going to benefit the residents of Maputo but also the people that come from the country for family visits.<sup>52</sup>

Initial reports on *Operação Produção* stated that people came forward to obtain varied forms of identity documents. However, there were motivations to volunteer oneself or turn in a person in lieu of the possibility of receiving identification. People self-identified themselves in order to reunite with family left in the countryside or to return to their birthplaces after not finding work. One father turned his daughter in because he disliked her boyfriend, and some communities identified women as “prostitutes” based on the frequency in which they received visitors at their homes.<sup>53</sup>

There was little reason for Mozambicans to want headshots and identity documents when considering the difficulty of acquiring these materials and state officials questioning of them. Long before and over the course of *Operação Produção*, people encountered bureaucratic hurdles. Individuals returned repeatedly to government offices months and years after submitting paperwork. They discovered that officials lost their documents, sent them to the wrong offices, or failed to calculate the correct postage for the return of documents. A *Tempo* reader expressed embarrassment about

50. Opinião Pública: Cartão de residente disciplinará a cidade,” *Noticias*, 18 Junho 1982 (Accessed through Mozambicanhistory.net).

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid.

53. Narciso Castanhaeira, “Sofala: os passos que a *Operação Produção* deu,” *Tempo*, No. 682, 6 Novembro 1983, 31 (Accessed through Mozambique History Net).





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not having the correct identity document and noted his “mouth stay[ed] open” considering that the state still had the right to ask people to show documents.<sup>54</sup> The state levied accusations of falsified workers’ cards on the presumptions that employers illegally issued cards to their family members or failed to pay for the required licenses.

People determined ways to live with expired documents or without documentations altogether. Writing offered literate Mozambicans a powerful platform to highlight their experiences. In the early 1980s, readers’ letters addressed the headshot. By the mid-1980s, letters focused on identity documents. In order to have the letter published, *Tempo* required readers’ identity card numbers. Readers’ letters represented the voices of a documented, literate, and privileged population segment. In fact, many of the authors of these letters identified themselves as civil servants.

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Interestingly, state photographers betrayed public acts of refusal. For example, *Tempo*’s coverage of Operação Produção featured a photograph of people with their backs to the camera (See Figure 10). The presence of the photographer appears unknown to all but one photographed subject. The people walked with their backs to the camera towards a military aircraft. They carried their belongings in boxes and suitcases. In the foreground, a man placed a suitcase directly in front of the camera. The man stood within the camera’s range because he lacked the required identity documents. By obstructing the camera’s view, he made the decision to remove himself from the visual frame of reference that the state’s documentary apparatus created of Operação Produção.

The state officials policed the movements of women in order to compensate for the lack of identity documents. Mozambicans viewed idle men as unemployed in contrast to idle women, whom they labelled as prostitutes.<sup>55</sup> A mother of five found herself accused of being a prostitute because her husband was white. The logistics of work separated husbands and wives and allowed women to live unmarried. However, the worker’s cards failed to acknowledge these varied forms of employment and their repercussions on the nuclear family. For example, women domestics received workers’ cards classifying them as unemployed. Wives could only use the previously mentioned ration card in the absence of her husband. State officials broadcasted attempts to modify identity documents to reflect women’s varied employment condition. Despite these efforts, detained women still needed to verify their marital status. The voice of a husband or father was essential to a woman’s release.

Attending to the headshot and identity document unveils the conditions under which people presented and concealed their identity documents. Many people withheld documentation because they were without

54. Francisco Vicente, “Multas e mais multas mas onde está o B.I.?” *Tempo*, No. 531, 14 Decembro 1980, 48 (Accessed through JSTOR Aluka Database).

55. Stephanie Urdang, *And Still They Dance*, 196–97.



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them or because they had expired. A photograph of a woman holding a worker's card offers a counterpoint (See Figure 11). Here, the unidentified woman holds her worker's card in full view. In Figure 10, the caption leaves unnamed the unidentified man's actions and instead explained government activities to assist the displaced. In Figure 11, the caption acknowledged that there were cases where "people went to evacuation centers possessing the workers' card." The caption noted the photographed woman's release. In most cases, the state undertook minimal effort to document evacuees or to confiscate the photographs in their possession. Personal photographs were of no value to the verification and evacuation processes. Furthermore, once relocated, people faced dilemmas in renewing documentation in their possession or obtaining new forms of identification. State officials worried that relocated persons with resident cards would use them to return to cities.

The displacement enacted by Operação Produção happened as Mozambique found itself at war with South Africa's apartheid regime. The state continued to enforce Operação Produção amid this military conflict. The year 1988 marked the unofficial conclusion of Operação Produção. The end was only the beginning for the displaced. People searched for their loved ones and wanted to leave relocation sites. Once again, for many, there was nothing. Neither headshots nor identity documents were of utility. During the final year of Operação Produção, *Tempo* introduced a section called "Who helps to locate."<sup>56</sup> The column's premise was to locate people displaced by the war and state projects, like Operação Produção. Many were without an image of their loved ones and an inability to obtain pictures of themselves. Those who wrote to *Tempo* inquired about a particular person's last known whereabouts. The discursive language associated with photography asked people to recall what they saw or who they knew in order for displaced populations to identify and reunite with their loved ones in the absence of headshots.

### The End?

In 2007, the former parliamentarian and author Lina Magaia publicly called for "an operation production."<sup>57</sup> Her statement directly referenced the 1983 forced removal scheme then implemented under the direction of Armando Guebuza, who in 2007 was Mozambique's president. Her rationale was to once again rid an overcrowded Maputo of crime. Reminiscent of the strategies adopted during Operação Produção and two years after Ma-

56. "Quem ajuda a localizar?," *Tempo*, 4 Outubro 1987, 43 (Accessed through the Biblioteca Nacional de Moçambique); and, "Quem ajuda a localizar?," *Tempo*, 27 Maio 1990, 43 (Accessed through the Biblioteca Nacional de Moçambique).

57. "Lina Magaia reeditaria 'Operação Produção,'" *Diário de um Sociólogo*, 3 Agosto, 2007, <https://oficinadesociologia.blogspot.com/2007/08/lina-magaia-e-operao-producao.html> (Accessed 13 Maio 2019).



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gaia's comments, the state announced its intention to introduce the biometric tracking chip to identity cards and passports. Public uncertainty surfaced over the validity of non-chip documents already in circulation and over the costs of new documents. In addition, photographers accused the state of taking away their "bread" because the new technology no longer required individuals to obtain their headshots.<sup>58</sup> The biometric passport revived the complaint that "There is nothing."

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The Mozambican government offered the Belgian company Semlex a contract to implement the new chip technology. Semlex's representative Ralph Hajjar claimed that African governments like the one in Mozambique maintained poor administrative records and that biometric technology allowed these institutions to comply with international security and immigration standards.<sup>59</sup> Predictably, Hajjar failed to account for historical realities like Operação Produção. However, he did say that because of poor record keeping, officials "must rely [on] the final document because they have no access to information."<sup>60</sup> The history of Operação Produção clearly demonstrates that Mozambique's state structures continually designed and modified visual technologies in order to identify populations and to carry out state reforms. Moreover, in its efforts to regulate people's movements and to implement developmental initiatives, the state incorporated methods of listening and writing.

Mozambique's government terminated in 2017 its contract with Semlex.<sup>61</sup> Frelimo claimed that Semlex failed to produce enough identity documents. The ones that Semlex did produce apparently failed to accommodate Mozambicans' long names. Many Mozambicans who continued to work in South Africa quickly encountered South African customer officials who did not accept their biometric documents. Rumors abound that government officials wanted to bring back the *guia-da-marcha*, previously abolished in 1991.<sup>62</sup> While the state and the public produced a common visual culture around state surveillance and the proliferation of lines (especially under Operação Produção), they did not always share in their interpretation. Lines made visible "*não há nada*" (i.e., no headshots and no material goods). Both the state and its citizens wanted lines to go away. Paradoxically, Mozambicans wanted them to go away not out of concerns over their visibility. To this day, the state has failed to address these material concerns. This reality is one explanation for the public's uproar over

58. Selemane, *Modernização*, 18–19.

59. Ralph Hajjar, E-mail correspondence with author, December 2014.

60. *Ibid.*

61. "Empresa de emissão de documentos de Identificação encerra atividades em Moçambique," *Diário de Notícias*, 23 Outubro 2017, <https://www.dn.pt/lusa/interior/empresa-de-emissao-de-documentos-de-identificacao-encerra-atividades-em-mocambique-8865388.html>.

62. "Finalmente abolidas guias-de-marcha," *Notícias*, 26 Abril 1991, Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique, Maputo, Mozambique.



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the introduction of the biometric chip, which perhaps would have made it difficult for people to articulate their daily life concerns without state documentation. Mozambicans continue to live with the legacies of lines, identity documents, headshots, and Operação Produção. In fact, many find themselves unable to envision and represent themselves through the norms and media prescribed by independence—an observation missing from the current historiography in Africa on identity documents and the biometric state.<sup>63</sup>

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63. I attribute this idea to Sharon Sliwinski.





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