Narratives of middle classness: the lived experiences of women entrepreneurs in Maputo

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To Avó Maria

Acknowledgments

Resumo

O tema da classe média em África, embora amplamente debatido, apresenta ainda lacunas empíricas significativas, especialmente nos países da África Subsaariana. O rendimento e o poder de consumo foram já considerados insuficientes para determinar a classe média, tendo os hábitos quotidianos e a sua relação com estatuto e prestígio sido gradualmente utilizados em várias disciplinas como um melhor indicador. As conjunturas políticas e históricas também se revelaram fundamentais para uma melhor compreensão da mobilidade entre classes.

O presente estudo visa explorar o conceito de classe média em Moçambique, procurando responder a três perguntas centrais: "Quais as perceções das mulheres empreendedoras em Maputo relativamente à classe média?"; "Qual a visão das mulheres empreendedoras de hoje, em Maputo, sobre as mudanças nas ambições e expressões de classe?"; e "De que forma o empreendedorismo (feminino) pode ter impacto na mobilidade social?". Aqui, considera-se especificamente o empreendedorismo formal exercido por mulheres em Maputo, Moçambique.

Para responder a estas questões, foram realizadas entrevistas de história de vida com mulheres empreendedoras de Maputo, complementadas por observações de campo e uma revisão da literatura relevante. As conclusões sugerem que a classe média de Maputo, segundo a perceção das interlocutoras, está a afastar-se das tradicionais elites privilegiadas e dependentes do Estado e a transformar-se num grupo mais independente, caracterizado pelas suas ambições de autorrealização e pela luta por uma vida melhor. Além disso, o empreendedorismo é visto como uma boa opção para a mobilidade social ascendente, porém o sucesso depende grandemente de fatores como os contextos socioeconómicos e o carácter individual.

Palavras-Chave

Classe Média, Empreendedorismo, Mulheres, Maputo

Abstract

The topic of middle class in Africa though broadly discussed, still faces significant gaps in terms of empirical data, especially from sub-Saharan countries. It has been well-established that measures such as income and consumption power are insufficient to assess middle classness. Everyday habits and how these relate to status and prestige have been increasingly used in a number of disciplines as a better gauge. Specific political and historical contexts have also been considered key to better understand how people navigate classes.

This study aims to explore the concept of middle class in Mozambique, by trying to answer three main questions: 'How do women entrepreneurs in Maputo perceive middle classness?'; 'What are the views of today's women entrepreneurs in Maputo about changing class ambitions and expressions?'; and 'How can (female) entrepreneurship impact on social mobility?'. Here, entrepreneurship is specifically regarded as formal entrepreneurship carried out by women in Maputo, Mozambique.

To answer these questions, life story interviews were conducted with women entrepreneurs from Maputo and complemented by field observations and a review of relevant literature. The findings suggest that Maputo middle class, as perceived by women entrepreneurs, is moving away from traditional privileged and state dependent elites towards a more independent group of society, characterised by their ambitions of self-fulfilment and the quest of a better life. Furthermore, entrepreneurship is seen as a desirable option for social upward mobility, but its success is highly dependent on factors such as socioeconomic backgrounds and the individual character.

Keywords

Middle Class, Middle Classness, Entrepreneurship, Women, Maputo

Contents

Introduction

Research on middle class in Africa has gradually broadened from economic perspectives to include contributions from multiple disciplines, such as sociology and anthropology. Some of the most prevalent ideas in literature on middle class used to revolve around the idea that it could be determined by income and/or consumption figures. However, more recently, authors such as Lentz (2020), Mercer & Lemanski (2020) and Spronk (2018, 2020) have been working on novel ways of looking into middle classness. These entail the aspirational aspect, which has also been explored particularly in the case of Maputo by Sumich & Nielsen (2020), but also the importance of how people are living their everyday lives.

Besides the interdisciplinary debate that arises in the domain of trying to define middle class in Africa, in particular Sub-Saharan Africa, there is a lack of empirical studies from most countries. To tackle this issue and illuminate this uncharted area, we have focused our research on Maputo, Mozambique. Scholarship on middle class in Mozambique (from multiple disciplines) has often considered it as precarious, as in Razafimandimby's (2017) work or otherwise trapped in a vicious cycle of interdependency with *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* (FRELIMO), the ruling party since independence in 1975 as explored by Sumich (2016b). Previous studies (Sumich & Nielsen, 2020) have also given account how some government initiatives towards Mozambican middle class are being unsuccessful, arguably due to an incorrect idea of who are actually this people and what they aspire to.

Studies on other countries, such as Kenya (Spronk, 2014) and Ghana (Spronk, 2020), give account of important changes in the current generation of cosmopolitan young adults, and therefore lay the ground for new studies with specific geographical focus and focusing on subjective elements and perceptions of middle classness. Furthermore, scholarship is consensual on claiming the need for in-depth empirical studies for a more profound understanding of the field, hence we have focused our research on a group of women entrepreneurs in Maputo, Mozambique.

The country has been undergoing deep changes and, therefore, in our view, provides fruitful ground for updated empirical research. Mozambique, which already ranks low on the Human Development Index (HDI), is under additional fiscal pressure on several fronts. The very high level of debt service (debt stands at almost 110% of Gross Domestic Product [GDP]), the additional burden arising from the consequences of natural disasters such as Cyclones Idai and Kenneth in 2019, and the substantial additional military and civilian expenditure to cope with the armed conflicts in the centre of the country and in Cabo Delgado, have a negative impact on the budget and the socio-economic development of the country. At the same time, revenues from the major projects which have been

announced in the natural resources sector are not increasing at the forecast rate and in the amount anticipated. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimates that the budget deficit will increase from an already high 5.6% of GDP in 2020 to 10.8% in 2021. In the last report, there was still an assumption of consolidation at just under 5% for 2020. Real GDP growth is expected by the IMF to fall from an already weak 2.2% in 2019 to 1.4% in 2020, with a recovery to 4.2% in 2021, while other reputable sources assume much weaker values.

This briefly described economic and political context, which has been often assessed and reviewed by many actors, deeply impacts the social structures of Mozambicans and how they navigate their lives amidst increasingly challenging conditions. The studies on such impacts, in turn, to our knowledge have been few and more side-lined. Against this background, entrepreneurship has been actively fostered by a range of actors, particularly amongst women and youth, as a desirable professional (or even life) option. Such efforts, mostly focused on women and youth, translated into a variety of initiatives to promote entrepreneurial activities, train and connect entrepreneurs. On a quick browsing exercise, we will find organisations and associations such as IPEME[1], UEM – Espaço Inovação[2], ANJE[3], FEMME [4], Orange Corners Maputo [5], Femtech and Business M+ [6] and numerous events and competitions, such as Seedstar, Startupper Total and Moz Grow, who engage in this topic. Entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial activity have also been investigated as a possible marker of middle class, yet most studies have not succeeded in establishing a clear link between middle class and a higher entrepreneurial drive, though acknowledging the potential of the intermediary group to harvest the potential of entrepreneurship (Banerjee & Duflo, 2008; Clementi, Dabalen, Molini, & Schettino, 2020; Southall, 2018).

Our assumption is that entrepreneurship, especially if opportunity-driven and growth-oriented, may play an important role in social mobility and, in particular, in the formation of a new middle class. Hence, in this research we follow a selection of women entrepreneurs, as women emerge as the dominant target group among entrepreneurship initiatives. This study focuses on entrepreneurs with formal businesses, which have been understudied, with most works to date focusing on informal or 'survival' entrepreneurship. Additionally, formal businesses are more likely to be more growth-oriented and, therefore, have a correlation with middle class.

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[1] *Instituto de Promoção de Pequenas e Médias Empresas em Moçambique* (Institute for the Promotion of Small and Medium Enterprises in Mozambique).
[2] An initiative by Universidade Eduardo Mondlane and Icamp to foster innovation and entrepreneurship.
[3] *Associação Nacional de Jovens Empresários* (National Association of Young Entrepreneurs).
[4] Associação das Mulheres Empreendedoras e Empresárias de Moçambique (Mozambican Association of Women Entrepreneurs).
[5] An initiative focused on promoting entrepreneurship by youth.
[6] Both initiatives focus on helping women formalise or grow their businesses.

By collecting the insights of a group of women entrepreneurs in Maputo our main goal is to explore the concept of middle class in Mozambique by answering the following questions: (1) 'How do women entrepreneurs in Maputo perceive middle classness?'; (2) 'What are the views of today's women entrepreneurs in Maputo about changing class ambitions and expressions?' ; and (3) 'How can (female) entrepreneurship impact on social mobility?'. The specific objectives of this research are: (1) To describe how women entrepreneurs in Maputo perceive middle classness; (2) To explore possible changing trends in class perceptions and expressions from parents to children; (3) To explain on the link between female entrepreneurship and middle classness.

For purposes of conceptual clarity, key terms used in this work and that may present some interpretation challenges are 'middle-class', 'middle class' and 'middle classness'. The first one, 'middle-class', is an adjective and, therefore, used to qualify anything or anyone related to the middle class. 'Middle class' is a noun, used to describe a socioeconomic group of people. As for 'middle classness', though sometimes it has been used interchangeably with 'middle class' in literature, in this document it will be used to emphasise the sense of being and belonging to middle class, more frequently pursued in disciplines such as Anthropology and Sociology.

This document is organised into five chapters. Following this introductory section, chapter 2 gives account of the central scholarly contribution on the topic at hand. We start by exploring the broader notion of middle class and how the debates have evolved from being based on purely quantitative aspects to focus on more subjective and symbolic elements. Examples of the first are the definitions by the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO), based on the *per capita* daily consumption or other methods including income data, such as the one by Clementi et al. (2020). As for the latter, we explore in detail the works by authors such as Bach & Nallet (2018), Lentz (2020) and Spronk (2018), which focus on the non-material characteristics of middle class and on its expressions and significance in everyday life and consumption patterns.

The following section addresses the link between entrepreneurship and social mobility in Africa and attempts to disentangle current debates on survival and growth entrepreneurship and how it is more often seen as self-employment and thus a possible solution to the high unemployment rates (Akunkugve & Wohlmuth, 2016; Nafukho & Muyia, 2010; Naudé & Havenga, 2005). After looking into the role of the government in extracting the full potential of entrepreneurial activities, we narrow down to the specific challenges and potential of female entrepreneurship.

The last subsection of our literature review focuses on works about the Mozambican middle class, which elicit the strong heritage left by the colonial divides between subjects and citizens, natives and 'civilised' and the in-between *assimilados,* or assimilated people; followed by the failed ideals of 'classnessless' in the post-independence fascist regime. We then follow the works of Sumich (2016b) on the long lasting co-dependence between middle class and the ruling party and how housing and

urban planning is reflecting Maputo middle classness and transforming (or being transformed by) social and economic landscapes (Mazzolini, 2016; Nielsen & Jenkins, 2020a; Sumich & Nielsen, 2020). And finally, by scoping the literature on (female) entrepreneurship, it becomes clear that most work developed so far has been done on informal economy and that formal entrepreneurship is frequently not seen as entrepreneurship in dedicated studies.

Chapter 3 details the methodology used for this research, outlining the particulars of our field work, interviews, data analysis and presentation of findings. In particular, it clarifies the option for a qualitative approach and the life stories method, as well as the rationale behind the coding of the data collected.

Chapter 4, which aims to present and discuss our findings, leads with a brief biographical profile of each interlocutor followed by a general introductory discussion highlighting the main patterns in our stories. The three subsections that follow will each address one research question discussing our data, corroborated when relevant, by previous scholarly works and statistics. The final chapter summarises the conclusions of the research.

A key contribution of this research is that it provides fresh insights from an ethnographic perspective, on perceptions and personal histories, and thus yields relevant empirical contributions to literature on middle class and entrepreneurship. Our findings in Maputo significantly agree with previous studies with a geographical focus on the sub-Saharan region, in particular those along the anthropological field. Therefore, one important contribution is to provide empirical evidence that corroborate, and strengthen, previously developed theoretical approaches.

Additionally, the literature review evidenced an economic dominance within the discourse on the topic in Africa, and thereby a dominance of top-down approaches, frequently biased by political or economic interests. By using the life story approach, novel to research on this topic in Mozambique, important details about the nuances of middle class in Mozambique over the last two generations have emerged. As brilliantly put by Atkinson (2012) 'It is through story that we gain context and recognize meaning. Reclaiming story is part of our birthright. Telling our story enables us to be heard, recognised, and acknowledged by others. Story makes the implicit explicit, the hidden seen, the unformed formed, and the confusing clear' (p. 7). Hence, by listening to the voices of Mozambican women entrepreneurs, this research has captured the perceptions in the first person, bottom-up, on what is middle class and the feeling of middle classness. Besides the relevance of the specific findings, this dissertation contributes to acknowledging the significance of more anthropological approaches in studying and discussing middle class. Furthermore, apart from its inputs to theoretical knowledge, this exercise provides strategic evidence to inform policy making and government action, which as suggested by this study has not been very enabling.

CHAPTER 2

State of the Art

2.1. Middle Class: a notion in the making

Recent literature pertaining to middle class in Africa broadly agrees that it is a social construct, increasingly gaining new context-specific meanings and uses, in fields other than economy. Prior research suggests that the notion, acceptance and measure of middle class in Africa is highly controversial, giving rise to a variety of estimates and debates (Melber, 2016; Mercer & Lemanski, 2020; Southall, 2018; Spronk, 2018). Also important as an introductory note is to acknowledge that current debates are mainly focusing on the new or emerging middle class, since previous studies have emphasised that some groups affluence and middle classness dates back to colonial times.

Literature reveals growing awareness among scholars of how unclear the expression middle class is, even if used in the plural, middle classes, as such it is increasingly being used as a prompt for discussing new lines of thought and 'dedicated to the many ways people on the African continent navigate their lives against the canvas of larger economic and political transformations' (Spronk, 2018, p. 315). The challenge in defining what is exactly middle class about in Africa and even whether the notion is relevant may be the reason, as observed by Spronk (2014), for a preference by the term 'elite(s)' in broader literature to refer to a social group that would arguably also fit into the middle class box. Yet, also worth noting, though the terms 'elite' and 'middle class' are sometimes used interchangeably, scholarship on middle class mostly associates elites with the post-colonial period (Havstad, 2019; Lentz, 2016; Southall, 2018).

A large number of studies in the broader literature have examined class structures in Africa, in particular the concerns raised in the first decades of independence by an increasing inequality between the large majority of the population, most of which uneducated, and the elites that harvested the post-colonial privileges. As for the middle class in Africa, it has particularly been in the spotlight since the turn of the twenty-first century, yet remaining hard to define and measure due to lack of data (Spronk, 2014, 2018; van Blerk, 2018). It has also been argued in literature that the noise around an emerging middle class in Africa is artificial, created by a variety of actors (media, Non-Governmental Organisations [NGOs], politicians, economic actors etc.) to shadow the concerns with poverty and push for more foreign investment in the continent, while many authors are very sceptical of the actual transformative power of middle classes (Melber, 2016; Scharrer, O'Kane, & Kroeker, 2018). Banerjee & Duflo (2008, p. 3) have put forward three main arguments for such interest on middle class, in particular: (1) it frequently gives rise to the emergence of new entrepreneurs, that, in turn, will create

benefits for the general population, (2) middle class is commonly associated with an emphasis on accumulating 'human capital and savings', thus becoming valuable assets for the society, and (3) the consumer profile of middle class, valuing quality and hence opening the space for better jobs. This is in line with Spronk's (2014) definition of 'middle classness' as a 'practice that results from the productive interconnections among three factors: (1) access to education and the resulting salaried occupations, (2) consumption patterns and lifestyle choices, and (3) modern self-perceptions' (p. 99); and on a more recent study (2018), the author highlights five dominant uses of the category in literature: focused on the social and economic status, focused on the social and cultural features, focused on how purchasing power enables a specific lifestyle, focused on the potential to trigger change and strenghen democracy and development, and focused on the ambition to reach an higher social status. These are also identified by Southall (2018), though using a different categorisation, who only adds an approach used by Marxian or neo-Marxian scholars, that positions in the middle class anyone who cannot be immediately associated with capitalist or working class.

The studies on middle class were initially embedded in the studies of African elites, who were in charge of promoting progress in colonial and early post-colonial times. However, with the dissemination of Marxian philosophies, such elites started to be depicted by scholars as some sort of bourgeoisie with privileged links to the State, thus in a position to take advantage of deals, but highly dependent on the government for patronage (Southall, 2018). By the 1990s, due to commotions in the economy and politics, state bourgeoisie entered into business with foreign corporations, whereas the small working classes in Africa, on the one hand, resourced to the informal sector for growth and on the other, benefitted from employment generated by the development of sectors such as tourism, construction and communications. This gave rise to a new middle class, mostly urban, educated and cosmopolitan, that is seen as genuine and different from its predecessor elites, the new middle class (Southall, 2018).

However, despite the growing interest on the topic, the key issue for many scholars remains: What middle class? Some argue that only looking at income and consumption figures is a very restricting categorisation, and that middle class actually 'results from a complex and multi-agent construction of social realities' and 'is vague, volatile, and ambiguous' (Bach & Nallet, 2018, pp. 2, 3). To understand the true meaning of the category, a number of authors have recognised the importance of looking into the term in a multi-fold way: how it is used, who uses it, in what context and with which purpose; the social and historical backgrounds that impact those more visible and economic aspects; cultural practice; and ambitions (Bach & Nallet, 2018; Spronk, 2014, 2018; Sumich, 2016).

Among the definitions based on quantitative criteria, the most frequently cited one was put forward by the African Development Bank (AfDB) in its 2011 report on the topic, which defines middle class as 'a large group of people with a per capita daily consumption comprised between $2 and $20'

(AfDB, 2011). This apparently simplistic definition by the AfDB has been widely used by scholars to illuminate the limitations of such definitions, purely based on economic factors (Spronk, 2018). Another broadly used definition is the one by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) which determines as middle class those 'households with a daily *per capita* consumption of US$4 to US$13, using financial measures to categorise the middle class as those who are a little wealthier than the "working poor" (under US$2 per day) and "near poor" (US$2–US$4 per day)'(Mercer & Lemanski, 2020, p. 430). The quantitative approach has been explored by other authors, such as Banerjee & Duflo (2008), who also follow a quantitative and economic model, and look into *per capita* consumption as a gauge to identify middle-class members; their approach may be considered somehow superficial as they draw the common traits of people that according to their income and consumption profiles would be considered middle class from an analysis of various developing countries in very different regions and cultural and economic contexts. More recently, Clementi, Dabalen, Molini, & Schettino (2020) also propose a method using income and consumption data to measure welfare specifically designed having in mind the perceived characteristics of middle class.

These quantitative and economic models focus, as put by Spronk (2018), on the material characteristics of the middle class notion, but she draws the attention to the importance of looking into the historical data and the cultural, social and political dynamics behind the evolution of the intermediary groups. The significance of historical data has also been empirically established by Razafimandimby (2017), on a quantitative study with data from 120 countries, including Mozambique, from almost two decades. The aim of the study was to establish how middle class is composed and how it can impact on growth, by looking into the statistics of income and consumption distribution. The author claims that the term should actually be middle classes, and not one single middle class, four to be precise. The four subgroups identified based on income levels established in previous studies are: '1) the floating class in the interval (US$2; US$4) comprises no longer poor but still vulnerable households (…) 2) the lower middle-class corresponds to households earning between US$4 and US$10; 3) the upper middle-class (US$10; US$20), and 4) the higher middle-class (US$20; US$100)' (p. 5).

The broad middle class concept is already a challenging one, as discussed above, entailing 'the category itself, its material characteristics, and its non-material aspects' (Spronk, 2018, p. 315), but Spronk (2018) adds another layer to the debate, alerting to the challenges that come with finetuning the concept into African Middle Class, stating that 'besides the challenge that studies from Africa bring to theorizing the notion of the middle class, the presumed Africanness, implied in the usage of the notion *African middle classes*, evokes pertinent questions' (Spronk, 2018, p. 312). According to the same author, some of the questions are the actual meaning and significance of Africa, which is

extremely diverse. Therefore, in the author's opinion, any use of African middle class, based on the assumption of a singular Africa, shall always be flawless.

There is another, relatively new, line of thought emphasising the non-material characteristics of what is 'middle class', where subjective and symbolic aspects, such as leisure, ambitions and consumptions patterns are taken into consideration (Bach & Nallet, 2018; Spronk, 2018). This approach stresses the need for ethnographic studies to complement the quantitative ones on middle class and, therefore, speaks directly to our object of study. In fact, literature is, in general, very consistent in highlighting the lack of empirical evidence to support the emergence of debates on middle class in Africa. And such limitations frequently led the debate towards comparisons with other developing regions with very different contexts, thus forcing 'importation of issues at stake in other areas' (Bach & Nallet, 2018, p. 7). Banerjee & Duflo (2008), for instance, to overcome the limitation posed by a lack of a specific and global database on middle class have analysed household surveys of developing countries from various continents and aggregated them for their analysis, thus confirming Bach & Nallet's concerns. Though more recently there has been an increasing number of scholars debating middle class, such debate has just heightened how diverse and ambiguous the category is and added further layers to it. Recent literature advocates for a switch from an infinite debate on the best way to define middle class in Africa, to 'examining the everyday lives, hopes and dreams of those living across the continent, [so that] more nuanced and grounded perspectives on the experience of class in everyday life can emerge' (Mercer & Lemanski, 2020, p. 431).

Finally, and also relevant to our research, are the perceptions of the people themselves. Research has provided evidence that quite often people that according to the most frequently used quantitative methods (based on income or consumption) are placed in the middle class group don't see themselves as members of middle class, and the opposite is also true (Khunou, 2015; Lima, Nelson, & Nassif, 2016). This calls for more empirical studies, focusing on the perceptions of apparent middle class members, resorting both to large-N studies and in-depth case studies. In this prolific and controversial debate around the positioning and definition of middle class, Southall (2018) is very assertive in identifying what is still missing, arguing that 'if the debate on the African middle class is to move forward, then an array of hard questions needs to be asked: about its relation to the state, educational systems, work and African capitalism, as well as far more nuanced probing about its political orientations and actions' (p. 20). According to this author, only by tapping into these issues, can the work on middle class move beyond the surface.

Since our study aims to contribute to the debate around the broader definition of middle class in Africa, and more specifically in Maputo (Mozambique), but also to explore the interconnections between entrepreneurship (in particular, female entrepreneurship) and the perceived expressions of

middle class, throughout the next section we will summarise the main inputs of existing literature on such links.

2.2. Middle Class and Entrepreneurship in Africa

Literature suggests that the income source is often put as one of the most distinctive features of the intermediary group. Middle class members resource less to agriculture, and tend to have more formal jobs - frequently in urban areas - which grants them more financial stability (Banerjee & Duflo, 2008; Clementi et al., 2020). This may also stem from the fact that middle class is more likely, when compared to the lower classes, to migrate in pursuit of work opportunities, which particularly visible amongst urban population, frequently with roots elsewhere.

Previous works also agree that middle class is characterised by having better access to formal sources of credit, which would lead us to believe they would invest more in growing their businesses, but according to Banerjee & Duflo (2008) that is not the case. Their opinion is that most people invest in durable assets, also corroborated by Clementi et al. (2020), rather than in growing their businesses, thus questioning the view of middle class as an entrepreneurial one. In this regard, it is important to take into account geographical and societal specifities, that may have not been given proper regard in the cited studies. On the other hand, van Blerk (2018) in his report on middle class focusing on sub-saharan african countries points out the entrepreneurial drive of this group, stating that 'while a third of the African middle class have a formal job, others are self-employed or have part-time jobs. Doing the "hustle" is a popular term in the region' (p. 7).

Nonetheless, 'doing the hustle' may not be enough to harvest the growth potential of entrepreneurial middle classes, as frequently claimed by NGOs, the media and other actors. Akinkugbe & Wohlmuth (2016) draw the attention to this, stating that 'Middle class entrepreneurship in Africa is to a large extent "survival entrepreneurship" and not "growth-oriented entrepreneurship"' (p. 76). The authors also highlight the lack of adequate policies taking into account this entrepreneurial reality, with most policy, economical, developmental agendas focusing on growth initiatives and therefore excluding a considerable portion of entrepreurial middle class, which is still in the survival phase. Whereas, van Blerk (2018), with a contrasting opinion, highlights the visible path of growth in such individuals.

Akinkugbe and Wohlmuth (2016) are particulary relevant to our research, as they debate, with detail, the 'missing middle', which middle class is expected to fulfill, i.e. the gap between the informal and survival businesses and the large corporations. The authors, though ackowledging the lack of reliable and comprehensive data on middle class segments, stress the importance of deeper research bearing in mind such different segments, since these growth enterprises are more frequently pursued

by upper middle class, which according to existing data is very scarce or somehow overlaps with upper class in most African countries. They further call for additional studies on 'the role of the African middle class in transiting from survival enterprises towards growth-oriented enterprises, and to distil the role of the upper class in affecting this transition via its strong market power' (Akinkugbe and Wohlmuth, 2016, p. 89).

There are two ways of looking at the relationship between entrepreneurship and middle class: focusing on the middle class income generation patterns and entrepreurial drive (Banerjee & Duflo, 2008; Clementi et al., 2020; Southall, 2018); or focusing on the entrepreneurs and their dynamics and assessing how it has impacted or has been impacted by class (Lima et al., 2016). To our knowledge, literature is far more abundant on the first approach, thus opening the space for more work on the second, to which we will contribute in our research. Lima et al. (2016) further emphasise the scarce academic research on the link between entrepreneurship and social classes, which the authors believe to be very visible. According to Lima et al. (2016), the social class to which someone belongs determines their social and cultural capital, and that may be pivotal for the entrepreneurial activity (both to the decision of engaging in it and how it is engaged on). The authors also identify a strong link between social class and entrepreneurship features[7], particularly among upper middle class and highlight the role of entrepreneurship as a vehicle to navigate classes. Additionally, previous studies on entrepreneurship, in particular those focused on Africa also tend to establish a strong causality relation between it and social and economic development, both collective and individual (Acs, Bardasi, Estrin, & Svejnar, 2011; Boateng, 2018; Hansen, 2015; Samuel, 2014; Sanyal, 2009; Spring & Ndhlovy, 2009), which can, as well, be construed as a link between entrepreneurship and social class.

To better assess the relationship between these two concepts, it is also important to elucidate what is understood by entrepreneurship in literature with a focus on Africa and how it has evolved. The scholarly debate around entrepreneurship in Africa is relatively recent, with a vast research on entrepreneurship in the Western world, while most African countries are understudied, lacking local evidence and literature (Acs et al., 2011; Boateng, 2018; Naudé & Havenga, 2005). Despite being an article from 2005 and therefore not considering more recent developments, it is still worth noting the findings of Naudé & Havenga (2005), which denote a significant prevalence of studies on South Africa (over 60%) and more concerned with aspects such as the characteristics of African entrepreneurs and their education and training. Boateng (2018) presents a long history of entrepreneurs in Africa, tainted by gendered roles intensified by colonial pasts and deeply linked to the informal economy; and highlights how entrepreneurship has evolved to becoming a field of study on its own right, defined in

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[7] The authors mention: entrepreneurial intention, frequency of business creation, growth and success.

literature as 'the study of sources of opportunities; the processes of discovery, evaluation, and exploitation of opportunities; and the set of individuals who discover, evaluate, and exploit them' (p. 8).

Naudé & Havenga (2005) clarify that in Africa entrepreneurship is often equated with self-employment or in other words becoming a business owner rather than seeking a paid job. Much of this self-employment in Africa is in the informal sector and, therefore, as mentioned above, frequently addressed as survival entrepreneurship (Akunkugve & Wohlmuth, 2016; Naudé & Havenga, 2005). In this regard, Nafukho & Muyia (2010) argue that in many African countries entrepreneurship is frequently seen as a cure for the unemployment problem.

The impact of governmental policy on entrepreneurship, including on the entrepreneurial drive, in Africa has been extensively discussed in previous studies (Nafukho & Muyia, 2010; Naudé & Havenga, 2005; Southall, 2018). Naudé & Havenga (2005) find that policy impacts entrepreneurship both directly (through for example, taxation and education and training policies) and by 'contributing to an uncertain policy environment, damaging social capital, and creating institutional features that keep African firms small' (p. 16). Southall (2018) calls for action by the entrepreneurs, arguing that the power of entrepreneurs is dependent upon their hability to harvest government support, and shall make a difference if 'they develop an "empowered strategy versus governments and big business", if they are strong enough to demand that the state accord them a strategic role in terms of public goods provision, and if they are able to generate wider societal support for their "transformative politics"' (p. 16). Whilst broader literature calls for more government action, Legas (2015) claims that many Sub-Saharan countries have recognised the substantial contribution entrepreneurship can make to their countries' economies, and many have even included entrepreneurship growth policies in their long term plans and have tried to regulate and reform business to increase the rate of entrepreneurship. Kenya is illustrative of this, Nafukho & Muyia (2010) recall how a compulsory entrepreneurship education and training programme was introduced to all vocational and technical training institutions in Kenya.

Narrowing down to scholarly works on women entrepreneurship, since our endeavour here is to grasp the perceptions of women on the issues of entrepreneurship and middle class and further contribute to this ongoing dialogue, prior research suggests that the role of women entrepreneurship in Africa emerged in scholarly debates during the 1990s (Nafukho & Muyia, 2010). Being a relatively recent field of study, existing literature highlights the need for more studies on female entrepreneurship in developing countries, acknowledging its relevance given that as per Acs et al. (2011), 'entrepreneurial activity might in principle be a highly significant way for women to engage in the market economy - a vehicle to construct employment opportunities, including when these are scarce or when discrimination in the labour market does not facilitate full women's participation in the

economic sphere' (p. 394). Samuel (2014), also argues that entrepreneurship is particularly important for woman because it can be a way to generate income and thus decrease the dependency with regards to the husband or other men.

Spring (2009) posits that there are formal and informal sector as parts of the entrepreneurial landscape, and asks a question if there can be mobility between sectors. This speaks to the issue discussed above on survival or growth-oriented entrepreneuship. Prior research suggests that the duality of sectors still plays an important role in disentangling the landscape, but the movement within sectors is limited because requirements with respect to education, capital, business networks, innovation requirements and so forth are imposed very differently on men and women (Acs et al., 2011; Spring, 2009). In fact, Spring (2009) claims that the gender divide is a real issue behind low rate participation of woman in the ownership of medium and big scale enterprises, thus leaving women mostly outside of a formal sector, though aknowledging that there is a tendency of growth in the number of female entrepreneurs. Moreira & Barros (2018), look into how women entrepreneurs cope with the multitude of business and family responsibilities. The authors include an historical perpective of the role of women in society, from an ancient time where there was not a hierarchical relation between men and women to the present, where women juggle professional and unpaid domestic work. Moreira & Barros (2018) follow a feminist framework, which, similarly to the debates around middle class, posits that women cannot be seen as a unit, since there are significant differences between them. One interesting finding is that most women in said study were drawn to entrepreneurial ventures due to economic needs or to gain a better status in the professional market.

Additionally, previous studies have emphasised that women, in particular from Sub-Saaran Africa tend to engage mostly in relationships of kin and relatives, which has also proven to be a limitation, when compared to men, in terms of professional development and business opportunities (Babah Daouda, Ingenbleek, & van Trijp, 2016). In this regard, a number of authors have recognised that it is equally important to foster the right relationships as it is to abandon the ones that are excessive or prejudicial to growth, and that women's typically large number of bonding ties is dragging them behind (Babah Daouda et al., 2016; Mozumdar et al., 2019).

In short, the literature pertaining to female entrepreneurship strongly suggests that social and cultural aspects may stand in the way of women's success as entrepreneurs, by creating barriers in their access to formal settings, limited time available (considering family duties), less influencial presence in political and business spheres, amongst others (Babah Daouda et al., 2016; Moreira & Barros, 2018).

Despite the above mentioned challenges, which are very specific to women, women entrepreneurs in Africa are also faced with other general constrainsts on entrepreunership in the region. As an example, Legas (2015), based on data from Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, the World

Bank Doing Business, and Enterprise Survey database claims that entrepreneurs in sub-Saharan Africa experience some of the most restrictive laws and regulations as well as some of the poorest infrastructure and financial services in the world. According to the same author, other impediments to entrepreneurship in Africa include corruption, lack of strong entrepreneurial training programmes and the small size of the African market.

Scholars call for the government, research institutions and higher education institutions to create necessary reforms to the cumbersome laws and regulations, diversify sources of finance, and to incorporate more holistic and innovative teaching strategies, ackowleging that the new generation of entrepreneurs is open and willing to dialogue with policymakers but is moving away from patronage (Legas, 2015; McDade & Spring, 2005).

Another interesting input by Nafukho & Muyia (2010) is their debate around life-long learning model of entrepreneurship created by Ashmore, which the authors agree is necessary for developing entrepreneurial competency. More recently and adding another layer to the ability debate, Pereira & Maia (2019) also draw the attention to a focus on the entrepreneurs themselves to extract the fullest potential of entrepreneurship for growth, adding innovative abilities to the desire set of abilities of an entrepreneurs, stressing that 'Entrepreneurs in developing countries have a much greater propensity for innovation than is often recognised in the literature or by policy-makers' (p. 100).

From a marketing perspective, Babah Daouda, Ingenbleek, & van Trijp (2016) argue that 'To improve their livelihood and potential to move out of poverty, micro-entrepreneurs could seize opportunities arising from the middle class by taking a step upwards away from subsistence-marketplace target customers to focus on UMC [upcoming middle class] customers.' (p. 130). The same authors also defend that relationship management skills are vital for the success of entrepreneurs and therefore should be actively strenghened and policy makers and other actors should take that into consideration whilst designing entrepreneurship training programmes.

2.2. What about Mozambique? Inputs on middle class and entrepreneurship

We have already mentioned how some authors argue that looking at African middle class or African entrepreneurship as whole is, in itself, flawless (Spronk, 2018), calling for research with a narrower geographical scope. Our contribution to close this gap is focusing our research in Maputo, Mozambique. To frame our study, we have reviewed existing literature on the various features of middle classness and (female) entrepreneurship in Mozambique.

To our knowledge there is very limited work on the link between entrepreneurship and middle class in Mozambique. Nonetheless, several authors have reported important findings and arguments

on the individual concepts. An example is a study[8] concluded by Razafimandimby (2017), which established that middle class can be divided into four categories, already listed above, and that in Mozambique only the three bottom categories can be identified. This is of particular importance since the conclusions of this study further support that the bottom levels are still very vulnerable to some sort of downgrading and, therefore have no significant impacts or even negative ones on growth. The author argues that countries such as Mozambique 'to take full advantage of the dynamics behind the expansion of this intermediate class (…) should design policies that are consistent with the needs of middle-class households and increase their resilience' (Razafimandimby, 2017, p. 16).

On a more historical note, it is worth going back to colonial times and the divides between citizen and subject. The code of the *Indigenato*, adopted in 1928, built on previous statutes opposing citizen to native (*indígena*), a distinction established already in 1899 Labour Law, whereby the *não-indígena* (native) or *civilizado* (civilised) was a full Portuguese citizen with every right it entails and the *indígena* was subject to particular laws and had limited rights, including being subject to forced labour (known as *chibalo*) (O'Laughlin, 2000). In 1917, a new divide came into the picture with the *assimilados* (assimilated people), who were considered in-between, hence native Mozambican, that after abandoning native habits and customs were given limited rights of Portuguese citizenship, for instance, they had an identity card instead of temporary passes like the other natives, had access to state schools and were not subject to forced labour, but tipically were not entitled to vote (Havstad, 2019; O'Laughlin, 2000). During the *Estado Novo* dictatorship[9] the distinctions between native, assimilated and citizen where further exacerbated. Scholarship frequently associates the beginning of middle class formation with the *assimilados*, usualy seen as male-gendered and therefore setting the tone for a gendered category and one that was utterly dependent on the state (Havstad, 2019; Sumich, 2016b). This is further explored by Havstad (2019), in her doctoral thesis, who taps another layer of middle class formation in Maputo, disentagling how this process has impacted on gender roles and how it was impacted by the colonial-capitalism, postcolonial socialism and the post-socialist state rule. The author contends that the aspiration of both upwardly mobile women and men have been relevant in Mozambican middle class formation and her research 'shows that the middle class has been unified over time by ambitions to modernize Mozambique, but fractured by deeply gendered struggles over how to modernize' (Havstad, 2019, p. 3)

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[8] Mozambique is one among 120 countries in the study.
[9] The *Estado Novo* (New State) was inaugurated in 1933 under the Portuguese Authoritative regime led by António de Oliveira Salazar and remained in force until the Revolution of 25 April 1974, which put an end to the dictatorship. Among other measures, the *Estatuto dos Indígenas Portugueses das Províncias da Guiné, Angola e Moçambique* (Statute of the Portuguese Natives of the Provinces of Guinea, Angola and Mozambique) was enacted in this period with the aim of establishing the guidelines for the relation with natives of the colonies and the process of their assimilation to occidental culture.

With a more recent focus, but still looking at the dependency towards the State, above mentioned as a characteristic of the *assimilados*, Sumich (2016) has studied the particular case of Maputo, challenging the notion that current middle class tends to be apolitical and more capitalism oriented. The author gives account of the background of the issue, underlining that in the specific case of Maputo, there has been a long term intertwined relation between the growth of middle class and the growth of FRELIMO[10]. Other broader literature also supports Sumich's findinds in Maputo, stating the political participation and positioning of middle class is deeply bound to the specific context that gave rise to such class (Kroeker et al., 2018). In the case of Maputo, after the independence, FRELIMO needed to secure its support base and the priviledged ones chosen to carry on and support the system were both the base of the party and the stemming of a middle class. As time passed, the link and dependency continued, because those who had climbed the social ladder also wanted to secure their position (Sumich, 2016b). In this regard, the relationship between middle class and politics is very well put by Kroeker et al. (2018), who state that 'middle classes in Africa do not only act politically but are politically acted upon' (p. 177).

In Maputo, the intermediary group, as argued by Sumich (2016), mostly occupy positions of public servants, or have enjoyed benefits, such as studying abroad and getting good jobs in the private or third sector, resulting from priviledged relationships with the political powers and 'therefore complicit in its growing illegitimacy' (p. 823). The author highlights that FRELIMO's narrative during the liberation struggles and the first years of independence revolved around a narrative of one, homogenous, equal and prosperous country for all. And, even though this vision has decayed, it still has produced its fruits and the current middle class, though with some exceptions, is the result of that common belief of hope and future, which translates into deeply entrenched dependence, inequality and stratification. As noted by Sumich, the wicked prize of such priviliges granted to a group of loyal followers of the system, is a very precarious future with many strings attached, as the relationship is generally seen as a crosscutting condition for prosperity, be it occupying a position with a salary or expanding your business. This is also present in other literature who contend that most Mozambicans did not have full ownership of their own development stories (Brooks, 2018).

We argue that Sumich's research is extremely valuable to get an insight of middle class formation dynamics in Maputo, in particular as regards political and structural dynamics giving rise to priviledged individuals and groups, but by not exploring a whole new generation of professionals and

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[10] FRELIMO led the liberation struggle against the Portuguese colonial rule in Mozambique and has been the ruling party since the independence in 1975. It was established in 1962 in Tanzania by combining three existing anti-colonial movements - UNAMO (União Africana de Moçambique), MANU (Mozambique African Nation Union) and UDENAMO (União Democrática Nacional de Moçambique) (Paredes, 2014).

entrepreneurs that seem to be trying to follow a different path than that of their parents and grandparents, it may not be capturing a thorough view of Maputo's new middle class. In fact, we agree with Havstad (2019), that in Sumich 2016 works, his focus are the post-colonial elites, as better described elsewhere in this document.

In Sumich's words 'The moral basis of social hierarchies (…) is (…) expansive and encompasses narratives that explain and attempt to justify forms of dependence, inequality and wider obligations and how these will build a better future.' (p. 838), but he also adds that such ideological narratives are in decay and there is an awakening, both from those in the system, that feel trapped, and from those out of the system that feel deeply hindered. Among more subtle debates, Sumich (2016) also mentions violent riots in Maputo by the ones that feel marginalised in recent years. The 2008, 2010, 2012[11] riots in Maputo over increasing food and fuel prices in Maputo, popularly called *Revoltas da Fome* (Food Riots), are also extensively analysed on the book coordinated by De Brito (2017) and the conclusion is fairly similar: that even though the riots have partly happened due to an increase in international market prices, they were first and foremost a reflection of local economic dynamics and resulted from the social and political exclusion to which poorer urban social strata in Mozambique are doomed (De Brito et al., 2012, p. 41) .

Sumich (2016) is highly skeptical of the potencial of middle class outside politics, considering in fact, that it is 'hostage to it' (p. 169). In this regard, it could be useful to recall Nairobi's experience, where urban Nairobians, unlike their previous generations, prefer to 'seek careers in the private or nongovernmental sector' (Spronk, 2014, p. 101). In Nairobi, the flourishing urban scene characterised by a landscape of multiple international organisations (private, state/regional, non-governmental), multipartisan system, and an array of media outlets has layed the grounds for young professionals to aspire to a different lifestyle than that of their parents and hence, a different middle class, originating cultural clashes and criticisms (Spronk, 2014).

Looking at the material expressions of middle class, housing and urban planning in Maputo can shed some light on this debate[12]. High rental prices and little availability of dwelling in the centre of Maputo have been pushing the boundaries of the city to more peripherial areas, following formal housing policies and iniciatives (Nielsen & Jenkins, 2020b; Sumich & Nielsen, 2020) and private and informal initiatives (Mazzolini, 2016). On the informal initiatives Mazzolini (2016) talks about 'inverse

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[11] The 2010 riot was the most violent one and the 2012 one was averted by the government, which restricted SMS services, deployed extensive military all over the city on the day of the increase, enhanced the dialogue with civil society and used exchange-rate to moderate the impact on global price increases on the local market.
[12] This kind of analysis has been done in other countries. See Gastrow, (2020).

governmentality' and how private individuals getting land use rights[13] in the outskirts, formally occupied only by the poorer, is shaping government action in those areas. Hence, there is a negative effect of pushing the lower segments of the population even farther away from the urban centres. However, the fact that local government authorities have a very differentiated approach towards those lower segments and middle class, who is usually more social and political aware and present, is bringing urbanity (infrastructures, trade) into those areas (Mazzolini, 2016). Sumich & Nielsen (2020) based also on this new stretched urbanity, explore the differences among those that are redefining the city boundaries and have found 'a shared basis in the political aesthetics of urban housing but with varying effects' (p. 15). On the one hand there are the new young professionals, who self-identify as middle class, that aspire to place themselves in a good position for upward mobility and, for them, that often means buying a house as it is expected of a serious person, in new compounds built slight outside the city or buying land to build their own houses. Such compounds still, however, reflect contraditions between a former socialist ideal of community and collective habitation, while the residents desire for privacy and are building walls to drift away from this idea of collective. Thus, even though they have been developed and advertised as the ideal housing for Maputo middle class, these houses are now seen as a stepping stone to a yet undefined better place (Nielsen & Jenkins, 2020b; Sumich & Nielsen, 2020). On the other hand, for the wealthier and closer to power, housing mirrors their priviledge, while giving them some sense of autonomous space (Sumich & Nielsen, 2020). Sumich & Nielsen (2020) argue that any social category, middle class included, emerges from a specific context of domination and inequality, and from their research in Maputo, their intake was that 'Instead of acting as an agent of social transformation, a middle class (…) can be instrumental in reproducing a social order that even they despise' (Sumich & Nielsen, 2020, p. 16).

Brooks (2018) questions the actual effects of the 'Africa Rising' narrative, popularised in the 2000s and 2010s, which though having some positive impact on livelihoods of a group of people, actually resulted in rising inequalities, with the leaders of FRELIMO serving as 'as intermediaries between the global and national markets and gained from uneven development' (p. 447). Economic growth in Mozambique, widely commended by international organisations and other actors, and held as a positive example by political actors, seems to have boosted business, but regulations and increased inequality as well as exploitation of labour by foreign enterprises have earned frustration among middle class (Brooks, 2018).

As far as (female) entrepreneurship is concerned, and establishing the link with middle class, Havstad (2019), has studied in detail the gendered nuances of middle class formation in Mozambique.

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[13] In Mozambique, land is legally owned by the State and people are granted land use rights, as provided for in the Land Act (*Lei de Terras),* No. 19/97, of 1 October 1997.

Her study has elicited that the promises of progress and modernity of the newly independent Mozambique, to be materialised by the *Homem Novo*, who was to break with any colonial inheritage but also with traditional African and tribal costumes, as these were seen as backward and not aligned with the ideals of a modern and unified nation (Farré, 2015; Havstad, 2019). Such ideals of progress and development entailed empowering women, by integrating them in the economy as teachers, nurses, and other positions while strenghening their role as good wives and mothers. As a result, women were expected to conform to the subservience of a patriachal society in the private arena, while also working in the public arena, together with men to build the new nation. This failed attempt to empower women actualy resulted in domestic conflicts on the role of women, and 'by the late-1980s and early-1990s, a new female entrepreneurial middle class had emerged as women found creative ways to make money and carve out futures less dependent on male partners who were unwilling or unable to live up to FRELIMO's revolutionary ideals of the *Homem Novo* in support of the Liberated Mozambican Woman' (Havstad, 2019, p. 236). This is corroborated by Samuel (2014) in his case study focusing on a sample of women entrepreneurs in Pemba, Mozambique, who found that, among the women interviewed in Pemba (in the north of Mozambique), the increased income resulting from having their own business led to increased autonomy and consideration, both within their families and in the society, thus opening spaces for their active participation.

On a more macro perspective, Pereira & Maia (2019) have conducted an empirical study to investigate how government action impacts on entrepreneurship in Mozambique, which supported most assumptions explored above in the literature on entrepreneurship, such as the importance of fostering entrepreneurial ability instead of the activity, the relevance of an enabling institucional, financial and legal setting. The authors haven't found a political relevance in entrepreneurs, but atribute that to the small scope of interviewees and/or the entrepreneurial profile in Mozambique[14].

As a final note, although research has illuminated the controversial and evolving debate around middle class in Africa and Mozambique in particular, what would be the income of a middle class household in Africa and in Mozambique, middle class formation, how politics and middle class relate, the challenges faced by (women) entrepreneurs in Africa and its potential, as far as we know no study has examined the relationship between contemporary middle class and female entrepreneurship in Mozambique. As for entrepreneurship there is a considerable body of literature on informal entrepreneurs[15], but formal entrepreneurship is scarcely studied and very often disregarded as entrepreneurship, and Mozambique is no exception, 'Entrepreneurship in Mozambique means

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[14] According to the authors, in Mozambique there is a low level of entrepreneurial sophistication.
[15] See, for instance, Raimundo & Chikanda (2016).

informal economy, "barraquinhas", and poverty alleviation. Anything other than that is pure business, not entrepreneurship' (Pereira & Maia, 2019, p. 109)[16]. To shed some light into this literature gap, and framed in the recent tendency to explore the everyday manifestations of class among specific groups among scholars, this study addresses the perceptions of women that have founded formal businesses in Maputo.

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[16] See also Dalglish & Tortelli (2017).

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

This chapter aims to clarify and substantiate the methodological options relevant to this study, aiming to make sense of the concept of middle class in Maputo as perceived by women entrepreneurs. This chapter will give account of the research questions and objectives, the research approach and design, as well as participant selection considerations and the procedures used for collecting and analysing data. The findings and discussion thereof will be presented in the next chapter.

As shown in the previous chapter, to date the concept of middle classness has not gathered consensus in academic literature, in particular African middle classness, which, as widely supported by literature requires further empirical research. Some approaches reduce it to a quantitative measure, while others have furthered more progressive notions based on the living experiences and ambitious of the concerned group of people.

Specifically, regarding Maputo, literature suggests an intertwined bond between middle classness and the ruling political party (Sumich, 2016b). Yet, though the same was true in other countries, such as Kenya, in such other countries there is evidence of a new generation moving away from the political patronage and dependence (McDade & Spring, 2005) and pursuing more independent paths, typically more embedded in and driven by the particulars of capitalist systems. Furthermore, as evidenced in the previous chapter, middle class formation processes in Africa have been punctuated by historical gender divides. Against this background, our overarching goal here is to explore the concept of middle class and how entrepreneurship correlates with its gendered nuances in Mozambique. To that end, the questions underpinning this research are: (1) 'How do women entrepreneurs in Maputo perceive middle classness?'; (2) 'What are the views of today's woman entrepreneurs in Maputo about changing class ambitions and expressions?'; and (3) 'How can (female) entrepreneurship impact on social mobility?'. Hence, our objectives are: (1) To describe how women entrepreneurs in Maputo perceive middle classness; (2) To uncover possible changing trends in class perceptions and expressions by these women in relation to their forefathers; (3) To explain on the link between female entrepreneurship and middle classness.

The naturalistic approach, which consists of observing things in their natural settings has benefited, as explored by Lofland, Snow, Anderson, & Lofland (1995), from the background of the author as a women entrepreneur in Maputo for several years, having attended entrepreneurship courses and networked with other women. While going through the motions of such a path, the role

of women in the Mozambican society interest and how they are striving to find alternative ways to live a more fulfilling life has long caught our personal interest. This not only impacted our choice of topic but also the access to the field and the interaction with the interlocutors, which gained increased fluidity. Accessing previous knowledge and reasonable familiarity with the setting were vital to develop trust and a sharing environment during the interviews conducted, as well as to, afterwards, inform the discussion of the data.

This research is qualitative in nature, as the goal is to explore how a number of individuals experience a specific phenomenon, from their own perspective. This kind of research is used for grasping culturally specific non-numerical data on the behaviours, opinions, values and social contexts of particular populations, and 'provides a thorough and deep overview of a phenomenon through data collection and presents a rich description using a flexible method of research' (Naderifar, Goli, & Ghaljaie, 2017, p. 1).

Furthermore, it follows a life story design, as it will essentially be based on peoples' stories and how such stories speak to our object of study. It is our belief, that these women telling their stories may bring about important aspects that might otherwise be lost, because 'We seem to be recognizing more now that everyone has a story, even many, to tell about their lives and that they are indeed important stories' (Atkinson, 2012, p. 3). Academically, stories have been gradually earning the respect of various disciplines and are now broadly used by scholars, as summarised by Atkinson (2012, p. 6), stories are being used by phycologists, anthropologists, sociologists, historian, education and literary scholars. He points out how each discipline uses them, and according to that our approach will be closer to the anthropologists view, who 'use the life history, or individual case study, as the preferred unit of study for their measures of cultural similarities and variations' (Atkinson, 2012, p. 6). Literature mentions both life story and life history, but always used to translate very similar approaches consisting of telling a persons' biographical path.

This research is based on primary qualitative data complemented by the existing body of literature and relevant statistics on the topic. Primary data consists of interviews with the key interlocutors and observation notes. To give account of women entrepreneurs' perceptions, in-depth life-story interviews were conducted with 6 participants, all female, aged 27-40, living in Maputo and with formal businesses established. The participants were selected using the snowball or chain-referral method, which is based on convenience and consists of identifying a group or individuals that meet the criteria of the research and asking them to suggest other possible participants with similar characteristics that may be willing to participate in the study (Lofland et al., 1995; Naderifar et al., 2017). It is important to highlight that 'This type of sampling is a nonprobability method, which involves random selection of subjects' (Naderifar et al., 2017, p. 2), and is a common method among qualitative

researches. As mentioned above, the target characteristics sought in the participants were: being a woman, living in Maputo and having a formal business.

The interviews were developed in line with the ethnographic interview features as put forward by Spradley (1979) and interwove with features of a friendly conversation to keep the conversation flowing and relaxing the interlocutor. The interviews followed an open-question approach, based on a basic script with 19 questions to guide the conversation and gather a good understanding of the underlying context of our research focus. The average length of our interviews was 47 minutes. All participants were sent an informed consent form by email before the interview and verbally briefed on its content before the interview. Every participant agreed to be identified in the study. It should be noted that the initial plan was to conduct in-person interviews, complemented by a 3 months observation period. However due to the outbreak of COVID-19, the plan had to be adjusted and we stayed in Maputo only for one month, March 2020, for initial observations and contacts followed by interviews conducted remotely, in Portuguese, via online tools. Since network is sometimes unreliable in Maputo, we had to be flexible and used an array of tools to conduct the interviews, in particular, BigBlueButton, Skype and WhatsApp. Preliminary contacts with the interlocutors were made by phone and email. The interviews were recorded using QuickTime. After the interviews and during the data analysis process, some participants where contacted by WhatsApp for brief clarifications.

After conducting the interviews, they were transcribed and analysed to identify relevant aspects that speak to our research questions and could motivate further research. In broad terms, qualitative data analysis aims to 'bringing order, structure, and meaning to the masses of data collected' (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 3), and the subjective interpretation of the data is commonly achieved by carrying out a set of sequential steps entailing the organisation of the data, generating categories, coding and identifying patterns (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). More specifically, we have applied the content analysis, which according to Hsieh & Shannon's (2005) literature review 'focuses on the characteristics of language as communication with attention to the content or contextual meaning of the text'(p. 1278) and aims 'to provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study'(p. 1278).

Our data analysis followed several stages and included a qualitative coding process, which was first and foremost done in light of the questions guiding this research, following an iterative process of tagging key segments matching the questions, similarities and unexpected ideas. There are a few possible considerations on the type of coding, namely framework analysis, grounded theory and *in-vivo* coding. Grounded theory, first put forward by Glaser and Strauss (1967), is characterised by following the principle that any concept and hypotheses stems from the analysis instead of being established a *priori* (Gibson & Brown, 2011; Licqurish & Seibold, 2011). *In-vivo* codes, which are frequent among grounded theory methodology users are those where the code, or tag used

corresponds to the actual words used by the speaker (Licqurish & Seibold, 2011). As for framework analysis, developed by two qualitative researchers, Jane Ritchie and Liz Spencer in 1994, it has many similarities with grounded theory, but its focus lies more on describing and interpreting a particular context that developing theories. Framework analysis is 'better adapted to research that has specific questions, a limited time frame, a pre-designed sample (…) and *a priori* issues (…) that need to be dealt with' (Srivastava & Thomson, 2009, p. 73). In our research, we have used a combination of all the above. We did have a pre-established framework to guide our analysis of the data, yet throughout the coding process we kept an open mind and found other topics of interest that elicit possibly novel perceptions, links and ideas for future research, which is supported by grounded theory. We have also, very frequently, coded using *in-vivo* codes. The qualitative coding procedures were carried out using a computer software: Quirkos (version 2.3.1).

As far as the presentation of our findings is concerned, we followed a mixed approach. Literature suggests that ethnographic research is presented by developing individual *vignettes* of each participants and then aggregate them into categories, or, alternatively to follow a more interwoven approach, and 'to mark individual passages or excerpts from the transcripts and group these in thematically connected categories' (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 16). We have crafted a brief profile of each participant, based on their interview and previous knowledge, followed by a detailed analysis and discussion of the main ideas relating to each research question. Whenever we quote our interlocutors, we include a free translation into English in the text, supported by the original transcription extract in Portuguese as a footnote.

CHAPTER 4

Data Analysis and Findings

This chapter gives account of the research findings gathered from Mozambican women entrepreneurs with formally established businesses in Maputo using the methodology for collecting and analysing the data as described in the previous chapter. The findings will be presented and discussed in light of the research questions and objectives of this study and complemented with inputs from existing literature on the topic. Hence, the chapter will be divided into four main sections, the first one includes a brief profile of each key interlocutor and the following three are dedicated to presenting and discussing the findings pertaining each research question: (1) 'How do women entrepreneurs in Maputo perceive middle classness?'; (2) 'What are the views of today's women entrepreneurs in Maputo about changing class ambitions and expressions?'; and (3) 'How can (female) entrepreneurship impact on social mobility?'.

4.1. An Overview of Key Interlocutors

This section presents a biographical overview of our key interlocutors followed by brief introductory findings that aim to set the background for our discussion.

4.1.1. Gércia Sequeira[17]

Gércia Sequeira is the youngest child of a family of eight. Born in Inhambane in 1983, she started moving south around the age of 17, firstly to Chokwe due to her father's job at a bank and shortly after to Maputo when severe floods shattered the region in 2000. Taking education of his children as a priority, her father moved with the whole family to Maputo, so they were able to further their studies.

With Mozambican paramount chiefs, Cape Verdean and Portuguese ancestors, G. Sequeira was raised in the newly independent Mozambique, speaking Portuguese at home and, on the one hand, kept in line by her mother who had spent most of her life in a boarding school run by Portuguese nuns, while on the other pushed to 'grab the power[18]' and proudly pursue her ambitions by her father. *Avó*

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[17] G. Sequeira, Bigbluebutton Interview, June 16, 2020
[18] 'o poder arranca-se'

Amélia, her mother's elder sister and the first woman to have a pass,[19] has, since a young age, acted as a role model for an independent and tenacious woman, challenging gender roles.

Currently, at the age of 37, Gércia is the co-founder and CEO of ITIS - Instituto de Tecnologias Inovação e Serviços, chairwoman of AMPETIC[20], trainer in national and international initiatives in the field of entrepreneurship and business development, university lecturer and a student at a Business Master's Programme. Her transition from being employed to having her own business was almost incidental: a passion project that raised interest in the market and turned into a company in 2011. However, it has never lost the drive of a passion project and is thus deeply enmeshed with Gércia's family life, where new ideas and initiatives are more often than not brainstormed and discussed at lunch or dinner.

4.1.2. Mariana Eria[21]

Born in 1991, at the Maputo Central Hospital on a day where there was no running water to a family coming from Niassa, Mariana Eria was shaped by the very different places where she spent her childhood and youth and inspired by her assertive and entrepreneurial mother.

The family moved to Sweden on a diplomatic mission when she was 7, the youngest of 6 children, she was exposed to a different culture and education which fed her natural curiosity. In her family, education was believed to be crucial for a stable and secure life, so her educational choices were always discussed by the family, and such discussions were frequent, due to her parents moving to different countries. Maputo, Stockholm, Maputo, Durban and Maputo again to complete a Bachelor's in Management lectured in English. Whilst studying, M. Eria got a job at a bank, a stable and secure job, as expected by the family. Not exactly her dream, but after all the family efforts put into her education, she couldn't simple go and work with flowers, as she would have preferred. Henceforth, she kept it as a hobby until eventually her innovative floral designs started giving her more financial return than her stable and secure job, and that was the argument she needed to break away from her regular job at the bank.

M. Eria is now a successful and passionate entrepreneur in the field of contemporary floral design, with a 5 year old business, The House of Agness, and very active in various local and regional networks, especially those dedicated to women and youth entrepreneurs, such as the Commonwealth Alliance

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[19] Travel passes were initially only issued to men. Only in 1946 women who lived in urban areas were issued identity cards and could apply for a special pass to travel, which required the consent of parents or guardians, husbands and traditional authorities (O'Laughlin, 2000).
[20] Association of ICT companies and professionals
[21] M. Eria, Whatsapp Interview, June 18, 2020

of Young Entrepreneurs-Southern Africa, Lionesses of Africa, ANGE[22] and FEMME[23]. Aware of the enormous challenge it is to go against your family expectations, she often addresses mothers in her talks at events for women pleading them to support their daughters' ventures, 'since the beginning is always a bit bumpy and if you have nobody telling you it may work out, you're very likely to give up'.

4.1.3. Sandra Tamele[24]

'People say I'm disruptive, but I don't agree, when I don't find my place, I go ahead and create it.'[25] Following this motto, Sandra Tamele, born in 1980, was the first of her generation in a big family to get a bachelor's degree. She studied Architecture, but her first experiences in the job market were tainted by sexual harassment, little responsibilities and no growth opportunities. And so, not long after graduating, she decided to leave the architecture and create her place in the market as a translator and interpreter with her company SM Traduções. This change was seen amidst fear and concern by her family, but it proved to be a path that allowed her the freedom to manage her time while giving her possibility to grow and thus meet her ambitions. Furthermore, it awoke the passion for literary translation and when she found nobody willing to publish the books she translated and those translated by the best participants of the literary translation contest she organises every year; she did it again and in 2019 founded Editora Trinta Zero Nove, a press dedicated to publishing translation.

Her bond with books goes far back. Brought up speaking Portuguese at home, the *lingua franca* in a household run by a Quimuane mother, from a matrilineal culture, and a Changana father, with patrilineal traditions, both teachers and enthusiastically promoting books, reading and writing at home. Sandra was a child of a new Mozambique, where her parents didn't believe in class divide. She, on the other hand, looking at how they lived thought they would be somewhere in the low spectrum of middle class. Now, she feels much more blessed than middle class, all thanks to being an entrepreneur. In fact, for S. Tamele, everything she has and has done, the trips, the house, the car, her freedom are only a reality because she once decided to risk and start her own business venture.

4.1.4. Sázia Sousa[26]

Sázia Sousa, born in 1987, is the founder and CEO of Technoplus, an IT company that has been on the market for 10 years now. Even though she has been living in Maputo since she was 17, where she

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[22] National Association of Young Entrepreneurs of Mozambique
[23] National Federation of Women in Business
[24] S. Tamele, Skype Interview, 17 June, 2020
[25] 'As pessoas dizem que eu sou disruptiva, mas eu digo que não, quando não encontro o meu lugar, eu crio-o.'
[26] S. Sousa, Skype Interview, 24 June, 2020

studied IT Engineering, she believes that having been born and raised in Beira has endowed her with the nature of fighting for solutions, a feature of the people from Beira – in her own words, which has been key throughout her life.

Her entrepreneurial path was unintentionally shaped throughout her upbringing in a hard-working family, where both, parents and grandparents, had their own businesses. When after leaving university and choosing to do an exchange in Germany instead of seizing the opportunity of working at an established IT company, S. Sousa chose the riskier path. Upon her return to Mozambique and faced the challenges of finding a job, establishing her own company seemed to be the perfect solution, it would allow her to pursue her own path, as opposed to working at her father's company or continue fighting for a vacancy at somebody else's project, and she would be able to play a role in changing the prevailing view on Mozambican tech solutions and professionals.

Throughout the past 10 years the divide between her personal ambitions and the ones for the company was faded, with her investing most of her time, energy and resources in growing the company and making sure it had an impact. Nowadays, S. Sousa's every day struggle is to find a safe inner place for decision making among the pressures of running a home and a company, heightened by the societal expectations of the role of women, as wives and mothers. Yet, growing recognition in the market, increasingly challenging projects and a supporting husband and a network of peer women entrepreneurs are some of the factors that keep her moving forward.

4.1.5. Sofia Cassimo[27]

Sofia Cassimo, born in 1983, comes from a very plural family, with origins spanning from a paramount chief in Niassa (Mozambique), Maputo (Mozambique), Goa (India) and Alentejo (Portugal), and also plural in terms of social classes. Because both of S. Cassimo's parents were studying in Russia as part of the measures to train professionals for the new independent nation, S. Cassimo spent most of her childhood in Maputo with her grandparents, at first unaware of any class differences due to the country's Marxist ideologies, but the liberation of the economy and the status of her medical doctor grandparents brought her the first dolls and the first signs of class.

For the family, education was seen as vital for a good and stable life, so S. Cassimo was always instilled to follow the family trade and studied Medicine. It was not her passion though; it offered too narrow possibilities for her 'mushrooming ideas'. Eventually, after becoming a mother and inspired to seek an even better life for her son, she ventured into entrepreneurship, at first more shyly at a catering business, Sublime Special Events & Catering (founded in 2013), and shortly after, in 2014, she

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[27] S. Cassimo, Bigbluebutton Interview, June 16, 2020

went all-in with Samsara Development and Investment, a consulting firm operating in the field of economic inclusion and promotion of entrepreneurship with a major focus on women. Though supported by her husband, her choices were always somewhat foreign to her family ideals, who only started to accept her path when S. Cassimo's achievements as an entrepreneur led her to positions with greater visibility, such as being the vice-president of FEMME and being the chairwoman of the Chamber of Women and Entrepreneurship at CTA[28], amongst others.

S. Cassimo has since her debut as an entrepreneur been very active among initiatives and networks dedicated to women entrepreneurs, as these provide some solace during the challenging and bumpy roads of making your own path and also extremely useful platforms to learn the practicalities of starting and running a business.

4.1.6. Yara Ribeiro[29]

A father with Portuguese family, a mother from Maputo and Yara Ribeiro's first 10 years in Brazil probably play a role in her adaptability to different settings nowadays. Even though she was born in Mozambique, she spent her childhood in Brazil, where her parents had a scholarship for a bachelor's and masters' degree. The scholarship was not enough for them to have a good lifestyle, so her mother resourced to entrepreneurship, engaging in small businesses to complement their income. Upon their return to Maputo her mother continued to repeatedly seize opportunities and embrace new challenges.

Born in 1993, hence currently at the age of 27 and engaged in four businesses, Y. Ribeiro seems to have inherited her mother's serial entrepreneur impetus. She did follow a standard academic path, always together with small informal businesses and projects, and graduated in architecture, but never worked as an architect. Instead she has been striving to create projects in which she is free to manage her own time, choose where to work from and adjust the projects' missions and *modus operandi* according to her beliefs and ambitions. This obviously taking into account the market characteristics. Example of that is Smart Casual, the project that is currently taking up most of her efforts, founded in 2015, with a great focus on supporting marketing actions of private companies. Yet Y. Ribeiro's personal experience in a refugee camp and market mutations are now driving Smart Casual to pursue more social ends. In 2019, Y. Ribeiro spent a whole year in Nampula working at a refugee camp in Nampula, and her role was to help people there to start small businesses and make a livelihood. This

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[28] The Private Sector Chamber
[29] Y. Ribeiro, Bigbluebutton Interview, June 30, 2020

was at the same time a huge challenge, but also an opportunity for learning how to delegate and an example of how running your own businesses can give you freedom to pursue other passions.

4.1.7. Key Introductory Findings

The brief profiles of our interlocutors above are underpinned by a common narrative of pursuit for freedom and personal fulfilment. Very often at the expense of breaking the patterns instilled by the previous generation of settling for a safe job with a fixed income at the end of the month and a pre-established career trajectory. Our women are mostly the first generation born after the independence, most of them during the subsequent civil war, with parents impregnated with the ideals and opportunities of a new nation on the making.

Their stories are also sharply traced by multiple origins, crossing points and ethnicities that converge in the city of Maputo in times of change. These summarised life stories aim to give an overview of our interlocutors' individual successes and struggles framed by their family and historical context. This is broadly in line with Lentz (2020), who warns of the importance of considering individual biographical, family and historical time, as well their manifold correlations in studying middle class formation and reproduction.

4.2. Main findings and discussion on RQ1 'How do women entrepreneurs perceive middle classness?'

In our semi-structured interviews with women entrepreneurs in Maputo we have found a series of patterns. As a starting point we would like to highlight how perceived middle classness through the lenses of our women entrepreneurs is intertwined with aspirations and ambitions, which are not stagnant though. This ties well with previous studies, wherein it has been contended that '[Maputo] middle classness invests the present with an uncanny sense of existential otherness that serves as a reminder that any final destination is yet again projected onto a still unknown future'(Nielsen & Jenkins, 2020, p. 17).

Furthermore, it became very evident (mentioned by 5 out of 6) that our interlocutors are aware of how the expectations about what is middle class in Mozambique differ from those in other countries, especially taking into consideration the wages[30] practiced in the country and the number of people still living below the poverty line. For instance, when asked about what would middle class in

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[30] Minimum wages in Mozambique currently range from MZN 4.390,00 (approx. EUR 53,00) in the Agriculture, Husbandry, Hunting and Forestry Industry and MZN 12.760,00 (approx. EUR 154,00), information retrieved from https://meusalario.org/mocambique/salario/salario-minimo on 5 August 2020.

Mozambique be, after thinking a bit, S. Tamele acknowledged that she has 'travelled too much to be able to answer this accurately (…) [and that she] may be confusing what is middle class in Portugal or the United States with what is expected to be middle class here [in Mozambique].' [31] Despite considerable growth over the last two decades, almost half of the Mozambicans are still living below the poverty line, if considering the official poverty line ($1,49), and more than half (60,4%) if considering the international poverty line ($1,90) (The World Bank, 2018). On the issue of poverty it is also worth noting that there is a considerable share of the population very close to the poverty line, which means on the one hand, that many people are very close to overcoming it, but also that the number of people and households very vulnerable to fall back into extreme poverty is still significant. These poverty figures were ascertained before the hits on the economy caused by hidden debt scandals (in 2016), natural disasters (Idai and Kenneth Cyclones in 2019) and now COVID (in 2020) and ongoing security issues in the centre and north of the country. Hence, we speculate that the optimistic outlooks of ending extreme poverty by 2030 are now lagging even more behind.

These data, together with the aspirational aspect mentioned above, support the question very recently raised by Lentz (2020) about the impacts of transnational narratives on middle classness and of what is to be expected of a middle class life. Our interlocutors' entrepreneurial activities have them interacting with a vast array of people and institutions from different countries and regions, which make them more prone to feel the effects of global narratives. In this regard, G. Sequeira actually questions whether there is in fact a middle class if we look at the Mozambican context: 'Another option would be to look at the context and say what is middle class in Mozambique. That is a different story. We might have barriers to finding where the middle class really is. I wonder if it does exist'[32]. This speaks to the precariousness of Mozambican middle classness (Havstad, 2019; Razafimandimby, 2017) and has also been implicitly substantiated by other interlocutors, who hesitantly admitted feeling better off than the Mozambican middle class, whilst at the same time not really confident of their belonging to their imagined middle class ideals.

Another very consensual topic was regarding the perceived importance of material expressions of class (Nielsen & Jenkins, 2020b; Spronk, 2018; Sumich & Nielsen, 2020). Having a house or a plot was mentioned by every interlocutor as a key feature of a middle-class member. These findings, complemented by previous knowledge and observation suggest a behaviour similar to that observed

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[31] 'Eu acho que viajei demais para conseguir responder a isto com fidelidade, sabes. Porque posso estar a misturar o que é classe média em Portugal ou nos Estados Unidos, com aquilo que é a expectativa de ser classe média aqui' (S. Tamele, Skype Interview, 17 June, 2020)

[32] 'Uma outra forma seria olhar o contexto e dizer o que é classe média em Moçambique. Isso é outro assunto. Teríamos barreiras de onde é que está realmente a classe média. Será que existe?' (G. Sequeira, Bigbluebutton Interview, June 16, 2020)

in Luanda by Gastrow (2020) 'Luanda's residents increasingly believed that access to formal housing, (…) aesthetically defined, was a primary means of affirming middle-class status.' (p. 527). The location of the dwelling is also seen as an expression of someone who is upper in the social structure, but the interlocutors broadly acknowledge the need to consider the local context. Our research and observations suggest that even though the aspiration of most middle-class person is to have a house or an apartment in the city centre, in Polana Cimento or Sommershied, closer to jobs and the bustling life of the capital city, they usually end up buying or building a house farther away from the city centre pushed by the limited available housing in the centre and real-estate prices. Away from the centre we find the Intaka and Casa Jovem compounds, which, as argued by Nielsen & Jenkins (2020), aimed to host the new Maputo middle class, but has failed in its objective and 'rather than considering [such] formalised middle-class housing as a final destination, to many Maputo urbanites, it affords them with an opportunity that potentially allows them to leap into more desirable futures elsewhere in the city' (p. 18). Major developments in infrastructure, mostly financed by the Chinese Government, over the past decade, such as the Maputo ring road and the Maputo-Katembe bridge have also further motivated the urban middle class to build in places like Chiango, Marracuene and Catembe, in addition to the former expansion areas near Matola and other areas close to N1 road. S. Cassimo admitted that owning a house in Maputo city centre is very expensive, so the next step is renting an apartment in the centre, but still build your own house in the peri-urban areas, in her words 'most people that are middle class here, rent a house in the centre but build one in their place of origin, where it is cheaper'[33] Investing in property, ideally a house, but also plots is seen by our interlocutors as a cultural symbol of status and class, as confessed by S. Souza, when talking about what would a Mozambican do with additional income: 'Buy a plot. I believe that's really a cultural thing. They [Mozambicans] keep "burying" their Money in plots'[34].

Having a car or access to transport has also been frequently mentioned by our participants. In fact, according to the 2018 report on Transports and Communications from the Mozambican National Statistics Institute (Instituto Nacional de Estatística, 2018), the Mozambican vehicle fleet saw a dramatic increase from the previous year, 41.1%, with Maputo province having by far the largest number of car owners in the country. At this stage of understanding, the growing number of vehicles can be construed as a sign of increased purchase power, but also as a consequence of more urban middle-class people, whose work activities typically are in city centre, owning houses in the peri-urban

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[33] 'Atenção que as pessoas que são classe média cá, aqui onde residem muitas vezes não têm casa própria, alugam no centro, mas constroem no local de origem, que é mais barato' (S. Cassimo, Bigbluebutton Interview, June 16, 2020)

[34] 'Comprar terreno (risos). Acho que isso é muito cultural mesmo. Vai enterrando dinheiro em terrenos' (S. Sousa, Skype Interview, 24 June, 2020)

areas as explored above, and having to commute every day. Another curious finding relates to the silence on the car makes in our interviews. This may be indicative of the fact that having a car, notwithstanding its make or type is, in itself, a symbol of autonomy and better living conditions, possibly middle class, as opposed to having to travel in the overcrowded public and semi-public means of transportation.

However, 'Neither houses nor cars reveal middle-class status in a straightforward manner. They are instead bound up with increasing tensions between individualism and social obligation that people must navigate'(Mercer & Lemanski, 2020, p. 433), therefore it is worth looking at other expressions of middle classness mentioned by our interlocutors. Access to private service providers was broadly another topic of consensus, with most participants mentioning the access to education, in particular to private schools, as a distinctive feature of middle class. Access to private health providers has been specifically mentioned by 2 interlocutors. A healthy diet was mentioned by S. Cassimo to justify why she feels she is part of middle class and food habits were often mentioned as a gauge of the economic status of their families while growing up, which suggests that basic needs, such as education, health and food are still among perceived middle classness top priorities, the quality thereof and not only their mere fulfilment is currently regarded as the distinctive feature between classes.

Scholarship on middle class has increasingly highlighted the importance of studying everyday life (Lentz, 2020) and calling for 'empirically based analysis of the living conditions and everyday life of this growing middle-income stratum.' (Neubert & Stoll, 2018, p. 73). As illustrated by Y. Ribeiro's words during our conversation 'I don't think international trips and things like that says much [about one's social class], I think it's more the daily lifestyle'[35], how everyday habits are indicative of one's middle classness was also a strong theme that emerged among participants. Or as described by M. Eria 'These are people who go to the same places, when you go to restaurants, when you go to the hairdresser, the kind of hairdresser that you go. The nightlife, the activities that people do. I think you can tell a lot from that.'[36] The fact is that this mirrors this idea of how everyday habits are impacted by social class, and that is not the city is that small, or has so little options, but that people from a certain class or status choose prefer to go to certain places, like having dinner at one of restaurants at Julius Nyerere Avenue or the Marginal or even go to Ponta or Macaneta to spend their Sunday with family or friends at the beach. Or, as other interlocutors mentioned and confirmed by our observation, these daily habits also entail selfcare routines, like spending considerable money on hair, nails, clothes and shoes.

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[35] 'eu acho que viagens internacionais e assim não mede muito, acho que é mais o *lifestyle* de cada dia' (Y. Ribeiro, Bigbluebutton Interview, June 30, 2020)
[36] 'São pessoas que vão estando nos mesmos sítios, quando vais para restaurantes, quando vais para o cabeleireiro, o tipo de cabeleireiro que tu vais. O *nightlife*, as atividades que as pessoas fazem. É, acho que se nota muito nisso.' (M. Eria, Whatsapp Interview, June 18, 2020)

In this context of everyday consumption habits, we acknowledge that they are important for the topic under research, yet also this should be seen as a part of a group of elements. As alerted by Gastrow (2020), consumption can be superficial and therefore deceiving of one's actual wealth and Y. Ribeiro also recalled: 'If I spend 10,000 meticais on Friday dinner I should be upper middle class, but that also depends on whether I' m staying the whole week doing nothing because I did that on the weekend.'[37].

Also worth noting is how some participants include the household members day-to-day habits, thus looking at the nuclear family as a unit where the individual habits of each individual impact the notion of class of the collective. This can be framed within the scholarship that generally sees social classes as including households and families and not only the individuals (Lentz, 2020), and that 'Wealth is not tied to the individual but circulates more widely through social relations' (Mercer & Lemanski, 2020, p. 429). According to our observation, there is, however considerable difference between the nuclear family and the extended family, where very often even if a household is better off and helps their extended family, it typically doesn't seem to result in a sharing or extension of everyday middle class habits, but more to punctual assistance.

Still on the lifestyle and consumption habits topics, which are among the most prolific both in literature, in our interlocutors' words and very evident while just partaking in Maputo city life, it seems particularly relevant, to once again take into consideration culture and entrenched values while looking at such elements. For instance, travelling for tourism, which in other regions is seen as a sign of a higher class, in Maputo doesn't seem to be so linked to class. Two interlocutors mentioned culture and going on holidays as markers of middle classness. However, two other participants mentioned how travelling is not something as valued by Mozambicans as by people in other countries, and therefore not travelling should not be seen as them not having the possibilities, financial or otherwise, for S. Souza 'the problem is still much more cultural than financial. Because people might have the money to do these things, but they don't value them. So, I believe that travelling for holidays, going out to a cinema, etc., is indeed a middle-class thing, but there may be people who are middle class who don't do this'[38].

To afford all the things, services and habits mentioned above, you need money, and so, income and earnings in general need to be included in this discussion. Among our interlocutors it became clear

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[37] 'Se eu gasto 10 mil meticais no jantar de sexta eu devia ser classe média alta, mas isso também depende se na semana toda eu vou ficar sem fazer nada porque fui lá no fim-de-semana' (Y. Ribeiro, Bigbluebutton Interview, June 30, 2020)

[38] 'o problema ainda é bem mais cultural do que financeiro. Porque as pessoas podem até ter dinheiro para fazer estas coisas, mas não darem valor a estas coisas. Então, eu acredito que o viajar para férias, sair para um cinema, etc., é sim característica de quem está na classe média, mas podem existir pessoas que estão na classe média que não façam isso' (S. Sousa, Skype Interview, 24 June, 2020)

that income is a good gauge in asserting what defines middle class. Some participants mentioned specific income figures, usually between 30 and 50 thousand Meticais per month, like S. Cassimo, for instance 'the working class and the self-employed, who earn around 5 times the minimum wage'[39]. It was also noticeable, however, that more than them believing such amount was enough to enjoy the middle-class life, the figures alluded to categories shared in trainings they had attended or in the media. These figures are presented by our interlocutors only as one factor among many that, when seen together will form the expression of middle class, which encompasses income, but also status, connections and the everyday experience of being middle class as discussed above. Overall these data are in accordance with findings reported by Lentz (2016) and Spronk (2018), who warn of the fallacy of considering income alone in this type of analyses regarding Africa. The reason argued by most scholarship is that while in other regions, higher income usually also equates higher status, this is not always true in African countries. Considering the local reality, we can also draw a parallel with 'middle income people', as identified by Bach & Nallet (2018) in public policies in Ethiopia.

The relative importance of income has been more intensely emphasised to the extent that it relates to purchase power and the enabling of the consumption habits described above. Whilst speaking about the purchase power, a mismatch emerges between the figures usually associated with middle class income in Mozambique and the money needed to live the so much ambitioned 'good life', as discussed elsewhere in this section. Y. Ribeiro admits that 'The cost of living in Maputo is very high and the wages are very low. There are people with 10 years' experience who are perhaps now getting 50,000 meticais, but 50,000 meticais are not enough to maintain a standard of living in a good home, have a good car, have a child, send the child to a good school'[40]. Another curious finding revealing a very specific cultural aspect concerns how a person's or a household's income should be enough to meet every day needs without financial pressure, i.e. as pointed by G. Sequeira 'always spend the salary in the right month'[41]. In Maputo, it is very common for someone to receive their salary on the 23rd and by the 30th, after doing the *rancho*[42], paying all the small debts incurred throughout the previous month and some indulging, such as a nice dinner or night out, the bank account is back at zero, so the following weeks any additional spending will come out of next month's salary.

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[39] 'a classe trabalhadora e classe executiva, que ganha por aí 5 vezes mais que o salário mínimo' (S. Cassimo, Bigbluebutton Interview, June 16, 2020)
[40] 'O custo de vida em Maputo é muito elevado e o nível salarial é muito baixo. Há pessoas que estão com experiência de 10 anos e que talvez neste momento estão a receber 50 mil meticais, mas os 50 mil meticais não chegam para manter um nível de vida numa boa casa, ter um bom carro, ter um filho, pôr o filho numa boa escola' (Y. Ribeiro, Bigbluebutton Interview, June 30, 2020)
[41] 'gastar sempre no mês correto o salário do outro mês' (G. Sequeira, Bigbluebutton Interview, June 16, 2020)
[42] Monthly grocery shopping

Policy and government action, frequently at the core of scholarly arguments on hindrances to middle class formation and development were mentioned by our interlocutors as direct barriers to individual growth, in particular the entrepreneurial cohort. They claim that the system in itself is difficult to navigate, with too many shaded areas. Taxation, in particular, was mentioned by 3 of our interlocutors as a key challenge, S. Cassimo confessed: 'If I look at what we have today, then this middle class is getting thinner and thinner because of the way we are being pressed with taxes.'[43]. These data are in light with the gap identified by Southall (2018), who advanced the need for a deeper study of 'the role of the state in the making (and in some cases, the unmaking) of the middle class' (p. 6).

On a broader note, we would like to briefly review the duality between old and new middle class, which has been frequently used by broader literature with varying significances (Lentz, 2020). This has also been discussed by Sumich (2016), in his works on Maputo, considering old middle class, as those people who have been close to FRELIMO since independence and therefore have benefited from privileged positions, whereas, for the same author, the new middle class would be people that occupied high ranks in the opposition parties, staff of international organisations and businesspeople that have seized the opportunities of the switch from socialism into capitalism. For Sumich, however, a frequent common feature between old and new middle class is some sort of link with the ruling party, be it more direct or indirect. For Y. Ribeiro, the difference seems to lie on how rooted is the middle class, agreeing with Sumich as far as the old middle class is concerned, but stressing the journey of young professionals to climb to a better life situation: 'I would say that the upper middle class are those people (...) already born into an upper middle class and that will always be upper middle class, unless the parents take a blow or something happens in the family business. But nowadays, I believe that the young people who are working and who manage to get some management positions are able to be middle class.'[44].

Finally, S. Cassimo introduced a new element, highlighting how current middle class in Maputo is part of a process and can leverage the potential of the next generation or the people interacting with them. This was also very present in other interlocutors whilst taking about the main drives[45] in their undertakings, which very often entailed an enhanced Mozambique. What keeps S. Souza moving, for instance is 'The change I [she] can see we achieve with our work. It is the purpose to be accomplished

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[43] 'Então se eu for para aquilo que há hoje, é que esta classe média cada vez é mais diminuta da maneira que nos espremem com os impostos' (S. Cassimo, Bigbluebutton Interview, June 16, 2020)

[44] 'A classe média alta diria que são aquelas pessoas (…) já nasceram numa classe média alta e vão ser sempre classe média alta, a não ser que os pais levem um golpe ou algo aconteça no negócio da família. Mas classe média agora eu acho que agora é o jovem que está a trabalhar e que já consegue alguns cargos de direção consegue ser classe média' (Y. Ribeiro, Bigbluebutton Interview, June 30, 2020)

[45] We have included our interlocutors' main drives here based on the fact that they all admitted being part of Maputo middle class, and as such, they can be taken as illustrative of middle classness.

every day'[46]; whereas G. Sequeira's aim is to uplift Mozambicans' image in the workplace: 'We would love to see that after we're done working, for example, nobody would ever say that people in Mozambique don't know how to do things'[47]. Attaching the transformative potential to middle classness or the effects of their actions has been identified in literature with different positionings. Sumich & Nielsen (2020), for instance question the extent to which middle class is being instrumental or instrumentalised in this pursuit for societal change. Spronk (2018) highlights how middle class considered as 'subjects for economic development and entrepreneurs, and drivers of change' (p. 316) is one of the narratives most used in African studies on middle classes. We believe that aspirations, so frequently cited in broader literature (Bach & Nallet, 2018; Havstad, 2019; Lentz, 2016; Nielsen & Jenkins, 2020b) are key in our findings here, suggesting that Maputo middle class, even if not still fully meeting it, can be seen as aspiring to transform society.

By and large, when comparing our findings to those of previous works, we argue that the perception of middle classness by women entrepreneurs is broadly in line with previous works, claiming, for instance that 'middle class households diversify their expenditures away from basic needs towards more durable goods (home appliances, computers, smart-phones, cars), luxury goods, entertainment (restaurants, movies, travels), and in some cases properties.' (Clementi et al., 2020, p. 2). Their being entrepreneurs and having to fight for their income in a challenging environment surfaced the role of the state in consolidating middle class, or, as it seems to be the case, in making it a fragile status, very vulnerable to rises or falls. One finding that has not always gathered consensus in literature, but that is very notorious in the perceptions of the women in this study, is their potential to leverage change in society, not as much from a political perspective, but rather a social and economic one.

4.3. Main findings and discussion on RQ2 'What are the views of today's women entrepreneurs about changing class ambitions and expressions?'

There is a solid consensus around this relatively new debate on African middle class(es): it fraught with complexities, a 'one size fits all' definition will hardy be possible, there is not enough data available, and different conceptual approaches are subject of an inter-disciplinary debate on middle class. Nonetheless, there also seems to be a growing agreement on the need to take into account historical process and contexts in the study of classes in Africa (Lenz, 2020) and how 'specific historical contexts

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[46] 'A mudança que estou a ver que a gente consegue fazer com o trabalho. É o propósito a ser concretizado todos os dias' (S. Sousa, Skype Interview, 24 June, 2020)
[47] 'Gostávamos muito que depois de nós terminarmos de trabalhar nunca mais se falasse por exemplo que as pessoas em Moçambique não sabem fazer' (G. Sequeira, Bigbluebutton Interview, June 16, 2020)

of political rule, economic structure and social organisation shape personal experiences and livelihoods.' (Spronk, 2020, p. 472). Contributing to this narrative, Mercer & Lemanski (2020) claimed that 'class is not about describing a snapshot in time, but about embracing non-linear processes of class formation and social change over time'(p. 436). This is extremely relevant in Mozambique as we do not need to travel that far back in time to witness dramatic political, economic and social changes. In Mozambique, 50 years back are enough to take us through the commotions of colonial rule, a fight for independence, a new nation guided by socialist ideals, a civil war, the abandonment of Marxism and the embrace of (neo-) liberal market policies, the discovery of one of the world's largest liquefied natural gas deposits and so many other critical events that deeply impacted on the lives of the country and its people.

In view of the above, we will begin this section by briefly exploring key moments in the Mozambican history which we believe to have a profound impact on the way people look at and live social classes in their specific times, and we shall firstly do it through the lenses of education. Our life story interviews elicited how important education is and has been throughout our protagonists' and their families' generations. To illustrate this relevance, when taken together, words related to education were amongst those more often used, *escola* (school) was mentioned 34 times, *estudo* (study) and *estudos* (studies) 31 and 10 times respectively, then we have *formação* (formation, training) *and formações* (trainings) 22 and 9 times respectively, *estudar* (to study) and *faculdade* (university) 20 times each, and *Licenciatura* (Bachelor's) and *Mestrado* (Master's) 15 times each.

Education has been and is still seen as the key to empower people and the access to it or lack thereof and its quality typically determines one's future. Therefore, it is also very often the root of social divisions. In Mozambique, the divides date far back, for example, under the *Estado Novo*, when native and Portuguese children weren't allowed in the same schools; primary schools for native children (who weren't allowed into secondary education) focused on Portuguese language and history as well as on developing their skills for specific labours (O'Laughlin, 2000). The assimilated people, as discussed in Chapter 2, were native Mozambicans granted some privileges of those with Portuguese citizenship, including their children's access to their schools and thus access to better jobs in the future. Education was the key to status and authority, and as recalled by Sumich (2008), it is very revealing that Eduardo Mondlane, who became the first leader of FRELIMO, was the first Mozambican black person to graduate from university[48].

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[48] He studied Anthropology and Sociology in a South African university, which he was forced to abandon due to the Apartheid regime. After a short stay in Portugal, he completed his studies in the United States of America (USA), where he obtained his PhD in the 1950s.

With the independence in 1975, FRELIMO, which had led the liberation struggle and was now ruling the new nation, was invested in improving the education system and bringing education to the masses, at it would the base of their new national identity and pave the way to their *Homem Novo*, the New Man, who was to be guided by science and reason (Khan, 2016; Sumich, 2008). The investment in education was also motivated by the need to replace the Portuguese cadres in business and administration that had left the country, so the local efforts were complemented by scholarships for young adults, typically former *Assimilados*, as they were the ones who had secondary education, to go abroad and study at the University. S. Cassimo's parents were among this cohort, as she recalls: 'In that post-independence period we needed cadres here and at the time Mozambique was aligning with Eastern and Marxist countries, so my parents were among the first group of students who were sent to Russia to get their degree, and then they had to return.'[49] On the other hand, the testimony of S. Tamele's parents speaks to the overall excitement around education in the first years of independence. They were proud teachers, working in the 'building of the Mozambican nation'[50]. The leaders of new Mozambique were guided by the universalist principles of Marxism and therefore rejected not only capitalism and other colonial institutions, but also any ethnic features and cultural traditions, in fact literature frequently claims that the *Homem Novo* of independent Mozambique actually came to replace the *Assimilado* from colonial days (Fry, 2000; Sumich, 2008). Portuguese language was the only element from the old colony that FRELIMO's new men project not only preserved but intensively promoted as it was seen as way to unify the nation and avoid language divides, as the society should be one without races, tribes or religions (Khan, 2016). Some of our interlocutors also spoke of this, recalling how they were forbidden to speak local languages at home, which sometimes even made their communication with the elders of the family very difficult, if not impossible. Samora Machel, the first president of Mozambique, enthusiastically promoted the idea of the power of a society without divides, which was adopted by many of its followers, S. Tamele, for instance, says that until she was about 12, she 'grew up in a world where there was no white, there was no black, there was no poor, there was no rich, there was no so so'[51], this was Samora's ideal.

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[49] 'Naquele período do pós-independência nós cá precisávamos de quadros e na altura, Moçambique alinhava com os países de leste e com os países marxistas, então os meus pais fizeram parte do primeiro grupo de estudantes que foram enviados para a Rússia para tirar a licenciatura, que tinham que voltar depois para o país' (S. Cassimo, Bigbluebutton Interview, June 16, 2020)

[50] 'eles foram os que trabalharam para a edificação daquilo que é a nação moçambicana' (S. Tamele, Skype Interview, 17 June, 2020)

[51] 'Cresci num mundo em que não havia branco, não havia preto, não havia pobre, não havia rico, não havia remediado' (S. Tamele, Skype Interview, 17 June, 2020)

However, this ambitious project did not succeed and shortly after independence, a 16-year civil war (1977-1992) between FRELIMO and RENAMO [52] erupted, with many voices including the disrespect for ethnical traditions and customary authorities in the reasons behind the discontent that led to the war (Khan, 2016). The civil war that destroyed the country, especially the north and the central regions ended with a peace agreement signed in October 1992, following the enactment of the first liberal constitution in 1990. The agreement was, however, followed by a poorly implemented Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) and peace building process that eventually led to a resurgence of the conflict in 2014, which we will discuss later in this section. The war also took a huge toll on education infrastructure, especially in rural areas, thus aggravating regional differences. But as recalled by Fry (2000), the war did not only took away, it also brough in the United Nations, international aid agencies, non-governmental organisations, renewed interest in the country that eventually resulted in 'new ways of thinking, new categories and ultimately a new definition of the Mozambican nation that broke quite radically with that which FRELIMO had forged' (p. 131). Such new ways of thinking include a transition from socialism to market economy and the return and celebration of traditions, local languages and diversity. The rebuilding of the country together with the considerable influx of development workers (and their purchase power) also brought many business opportunities, and therefore many people, such as S. Souza's parents, for instance, have harvested these opportunities and thrived as businesspeople. The differences heightened by the war and the liberalisation of the economy brought back the notion of classes to Mozambicans' lives. This doesn't mean they had not been there before, yet the socialist ideal tried to mask them. S. Cassimo, even though she was still a child then, remembers those days 'When I was 8-10 years old a shop opened here (...) my grandparents, as they were doctors, had access to this shop so I (...) began to see a difference between people who did not have access to the things I had. And then, when the supermarket came up, everything became very differentiated'[53]. G. Sequeira also spoke of the social ranking in Chókwè, where her family lived, with the governing elite on the top, followed by managers and directors of companies, then executive workers and finally peasants. This hasn't really changed until now.

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[52] *Resistência Nacional Moçambicana* (RENAMO) 'had been formed immediately after the independence of Mozambique, in 1975, through an alliance between the Rhodesian secret service and a group of Mozambican dissidents from FRELIMO, from the border region between the two countries, who spoke a ChiShona dialect, Chindau' (Fry, 2000, p. 131)

[53] 'Já eu tinha 8-10 anos surgiu aqui uma loja (...) os meus avós, como eram médicos tinham acesso a essa loja então eu (...) comecei a ver uma diferença entre as pessoas que não tinham acesso às coisas que eu tinha. E depois, quando já havia supermercado, tudo ficou muito diferenciado' (S. Cassimo, Bigbluebutton Interview, June 16, 2020)

It is interesting to see how the stories of our interlocutor's lives have elicited a number of patterns that can be interpreted as a way of navigating the above framed specific contexts to pursue a better life. A similar conclusion was found by Spronk (2020) while following groups of Ghanaians from different generations, 'the pursuit of social mobility brings a focus on the middle class as a classification-in-the-making, arising from people's desire to improve their livelihoods, and on an ongoing process' (pp. 483-484). These materialisation of better livelihoods has in many of our interlocutors' stories, as for most part in Spronk's Ghanaian interlocutors, translated into a move into the capital city, which had been less affected by the war, in pursuit of better education. This reflects their parents' high efforts to provide their children with a good education, like S. Souza, for instance 'I was 17 when I left Beira, I came here to study'[54] or G. Sequeira 'my father's decision was that we shouldn't interrupt our studies, so we had to come to Maputo'[55]; work opportunities; and better healthcare. Nuclear families also became considerably smaller. In fact, none of our interlocutors have more than one child to date, but most of them come from numerous families. Other patterns that surfaced were spending holidays, marrying later, a diversified diet, looking for self-fulfilment and many more.

In most of our interlocutors' stories we see a massive transformation from their grandparents' lives, in particular their grandmothers' to them. Looking at S. Tamele's story, for instance, when talking about one of her grandmothers: 'She worked in the fields, but had nothing of her own, except for her *capulanas*[56], which she left me, along with her stories'[57]. And only two generations later, about her own achievements, S. Tamele says 'I have my own house, I have a car, some savings, I have travelled'[58]. S. Cassimo, whose maternal grandparents were medical doctors and therefore already could afford a good life, tells a different story, but, nonetheless, one of change, the difference here, two generations later, is a pursuit for self-fulfilment. S. Cassimo is also a medical doctor but when she goes to work, she doesn't carry a stethoscope, but rather a laptop and energy for meetings and trainings at her impact investment consultancy.

The grandparents of our interlocutors were born and lived most of their lives during colonial rule. Their parents were born towards the end of colonial rule and came of age in the new Mozambique of

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[54] 'tinha 17 anos quando saí da Beira, vim para estudar' (S. Sousa, Skype Interview, 24 June, 2020)
[55] 'A decisão do meu pai foi que nós não devíamos parar a escola e tínhamos que vir a Maputo' (G. Sequeira, Bigbluebutton Interview, June 16, 2020)
[56] Traditional cloth that Mozambican women use for for multiple purposes, including wearing it wrapped around their waists.
[57] 'Trabalhava nos campos, mas ela não tinha nada dela, tirando as capulanas que é o que deixou de herança para mim, junto com as histórias' (S. Tamele, Skype Interview, 17 June, 2020)
[58] 'Eu tenho casa própria, tenho carro, tenho algumas poupanças, viajei.' (S. Tamele, Skype Interview, 17 June, 2020)

Samora Machel, with the narratives of the *Homem Novo* guided by Marxist ideals. Our interlocutors were born during the subsequent 16-year civil war, but their adulthood came in a Mozambique more geared towards capitalism and amidst promises of opportunities from business opportunities in a liberalised economy, in a country with new-found mineral resources potential. Not a challenge free country though. The 1992 Rome General Peace Accord held for more than 20 years, the aid boom that followed it, though yielding development progresses, also enabled the elites that owned the houses, the buildings, the lands required for the projects, namely FRELIMO elites. The recent discovery of gas and coal reserves and the megaprojects from international corporations they bring with them has furthered triggered RENAMO to go back to armed conflict in 2013 (Vines, 2019), which after several negotiation processes led to the signing of a new Peace Accord in 2019, the implementation of which is still underway. But it is still not time to enjoy the bonanza. Internal discords within RENAMO may threaten the successful implementation of the peace agreement. Moreover, the security crisis due violence allegedly promoted by an Islamic terrorist group in Cabo Delgado province is leading to enormous tests to Mozambican leaderships, including how to handle the increasing numbers of internally displace people. The question here is whether these events will push development policies to reduce the inequality between regions and people or if they will further enhance it and how Mozambicans will traverse these, yet again, changing circumstances.

After looking at the stories told by our protagonists against the relevant political, economic and social background in Mozambique, in short and in general we can draw a line from a broadly rural background striving for the basics and move past an enthusiastic generation. The people in this generation were very often the first ones to have a higher education, which afforded them a step-change into a better and prestigious life. They, therefore, placed their best efforts in making sure their children (our interlocutor's generation) had access to the best possible education, frequently the expense of cutting down expenses in food or clothes not to scarcity, but to the basics. Then we arrive at our interlocutors' generation, all of them with university degrees and now searching for more. In this generational journey we follow a group of people who tried to make the most out of their time, taking into account the favourable and not so favourable elements, they are not uniform stories though, because, as Spronk (2020) asserts 'Every era has its conducive and detrimental circumstances; the question is how to seize the opportunities' (p. 485).

4.4. Main findings and discussion on RQ3 'How can (female) entrepreneurship impact on social mobility?'

As a background note to this section, it is important to recall that our key interlocutors have all identified themselves as belonging to a general, blurry middle class, and as such our findings comprise their direct statements on the role of entrepreneurship in reaching middle class, but also and more importantly their personal entrepreneurial journeys.

From our interactions with women entrepreneurs it became clear that entrepreneurship is a viable path to achieve their middle-class ambitions and maintain a 'good life'. S. Tamele, for instance, doesn't hesitate and admits: 'Oh my God! Everything I have, I have only accomplished because I am an entrepreneur. Really, everything! I have my own house, I have a car, I have some savings, I have travelled. Yes, everything. Without this job I do, without becoming an entrepreneur, I wouldn't have made it.'[59].

Two key reasons emerged more visibly, one more related to the non-material characteristics of middle class, while the other more material as per the respective ideas posited by scholarship on the topic (Spronk, 2018). 'Definitely freedom!'[60], freedom has been mentioned directly or indirectly by all our key interlocutors as one of the greatest advantages of entrepreneurship. Freedom to manage their own time, to (when their businesses already allow for tasks delegation) spend time with their loved ones, freedom to choose where to work from (depending on the kind of business) and, above all, freedom to decide on the work philosophy and in which projects they focus their efforts on. The material grounds relate mostly to the potential of growing their income, because as S. Cassimo claimed 'if you are smart, it has this advantage of falling and getting up and you learn very fast'[61]. In a country where the wages are very low and career paths, unless you are very well connected, are slow, entrepreneurship has the potential to fast track the route to having income enabling of the aspired life. Y. Ribeiro describes a typical career path and why so many people resort to entrepreneurship: 'Until you reach a bank management position you can spend 15 years and perhaps receive a 3-figure salary. So many people can see the alternative of entrepreneurship, first to supplement the income,

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[59] 'Ó meu Deus, tudo o que eu tenho, só consegui porque sou empreendedora. A sério, tudo! Eu tenho casa própria, tenho carro, tenho algumas poupanças, viajei. Sim, tudo. Sem este trabalho que faço, sem empreender não tinha conseguido' (S. Tamele, Skype Interview, 17 June, 2020)

[60] 'Sem dúvida a liberdade' (S. Tamele, Skype Interview, 17 June, 2020)

[61] 'se fores esperto, tem esta vantagem de cair e te levantar e aprendes muito rápido' (S. Cassimo, Bigbluebutton Interview, June 16, 2020)

to get a little more'[62]. Lentz (2000) also alludes to this, in view of the precariousness of wages in unstable economies 'In any case, the creation of property, beyond salaried income that is often vulnerable to economic and political crises, is important for transmitting middle-class status to the next generation.' (p. 451)

S. Cassimo reveals that to her 'entrepreneurship is not a profession; it is a way of being in life'[63]. This is key to understanding why we argue entrepreneurship is a viable path, rather than the best or a better path. In what concerns the financial side of entrepreneurship and, therefore, its direct impact on middle classness aspects such as consumption patterns, type and location of housing or indirect on aspects such as status and connections, our findings suggest that only individuals with certain characteristics will find it as a better option. As Y. Ribeiro well reminds: 'As for the financial aspect, there is a good and a bad side, there are two kinds of people in the world, right? Those who want their regular money at the end of the month, so they don't have to worry about anything. And there are the other people who would rather have a lot of money in a month, and then have less and manage it.'[64]. On a similar note, S. Souza highlights how an entrepreneur, at least in the early stages, will very often need to sacrifice personal wellbeing for the business wellbeing. As such we can say that our interlocutors and other successful entrepreneurs in Maputo 'not only had the education, networks and resources to pursue their ambitions, they also had the resilience, knowledge and skills to enact the chances that came their way.' (Spronk, 2020, 485), or as M. Eria recollects 'I would not have had the opportunity to meet the people I have met, to be in the places where I have been, if it had not been for the courage at the beginning and to have survived all those doubts'[65].

Another major finding relates to possibility offered by entrepreneurship to draw one's path to middle class or higher, as opposed to following the one expected by parents and broader family of after proudly completing university education getting a secure job with prospects of stability and career growth. This was very visible in the hardships and difficult decisions faced by most our interlocutors when starting their entrepreneurial journeys, and, in some cases until today, S. Souza felt like working with her father, as he wanted, was like taking away her merits, S. Cassimo ended up

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[62] 'Até a pessoa chegar a um cargo de direcção de banco podem-se passar 15 anos e talvez vá receber um salário de 3 dígitos. Então há muita gente que consegue ver a alternativa do empreendedorismo, primeiro para complementar a renda, para conseguir um pouco mais' (Y. Ribeiro, Bigbluebutton Interview, June 30, 2020)

[63] 'empreender não é uma profissão, é uma maneira de estar na vida' (S. Cassimo, Bigbluebutton Interview, June 16, 2020)

[64] 'Quanto à questão financeira há o lado bom e o lado mau, existem dois tipos de pessoas no mundo, não é? Aquelas que querem o dinheiro fixo no final do mês, certinho, para não terem que se preocupar com nada. E há as outras pessoas que preferem ficar um mês a ter muito dinheiro e no mês a seguir ter menos e vão conseguindo gerir' (Y. Ribeiro, Bigbluebutton Interview, June 30, 2020)

[65] 'Não teria a oportunidade de ter conhecido as pessoas que conheci, estar nos lugares onde estive, se não fosse pela coragem lá no início e ter sobrevivido a todas aquelas dúvidas' (M. Eria, Whatsapp Interview, June 18, 2020)

finishing a medicine degree because her mother insisted that with medicine her life would be assured. M. Eria recalled all the negative voices whenever she spoke about leaving her regular job at the bank, while S. Tamele confessed that her mother still tries to get her to work for the State. Reviewing these findings under the light of previous works, two important aspects stand out. The first one relates to the apparent similarities with Nairobian young professionals followed by Spronk (2014), who position themselves in between the 'small wealthy elite' and the increasing 'impoverished masses', and 'In the midst of this diversity, young professionals are inspired and oriented toward diasporan Kenyans, working alongside expatriates and engaging with global investment and media' (p. 102). The two realities have very specific cultural and local specifics, but nonetheless follow this same trend of taking of advantage of their parents' investment on their education to lay the ground for a fresh narrative. Another similarity between these youth in Nairobi and our women entrepreneurs in Maputo is the cosmopolitan convergence, i.e., their families have roots in other provinces, but they are well established in Maputo. S. Souza acknowledged that everyone she knows comes from different provinces, but that they all live in Maputo and end up living a particular Maputo, cosmopolitan, life. The second aspect relates to Sumich (2016) views on co-dependence between middle class and the state (or the ruling party). Our findings suggest that our interlocutors have strived to follow a more independent journey and free from political strings. We do not naïvely take this pursuit of independence and freedom as a total detachment from traditional state bound privileges but do see it as a first steppingstone towards a more merit-based and less political connection-based society. S. Cassimo very well captured this when talking about her position at the CTA: 'You usually get to these places that they call high-ranking, although I don't think they're high-ranking, because you have a good relationship with someone, or you've paid or you have someone behind you who told you to take that position. The general thinking is that for us women, especially young women, it's never about merit. So, getting in by merit, I think it's very valuable'[66].

The above can be linked to the role of agency in middle class studies, as advocated by Spronk, who contends that middle classness ought to be looked through the lenses of cultural practice, which 'can bring into view people's agency in the context of social reconfigurations' (2018, p. 231). This was notorious in our protagonist's stories, in particular how being entrepreneurs opened spaces for their voices, which has also been ascertained by Samuel (2014) in Pemba. M. Eria confesses 'I have had so

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[66] 'normalmente consegues chegar a estes lugares que eles chamam de topo, apesar de eu não achar que são de topo, porque te dás bem com alguém, ou pagaste ou tens alguém por trás que disse para tu ocupares esse lugar. A ideia geral é que para nós mulheres, especialmente jovens, nunca é por mérito. Então conseguir entrar por mérito, acho que tem muito valor' (S. Cassimo, Bigbluebutton Interview, June 16, 2020)

many opportunities because I chose entrepreneurship'[67]. In fact, because of their professional choices, all of our interlocutors have had the opportunity to give speeches, mentor and train other women or youth, or be interviewed for local, regional and even international media outlets[68]. This topic of spaces to boost and enact their agency, not only produces effects in the broader social fabric, but also has a smoothing impact in the rupture made with the previous generation explored before, in S. Cassimo's case, for instance 'family is a bit more difficult (...) only when I started appearing on TV and in the newspaper, because of Femme and CTA, they kind of validated what I do.'[69]

'Networking is vital for entrepreneurship'[70], all our interlocutors have highlighted the importance of networking from two perspectives. Firstly, as business owners, as stated by G. Sequeira 'the key thing is the network, if you don't have a strong social capital, you'll hardly get far'[71], and secondly as a source of peer support, as acknowledged by most our interlocutors, S. Cassimo, for instance recognized that 'It is also important to be part of networks because you meet other women entrepreneurs (...) it is so often a very lonely journey, so it is always good to have someone to talk to about these things'[72]. These findings support the idea that women that opt for entrepreneurship are very prone to join peer networks, and that such networks play a vital role in strengthening their skills, both soft and hard, support, as well as opening spaces for their participation. This would require further research, but we consider it provides a strong starting point to establishing a link between entrepreneur networks and consolidation of middle classness. Spronk (2020) also highlighted the importance of networks in the formation of middle class to the extent it facilitates the access to access resources.

Lastly, on the very much debated potential of middle class to leverage change, even though we believe this is not exclusive to women entrepreneurs, their visibility definitely enhances the potential for them to actively pursue change or materialize change by their example. As for a more proactive stance, the protagonists of our stories seem to have embodied the need to fight for a better

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[67] 'tive tantas oportunidades por ter escolhido o empreendedorismo' (M. Eria, Whatsapp Interview, June 18, 2020)

[68] Femtech, TEDx, Yali, Lionnesses of Africa, Femme, ANJE were some of the initiatives/organisations most frequently mentioned by our participants.

[69] 'com a família é que é um bocadinho mais difícil (…)só quando eu comecei a aparecer na televisão e no jornal, por causa da Femme e da CTA, então como que validaram aquilo que eu faço.' (S. Cassimo, Bigbluebutton Interview, June 16, 2020)

[70] 'O networking é crucial para o empreendedorismo' (M. Eria, Whatsapp Interview, June 18, 2020)

[71] 'o principal é a rede de contactos, se não tiveres um capital social forte, dificilmente vais longe' (G. Sequeira, Bigbluebutton Interview, June 16, 2020)

[72] 'É importante também fazer parte de redes porque encontras outras mulheres empreendedoras (…) é uma jornada tão solitária muitas das vezes, então é sempre bom teres alguém com quem ter esse tipo de conversa.' (S. Cassimo, Bigbluebutton Interview, June 16, 2020)

Mozambique, including the empowerment of woman, local production of knowledge, development of skills, amongst others, and these fights are deeply entrenched in their business philosophies, for instance M. Eria always tries to 'push for the feminine side, the empowerment of the woman'[73], while S. Souza aims to 'bring artificial intelligence, big data, automation, mobility, ultimately, teach people that things are different and that they can leverage technology to improve their work'[74]. As far as the transformative power of their examples is concerned, our interlocutors are very aware of how their examples as women, actually young women, leading companies, some of them in fields that were traditionally dominated by men, may pave the way for other women.

Ultimately, our findings support the notion that entrepreneurship yields great potential to reach and consolidate middle classness for the individual, but also acting as a catalyst for the broader society. An enabling social, economic and political environment is vital for the emergence of business opportunities; nonetheless, our research, in line with other literature, provides empirical evidence of how the person's individual characteristics are vital to harvest such opportunities. In fact, 'a crucial element in the formation of the middle classes is the motivation of individuals to make a change' (Spronk, 2020, p. 477). At this stage of understanding, we believe that entrepreneurship is not a panacea for social mobility and, as often used, stimulating growth alleviating poverty (Neubert & Stoll, 2018; Southall, 2018), but it definitely provides an important avenue for societal change and improved lives that should not be neglected.

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[73] 'puxar para o lado do feminino, empoderamento da mulher' (M. Eria, Whatsapp Interview, June 18, 2020)
[74] 'trazer inteligência artificial, big data, automação, mobilidade, enfim, ensinar as pessoas que as coisas são diferentes e que podem aproveitar a tecnologia para melhorar o seu trabalho' (S. Sousa, Skype Interview, 24 June, 2020)

CHAPTER 5

Final Remarks

By conducting this study based on a qualitative approach that drew from the life stories of women entrepreneurs, this research has yielded important empirical data to elucidate on the concept of middle class and its correlation with entrepreneurship in Mozambique. First and foremost, the term middle class is not fix, but malleable and entailing very different meaning depending on who is using it and for what purpose. From an economic perspective, which has been dominant in the past and is still very much used for policy making, it is important to highlight the rise of middle class in Africa and the growing consumption power and this will, amongst other effects, attract interest and investment.

Nonetheless, such approaches have their limits and previous studies, and also this one, have shown a frequent mismatch between the established categories based on income or consumption and the actual perceptions of people. Our findings corroborate the idea, increasingly supported by scholarship, as some of most recent works by Lentz (2020) and Spronk (2020), that middle class is very much a concept in the making, where the focus should be on seeing how people are living their everyday lives and navigating their specific historical, economic and social contexts; and how they themselves perceive the notion of middle classness and their position towards it. Furthermore, this research has stressed the relevance of using different approaches to look into the same topic. In this case, the life story interviews have elicited important data on how the notion of middle class has mutated and was impacted by, or impacted on the idiosyncrasies of each time.

Starting with a few specific remarks directly linked to the research questions guiding this work, our findings under RQ1 'How do women entrepreneurs perceive middle classness?' have established that our interlocutor's perceptions corroborate the idea that daily habits and consumption patterns are amongst the better markers of middle classness, while acknowledging the vulnerability of Mozambican middle class. Under RQ2 'What are the views of todays' women entrepreneurs in Maputo about changing class ambitions and expressions?' we have further established the profound influence of the broader context into what is seen and lived as middle class and therefore provided evidence that any narrative on the topic shall be incomplete if taken irrespective of the particular context. Finally, the answers to RQ3 'How can (female) entrepreneurship impact on social mobility' have established how becoming an entrepreneur can, in fact, be a faster path to upward social mobility but one that comes with numerous challenges, including the rupture with family and broader society prejudices and pre-conceptions. As such, although entailing a huge potential, a successful entrepreneurial journey is highly dependent on both external (government policies, social context, etc.) and internal (resilience, ability to take risks, etc.) factors.

Importantly, our data suggest that the feeling of being middle class in Maputo is deeply linked to prestige and status, both self-acknowledged and by others [75]. This casts some light on how entrepreneurship can be an important catalyser of middle classness feeling. Our research has demonstrated that one of the most distinctive features of entrepreneurship in Maputo (at least of formal entrepreneurship by women which was our focus here), vis-à-vis a regular career, even if an executive one, is the access to multiple opportunities and visibility it entails which, can also be construed as some form of building status and prestige. This is further leveraged by the transformative potential of entrepreneurship. On the one hand, our findings suggest that the motivation and passion of the interlocutors often stem from the numerous opportunities in a country still lacking sufficient skills, services and goods – and work towards closing such gaps. On the other hand, these women tend to be very active in networking, for they are laying new ground in a relatively new nation and embody the responsibility of opening the doors to other women and also find themselves the strength in other women.

Overall our findings demonstrate that the strongest impact of entrepreneurship on the formation of middle class is by opening up spaces for public engagement, activism and recognition. However, while entrepreneurship has surfaced here with the potential to fast-track increased earnings, prestige and self-fulfilment, it should not be promoted and devised by the media, government or development actors as a path to be followed by everyone. Entrepreneurial success in Mozambique[76] is deeply dependent on personal and character traits, therefore people with the same conditions and access to the same resources may not yield the same outcomes.

These findings provide a starting point for discussion and further research on the topic, which could include a broader range of interlocutors to consolidate findings and possibly include a focus on gender roles and how entrepreneurship can advance the agenda of gender equality, as well as explore how its impacts differ between genders. In addition, exploring consumption aspiration and tourism trends, in this research frequently associated with cultural aspects, could prove quite beneficial to the literature on social mobility and structures.

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[75] This is in line with Spronk (2020), in a research conducted in Ghana, where she asserted that people spoke above all of social mobility, which entailed not only financial improvements but also prestige.
[76] But also in Ghana, where Spronk (2020) reached the same conclusion.

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Informed Consent

CONSENTIMENTO INFORMADO

O presente estudo surge no âmbito da investigação conducente à realização de uma tese do mestrado em Estudos Internacionais do **ISCTE – Instituto Universitário de Lisboa**, para o qual não existe qualquer entidade financiadora. Este estudo incide sobre o empreendedorismo feminino e a classe média em Maputo, Moçambique.

O estudo é realizado por Sónia Pinho, estudante de mestrado do ISCTE-IUL, que poderá contactar caso deseje colocar uma dúvida ou partilhar algum comentário.

A sua participação, que será muito valorizada, consiste em ser uma das entrevistadas-chave do estudo. Não existem riscos expectáveis associados à participação no estudo. Ainda que possa não beneficiar diretamente com a participação no estudo, as suas respostas vão contribuir para uma melhor compreensão das mulheres empreendedoras em Moçambique e na região. No final, o estudo será igualmente partilhado consigo.

A participação neste estudo é estritamente **voluntária**: pode escolher participar ou não participar. Se escolher participar, pode interromper a participação em qualquer momento sem ter de prestar qualquer justificação. Pode optar por ser identificada. No entanto, a participação pode ser também **anónima** e **confidencial**, se assim o desejar. Neste caso, seria identificada apenas com um nome fictício.

Os dados recolhidos na entrevista destinam-se a análise de conteúdo e à redação de uma breve história de vida.

Face a estas informações, por favor indique se aceita participar no estudo:

ACEITO ☐   NÃO ACEITO ☐

Face a estas informações, por favor indique se aceita ser identificada no estudo:

ACEITO ☐   NÃO ACEITO ☐

Nome: _____ Data: _____

Assinatura: _____

ANNEX B

Semi-structured Interview Guide

0. Greetings, Background information, Informed Consent

1. Who shaped and influenced your life the most?

2. Where were you born? (If not in Maputo, how old where you when you moved to Maputo? Why?)

3. What is the ethnic or cultural background of your parents?

4. What cultural values were passed on to you, and by whom?

5. What did you grandmothers do? And your mother? How did they impact your life choices?

6. Was social class important in your family life? If you had to describe your family social class while you were growing up, how would that be?

7. What were some of your struggles as a child? And as a youth?

8. How far did you go with your formal education?

9. What social pressures have you experienced as an adult?

10. Did you achieve what you wanted to, or did your ambitions change?

11. What is important for you in work?

12. Why did you choose the entrepreneurial path?

13. Did you attend any specific training, or do you belong to any associations?

14. How does entrepreneurship help you achieve your ambitions?

15. How would you describe middle classness now?

16. How does your work fit with other areas of your life (family, etc.)?

17. What was the most significant moment in your professional life so far?

18. How does your work and your professional choices impact the lives of other women?

19. What gives you the most hope?

ANNEX C

Coding Structure

RQ1: How do women entrepreneurs in Maputo perceive middle classness?

Code ID	Title	Description
6	Middle Class Definition	Tentative definition of what is Middle Class in 2020 in Maputo
8	Education	Importance of education
9	Health	Access to health
10	House	Perceived importance of having a house
25	Food	Perceived importance of food
39	Location	Location, services nearby
40	Car	Owning a car
41	Traveling	Traveling for holidays
43	Class in Moz vs. other places	Challenges identifying middle class in Mozambique
49	Lifestyle	Everyday life habits
52	Taxes	Taxes as barrier
54	Politics	Political context, women in politics
58	Investment	Investment priorities
59	Available money	Amount and management of money available

RQ2: How have class ambitions and expressions changed over time?

Code ID	Title	Description
7	Class while growing	Signs of class while growing
12	Family jobs	What parents and grandparents did
22	Grandmothers	What grandmother(s) did & main character traits
23	Mothers	Occupation of the mother + values
47	First signs of class in Mozambique	When they first started to realise there were different classes
60	Family ideals	Family priorities, struggles, etc.
16	Family details	Number of children
21	Language growing up	What language was spoken at home, i.e. Portuguese vs. local languages

RQ3: What is the role of female entrepreneurship in achieving a perceived middle-class status?

Code ID	Title	Description
17	Freedom	Importance and examples of freedom
27	Passion	Passion in work
32	Life changes	Key moments throughout life that triggered change
35	Start	Starting to be an entrepreneur
36	Network	Importance, use of networks
37	Engagement in E Initiatives	Trainings, networks, activities related to entrepreneurship
45	Non-entrepreneurial work	Self and others experiences with non-entrepreneurial work
48	Achievements	Things accomplished/ambitions met through entrepreneurship
53	Access	How entrepreneurship gives you access to people, resources, opportunities.
56	Recognition	Recognition by the society, clients, family
62	Rupture	Rupture with parents/society beliefs/norms

Life History Details

Code ID	Title	Description
18	Academic Background	Education, what and where
15	Places lived	Places throughout life
13	Influences	People or life events that influenced life choices
14	Place of Birth	Place of birth
19	Ethnicity	Parents & self ethnical origins + perceived importance
21	Language growing up	What language was spoken at home, i.e. Portuguese vs. local languages
31	Ambitions	Ambitions over life & now
30	Character	Traits/features of the interlocutor
33	Learning	Courses and informal learning

Possible Future Research

Code ID	Title	Description
61	**Women Entrepreneurs in Maputo Now**	
34	Drives	What drives the interlocutor
50	Entrepreneurship	Definition, associations
61	Purpose	Meaning of their work
64	**Gender roles**	

28	Work/Life	How work is enmeshed/fits with other areas of life
29	Social Pressures	Social pressures felt to do something or act in a certain way
38	Women	Engagement with other women, impact on women
46	Discrimination	Harassment, pressure and discrimination felt throughout life