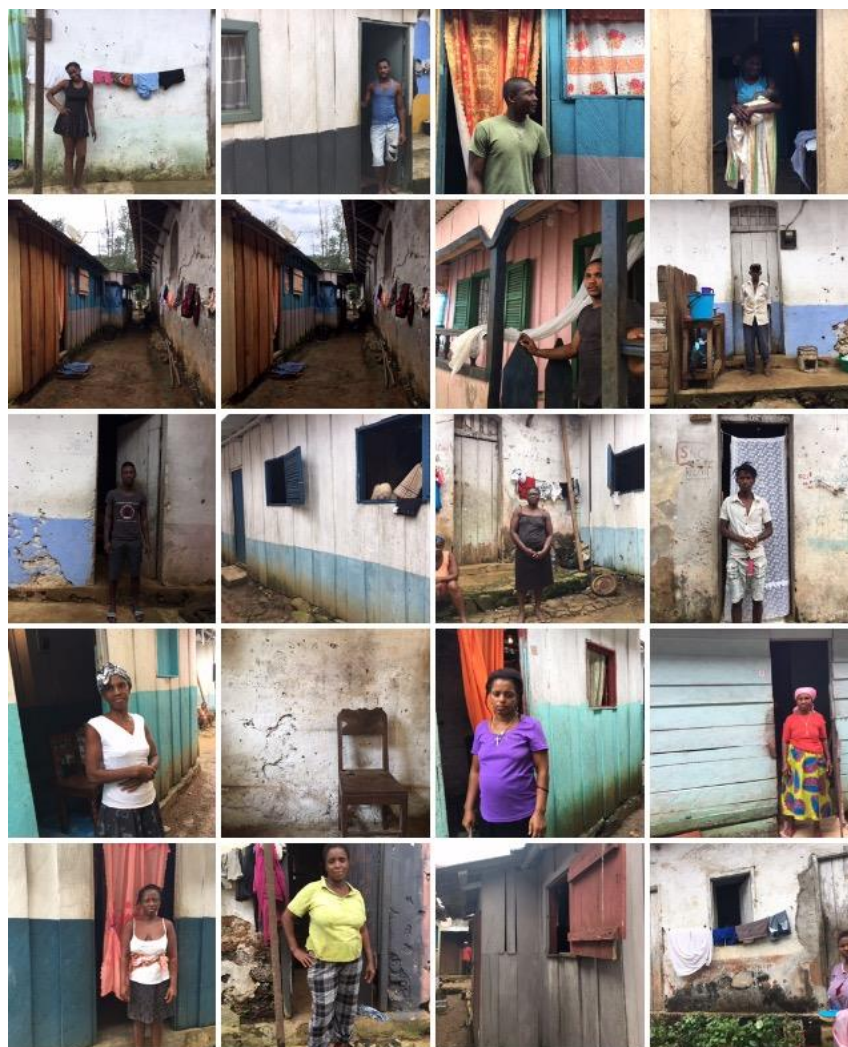


***Roça, sanzalas* and resistance: Agency and spatial transformation in the displacement of the Sundry community in Principe Island**



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Abstract

This thesis uses a post-colonial theoretical approach to explore how a contemporary form of colonial discourse unfolds in the upcoming displacement of people from the Sundry community in Principe Island, Sao Tome and Principe. It also examines how this discourse is subverted by this community, marking evidence of agency of this colonized group using as analytical tools such as colonial discourse theory and a spatial and gender perspective, and concepts of neo-colonialism, appropriation and place.

Keywords: agency, displacement, Sao Tome and Principe, post-colonial, colonization.

1. INTRODUCTION

“I hope they are able to resettle us soon, because I don’t think the tourists will get used to our way of living. We like to speak loud, listen to the radio in a high volume; we don’t fit here with the tourists anymore” (Maria, Principe Island, June 2017).

Maria is the fictional name of a 50-year-old woman from Sundry, a community in the middle of Principe Island. She lives with six family members in a small room of 30 square meters at Sundry farm. Maria and about 400 other people live in quarters that were made for slaves and indentured workers from Cape Verde during the colonial times in Sao Tome and Principe. Most of them are descendants of the first inhabitants of the quarters and have never left the slave quarter.

The country of Sao Tome and Principe is formed of two main islands in the Gulf of Guinea, East Africa. Sundry is the name of a former plantation farm in Principe Island, known as “*Roça Sundry*”. Six years ago, the South African company HBD bought Roça Sundry to transform it into a luxurious colonial hotel. HBD and the Regional Government of Principe promised Maria and other dwellers of the Sundry community to resettle them in a new area with better “living conditions”.

The displacement process of the Sundry people started five years after the relocation promise, in 2016. The Autonomous Government of Principe Region requested that the

United Nations Humans Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) office in Sao Tome island design a project proposal regarding the resettlement of Sundry community. The project was approved and the funds were donated by the HBD company in mid 2017 (Whister 2013). I was assigned as a consultant by UN-Habitat to work as communication specialist in the resettlement project from June to October 2017.

Scholars and policy makers have used the term “development-induced displacement” to mean displacements caused by variety of economic reasons, from infrastructure construction to sports events. The association of the world "development" with "displacement" attributes to the latter a positive association which is not always felt by displaced communities, even if the country experiences overall economic growth and prosperity. For this reason, I have chosen to use the terms “economic-induced displacement” and “tourism-induced displacement” for the remainder of this argument to mean displacements caused by economic forces.

Tourism-induced displacement is not a new phenomenon in Principe Island. Recently, three other populational displacements occurred to open room for touristic enterprises in Principe – two of which were also caused and funded by HBD. Small islands like Principe are particularly vulnerable and will likely to face an intensification in population displacement due to the increase of tourism activities and improvement of flight connections in the next years (Teixeira 2016).

In 2014, there were 880 million people living in slums, without the basic infrastructure and services, and this figure is growing (UN-Habitat 2016). In this context, economic reasons induce populational displacements and economic growth is cited as a relevant cause, as developing countries continue to invest in large infrastructure projects, big sports events, tourism developments, and other projects justified as of “national interest”. Resettlement policy experts linked to the World Bank (Picciotto 2001; Cernea 1996/1997, 1999, 2000) predict that, to build needed infrastructure in developing countries, more communities are prone to be displaced in the years to come.

In Africa, other the common causes of economic-induced populational displacement are private individuals and companies buying cheap farmland resulting in the dislocation of small farmers, the construction of large dams, and large-scale mining projects led by

foreign companies. Particularly, African partnerships with China for infrastructure construction are a reason for concern (Cotula 2011). Policy experts, scholars and activists raise the need to question the dominant arguments that guide economic induced-displacements, alerting to the negative impacts that are mainly concentrated on the poor, indigenous communities and ethnic minorities (Picciotto 2001; Rolnik 2014).

In this thesis, instead of focusing in the displacement process, I choose to concentrate my research on how the colonial discourse that is deeply rooted in former African colonies influences the discourses and behaviours of the Sundry community and their representations of the displacement in order to examine the agency of these people and the character of their resistance. Furthermore, I seek to show how these discourses, practices and representations are still based on a dominant colonial view of the world which culminates in a contemporary neo-colonial discourse that impacts and justifies the displacement of people in Sundry. By discussing how the soon-to-be displaced community live and navigate in an environment dominated by this neo-colonial logic, I examine individual's processes of appropriation and subversion of the colonial discourse according to their personal interests and prospects.

I seek to find and analyse evidence of agency. Hence, I examine the discourses and observed practices of people in Sundry to find indications of appropriation and subversion of the colonial discourse. In spite of the clear power hierarchy rooted in the space people inhabit today and in the process of displacement, people manage creatively transform the space and make statements that disrupts the colonial logic. Thus, I also aim to find evidence that demonstrates people's agency when subverting the dominant colonial discourse in their favour (De Certeau 1998a; De Certeau, Mayol, & Giard 1998b; Ashcroft 2001). Moreover, I include the gender perspective to show how gender interplays dominant discourses and practices and affects an individual's interaction with contemporary colonial discourse (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007; Spivak 1988). I include a spatial perspective as well, elaborating how people exercise agency through their uses of space and practices of everyday lives (De Certeau 1998a; De Certeau, Mayol, & Giard 1998b; Ashcroft 2001; Massey 1994).

The object of my analysis is the situation of displacement in a former colony in Africa that reveals the hidden influences of a contemporary form of colonialism after a so-called

decolonization in progress, meanwhile I also seek to demonstrate and discuss the agency of the colonized people, generally portrayed as passive victims.

People from the Sundy community are of academic interest for a three main reasons: (i) their experience of displacement is indicative of a major phenomenon that shows the impact of colonialism in post-colonial African societies; (ii) their positioning in former slave's quarters (*sanzalas*) renders the Sundy community a living memory of slavery, indenture work and archaic colonial practices in the contemporary world; (iii) this process has shown that even when people may seem stuck while waiting for a displacement and promised resettlement, they find balance between resistance and endurance, develop strategies to act within the terms imposed by the dominant logic using, as tools, discourse, transformation of spaces, habitation, and small everyday acts of resistance.

The nature of the collected data and my own observation of the everyday lives of people in Sundy justified my choice to use post-colonial theories and colonial discourse theory to conceptualize neo-colonialism, existing conceptions of people's agency, and the role played by gender. To complement my analysis, I choose to use a spatial perspective to highlight the ways in which agency can also be manifested in the uses of spaces. I believe there are similarities in how people exercise agency to reproduce, adapt and subvert the dominant discourse and how they behave in authoritative spaces, coping and subverting it. Both actions lead people to navigate through life making the best out of the opportunities they see as available to them.

This is a relevant topic of analysis because I investigate a contemporary phenomenon, i.e., a situation of displacement in a former colony in Africa that reveals the hidden influences of a contemporary form of colonialism after a so-called decolonization in progress, meanwhile I also seek to demonstrate and discuss the capacity of agency of the colonized people.

To incorporate the themes of colonial discourse, neo-colonialism, agency, uses of space and the issue of gender agency, I formulated the following research question:

How does the colonial discourse unfold and how is it subverted by people in Sundy community, Principe Island? To what extent

*can the displacement process of Sundry community be understood
as a contemporary form of colonialism?*

To shed a light on the first part of the research question, that is, how the colonial discourse is manifested and subverted by people, I consider Edward Said's approach in 'Orientalism' as a system of rules and statements by which the Western produces what is known about the Orient and exercises domination over it (Said 1978; Parry 1987). I understand "colonial discourse theory" as a theoretical analytical tool within post-colonial studies that analyses multifaceted sets of speeches, statements, representations and behaviours that organize the social existence of people in post-colonial societies (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007: 37). Furthermore, I seek to demonstrate people's agency by using the different conceptualizations and understandings of "agency" as it has been used by a wide range of scholars, from the ones that class people as passive subjects to colonial discourse (Said 1978; Fanon 1964) to those who assume a more positive view of agency and see possibilities for resistances to the colonial discourse (Ashcroft 2001; Bhabha in Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007; De Certeau 1998a; De Certeau, Mayol & Giard 1998b) and finally others that do not necessarily see people as passive but alert that agency in post-colonial societies cannot be taken for granted without considering the oppressive forces influence in the agency (Spivak 1988).

Regarding the second part of the research question, I interpret "neo-colonialism" as a contemporary form of colonialism that occurs after the official liberation of former colonies. In this conceptualization, it is not easy to identify the dominant actors – instead of only one colonizing nation, several oppressive forces can be hidden under a capitalist logic (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007; Fanon 1967, 1896; Said 1978). I argue that the contemporary colonial logic embedded in the discourse and practices of the vulnerable people in Sundry plays an important role in the ways in which people act in all directions, that is, how they reproduce, appropriate and react to colonial discourse.

Chapter 2 comprises the literature review of the main scholars and theories employed, mainly from post-colonial studies related to conceptions of agency and others who offer a spatial perspective. Chapter 3 describes the methodology I adopted, research limitations and ethical considerations. Chapter 4 explains and discuss the theoretical framework I have used to analyse the collected data. Chapter 5 contextualises the study, defining and

analysing the space formation and transformation in Sundy in relation to the colonial discourse influence, highlighting the capacity of people's agency by transforming spaces. Chapter 6 constitutes the analysis of statements of my informants, emphasizing appropriations and resistances to the colonial discourse. It also includes an analysis of the NGOs' mission. Finally, Chapter 7 presents my conclusive remarks.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

I choose post-colonial studies as the theoretical foundation to examine the research question. In this chapter, I seek to: insert the thesis' themes within the post-colonial body of knowledge and to localize the underlying assumptions of the post-colonial theoretical body to show why it is a suitable approach to analyse the data collected to answer the research question (Marshall & Rossman, 1999):

How does the colonial discourse unfold and how is it subverted by people in Sundy community, Principe Island? To what extent can the displacement process of Sundy community be understood as a contemporary form of colonialism?

From the post-colonial body of study, I decided to use colonial discourse theory as the analytical tool to examine the research question. After looking closely at the fieldwork data collection, I arrived at five main concepts through which to explore the research question in my analysis: neo-colonialism, agency, gender, space, and place. The concepts of space and place as social constructs facilitated my understanding of the extent to which the influence of the contemporary colonial discourse also forges the ways in which people exercise agency on physical spaces. In this context, agency is exercised by either complying to the rules located within a space – visible or invisible – or subverting these rules leading to the transformation of spaces into places, even by the mere act of inhabiting them (Ashcroft 2001).

2.1. Post-colonial studies

The historical point that marks the beginning of post-colonial studies is the official independence of former colonies in the second half of twentieth century. In this moment, feelings of anti-colonialism were “*often articulated in terms of a radical, Marxist discourse of liberation, and in constructions that sought to reconcile the internationalist and anti-élitist demands of Marxism with the nationalist sentiments of the*

period”(Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007: 12). Processes of decolonization came with independence, though many post-colonial scholars choose to look at these processes as continuous ones that did not end when colonizer nations left the previously occupied territories of former colonies (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007; Said 1978; Fanon 1967, 1986).

Early post-colonial nationalists, such as the pan-Africanist Frantz Fanon, inform my study of the consequences of the decolonization process. Fanon was a psychiatrist and philosopher from the French colony of Martinique that looked at the psychological effects of colonization, also examining his own experiences as a colonized individual. In the seminal book “*Black Skin, White Masks*” first published 1952, he argues that local elites took the place of the former colonizers, spurring a new form of colonization. Other issues presented in his book, such as racism are relevant concepts for contemporary post-colonial studies in general, but have been of secondary importance in my study so are not discussed in my analysis (Fanon 1967, 1986).

The intellectual and political leader for the independence of Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde, Amílcar Cabral, is not as pronounced in the field as Fanon but has influenced my work. Cabral adopted a less naive view on the pre-colonial past. From a Marxist background, Cabral provides insights on the perspective of colonized people, subverting the dominant view about the liberation of African people in former Portuguese colonies (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007).

I use the term “colonized” to refer to all the people living in former colonies, that is, people who are subject to the influence of colonial and neo-colonial discourses and practices, including my informants from Sundry community. Scholars may use several terms to refer to the same category of people. For instance, Spivak uses “subaltern” (1988), De Certeau, Mayol and Giard use “consumers” no necessarily referring in relation to colonization (1998a, 1998b), others may use “the dominated”, “the weak”, etc.

The use of the term “neo-colonialism” is subject of debate. To differentiate the contemporary forces of imperialism in developing countries from the classic imperialism of European colonizers, as well as the domain carried out during earlier decolonization, some theorists have used the term “neo-imperialism” (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007).

Still, I have chosen to use the term “neo-colonialism” when referring to the period and dominant practices that came after the official independence of former colonies replacing the colonial domination of territories by European nations. The temporal proximity of the recent decolonization process in Sao Tome and Principe makes “neo-colonialism” an appropriate term.

“Neo-colonialism” was first used contemporarily by the Ghanaian political leader Kwame Nkrumah (1965) to describe the processes of decolonization of the African colonies and the uprising of new dominant powers acting in a similar logic as the former colonizer powers. In his book *‘Neo-Colonialism, The Last Stage of Imperialism’*, Nkrumah contends that neo-colonialism is more than a mere continuation of imperialism and tends to hide its ways of operation—domination is subtler. The neo-colonial powers may be foreign corporations, multilateral organizations, other imperialist nations that are not the former colonizers, and/or local elites. This approach exposes how colonial discourse continues and transforms, and is useful in understanding its influence today. Neo-liberal capitalism produces a contemporary form of colonialism, where control is exercised in a subtler manner, primarily in economic and financial ways (in Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007; 146) .

I distance myself from early nationalist theorists and political activists who tend to understand pre-colonial cultures under an essentialist view by assuming that there was an original culture that must be recovered after colonization ends. I prefer Jamaican cultural theorist and political activist Stuart Hall’s approach to cultural identity as a process that is always in transformation, despite acknowledging how discourse aimed at recovering “original culture” is an important inspiration for anti-colonialist and decolonization movements (1994).

The Australian-based post-colonial scholars Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin’s compilation of post-colonial concepts in *‘Post-Colonial Studies’* (2007) and of post-colonial essays from various scholars in *‘The Post-Colonial Reader’* (2003) are fundamental for a critical overview of the main theoretical perspectives developed by post-colonial theorists. *‘The Empire Writes Back’* (2003b) brings together the most relevant texts on post-colonial writing and their relationship with other cultural aspects of post-coloniality. These works conceptualised some of the most up-to-date and relevant

topics in post-colonial studies, and were extremely helpful in identifying the underlying concepts from the data collected in the field.

Post-colonial feminist studies influenced this study as well. This field responded to the invisibility of women in the first nationalist efforts to approach neo-colonialism and criticised Western feminism for failing to acknowledge the specific struggles of Third World and black women (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007; Petersen 1984; Suleri 1992). Post-colonial feminist scholars Kristen Host Petersen and Anna Rutherford first conceptualized the term “double colonization” in the book *‘A Double Colonization: colonial and post-colonial women’s writing’* (1986). They provide insights on double colonization, highlighting the overlapping experiences of women as colonial subjects that also live under the dominant logic of patriarchy. This concept has informed my approach to female agency in the Sundry community because there are parallels in both oppressive logics as well as in the ways in which women act in order to subvert both dominant logics. In acting in opposition to two dominant forces, they may not eliminate the double control over them, but are called upon and able to use different tactics to men involved in the same process (De Certeau 1998a; De Certeau, Mayol & Giard, 1998b), thus, reflecting and impacting the way gender is constructed in this community (Massey 1994).

2.2. Colonial discourse theory

From the field of post-colonial studies, I selected the colonial discourse theory to examine the research question. The scholar and Palestine activist, Edward Said’s concept “orientalism”, that was developed in the book by the same name published in 1978, investigates how Western representations of the Orient construct the view and expectations we have about it. His ideas are particularly useful in finding evidence of colonial discourse in contemporary discourses about post-colonial societies (Said 1978; Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007; Parry 1987).

Robert Young’s warning against the assumption that *‘the reality of the historical conditions of colonialism can be safely discarded’* in favour of *‘the fantasmatics of colonial discourse’* has guarded my study (Young 1995: 160 in Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007). In my analysis, I have sought not to hierarchize the colonial discourse over the actual practices of the informants.

The Indian British scholar Homi Bhabha's is famed within post-colonial studies and colonial discourse theory because of the ways in which he sought to find how flaws in the colonial discourse allow room for the colonized to exercise agency. For Bhabha, people from former colonies, besides being subjects to neo-colonial domination by several powers, may exercise agency in different forms—assimilating the dominant discourse, or acting to subvert it, and in so doing, adapting it to fulfil their own needs (in Ashcroft 2001: 142; Bhabha 1985). What I seize from Bhabha's ideas are concepts that explain forms of agency, such as ambivalence, which will be discussed in the theoretical framework, Chapter 4 of this thesis.

Bhabha's views are set against those of Gayatri Spivak, Indian scholar and feminist critic, who alerts that one cannot take agency of the colonial subjects for granted. In her controversial article "*Can the Subaltern Speak?*" (1988), Spivak raises the questioning about the condition in which the colonized are able to exercise agency. Spivak provides a non-naïve view of agency useful for critical studies of colonial discourse theory.

2.3. Two important post-colonial issues: agency and space

"Spaces" can themselves be instrumental to oppression, but also open potential for transformation and agency. Before the 1970s, scholars predominantly saw "spaces" as given. The French philosopher Henri Lefebvre influenced a shift dealing with space not as neutral arena where culture takes place, but space as a product of culture too with the book '*The Production of Space*' (1974). The lack of scholar interest in problematizing spaces shifted in the 1980s, with what was called as "space turn", a tendency to deal with spaces by a Marxist approaches, that is spaces as an arena where power is exercised, is an expression of power relations. The Spanish sociologist Manuel Castells studying social movements in urban spaces goes further and sees society expressed in the construction of physical spaces. This spatial perspective is complicated by gender, so I have considered how the experiences of shared spaces can differ for men and women.

The incidence and character of agency on the part of my informants was a major consideration in this thesis and informed the choice to explore other theoretical approaches outside of post-colonial studies to unfold the distinct ways in which my informants exercise agency. The framework was adjusted following the ideas presented in '*Practices of Everyday life*' volumes 1 and 2 (1998a, 1998b), by the French scholar

Michel De Certeau, and his fellow collaborators Luce Giard and Pierre Mayol for the volume 2. They examine the tactics that people employ in their everyday lives to deal with, and ultimately take advantage of, the cultural products and spaces that are imposed to them. In other words, how subjects seek for loopholes in the dominant logic to find a platform where they can exercise agency. This perspective has been particularly valuable when looking at the everyday actions or tactics that may, sometimes, seem contradictory.

Bill Ashcroft's book '*Post-Colonial Transformation*' (2001) has informed my understanding of agency and creative ways in which post-colonial communities react and resist to colonial control, particularly providing insights about habitation as resistance. Within the theoretical framework I have employed, his perspectives guides the investigation into subject agency as a form of resistance to colonial domination. Ashcroft demonstrates how colonial oppression is linked to space domination and how colonized can creatively resist domination by the ways they transform spaces into places and inhabit lived spaces.

I consider the premise that spaces are not neutral (Gupta & Ferguson 1992; Massey 1994; Ashcroft 2001) and have found it relevant to include the perspective of the British feminist geographer Doreen Massey (1994) who problematizes the division of space and place. Massey sees spaces as universal and measurable, and, hence, conquerable. On the other hand, *place* is a flux in constant transformation, connected to belonging and identity – including gender identity and expression (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2003: 391).

2.4. A critical overview about NGOs working on “resettlement”

Instead of telling the story displacement itself, I choose to use the post-colonial view to talk about transformative agency and creative ways by which people can resist to oppressive forces operating in their daily lives and spaces. I am not analysing the process of displacement but the ideas that govern it. I adopt a critical approach and avoid the policy-making perspective to distance my work from NGO and United Nations' dimension. The use of the term “development-induced displacement” is linked to policy, and is problematic. The link to the word “development” masks the root causes of these kind of displacements that are, fundamentally, economic. This complicates the issue from the perspective of resettlement (Picciotto 2001; Cernea 1996/1997, 1999, 2000; Vanclay 2017). If organizations that work with displacement and resettlement do not question the

nature of displacement, and in seeing it as unavoidable simply seek ways to make resettlement more bearable, then they become blind to the oppressive colonial discourse that justifies the displacement in the first place and the logic that operates in these processes. This relates to similar instances where these organisations adopt a discourse that includes other common policy expressions, such as “induced eviction” to refer to involuntary displacement (Picciotto 2001).

Most research related to resettlement policy was done under the scope of large infrastructure projects focus on dams, and financed by multilateral bodies (for example, World Bank) in highly-populated developing economies (for instance, India, Brazil, China). The sociologist Cernea (1996/1997) financed by World Bank, carried out a study to make sense of the ongoing resettlement operations in 192 projects in 39 developing countries during 1986-1993. They represented 10% of the 1,800 projects financed by the World Bank in that period, involving the displacement of 2.5 million people. He states population displacement is predominantly caused by a small number of large projects. Such policy-oriented research studies may provide practical insights for NGOs dealing with displacements in the field. However, this type of studies also support an agenda, that is, the agenda that supports the economic interests that guides the population’s in the name of “development”. This agenda is fundamentally the same dominant discourse that I seek to unfold within this thesis; as such, I have distanced myself from policy-oriented research in my analysis.

3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides a brief overview of my methodological approach to answer the research question. It presents the epistemological considerations, an overview of the research design, a brief description of the informants, ethical considerations, and the research limitations of my thesis. The objective of this chapter is to explain the research process, and the path followed to answer the research question.

3.1. Epistemology

The theory of knowledge structuring this thesis is social constructivism. It is the most suitable approach for this enquiry because it classes with the objects of research as non-given objects, addressing the problematic subjectivity of the selected theme. That is, that the selected subjects and topics change over time, and their study is influenced by shifting

cultural and social aspects. Measuring this study through the lens of social constructivism address the conceptualization of space and of discourse as social constructs. Discourse is prone to change depending who holds power, and on which interests are in play in a specific moment in time or a specific location. The case selected for this research reveals a construction of a situation specifically to serve the research purpose. There are other several possibilities to understand and represent the same reality.

3.2. Research question and working questions

To approach the current situation of people from Sundry farm under the light of post-colonial studies and based on the data collected in the field, I developed the following research question:

How does the colonial discourse unfold and how is it subverted by people in Sundry community, Principe Island? To what extent can the displacement process of Sundry community be understood as a contemporary form of colonialism?

Aiming at answering the research question, I formulated three working questions to guide my analysis. They are as following:

- 1. How does the colonial discourse determine the construction and transformation of spaces in Sundry farm?*
- 2. How do the people in Sundry demonstrate agency? How they reproduce and subvert the colonial discourse in their daily practices, uses of space and speeches?*
- 3. To what extent does gender play a role in Sundry community and in the displacement process? How does gender interplays with the colonial discourse?*

3.3. Designing a qualitative enquiry

To examine the discourse about the displacement of a selected community together with the practices and uses of space, I decided to use the qualitative method for data collection and analysis. The qualitative approach is appropriate here because it is concerned with the context of particular realities and subjective views of people: it seeks to reply how and why a certain phenomenon occurs. The objective is to explain processes,

representations and meanings. It focuses on the lived experiences of individuals (Marshall and Rossman 1999) .

To address the research question, I carried on ethnographic fieldwork during 6 weeks in Principe Island in June and September 2017. I conducted short semi-structured interviews with approximately 40 community household and collected data through participant observation in several activities with the community – community meetings, community consultations, workshops, resettlement project meetings, informal social gatherings, etc.; and non-structured conversations with particular members of the community.

Ethnographic fieldwork

I choose ethnographic fieldwork for data collection to understand the cultural and social particularities about the Sundy community relations and displacement that would otherwise continue invisible. This specification also served the purpose of acquiring the perspective of the people who usually do not have their voices heard and counters dominant discourse, that is, facilitates the “acquisition of new perspectives on things we thought we already understood” (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997: 33). Gupta & Ferguson acknowledge the field is not a static entity in a physical place and time. They conceptualize the field as encompassing social, political, and cultural instances and interactions in an interconnected world where, people, objects and ideas are rapidly shifting.

I agree with the perspective of Gupta and Ferguson, who see fieldwork as the exploration of the remote, “the most other of others”. However, in this study I was able to and sought for similarities. My own Brazilian roots, another former Portuguese colony, connected me to the people I interviewed through our common language and some shared traditions. Although Brazil is very different from Sao Tome and Principe, contemporary culture in Sao Tome and Principe is deeply rooted in Brazilian culture—Brazilian soap operas, music, and evangelical churches (for example, *Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus*) are one of the most consumed cultural products in Sao Tome and Principe. The Brazilian Portuguese accent is highly appreciated by the people. All these shared cultural elements helped me to approach people easily, offering starting points for informal conversations.

Participant observation

I choose participant observation to collect perceptions about the field aiming at reducing interference and bias. This choice recognized the need to separate the data that informs this thesis from my post in the UN-Habitat resettlement project team. To reduce the problem of a conflict of interest I tried to inform my informants also about my aim as a master thesis student and I assured them that their opinions and speeches would be anonymous and used exclusively for my master thesis. I carried on participant observation in several occasions in community meetings, community consultations, workshops, resettlement project meetings, informal social gatherings, etc. In these settings, I was largely tasked by UN-Habitat with note-taking and recording meeting minutes. In the passive role, I was able to observe behaviours, relationships, kinship, and views on the displacement / resettlement processes without interfering too much in the proceedings.

To collect information about how my informants used of spaces considering the limitations that are imposed on them, I utilized the methodological approach to participant observation proposed by Giard by a “*a controlled and controllable distancing of our places and practices was constructed in order to enable us to marvel at them, interrogate them, and then give them back meaning and form in a sort of conceptual ‘re-creation’*” (in De Certeau, Mayol & Giard 1998b). Thus, I sought to look critically at my informants’ everyday habits and behaviours, questioning them about it, questioning myself as well and searching for supportive literature to looking back at my informants’ practices in order to find their hidden meanings.

Semi-structured interviews and selection of informants

I conducted 40 household interviews with people living in the slave quarters and former quarters dwellers currently living on the road by the entrance of the farm in three days during the first project household survey in June 2017 (more information is about the spatial distribution of the Sundry community is given in Chapter 5). These interviews constituted a basic community assessment according to the resettlement project’s agenda. Interviewees were first posed the following questions:

Who is the house bread winner and what is his/her job?

How many people live in this house? What are their names, ages and family relation to the house bread winner?

Do you know how to read?

What are the most used means of communication used by the household members?

How many rooms do you have in your house today?

After this first line of questions, I informed the interviewees that I was conducting an independent study for a master's thesis and wanted to ask them some questions about their impressions and views of Sundry and the displacement process. I also informed them, that should they consent to answering the additional questions, the interviews would be completely anonymous, and their replies would not be used for the resettlement project purposes. All informants agreed to answer more questions.

I formulated the second line of questions as openly as possible so as not to direct my subjects to a positive or negative view of their lives before the resettlement project, current situation or the future. Every time they replied with a short answer I sought to complement that with questions, such as “why do you think this” or “what this mean to you”. Participants who agreed to a longer interview were asked the following questions:

- *Regarding life in general and their memories of Sundry:*

What do you think of living in Sundry?

What are your memories from life in Sundry before the company bought the farm (before the talking about resettlement started)?

What do you think of your neighbours?

With these questions, I aimed to assess their views about the space where they currently. The objective was to collect the views about Sundry community, the quarters, and other community members.

- *Uses of space:*

Can you tell me how is your daily routine? (Places you go, things you do)

Where do you cook, how do you get your food?

What kind of changes and/or improvements did you make in your house?

Why?

Is there anything that you would change about your currently living situation?

I was able to collect insights about the power hierarchy embedded in the physical construction and use of spaces, about the meanings people attribute to these spaces, and about their view on private and public spaces by considering the answers to the questions I posed about the uses of spaces alongside participant observation. Questions about the changes and improvements allowed me to perceive how people strategically subvert a dominant physical order to take some kind of advantage.

- Hopes and expectations:

What do you think of the displacement and resettlement processes?

How do you feel about leaving Sundry to the new settlement?

What do you expect from this resettlement?

How do you see your life in the new settlement?

How do you imagine your house and the composition of the new settlement?

How do you see the actors involved in this displacement/resettlement project (government, HBD, UN-Habitat)?

These questions focused measuring feelings for hope, opportunity or limitation in relation to the displacement process. I tried not to direct my informants towards any of those feelings, thus, I kept the questions open and did not use words related to hope, opportunity or limitation. I also aimed at collecting the community perceptions about the displacing agents (government, HBD, and UN-Habitat) to understand the nature of the relationships between these stakeholders and the extent to which these agents are seen as representatives of dominant powers. Again, I tried to ask the questions in an open manner as neutral as possible.

For the people living on the road out of the slave quarters, I added the question:

Would you like to move from your house? Why?

As the majority of this group replied they would rather stay where they are, I added the following question to help me understand how they see themselves as a community:

If everybody from the quarters move, what would you like to do?

To this question, all the people who previously said they did not wanted to move, replied they would move to the new settlement if everyone left together. This answer will be further examined in the analysis at Chapter 6.

All interviews took place near informants' houses as I knocked on their doors to request to speak with them. The interviews were carried out inside the houses when people invited me in or at their front door outside the houses. All the people I asked agreed to participate in the extended interview for the Master's research project. Being aware of my position of power when requesting them to participate, I stressed that these questions had nothing to do with the resettlement project; they were not going to have any positive or negative impact in the project and were only going to be used for academic research purposes – and all informants quotes selected to the research are appearing anonymously. The interviews for this thesis took to informality, following the “friendly conversation” style (Spradley 1979).

Informal conversations

Besides the semi-structured interviews, I also conducted non-structured informal conversations with several members from Sundry community in my daily activities during the six weeks living in Principe. As these conversations were not initially carried on with the purpose of this thesis research, I choose to use the information I collected sparingly, and anonymously, only when what was said is of extreme importance to the research question and objectives guiding this study. Where I have quoted informal conversations it is because valuable information was imparted because the interaction lay outside of the constringent interview structure. I realized that people were more willing to speak with when they did not feel I was formally working. I was able to collect more genuine insights by expressing interest in the everyday lives of individuals in Sundry and about their expectations about the new settlement (Spradley 1979: 63).

These field impressions were documented retrospectively, from memory, after every full day of work much so most extracts quoted here do not appear in quotation marks. They are presented as a description of what I remember from these informal conversations.

Who are the informants and why they are anonymous

For the semi-structured interviews and the informal conversations, my fare all members of Sundry community living either in the quarters or by the road in the entrance of the farm. They are men and women aged between 16-60 years. Most are unemployed, or are

not formally employed, farmers, or survive by gathering products from the bush. The minority who have formal jobs are mostly working for HBD company or the government.

I was aware that this might complicate the interview process, where they may have felt that criticizing the resettlement process put them in a challenging position and was careful to offer assurance of their anonymity in this thesis. The approach described here allowed me to gain the community's trust. Most people felt comfortable in talking to me *off the record*. In some situations, they asked to talk to me in private to share criticisms about the project's implementation that they did not want to express in front of others at community consultations or other open discursive spaces. I limited my references to these informal conversations, using only essential quotes or descriptive summaries that directly support my argument, to reduce the chances of identifying members of the Sundry community via their comments.

3.4. Researcher's role

My research is complicated by my position as a UN-Habitat consultant: this role placed me in a higher hierarchical position in relation to the informants, and my association with the resettlement project that may have made people less willing to criticize the displacing agents and the resettlement process itself. To minimize the impact of this association, I assured my informants that my questions were formulated for a separate academic study and that their answers would be used anonymously.

My position as a researcher created situations where the power balance was shifted. Since I needed to make myself open and available for frank conversations with them, it created opportunities for the informants to ask me questions about the resettlement project's progress. For instance, they wanted to know about the housing construction materials, how many people would be resettled, how much would each house cost, etc. To address this issue, I was honest insofar as I was able to do so without infringing upon ethical considerations, clarifying my role as consultant and researcher.

Working for an international development organization while conducting a Master's thesis research was a complex task that certainly had an impact on how I see and approach this thesis subject. Seeking to address this issue, I needed to distance myself from the field and the work to be able critically analyse it. I revisited my field notes several times

to be able to find ways to approach the displacement of people in Sundy critically and with minimal bias.

My position as a white Brazilian woman is an additional consideration. The interest of community members in my Brazilian accent and culture, for instance, worked as an icebreaker to start conversations and often made them more open to talk in informal situations.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The aim of this chapter is to introduce the post-colonial theory as the backbone of my thesis. I also present the theoretical concepts that constitute the theoretical framework to approach the themes of my thesis.: colonial discourse theory, binarism, “civilizing mission”, obfuscatory justification, neo-colonialism, agency, decolonization, appropriation, ambivalence, space, place, displacement and gender.

Firstly, I provide an overview of the post-colonial theory that is the analytical tool to sustain my analysis. To obtain insights about how the colonial influence is unfold on contemporary former colonies I conceptualize neo-colonialism. To guide my analysis, I discuss the colonial discourse theory, which is useful to understand how people, particularly the “colonized”, reproduce it and act according to it. However, I believe, the colonized also have the capacity to resist and make movements of subversion of the dominant colonial discourse. Hence, I discuss forms of agency for colonial transformation of discourses and spaces. To complement the theoretical framework for my analysis, I utilize a spatial perspective to approach concept of place within the post-colonial studies. This has facilitated an enquiry into the ways in which colonial discourse acts on the physical constitution and transformation of spaces as well as how agency is manifested in the transformation of spaces into places. During the fieldwork, I verified significant differences in the modes of agency of men and women, hence, I provide insights on the construction of gendered spaces and how it impacts and reflects the construction of gender itself.

4.1. Towards a post-colonial approach

I utilize the post-colonial studies as the backbone of my research in an attempt to describe and discuss how and to what extent the informants from Sundy community have been simultaneously assimilating and resisting domination from colonial discourse. My fundamental assumption is that cultures, identities and places are in a constant process of transformation and cannot be interpreted as static or unchanging (Ashcroft 2001: 3; Hall 1994).

Post-colonialism and its derivatives can have a myriad of meanings and represent a wide range of positions (Slemon 1994). For the purposes of my research, I consider “post-colonialism” as the study of former European colonies, focusing on colonial legacies, institutions and discursive operations, and paying particular attention to the response and resistance of former colonized people, communities and nations (Ashcroft 2001; Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007). Additionally, I consider the chronological facet of post-colonialism as the period that followed the so-called decolonization of European territories overseas.

Edward Said marks colonialism as the practical outcome of imperialist ideology – the “*implanting of settlements on distant territory*” (Said 1993 in Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007). I focus on the “*transhistoricality and lack of specificity*” of colonialism in order to understand and unfold different kinds of oppressive operations and discursive controls within colonialism and neo-colonialism (Slemon 1994, 1990) and to analyse the specific material conditions in which colonialism and neo-colonialism is acting in the Sundy community. According to Gilroy (1993) the important objective associated to post-colonial studies is “*to show how the ongoing effects of that exchange [colonial] remain the constituting factor in a discursive economy that continues to dominate the social and political practices of the modern world in societies*”(in Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007).

As a global phenomenon, colonialism had different expressions and left different marks over colonized societies. To materialize the discussion and contribute to the debate about forms of oppression and resistance of post-colonial societies, I have evaluated my case at a local level. As defended by Slemon (1994) “*post-colonialism must address the material exigencies of colonialism and neo-colonialism*”. Hence, I am concerned with the specific scope and nature of assimilation and resistance of my informants because “[t]he

materiality and locality of various kinds of post-colonial experience are precisely what provide the richest potential for post-colonial studies, and they enable the specific analysis of the various effects of colonial discourse” (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007: 171).

The concept of binarism as a colonial discourse feature has helped to classify the contradictions in a cultural sphere and has facilitating this study because opposing two ideas and concepts, we attribute them meaning as well as a relation of dominance, imposing a violent hierarchy that is used to construct useful meanings to reinforce and justify the dominant ideology. Colonialism creates important binary opposite categories—colonizer and colonized, civilized and salvage, metropolis and colony, black and white, amongst others. Binarism eliminates ambivalences and contradictions by hiding and/or homogenizing everything that does not fit in the two essentialist categories. Post-colonial theory exposes and examines these binary constructed categories and other categories that escape the binary logic, disturbing the colonial discourse (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007). For instance, colonial conquerors portrayed the native Africans and Americans as salvage others in opposition to them (the civilized) by hiding all cultural developments from these civilizations, and justified such things as slavery (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007; 2003) from this base. Bringing to the forefront of this discussion the interspaces between the colonial binary oppositions (i.e. categories that escape the binary logic), exposes the power relations that act to render them invisible. I investigate how colonial forces juxtapose the lived reality of Sundry community. Thus colonial discourse is my analytical tool to clarify the exercise of colonial domination, because it sheds a light on a variety of forms of expressions and resistances that escape of the colonial binary and homogenizing assumptions.

A further violent process occurs, for instance, when colonizers justified the *civilizing mission* by the idea that Africa was the “empty space” there to be conquered and illuminated by the Europeans. In the book ‘*Colonial Transformation*’ (2001), Ashcroft argues the colonial territories were seen as blank spaces; they did not even fit at the binary opposition as “the other” in this case; it is more an absence than an antagonist. The disassociation of Africa from ideas of development, civilization, philosophy, for instance, was so blinding that “*one cannot even say that Africa was inscribed within Western metaphysics as its opposite. Africa was regarded as non-assimilable*” (Bernasconi 1997:

185 in Ashcroft 2001: 131). Physical and cultural occupations were justified through the idea that Africa was “empty”. Neo-colonialism discourse today brings certain ideas of development to Africa with the same justification. For instance, there are parallels between the colonial civilizing mission and the current work of NGOs and international development organizations that often find justification to their missions in the idea of bringing ‘first world’s’ development to Africa, as I relate to UN-Habitat’s role in relation to the displacement process of Sundry community in Chapter 6 of my analysis.

A second concept relevant for my analysis of NGOs’ role is “*obfuscatory justification*”, meaning “*violent and essentially unjust processes [that become] increasingly difficult to perceive behind a liberal smoke-screen of civilizing [concepts like] ‘task’, paternalistic ‘development’ and ‘aid’*”. Colonial discourse hides its own existence by reinforcing itself as the only truth possible (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007: 41, 37). After decolonization, the “colonizer role” is no longer carried out by a distinct country although the colonialist power relations remain present. Neo-colonialist discourse simultaneously assimilates and modifies the colonial discourse. Neo-colonialism domination is harder to resist because it obscures the operational mechanisms and actors of its oppressive discourse in its contemporaneity, as I discuss in the following sections 4.2 and 4.3 (Fanon 1986, Said in Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007).

4.2. What changes with neo-colonialism

The term neo-colonialism is mainly used by scholars who defend an emancipatory agenda in post-colonial societies. The Ghanaian socialist leader Kwame Nkrumah (1965) first use of the term implied that this form of domination is harder to reveal because its “colonizers” are not directly occupying the territories and legislating over the former colonies’ economies, and thus it is also harder to oppose. What marks neo-colonialism in a historical timeline is the decolonization process (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007; 146). Decolonization itself is more than a temporal mark; “*it invokes an ongoing dialectic between hegemonic centrist systems and peripheral subversion of them*” (Tiffin, 1987; 95). However, independency is a temporal mark that occurs simultaneously and may hide the new agents and powers relations operating within this process, likening the loss of oppression to the end of official colonial domination. Independency gives the idea that the former colonial powers simply have left the colonial territories, allowing them to return to a pre-colonial estate, which nationalists as Fanon (1967, 1986) and Cabral 1973

(in Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007) oppose and aim to disclose that colonizer domain is replaced by new forms of domination exercised by local elites and other foreign imperial powers. One view of decolonization holds the assumption that pre-colonial societies were homogeneous before and are able to return to that previous estate after independence. This view denies “culture” as a live process and fails to acknowledge the capacity of colonized societies of absorbing and producing new forms of culture over time by mixing, merging and resisting to colonial culture (Hall 1994). Hence, neo-colonialism is marked by the official independence of colonies and emergence of new instruments of control in post-colonial societies in nations guided by capitalism and imperialist ideologies (Fanon 1986; Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007: 146).

The binary opposition of “colonization and decolonization” denies a wide variety of components that may accompany these processes. These include the struggle of the colonial people in the fights for independence, the agency of local elites who in surviving the process then exercise power by appropriating and adapting the colonial discourse, the capacity of local societies to transform and adapt, etc (Hall 1994; Ashcroft 2001). Thus, decolonization is rather a complex and continuous process that continues in post-colonial societies and nations. Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin affirm that:

“The borders and images of the post-colonial nation may be fictions that allow free passage to the continuing control of the neo-colonialism of multinational companies and global monetary institutions” (2007: 59).

The new and more subtle colonizers are formed by a wide range of actors that operate within the capitalist ideology. These actors are imperialist world nations; transnational companies operating in the former colonial territories to obtain the maximum in terms of resources; and international monetary organizations working in the name of development (for example: the World Bank, International Finance Cooperation, International Monetary Fund and so on). They can also be local elites who collaborated with colonizers for independence; and local elites who fought for independence and later conferred power onto a small group after independence, etc.

In *Black skin, white masks*, Frantz Fanon examines the “comprador class” that emerged in post-colonial societies replacing the colonizers after independence. By means of

collaboration with the colonizers and/or forging ideas of nationalism, most independent countries in Africa are now under a dominant discourse taken over and adapted by local elites, who did not do much to change societal organization and the exploitation of people in the decolonization process, which helps to understand how parcels of post-colonial society predominantly reproduces the colonial discourse without apparent attempts of resistance, while others are more engaged in disrupting the dominant colonial discourse, even though it can refer to an unconscious movement (Fanon 1986; Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007; Ashcroft 2001; De Certeau 1998a; De Certeau, Mayol & Giard 1998b).

For Nkrumah, neo-colonialism “*was more insidious and more difficult to detect and resist than the direct control exercised by classic colonialism*” (in Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007: 146). This approach is relevant for my analysis because by understanding that decolonization is not the end of colonization in Sao Tome and Principe, but is instead an ongoing process that starts with the formal independence, I can examine how neo-colonialism adopts the colonial discourse to maintain the domination in Sao Tome and Principe post-colonial society.

4.3. The discursive construction of post-colonial societies

To analyse the influence of colonialism and neo-colonialism in Sundry community and in my informants’ view about the displacement I choose as analytical tool the colonial discourse theory. I aim to demonstrate how my informants reproduce and transform the colonial discourse in their daily uses of spaces and in their speeches.

Colonial discourse was first conceptualized as “orientalism” by Edward Said in his book *Orientalism* (1978), in which he studied the orientalist discourse as an useful framework for analysis of colonial influence. As Said conceptualizes:

Orientalism can be discussed and analysed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating restructuring, and having authority over the Orient (1978: 11).

Said sees that the portrayal and understanding of the Orient – which understand as the former colonies – serves the final purpose of establishing and maintaining domination over it. However, the “colonialist discourse theory” came into being as a field of study in the 1980s by the theorists Gayatri Spivak (1988) and Homi Bhabha (1985). Said reveals

the mechanisms of colonial discourse as an component of colonial domination. According to Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007, colonial discourse is one of the ways which the dominant groups in a society enforce their set of values to the dominated group.

As a social formation it works to constitute reality not only for the objects it appears to represent but also for the subjects who form the community on which it depends. Consequently, colonial discourse is the complex of signs and practices that organize social existence and social reproduction within colonial relationships. (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007: 37).

Said's approach allows the conceptualization of the colonial discourse as the system of statements, knowledges, representations, construction of subjectivity, signs and practices that organizes the colonial and post-colonial social existence. Post-colonial thinking tends to look to the subjugated societies (Said 1978; Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007). Overall, dominant discourses entails assumptions, perceptions and prejudices well located in place and time. By looking at colonialism from the discursive perspective I gain relevant guiding questions to my analysis, such as what are the spoken and unspoken rules that organize the Sundry community? What rules govern classifications and statements about Sundry community? Who are the authors and who are the consumers of these statements? Can the consumers of the discourse also produce the discourse?

The task of identifying dominating actors and rules is an exercise of examination. It must first consider the language used to construct the discourses. In former colonies, the language of the colonizer often ends up being the main language of the colonized, hence, the language of domination is the same as the language of resistance. As contended by Robert Young (1958: 163), the identification of the unspoken rules of domination a critical objective of the colonial discourse theory is complicated by the fact that:

“all perspectives on colonialism share, and have to deal with a common discursive medium which was also that of colonialism itself: the language used to enact, enforce, describe or analyse colonialism is not transparent, innocent, ahistorical or simply instrumental” (in Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007: 172).

Colonial discourse follows some fundamental principles. Firstly, it construes the cultural superiority of Europe, and from a neo-colonial perspective, also implies the superiority of other imperial nations. Secondly, a substantial part stipulates that the colonized people need to be “raised up” through development, thus justifying several kinds of intervention from Western nations and institutions. Thirdly, colonial discourse tends to hide the exploitation of people and resources and tends to conceal the dominant agents, particularly in the period that directly follows the era of colonization and the beginning of the decolonization process. It also tends to marginalize alternative and/or emancipatory discourses (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007).

The use of Said’s perspective about Orientalism in my analysis aids the identification of primary colonial discursive practices in Sundry community . However, Said ignores the agency and transformation power of the colonized by assuming that the world we scrutinize is the same one where colonization/neo-colonization, and that it is ruled only by the system of statements that was produced by the colonizers and consumed by the colonized in one unique flow of power (Said 1978; Parry 1987). This interpretation begs the questions about the extent to which subjects are able and willing to act, and has prompted the concern of several scholars in this degree of action and its particular enactments (Ashcroft 2001; De Certeau, Mayol & Giard 1998b; Slemon 1994; Spivak 1988)

4.4. “We must not take people for fools” – Michel De Certeau

In this section I aim to discuss how agency of the colonized is seen by different scholars in order to examine my informants’ capacity of agency in the analysis.

During fieldwork, I observed different levels of agency of my informants , thus, I avoid the naïve colonial discourse binary oppositions: aggressive/aggressor and passive/victim when discussing their agency. That is why I seek to look for the agency in the various aspects of my informants’ everyday lives. The wide range of colonial experiences worldwide shows a diverse capacity of change, adaptation and transformations by the colonial subjects. The resistance to colonial discourse impositions may appear in appropriations of the colonial discourse, in anticolonial discourse, and is recognized in the ways in which people creatively transform spaces (Ashcroft 2001; De Certeau 1998a; De Certeau, Mayol & Giard 1998b). As stated by Ashcroft:

“A common view of colonization, which represents it as an unmitigated cultural disaster, disregards the often quite extraordinary ways in which colonized societies engaged and utilized imperial culture for their own purposes” (Ashcroft 2001: 2).

Slemon’s approach to colonial discourse theory is relevant for its two main considerations: the question of historical specificity, as previously pointed in this theoretical framework, and the issue of agency. Slemon expands on the debate over agency arguing that the agency issue is a question of *“who acts oppositionally, when ideology or discourse or psychic processes of some kind construct human subjects”* (1994; 50). Slemon rightly views the issue of specifying agency as an extreme complex one. However, it is one that colonial studies cannot ignore because it *“refers to the ability of post-colonial subjects to initiate action in engaging or resisting imperial power”* (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007: 6).

I distance my study from common early Pan-Africanist assumptions that colonizers completely destroyed local cultures in occupied territories, which must then be recovered to its previous stage (Fanon 1967; Nkrumah 1965; Cabral in Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007) and that subjects are always passive (Said 1978a, 1978b). The aim to recover an idealized pre-colonial culture from the past may validate politicised objectives of nationalist movements in former colonies or black movements worldwide, for example (Ashcroft 2001). However, these notions assume that cultural identities are fixed in place and time, and that indigenous communities and other colonized peoples had no agency to resist, respond and adapt to colonial domination (Ashcroft 2001; Hall 1994).

To demonstrate that cultural identity is not static, i.e. that there are various possible cultural responses to colonial discourse, I base my arguments in the ideas developed by the Jamaican cultural theorist and political activist Stuart Hall. Hall argues that cultural identity is ‘being’ and ‘becoming’ simultaneously. It dialogues with the past and the future, has an origin and receives influences, and undergoes constant transformations. Hall’s view is particularly useful in understanding the diasporic origin of the community living in Sundry where the movements of the community’s and the inhabitant’s cultural identities relate to their differing responses to the colonial discourse. Cultural identities

have an historical past but also are continuously “*constructed through memory, fantasy, narrative and myth*” (1994: 226).

Ashcroft makes the more radical argument that the culture produced by the colonized in response to colonial discourses also impacts the dominant cultures. Thus, culture as well as discourses act bi-laterally:

On the contrary, colonized cultures have often been so resilient and transformative that they have changed the character of imperial culture itself. This ‘transcultural’ effect has not been seamless or unvaried, but it forces us to reassess the stereotyped view of colonized peoples’ victimage and lack of agency (2001: 2).

Following this view, my analysis of the Sundry community investigates how informants are consciously and unconsciously occupying the spaces imposed on them and responding to the displacement process. I also examine how the Sundry community’s displacement imposes over them a discourse that has its roots on the neo-colonialism and the colonial missionary ideology (in Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007).

A complex question that relates to agency in post-colonial studies enquires after the extent to which colonial subjects exercise their agency (Spivak 1988; Ashcroft 2001; Said 1978a). That is, “*whether individuals can freely and autonomously initiate action, or whether the things they do are in some sense determined by the ways in which their identity has been constructed*” (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007). In other words, can agency be taken for granted or the extent to which it occurs depends on the forms of domination to which they oppose?

Said and Spivak’s pessimist perspectives about agency serve to counter-balance my own analysis. Said’s understands the colonized as passive subjects who are fixed in their domination under the oppressive forces of colonial power. For Said, the power over discourse is under the colonizer’s domain (Said 1978a, 1978b; Parry 1987). Secondly, in the article ‘*Can the subaltern speak?*’ (1988), the Indian scholar Gayatri Spivak warns that agency of the colonized is not a given. In her view, at the least, an analysis of agency must consider that any response from the colonized was constructed within the oppressive

discourse, as in the case where the language used for resistance by intellectuals from the colony is the colonizer's language as well. I use Spivak's perspective to acknowledge that the subjectivity of the dominated in relation to dominant discourse that shaped, assigning a central importance to the guiding question of her article:

On the other side of the international division of labour from socialized capital, inside and outside the circuit of the epistemic violence of imperialist law and education supplementing an earlier economic text, can the subaltern speak?(1988: 25)

For Spivak, the subaltern cannot be “*isolated in some absolute, essentialist way from the play of discourses and institutional practices that give it its voice.*” (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007: 74). Additionally, Spivak warns against the risks of assuming the colonized is a homogeneous category of people. I avoid this assumption in my analysis by describing different modes of action of my informants (Spivak 1988; De Certeau 1998a; De Certeau, Mayol, & Giard 1998b) as well as acknowledging that people may respond to colonial discourse in ambiguous and contradictory ways, considering that “*human beings cope with the demands of everyday life through their interpretative and innovative skill*” (Mintz in Ashcroft 2001: 2). Hence, I am cautious with ideas regarding providing room for the oppressed to speak without considering the restrictions and invisible rules imposed by the dominant language, discourses and an oppressive environment.

The Indian English scholar Homi Bhabha (1985; Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007) problematizes the question of agency in considering it as a difficult, but not impossible, reaction against dominant forces. I agree with this interpretation of Bhabha that sees resistance to colonial and neo-colonial domination possible and it occurs in complex ways. Moreover, in most cases, agency is hidden under the subjects' ambiguous responses to dominant forces. Therefore, I believe agency varies in extent and intensity, in relation to the context in which it is studied, and I use this understand about agency to look at the distinct ways my informants in Sundry are able to demonstrate their capacity of agency. That is why I have conceptualized a variety of relevant ways in which a response to colonial discourse is formulated for my analysis, discussed below.

Appropriation is one of the ways in which subjects are able to respond to colonial discourse. It happens when the dominated culture employs the same tools as the dominant culture, consciously or unconsciously, and in so doing opposes the dominant (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007). The processes of naming places during colonization was one tool used by the colonizers to appropriate a conquered place as their own; after decolonization, several former colonies renamed places using local languages to regain the power over it (Ashcroft 2001; Carter 1987b). Spivak describes “*catachresis*” as something similar to appropriation, which occurs when the “colonized take and re-inscribe something that exists traditionally as a feature of imperial culture, such as parliamentary democracy” (in Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007: 30). This appropriation was evident in the case of the Sundry community, who named the resettlement site as they wanted to – I will analyse this more extensively in Chapter 6.

The conceptualization of “ambivalence” helps to clarify cases of disturbance in colonial discourse (Sharpe 1989; Bhabha 1985; Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007).

“The movement between a fixity of signification and its division, what he [Bhabha] calls the ‘ambivalence’ of colonial discourse, demonstrates that colonial authority is never total or complete. And it is this absence of a closure that allows for native intervention” (Sharpe 1989: 101).

Ambivalence contributes to the examination of the relationship of colonized and the colonial discourse, “*for it may be both exploitative and nurturing, or represent itself as nurturing, at the same time*” (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007: 10). For instance, ambivalence is useful to reveal how several development finance institutions, aid agencies, and some private institutions adapt colonial discourse to deal with former colonies today. Development finance institutions frequently employ and impose paternalistic approach to justify potentially intrusive enterprises in developing countries, while imposing economic guidelines for governments to follow, which can create ambiguous reactions in former colony societies of acceptance and repudiation.

What I gain from looking into my data considering aspects of appropriation and ambivalence, as it relates to agency, is the disruption of the colonial authority that occurs when the colonized question the idea of fixed meanings established by the colonial

discourse. By doing so, the colonized highlights the imperfections of the colonial discourse and demonstrate agency.

4.4.1. A tale of common people

The approach developed by the French historian Michel De Certeau and his collaborators Pierre Mayol and Luce Girard in the two volumes of the book ‘*Practices of Everyday Life*’ (1998a; 1998b) complements my analysis of agency. For him, “*everyday life is what we are given every day (or what is wiled to us), what presses us, even oppresses us, because there does exist an oppression of the present*” (1998b: 3). I interpret De Certeau’s conceptualization of everyday life oppressions in the context of Sundry community, as the oppression caused by the colonial discourse. Furthermore, De Certeau proposes a “theory of everyday practices”:

in order to bring out of their murmuring the 'ways of operating' that, as a majority in social life, often only figure as 'resistances' or as apathies in relation to the development of sociocultural production (Giard in De Certeau, Mayol, & Giard 1998b: xx)

In other words, De Certeau offers alternative ways of thinking about the agency of the common people looking for the individuality that composes ways of acting that are plural and may seem incoherent and contradictory. His starting point is that these everyday practices of consumers – who I interpret as colonized – are of the tactical kind showing concern for the ways in which common people act on the products imposed by a dominant economic order on their everyday lives – i.e. how people act in order to take advantage of forces that are alien to them (Giard in De Certeau, Mayol, & Giard 1998b; xxiii). For him, common people are the consumers, the dominated, but are never passive. I am extending his understanding of “dominant economic order” to the reality imposed by colonialism and neo-colonialism to look at my informants in the Sundry community. This approach is particularly convenient to uncover what De Certeau calls the “ways of operating” that are camouflaged by the dominant rationality, and to decode contradictory practices of the colonized group. Within his conceptualization of agency, spaces are given a special significance. Actions of the colonized are relative to a present moment that is tied to the conditions imposed by a physical space (as I discuss in next section).

Following the perspective provided by De Certeau, Mayol & Girard (1998b), I have looked into how people in Sundry have used space, operations, ways of doing, and

repetitive behaviours in their everyday lives to face a system from which they cannot entirely escape, but they can act against in subversive ways. I also search for evidence of resistance and “*for the form of mobility that this resistance opens up*” (Giard in De Certeau, Mayol, & Giard 1998b; xxii). Although resistance may seem impossible in some oppressive contexts (Spivak 1988) and may not be expressed verbally, subtle resistance can be observed in creative uses and appropriation of spaces in common quotidian practices, such as cooking, social gatherings and other modes of inhabiting a place (De Certeau, Mayol, & Giard 1998b; Ashcroft 2001).

It is also appropriate to look at the organization of everyday life within the neighbourhood, conceptualized by Pierre Mayol as: (i) visible behaviours and (ii) “*expected symbolic benefits*”. The notion of “*expected symbolic benefits*” is more complex and requires an interpretation of the cultural traditions of the group in question (Mayol in De Certeau, Mayol, & Giard, 1998b: 8). It relates to the relationships between dwellers and requires a public space that is governed by a set of given (but often unspoken) rules and behaviours. These rules and behaviours are relative to a specific time place and group, and are either expected or condemned by the group as a whole. The group may not always be conscious of their actions or their guiding ethos, but an understanding of it helps to make sense of apparently disconnected actions.

4.5. Space, place, displacement and gender

In this section I will conceptualize space, place and displacement in order to use it as analytical tool to demonstrate how the space of Sundry was constructed by influence of colonial practices, how this space is transformed into a place by the agency of my informants and how Sundry community history is permeated by the idea of displacement. I add the gender perspective because I observed during fieldwork that men and women experienced and occupied the spaces in different ways.

I consider the anthropologists Gupta and Fergusson’s view that call attention to the risks of assuming “*space*” as a neutral grid where social relations and events are inserted, because whilst “*space functions as a central organizing principle in the social sciences at the same time that it disappears from analytical purview*” (1992: 7). That is, by disconnecting space from the mechanisms that turn it into places we render the relations of power operating in it invisible. Hence, “*by always foregrounding the spatial*

distribution of hierarchical power relations, we can better understand the process whereby a space achieves a distinctive identity as a place” (1992: 8).

I also consider the spatial perspective of the Australian scholar Paul Carter, who highlights the dangers of reducing space to a mere stage where history happens, that is, telling an imperial history in such a way that events are disconnected from spaces. In “*The Road to Botany Bay*”, Carter avoids a simple historical narrative of events and heroes, proposing a “spatial history” instead that promotes the view that the world is formed by active spatial choices that shape and transform spaces (Carter 1987; Ashcroft 2001). I employ Carter’s perspective of spatial history when examining the formation of Sao Tome and Principe as a country which is socially and spatially impacted by colonization.

Simplistically, colonization can be understood as the attempt to assert physical control over territories or spaces and colonial discourse is that which is used to justify it (Said 1978). That is why the issues of space and displacement, and the distinction between space and place, are central to the post-colonial discussion (Ashcroft 2001).

Such intervention [colonialism] may disrupt a sense of place in several ways: by imposing a feeling of displacement in those who have moved to the colonies; by physically alienating large populations of colonized peoples through forced migration, slavery or indenture; by disturbing the representation of place in the colony by imposing the colonial language. (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007: 161)

The problem of space is central to many post-colonial scholars, who argue that the colonial experience, including the colonial discourse, enforced a separation of the ideas of space and place, being “space” the physical aspect and “place” the aspect connected to identity and belonging (Ashcroft 2001; Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007; Massey 1994).

The colonial view of space allows us to see it connected to the material world – space is universal and measurable, and is valued as a commodity. In this context, the colonizers take ownership of the land as property. Measurable land, as a physical space, has value when it is transformed into goods. “[T]he effect of this is to invalidate the claims over land of any people whose relationship with it does not involve agricultural ‘improvement’” (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007: 161: 162). The separation of the physical space from

the aspects that give it character, including culture and existing population, is aligned to the view that colonies were empty spaces for imperial forces to explore and civilize – this pragmatism supported the separation of space and place and justified the colonization process (Bernasconi 1997: 185 in Ashcroft 2001: 131). Ultimately, the notion of protecting colonized land could not be raised if colonies were not viewed as places. Equally the exploitation of land and displacement of people could only be recognised in relation to a previous acknowledgement of another's possession or "belonging".

Anthony Giddens observes the results of separating space and place, by further specifying place with the term locale. "*In conditions of modernity... locales are thoroughly penetrated by and shaped in terms of social influences quite distant from them*" (in Massey 1994: 6). Following these approaches, the colonial enterprise of leaving one's place of origin to occupy distant territories (i.e. spaces) leads to an internal disruption for the colonizer and colonized of their own sense of belonging to a place. This is set against the disruption of the specificity of the occupied spaces and the colonized people's conception of place – the imposition of an alien language, culture and the physical domination (slavery or indenture work) to colonized people also disturbed their sense of place, and created, in some cases, a sense of displacement in relation to their own land. Doreen Massey proposes the view of space as dynamic and constructed out of simultaneous and cross cutting events and discourses.

"[Space] not as some absolute independent dimension, but as constructed out of social relations: that what is at issue is not social phenomena in space but both social phenomena and space as constituted out of social relations, that the spatial is social relations 'stretched out'" (1994: 3)

Her view defines the examination of the spatial organization of the society as necessary to understand the production of the social relations and power relations operating in it. For Massey, place is neither permanent nor static. Place is uniquely constituted by specificities of space and time, that is, by how people and social relations are organized in that specific time of history. I interpret Massey's complex view of place as one "scene" in the sequence of an entire movie. For her, a place is marked by a specific time and specific interaction between social actors that makes it unique and not replicable. To understand its complexity, the scene (place) cannot be isolated from the movie as a whole

(space), because the moment (time) that the setting or the interaction between the actors changes, you have a different scene from the previous one. Still, the scene is significant in and of itself. *“The spatial is both open to, and a necessary element in, politics in the broadest sense of the word”* (Massey 1994: 3). For instance, in my analysis I consider the specificities of the place formation in Sundy farm constituting an unique environment in a specific time (a “scene”) but I look at this particular place in relation to a broader context, that is, the Portuguese colonization of Sao Tome and Principe and the neo-colonial influences of today (i.e. “the movie as whole”).

To approach gender uses of space and gender construction in Sundy community I also look at Massey’s spatial perspective. For her a place is as an articulation of specific social relations and networks in a particular moment. Her view questions the claims that place or belonging may be static or connected to static entities. She argues, *“geography matters to gender”* (1994: 177), hence, the view of a place in flux helps us to understand that gender relations vary over space and time as well (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2003; 391). In other words, gender construction and relations are specific to places. Massey’s observations regarding feminine and masculine relations, roles and occupations of space in the colony and in the metropolis as different experiences is relevant to this study. Within this approach, to be a woman in different colonial societies affects her experience of space, and interactions within this place (“scene”). Furthermore,

From the symbolic meaning of spaces/places and the clearly gendered messages which they transmit, to straightforward exclusion by violence, spaces and places are not only themselves gendered but, in their being so, they both reflect and affect the ways in which gender is constructed and understood. (Massey 1994: 179)

Consequently, this gendered perspective improves my analysis in the understanding of the extent to which place and displacement are experienced in different ways, by men and women living in the same physical spaces (Massey 1994: 3).

Regarding ways of inhabiting places as tactics of resistance, Ashcroft (2001), De Certeau, Giard, and Mayol (1988b) argue that societal behaviours in public and private spaces comprise tactics of resistance at different levels. De Certeau and Giard, without mentioning colonialism or neo-colonialism as oppressing forces, see the everyday

practices and habits of “consumers” of cultural products (colonized) as ways of providing new meanings as unconscious manners to resist oppressive forces with the aim to gain some advantage. “*A place inhabited by the same person for a certain duration draws a portrait that resembles this person based on objects (present or absent) and the habits that they imply*” (De Certeau and Giard in De Certeau, Mayol & Giard 1998b: 145).

Ashcroft comments on how inhabiting a space constitutes as strategy to make it a place of your own. This act of appropriates is a strong form of resistance that highlights the potential for transformation within imposed colonial spaces, where direct opposition to dominant forces is impossible, or problematic. Ashcroft conceptualizes “*culture*” and “*place*” as processes that are closely tied to identity formation of a space’s inhabitants, and are continuously in a state of formation and transformation. “*Above all place is a result of habitation, a consequence of the ways in which people inhabit space*”. Ashcroft argues that “*habitation*” is a transformative strategy.

“Whether dominated by imperial discourse or global culture, the local subject has a capacity to incorporate such influences into a sense of place, to appropriate a vast array of resources into the business of establishing and confirming local identity” (2001: 158).

By considering Ashcroft’s view of habitation as a strong form of resistance to which the colonial domination has no answer, I can look at the ways my informants act on space employing creative ways to navigate the impositions of their everyday lives in Sundry by adopting, appropriating, and resisting to the colonial impositions.

5. HOW ROÇA SUNDY WAS FORMED AND IS TRANSFORMED AS A PLACE

In Chapter 5, I analyse how colonial discourse determines the formation of spaces in *Roça Sundry* and how people resist to the domination of this colonial discourse by transforming this space into a place for living. First of all, I provide a brief context about the formation of Sao Tome and Principe as a country, I define what are *roças* (i.e. the plantation farms) and consider how what the *roça* means for local people. Secondly, I define and discuss the formation of the Sundry community within the physical space of *Roça Sundry*. Thirdly, I analyse how the use of spaces in *Roça Sundry* can be understood as ways of spatial resistance on the part of the Sundry community against the form of contemporary colonial discourse that is present today. These uses include the ways in which the community

inhabits the former slave quarters, the gendered division of spaces and gendered uses of spaces, and the definitions of public and private as they apply to the same. In summary, I provide a brief overview about the materiality of the spaces within *Roça Sundy* and discuss how people demonstrate agency in these spaces by transforming them into places. I follow Massey's supposition that spatial organization reflects and reproduces social and power relations (1994) and take into consideration insights provided by the spatial history proposed by Paul Carter (1987).

5.1. Sao Tome and Principe: an isolated country

The formation of Sao Tome and Principe formation as a country, and how it was severely impacted by the 500 years of Portuguese colonization and other external pressures, is my present focus. These factors include the slave traffic, the indentured labour system, and imposed farming practices for export purposes that emphasised, firstly, a monoculture of sugar cane and coffee and, later, of cocoa beans (Seibert 2005; Arenas 2010). I will start with an analysis of the country as a whole, leading into a closer consideration of the significance of the country's spatial division into smaller parcels called *roças*, such as *Roça Sundy*.

The country of Sao Tome and Principe is an archipelago constituted by two main islands. According to the 2012 census (INE 2012) ¹, the larger Island of Sao Tome had 180,000 inhabitants and the smaller Principe Island had approximately 7,500 inhabitants. Together the two islands have one thousand square kilometres. Sao Tome and Principe are located 350 km of West African coast, near Gabon on the north of Equator line. Sao Tome Island is separated from Principe Island by 140 km of sea. The dense and humid equatorial vegetation, together with a landscape formed by a rough terrain surrounded by mountains, turned both islands an arduous location for humans to live in, particularly Principe.

Portuguese navigators found Sao Tome and Principe islands in 1470 and quickly transformed the islands into the first plantation economy of the tropics for the cultivation of sugar cane (Seibert 2005). The history of Sao Tome and Principe is different from most other African nations'. The two main islands have no official records of distinct ethnic groups before the Portuguese arrival. The image of Sao Tome and Principe as an

¹ The total population is according to the 2012 Census. Source: National Institute of Statistics of Sao Tome and Principe. Accessed from: <http://www.ine.st/>. The World Bank estimates STP had 199,000 inhabitants in 2016.

unpopulated territory, i.e., a blank space waiting for civilization (Bernasconi 1997: 185 in Ashcroft 2001: 131), helped to justify the exploitation of the land for monoculture and the domination of the bodies of people brought as slaves. Even today, school books about the Portuguese navigations and colonization name the process “the discovery of Sao Tome and Principe”. The lack of a documented indigenous population in Sao Tome and Principe served to make their colonization less problematized.

There were no previous official records of traditional institutions or tribes that characterize other African countries (Varela 1997b: 464). The Portuguese started to traffic slaves from African continent, mainly from Congo, Gabon, Benin, Nigeria, Angola and Cape Verde to work on the plantations. The consequence of slavery and the mixing of African populations with the colonizers started the slow development of a *mestizo* or creole society (Arenas 2010, Seibert 2005). By 1771, records account for 4,668 African slaves, 111 white people, and 1,065 *mestizos* and other free African people distributed across the plantations farms in Sao Tome and Principe (Andrade & Pape 2013).

One exception in the ethnic makeup of the islands concerns the *angolar people*, an ethnic group of about 7,000 people living in Sao Tome. They are thought to have arrived at the islands without the influence of the Portuguese colonizers. According to the author Gehard Seibert, “*the Angolares are descendants of Angolan slaves who had escaped from a slaver wreck in 1544 off the southeast coast of São Tomé*”. The angolares are first mentioned in historical narrative accounts about Sao Tome in 1574, “*looting and burning plantations, sugar mills, and the city*” (2005: 42). According to Seibert, for Portuguese authors to acknowledge the possibility of surviving communities of runaway slaves in the islands was not a good propaganda, “*because at that time the flight of slaves and subsequently contract workers had also become a problem for the booming cocoa plantations*” (2005: 44). The dispute over the *angolares*’ origin demonstrates the importance of promoting an image of a strong colonial power that exercises domination over the slave population -- evidence of resistance, demonstrated by the survival of runaway slaves, needed to be contained or eliminated to maintain the image of order and power.

Colonial influence was stronger over Sao Tome and Principe territory in two periods - in 16th century in the time of the sugar cane plantations and slavery (Seibert 2005), and in

the 19th century, when the rising demand for the export of coffee and cocoa plantations and the use of indenture labour consolidated economic power for the colonizers. By the 17th century, the large-scale sugar cane plantations in Brazil overtook the production of the sugar cane plantations in Sao Tome and Principe and impacted profits. With the decline of the sugar cane market, Sao Tome and Principe also started to be used as a stopover in the slave trade route from Africa to Brazil and the Caribbean (Seibert 2005). Monoculture plantations never fully ceased, but were in decline until the farming of coffee and cocoa towards the end of 19th century. The “golden era of cocoa” peaked in production by 1909; the country was one of the most productive cocoa producers until the beginning of 20th century (Odekon 2015; Seibert 2005: 45). Political instability in Portugal in this period affected the colonization of African territories, leaving colonies in Africa “*to their fate*” (Seibert 2005). In 1844, registers note 7,054 native creoles, 5,514 slaves, and only 185 whites in São Tomé and Príncipe (Seibert 2005: 39).

The Portuguese colonization, the slave traffic, the indentured labour system, and imposed monoculture farming practices for export that impacted the formation of the country as a whole. The process was aggravated by a condition of isolation and economic irrelevance in the global scenario (Varela 1997b). The Portuguese colonial domination evidently controlled the land and the groups of people that were brought to work as slaves and indentured workers. They divided and organised the land, transforming the physical space into a commodity (Ashcroft 2001; Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007: 162), that is, into productive units, the *roças*, to suit monoculture farming. Thus, the *roça* was historically a productive unit comprised of space and people.

Principe Island has a total area of 142 km², constituted by a large portion of dense Equatorial forest and some mountains, and is largely uninhabited. It has 7,500 inhabitants, of which 2,000 are living in the city of Santo Antonio. Principe has been an autonomous region since 1994 with a regional government and basic administrative structure. Politically, the central government in Sao Tome has limited influence in the daily life of Principe. Santo Antonio, the capital of Principe, was the capital of the colony from the mid 18th century to 1852 (Seibert 2005). Currently, the connections between the two islands are scarce. Long and dangerous boat trips or expensive flights operated by two companies only and costing around 200 euros each way are the options for travelling and transporting goods and beyond reach for most local people. The commercial exchanges

between Sao Tome Island and Principe Island centre on food, since edible crop cultivation is not a major activity in Principe. Many people live on products collected from the forest and from fishing. The transportation of goods happens at a community-level as well, with local people coming to the airport in Sao Tome to ask airplane passengers to carry bags of fresh vegetables to their relatives in Principe. I experienced this during my fieldwork.

Principe's population is predominantly young and growing at a fast pace. A large portion of the population arrived to the island as indentured workers from Cape Verde to work in Principe's *roças* cultivating coffee and cocoa (Varela 1997b), as in *Roça Sundy*, where most people still speak the Cape Verdean creole in the former slave quarters.

The development of the local creole culture was marked by diaspora, forced migration, and the isolation of the islands from the continent and from each other (Varela 1997b). According to Seibert (2005: 37), Africans brought from many countries to Sao Tome and Principe were not able to “*retain their various cultures and languages intact*” because the Portuguese colonial culture was imposed on them and they “*came from different regions with relatively diverse cultures, while the culture of the Portuguese was relatively homogeneous*”. He argues:

Due to the colonizers' monopoly of power, the Africans were not in the position to develop and establish their own institutions and legislation outside the parameters fixed by the Portuguese. Consequently, the kinship systems and economic, religious and political organizations of the Africans did not survive (2005: 37)

I agree only partially with his statement. The slaves and indentured workers from many places were not able to keep all their economic and political organizations because their displacement dismantled these structures. As for the religion, most became Christians from catholic or other evangelic churches. However, as observed in Sundy community, the descendants of Cape Verde diaspora were able to resist and maintain some habits such as their language, i.e., the Cape Verde creole. Moreover, the idea that by coming in large groups from the same area people would be able to maintain all their original institutions intact ignores Hall's presupposition that culture identity is not static; it is changing, absorbing and appropriating from other cultures over time (1994). The colonial influence

certainly had an strong impact in the culture of people in Sundy, but I do not see the inability to keep all the original traditions from Cape Verde in Sundy as a sign of passiveness of the colonized people. Instead I see their capacity of transforming their cultural identity it as a sign of adaptability to the conditions imposed by the reality in the new territory, as pointed by Ashcroft, we must not ignore the capacity of adapting and transforming of dominated cultures (2001).

5.2. *Roça* as the organizational unit of society

In this section, I explain the constitution of the *roças* and discuss the meanings *roça* have for people living in there.

The *roça*, the plantation farm, is the social and economic basis of the Portuguese colonial domain over Sao Tome and Principe. They were owned by the Portuguese colonizers for monoculture plantations of sugar cane, coffee and cocoa and were the basis of the territory's organization, economic activities and population occupation.

The Portuguese architects Rodrigo de Andrade and Duarte Pape (2013) catalogued 122 of the estimated 150 still existent *roças* in Sao Tome and Principe. For the authors, *roças* enabled the development of villages and necessary infrastructure, such as roads and train tracks for the transportation of products to export, during the colonial period. The *roça* has been the main productive unit of the country for the majority of its 500- year history as a colonized territory (Varela 1997; Andrade & Pape 2013). On Principe Island, difficulty of access and geographic isolation exacerbates the internal isolation of the *roças*, causing each one to function as an almost independent productive and societal organizing unit.

Varela (1997a/b) also sees *roças* as the “*basic productive unity and the main social institution*” but highlights the ambivalent meaning of *roças* dos people (Sharpe 1989; Bhabha 1985; Bhabha in Ashcroft 2001). Varela ties the *roças*’ monoculture farming to the disappearance of subsistence agriculture and the circular nature of this relationship. The need for cheap and abundant labour force in the *roças* was used to justify slavery and/or the severe exploitation of indentured workers, and provoked a complete dependence on the importation of food items. The local population faced increasing food

insecurity because slaves and workers were not allowed to live outside the *roças* and could not sustain themselves through subsistence agriculture.

The work regime allowed the fragmentation of the people as well as the enforcement of brutal controlling measures, which made impossible any kind of African organization and anticolonial movement. This also explains the high level of marginalization of the African people. (1997b: 467, as translated from Spanish)

In 1876, slavery was officially abolished in Sao Tome and Principe, however degrading working conditions continued to plague former slave communities specifically, affecting their descendants and the indenture workers who came after. Reports of slavery in *roças* were present until the 20th century (Varela 1997a). The *santomense* poet Antonio Tomas Medeiros said in an interview he witnessed slavery practices least until 1945. “*I saw a slave sale when I was a kid at the general attorney of the republic*” (Sertorio 2015).

According to Varela, “[a]mong the African population, *roças* were the symbol of the colonial submission and slavery, in addition they represented the most hated colonial institution” (1997b: 468, as translated from the original). For Seibert, the organization of plantations was marked by feudal features. “*The owner exercised not only control over the labour of his work force, but also a de facto legal jurisdiction with regard to minor crimes and disputes*” (2005: 22).



Figure 1. Aerial photo of Roça Sundry. Photo Source: HBD.

As observed from the recent aerial photo from Roça Sundry, *roças* were formed by: a colonial manor where Sundry Hotel is located today in the centre; the “sanzala” buildings (quarters) for the slaves and indenture workers; and near the colonial manor, there are the supporting buildings, they used to be the house of the farm foremen, a catholic chapel, and a place to benefit coffee or cocoa (“*terreiro*”).

Roças, and the socioeconomic system they represent, are seen as a heritage of the archaic colonialism, with economic and social relations marked by exploitation of the African population, unproductive systems and lack of economic diversity.

Even when slavery was abolished, the physical structure that sustained it remained, and preserved with it some elements of societal and economic organization. Long after the system of indentured servitude, these physical divisions are still present today in the territory of both Sao Tomé and Príncipe Islands, and the descendants of slaves and indentured workers are still living in the *roças* in similar conditions.

Until the independence of Sao Tomé and Príncipe in 1975, around 90% of the *roças* were owned by Portuguese and housed 50% of the total population. After independence, the Marxist-oriented Party for the Freedom of Sao Tome and Principe (MLSTP) nationalized the land owned by the Portuguese. Thus, the workers started to work for the plantations for a low salary provided by the State, shifting the domination from the colonial forces to

the local elite (Fanon 1986). Nationalization did not represent a big change for the workers. Most *roças* were bankrupt; even though they were no longer profitable, they remained the main societal organization unit (Varela 1997b).

In Principe today, half population lives below the poverty line; that 62% is impoverished; and life expectancy is 66 years; the Gross National Income (GNI) per capita was \$1,670 in 2014², according to the World Bank figures. The country economy is weak, based on monoculture, fishing, and a small tourism sector; with “*no single economic activity that serves as a driver of growth*”³, according to the World Bank report. Lacking internal economic resources, government of Sao Tome and Principe was lead to a search for external resources to help the consolidation of its political power (Seibert 2005: 12). Hence, the country relies on external aid and external investments, being amongst the main donors and/or investors European Union, World Bank, African Development Bank, and China.

By 1985, the International Monetary Fund pushed the government for an economic liberalization through the privatization of land, including areas where *roças* are located. Concessions to the use of the land were sold to mainly foreign companies to explore agriculture and tourism sectors, as in Roça Sundry sold to the HBD company, owned by the South African millionaire Mark Shuttleworth (Veiga 2016).

The movement of the ownership of land in Sao Tome and Principe after the official independence demonstrates how the power over space only shifted from the hands of a small Portuguese colonizer elite to a local elite (Fanon 1986), represented by the government. The socialist ideology of the newly established independent government called for a redistribution of land that never happened truly. Under neoliberal influence, in the guise of land use concessions for exploitation of resources and tourism, land went back to private hands, and foreign companies.

Scarcity of investments and the weak internal productive capacity after independence, culminated in the abandonment of several *roças*, and the political, social and economic isolation of people living there. Today most *roças* are still inhabited by the descendants

² Source: World Bank accessed at <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/saotome/overview>.

³ Idem.

of their original worker communities but are not productive, with high levels of unemployment for people living there. Most of them live on what they can collect from the forest, or have small subsistence crops, and a minority have tourism related-jobs in the hotels, as in Sundy. Today, a *roça* looks like a small rural village where the original communities are still living in *sanzalas* (quarters). *Roça Sundy* has some basic infrastructure and services (e.g. school, health facility, and a rudimentary water supply system).

Exemplifying Fanon (1967) and Nkrumah's (1965) concern when the decolonization processes started in most African colonies: the official end of colonialism opened space for a contemporary form of colonial influence. More subtle and sophisticated, instead of being concentrated on the hands of the colonizer Portugal, now foreign companies and multilateral entities exercise influence based on a neo-liberal discourse that overlaps the colonial discourse. The domination occurs either influencing governments decisions and policy making or by direct influence on people's life, for instance, in Sundy a foreign company buys land and displaces the community (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007; 56: 146).

5.3.Sundy, a community formed by displacement

In this section I demonstrate how the soon-to-be-displaced Sundy community is characterized by this process of displacement.

The Sundy community lives in *Roça Sundy*, a plantation farm dating back to 1915. The Sundy community is formed mainly by descendants of indentured workers ("*trabalhadores contratados*") coming from Cape Verde in the beginning of 20th century. They migrated to Sao Tome and Principe after the official abolition of slavery when the country needed cheap labour for coffee and cocoa plantations. Their working conditions were similar to the one experienced by slaves—they did not have the right to own land, lived in similar buildings as slaves ("*sanzalas*") and earned very low salaries (Andrade & Pape 2013; Varela 1997b; Seibert 2005).

The Sundy community is constituted by 132 families making up nearly 500 people. According to a UN-Habitat household survey conducted in June 2017, in which I participated, nearly half of the population is under 18 years-old. Around 400 people still

live in the sanzala buildings, the others live in wooden houses along the main road at the farm entrance. Still today, the Sundry community speaks mostly Cape Verdean creole amongst themselves.

When HDB Company purchased the Roça Sundry concession to be transform it into a hotel complex, the company and the Principe's Regional Government promised the local community that it would be relocated to a new area with better housing conditions six years ago. The Sundry community is expected to be relocated 2,5 km away from Roça Sundry within a three-year resettlement project coordinated by UN-Habitat; the land is provided by Principe's Regional Government and funds for housing construction are provide by the company HBD, which is the largest investor in Principe, it used to hire 22% of Sundry community by 2016. The resettlement project was initiated in June 2017 only; at the same time Roça Sundry Hotel was opened.

If “place” in post-colonial societies is an interaction of language, history and physical environment and “displacement”, as a feature of colonial discourse, occurs when language, physical environment and history seem disconnected (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2003b: 391), then we can trace the “spatial history” of Sundry community as bonded to the idea of displacement. In other words, Sundry's spatial history – from Cape Verde to the plantation farm and the new resettlement project – is marked by a sense of detachment caused by the interplay between place and history. On one hand this may be used to assess the community's right to remain in Roça Sundry and justify the new displacement caused by a tourism project (Carter 1987) – the community's right to remain in Roça Sundry is marred by the fact they are already not originally from Sundry. Additionally, if land is seen as a commodity by the colonial discourse, then the community's right to the land is weaker in relation to the HBD Company, because whereas they did not pay for the land, the Company purchased the concession (Ashcroft 2001; Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007: 162). According to these facets of colonial discourse, the lacuna between the materiality of the place in the Sundry community lives, and their history and origins as a group of people, helps to justify their displacement process.

Two approaches problematize the right of the Government and HBD company to displace people from Roça Sundry - the switch in this colonial interpretation of place to Ashcroft,

Griffiths & Tiffin's proposition of a place as a flux (2003: 391), and Hall's argument that cultural identities are not necessarily tied to places (1994).

5.4. Sanzalas and the ways of inhabiting

In this section I describe the physical space of *sanzalas* and the way people inhabit these places today to point to and discuss evidence of resistance in the way people inhabit and make of this space a place for them to live. This analysis is based on Ashcroft's conceptualisation of habitation as a "*way of being in place, a way of being which itself defines and transforms place*". I emphasise that through habitation people demonstrate agency and resistance to colonial discourse. "*[Habitation] is so powerful because the coercive pressures of colonialism and globalization have ultimately no answer to it*" (2001: 157).

I employ De Certeau, Mayol and Giard (1998b) perspective to describe the creative ways people resist by transforming spaces.



Figure 2. Facade of sanzalas in Roça Sundy; on the left side, the gay wall is the former horse stable.

The Sundy's sanzala buildings are distributed in 8 columns located approximately 200 meters from the main colonial manor, which is already running as Roça Sundy Hotel. A *sanzala* building usually follows the same basic structure in most Portuguese colonies. They are large buildings in the traditional colonial architecture, with high thick walls made out of mud or rock blocks covered in a kind of cement (or similar material). The roof is made of clay tiles supported by a strong wooden structure. The original doors were made also of thick wood, usually built in such a way that the doors could be locked from the outside to prevent slaves or indentured workers from escaping. The internal spaces were largely open, hardly containing internal divisions or windows, reflecting a lack of concern about indenture workers' privacy and comfort. Today, the main structure of the sanzala buildings remains the same.

Today, most families in *sanzalas* live in small single-room units of approximately 30 squared metres, separated from the neighbours by a self-built shared wall. Often, a single room is subdivided into at least two parts by an object like a fabric curtain or a tall item of furniture like a shelf. Usually the house is composed of one living/dining room with a table and places to sit (a couch or some chairs) and sometimes a radio or a TV, and one separate bedroom where the family members sleep. These recent self-made improvements address the issue of privacy amongst family members and neighbours. The walls seek to improve neighbourly relationships since some people complain in Sundy about the proximity with their neighbours.

Here everyone knows about everyone's life. We live too close from each other. If I have a fight with my wife, my neighbour will know right away. If their kids are crying, I can listen from my bedroom. People are gossiping about each other's life all the time. I hope to have more privacy and space for myself to do my things in the settlement (Ednilson, a 32 year-old sanzala dweller).

According to Mayol, also living in neighbourhood (understood here to mean community) requires “[finding] an equilibrium between the proximity imposed by the public configuration of places and the distance necessary to safeguard one's private life” (in De Certeau, Mayol & Giard 1998b: 15). Ednilson expresses a common concern in *sanzalas*. He lives with four other family members in a two-room house, extended by an annex that

serves as a dining room. In a previous household survey carried out by HBD in 2016, most people revealed they were lacking privacy. The tactics found by most people in Sundry to balance the need for private and public spaces against lack of privacy imposed by the environment of sanzalas is to build makeshift walls. This shared endeavour is aligned to Mayol's conceptualisation of the practice of a neighbourhood which is unwritten conventions that guide dwellers (in De Certeau, Mayol & Giard 1998b; 7). In line with Ednilson's complaint about gossip, transgressions to these unwritten rules become commentaries amongst neighbours – people gossip when something occurs which is misaligned with unwritten social conventions.

Given the proximity of the houses in Sundry, one can assume that the limits of personal and/or familial privacy are stretched. Similarly, what designates intrusion into a neighbour's life is not always clear. Here, the scene of a woman taking care of other neighbours' children is common. To reinforce the idea that in spite of the complains about the intrusive relationships with neighbours, there is communion between them, regarding mixed feelings about their upcoming displacement, Ednilson states that: "*If everybody is going to be relocated to another area, I want to be relocated too*". Ednilson's perspective on privacy and community were common among all the people I interviewed—complaints about relationship with the neighbours are set against direct statements that they will move if the community is resettled as a whole. This indicates to a sense of community and belonging that is not necessarily tied to the place, as Hall (1994) and Massey (1994) proposed.



Figure 3. The picture shows wood annexes built by sanzala inhabitants to function as extra rooms or kitchens.

Ednilson's house is not atypical in containing an annex. Wooden annexes, built by the sanzala's inhabitants, function as extra rooms or kitchens. Kitchens follow three configurations: (i) the family builds an extension to the house made of wood with a table and a wood burning stove; (ii) the family builds a wood burning stove on the outside of the house that is sometimes shared between neighbours; or (iii) families use some of the few communal kitchens built on the outside of the *sanzalas*. There are no sanitary facilities inside the houses; there are communal bathrooms with toilets and showers built on the back of the *sanzalas* built for the community to share. Since there is no water system connected to many houses, there are also some shared water fountains dispensing running water. Families collect water for personal and household consumption. Often, it is possible to see kids bathing outside directly from these fountains, or to see women there washing dishes and clothes, etc.



Figure 4. Women using a wood burning stove built on the outside of the main house in the sanzala.

The wooden annex rooms built on the sides of the main building ameliorates the lack of space for families. This strategy of improving a space aligns with De Certeau's conceptualization of tactical ways in which the weak operate in an oppressive environment in order to circumvent some of the conditions to which they are subjected (in De Certeau 1998a; 47)—that is, to make the space of the sanzalas, a place for living. The effort can be collaborative. For instance, I observed one young woman using the communal kitchen to make coconut oil from scratch. She was making many litres of it, and told me that she was also making oil for her friend who lives two houses from her, with the justification that “*next time, my friend will do it for me*”. This exchange of favours is facilitated by the sharing of space, when hard tasks can be divided as well as the benefits generated by them. Translated directly into English, the title of De Certeau's book *L'invention du quotidien* in French, is the “Invention of Everyday Life”. The word invention here matters because it draws attention to the creative potential of people who find solutions and amendments, for what can be seen as obstacles, to make a living or just to make life easier.

In colonial times, the sanzalas' architecture was aligned with the desire to create a form of warehouse for human commodities. Since the abolition of slavery and indentured servitude, which sanctified this type of structure, people have found ways to transform the sanzalas' architecture into a liveable place. They have adapted the archaic building to their many everyday needs in order to make life bearable. By transforming spaces, people position themselves in a refusal to be passive subjects.

The observations of different ways of living demonstrates that being a part of a diasporic community from the start does not exclude the potential for a shared community-based identity. The identification of the people in Sundy and the community ties between them is identified with the space that they creatively transform in their everyday lives to make it a home (Ashcroft 2001). By appropriating the colonial sanzala space and making it a place of identification, the Sundy community resists to the idea that diaspora infringes upon their ownership of that space. The collaboration among people and their wish to move collectively evidences the extent to which Sundy's sanzalas jointly compose one community that cultural identifies with that place and its process of creative and reactive transformation.

5.5. Gendered places

In this section I will demonstrate and discuss how gender plays a role in the uses of space, and in creating places for men and women. I search for social manifestations that "*respond to a gendered organization of society*"—for instances where the roles that have been, more or less, distinguished by gender interplay with the spatial organization of Sundy (Mayol in De Certeau, Mayol & Giard 1998b: 23). Additionally, following Massey's reflection I analyse how the construction of these gendered spaces reflects the way gender itself is constructed and understood within the Sundy community (Massey 1994).

The male public place

The men's meeting point in Sundy is the "*má-lingua*" bench, meaning the "tittle-tattle bench or gossip bench" in English. It is a wooden bench under a tree with a large shadow. During my fieldwork, I have never seen this bench empty. Every day after work at 3 or 4 pm, more men gathered around the bench, like an equivalent to the modern conception

of the “happy hour”. Around the “*má-língua*” bench, some men use the phone, others chat, and boys play football. Men get together to talk about their days, share information and discuss important matters for the community, and as suggested by the name, it is where internal news about the community members is shared. The “*má-língua*” bench functions as a “public space” (a “public square”) for men in the community. Even the outsiders acknowledge that the “*má-língua*” bench is the public square in Sundy. For instance, UN-Habitat chose the bench as the main place at which to communicate important matters regarding the resettlement project to the community. This “public space” is not a given, but has been constructed for the purposes of discussing and resolving “what matters” for this community. The actors reigning in that space are men, and are mostly responsible for important decisions within that community.



Figure 5. The má-língua bench is a place dominated by men in Sundy.

I asked Gregorio, a 35 year-old man landsman, why he thought the men in the Sundy community were opposing a women’s quota for participation in the resettlement project steering committee. He told me:

Women cannot participate in this important matter [, the project steering committee,] because they have a soft heart. Women must not participate in the committee the because women cannot take serious

decisions about the resettlement. We [men] do not let people take advantage of us.

Gregoria's idea of women as "too soft hearted" defines men in opposition to women, where they become "stronger" in their comparison and supposed ability to resist the manipulation of the displacing agents (i.e. HBD, government, and UN-Habitat). His view also reflects a binary in his society—man and woman, serious and emotional, leadership and subservience—that associates the role of man with serious matters and woman for the emotional instances of life. For him, men should take the lead decisions regarding important issues, just as they have the right to do so at the "má-língua" bench. The idea of letting women participate in the project steering committee to share in the decision-making process was a disturbance in his construction of gender roles, reflected by the use of that space. As proposed by Massey (1994), the gendered division of that "má-língua" bench reflects the construction of what it means to be a man in Sundy, that is male's agency in Sundy is linked to take care of the important decisions as well as to demonstrate strength. On the other hand, to be a woman is to take care of emotional tasks, as I will discuss next.

The hybrid female places: communal kitchens and other places of nurturing

Traditionally, spaces for women are connected to private spaces for cooking, taking care of the house, i.e., nurturing tasks (Giard in De Certeau, Mayol & Giard 1998b: 151).

However, in Sundy, these tasks happen in mixed spaces such as around the shared wood-burning stoves or the communal kitchens. Mariele, a 32 year-old woman I interviewed, has a wood-burning stove and a shared water tap right next to her house in the sanzala. She uses the stove and the tap every day for cooking for her family, and as well to sell meals for Roça Sundy Hotel workers. When she has more clients than expected, she asks other women neighbours for help.

It is like this here, when I need I ask them to help me [pointing other women who were cutting vegetables, washing dishes and organizing food into plates]. Sometimes I asked the woman that has the small shop [in Sundy] to lend me products that I do not have and a client asks, such as water bottles or sodas. The next day I pay her.

Mariele tells me she usually cooks with at least two other friends and they cook together for their kids. They take advantage of using the same wood for the stove and share the perishable items they buy and products they cultivate in the bush. Mariele and her friends have an economy for nurturing in their families in a space that mixes public and private activities—private because only Mariele’s friends are allowed to use her wood-burning stove and in the event that other women need to use it, they will likely ask Mariele first. The activity is also public, because it is there that Mariele and her friends interact with other women from the community. “*When people want to find me they come to my kitchen*”, Mariele tells me. She states that it is *her* kitchen even though it is on the outside of her house.

Public water taps are also spaces where private and public functions are blurred. During the fieldwork, I observed mothers using the public water tap to bath their younger children for instance, as well as older youths bathing alone. In these moments, adult men are hardly spotted around the shared kitchens spaces or taps. This use of spaces indicates a sharing economy amongst women construct that is coherent with the view expressed in the previous section, where the idea of how it is to be a man in Sundy relates directly with public spaces and decision-making responsibilities, and to be a woman means to act in more private spaces and to be emotional and collaborative. Women in Sundy are more likely to demonstrate their capacity of agency in nurturing tasks in more private family tasks even though these happen in semi-public spaces, demonstrating that the public and private are sometimes intertwined in Sundy (Mayol in De Certeau, Mayol & Giard 1998b: 23).

5.6. Transforming a future place

In this section, I will examine how people in Sundy exercise agency by intentionally transforming not only the space they live in today, but the resettlement place also, by making their opinions heard in an attempt to influence decisions about the new settlement, according to Ashcroft view of transformative and creative ways people resist colonial discourse in spaces (2001; 128).

In September 2017, a UN-Habitat worker requested that a group of men from Sundy community help to clean a small area of the plot where the new settlement will be located

to prepare the area for the project's launch. According to the environmental management plan, some trees had been previously cut down, and another forested area was left untouched. Ten to fifteen men voluntarily offered to clean the area, taking their own tools to cut grass and clear branches. Anderson, a 26 year-old, told me the reason: "*We want to make sure the area will be well cleaned. This resettlement has to start with the right foot.*" Additionally, this accorded the group of men the opportunity assess how area had been prepared before their assistance and to provide their opinions about the resettlement project to the UN-Habitat people. As Anderson tells me in private:

I want to tell you something, the way you cleaned the area is wrong. You left some trees behind. You should cut them all because trees will fall over the houses in the first rain we have. You should really clean the plot.

Anderson took advantage of the opportunity to work with the people coordinating the resettlement project to make his voice heard. As part of a public audience, within a large group of people, it would be hard emphasising his concerns in relation to those expressed by the group as a whole. Anderson acts in a tactical way to make his opinion count, in an active and conscious way (Giard in De Certeau, Mayol & Giard 1998b: xxii).

6. PERSPECTIVES

Looking to the perspectives of my informants about the displacement and the daily life in Roça Sundy, Chapter 6 examines the speeches of my informants for evidence of colonial discourse – and evidence of agency in resistances to this discourse. Firstly, I describe and discuss instances where the informants' attest to feeling "out of place" in their current housing situation. Secondly, I analyse the how the act of naming the new settlement by the community can be seen as a strategy for gaining control over a space, using a tool that is appropriated from colonial practices (Ashcroft 2001; Carter 1987b). Thirdly, I describe and compare male and female claims to place, detailing the differences between both genders' perspectives about belonging. In the section 6.5. I describe the UN-Habitat and community's speeches about who deserves the land, and I discuss to the extent to which their perspectives reflect colonial discourse.

6.1. Feeling "out of place"

In this section, I describe how the colonial discourse that permeates the justifications for displacement of people has also been adopted by the people from Sundy and generates the feeling of being “out of place”. I then address the tactics adopted by people to appropriate the idea that has been imposed upon them that they do not belong to Roça Sundy anymore in their desire to move to the new settlement.

During my first day of fieldwork, I interviewed Maria, the 50 year-old woman who provided the statement that opens the thesis introduction:

“I hope they are able to resettle us soon, because I do not think the tourists will get used to our way of living. We like to speak loud, listen to the radio in a high volume; we do not fit here with the tourists anymore” (Maria, Principe Island, June 2017).

Maria tells me this whilst seated at her doorstep, answering the household survey. Behind her assertion that tourists will not be accustomed to their way of living, lies a series of unspoken statements. Her concern highlights the supposition that there are new rules governing life in the transforming space of Roça Sundy. According to Maria, these new rules do not include people who like to speak loudly and listen to loud radio. In bringing tourism to that space, the Company is also bringing a new civilization, with new ways of living that differ from those that are typical to the people in Sundy and that are perceived to be hierarchically superior to the Sundy community lifestyle. Maria reveals what Fanon (in Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007: 92) understands as an internalization of colonialist discourse; her comments betray feelings of inferiority and indicate the psychological impact of the colonial discourse by on the colonized.

Secondly, Maria divides people into two categories reflecting the colonial binary way of thinking: people who fit to the new environment (i.e. tourists, the “civilized”) and people who do not fit (i.e. Sundy community, the “uncivilized”). In defining these categories in opposition to each other she places them in hierarchy and adopts the colonial discourse herself. Maria exemplifies Spivak’s reflection from ‘Can the Subaltern Speak’ (1988) that questions to what extent the colonized people are able to resist since their subjectivities are formed by the colonial discourse too. So Maria’s appropriation of the colonial discourse in this hierarchical categorisation of people leads to the question: to what extent

can she be critical of and resistant to the colonial discourse that is imposed upon her, when she is also living by the rules of that discourse?

The answer to this question is related to the rest of the interview when Maria continues to say: *“I hope they are able to resettle us soon”*. In so doing she reveals expectation, but also reveals a demand. She appropriates the colonial discourse that says that she and her community do not fit in with the new touristic environment, but she also operates with agency by implying that she *wants* to move soon. Giard summarises De Certeau’s main ideas in *‘The Practices of Everyday Life’* (De Certeau, Mayol & Giard 1998b; xxii) stating that the “powerless people”, who do not have “belongings nor place”, reveal their capacity for “tactical mobility” by showing intelligence and inventiveness in how they face the unequal relationships. Maria shows her capacity of subverting the dominant discourse in a subtle way by appropriating the discourse that says she has to move and using it in her favour. *She expects to move*. Maria, seeing the displacement as inevitable, admits the need for displacement speaks in such a way that shows that she is the one that thinks that the Sundry community does not fit in Roça Sundry’s new touristic environment anymore.

6.2.Naming a place: a strategy to gain control over it

In this section I analyse how the act of naming a place, appropriated from the colonial discourse, is a strategy used by the Sundry community to gain control over that place, and ultimately, to regain control over their destinies.

The act of naming the new settlement is an appropriation from the colonial discourse in that subverts it. As Said conceptualize in *Orientalism*, by naming places in the past, colonizers produced knowledge about those places and gains control over those spaces, (Said 1978a, 1978b; Ashcroft 2001; 132; Carter 1987b). The Sundry community named the new settlement site *“Terra Prometida”* (“promised land”). I was not present when they first mentioned that name to UN-Habitat team so I questioned some people about the reason for that name. I received three different answers for my question. José, a 18 year-old man who works in agriculture told me:

“It is ‘Promised Land’ because they promised us years ago; we call it by this name since that time; we are really waiting to have a better life in this promised land; Sundry must stay behind us now”.

Alzira, a 27 year-old housewife said: *“It is Promised Land because a well-known church pastor here suggested this biblical name; and we liked it”*. A third person, a 31-year old man who lives by collecting product from the forest, told me: *“It is ‘Terra Prometida’ because of the Brazilian soap opera called ‘A Terra Prometida’*. Regardless of the precise origin of the name “Promised Land”, it was clear that the community is refusing to call the new settlement by “Sundy”. The refusal of José to call the new settlement Sundy reveals that the name represented negative aspects for him. It may also reveal that, through tourism, Roça Sundy was becoming someone else’s place, that is, Sundy was being colonized again by new agents.

The community unanimously refused, through a voting process during a community committee meeting, to call the new settlement “*aldeia*” (village) or “*Nova Roça*” (new roça). José also told me:

“Since UN-Habitat is talking about to build streets in the new settlement, it has to be cidade (city) or bairro (neighbourhood). I do not want to live in another roça again!”

To José, the ideas expressed by the words *aldeia* and *roça* are also related to the past and to the reproduction of the living conditions experienced in the roças. These could also be tied to memories of indentured servitude and slavery in the colonial past, as indicated by Varela (1997a, 1997b). Meanwhile, the words *cidade* and *bairro* denote features of an urban life and point to ideas of modernity, development, and progress that are set against the archaic roças. Thus, the categories of *cidade* and *bairro* are superior in opposition to *roça* and *aldeia*. This hierarchy reflects how José appropriates the colonial discourse way of constructing binary oppositions in order to create a hierarchised categories that justifies his argument for building a *bairro* (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007; 2003).

José and the community choose to name the new settlement in relation to cultural markers that are familiar to them. Each of the suggested origins of the name “Terra prometida” points to something which is familiar to the Sundy community: first, the expectation of a new land and life (*“they promised us years ago”*); second, a religious blessing by the church pastor that is also tied to community leadership; and third, a reference to a mass culture that is common to them, the soap opera.

In stating that he wants a bairro or a cidade, José is doing what Spivak conceptualized as “catachresis”. This is similar to appropriation, wherein the act of re-inscribing something that exists traditionally provides new meanings for it or adds to existing ones (in Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007: 30). If the community calls the new settlement a city, it will be the city made by Sundy former dwellers in Principe island, that is, most likely a very different city from the colonizers or European standards for a city. Hence, by naming the new settlement and placing it in the category of city/neighbourhood, the community is attempting to gain control over that space and taking charge of its portrayal. Ultimately, the community is trying to gain control over the new lives that have been promised to them and which they link to the idea of the new settlement in a conscious exercise of their capacity of agency.

6.3. Male and female claims of place

In this section, I demonstrate and analyse the differences between the male and female agency in their claims of place. Here I reproduce men’s and women’s statements provided during a public consultation among the Sundy community, UN-Habitat, Principe Regional Government and HBD company representatives in June 2017 so I cannot provide their exact ages and occupations.

Male claims regarding houses and rights

“The community is worried if the size of the houses we have today will be respected in the new settlement. We are worried about the size and typology of the new houses, construction materials (...) The government must be present in the resettlement process to avoid land invasions. You must know the Sundy community is more than houses; the community is land for agriculture and animal breeding” (Celso, around 50 years-old)

Celso’s desire to know about the size of plots and housing materials was a common amongst the male community in Sundy. They show concern about the commoditized aspects of land, such as size, value, and construction materials used for the houses. Here the feelings of ownership replace feelings of belonging, reflecting an appropriation of the colonial idea of the right to the land. He understands that the value of the land he lives on is tied to me that are universal and measurable, including size and land use—“agriculture

and animal breeding”. This validates his claim of place (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007: 161: 162).

“The house I live today was from was from my grandfather. So I ask for respect from all the [people and institutions] involved in this resettlement. We want to know the size of the plots and the construction materials”(Firmino, around 40 years-old)

Firmino’s speech links ideas of kinship and right to the land by requesting respect for the house that has been passed down through generations of his family. He demands respect for family history in that space, indicating his perspective on the standard by which he judges who deserves to be resettled. In his view, the land is for those who have a historical connection to it , i.e. whose identity is connected to that space. From his request we understand that he sees cultural identity as connected to places, thus, for him, people from other parts of Principe are not allowed, for instance, to claim for a place in the new settlement. In a subtle manner, Firmino also contrasts what we can argue is the dominant colonial perspective regarding right to claim a space of the identity of a place, pushed forward by the Government and the HBD Company.

Female claims of place

I would like to stay in the house that I have today because it is near to my job. But if everybody moves from here, what will I be doing here alone only with my family? (Dilma, around 30 years-old)

Dilma’s overt concern proximity to her job, and the threat to her livelihood—her subsistence—that could result from moving to a place that is further away from that hub. However, she continues to declare that she will move if everybody from Sundry community moves, showing that her cultural identity is more tied to the community and connected to the people of the community than to the physical space they occupy today. Hall (1994) proposed the view that cultural identity is not tied to a single place because it is in constant movement. Dilma representation of space recalls Massey’s conceptualization of the term, *“as constructed out of social relations”* (1994: 3). Once the entire community leaves the place, it can no longer be a place of identity because it

becomes an empty space devoid of the people and the relations they built together every day.

I do not care about construction materials, as long as it will be a better place to live with my family. I want a house and a garden with space to grow my own food and raise my children and grandchild (Elza, around 60 years-old).

Unlike many men in Sundy, Elza does not show concern about housing materials in the resettlement housing. Instead, Elza's claim is also associated with the idea of subsistence and nurturing, recalling the discussion presented in Chapter 5 about the gendered uses of space. Her claim of place is similar to Firmino, whose focus is on ideas related to family, but Elza does not mention kinship or right over the land. Her concerns are more immediately associated with nurturing tasks, exposing an aspect of the construction of female identity in her environment in Sundy.

A hybrid claim of place

Based on the previous statements and in observations conducted during fieldwork, men's claims are more related to aspects of space as a measurable good, whilst women's claims are more tied to ideas of belonging and nurturing. According to Massey and Ashcroft's conceptualizations of space and place, we can observe that the claim of place and the idea of displacement is experienced differently by men and women living in the same spaces (Massey 1994; Ashcroft 2001). However, the fieldwork also revealed there are hybrid experiences and claims of space. For instance,

"I do not want a lot of land to grow a lot of things to sell; for me, I just want sufficient land to grow food for me and my brothers. If you want to take the rest, it is fine by me" (Renato, a man, agriculture of around 35 year-old)

Renato's claim of place blends concerns that I previously noted as dominantly male or female. He is concerned with the materiality of the new place—a plot that is large enough—but links this measurable value to the desire to sustain his immediate and extended family. This convergence shows that gender identity and gender construction are also in flux (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2003: 391), in accordance with Massey's conceptualization of space (1994).

The construction of gender reflects and affects the constructions and experiences of space. Since both gender and space are in constant movement, in the small sample I collected in my fieldwork, I can only identify some claims of place as predominantly female and others as predominantly male. In large part, I avoid a binary interpretation of gender, i.e., male in opposition to female, which is itself as colonial feature and ignores the complexity of individuals and their experiences of space, as linked to their own understanding of male and female gender and their respective roles within a community (Massy 1994).

6.4. The NGO perspective: the ‘neo-missionaries’

In this section, I seek to analyse how the UN-Habitat, other NGOs and international bodies working in the field of resettlement, embrace some features of a contemporary colonial discourse and the extent to which they replace the role of the colonial missionary.

The increase of projects financed by international organizations causing the displacement of hundreds of thousands in developing countries, are leading to modern policy approaches on resettlement, which include so-called “rights-based” and “participatory approaches” (ERBD 2016; World Bank 2004; IFC 2009, 2010). Some authors linked to the policy perspective (Vanclay 2017; Cernea 1996/1997; Picciotto 2001) state that community associations and self-organizations are likely to break after the resettlement if issues of inclusivity and participation are not addressed by projects. However, these organization often do not question the root causes of economic induced displacements. “*Refusing to relocate is not usually a realistic option*”. (Picciotto 2001: 239)

The World Bank’s current approach to resettlement, as stated by Picciotto, is that “*the involuntary resettlement policy includes measures to ensure that the displaced are informed of, consulted on, and offered choices among resettlement alternatives*. (Picciotto 2001: 242). Similarly, UN-Habitat follows a participatory approach to projects involving resettlement (UN-Habitat 2009). According to these organizations views’, to be regarded as participatory, policies for resettlement should ensure that displaced people are “*offered choices among resettlement alternatives*”. Nevertheless, these choices are limited to a set of pre-determined alternatives. As such, true power of choice is not really given to displaced communities, as they are limited to the options offered by displacing agents.

Usually, UN-Habitat's mandate does not engage in economic-induced displacements. The agency's engagement with this project is justified by the UN Programme due to the living conditions of the people in the *sanzalas*. According to UN-Habitat, people living in sanzalas in Sundry experience the five areas deprivations that define a slum⁴, lacking access to basic services and infrastructure, adequate housing space, access to means of subsistence, natural resources, and sources of livelihood and work (UN-Habitat, 2010). In resettlement projects of this nature, the dominant forces are seldomly identified as new colonizer agents because they are a diffuse mass of transnational companies, governments, international financial organizations and local elites that emerged after decolonization and hide behind an obfuscating, neo-liberal logic (Fanon 1967; Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007; 56). Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin argue that the NGOs and other international aid agencies may represent the new missionaries of our time (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007: 147). This proposition is particularly useful in analysing critically the role assumed by UN-Habitat as regards the displacement in Sundry. The justification for the work of the NGO originates in a similar set of principles that guided colonial missionaries: both institutions justify their actions in the name of "the greater good". The ideology of bringing development to the underdeveloped in the Third World replaces the ideology of spreading Christianity in order to save souls of heathens in colonies. Actions are justified within this context; they are acceptable if they are supported by the principle of amelioration and increased opportunity. There are parallels in how both institutions preach idea of evolution and improvement. Whereas colonial missionaries targeted the elevation of souls in a theological context, NGOs seek to improve socio-economic realities of the poor and elevate their status within the material world.

That is not to say that both organizations have only negative impacts for colonized people. Griffiths' provides the example of missionaries in Zanzibar who bought slaves to rescue them, but also to "*to rescue them from their own origins, from the religion and customs of [the] barbarous inland tribes' and from the horrors of 'exclusion from the faith'*"(2007: 21). These missionaries believed that it was better to buy slaves for themselves than to allow them to be purchased by other communities slave owners. These missionaries acted within the system's rules to obtain results which they considered more closely aligned with "a greater good" that also fit their mission's purpose (i.e. saving souls

⁴ According to UN-Habitat, the five deprivations that define a slum are: access to clean water, access to improved sanitation facilities, durable housing, overcrowding (insufficient living area) and security of tenure.

via Christianity). In ascribing to the system instead of acting out against traditional slavery practices, however, they contributed to the market and increased the demand for slaves.

I argue that the NGOs and international organizations may act following a similar logic: in defining “a greater good” within an oppressive system’s rules they nevertheless adopt a contemporary colonial discourse that justifies their actions. One instance of this is the process of relocating people from slave quarters to better houses without first questioning the root reasons for the displacement. The end goal is similar: the idea of improvement. Just as the colonized were “raised up” to the colonizer’s level in colonial discourse, NGOs and international agencies intervene to raise the level of “the underdeveloped” to those of “the ”developed” by the provision of improved housing. Through this binary distinction, violent hierarchization continues to operate with the idea that a process will raise an inferior society to the level of a superior one (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007).

7. CONCLUSIVE REMARKS

The aim of my thesis was to analyse the extent to which a contemporary form of colonial discourse influences the practices and representations of my informants in Sundry community both in their current situation and as participants in the process of a displacement. I demonstrated the capacity of agency of my informants by looking at their practices of everyday life, speeches and their use of space in relation to transformation of spaces, inhabitation, relationships with neighbours, perspectives about the displacement process, views about community life, etc.

One of the main findings of my analysis is that agency in a post-colonial context is demonstrated in a wide variety of ways. Agency is present in an individual’s subtle appropriation of the colonial discourse, in his/her attempt to take control of a situation to gain immediate benefit from it, in creative transformations of otherwise oppressive spaces, or in direct speech against the colonial discourse. For instance, people from the Sundry community showed agency by transforming sanzalas into homes, by adapting spaces in the sanzalas spaces to their needs, by actively trying to influence the process of resettlement, by voicing opinions about it, etc. Although consciously subversive anti-colonial agency is not always readily discernible—a perspective which is supported by

Spivak (1988), I found evidence that subtle forms of agency exist in commonplace and often unconscious actions that result in an appropriation and subversion of colonial discourse in order, substantiating the conceptualization of agency that was proposed by De Certeau, Mayol & Giard (1998b) and Ashcroft (2001).

Following an understanding of place, cultural identity and gender as fluxes, in relation to a specific time and space, resulted in a better comprehension of the ways in which men and women experience the space in Roça Sundy differently, thus, exercise their agency in distinct forms. I found that their experiences reflect and impact the way that gender is constructed and represented by Sundy community.

My consideration of the role of UN-Habitat in the process of displacement of the Sundy community, served to disclose the colonial discourse that permeates the mission of NGOs today, likening it to the objectives of missionaries that assumed the task of civilizing indigenous populations in the colonial period. This study has not sought to class the impact of such organizations on displaced communities as necessarily negative or positive. Further research is needed for to evaluate the impact.

The main research question guiding this study was:

How does the colonial discourse unfold and how is it subverted by people in Sundy community, Principe Island? To what extent can the displacement process of Sundy community be understood as a contemporary form of colonialism?

My investigation found evidence of the impact of colonial discourse on the formation of Sao Tome and Principe as a country and in the surviving socioeconomic and spatial impositions of the *roça*. This impact is identifiable in the lives of the community in Roça Sundy today as well as in their experience of the process of displacement. Still, through close interaction and interviews, I found that my informants in Sundy exercise agency and resistance to contemporary colonial discourse regardless of their level of conscience in doing so. They exercise agency and resist colonial discourse in their transformative use of spaces, by adapting the colonial architectural space that is the *sanzala* into a place for living and a place of community, by shaping their cultural identity and experience in

relation to that place, and by appropriating colonial discourse linguistically. My informants appropriated colonial discourse to make sense of life, space, and displacement, by finding ways to express their opinions about the displacement, and presenting it in such a way as to make it count. Ultimately, the process of displacement of the Sundy community reproduces a neo-colonial discourse. The pursuit of the resettlement project for economic motives, but its alignment with the development agenda, leads dominant actors to facilitate the process without questioning the reasons for displacement. In this neo-colonial context, the people in Sundy do exercise agency in a variety of directions, sometimes adapting their existence to the impositions of colonial discourse, sometimes to resisting it. People act in appropriation and subversion of the colonial discourse according to their personal interests and prospects.

In Sao Tome and Principe context, *roças* and *sanxalas* represent living memories of slavery, indenture work and archaic colonial practices for people living there. Currently, the economic-induced displacement is justified by a neo-colonial logic that disconnects space and place in Roça Sundy. But Sundy people do not watch the displacement process passively, they demonstrate agency in a wide variety of ways. For instance, I found evidence of habitation as a relevant form of resistance to the spatial impositions of colonialism and neo-colonialism, as pointed by Ashcroft (2001). Hence, Sundy community find an equilibrium in their everyday life between resistance and endurance, by developing tactics to act within the terms imposed by the neo-colonial logic of space and displacement, using discourse, space transformation, habitation, and small everyday actions of resistance.

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