

The Relations of Portuguese and Hindus in the Former Migration Process: Trading Posts vs. Rural Cantina

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Abstract: This article is part of an ongoing historical study carried out at the National Portuguese's library, Torre do Tombo, overseas historical archive and Geographical society, and use some interviews to several migrant Hindus living in Portugal. The aim is analyses the Hindu diasporic movement, with a particular focus on Gujarati migration to Portuguese under Portuguese rule, especially Mozambique.

The study explores the historical phases of Indian presence, from early precolonial trade contacts to colonial and postcolonial migratory waves. It highlights the role of traders, settlers, and shopkeepers in the colonial economy, as well as the importance of caste, family, and religious networks in shaping social organization and settlement processes.

The research further demonstrates how interactions between Hindus, Africans, and Portuguese generated new cultural, dietary, and social dynamics, while also giving rise to political and commercial tensions marked by stigmatization and identity conflicts. By addressing the complexity of the Hindu-Gujarati diaspora, the article underscores the mechanisms of adaptation, resistance, and integration that characterized the Indian presence in Mozambique and, later, in Portugal.

Keywords: Indian and Portuguese history, migration, social and economic relations

1. Methodology

Research design and approach. This study adopts a qualitative approach within social history and migration studies, engaging with diaspora scholarship and transnational perspectives. Its aim is to examine, over the longue durée, the historical phases of Hindu-Gujarati presence in Portuguese-ruled contexts—particularly Mozambique—and its contemporary continuities and reconfigurations in Portugal.

Sources and documentary collection. Data collection is grounded in archival research conducted at the National Library of Portugal (Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal), the National Archive of Torre do Tombo (Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo), the Overseas Historical Archive (Arquivo Historico Ultramarino), and the Lisbon Geographical Society (Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa). Primary sources were identified and selected in relation to: (i) colonial administrative policies and practices; (ii) commercial circulation and mobility; (iii) legal frameworks and economic disputes; (iv) representations and stigmatization of Indian populations; and (v) records of associational and religious social life. The materials were subjected to critical reading, historical contextualization, and systematic metadata recording (date, provenance, document type, actors involved, and conditions of production), enabling comparison across periods and institutions.

Interviews and oral history. To complement archival materials and capture lived dimensions of migration, semi-structured interviews were conducted with Indian migrants residing in Portugal, privileging trajectories connected to the Hindu-Gujarati diaspora. Recruitment followed purposive sampling and/or network-based strategies (snowball sampling), seeking generational diversity and varied migration pathways. Interviews addressed mobility trajectories; family, caste, and religious networks; religious practices; economic incorporation (e.g., commerce); experiences of belonging; identity tensions; and processes of adaptation and integration. Interviews were recorded (when authorized), transcribed, and organized for analysis.

1.1 Data processing and analysis. The analysis combined:

- a) documentary analysis (examining both the content of the materials and the conditions/context of their production); and
- b) thematic analysis of the interviews, with coding structured around analytical categories related to: migratory phases (pre-colonial/colonial/post-colonial), economic roles (merchants, settlers, *cantineiros*), social networks (family, caste, religion), cultural interactions (food ways and sociability's), and dynamics of conflict (stigmatization, political disputes, and commercial contestation).

Interpretation derives from the systematic cross-reading of documentary evidence and oral testimonies, with the aim of identifying patterns, continuities, and ruptures over time.

1.2 Triangulation and interpretive rigor

Analytical robustness is strengthened through triangulation across archival sources, scholarly literature, and interviews, as well as through temporal and geographical comparison (Mozambique/Portugal). When discrepancies emerge between sources, they are treated as analytically productive rather than as mere inconsistencies, and are examined in light of the contexts, interests, and positionalities that shape documentary production and memory.

1.3 Ethical considerations

Interviews followed principles of informed consent, confidentiality, and data protection. Where necessary, anonymization/pseudonymization and the removal of identifying details were employed, acknowledging the sensitivity of topics related to discrimination, conflict, and identity-based belonging.

Limitations. The study recognizes limitations typical of this research design, including gaps and asymmetries in archival holdings, colonial biases in source production, and the selectivity of memory in oral narratives. These constraints are mitigated through triangulation and critical contextualization.

2. Settlers, Merchants, and *Cantineiros*: The Migration and Settlement of the Indian Population in Mozambique

Indian migratory movements may be broadly classified into four major periods: (1) an initial pre-colonial phase characterized primarily by internal mobility and the earliest Gujarati migrations; (2) a second phase during the colonial period, beginning in the 1830s, directed toward the principal colonies of Western powers (Britain, France, Germany, and Portugal); (3) a third phase, commonly described as post-colonial migration toward former metropolitan states; and, finally, (4) a very recent fourth phase oriented toward West Asia (Sahoo, 2006).

Sahoo's typology, however, is too expansive to capture the specificities of regional migratory dynamics, such as those involving Gujaratis—and even Goans—toward Portuguese territories. Indeed, a pre-colonial migratory period can be discerned, since records indicate that, at least from the sixth century onward, contacts from Persia, India, and Indonesia reached the coastal populations of East Africa. The thesis of an Asian contribution to the diffusion of new food crops along the East African coast, advanced by Rita-Ferreira, notes that in the sixteenth century Portuguese discoveries documented plants of Asian origin on the southeastern African littoral: rice varieties, coconut palm, citrus, banana, mango, sugarcane, cowpea, certain horticultural products, and Indian hemp (*Cannabis sativa*).

The dissemination of new food crops along the eastern African coast produced “profound repercussions within African societies,” including the introduction of rice, banana, coconut palm, mango, citrus, and sugarcane (Rita-Ferreira, 1982a: 617). These were later complemented by crops from South America, introduced through the Portuguese presence: maize, groundnut, cassava, pineapple, cashew, avocado, guava, sweet potato, and tobacco. South Asian presence also left cultural traces that remain visible today, particularly in beliefs concerning the supernatural. In parts of southern Mozambique, it is possible to identify survivals of popular Hinduism, such as distinctive divinatory practices (Grilo, 1958; Rita-Ferreira, 1982a; Lobato, 1989). Nonetheless, it was the ties forged by merchants that facilitated the settlement of a segment of the Indian population along Mozambique's coastal region (Rita-Ferreira, 1982b; Spence, 1965), a presence that has endured to the present.

Between the ninth and tenth centuries, Asian merchants frequented the Gulf of Cambay in East Africa, driven by the exploitation of gold mines. Over time, commercial exchange with African populations expanded, reaching its apogee around the fourteenth century. It was, however, the Portuguese establishment on the Malabar Coast—in Goa, Daman, and Diu—that most decisively stimulated Indian immigration to Mozambique. It is now possible to argue that some of Mozambique's earliest settlers were Indian, particularly Bania (or Vaniyan) merchants from Gujarat who, propelled by the dynamics of mercantile capitalism, extended their activities to East Africa (as well as to Malacca, Arabia, and islands across the Indian Ocean).ⁱ

Antunes offers a critical assessment of the nature of the Baneanes, noting the existence of contradictory interpretations. For some authors, the designation refers to an occupational category, whereas for others it denotes a religious and cultural identity group. Antunes concludes that they should be understood as “a community composed of Hindu and Jain merchants from different castes” (Antunes, 2001: 8).ⁱⁱ

3. The process of migration and settlement of the Indian population in Mozambique

The Indian migratory movement can be classified into four broad periods: (1) an initial pre-colonial phase, characterized mainly by internal migrations and the earliest Gujarati migrations; (2) a second phase during the colonial period, beginning in the 1830s and directed toward the principal colonies of Western countries (England, France, Germany, and Portugal); (3) a third phase, regarded as post-colonial migration toward the former colonial powers; and, finally, (4) a fourth, very recent phase toward West Asia (Sahoo, 2006).

This classification, proposed by Sahoo, nevertheless proves too broad to account for the specificities associated with regional migrations, such as those of Gujaratis—and even Goans—toward Portuguese territories. Indeed, a pre-colonial migratory period appears to have existed, since records indicate, at least from the sixth century onward, contacts originating from Persia, India, and Indonesia with the coastal populations of East Africa. The thesis advanced by Rita-Ferreira concerning the Asian contribution to the diffusion of new food crops in East Africa notes, in the sixteenth century, Portuguese discoveries of plants of Asian origin along the south eastern African coast: rice, coconut, citrus fruits, banana, mango, sugarcane, cowpea, certain horticultural products, and Indian hemp (*Cannabis sativa*).

The dissemination of new food crops along the eastern coast of Africa triggered “profound repercussions within African societies, such as rice, the banana plant, the coconut palm, mango, citrus fruits, and sugarcane” (Rita-Ferreira, 1982a: 617). These were later supplemented by crops originating in South America and introduced through the Portuguese presence: maize, groundnuts, cassava, pineapple, cashew, avocado, guava, sweet potato, and tobacco. South Asian presence also left cultural traces that remain visible today in beliefs concerning the supernatural. It is possible to find survivals of a form of popular Hinduism among certain populations in southern Mozambique, such as particular methods of divination (Grilo, 1958; Rita-Ferreira, 1982a; Lobato, 1989). However, it was the ties established by merchants that led to the settlement of a number of Indians in Mozambique’s coastal region (Rita-Ferreira, 1982b; Spence, 1965), a presence that has persisted to the present day.

Between the ninth and tenth centuries, Asian merchants frequented the Gulf of Cambay in East Africa, primarily motivated by the exploitation of gold mines. Later, they expanded commercial exchanges with Africans, which reached their peak around the fourteenth century. It was, however, the Portuguese establishment on the Malabar Coast—in Goa, Daman, and Diu—that would foster Indian immigration to Mozambique. It is now possible to state that Mozambique’s earliest settlers were Indians, mainly from the Bania (or Vaniyan) caste of Gujarat, who, propelled by the system of mercantile capitalism, extended their activities to East Africa (as well as to Malacca, Arabia, and the islands of the Indian Ocean).

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The number of merchants does not appear to have been large—and, moreover, it did not need to be. The business required substantial resources: credit, one’s own premises, personnel, ships, agents, and friendships in every port. It depended on a network of contacts that took many years to consolidate. Merchants, in turn, had to possess sufficient resources to wait for returns over many months—something that did not always occur due to shipwrecks or acts of piracy. It was also necessary to cope with the payment of very high interest and penalties, to such an extent that “the merchants themselves were bankers to one another” (Lobato, 1966a: n.p.).

Indians were connected through kinship networks that were also entrepreneurial, importing provisions from Zambézia and exporting to the islands of the Indian Ocean, Sofala, Inhambane, and Lourenço Marques. “They imported regulated textiles on the oceangoing vessels that came from India, sold them here retail, and wholesale to traders in subordinate ports; they received gold, ivory, wax, and slaves; they exported, paid, and collected.” (ibid., 1966a: n.p.)

The most important traders were shipowner-merchants who retained agents to negotiate from port to port. The complexity of facilities and the need to maintain stockpiles and warehouses at the port of outfitting meant that these entrepreneurs had a large number of people under their charge, with “colonial business of the time” (ibid., 1966a: n.p.).

Drawing on Portuguese administrative descriptions, Antunes portrays the image the held of the Banias—later classified as a Gujarati community:

“Outwardly their appearance was similar, shaped by the same pattern of everyday life. (...) Similarity among the shop assistants, the accountants, and their employers (...) Indeed, they subsisted on a very frugal vegetarian diet and wore simple and poor clothing (...)” (Antunes, 2001: 305).

Although there were outward differences among Hindus, these could only be recognized by an attentive gaze equipped with forms of knowledge the Portuguese did not possess. As for the alleged frugality of the diet, nothing could be further from the truth. Hindu vegetarian cuisine can be prepared so as to yield a different menu

for every day of the year. However, in light of Portuguese dietary habits at the time, any vegetarian diet would appear frugal and poor. Moreover, around 50% of India's Hindu population eats meat and fish, especially inhabitants of coastal areas such as those of Diu and Daman, and certain groups in Goa. Non-vegetarian diets have, of course, been associated with lower castes, and one form of social emulation has been the alteration of dietary habits, alongside other customs. Castes considered to be of lower status not infrequently modify their food practices, as well as religious observances, as a strategy of social emulation vis-à-vis more prestigious castes. There exists an objective—though not always consciously articulated—of altering one's position within the hierarchical caste system, something that may occur through changes in everyday work, for example because of migration. For those whose contact with Hindus was only superficial, Hindus ate curry and... little else.

There is, however, a strong possibility that Hindu diets prior to the 1930s were indeed simpler, insofar as women—primarily responsible for culinary variety and for the affirmation of “Indianness”—were absent. During the nineteenth century, female presence must have been almost nil, for Rau offers the following description drawn from a provincial memorandum of 1822: “The followers of Brahma of the Bania caste are numerous in this land, and at present they may number up to 180—men only—because none brings his wife here” (Rau, 1963: 138).

Frei Bartolomeu dos Mártires, cited by Rita-Ferreira (1982a), likewise refers to a Hindu population composed of men. The few Indian women who existed were dancers, “sent from India or from Zanzibar or Mombasa by some wealthier Bania, who took delight in watching them dance naked” (Zamparoni, 1998: 358). Immigrant men left their wives in India with their extended family and lived for many years with local girls, to whom they left “at most twenty pounds of gold” (Reis, 1973; Lobato, 1970). Although children frequently resulted from these unions, it was rare for them to be recognized as legitimate. Migrants from Diu, however—who arrived in Mozambique much later, as fishermen and small traders—typically acknowledged the children they had with African women, even taking them back to India upon their return, a fact that remains visible today in the physiognomy of many inhabitants of that region.

When Vasco da Gama first put in at Mozambique, the East African coast had long maintained relations with India through a network of commercial transactions. This network, with fluctuations owing to European political and economic contexts, endured until the twentieth century, confronting the Portuguese Crown from the outset with an irresolvable situation: its inability to compete directly with Indians in that African region. The first Portuguese navigators in those waters (Pedro Álvares Cabral, Francisco de Almeida, Lopes de Sequeira, and Simão Miranda) recorded existing commercial activities between India—departing from the ports of Diu and Surat—and East Africa, including Mozambique, as well as the types of goods exchanged: textiles, and African ivory, copper, and gold.

From 1392 onward, Gujarat was governed by a Muslim sultanate that reached its apogee in the late fifteenth century, although in the early sixteenth century Cambay was still the most important commercial port in the region. Its progressive silting, however, shifted preponderance to the ports of Diu and Surat. From 1577, the Portuguese Crown declared traffic and interchange with India to be free. Years later (1595), it placed that traffic under the authority of the captain of Sofala and Mozambique, drawing dozens of Portuguese and other Europeans to the region in the hope of acquiring wealth through the ease of trade. Many clandestine traders operated in indigenous villages in the interior and prospered to such an extent that a conflict of interests erupted between the Portuguese and Indian “bush” (hinterland) traders (Hoppe, 1970; Lobato, 1960; Rita-Ferreira, 1985).

The creation in Goa of the Junta do Comércio de Moçambique e Rios tribunal in 1673 sought to alter the mercantile system by turning into a royal monopoly the commodities that included the so-called fazendas de lei: ivory, textiles, gold, beads, gunpowder, and firearms. The remaining fazendas livres could be traded by private individuals (Boleo, 1959). A few years later, in 1686, the commercial monopoly was granted to the Companhia dos Manzanes de Diu. The creation of this company, grounded in the Bania caste, enabled Hindu importers and exporters based on Mozambique Island to dominate the colony's economy entirely, transforming that economic group into an embedded structure due to its dense social support network (Portes, 1999).

Since monetary circulation was conducted mainly in xerafins (an Indo-Portuguese currency), the trade regulation between India and East Africa came to favor Gujarati merchants, who derived very high profits from it. It is estimated, for example, that Mozambican ivory yielded around 100% in India, but in Cambay it could reach 500% (Castro, 1861; Hoppe, 1970).

Such mercantile capitalism, transmitted from generation to generation, combined with the rigid rules of the Hindu patrilineal system, indirectly influenced the central policy of Mozambique's economic subordination to Portuguese India. This economic embeddedness emerged as a product of the caste's form of social organization, whose members were linked by kinship ties, normative obligations, and occupational ties. The economic transactions carried out by the Banias were embedded within a broader set of social relations, since,

according to Hindu patrilineal tradition, families belonging to the Vania (Bania) caste lived according to the model of the undivided family, forming large domestic groups.

Caste social organization generally assumes the form of circles nested within ever larger circles, in which property is traditionally collective possession of the patrilineal family. For Hindus, patrilineage constitutes the central axis of social, economic, and political relations, insofar as it functions as the unit that reproduces the lineage, as a model of sociability for its members, as a unit of residence, production, and consumption, and as a means of alliance with other gotra, reinforcing the interests of each caste.

The extended family was under the authority of the patriarch, who regulated expenditures, provided for the household's needs, enforced observance of *gotra* customs, and ultimately adjudicated family matters. Within each *gotra* of the Baneane caste, the patriarch decided which son should migrate, while ensuring that the migrant's wife and children received material and psychological support during the husband's absence. When the individual returned, he resumed the position that corresponded to him within the family hierarchy, handing over to the patriarch the earnings acquired. This institutionalised solidarity encouraged, for example, child marriages previously arranged by families, a matter discussed later (Rita-Ferreira, 1985).

In sum, the preponderant role of the Gujarati Baneanes in Diu's commerce appears to have derived from caste solidarities that accumulated experience and capital within professional activity. The Baneanes operated as wholesalers, closely linked to textile production centres located in Gujarat (Fege, 1977), but they also acquired goods from the Portuguese kingdom and acted as moneylenders (Rita-Ferreira, 1985), remitting profits in the form of gold and silver to family households that remained in Diu or Gujarat.

Owing to their mercantile knowledge, ease of interaction with foreigners, negotiating capacity, and diligence, they became preferred auxiliaries of the Portuguese administration, which sought to eliminate Islamic presence. Nevertheless, the need to prescribe the activities of the *jati*, together with obedience to the patriarch, explains this group of temporary migrants' exclusive dedication to commercial activities, as well as the transfer of profits to India, with little interest in local investment. The Diu-based Baneanes established in Mozambique possessed tremendous economic power, going so far as to have their goldsmiths melt gold and silver coins in order to send them to India, this time as currency with international acceptance. From 1737 onwards, when freedom of trade in East Africa was proclaimed for all natives of Portuguese India, the Baneanes intensified business in the interior. Thanks to the solidity of their material organisation, they were able to survive the expulsion of the Jesuits (1759–1760), who had been their protectors and commercial partners. Hindu merchants, through their connections to their *manzanes* in Diu, sold textiles at prices without competition, while also profiting from the ivory trade.

Although the company was dissolved in 1777, the Baneanes continued to control—directly and indirectly—almost the totality of commercial exchanges in the interior, maintaining commercial supremacy throughout the territory. Throughout this period, migration remained temporary and almost exclusively male, and thus involved no strategy of settlement. Such an attitude earned them severe criticism, reiterated over time by agents of the Portuguese administration, and gradually contributed to the formation of markedly negative ethnic stereotypes. Only in the mid-nineteenth century did the Baneanes begin to lose their importance in the Mozambican economy. The reasons are connected to three major factors: the rise in ivory prices, which led importers from Gujarat to seek it north of the Rovuma; the slave trade, which came to be dominated by other Afro-Islamic groups; and, finally, competition from English and American textiles produced by steam-powered machinery (Rita-Ferreira, 1985; Rau, 1963; Ribeiro, 1930).

As a result of these factors, with the advent of liberalism the Baneanes came to confront Muslims from British India, who competed with them in migration due to the opening of ports to Asian immigration. They nevertheless retained the privilege of enjoying the full range of social and political rights accorded to Portuguese citizens, such as owning land and residing in the capital or anywhere within Mozambican territory. After the consolidation of liberalism, new waves of Indian immigrants, from both Portuguese and British India, arrived in Mozambique, motivated by the commercial freedom that was then being instituted. It was the replacement of mercantilist arrangements by the effective integration of African and Asian colonies into the emerging capitalist system—entailing the development of food production and of raw materials, as well as the progressive abolition of slavery (Britain in 1834; France in 1846; the Netherlands in 1873)—that would truly have implications for the movement of the Gujarati diaspora towards Southern Africa.

Indian migration, now undertaken out of economic necessity, was transformed in this period into diaspora. Thousands of Indians came to be recruited for British, Dutch, and French possessions and, by extension, for Portuguese colonies in Africa. The recruitment system for the British colonies operated through contract labour, whose regime bordered on semi-slavery. Migrant workers (*coolies*) were recruited for a fixed period (between five and ten years), during which they received wages, accommodation, and food; the payment of return travel to India was also upon completion of the stipulated contract. In practice, only one third returned (Vertovec, 2000; Lal, 2006).

However, the phenomena responsible for the growth of communities of Indian origin in Mozambique differed from, and ran parallel to, *coolie* migrations. The principal cause lay in the limited Portuguese occupation of the territory and in the advantages of a long-standing experience of contacts that free Indians had established over centuries in those regions. Indeed, Indian migration to Mozambique unfolded under circumstances somewhat different from those prevailing in British colonies in East Africa. Mozambique Island, once a major commercial centre and the principal point of Hindu concentration in the first migratory cycle, was by the nineteenth century virtually deactivated. Colonisation, always sparse, was confined to coastal areas (Ibo Island, Mozambique Island, Quelimane, Sena and Tete), such that by the end of the nineteenth century the colony of Mozambique had failed to achieve a sufficiently dense European settlement, because “(...) in the past there were no European migratory currents to Mozambique, and only in the nineteenth century was a dual Luso-Indian and Gujarati current established” (Lobato, 1952: 37). In Lobato’s view, “Mozambique’s social life was not structured, in the past, around the occupation of land, agriculture, or an industry based on local raw materials; it was based solely on the exchange of cloth goods—first for gold, later for slaves and ivory” (1952: 38), because Mozambique had never been envisaged as a settler colony, and the prosperity of certain regions was circumstantial, ending when the economic context changed.

The effective occupation of the territory began only with the conclusion of Mouzinho’s campaigns against the Vátuas (culminating in the defeat of Gungunhana) and the creation of chartered companies: the Mozambique Company in 1891, headquartered in Beira, and the Niassa Company. Nevertheless, the Indian presence in Lourenço Marques and Beira differentiated Mozambique from other colonies. A long commercial tradition (initially with the characteristics of a migratory enclave and later of an intermediary minority) motivated both Portuguese Hindus and British Hindus of Gujarati origin to migrate to that region of Africa. Following the construction of the port of Lourenço Marques and after the First World War, a genuine wave of settlers—both European and Asian—took shape. The first statistics (around 1928) produced in the colony estimated the number of Indians residing in Lourenço Marques in 279 Asians recorded (all of whom were Indians), only eight were women. It should be noted, however, that Mozambique had no official population censuses prior to 1928.

The counts that do exist are fragmentary and methodologically uneven, a limitation that becomes apparent when figures reported by different authors are compared. The censuses that do exist consist of scattered data lacking rigour, which becomes evident when one compares information drawn from different authors. The procedures employed were still largely empirical and the means of implementation rather inefficient. In practice, it becomes almost impossible to infer the exact number of Indian individuals, and even less the number of women living in Mozambique at that time. For example, “there is not even a distinction between ‘yellows’ and Indians—both generally designated as Asians—from others such as Australians, Brazilians, and people from the Cape of Good Hope, while among nationalities one also finds ‘Arabic’ and ‘colonial’ recorded!” (Reis, 1973: 17).

Another statistical dilemma lies in the fact that the children of Indo-British parents, born and registered in Mozambique, came to be classified as Indo-Portuguese irrespective of the religion practised by their parents. This legislative measure, set out in §2 of Article 18 of the Portuguese Civil Code, if individuals born in the colony of Mozambique to Indo-British parents could be registered as Portuguese, with the aim of nationalising part of that population and subsequently encouraging permanent settlement. The nationalisation of the children of Indo-British parents inflates the number of Indo-Portuguese and does not, therefore, accurately reflect the true magnitude of the phenomenon.

Nevertheless, the statistics for 1930, as well as those for 1940, reveal a very low proportion of Indo-British women—around 25.5%—in contrast to Indo-Portuguese women, who reached a proportion of 55.5% (Bettencourt, 1945). Bettencourt associated this fact with the “voluntary omission of women on census forms, observed in British India censuses” (1945: 45), although the most evident explanation is the limited settlement of Indo-British families in the colony during that period. Hindus—and, quite naturally, Muslims from Gujarat—sought Mozambique’s coastal zones, where they traded cashew, extended loans at high interest to both co-ethnics and Portuguese, and in some cases became major moneychangers and intermediaries in trade with the interior. Diu, in turn, was in a precarious economic situation at the beginning of the twentieth century. Its small-scale industry was limited to catching and drying *bambolim* fish, cutting stone for civil construction, manufacturing *chelkas*, printed blankets, and dyeing (Moura, 1902). A very small territory with no capacity to compete, it was further constrained by uniform legislation applied to the entire province of Portuguese India, which favoured Goa but limited the economies of the smaller territories of Diu and Daman. When urban construction began, many workers from Diu and some individuals from Goa migrated to Mozambique: in the former case, masons and construction workers who brought with them rituals from the Hindu-Gujarati cycle and recreated rites previously exclusive to Brahmins; in the latter, Goans—mostly Catholic—who served as assistants to the Portuguese administration and remained distant from their Indian counterparts.

4. The new phase of economic relations between the Portuguese and Indians

Between 1895 and 1897 a new phase began in economic relations between Mozambique and the British colonies of Natal and the Cape. By publishing, in 1897, the first regulation concerning the recruitment of Mozambican labour for the South African mines, the Governor of Mozambique became the principal supplier of men for South Africa's mining industry, whose contracts lasted two years. In this context, the presence of Hindu traders increased in the south of the colony, precisely in the areas where African labour was primarily recruited. This was also the phase in which *cantinas* (small trading posts) opened in the Gaza district, where Hindus accumulated large sums of money—in pounds sterling—by selling all kinds of goods to Africans. This experience can be illustrated through the memories of some Indians from Diu who, taking advantage of a climate of commercial euphoria, ventured into Africa. Bakul's grandfather migrated to Mozambique in the context described above:

My grandfather was *Sarpanch* for about 30 years in Diu. Then, already old, he emigrated to Mozambique, to Inhambane, on a sailing boat. Once in Mozambique he began to bring his sons over and established another branch there. He returned to India and brought back doors, windows, façades made of exotic wood, and then, still not satisfied, he decided to go as far as Morrumbene and settled there. He managed to create around 40 shops. In each area he placed the sons of one wife. Then my grandfather called the second branch—the sons of another wife—and installed them 60 km from Inhambane. In Morrumbene, there were four brothers. And the old man went to explore other areas, setting up little shops in the interior, which at that time was very harsh and dangerous. My uncle used to say that at 5 a.m. the lions would come close! (*Bakul*, 1945)

Between 1896 and 1906, around 1,563 *cantinas* were established, serving a population of approximately 220,000 Africans (Covane, 1988; Godinho, 1962). The development of the region of João Belo (present-day Chai Chai) was due to the growth of the Hindu-origin population that settled there. These new migrants adopted a different stance towards commerce. This was no longer a matter of large importing and exporting firms, but rather small-scale retail businesses run by individual Hindus from Diu and, in smaller numbers, from Gujarat (where Portuguese also resided). People from Gujarat tended, due to linguistic proximity, to emigrate to the British colonies of East Africa and later spread to neighbouring territories such as Mozambique. However, life as a *cantineiro* (trading-post keeper) and bush trader was arduous and typically undertaken by individuals from less prestigious castes:

My ancestors lived in small wooden houses and travelled by donkey to collect instalments and other monetary goods from rented little shops. It took a whole day to get home, and when night came they tied up the donkey and climbed up a tree because of the animals. By five o'clock everything had to be closed. (*Bakul*, 1945)

Godinho provides a similar description:

(...) the Indian or Indo-Portuguese (...) went into the backcountry with a few bales of cloth that the employer entrusted to him, or that he had bought on credit. He travelled on foot or by donkey and ate whatever he came across on the way, or what the native offered him; he slept out in the open. He established his lodging in a hut, always at the mercy of wild animals, subject to tropical diseases... (Godinho, 1962: 41).

Despite Portuguese governors' negative views regarding the effects Indians exerted on commercial traffic—considered wholly contrary to the state's economic interests—their influence was of extreme importance. The presence of these populations fostered the diffusion of the monetary economy among southern populations and influenced the spontaneous formation of migratory flows towards South Africa's new mining centres (Serrano, 1894). Trading-post keepers sought to position themselves strategically near the borders with South Africa, benefiting from the intense traffic of miners returning to their villages. Mukesh recounts aspects of this experience, which largely corresponded to the everyday life of *cantineiros* established in the border zones. Mukesh related some impressive aspects of that period:

Company E had a camp where men gathered for the mines. They stayed there six, four days waiting for a bus to take them. There was a man who did the health inspection. He didn't understand anything about health, but he did the inspection and then contacted the employers and said: I already have so many workers—send the bus!

There was an agreement between the government and the company. At the time, they received an x when they finished the contract and then they came to splurge. They came to spend! They started first at that depot in Ressano Garcia, those little shops. There they loaded up and then finally ended up where my parents had their business. The men came from various places, and when they arrived there they said: Now I've reached my land, I want to go into the interior where my wives and my mother are. And when they got there they said to our parents: Now I want to buy this, and this, and that for my daughter, for my son—and they made up a load. In the end they said: Do you have transport to take me?

In the interior there was no public transport; it was our parents' vans that carried those men and took them to the village. When they arrived it was joy, a surprise—because he had things that seemed never to run out. There are scenes engraved in our minds. As they had no space to carry everything, they tied a lamp, lanterns, a radio to their belt—they had no hands for it all. They didn't need suitcases; people didn't use them. You took a *capulana*, put everything in the centre and tied a knot. Each wife, each son, each daughter, had their own treatment. They spent half their wages on those things we sold. (*Mukesh, 1943*)

The *cantinas* in the bush owned by Indians were initially run only by men who migrated first and ventured to make the business profitable. Later, around the 1930s, the business began to be run by the family, with the wife simultaneously acting as an active collaborator in the shop and interacting with the local African population. Women's roles slowly began to gain importance within the diaspora, owing to their influence both on the adaptation of the families of trading-post keepers and bush traders and on interaction between Indians and Africans. Indian women learned the local language, customs, and medicinal practices, which they combined with knowledge of Hindu folk medicine of Ayurvedic origin; in some cases they became midwives—women of virtue whose knowledge earned respect and prestige among both ethnic groups.

Mitha recounts her memories of her mother-in-law who, living in the bush, ran a *cantina* jointly with her husband and children:

(...)My mother-in-law lived in an area far from the city, and at that time, when she came from India, the doctor went there once a month, so people had to manage on their own. The births of her children—of my husband, my brothers-in-law—were assisted by African women, who were her friends, and they also taught her about herbs: Look, go get that plant, make that tea. (*Mitha, 1960*)

Mitha's mother-in-law lived for part of her life close to bush villages and learned African medicine, becoming a woman of virtue—a midwife and healer—consulted by both local Indians and Africans:

Those customers who came to shop would say:

– Ah, my wife is ill.

And my mother-in-law would reply:

– What does she have?

– She has stomach pain!

– Then wait, I'll give you some leaves!

Then she would go inside and prepare the plants, make a tea, as she knew how, and give it to people. Everyone there knew her and she was greatly respected. (*Mitha, 1960*)

Women's interaction between Hindu and African women transformed food practices, added flavours, and increased adaptive capacity between the two groups. Mitha recounts an example of this important interaction:

Back in India, I only knew how to make rotli, rotlá, fish and vegetarian dishes. Then I learned to make African, Portuguese, and Indian food, even mithá (a traditional Indian sweet eaten especially on festive days). I learned from my mother-in-law, who knew how to mix the two cuisines very well. She made the best achar in the region (*Mihta, 1960*).

The settlement of Hindus, as well as Muslims, in Mozambique can be inferred from several administrative orders issued by the Governor-General's office. For instance, in 1906 an individual named QueluDouça petitioned the Mozambican government for the grant and leasehold (*aforamento*) of 2,000 metres of land located in the settlement of Matola. The plot was subsequently granted, and its owner undertook improvements of considerable value. In the same year, Framji Pestanji Dhandi—another Indian of British origin—requested the leasehold of a plot in the settlement of Magide, in the district of Lourenço Marques (B.O.M., no. 18, 1906). Later, other members of the Dhandi family applied for leaseholds of adjoining plots, revealing not only a settlement project but also an interest in local investment. Governor Álvaro de Castro likewise noted, in 1917, the opening of businesses by Indians in both the secondary and primary sectors, especially investments in rice cultivation in the district of Gaza. “'Yellows' and Indians constituted genuine ethnic minorities of adult men, professionally specialised” (*Reis, 1973: 38*), a significant contingent of whom devoted themselves to services and public administration. Given the prior historical and contextual situation, it may be inferred that Goans were those who occupied administrative posts. Indo-British Indians tended to concentrate in crafts and in import-export commerce, while a proportionally smaller—though increasingly important—group consisted of workers originating from Diu.

When analysing the types of activities undertaken across the ethnic group, it becomes evident that farming enterprises, fashion and garment manufacturing were mainly in the hands of Indians, as were groceries and bazaars. In the 1930s, 32 commercial establishments owned by Muslim and Hindu Indians were recorded, in addition to 38 shop assistants and cooks. Some Indian women were working as cooks or as domestic servants (*Zamparoni, 1998: 178*). However, this situation was rare: the women who were present were generally

housewives who employed African wage labourers, or, more sporadically, other Indian women of more modest economic standing.

A decade and a half later, the occupational situation of Indians had not changed significantly. The largest proportion remained engaged in commercial activities—canteens/trading posts, trade with villages in the bush (mato), and small garment-making industries, including shoemaking, goldsmithing, costume jewellery, and a small number in agriculture. This population's entrepreneurial capacity (especially among Hindus) was high and conspicuous. Governor Bettencourt noted the construction of excellent commercial buildings in Lourenço Marques by Indo-British firms: "(...) Casa Coimbra, which honours the city and represents a remarkable deployment of capital" (1945: 45). Between the 1930s and 1940s, 15,536 immigrants of Indo-British origin and only 1,311 of Indo-Portuguese origin were counted. However, only 3,952 Indo-British residents were recorded in the colony in 1940. Comparatively, the data on immigration and emigration appear exceedingly high. The reason is that Indians living in territories adjacent to Mozambique, without access to the coast, needed to travel across Mozambican territory to reach the coastal ports of Beira and Lourenço Marques, from which they could embark; each journey was recorded as an immigration and subsequent emigration event. After several decades, one observes a population in transit—Indo-British individuals moving across African territories, both British and Portuguese—suggesting a strong transnational tendency.

Statistical data indicate a marked interconnection between place of residence and the locations where other members of the lineage were established, in Africa and in India. By contrast, Indo-Portuguese immigrants who initially arrived in the colony largely came from Goa and migrated with a settlement project, partly organised and managed by the Portuguese government. Kamal explains this situation emphatically:

It wasn't people from Diu who were in Mozambique before the mid-twentieth century; there were very few. It was people from Goa! Those from Goa never demanded an office to work in like the Portuguese; they worked under rudimentary conditions. The Portuguese did not want to work on the borders because they demanded conditions—desk, calculating machine—then it was very hot and at that time there was no air conditioning... whereas for these (the Goans) it was enough to say: Here is your salary. How they worked didn't matter. They used paper and folded it to write on the back; the machines, even in modern times, were rudimentary, and they didn't mind. The Portuguese government saved on expenditure with these administrative cadres. Then they spoke Portuguese well, compared to those from Diu, and many also spoke English, although most had only completed the 4th grade. But because many had a mixture of white and Indian ancestry, even better—they spoke well because at home they spoke Portuguese and also Konkani. Since they expressed themselves well, they had better access to civil-service competitions. They were Goans, and some from Diu, who were hired. Those from Diu would say: I'm going to Mozambique because I have a neighbour, a sutar, a kania who will help me... And then he would write to him and the friend would reply: You can come; I'll send you the documentation. And it was easy at that time. (Kamal, 1939)

The 1950 censuses provide a set of information on the characteristics of Indian migratory movement in Mozambique, disaggregating the movement by age, sex, race and nationality—an approach that would not be repeated in subsequent censuses. These statistics allow us to observe that the flow of male individuals from British India was especially high when compared to the equivalent movement among Indo-Portuguese. However, considering population evolution in the province, and based on information from individuals who lived in Mozambique during this period, settlement among individuals from Gujarat was not high. The number of women accompanying this migration was very low, increasing significantly only after the 1940s. A similar pattern seems to indicate a project of temporary migration—indeed a feature observed across two hundred years of Gujarati migration to Africa.

5. The Modern Migratory Movement

The modern Gujarati migratory process to Mozambique begins only in the 1920s, linked to anti-Indian agitation in South Africa, which later reverberated across other British colonies. Between the 1910s and 1920s, the situation of Indians contracted under a regime akin to semi-slavery for British possessions changed entirely. In 1916, the indentured labour regime ended and wages increased significantly. Many individuals abandoned plantation work and sought other, more profitable occupations. Historical accounts suggest, however, that at least at this stage, descendants of plantation labourers did not succeed as merchants (Palmer, 1957), instead seeking employment in other sectors, such as artisan trades, following family professions, or continuing in the primary sector as wage labourers.

Those active in commerce were free Indians who had never been on plantations. Regarded with reserve and suspicion—both by South Africans and by compatriots—this group accumulated considerable fortunes, especially during the First World War. In parallel, in the Transvaal, a large group of Indians acquired substantial properties, making use of the so-called "gold laws" which, while restricting Indians' residence in certain places, were silent regarding their ownership of businesses and properties. Indian companies became so significant in

the Transvaal that by 1919 they attracted the attention of South African entrepreneurs, and a campaign began to restrict Indians' rights regarding acquisition or commercial exploitation, with agitation spreading across the other four provinces of the Union of South Africa.

A commission was formed to oversee and evaluate the position of Indians throughout South Africa, based on the following propositions: (1) Indians do not invest in the territory where they live, sending their savings abroad; (2) Indians neither produce nor consume local products, importing food from India; (3) they constitute support networks that impede European action; (4) as merchants, they become overly familiar with white women, undermining distance and natives' respect for Europeans (Palmer, 1957). The process ended only in 1923, with the residential segregation of Indians and the limitation of their settlement to coastal areas. At the start of apartheid, many men sought to leave South Africa and moved to Mozambique, later forming families and bringing wives from India.

5.1 The Modern Migratory Indian Movement and the beginning of the association life in Mozambique

In the first decades of the twentieth century, socio-professional associations were formed, separating Indian groups established in the colony. In 1922 the first Indian Chamber of Commerce emerged, and in 1925 the União Indiana Mutual Aid Association was created, integrating mainly Indo-Portuguese. In the same year, a licence was granted for the New Hindu Association of Lourenço Marques. The Indian Chamber of Commerce aimed to bring together Portuguese and foreign Indian merchants but, contrary to Zamparoni's view (2000), who considers this chamber governed by Hinduists, it appears to us that it was shared between Hinduists and Muslims, and did not include a single merchant from Diu.

The number of Indian workers in the colony was quite high, although statistics and some reports do not provide the full dimension of the phenomenon. In 1947, the Statutes of the Mutual Aid Association of Indian Workers were approved, headquartered in Lourenço Marques, although its founding date goes back to 1921. The association aimed to defend the interests of Indo-Portuguese, especially workers in the colony, whose origin was mainly Goa and Diu. Members were entitled to financial assistance, medical aid, medicines, education and assistance with repatriation if necessary; and in situations of unemployment or bankruptcy, family members would receive a pre-agreed amount to establish or find a new job.

The social composition of Indo-Portuguese in African colonies was not limited to an intermediate administrative elite; it included a heterogeneous set of individuals performing diverse artisanal and service occupations. Social and caste differences manifested in everyday life and were evident in associational movements of the diaspora in Portuguese territories, related to origin, place of birth and descent. In Mozambique, the Goan population was extensive and well-integrated, yet grounded in a rigid hierarchical social system, similar to sociability patterns in India. For example, in the case of Goans:

Those of Brahmin origin constituted high society, the upper class. The Chardós were the middle class and the Sudras were the workers; in Mozambique it was still somewhat like that, in clubs and associations. (José M, 1951)

Among Hindus, differences were also visible:

At first there was no temple in Lourenço Marques, only later. But people gathered in associations, where they performed rites and festivals, yet they were divided by castes. In Mozambique, in Lourenço Marques, it was rigid. (Parul, 1952)

Occupying important positions in the provincial administration, Indians were often challenged by more controversial media outlets, which denounced Indian influence in the colony both in commercial relations and in the administration itself—such as the newspaper *O Brado Africano*, (*O Brado Africano* was created by the Albasini brothers in 1892 under the name *O Clamor Africano* until 1924. A bilingual newspaper, published in Portuguese and *landin*, it was linked to the movement of the assimilated, in defence of natives of the province) which referred to “the inconvenience of filling public offices with the Indian element, instead of the African element or even the European element” (12/10/1921). Indo-Portuguese constituted a political force in the province that could not be ignored, and they frequently allied with Indo-British to defend interests they considered common. Commercial and recreational associations served not only to preserve interests and foster cohesion among the Indian population vis-à-vis Europeans, but also—at an institutional level—to guarantee the transmission of a way of life in a context where second and third generations were becoming predominant.ⁱⁱⁱ

The Indian associational movement was constituted on a dual basis—class and religion—in which castes and classes began to fuse. The small Goan bourgeoisie founded the Instituto Goano; the Indian middle bourgeoisie, the Indian Chamber of Commerce; the Indian working class of Goan and Diu origin, the Mutual Aid Association of Indian Workers; and the small bourgeoisie and Hindu working class, the New Hindu Association. These associations recreated a model of social stratification typical of Indian society, while also incorporating influences from class structure that would later be reflected during migration to Portugal.

6. Indians and Portuguese: Disputes and Conflicts

6.1 Commercial conflicts

Indian presence in Mozambique was not always peaceful, nor readily tolerated by Portuguese colonial administration. It was rarely protected, oscillating between periods of indifference and periods of overt hostility, depending on political and economic contexts. The few documents referring to the Asian presence reveal, on the one hand, marked indifference to Indian social and cultural context—despite acknowledging their mercantile competence—and, on the other, hostility and erasure. The documentary scarcity likely derives precisely from a desire to annihilate and render invisible an uncomfortable reality. The stigmatisation process affecting the Indian population (especially Hindu and Muslim) begins with the effective occupation of overseas territories and the ensuing mercantile competition between Portuguese and Indians.

From the second half of the nineteenth century onward, Indians were persecuted by various agents of Portuguese administration, fostering an ideological posture that would have consequences in creating feelings of identity cohesion and the ethnicization of members. When attempts began to settle the Portuguese population in the colony of Mozambique, Indians constituted an obstacle to small traders who tried in vain to compete in prices and profit margins. This is recorded in early reports by provincial governors. Sebastião Chaves d'Aguiar wrote the following about the Asian population of Indian origin:

There are some who, in my view, are extremely harmful to the district, especially the Baneanes. It is a race that is today spread across all districts of the Province and may be called a true plague. They are men with no needs whatsoever, who wear a piece of cotton that comes to them from India, and with respect to food they subsist on rice and sugar of that origin, and this on feast days, because ordinarily their diet is herbs they gather in the field. Everything they earn they hoard and remit to their homes in India, in coin, in the hands of packet-boat captains, or in the hands of compatriots who, already rich, withdraw (...) (D'Aguiar, 1882)

In his report on inhabitants from India, Governor Carvalho e Menezes refers to the need to prevent Indians from holding high offices due to their “natural incapacity” for neutrality and impartiality in their own land. Although this alluded to office-holding in India, he nonetheless considered them excellent workers and recognised their capacity for subordinate functions, since in addition to knowing local languages, they performed duties for less than half the cost of a Portuguese employee. Mouzinho de Albuquerque, in his annual report, refers to the dissemination of the Hindu population throughout the territory, although in reality it was more concentrated in Lourenço Marques and Beira. The governor's opinion is noteworthy given the emergence of negative stereotypes and other prejudices at that time—stereotypes that would persist to the present:

The competition to fear for these classes of Portuguese emigrants comes from Asians: Hindu and Muslim merchants, and Chinese workers. Living off nothing, one might say—humble, greedy, and devoid of scruples of any kind—immigrants from India drain the money from the country where they establish themselves, without leaving a single useful trace of their passage. Against this evil the English colonies and the Transvaal are fighting, and we must defend ourselves against it. (Albuquerque, 1899: 117)

Indian presence (regardless of religious group) rapidly became the scapegoat for the alleged decline of commerce and the difficulty of implanting Europeans in the territory. Their ease of adaptation to climate and local constraints affronted European traders, unable to speak local languages, travel inland, compete in prices, or match their supply capacity; hence they were accused of obstructing the “civilising movement” in East Africa. Latent hostility between Portuguese administration and Indians was also fuelled by Portuguese soldiers, who openly displayed contempt for the population, harassing them repeatedly without protection from authorities. Under this social constraint, Indians sought refuge as far as possible from Portuguese influence—moving away from roads, becoming invisible to “whites,” opening small shops inland near indigenous villages, with whom they had greater affinities, both linguistic and social.

During the governments of Mouzinho de Albuquerque and António Ennes, repressive measures and attempts to contain Indian commerce—apparently contrary to liberal spirit—were justified as necessary to protect Portuguese commerce seeking to prosper in the colony. In any case, from the late nineteenth century and throughout much of the twentieth century, administrative agents, politicians, academics and writers expressed concern and repudiation regarding Asian presence in Mozambique, and the Portuguese government oscillated between restrictive and permissive measures concerning Indian entry into the province. In some decades, concern focused on Indo-British; in others it also targeted Portuguese “canarins” and “baneanes.” Indeed, the *monhé*—the Indian or Indo-Portuguese—was the major holder of Mozambique's commerce, having created over time a mercantile web that remains practically impossible to defeat; its secret lies fundamentally in unequalled adaptation to physical and social conditions, intimacy established with indigenous people of coast and interior, and the extremely low standard of living of its agents in the bush. (Godinho, 1962: 83)

Mouzinho de Albuquerque attempted in vain to pass legislation aimed at dislodging Indian merchants, especially in retail. He proposed a tax on each Indian disembarking in Mozambique, prohibiting shops located more than 500 metres from military commands and posts, imposing a military tax on all natives of India, and

requiring industrial contributions. In practice, these measures were never implemented, but they influenced the “white” population’s disapproving stance. To protect European commerce, Mouzinho de Albuquerque changed the type and amount of taxes paid by small traders, especially those employing shop clerks:

Each shop of a Moor or Baneane has countless clerks; by requiring payment for each one from 10,000 réis to 60,000 réis, depending on locality and class, the growing immigration of Asians was hindered and they were prevented from advancing further in monopolising small retail trade.(Albuquerque, 1899: 312–13)

Taxing Indian shops located outside the administrative centres at ten times the rate generated a wave of protests reaching the metropole. The Indian merchant population requested an extension of the regulation for one year; in retaliation, they stopped sending commercial goods to Gaza, resulting in a sharp decline in customs revenues. As a result, provincial authorities had to retreat—an outcome that constituted a victory for Indians, who began to understand their social weight as an economic pressure group. Other restrictive measures were implemented: Indian-operated shops were required to employ Portuguese, European, or local indigenous individuals; shops were to be located in specified places, mainly along roads, to support travellers and military forces and provide lodging. All this because, in Governor Albuquerque’s view:

It is in the isolation of the bush, free from competition and far from all oversight, that the merchant triumphs—*monhé*, *banenane*—extracting the greatest profits. A demijohn of alcohol diluted with water from the nearest swamp constitutes for the Black man an irresistible temptation (...) and with all that the Asian does business and trades everything into pounds that he sends to India(Albuquerque, 1899: 313)

Restrictions also affected Indian imports, requiring that traded products be Portuguese or nationally produced. Portuguese traders, in turn, would enjoy exemption from industrial contributions relative to their counterparts. Curiously, Salazar, shortly after the Second World War, adopted a similar measure, refusing to grant commercial licences to foreigners (Indians) and establishing that each foreign trader should employ at least two Portuguese nationals. This was a strategic manoeuvre to promote employment policy and encourage Portuguese investment, but it affected non-naturalised Hindu traders. Barti explains how the “solution” operated:

A Portuguese employee? How would they find one? White Portuguese were generally civil servants, or worked in national companies, railways, etc. On the other hand, restrictions on emigration to the colonies were strong; there were few whites. Indians from Diu, by contrast, had Portuguese nationality and began to be hired to work in Mozambique. Since families sometimes didn’t even have money for passage, the employer paid, and then the employee from Diu amortised the cost over time. After a few years, they also set themselves up on their own. (Barti, 1931)

The Lourenço Marques Commercial Association, led by Europeans, repeatedly rose against the influence of Indian merchants, preventing them from participating in commercial and shopkeepers’ associations and pressuring colonial government bodies to adopt measures to expel these adversaries. In 1899, an ordinance was published prohibiting entry of individuals from India. But because Indo-British activity comprised an important share of tax revenue, the ordinance was revoked the following year. Yet on 24 November 1900, the governor-general issued a new ordinance reactivating the 1899 measures—short-term measures, as so many others were, dependent on local political contexts rather than an overall plan or long-term economic strategy. Indians—especially those of British origin—were always subject to obstacles and discretionary measures by Portuguese administration. In 1906, the Ministry of Navy and Overseas Affairs issued a decree (27 June) facilitating admission, residence and transit of foreigners in overseas provinces. Article 1 allowed foreigners to enter the provinces without passports or any identification documents, provided that within three days immigrants presented themselves to administrative border authorities to regularise residence. However, these measures did not apply to individuals from India; they were intended mainly for foreigners from Europe. For Indians, a different ordinance required payment of 30,000 réis to obtain disembarkation authorisation, even if their destination was South Africa.

After the establishment of the Portuguese Republic, freedom of belief and recognition of political and civil equality of all faiths were proclaimed (Decree no. 233, 22 November 1913), and this legislation was also applied to colonies:

The Republic treats equally all Portuguese from the metropole and the colonies, without distinction of castes or religions (...) in the provisions of the Fundamental Law of the Republic one will find none that places Indo-Portuguese on an inferior footing, nor any exception open for any citizen, whatever the origin. (Ribeiro, 1930)

Yet Indians never obtained such recognition. In 1912 a regulation was published for policing and oversight of entry of Asians and assimilated persons into Mozambique’s territories under direct state administration, extending to the entire province. It sought to prevent Asians from entering by sea at the port of Lourenço Marques without prior licence issued by the municipal administration. Licences were granted only to those holding a laissez-passer for business practice, enabling constant travel between African territories and

India and authorising return to the district. Shortly thereafter, the Minister of Colonies annulled this legislation, “(...) fearing diplomatic reactions from England, since many affected were British subjects” (Zamparoni, 2000: 197).

Indians were also required to present a certificate issued by the Portuguese consulate in the Transvaal stating permission to return to that colony. But the *laissez-passer* was reserved for those who, through official documentation, proved residence in the district prior to 30 November 1907 and demonstrated at least four months of effective residence. The legislation differentiated Indians by economic status, naturally considering the fiscal interests of the Provincial Treasury, since the colonial government collected their taxes and contributions, assessing income through real estate holdings or the amount earned in commerce- or industry-related professions.

For example, individuals owning real estate registered in the registry office, or having invested not less than 10,000 réis in commercial or industrial activity, were not required to meet minimum residence time and were even permitted to be accompanied by lawful wives and minor children. Those who proved themselves heirs of Asians who had left assets in the district were also permitted to disembark and remain as long as necessary to liquidate inheritance or even establish residence. Given that colonisation and territorial occupation were premised on selectivity, the principle of wealth prevailed here: in cases of inheritance, it had to consist of not less than 10,000 réis for heirs to have residence rights. In other situations, Indian permanence in the territory was made difficult, and in extreme cases could lead to imprisonment, punishment and expulsion; Christian Indians were treated differently, with no prescriptions applied to them. The underlying reason is simple: Indo-Portuguese did not occupy significant positions in commerce; they were civil servants, workers, or wage labourers of other Gujarati Indians.

For colonial administration—and Portuguese traders—every possible form served to legitimise distancing and exclusion of the group from the colony. Beyond periodic legal attacks, information circulated about this population reflects the stereotyped and stigmatising opinion to which they were subjected for almost 100 years. For instance, in 1926 Camacho referred to Hindus as follows:

The *monhé* [here the word refers to both Hindu and Muslim] squeezes the Black man like a lemon and makes him pay for the ill-treatment the Black man often inflicts on him as if it were useful service he provided. The Asian does not settle in the province; once he becomes rich, he returns to his native land. (Camacho, 1926: 216)

Likewise, Lopes de Castro (1932) accused Indo-British of dedicating themselves only to commerce and “canteens,” “not seeking to cultivate the land because (...) the development of the territory does not seduce them,” warning that Indians should “be prevented from entering Mozambique,” considering them “an inferior and unassimilable race, ethnically inassimilable and irreducible to our civilisation and mentality,” such that Indo-British immigration would be merely “an element of disturbance in national life” (1932: 136).^{iv}

In general, and until the 1960s, publications referring to the Indian population tended to confuse individuals’ geographic origin with religion and cultural habits. Extensive criticisms were made regarding their refusal to adopt European clothing, diet, uses and customs; their living in extended families inside their commercial establishments; and their not keeping organised or regular accounts. It is true that both groups perceived each other as “the other,” whose coexistence or cooperation was excluded for reasons far more complex than merely economic. It was also an opposition between two apparently irreducible cultures, in which Indians were historically—and perhaps socially—closer to the local population.

6.2 Political conflicts

India’s independence in 1947 triggered a nationalist movement that culminated in the decolonisation of Portuguese India and led to a new migratory process by this population towards African territories. Gandhi delivered a speech against Portuguese colonialism, published in a widely circulated Indian newspaper, which made a strong impression among Indians in Portuguese provinces, especially Goans. Influenced by the leader’s words, pro-independence movements began to form. When, on 27 February 1950, Nehru asked the Portuguese government to begin talks to integrate the territory into the Indian Union, the problem already had a long history. Since the 1930s, the Goa Congress Committee had been a local extension of the India National Congress party, which had initiated an underground nationalist movement, becoming visible only in 1945. Yet even before Indian independence, on 18 July 1946, Ram Manohar Lohia—one of the founders of India’s socialist movement—organised a rally in Goa that contributed to awakening nationalist consciousness. And although the Portuguese government systematically declared Indo-Portuguese loyalty to Portugal, integrationalist policies gained more and more adherents worldwide.

Salazar, refusing outright any negotiations, counter-attacked by altering the Colonial Act, a way to justify, in extremis, the existence of colonies. In 1933 Salazar approved the Constitution of the Republic and published the Colonial Act, a setback relative to previous legislation. During the liberal monarchy, the

Constitution considered territories under Portuguese administration as provinces, each able to elect at least one deputy to the Cortes; Portuguese India even had six deputies in Parliament. Between 1820 and 1920, all citizens of the Asian colony—regardless of being Hindu or Christian—had freedom guarantees enshrined in the Civil Code. With Salazar's rise to power and the 1933 Constitution establishing the Colonial Act, citizens of Goa saw previous freedoms and prerogatives refused.

By altering the Constitution, Salazar's government changed the term "colonies" to "provinces," legitimising these territories as extensions of the country. The Portuguese government assumed that, if overseas territories were integral parts of Portugal, they would be protected from the independence fervour spreading since the end of the Second World War. In June 1953, failing to succeed in negotiations with Portugal, Nehru closed the legation in Lisbon, while members associated with the Satyagraha Sabha invaded the enclaves of Dadra and Nagar Haveli. Portugal appealed to the International Court of Justice in The Hague to obtain recognition of a secular right of transit between Daman, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, but the following year the enclaves were formally annexed by India.

Following this conflict, the Indian Union initiated an embargo policy on Portuguese territories, generating severe supply and communications problems, to the point that Salazar considered Portuguese control over transit by foreigners and Goans between Portuguese territories and those of the Union, as well as emigrant remittances, to be compromised: This may amount to only a few tens of thousands of *contos* (dorales) per year, which in the international accounts of the Indian Union represent nothing and are not even difficult to offset in the balance of the State of India, but in small Goa they represent the livelihood of numerous families. (Salazar, 1954) During the Bandung Conference in 1955, newly independent countries condemned colonialism and called for unity among peoples. Portugal again sought to mobilise the international community, including British intervention. Yet given the global political context, it did not interest Britain to act against its former colony, with which it sought to develop commercial relations. And although on 12 April 1961 the International Court of Justice in The Hague recognised the right of transit in the enclaves of Dadra and Nagar Haveli, international opinion had shifted radically. In late August of that same year, during the Lok Sabha meeting, Nehru raised the possibility of resorting to violence in the case of Goa. Diplomatic intervention failed completely, while Salazar's final strategy was to render visible, to international public opinion, the alleged fallacy of the Satyagraha (peaceful resistance) movement, reducing military forces in Portuguese India.

After Indian independence, a small number of emigrant Indians returned to their country, but the majority—perfectly integrated—remained in Mozambique, maintaining British passports. At that time, families from British India who had opted for definitive settlement did not habitually renew their passports and were not informed that they should do so, remaining in uncertainty regarding nationality. When India annexed the enclaves of Dadra and Nagar Haveli in 1953, the Portuguese government sought to ascertain the nationality of Indians residing in the colonies. When they approached the British consulate, they found that passports had expired. Moreover, as India had become independent, this population was compelled to assume Indian nationality and forced to resolve legal matters in Nairobi, since the Indian Union had severed diplomatic relations with Portugal. On 17 December 1961, when the Indian army of 50,000 men invaded Goa—against only 3,500 Portuguese defenders—Portugal retaliated against Indo-British-origin Indian citizens residing in Mozambique. In Adriano Moreira's words:

(...) we had an important community in Mozambique and there was a distinction to be made: one thing is to be Goan (they understood as Goans all Luso-Indians), another thing is to be Indian or Pakistani; and we ordered the internment of Indians in Mozambique. That was done without brutality; I think most stayed at home, but why? It was the message sent to Mr. Nehru—if you do not respect Portuguese property, we will confiscate the property of your citizens. And he respected the property and we did as well. (Adriano Moreira, interview)

During this process, movable and immovable assets of Indian citizens became subject to the protective measure provided in Article 1502 of the Civil Procedure Code. A Coordinating Commission on Matters Relating to Assets Belonging to Subjects of the Indian Union was rapidly formed under the governor-general to prevent diversion or loss of Indian assets. On 8 August 1962, with publication of Decree no. 44.416, all residence permits of Indian citizens in overseas provinces expired; application extended to children of Indian-nationality parents born in Portuguese territory who had not previously requested nationality. Ordered to leave the province, they would also have all assets (movable and immovable), belonging to individuals or legal entities, liquidated. Consequently, several thousand Indians left the province, returning to their region of origin, while others settled in surrounding African territories: Tanganyika and Zanzibar (today Tanzania), Nyasaland (today Malawi), Northern and Southern Rhodesia (today Zambia and Zimbabwe), Kenya, and even South Africa. Since the legislation allowed residence permits for children of Indian citizens through administrative justification, or for those in active military service or public functions, many second-generation individuals were able to remain in Mozambique.

After a period of house arrest—described as a concentration camp—the first migrant generation was expelled from the territory, and part of its assets sold at public auction. Dharmesh was only 10 when Goa was annexed and recalls the episode as he experienced it:

There was a Luzalite warehouse and they put the Indians there, in Beira, and there were about 50 or 60 people. They stationed troops there and only relatives could enter—one at a time. Only children born in Mozambique could provide food to those relatives. They stayed there for some time. Then they transferred them to a neighbourhood with small houses near the airport, which was still under construction. But many children had no transport to go there and they could only visit the m at certain hours. Maybe they lived there between 6 and 10 months, and then they were released. In 1962 they were expelled. Many returned to India and others stayed in Tanzania and Kenya. My father went to Tanzania, where he had worked as a dental technician. (*Dharmesh, 1951*)

Children and close relatives who had residence rights were facilitated in acquiring these assets, so that, in Dharmesh's words, "it all ended up staying in the family!" Relations between India and Portugal were severed, only resuming after the 1974 revolution; all consular matters that Indians needed to resolve were handled through the Brazilian embassy in New Delhi. As Dharmesh tells

When I got married, it was through the Brazilian embassy in Delhi that I could obtain a Portuguese passport. To resolve any matter was a problem—everything was very slow and with many costs. (*Dharmesh, 1951*)

During this period, the type of Indian migrants in Mozambique changed. The number of people from Gujarat (former British colony) decreased significantly, while those from Goa and Diu increased. At the same time, generations remaining in Mozambique were renewed, as older individuals left for India or other African countries. It would be the younger generation that remained there until the civil war after the colony's independence.

An unfinished conclusion

This article has shown that the Indian presence in colonial Mozambique was neither homogeneous nor static, but rather structured by distinct migratory projects, legal statuses, and religious and regional affiliations. While Indo-British groups frequently formed a mobile, transnational population linked to regional routes and commercial circuits, Indo-Portuguese migrants—especially from Goa—were more closely associated with a settlement logic and with the needs of the colonial administration for relatively low-cost, linguistically competent intermediate cadres.

Across the twentieth century, Indians became central to retail trade, artisanal production, and related services, generating both visibility and conflict. Associational life operated simultaneously as a mechanism of mutual support and as a means of reproducing internal stratifications (class, caste, and religion) in the diaspora. At the same time, Portuguese colonial policies oscillated between instrumental tolerance and restrictive hostility, often framed through racialised and moralising discourses that Finally, the political rupture opened by India's independence and the subsequent annexation of Portuguese India precipitated a decisive reconfiguration of belonging and citizenship, culminating in measures of internment, expulsion, and asset control in the early 1960s.

These events not only transformed the demographic composition of the Indian communities in Mozambique but also reveal how diaspora trajectories were shaped by the intersection of colonial governance, regional geopolitics, and everyday strategies of adaptation.

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Notes

ⁱFrom the second half of the century, after India's independence, the designation Indo-British ceased, shifting to the general category Asian, subdivided into yellow, Indian and Indo-Portuguese. Immediately after India's annexation of Goa, Daman and Diu, statistics began to use a general designation of Indians.

ⁱⁱAfonso de Albuquerque, in a political effort to gather allies in a territory where the influence and strength of Portuguese troops were limited, pursued a policy of marriages, fostering unions between low nobility Portuguese soldiers and young Goan women of high local status. These unions produced lineages called *descendants*, differentiated from Hindu Goans who later converted to Catholicism and adopted Portuguese names; hence surnames are found in a limited number and are easily identifiable by geographic origin. Conversion to Catholicism functioned as a marker of social status. Being Christian signified the possibility of participation in local political structures, social and economic mobility, and maintenance of status, especially among Goan Brahmins.

ⁱⁱⁱ

O Brado Africano was created by the Albasini brothers in 1892 under the name O Clamor Africano until 1924. A bilingual newspaper, published in Portuguese and landin, it was linked to the movement of the assimilated, in defence of natives of the province.

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