

History, memory and violence: changing patterns of group relationship in  
Mocímboa da Praia, Mozambique

Thesis presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Social Anthropology

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## **Abstract**

My D.Phil. thesis addresses the historical construction of difference in northern Mozambique and its relation to conflict, especially an upsurge of violence in 2005. I look specifically at the relationship between Makonde and Mwani inhabiting a coastal district in the north of Mozambique and the ways in which modes of livelihood, religion, pre-colonial history, experience of colonial rule and post-independence policies, and political affiliation play a part in the construction of identities of these two groups. I look at how a shared but differently understood history and differing memories of the past become part of local discourses of identity and difference. I investigate how history and memory, place and space, and the surrounding landscape are reflected in concepts of identity especially with respect to tension and conflict.

The Makonde traditionally inhabit the Mueda plateau in a remote area in the north of Mozambique. They have been associated in colonial literature with ideas of violence, fierceness and independence. They were very active during the liberation struggle in Mozambique, but their influence in the country diminished after independence. Less is known about the Mwani. They are closely associated with the Swahili complex, and had links with the Portuguese during the colonial period, losing power and influence during the post-independence period. The Makonde and Mwani had different experiences of historical events and diverse roles in defining moments of Mozambican history such as the liberation struggle (1964-1974). The history of this area of Mozambique has had a huge impact on human settlement, changing patterns of residence, land occupation, and social relationships.

This D.Phil. makes ethnographic and theoretical contributions to the anthropological research of space, place, conflict and identity, as well as memory and history. It also contributes to ongoing studies of Mozambique. It addresses the consequences of two consecutive wars caused much displacement, migration and movement.

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When my scholarship ended and I looked for jobs, ISCA and African Studies were the places where I found a number of library and research jobs which helped in the later stages of the thesis writing process. In my final year I worked at the School of Oriental and African Studies, teaching the Ethnography of East Africa – from this I got to step back from the narrower focus of the thesis and read on more general regional literature.

In Mozambique, I have to thank Carlos Serra, Rafael da Conceição, at the Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, for giving me institutional support and advice on fieldsites. At the Arquivos Nacionais de Moçambique, Antonio Sopa gave me precious direction on the materials available. In Maputo I stayed with the Dominicanas de Santa Catarina de Sena. My friend Etna Marlene, was always available for practical discussions when I was in Maputo and gave me useful contacts in Pemba.

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My family, though often puzzled as to why I was doing this, was always supportive and challenging. My father often thought he knew better than me what I was researching and listened patiently. My mother, ignored the technical details and worried about whether doing well while writing. My sister and my cousin were good friends throughout.



## Maps

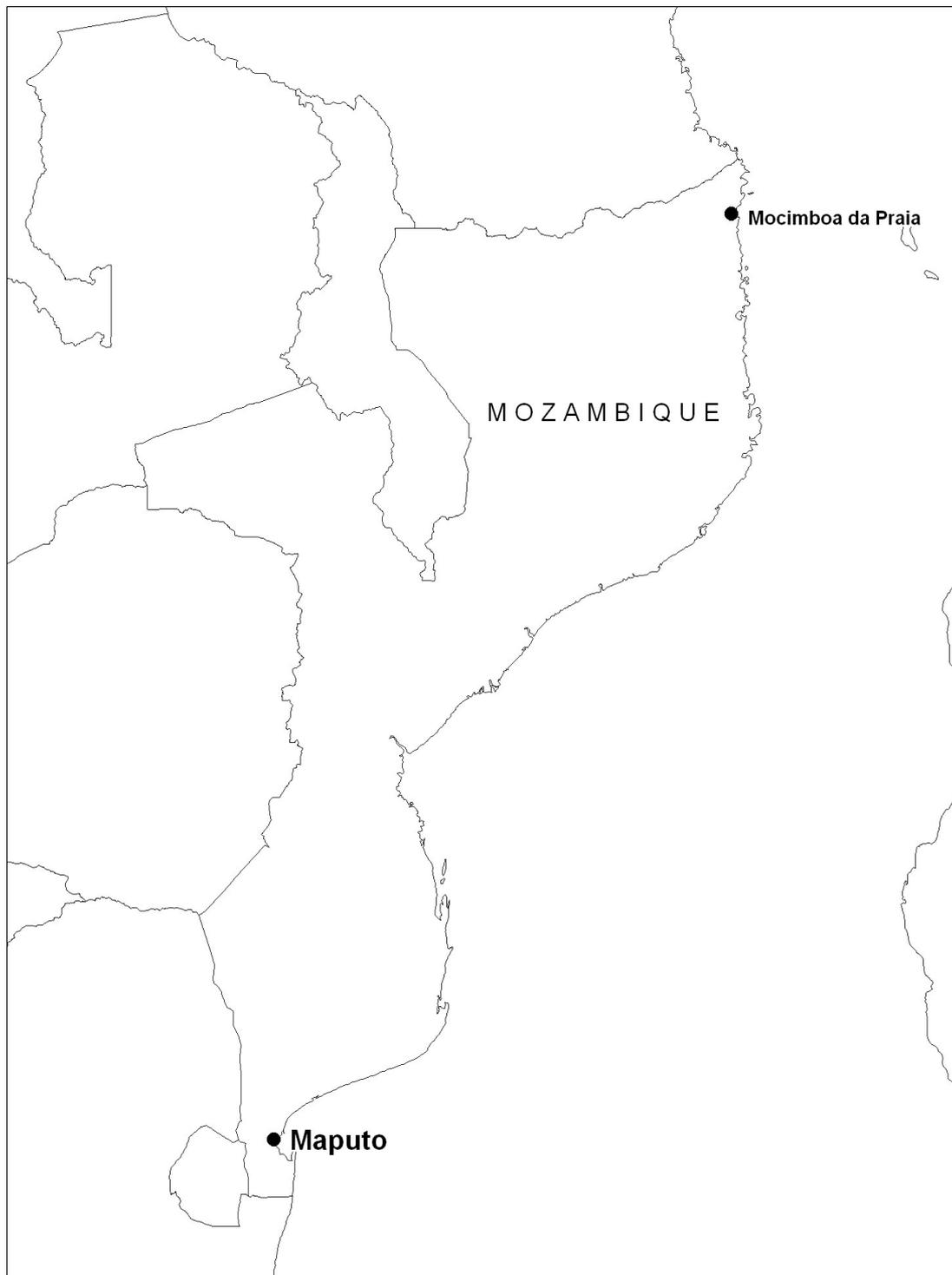


Figure 1 – Location of Mocimboa da Praia

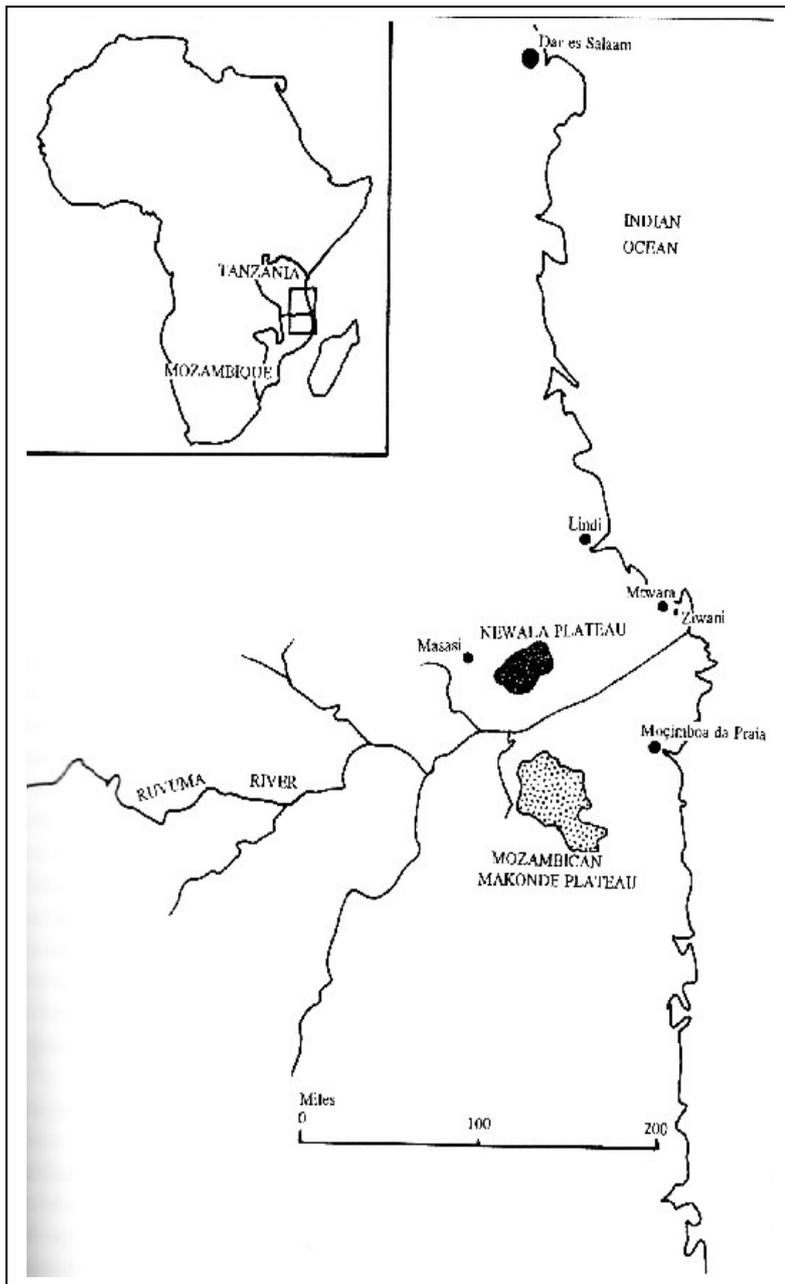


Figure 2 – The Mozambique-Tanzania Border – Makonde Plateau (Kingdon 2002)

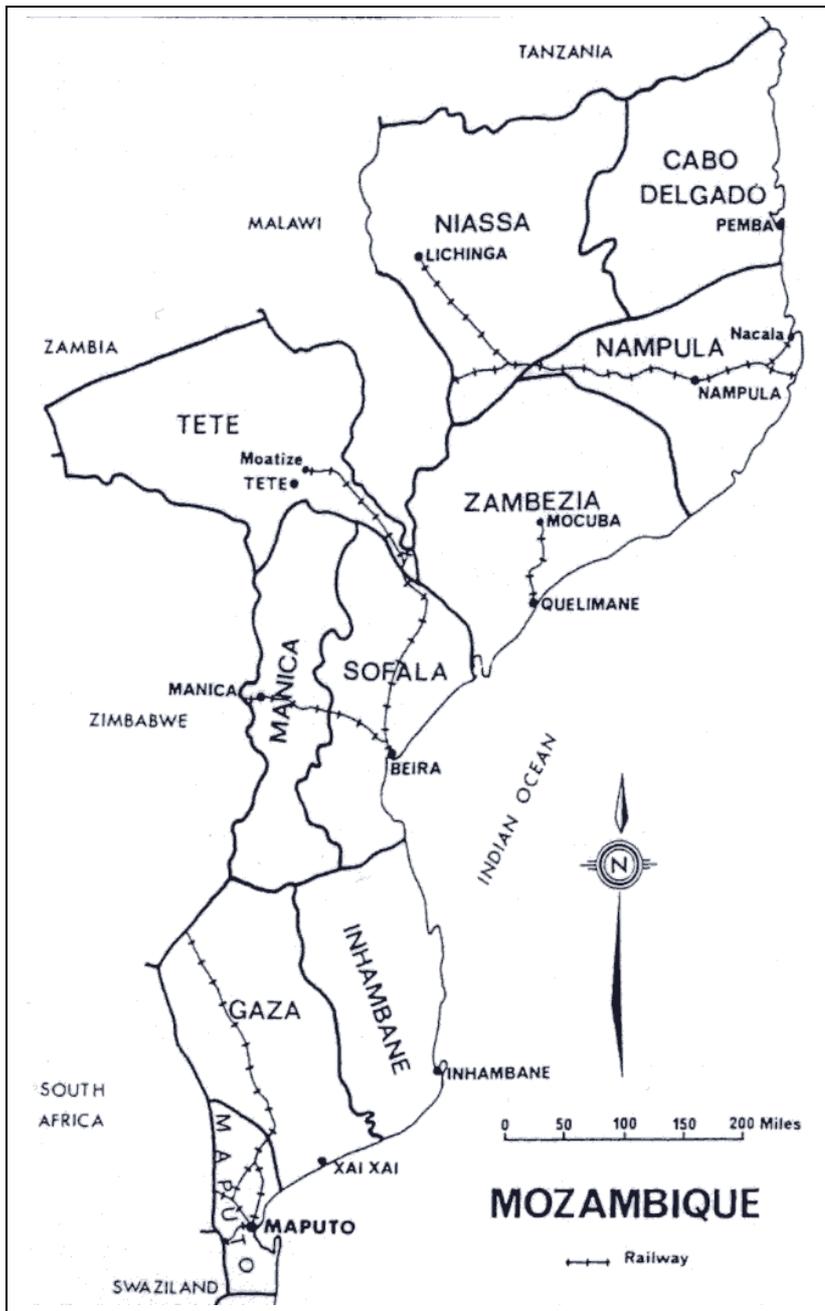


Figure 3 – Map of Mozambique (Hall 1990)

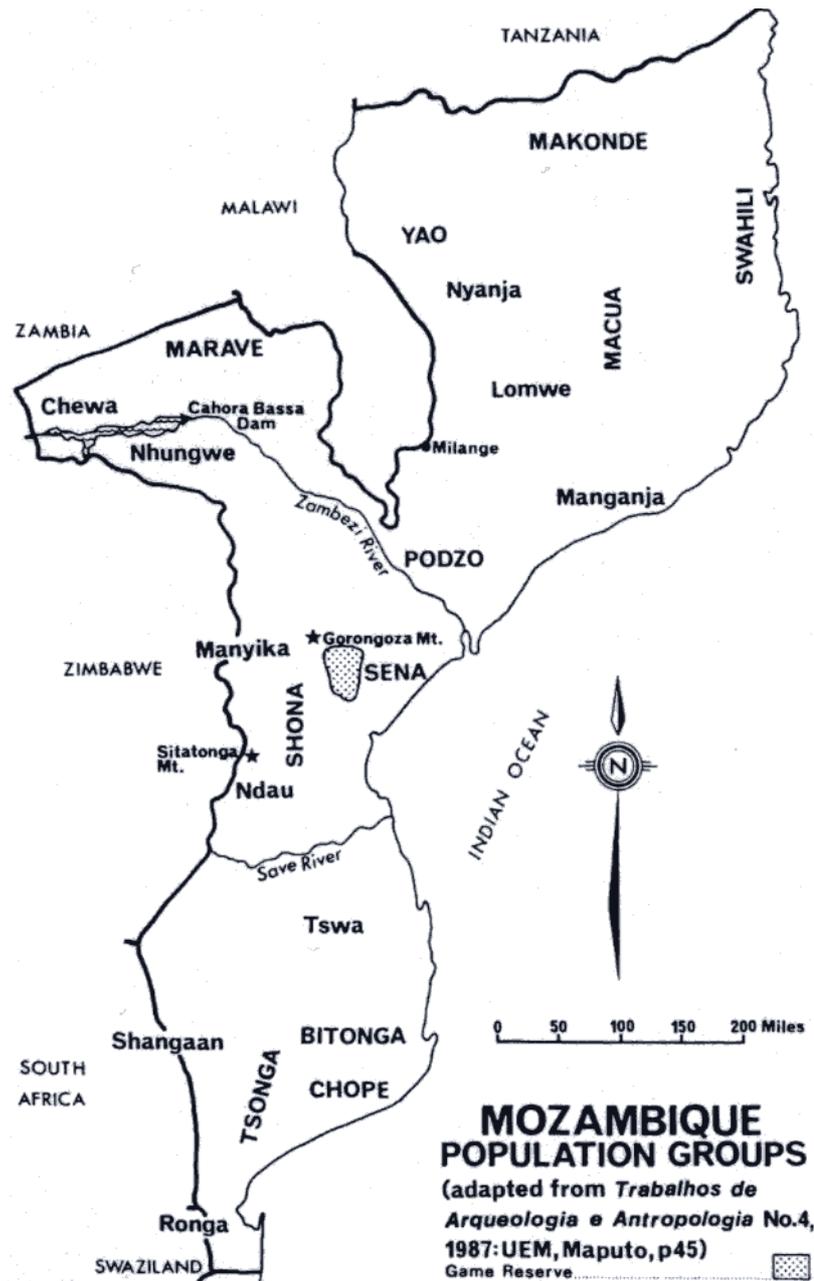


Figure 4 – Map with the Mozambican ethnic groups (Hall 1990)

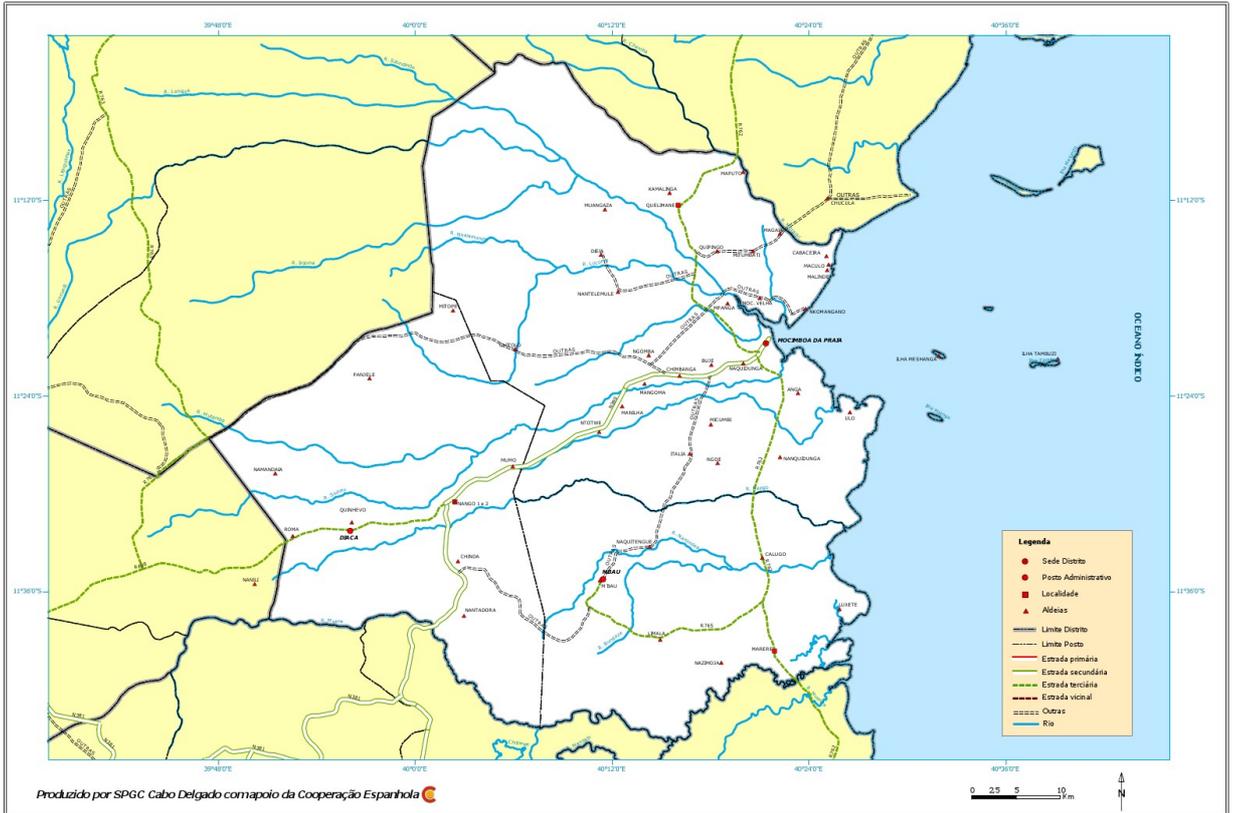


Figure 5 - The district of Mocimboa da Praia (from the *Divisão de Geografia e Cadastro*, Pemba (Department of Geography and Territorial Survey 2005))





Google maps Address Mocimboa da Praia Mozambique

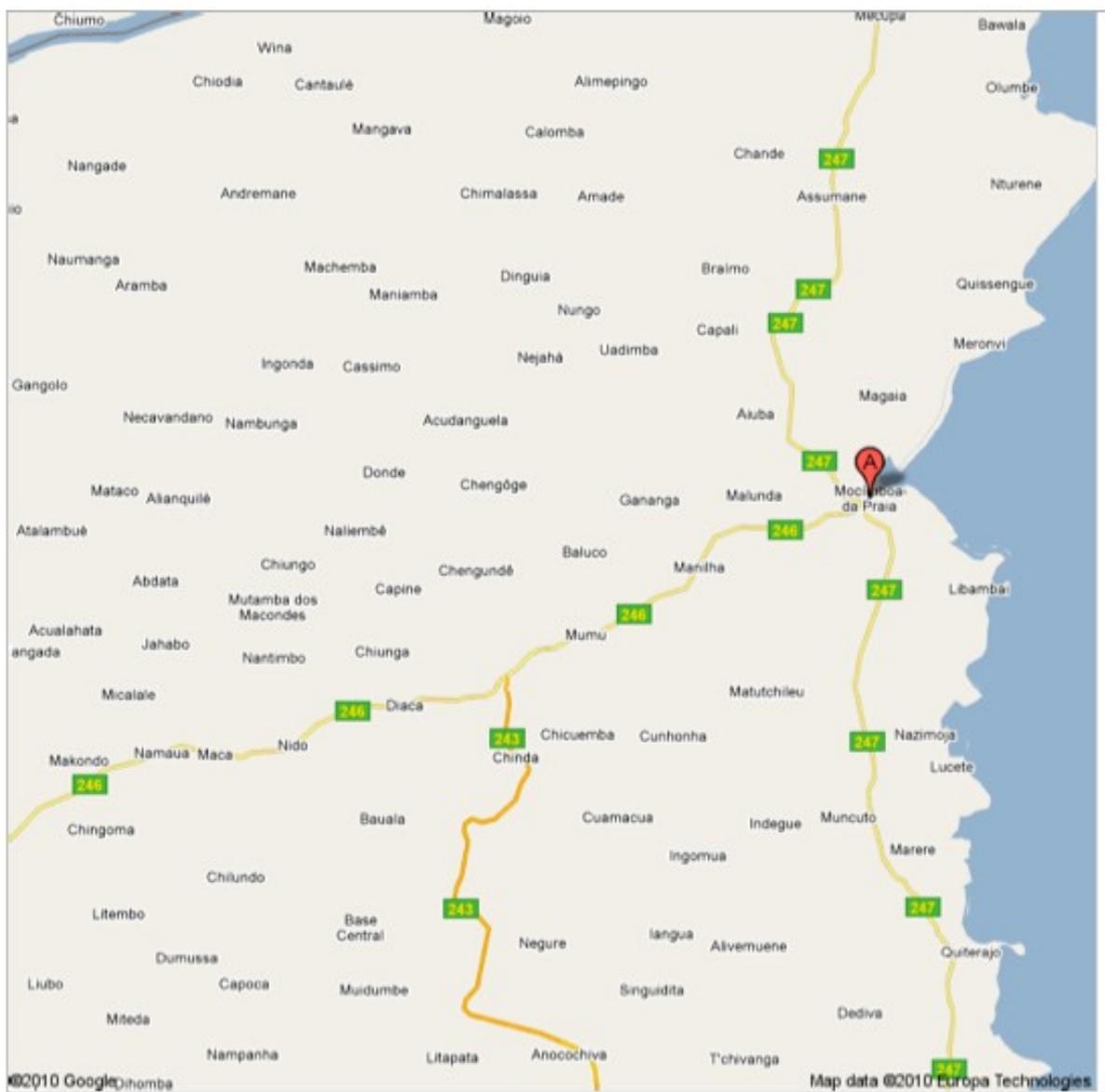


Figure 6 – Mocimboa da Praia and nearby villages

## Chapter I – Introduction

‘I hope you are interested in local politics, because there were riots in Mocímboa da Praia yesterday’. This was how I was greeted as I stepped off the plane in Pemba, the capital of the province of Cabo Delgado, in September 2005. I was coming from Mozambique's capital, Maputo, and ready to go to the northern edge of the province to start my research. ‘Do you know what happened there?’ was a question I was often asked. Violent clashes had taken place in the town where I was about to start my work and delayed my trip to Mocímboa, making the place feel close and distant at the same time. I will discuss these clashes in detail later in the thesis, and expand on their significance. The riots were widely reported within Mozambique and there were news reports in English and Portuguese and a number of internet blogs where they were discussed<sup>1</sup>. The coverage of the events reinforced categorical divisions between the people involved in the violence while failing to delve deeper into the ongoing construction of this difference, the constant reification, change of the elements that constitute and separate the two main groups involved.

The passage above marks my arrival in the province where I was about to start my research, albeit not my arrival at the actual field site. I was arriving at Pemba some 400 kilometres away from Mocímboa da Praia where I was to do my research. As with many anthropologists<sup>2</sup>, the circumstances of my arrival determined in part what

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<sup>1</sup> Mozambique News Agency, AIM reports, n. 304, 9 September 2005; News reports & clippings no. 90, from Joseph Hanlon, 15 November 2005;

<http://thereport.amnesty.org/eng/Regions/Africa/Mozambique> ;

[http://macua.blogs.com/moambique\\_para\\_todos/2005/09/sangue\\_em\\_mocmb.html](http://macua.blogs.com/moambique_para_todos/2005/09/sangue_em_mocmb.html) ;

<http://foreverpemba.blogspot.com/2007/08/mocimboa-da-praia-assassinatos.html> ;

<http://informozambique.wordpress.com/2005/12/09/dhlakama-wants-to-meet-with-guebuza/> ;

<http://comunidadeemocambicana.blogspot.com/2006/08/manifestaes-de-2005-em-mocimboa-da.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Description of arrival scenes are a constant feature in ethnographies (e. g. Malinowski 1972; Scheele 2009; Leopold 2005; West 2005; Dresch, James et al. 2000; Pieke 2000). Many anthropologists use this as a way of explaining how they got to be at their field site and what were the initial impressions and conditionings of research. The terrain is often described as a backdrop (Dresch 1988) and the

I was to look at, and how I was to look at it. I had defined my areas of research before this of course, but once I got to the field site the questions I was aiming to ask were replaced by others and there was a change in focus in my research.

I decided to do my fieldwork mostly in the district of Mocímboa da Praia in the province of Cabo Delgado, in Northern Mozambique. In Mocímboa da Praia, Mwani and Makonde appear at first glance to live well together and cooperate. However, a closer look reveals that they live parallel and not integrated lives, almost as if they segregate themselves. They interact on a daily basis, but the core of their relationships goes along ethnic lines for the most part. They maintain their separate languages, Shi-Makonde and Ki-Mwane<sup>3</sup>, and use them for daily communication, along with Portuguese and Swahili, and occasionally Makua. They have different religious beliefs and practices. The Makonde are Christian and the Mwani Muslim. Their political affiliation is also different, with the Makonde aligning with Frelimo, and the Mwani being mostly Renamo (there are some prominent members of Frelimo who are Mwani, but I couldn't find any Makonde who would admit to being Renamo). They live in distinct neighbourhoods as well, or when in the same neighbourhood, in different sections.

Mocímboa da Praia, where most of the fieldwork was carried out, is a coastal district capital of around 40,000 people<sup>4</sup>, located in the north of Cabo Delgado province (Figure 5), occupying 5,500 Km<sup>2</sup>, and is an area of transition between different groups. Mocímboa rose to importance in the colonial period because it has a good port from which some of the area's raw materials could be shipped out, and easy

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circumstances of arrival are described in similar fashion.

<sup>3</sup> These languages are closely related and mutually intelligible. They are nevertheless separate languages, classified as independent (Ethnologue 2009, Mpalume and Mandumbwe 1991, Petzell 2002, Guerreiro 1963).

<sup>4</sup> According to the census which was being conducted while I was doing fieldwork 2007. The values obtained gave about 40,000 people for the town, with a similar number for the remaining of the district.

access to other areas in the north and to Tanzania. A number of of sisal and cashew plantations were also established there. During the liberation struggle (1964-1974), and afterwards, during the civil war (1976-1992), it became a centre for refuge and safety, and many people resettled here after the peace agreements of 1992. At present it continues to be an area of transit for refugees and migrants. Here live a large number of Makonde, Mwani, Makua and Swahili. The two larger of these groups are the Makonde and Mwani and this thesis focus on them. Their ‘identities’, history, and permanence or occupation of territory in this area are diverse. So too are their religious affiliation, socio-economic activities, economic power and political links. Put this way the division between them does seem very clear cut and there are immediate, short-hand terms we can use to understand them. However if we dig a little deeper into the Mozambican colonial and post-colonial past we see that the divisions that exist in this town are not the product of some essentializing notion of what constitutes identity, but of a continuous history, which encompasses the local, the national and the global. Up until September 2005 they had been able to maintain a peaceful cohabitation, and had shared the space and resources of the town without major problems, so why are these riots relevant and what do they tell us? In this thesis I explore the ways in which the identities of both groups were formed and reformed through the recent history of this area.

### ***1. Research questions and objectives***

This thesis examines the ways in which history and memory shape the relationship between Mwani and Makonde in northern Mozambique. I use the violent events which took place on September 2005 as a starting point to examine the unfolding

social history of the region, focusing especially on the ongoing relationship between the Makonde and Mwani. Although I go beyond the observation and analysis of these riots, and look at the change in the region throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, these events are continuously on my mind and anchor my argument throughout the thesis.

I address the interactions and relationships that have been developing since before colonial times in an 'out of the way place' (Tsing 1993), far from centres of decision, where nevertheless 'national' decisions have an impact and are reinterpreted. I look at changes in the expression of ethnicity in post-war Mozambique, highlighting that conflict can erupt suddenly. I address issues of ethnicity, memory and a shared, but differently understood, history.

The questions I address in this thesis are the following: what is the nature of Mozambican politics and how have recent changes created grievances and resentments which provide the background for the violence? How have the policies implemented by Frelimo<sup>5</sup> during the early years of independence alienated part of the population in this area, who now gives their support to Renamo<sup>6</sup>? How has population change, migration and constant movement within the province changed the balance between the Mwani and Makonde? How is history understood and explained? While researching the answers to these questions this thesis bridges the past and the present, the local and the global.

In order to do this, I follow the history of Mozambique from the margins: in this case

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5 Frelimo (Frente de Libertação de Moçambique – Mozambique Liberation Front) was the movement formed in 1964 which fought the Portuguese for the independence of Mozambique. More details on the formation and activities of Frelimo will be provided in Chapter 4. Frelimo has been the ruling party of Mozambique since independence.

6 Renamo (Resistência Nacional de Moçambique – Mozambican National Resistance) was the rebel movement created in 1976 and which fought against Frelimo until 1992 when the General Peace Agreements were signed ending 16 years of civil war. Renamo is at present the main opposition party in Mozambique.

a margin abandoned by the centres of power despite its central role during the war for the liberation of the country (1964-1974)<sup>7</sup>. The perspectives on history from a place such as Mocimboa da Praia are often revealing, since the actions undertaken from the centre, from where history is mostly written, are often expressed locally, reinterpreted and felt in different ways. There is a growing body of research dealing with the effects of the state's actions at the periphery (Alexander *et al* 2000; Alexander and McGregor 1997; Worby 1994, 1998; Tsing 1993; Das and Poole 2004) and this thesis aims to contribute to this. However, a secondary aim, is to look primarily at local understandings of history and their impact on ethnic relationships. The place where I did my research is not only at the margins of power, it is also geographically at the margins of the country. I explore how, being geographically at the 'margins of the state' (Das and Poole 2004) is important in reclaiming, or rejecting, a part in the Mozambican state and its history. I also look at how local politics contribute to cleavages, and increase the distance between the people and the central government. Marginality<sup>8</sup> has been important in the construction of both Makonde and Mwani identities and is a constant feature in local discourses about identity (local and national). It is an important part in the formation of opinions and choices in local politics.

My research for this thesis builds on previous research done in Cabo Delgado. So far, however, there has been no work regarding the relationship between Makonde and Mwani, or the consequences of moving closer to the coast for the Makonde and how

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7 The northern province of Mozambique, Cabo Delgado was the place where most of the liberation struggle was fought. I will explore the impact of the struggle and the memories of it during this thesis but will focus on it especially in chapter 4.

8 Tsing (1993) develops the notion of marginality in her work in Indonesia. She explores three processes that shape marginality: "state rule, the formation of national and ethnic identities, and gender differentiation" (Tsing 1993:5) which are all present in northern Mozambique and influence local understandings of history. These become apparent in the ways in which people describe their history and in which the different local groups interact with each other.

this was looked at by the Mwani. Here I look at what happens when political change leads people to share a space which is considered to belong to one group and not the other. Along with the previous literature on Makonde and Mwani, I also rely on more general accounts of Mozambican history and ethnographic accounts of other areas of Mozambique for comparative purposes. Although the questions I am asking are not new, they have never been asked for this part of Mozambique, nor have they been asked for situations of sudden violence elsewhere in the country.

## ***2. Theoretical framework***

I had initially thought of focusing my research on the Makonde and addressing issues of cross border relationships and travel between northernmost Mozambique and Tanzania. However, as I started fieldwork in Mocímboa da Praia, I encountered a town where Makonde lived with another group, the Mwani, and where riots had just taken place and the emphasis of my research changed<sup>9</sup>. Instead of addressing issues related to borderland identities and discourses of belonging to the nation, I began to look at how a history and tradition of movement came to influence local politics and affect people's relationships and use of space, and how group boundaries were continuously formed and changed throughout the history of this area. Leopold describes his initial impressions of Arua district in the West Nile as 'the characteristic ones of violence and marginality' (2005: 4). My initial impression of Mocímboa was similar, reinforced by the stories of violence I had heard prior to my arrival.

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<sup>9</sup> Though I have seen this described more often by anthropologists doing research in South Asia (Daniel 1996; Nordstrom 2004) it is not unusual for anthropologists to change the focus of their research in the aftermath of violent events which occur during fieldwork and provide a changing insight into the area one is doing research in. For the same area of Mozambique West (2005) describes changing the focus of his research on sorcery and power because of the ways people described their histories.

Due to the way in which my fieldwork developed (more details will be given below) and the questions I began to ask, my thesis has focused on three main issues: conflict and violence; ethnicity; and memory.

It is not the first time that these three issues have been analysed concurrently<sup>10</sup> and the insights they provide will hopefully help shape the understanding of the region. Migration (internal and cross-border) also runs through this dissertation. I use it as a way to understand long term trends of movement and their impact on group relationships. Although there is a vast body of literature on each of these topics<sup>11</sup>, I aim at combining insights from all these perspectives in order to shed light on the events of 2005. This history provides the 'context' (Fabian 1995) of social and political relationships in which the riots took place<sup>12</sup>.

Research on violence has been increasingly at the forefront of ethnographic studies with a recent increase in specific studies on the issue<sup>13</sup>. The study of violence is fraught with methodological and ethical problems as anthropologists try to find the balance between analysing violence and avoiding a voyeuristic, graphic aspect to accounts of violent events and people's stories. There is the risk of aestheticizing and exoticizing some forms of violence. I was continuously concerned with portraying events in a way that was not biased favourably towards one of the communities.

David Turton's (2003) account of his experience dealing with a violent outburst while working with the Mursi shows the preoccupation anthropologists have with the

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10 For similar approaches integrating history, memory and violence see for example Leopold 2005, Ferme 2001, Shaw 2002, Alexander *et al* 2000.

11 On memory see: Halbwachs 1992; Olick and Robins 1998; Nora 1989; Connerton 1985. On ethnicity see: Anderson 1983; Ardener 1975; Barth 1969; Amselle 1991; Fardon 1987; Gellner 1983; Southall 1970; Tonkin *et al.* 1989. On history see: Evans-Pritchard 1962; Peel 1987; Cunnison 1951; Comaroff and Comaroff 1992.

12 Peters and Richards (2007), Broch-Due (2005), and Whitehead (2004) agree that violence can not be understood as deviant from normal society, but has to be understood within the history and context of that society.

13 The first collection to address specifically the anthropology of violence was published in the mid 1980s (Riches 1986) and covered various forms of violence, lacking some coherence therein (Das 1987).

description and analysis of violence, which he directly questions:

Can one present an account of violent conflict, as an involved outsider, without allowing and encouraging the reader (or the television viewer) to identify more strongly with side a than side b, and thereby helping either to demonise side b (...) or to justify horrific acts of violence by side a (...)? If not, then by writing about violence as an anthropologist in cases like these, one is more likely to help reproduce it than to prevent it. I have taken the view that one way we might hope to avoid such an outcome is to ask what the conflict meant to certain differently situated but key individuals and to make clear the practical involvement and emotional commitment of the anthropologist.' (Turton 2003: 24)

This is a hard question to answer, and an especially hard balance to strike when writing.

The emphasis when studying violence has recently changed. Violence and warfare were often described in the context of conflict resolution (Bohannan 1967) and often associated with studies of law<sup>14</sup>. In recent years and due to the increase in the number of violent conflicts in Africa<sup>15</sup> and the change of their nature, violence has become an area of focus for anthropologists. The ways war is fought have changed and the 1980s and 1990s have seen an increase in low intensity conflict, which has a deeper impact on civilian lives.

Anthropologists have therefore been departing from analysis of warfare and moving on to analysis of everyday violence (Ferme 2001; Finstrom 2008; Lubkemann 2008) by focusing on the ways in which long term conflicts, or *dirty wars*, affect people's lives and people's strategies for coping with violence as well as the long term consequences of conflict. But especially we should consider, as Lubkemann (2009) urges us to do that coping with violence is socially and culturally conditioned.

People's reactions to it, their strategies, are not developed in a vacuum, but are directly related to their experiences of previous wars, of colonialism, and to their

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<sup>14</sup> Law and warfare were addressed as different forms of resolving conflicts (Bohannan 1967).

<sup>15</sup> Yanacopulos and Hanlon (2006) place the numbers at 10 internal conflicts c. 1950, which then rose to 50 around 1992, seeing a small decline to 30 in 2003.

social relationships. Decisions like moving away are influenced by age, gender, experience. They are shaped like other human behaviour by a diversity of factors. That said we also need to remember that situations of war are extreme situations and that these decisions carry more weight than they normally would, and that as many anthropological research dealing with violence has established there is a strong potential for trauma in a warzone.

In Mozambique studies of violence have documented the range of experiences throughout the country (Englund 2005) and the fact that violent events were diverse and strategies for coping with them localized (Geffray 1991; Nordstrom 1997; Englund 2002; Lubkemann 2008). Though some research tried to bring together war as a unifying experience (Nordstrom 1997) what comes out of most studies is the difference between regions and the lack of a unifying discourse when it comes to narratives of violence.

The north of the country had a profound experience of the liberation struggle (1964-1974) and still has strong memories of this period, which are reflected in present day relationships between its inhabitants. The centre-north and centre, on the other hand, were hardly affected in a direct way by the liberation struggle, but bore the brunt of the fighting and displacement during the civil war (1976-1992), with some of the most brutal events during the civil war taking place in these provinces. This has mapped out in expressions of support for Frelimo or Renamo during electoral campaigns following the peace agreements of 1992 (Mazula 1995). Most studies of violence focus on people's experiences of violent events or long protracted wars.

Here I try to propose a way to address longstanding tensions which linger as a result of violence which has long since ended, but which can nevertheless find new outlets and produce more violence. I cover different forms and experiences of violence and

the memories and transformations which result from them. From direct warfare in Cabo Delgado during the liberation struggle to experiencing the consequences of a civil war, to the enduring memories of these wars and finally the sudden eruption of riots. The ways people experienced, discussed and conceptualised these forms of violence were consequently diverse, as were their consequences for present day group interactions.

The change in anthropological perspective brought forth by the post-modern approaches in the 1980s (Clifford and Marcus 1986; Marcus and Fisher 1986; Geertz 1983) has marked a departure from the timeless, bounded studies of the past, and has affected the ways in which anthropologists look at violence. There is a stronger emphasis on interaction between groups, and the influence of global and regional events which negate isolation on the part of the groups studied (Gupta and Ferguson 1992; Amselle 1990; Tsing 2005)<sup>16</sup>.

Along with a fast growing anthropological theory addressing violence, there is an increasing body of literature linking violence and the construction of ethnicity (Fearon and Laitin 2000). This is an aspect that features prominently throughout this dissertation, with Makonde and Mwani asserting their identities by opposition towards each other, and also as a reflection of events in the different historical periods. If for a long time 'the constitution of ethnic groups and the nature of the boundaries between them have not been correspondingly investigated' (Barth 1969: 9)<sup>17</sup> they have been increasingly the target of research and analysis. The idea that one

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<sup>16</sup> It could be argued that this was always the case, and that it was the anthropological bias that led people to investigate different groups as isolated units (*cf.* Southall 1970). Recent studies such as Hutchinson's on the Nuer (1996), West's on the Makonde (2005) have emphasised this point, as well as the historical tensions present at the time of the initial research. These tensions though they were there at the time of the research conducted by Evans-Pritchard on the Nuer (1940) and Dias on the Makonde (1964) were nevertheless written out of the ethnographic accounts in exchange for a much neater, structural-functionalist depiction.

<sup>17</sup> Barth's (1969) seminal essay about the making of boundaries between groups has been hugely influential and though it has been criticised and updated (Vermeulen and Govers 1994) some of his assertions still stand.

can study a group in isolation as an artificially bounded entity, far from the influence of the local, national, and world politics has long been abandoned by anthropologists (Barth 1969; Southall 1970; Colson 1970; Amselle 1990; Ardener 2007). Ethnic groups, no matter how marginal in relation to the centre of the state are no longer perceived as 'bounded cultural wholes' (Gupta and Ferguson 1997:1-5) and there is an effort to understand the spaces of contact and the outcomes for the various groups present in terms of the understanding of their own identities (Amselle 1999) as is the case in Mocímboa da Praia, where two or more groups share the same geographical area and have a strong, longstanding interaction.

Ethnicity is notoriously difficult to define in a way that is 'not either ambiguous or tautologous' (Fardon 1987: 170). There are three main approaches to ethnicity: the instrumentalist, in which ethnic categories are linked with political competition; the constructivist, which stresses the changes in ethnic categories; and the primordialist, which brings to the forefront the emotional aspects of ethnic allegiance (Ferguson and Whitehead 1999 [1992]: xix). Of these three approaches I am closer to the constructivist approach, looking at belonging from a historical perspective and addressing the changes that develop in time and through contact<sup>18</sup>. The categories defining the groups change with time, as do boundaries between the groups. The boundaries between groups persist despite contact because 'categorical ethnic distinctions do not depend on absence of mobility, contact and information but do entail social processes of exclusion and incorporation whereby discrete categories are maintained *despite* changing participation and membership in the case of individual life histories' (Barth 1969:9-10).

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<sup>18</sup> Primordialist approaches to social categories see them as natural and unchanging, a far cry from what is argued in this thesis. This approach explains violence between ethnic groups as coming from conflicts between these unchanging, essential characteristics (Fearon and Laitin 2000).

I take ethnicity to be constructed relationally (Malkki 1995) and subsequently reshaped throughout different historical periods/events, depending on the differing experiences each group has of events. Ethnicity is often said to be 'socially constructed' since social categories and 'their membership rules, content and valuation are the product of human action and speech, and [...] as a result they can and change over time' (Fearon and Laitin 2000: 848). It is in situations where there is an opposing entity that ethnicity becomes increasingly important, defined more sharply when there is another group to offer a counterpoint to whichever characteristics are claimed to form part of each group's ethnicity.

This makes it easier to understand why it is that ethnicity is so often implicated when it comes to violence. Being a process and a non-fixed (in time and space) entity, ethnicity is eminently related to history, and especially to the ways in which different groups relate to each other as a result of a series of events. This aspect is central to the definition of identity and it is at the centre of the events discussed in this thesis.

I realised early on my fieldwork that it would be impossible for me to write about the Mwani or the Makonde without including the other group, especially when dealing with their relationship in this district, and in the semi-urban and rural settings they share. The exchanges, the mutual influences which are present in the everyday life, and the impact from various political strategies undertaken by the Mozambican government and in some cases the global events all have a bearing in the ever changing relationships between these groups. These are formed and reformed according to local dynamics and events (both local and global). Though a larger part of my research focuses on the Makonde, the Mwani have a constant presence, and in some occasions act as a mirror image of the events the Makonde are experiencing, since theirs is a different history for reasons which will become clear as the narrative

progresses.

Due to my understanding of ethnicity, its relationship to the riots and the ways in which ethnicity is defined here, this thesis has a strong historical<sup>19</sup> bent. I argue that an understanding of the riots can only be achieved through a thorough acquaintance with the historical circumstances that led to the current demographic composition of Mocímboa and the relationships between the groups inhabiting the town. The memories of past conflicts and events shape the relationships between the groups living in town and their differing understandings, expression and construction of group identity. This is not unusual in current anthropological studies (e.g. Hutchinson 1996; West 2005; Pratten 2007) where a concern with history provides the basis for analysis and the tools with which to make sense of current events. Even if 'the past is a foreign country' (Lowenthal 1985) it is one that affects the present, and through the permanence of social memory becomes part of interpretations of present events and relationships. It is hard to avoid looking to the past for the roots of current explanations or for the reasons behind tensions and ruptures.

There is an ongoing interest from anthropologists and historians in the relationship between history, memory, violence and modes of representation (Leopold 2005; White 2000). This dissertation does not address war specifically<sup>20</sup>, but will nevertheless attempt to contextualize the period surrounding the liberation struggle and the civil war and its importance for present day concepts of identity and group relationships. It addresses in more detail the memories of these periods and the changes in local level personal and group relationships due to the various forms of conflict.

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19 The relationship between history and ethnicity has been thoroughly investigated (Tonkin et al. 1989).

20 Though this has been the object of many ethnographic studies (Nordstrom 1997, Riches 1986).

The relationship between history and anthropology has been a changing one. It has been a long time since ethnographic research was done without recourse to history<sup>21</sup> and there has been an increase in the attention paid to history when it comes to analysing social relationships and interactions. Structural-functionalist approaches which privileged a synchronic view and analysis of a given society have been left behind, being replaced by an approach that highlights processes and values long-term analyses. Despite the ahistorical perspective which dominated structural-functionalist studies, Evans-Pritchard (1962) argued for the use of history alongside anthropological approaches and for the relevance of bringing these two disciplines together. The convergence between history and anthropology has been developing with anthropologists addressing issues of change and historians looking into societies beyond the western world, and investigating the histories of the Middle East, Africa and Asia (Cohn 1980). Most historians working on these areas have concerns similar to those of the anthropologists when it comes to knowledge of the local languages and uses of other sources along with archives and much has been written about work with oral histories (e.g. White 2000; Vansina 1985) with an increasing number of historians making use of them (e. g. Alexander et al. 2000; Moore and Vaughn 1994). Historical research becomes a fundamental part of most current anthropological research<sup>22</sup>. Some anthropologists<sup>23</sup> have a longstanding engagement with the society they work with and are able to witness changes through decades of work and

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21 Early examples of ethnographic work were mostly synchronic and disregarded history as an important feature in the societies studied. These were seen as 'people without history' (Wolf 1982). In light of the developments history was undergoing at this time with the *École des Annales* it is not surprising that anthropologists disregarded social history as irrelevant to the purposes of their discipline. It was only at a later stage that historical considerations came into the understanding of societies.

22 The neglect of historical contextualization has been linked with the initial understandings of the tribe and the reification of its boundaries by ethnographers and colonial administrators (Fardon 1987: 172-173).

23 Elizabeth Colson (1970), Wendy James (2007), David Parkin (2000) come to mind, among many other examples, when thinking about long term fieldworkers whose work traces the history of the people they work with due to their long term engagement.

friendship. However, most anthropologists, especially first time fieldworkers, have no way of understanding the changes that the part of the world we are looking at and the people we are working with have experienced even in the relatively recent past without using what written material is available and cross-referencing it with interviews and observations from the field.

More than the written history, however, I focus on how history is remembered and how it remains in the imagination of those living in this part of the country and often departs from the written record through the spread of rumours and old tales. I look at how people construct different versions of the same events and how their experiences of the colonial period, the liberation struggle and the post independence are at times radically different, and affect the construction of difference between the groups living in Mocimboa. The powerful creative aspect of memory, inseparable here from history becomes part of the argument presented in this thesis<sup>24</sup>.

Though the interest in memory, especially social memory, is a longstanding one in the last three decades an increasing number of studies have explored the different aspects of social memory (Olick and Robbins 1998) and shaped the ways in which history is perceived and analysed.

Halbwachs (1925), in one of the earlier works about social memory, defined history and social memory as distinct. History is the remembered past 'that is no longer part of our lives' while memory is taken to mean the living past. However most scholars do not make a clear distinction between them (Olick and Robbins 1998). I will address mostly what has been termed autobiographical memory and the ways in

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24 There has been an increased preoccupation with historical context when it comes to studies of violence, and it has been argued that 'bringing history into the analysis does not rule out, but may enhance, efforts to link war to various aspects of social and cultural life such as ecology, social organisation, politics and cosmology. [...] historical awareness would lead to more accurate and realistic assessment of these areas' (Ferguson and Whitehead 1999 [1992]: xii) since it would provide context in terms of continuity and change.

which it frames historical memory through experience while attributing meanings to the past and re-framing events. I address its impact on definitions of identity and the ways this impacts on group relationships and is used in situations of negotiation and conflict.

There is an overarching concern in this thesis about migration and conflict in a variety of forms and its change through time in this area of Mozambique. Migration has been a constant phenomenon in Northern Mozambique for a long time, as well as elsewhere in the country (Covane 2001; Lubkemann 2008; Rita-Ferreira 1975, 1982). However the ways in which people moved, and the reasons for moving have been distinctive over time, and sometimes even during the same period there were distinctive reasons and features to this movement. Addressing demographic change and its implications became a way for me to understand and make sense of changes. The way it helps map out change in local level group relationships was fundamental for my understanding of the area where I worked. Migration patterns changed in relation to the pre-colonial period, and became more intense in response to some unpopular policies from the Portuguese. The emphasis on forced labour and tax led many to flee to the other side of the border. At the same time Tanzania presented higher levels of development, and better chances of improving one's life through labour. Lubkemann (2008) suggests that migration can provide an insight into the change, and allow us to map changing relationships between the populations occupying it. It was with a similar rationale that I looked at issues of migration and movement. Looking at the population changes in Mocímboa allowed me to understand how relationships were built and changed, and also trace back histories that are marked by moving. Moving across the border and internally has personal implications, but it is also something that changes the community<sup>25</sup>. It starts by

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25 A large body of literature has investigated issues of cross-border movement and dynamics in

allowing some of its members to cross the international divide, and move into a different economic sphere. At the same time it makes them realize how their new earning potential might change their position in their home communities.

During the period covered by this thesis, important changes have occurred which have changed local relationships and which are inscribed in the landscape as well. Whether this is as a change in the settlements, such as has happened in the Makonde area, with more enclosed, and more heavily populated villages, as described by West (2005), or just from the view of the refugee camps across the border described by Englund (2002), there are marks in the landscape that are a result of war and migration (Lubkeman 2008; Englund 2002). The changes which are inscribed in the landscape serve as reminders, increasingly linked with memories of the wars and of the peaceful period which ensued.

Throughout this thesis the concept of ownership is an important one to consider. The owners (*donos*) of the land, of history, of themselves are responsible for a variety of things. For Mwani and Makonde this idea pervaded relationships and concepts of personhood. It became enmeshed with ideas of belonging, identity and legitimacy. This idea will be developed throughout this thesis and linked with space, migration and especially history. Though this is an idea that is often associated with material possessions it was used in the place where I have done my research as a more general concept. It was associated with possession of an identity, a place and a being. It was often cited when discussing local tensions and when describing personal choices.

More than a material possession, ownership in this case was associated with various aspects of personal identity and group identity. The word *dono/dona* (Portuguese for

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Mozambique (Englund 2002; McGregor 1994, 1998; Murray 1995; McDermott Hughes 1999, 2006), elsewhere in Africa (James 2007; Leopold 2005; Nugent 2002; Nugent and Asiwaju 1996; Lentz 2003; Richards 1996), in Europe (Donham and Wilson 1994, 1998, 1999) and the Middle East (Stokes 1994) providing insights as to the specific issues that arise while living at the border and the ways in which anthropologists have been able to explain and illuminate these questions.

owner) was used in diverse ways by Mwani and Makonde.

### ***3. Makonde and Mwani in ethnographic literature***

The Makonde have been much written on<sup>26</sup>. The Mwani, however, have not attracted similar interest<sup>27</sup>, and far less has been published about them. I focused more on the Makonde myself, for two reasons. The first was, that although there had been some consistent ethnographic work for this group since the colonial period – with the first major ethnographic account published in the 1960s – and plenty of recent work, questions of migration and cross border contacts were addressed only marginally, and research had been conducted mostly in the Makonde 'traditional' territory, the Mueda Plateau (Figure 2). The second reason had to do with their particular situation during the liberation struggle and after independence. They took an active part in the struggle and were among the main fighters, but after independence they resumed their marginal position within Mozambican society, with very little participation in the affairs of the government. The small part they play in national politics along with the remoteness of the area where they live, partly accounts for their perception as 'primitive' and 'exotic'<sup>28</sup>.

When Harry West set out to do research in the north of Mozambique, in the 1990s, he

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26 Specific work on the Makonde includes Dias (1964, 1970); West (1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2008); Kingdon (2002); Israel (2006, 2006b, 2008, 2009, 2010). There are also a number of works of regional and national history where the Makonde feature prominently (Medeiros 1997, Adam 1993).

27 Possible reasons for the lack of research among the Mwani may be linked with their smaller numbers and relationship with the colonial administration. The Mwani were considered less difficult than the Makonde, and the relationship between the coastal population and the Portuguese colonial administration was considerably less problematic than with the Makonde. The Makonde were also considered more exotic and therefore more interesting to work with (Dias 1964; West 2004, 2005).

28 In the following chapter I will discuss some of the early stereotypes associated with the Makonde, and the way they were seen by late 19<sup>th</sup> century explorers and early 20<sup>th</sup> century administrators, missionaries and administrators.

was told that the Makonde were a rude and backward group, even ‘primitive’. They were described as: ‘traditional’, ‘fiercely proud and proudly fierce’ and ‘resistant to the modern world’ (2004: 2). About a decade later I was told very similar things when describing my proposed research to members of the University in Maputo. I was told this was one of the more naturally beautiful areas of Mozambique, but also I would find the region very rough and underdeveloped. Looking at pictures from the 1950s, I was struck by how much looked similar. However the effects of two wars, and different political options, have changed the face of this area, and they have especially changed the social geography of the district.

The Makonde of Mozambique are both an extremely well recognized name, mostly for their work in sculpture, and an unfamiliar people. Because of this lack of real knowledge [about them] they become exoticized and are frequently referred to as violent, elusive, dangerous, and strange (West 2004; Chambino 1968). They are doubly marginal: territorially, they live as far from the capital of the country as you can, inhabiting the extreme north; and socially, they are still considered a people that resists modernity. However, despite their elusiveness and marginality, there are a few thorough ethnographic accounts of the Mozambican Makonde, along with a number of similar accounts on the Makonde from Tanzania.

There is one comprehensive ethnographic account with four volumes, the first two of which were published in 1964<sup>29</sup>. Jorge Dias and his team – Manuel Viegas Guerreiro and Margot Dias – went on several missions to the area occupied by the Makonde during the 1950s<sup>30</sup>. Much has changed since then. Dias starts his preface by stating

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29 Along with the 4 volumes which were to be a complete ethnographic account of the Makonde, Jorge Dias, Margot Dias and Manuel Viegas Guerreiro also published a number of shorter works on stories, language, technology (1962, 1963b, 1974).

30 Dias's fieldwork was done during a series of ethnographic missions in the 1950s at a time when the colonial administration in the plateau was already well established, although its reach was still not total in the area, and would never be. The 1950s were a period of intense change, and a time when increasing numbers of Makonde were migrating to Tanganyika in search for work. These changes

that he acknowledges the fact that the Makonde live in a remote location and that this had implications for them. He states: 'It was [...] a frontier region, with issues of migration and several kinds of acculturation' (Dias 1964:7). However, in the ethnography he does not deal with migration or the changes which were underway in the 1950s in detail, or the fact that the Makonde were not a bounded, isolated cultural whole. This is not uncommon with ethnographic work of the period. Dias' main reason for choosing the Makonde had to do with the lack of ethnographic knowledge at that point. For the south of Mozambique, Dias claimed, there was better and more diverse ethnographic work.

Although Dias' work is useful, there is little problematizing of the history of the Makonde. However, this is brought forth in West's work, with a more detailed analysis of the history of the Makonde, and a stronger understanding of the relationship between them and the colonial administration, which was lacking from Dias' accounts. Dias' work focused more on the 'tradition' than on the changes in power structure, economy and religious belief that were underway in the 1950s as a result of the imposition of colonial rule and of migration to Tanganyika. More recent work by West (2005, 2007), Kingdon (2002), and Israel (2006, 2009) has brought to light more current issues and updated Dias' work.

West's most recent work on the Makonde (2005, 2007) focuses on issues of power and witchcraft and presents a very detailed, carefully crafted historical account of the Makonde. Arguing that power and witchcraft are understood as linked, and that powerful people are considered to dominate the 'invisible realm'. He then charts how

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however are not reflected in Dias's account. Instead Dias and his team present a picture with very little presence of the changes that were occurring at the time and which would eventually lead to the liberation struggle (which I will cover in chapter 4). In Dias's work there is very little critical assessment of the situation and what he presents is a picture devoid of tension and change introduced by contact, migration and the imposition of the colonial administration. In his reports of the time (1957, 1958, 1960, 1961), however, he seems very aware of the problems (West 2004c).

this language and understanding changed through time, and how this is enmeshed with political, social and economic changes in the north of Mozambique since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Having done his initial fieldwork in the mid-1990s after the peace agreements and the first elections, he observed at first hand a period of intense change. The period following the peace agreements was one of intense political change and of getting used to a multiparty system where Frelimo, the party which had been in power since independence and whose claims to power were backed by its role in fighting for the country's independence, was fighting elections against Renamo, the rebel movement against whom it had fought a civil war which was long and costly (in human and economic terms). West's earlier work addresses issues of change, kinship, power and authority and representation.

Kingdon (2002) works on Makonde art and addresses issues of migration throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He does so in the context of the changes in artwork and interpretation of the Makonde sculpture, and although he does provide very useful information on this respect, did not look into returnee migrants and refugees, but instead worked with Makonde who had moved to Tanzania and stayed there. In summary, although there has been plenty of serious, recent, ethnographic work with the Makonde, little of it deals with aspects of movement and displacement.

If the Makonde are mentioned in an extensive literature, this is not the case for the Mwani, about whom a lot less is known. The literature on the Mwani is considerably less rich and to my knowledge only Conceição (2006) wrote on them, with a focus on their livelihood. His ethnographic account focuses on economic activities and livelihoods of the Mwani (mostly fishing and seafaring activities). It brings to light some of the changes they have experienced in recent times and the impact of the Frelimo's policies in the post-independence. However, having been written as a part

of a PhD thesis defended in 1993, the research does not cover the post-conflict period and therefore does not address issues of return and the changes in group relationships it brought forward. The Mwani are sometimes mentioned in literature of the region (Medeiros 1997; Chambino 1968), and especially literature addressing connections within the Swahili coast complex. However, this literature seldom focuses specifically on the group or expands on their history and relationships with other groups in Cabo Delgado.

#### ***4. Fieldwork sites and methods***

This thesis is based on 11 months of fieldwork in Northern Mozambique, which I started in August 2005. Most of the fieldwork took place in the district capital of Mocímboa da Praia. However I have also conducted interviews and visited the villages of the district and spent some time in the nearby district of Nangade to collect material for comparative purposes. I travelled to Nangade, Mueda and Muidumbe, to gather some material for comparison, although my work in these districts was considerably less intensive than in Mocímboa, and I use the material collected there simply for context. Since I intended to do research on cross-border relationships and identity, I had aimed at doing fieldwork in one of the semi-urban centres in northern Mozambique, specifically in the province of Cabo Delgado, close to the Tanzanian border. The choices were Mueda and Mocímboa da Praia (Map 1). One of these towns would be my base and from there I would travel to nearby villages. I will describe my reasons for choosing this area of Mozambique and especially the district of Mocímboa da Praia in more detail later in this section.

After arriving in Maputo, and following contacts in the University (Universidade Eduardo Mondlane), I was advised to choose Mocímboa da Praia for the type of enquiry I was about to start. Mocímboa had a number of interesting aspects which connected well with my work. It had two very different groups with diverse, longstanding relationships across the border with Tanzania, and unlike Mueda, the other semi-urban centre, it had not been the target of much research<sup>31</sup>. In Mueda 'people are tired of questions', I was often told.

The situation I encountered and the changes it produced in my views and research fits with what Pieke (2000) terms 'serendipity'. Doing fieldwork in China at the time of the outbreak of the People's Movement in June 1989, he had the chance to observe it unfold and describes it as a total event, one that 'imposes its interpretive frame upon the whole society' (2000: 135; *cf.* Mauss 2002 [1954]). This was akin to the situation I encountered, with one important difference: I arrived in the field after the event took place. Yet it still framed my understanding of the local society, and shaped the way I did my research<sup>32</sup>. Starting fieldwork immediately after the riots I felt I could not address the issue directly, and at the same time it was of central importance, an event with the capacity to illustrate several elements present in the local power structure, and in the relationships between the two groups who inhabit the town. The local politics, the history, the socio economic structure could all be somehow linked to this event.

Like Pieke (2000), I was, nevertheless, advised repeatedly, not to ask people directly

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31 Mueda has been a target of intensive research because of the role played by the district in the liberation struggle campaign. It is often seen as the cradle of Frelimo and of the struggle. Research covers the historiography of the struggle, development and political change, witchcraft and representation (Adam 1993; Adam and Gentili 1983; Littlejohn 1988; West 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2008; Israel 2006, 2008, 2009).

32 Robben and Nordsstrom assert that 'fieldwork conditions weave their way into the entire anthropological endeavour (1995: 3), explaining that the views of the anthropologists are eminently subjective and dependent on fieldwork conditions, therefore justifying the need for an emphasis on the fieldwork situation and the anthropologists' positionality.

about it, lest they became suspicious of my intentions and uncooperative with the other elements of my research. Despite all the advice of this nature from NGO workers in Pemba, and government officials in Mocímboa, people were more open about the riots than I expected. In the first week after I arrived I was told different versions of what had happened and personal experiences. I also visited the areas which had been most affected, the *lines*<sup>33</sup> where most houses had been burnt, and slowly started forming a picture of what had happened and of how people related to the events.

Through thinking about the initial stages of organizing, and arranging my first foray into the field site I was led to understand the divisions in the town - ethnic, socio-economic, religious, historical. In a way this conditioned fieldwork. It framed my initial understanding and diverted me from my original aims, and into different questions. I could conceivably have reached the same understanding about local politics and inter-group relationships, resentments and grievances, but the riots became a marker and fleshed these out in such a way that these tensions were present when I started my work, instead of allowing me to understand these realities slowly and through daily contact. Initial stereotypes which came out in conversations were slowly understood, and I was able to add nuance to an otherwise very black and white picture.

The situation was not immediately peaceful, and there was no easy transition into research – there was plenty of suspicion, and negotiation was needed. Although this can be true of many research situations, and there is the need of a period of adjustment both from the researcher and from the people he or she engages with, in

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<sup>33</sup> In Chapter 7 I will describe the spatial organization of the town and the implications of the divisions in different neighbourhoods. The *lines* refer to the neatly alined rows along which houses are built.

light of what had happened recently in town, this was not at all surprising. Letters from the University (both the University of Oxford and the Universidade Eduardo Mondlane<sup>34</sup> where I had become a research associate), credentials from the government (a letter from the provincial governor's office, which was later stamped by the local government officials in the various districts I worked) had to be produced most of the time in the first months of fieldwork and early visits to villages. People I was aiming to interview would ask for the credentials before they agreed to speak with me. When they were unable to read they would generally ask a younger member of the family to read them to make sure what I was doing had been approved by the state authorities. Makonde, especially older Makonde men, were very keen on seeing the credentials and would not talk to me otherwise, being quite suspicious of my work and my motives for researching this part of the country. It was only in the later stages of fieldwork, when people knew me already and were familiar with what I was doing, that they stopped asking for credentials.

I also had to establish a good working relationship with the local political hierarchy. One short example illuminates the need to make my presence and aims of the research very clear to the local authorities. When I first went to speak with the local Deputy for Culture (Lilandoma) I was scolded for not having gone to meet him before, since I had arrived in town a few days earlier. This was despite his office being closed most of the time and the district administrator (whom I was expected to meet first) not being in town. I was then questioned extensively, on my research. It was only after the arrival of my research assistant, Eusébio Tissa Kairo, that Lilandoma stopped treating me with suspicion. In my dealings with local political authorities (district administrator, council president, party leaders, and various

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34 The letter from Universidade Eduardo Mondlane was especially important since, much more than Oxford, it was familiar for the people I was working with and demonstrated my acceptance by a national institution.

members of the political hierarchy) I became increasingly aware of the need to be very clear with respect to my aims, but at the same time to remain sufficiently vague that I could pursue my research without much interference.

This was a difficult time in the town, with the politicians frantically trying to bring the groups that had clashed during the riots together, and orchestrating meetings and events to discuss possible problems. All this was told and retold as rumour, and there were various occasions when people feared more violence, but fortunately the violence did not occur again. The causes for it are still there, the main problems were not addressed. Yet the riots were the escalation of a situation, and people don't want to go back to them. Local celebrations of history such as the Mozambican heroes day (3 February), Mozambican women day (7 April), labour day (1 May) were celebratory, and an attempt to bring people together, and to again make peace. The days before them were filled with gossip, rumour and apprehension as people feared more demonstrations and disturbances.

When I returned for another, shorter, stint of fieldwork in the Summer of 2007, there was once more talk of possible problems, and people were very apprehensive. One of the neighbourhood presidents<sup>35</sup>, half-way through an interview, went inside his house and fetched a bow and arrows, telling me he was perfectly prepared if the people from Renamo came and tried to cause trouble again. There were meetings all over town, to prepare for the elections, but also to ensure that there would be peace. Protest marches were called again, although they were subsequently cancelled.

The riots had another, more practical implication, which had to do with the choice of where to live. Being constantly told it was too insecure to go there and not really

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<sup>35</sup> The town is divided into 6 neighbourhoods each with a neighbourhood president who is responsible for the people living there. It has one more neighbourhood planned, the construction of which was beginning in the summer of 2007.

knowing the town, I approached a group of nuns working there about the possibility of staying with them. I lived with them during fieldwork. Although there is much that can be said about neutrality and positionality while conducting field research, and how a neutral position can never really be achieved, this was the closest setting I found to being apart from the recent events. The sisters provided me with direct knowledge of the town, an initial network of people to work with and another layer of understanding of the town's dynamics. I felt I could not, upon arrival, live with a local family. Choosing one of the neighbourhoods to live in would also be complicated, as they are divided among the groups, and I was all too conscious of my ignorance of these divisions, and their implications.

Working with a research assistant did help avoid some of the local pitfalls, as he was very aware of local politics and procedure, and managed to resolve a number of situations by claiming allegiance to a group, or in other situations downplaying this allegiance because he was from elsewhere in the province. Tissa was Makonde, but from outside the area, with extensive experience of working with various research teams, and knew far better than I 'how to ask' (Briggs 1986) questions, and how to break my vague searches into a number of smaller, more direct questions. Tissa was very good at reassuring people, questioned them gently and quietly, translated quickly, and was generally good at giving me advice, and deflecting major problems. He was also invaluable for explaining the work we were doing, and why it was important.

Tissa had to deal with some of the local politics as well, especially in the beginning and when looking for a place to live. He was told not to move to neighbourhoods which were predominantly Mwani, and where he, as a Makonde, 'would not be protected', if anything happened. He stayed in Muengue, a neighbourhood with a

similar proportion of Makonde and Mwani. Coming from different parts of town, our morning exchanges of information were extremely valuable for understanding local politics. We would draw from similar but also diverse networks, and from meeting different people in various areas of the town when we were not working together to discuss, and paint a more complete picture of the town.

Having initially planned to work with the Makonde, it was only after my arrival at Mocímboa that I realised the need to work with the Mwani as well in order to be able to gather a more complete picture of life in the area, and of the relationships between the people inhabiting it which had led to the violent clashes of September. However, despite my efforts<sup>36</sup>, I was unable to establish equally close relationships with the two groups. This will become clear as the thesis develops. I have, nonetheless, interviewed extensively with both groups, and tried to keep a balance of perspectives regarding age, gender, ethnicity, life history and experiences. Although I try to present a balance between Mwani and Makonde throughout this thesis, there is a bias towards the Makonde. The circumstances of my arrival to the field, the tensions which were present for the duration of my time there, all led me to spend more time with the Makonde than Mwani. I did structure the interviews in a way that would give me a balance of different experiences and perspectives, but it was not always possible to get a picture as complete as I would have wished.

I gathered data in various forms and tried to triangulate all the different types of data in order to present a fuller picture. The forms of data collection I employed included: participant observation of everyday practices and interactions, of special events (celebrations, commemorations of public holidays, meetings); in-depth and semi-

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<sup>36</sup> It is not at all unusual for anthropologists to develop closer relationships with one group when working in multiethnic areas (Parkin 1990). In ideal circumstances, it would be good to be able to establish close relationships with all groups present. However, if in situations when all is peaceful this is not always achievable, it is even harder in tense environments.

structured interviews (285 in total<sup>37</sup>) with people of different ages, life experiences and histories. Of these interviews some lasted for several hours and were done in different sessions, and with further visits to the interviewee. Conversely some were extremely short and did not warrant a repeated visit as they merely provided repeated information and confirmed data collected previously. This helped me acquire a stronger understanding of local level relationships and politics as well as validating the data collected through interviews.

I complemented the data from fieldwork with archival material and secondary literature on Mozambique in general, on the area where I was doing research and comparative ethnographic literature. Lubkemann (2008) makes a good case for the need to use different sources in order to understand better the issues we are addressing. For his research in the Machaze district in Manica, central Mozambique, along with collecting life histories he read extensively, especially focusing on colonial reports for the district. I did not have the chance to focus on similar reports for the district I did my research on, having been told at the *Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique* (Mozambican Historical Archives) that the material for the district of Mocímboa da Praia was not catalogued and that I could be lucky and find what I needed or spend months in one of the rooms of the archives and find nothing. Though this limited my access to archival materials, I was able to read a few reports, and upon my return to Lisbon used the archives and especially the materials housed at the *Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa* (Geographical Society of Lisbon) and *Museu Nacional de Etnologia* (National Ethnology Museum) where some of the reports from Dias's missions are still held. I also made use of the materials

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37 Not all these interviews were equally relevant – some were extremely informative, and others were frustrating and difficult. They varied in length and depth, and while in some cases I went back several times to talk to my informants, in others I conducted a single interview. Some of my interviewees became people I visited repeatedly and who became friends.

(especially bachelor's, master's and doctoral theses) housed at my old university in Lisbon – *Instituto de Ciências Sociais e Políticas*, which had, in the 1960s and early 1970s been the school that prepared the staff for colonial administration, and which, because of this, has a wealth of material produced by its former students who went on to work in Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau and S. Tome and Principe.

The combination of perspectives from ethnographic fieldwork and use of archival and secondary sources allows for a richer analysis of the topic and geographical area of research by providing a more nuanced approach.

Below I present a structure of the thesis, and a brief account of each chapter, and address the specific theoretical issues raised by each chapter briefly.

## ***5. Thesis outline***

Each chapter of this thesis encompasses sub-arguments which are especially relevant to the issues discussed there. I discuss the relevant literature within these chapters and not in this introduction, since this will allow me to address the issues directly within a context. I have chosen to do this so that there would be a clearer progression within the thesis.

This thesis could have been solely about the violence of September 2005. However I wished to go beyond the discussion of events and present the history of the changing relationships between Mwani and Makonde and how this change has created the possibility for the eruption of violence. It would be too narrow to reduce the relationships and history of the area simply to the violent events of 2005. Though

important, and with a strong impact in Cabo Delgado, they are but one aspect of a long-term relationship between the different groups inhabiting the district of Mocimboa da Praia. I look specifically at how these relationships were established and how they changed over time.

This thesis progresses chronologically. This was a way to best make sense of the changes and connections that occur in this part of Mozambique, and it is an intrinsic part of my argument throughout. For the issues addressed here, I realised that the best approach would be to divide the chapters according to periods of Mozambican history. This present a clear division within the country's history which proves helpful when addressing local change, events and relationships. There is a fluid evolution that cannot be contained by a strict periodisation, though. Events and relationships are built throughout different periods and sometimes, as will become obvious, events described in the earlier chapters are referred back to in the later chapters. Still, a structure is necessary, and this was the approach I thought would bring the most clarity. Along with this, and because part of my argument addresses the need to look at long term patterns (*long durée*) of relationships in order to understand present day events, a chronological approach also makes better sense. By taking a broad historical perspective I aim at exploring the changes and in that way highlighting the local social and political connections which contributed to shaping this area.

In Chapter II I address the early history of this part of the country up until 1891, looking specifically at the pre-colonial period. I describe how the Makonde and Mwani came to occupy different areas of this province and how that affected their perceptions of identity and was expressed in forms of description and relationship between the groups.

In Chapter III covers the period between 1891 and 1960. I discuss the historiography of migration in this part of the country: referring to early experiences of migration under colonial rule, as well as the impact of colonial rule and the changes it brought to movement. Forced labour and the migration which stemmed from resistance to forced labour are discussed as part of an initial movement which would contribute to bringing relevant changes to this province, and to changing local level relationships whose consequences continued into the liberation struggle.

In Chapter IV look at the changes brought about by the liberation struggle (1964-1974), the understandings of the war, the different experiences of migration and refuge-seeking that ensued from it: the experience of life in Tanzania and the experience of those who stayed in Mozambique. The memories which are relevant for the social relationships at present also form an important part of the chapter.

In Chapter V I am concerned with understandings of the 'nation', as well as issues of territoriality, national and local space in the post independence period. I discuss ideas of place, space and the changes to the local landscape, and its impact on local level relationships. The post-independence (1975-1992) policies of the Frelimo government with respect to the organisation of the rural areas, mainly regarding villagization and authority, affected the local landscape and local power structures and changed power relationships and land use in the region.

In Chapter VI I address the changes brought by peace and the issues of return and reintegration of migrants (and refugees) into the local networks after the peace agreements of 1992. I try to unpick the idea of home for these returnees, and the changing aspects and experiences of economic migration in recent years. I also address the changes an influx of people from a different ethnic group brought to the coastal areas. I look at how the border crossing is understood differently today, and

how different states and different colonial and post-colonial developments impact on people's perceptions and uses of the border, and at the ideas that become attached to national identity and belonging to a separate, sovereign state.

In Chapter VII I describe the town where I did most of my research and discuss local politics of space, along with issues of identity, religion and understandings of national politics. I look at how these aspects form a whole and should be examined in conjunction and not isolation in order to understand better local relationships.

Addressing these issues also provides the context for the riots of 2005, by addressing long term cleavages and resentments which have been developing over time among Mwani and Makonde.

In Chapter VIII I bring the circle to a close as I describe and draw from the events delineated in this introduction in order to understand how the changes throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century are part of local discourses of power and how older events are remembered and inform present day relationships. Issues of belonging and marginality come to light in this section.

These chapters will allow me to try and shed light on the events of 2005, but also to give a broader picture and present context for the connections and relationships in the northern districts of Mozambique. I hope to bring more than a simple explanation of an event (the how, why, when of journalistic accounts) and build an argument on the need to look at local histories, and the relationship between permanence and change.

This thesis intends to contribute to anthropology's continuing analysis of the articulation of the local and the global, especially through the understanding of the impacts of national and global policies at local level, and the integration of small places into larger systems of power and authority.

## **Chapter II – The colonial encounter**

This chapter introduces what is known of the early history of the Makonde and Mwani<sup>38</sup>. It addresses the changing nature of expansion for different polities in northern Cabo Delgado and the ways territoriality plays a part in the definition of identities. I explain how they came to occupy the areas they now claim as their own, and will describe the processes of change that this area was undergoing in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and how this precluded more rapid change during the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the 20<sup>th</sup> century which was to have a strong impact on the constitution of ethnicity for Mwani and Makonde. I address how the local landscape influenced ways in which these groups describe themselves and how it became a part of what they perceive as their identities, and also how it provided choices and strategies to deal with the changes which were happening in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The present chapter covers the period between the early contact with the Portuguese (16<sup>th</sup> century) until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. By expanding on the early history of the Makonde and Mwani I set the scene for the explanation of the changing relationships between Makonde and Mwani, while reinforcing the importance of the past for present day relationships. This past is constantly alluded to when reaffirming the legitimacy of claims of belonging and relationships between groups: especially when defining who belongs where, and who has rights to land in the coastal districts of Cabo Delgado.

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38 In order to do this I use mostly secondary sources which have explored the early history of the region. Detailed accounts of the Mozambican history where the history of Cabo Delgado is also mentioned have been written by Newitt (1995), Hall and Young (1997), Alden (2001), and Serra (2000). More specifically on the history of Cabo Delgado we have the accounts of Medeiros (1997), Chambino (1968), and the ethnographic works of Dias (1964, 1970), West (1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2003, 2003a, 2004, 2004a, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008), and Israel (2006, 2006b, 2008, 2009, 2010)

The different groups occupying Cabo Delgado<sup>39</sup> at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century had different histories and experiences of territorial occupation for the area where they lived at the time. However they all had a part in long distance trade of ivory and slaves and wars for captives (Alpers 1969, 1975)<sup>40</sup>, which was one of the causes for major population movement during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The ethnic distribution was thoroughly altered during the wars and migrations of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Newitt 1995). This was not, however a new phenomenon and it was one which would continue throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a result of the wars which affected Mozambique and which I will describe elsewhere in this thesis. The changes which were happening at the time of the European expansion implied a redefinition of identities and continued afterwards under the influence of the Portuguese presence (Medeiros 1997).

In order to understand the different concepts of ethnicity and belonging and their histories, I divided this chapter in five sections. The first section introduces the local timeline of occupation of territory and spatial divisions between Makonde and Mwani. The second and third sections I discuss what is known of the history of the Makonde and Mwani. I then address the impact of the 19<sup>th</sup> century slave trade for the group relationships in the north of Cabo Delgado. I end this chapter by describing the impact of the colonial encounter, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the more recent changes caused by it. There are considerable overlaps between the different sections, but by dividing the chapter in this way I hope to be able to show the different forces

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39 There are a number of different groups present in Cabo Delgado. In varying numbers and of differing influence we have Makonde and Mwani – with whom this thesis is concerned – and also Makua, Swahili, Yao, Andonde, Vandonde. All these will be at times mentioned in this thesis, but they are merely secondary characters to the events and history with which we are concerned here. They mostly occupy areas to the north or south of the district I am looking at in detail, and are only present in Mocímboa da Praia in small numbers. Some of these groups will appear throughout this thesis, some will make a brief appearance in this chapter alone. I will not refer to most of them in detail for reasons of space and focus. This thesis does not cover the complex relationships developed between all the groups occupying northernmost Cabo Delgado, but instead focuses on Makonde and Mwani.

40 The part played in the slave trade by Mwani and Makonde was quite different, with the coastal Mwani being much more involved in the sale of slaves, while the Makonde would at times, and not necessarily on a regular basis, bring people to the coast in order to sell them (West 2005; Alpers 1969, 1975).

at work.

### ***1. Who got here first?***

I sat one morning in a small yard in a house in Pamunda listening to two older men and one woman<sup>41</sup> as they told me the history of the place where we were. They patiently retold what they knew of the history of the area and explained the meanings of the place names and the histories associated with them. I will give an abridged version of their more lengthy account here, and signal the early clues of relationships between the groups inhabiting the area as well as the claims of ownership in the area and spatial distribution and the ways in which these are generally asserted. When I was told this story my informants were very vague about the exact period in which it was set. However from some of the elements presented it appears to refer back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. I will expand on this below when I discuss this story.

The first houses were on the island of Ipuhulu<sup>42</sup>. Sune was the first white man who lived there. I think he was Portuguese but I am not sure. [...] That white man, his sister and his nephew, and the wife and son came here to sightsee. They stayed there in the morning, and had a canoe, and would go along the river which came up to the sea close to Mpanga. No one stayed here. Once, on one of those trips, he saw some Makonde who came to find *dinondo* (snails)<sup>43</sup> at the beach. At that point the Makonde didn't make frequent trips here, they just came for the *dinondo* and to make their *machambas* (fields) and went back. The Makonde saw them [the white people], but they didn't see the Makonde. They were surprised and wondered what type of person that was. The next day when they went there the sister came down from the boat. The Makonde hid and carried off the sister and ran away with her. They took the woman to the plateau, and she stayed there and got married there.

When that happened the white people stopped going to Mpanga and started going to

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41 My informants were all Mwani, aged between 70 and 80, although they were not certain of when they had been born, and had been living in this area for their whole lives. Their families were from Mocimboa as well.

42 This island is located just outside the bay and is still a place where people of the old ruling lineages are buried. It is also a place where no one will sleep at night, as people are scared of the ghosts who are said to haunt the island.

43 The Mwani do not eat *dinondo*. Noting that the Makonde came to find *dinondo* is an early clue to dietary differences between the Makonde and Mwani. The Mwani would consider many of the food the Makonde eat as impure.

another river called Menya on the other side. Walking on that side there is a place where the garbage which comes in from the sea accumulates and there is a small island. They found several people and were surprised that there were people on that side. The white man used gestures to communicate with the people but they couldn't understand each other. Later they explained they came from Mitumbati, the village whose leader was Mandande. The white man asked if he could go there and they said yes. 'Is your leader really there?' He asked, and they said yes. He told them: 'Go tell your leader to come here, we are calling him.' They then separated. The white people went back to the island and the others went to their chief and told him about these people and that they wanted to meet him. He said he would. The white people were the first to arrive and Mandande arrived later and hid with others and put his men around the place. But he was the first to see the white people. The white people called Mandande and went up to him. He asked if they were the people his subjects had told him about, and they said yes. The Makonde called the white man Mayoyo. The island was the first area that got inhabited and was called Mayoyo because the white man started answering Mayoyo to everything.

The white people wanted to know where the sister went. Mandande knew where the Makonde ended in the river Messalo and knew that the sister was there. They just travelled as friends, exchanged things and paid visits and had not said what their aim was. Then they said the sister had been kidnapped and asked if he knew where she was. He said that if he found the sister he would divide the land: the interior would be for the Makonde and the coast for him [Mandande]. He left for the river Messalo, got there and found her but by then they had tattooed her and she had two children. He asked about how she had gotten there and where she was from. She was from the beach and had been caught and taken. Mandande talked with her, knew she wanted to go back and said that he would bring her back on his next visit. After that he informed the white people that he had found their relative. The second time he went there he brought her and one of the children. The other stayed with the father. He stole her in the evening. When the husband woke up he asked after her (*Ningumenya*), and the area became known as Menya.

Mandande informed [the white man] that he had the sister and the next day took her to the island. The child started crying there. The father started looking for the woman and reached Mandande (in Mitumbati). When he arrived, Mandande went to speak with him to find out whether he could take the husband to the island, so that he wouldn't be killed. She said she would let him know the next day. When the time came she told her brother about the child who had stayed behind and that she wanted to see the son. They decided that she would go to the island with the son. When Mandande arrived they sent for the husband and the child. The husband stayed for a few days and she decided to go back with him and just come to the island for visits. The brother agreed with that. She went back and because of that the area became known as Menya.

This story presents a number of important clues to the relationship between Makonde and Mwani, and also to the presence of the first Portuguese in the area and their relationship with both groups. Some of the aspects referred to here will be discussed in the following sections and chapters, and are briefly introduced by this account: the land division between Makonde and Mwani, with one group claiming the coast and

the other the hinterland; the assistance the Mwani gave the Portuguese; the Makonde kidnapping of women, and tattooing them in order to incorporate them in the group. The main issues which will run through this thesis are issues of historical construction of identity, belonging, legitimacy (first comers opposed to late arrivals), movement and kinship are all hinted at throughout this story. Religion and politics which form an important part of present day divisions between the groups will be developed later, and are a product of the transformations introduced by colonial rule and post-colonial political transformations.

The Makonde were known, and feared, for their practice of raiding the peoples living at the edges of the Plateau during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, kidnapping women, marrying them, and in this way increasing the numbers in the group. The descendants from such marriages were easily incorporated into the group according to Dias (1964: 85). However, integration was easier for the children of male slaves than female slaves because the Makonde are matrilineal. If the father was a slave, the child would belong to the mother's lineage. If the mother was a slave, on the other hand, the child would be without *likola* (matrilineage), being in a less prestigious social position (Dias 1964: 85).

The relationship between first and late comers is one which has been discussed in the African literature broadly (Evans-Pritchard 1948; Lienhardt 1961; Kopytoff 1989; Lentz 2000, 2005). This relationship is often linked with claims of belonging and being the 'true' first inhabitants of an area and therefore having legitimate claims to land and access to power in opposition to those arriving at a later stage and whose claims to land and power are much less strong. This also created relationships of dependence between the distinctive groups where one of the sections of the population has the right to distribute or deny access to land. The timeline for arrival

and the subsequent establishment of rights feature in historical narratives similar to the narrative presented earlier in this chapter, or in distinctions in titles (e.g. West and Kloeck-Jenson 1999; West 2005). In the district of Mocímboa. These assertions have become important and have changed in recent decades. Because of the role they play in access to resources, or perceived rights of access, they often become the basis for resentments and grievances. Property rights are often linked with mobility (De Bruijn et al 2001; Lentz 2005), which in Cabo Delgado has been a constant feature of establishment and definition of identities, as is the case for much of Africa. The claims to ownership are also often changeable and this is due to 'the characteristics of an oral culture, which lacks maps, written titles and cadastres, and in which the “bundles of owners”, “bundles of rights” and territorial boundaries have to be constantly interpreted and reaffirmed through narratives and rituals' (Lentz 2005: 163). In Mocímboa this was evident in the narratives of arrival, such as the one presented above, with all the elements of who arrived first and the interactions between the various groups present (in that case Mwani, Makonde and Portuguese). Makonde, Mwani and Portuguese started establishing relationships early on. The understanding each had of the other groups created stereotypes and crystallised ideas of identity and belonging. The larger history of the north of Mozambique, especially the slave trade, along with the start of colonial rule would also have lasting effects on local level group relationships.

## ***2. The Makonde***

The earliest reference to the Makonde, in European sources, as a separate group

comes from Silva Porto in 1853 (Dias 1964). They do not appear on maps before the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, because Europeans had not seriously explored the northern Mozambican hinterland before this, it would be difficult to give a rigorous account of the people living there. There were an array of groups inhabiting what is now Cabo Delgado in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the population seemed to be in almost permanent flux. Along with the Makonde, there were Makua, Yao, Mwani, Makwe, Andonde, Vandonde, Swahili, and smaller groups trying to secure a territory for themselves. Much like what is described by Ferguson and Whitehead (1999 [1992]), group identities were being defined at this point through movement, warfare and conquest. The name Makonde is directly related to the space they traditionally occupied on the Mueda Plateau<sup>44</sup>. According to Dias (1964) it refers to a kind of landscape, and was then adapted to the people that live on it; the people living in the lowlands and the coast are called by different names. Makonde means ‘fertile land’ in shi-Makonde, and also a place where there is no water (which might seem contradictory, but given that their land is indeed without water sources, but at the same time extremely fertile, it in fact makes sense – the nightly dew, during the dry season, and the rains in the rainy season, provide enough water for agricultural purposes). The Mueda Plateau they traditionally occupied is located in the hinterland of Cabo Delgado and is an area of about 1,715 square kilometres of “gently undulating, densely wooded land” (Kingdon 2002: 14). The western slopes are scarped and full of thorny, bushy vegetation that makes them difficult to penetrate (Dias 1964; Kingdon 2002). Although there is little surface water on the plateau top, high levels of humidity make this area fertile. The slopes of the plateau, on the other hand, have numerous springs where women usually went to collect water for their daily needs.

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44 This is not unusual, and we will see the same applies to the Mwani. Southall (1970) has remarked on how common it is for groups' names to derive from features of the natural environment in which they reside.

The overall lack of water is possibly the reason why the plateau was not occupied until the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Dias 1964; West 2001). The settlements were established on the plateau for defence, which meant that they were usually located between 5 to 8 kilometres from the nearest spring<sup>45</sup>.

Dias<sup>46</sup> (1964) acknowledges that lack of knowledge of the language on his part and that of his research team made it impossible to understand fully the importance of the landscape for the Makonde, and the degree to which it influences their concepts. Yet he notes that the plateau landscape is linked to Makonde perceptions of their own elusiveness and helped shape this perception by creating the natural conditions that enable the easy defence of the villages. The terrain the Makonde inhabited was good for protection, with thick bush, but the villages were also fortified and the gates were locked each night. The ability to defend their territory is related to some of the features they are proud of, such as their reputation for being fierce warriors, and also for being extremely difficult to conquer. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the inaccessibility of the plateau led to the isolation of the Makonde from neighbouring peoples, an isolation that was very much welcome to them – to the point that they deliberately created difficulties for people to contact them by, for example, making the access to villages extremely difficult, creating mazes of paths that would confuse visitors, and make it almost impossible for them to find the way to the Makonde villages alone.

The British consul Henry O'Neill, who was posted in the North of Mozambique in

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<sup>45</sup> Easier access to water was one of the unfulfilled promises of post-independence days (Littlejohn 1988). During my fieldwork complaints about the lack of water, and damaged village wells were a constant feature of conversations with village heads, and signalled old problems with lack of resources.

<sup>46</sup> Like so many other anthropologists of the same period Dias (1964) does not discuss the importance of the Plateau landscape for the Makonde and treats it more as a background description than a feature which is linked to some of the Makonde ideas and concepts. Recent literature on landscape (Hirsch and O'Hanlon 1995, Stewart and Strathern 2003, Feld and Basso 1996, Basso 1988, 1996, Turton 2004, Bender and Winer 2004, Bender 2001) has explored further the significance of landscape for the development of concepts and ideas of belonging, exploring the ways in which spacial concepts are linked with ideas about identity and especially ownership of land and territory. Dias acknowledges the relevance of the landscape to some extent.

the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and went on several journeys in the area, describes how, in 1882, he was taken by one Makonde leader (Lishehe) to visit his homestead, and how the trek was done in the evening so that he could not see the way to the village and would not be able to find his way back on his own (O'Neill 1883; West 2004). O'Neill (1883) describes the elusiveness of Makonde and the ideas that neighbouring groups had about them, and casts them as victims of the slave trade<sup>47</sup> which was rife in the area (O'Neill 1883; West 2004). In the introduction of his report to the Royal Geographical Society, O'Neill describes the opportunity to 'peep at the country of that strangely isolated tribe the Mavia or Mabiha' (1883: 393). Mavia has been translated as 'nervous' (Israel 2006: 116) or those who react swiftly and violently (Liebenow 1971) and has pejorative connotations. It is often linked with the fame for savagery and aggressiveness that the Makonde acquired towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The elusive and violent character associated with the Makonde has been attributed to their reaction to the slave trade and their ability to remain unconquered (West 2004; Israel 2006).

The remoteness and inaccessibility of the plateau played a part in the development of a sense of identity, since all the accounts point to the Makonde as a mix of people from a variety of origins, and it was the need to live together on the Plateau which brought them together as a people (Henriksen 1983: 7). The history of the Makonde – what is known of it, and which I trace briefly below – is a history of movement<sup>48</sup> and points to the possibility that they came to occupy the plateau and become a group as a result of various waves of migration. We know this history from a few different sources: accounts from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, ethnographic works, and historical

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47 I will expand on the slave trade and its impact in this part of Mozambique later in this chapter (pp. 17-21).

48 Turton (1996) describes how the Mursi were 'made' by travelling to where they live now. The same could be said of the Makonde whose identity was formed from the grouping together of people escaping from wars, droughts and famines.

accounts. Though it is impossible to be precise about some of the details the movement to the plateau seems well established as does the fact that there were various peoples moving there at the same time.

Dias and his team conducted interviews with Makonde elders in order to try to establish their history, and gain a sense of where they came from, but were unable to get a clear answer. In his account Dias (1964) describes the difficulty of going beyond the description of the history of the lineage, and into the history of the group. He attributes this to the lack of a centralized political system. This dispersion contributed to a lack of any collective conscience of the history of the group, and to the disparity of answers when questioned about the origins of the people<sup>49</sup>.

Nevertheless, he details the migration movements of the Makonde, as well as he can, and establishes that the main routes came from the south. Dias was told they had come from the Rovuma Valley, the area south of the River Msalo, the coast, south of Lake Niassa, the River Montepuez, and the north of the Mueda Plateau.

Kingdon (2002) was told stories consistent with what Dias had been told decades before him, and heard that some clans came from the lowlands south of the Plateau, such as the Mwilu clan. The Chumbuji clan is said to have come from the coast.

Some clans have the same name as a Makua section. There is therefore a wide range of possible origins, which suggests that the possibility that diverse groups of people came together, through successive migrations are defended by West (2004) as more

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<sup>49</sup> When discussing history concepts in the Luapula Valley, Cunnison (1951) remarks upon the different forms of story telling, and especially the people who are expected to know and tell histories, and how this is linked with their social standing and role in the lineage and clan. The history of the clan or lineage, their travel to reach the Luapula Valley belong to the member of each clan and lineage, and they are the ones with the right to tell it, remember it and pass it on. The telling of histories in Cabo Delgado had some features similar to those described by Cunnison, especially the importance of ownership of the histories which generally involved ownership of land too. Like with so many other issues, as I have discussed in the introduction and will discuss throughout this thesis, story telling is very much linked with ideas about legitimacy and ownership. Different from other forms of storytelling, where tales are passed on with moral meanings (Jackson 2005; Argenti 2010), these stories tell of the tale of human travel and occupation, of clan origins, but they also refer to personal stories, and to the place personal stories have in the larger picture of national and local history.

likely than the hypothesis of a single migration to the Plateau at a given time. West, like Dias before him, was given different versions of the history of Makonde settlement. He was told such different things as: “‘We came to the plateau from Mataka’s country, fleeing the Angoni’”, an elder told me in Mwambula. “‘We were once Yao’”. Said another: ‘We are really Makua. We took refuge here from the slave caravans’.” And also: “‘many of those who today call themselves Makonde were once Yao, and many who today call themselves Yao were once Makonde’”. I was also told that ‘the same thing is true here between Makonde and Angoni’” (West 2004: 25).

The Makonde share the same clans with some of their neighbours, and also share similar rituals, such as the extremely important rites of passage. Their *mapiko* dance<sup>50</sup> (that appears in the rites of passage of boys) is linked with the Chewa<sup>51</sup>. The Makonde of Mozambique recognize a link with the Matambwe, the Makonde wa Malaba and the Makonde of the Newala plateau in Tanzania<sup>52</sup>, and also with the Makua<sup>53</sup> and Yao<sup>54</sup>.

Despite the diversity of answers he got, Dias (1964) believed that the group had its

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50 The *mapiko* is a masked dance. In the past, during the initiation rites of boys they were told the secret of the *mapiko*: there was a man behind the mask and not a spirit. Recent research on Makonde dance and performance links it with modernity and history (Israel 2005).

51 The Chewa live in Eastern Zambia, Northwestern Zimbabwe, Malawi and Mozambique. They are often called Nyanja, and in Mozambique they live in larger numbers in Niassa province.

52 In southern Tanzania there is a sizable population who identify themselves as Makonde. The Makonde from Mozambique recognize a link, but claim differences in relation to the Tanzanian Makonde, one of the most important ones being religion. The Tanzanian Makonde are Muslim, while the Makonde from Mozambique are mostly Christian.

53 The Makua are the most numerous ethnic group living in Mozambique at present. They occupy areas in the South of Cabo Delgado and in Nampula Province. The spelling of the name Makua appears in different forms in the literature. Makua is at present the most usual form and the one I will be using in this thesis whenever discussing them. The form in the quotation, Macua, is the older Portuguese spelling. The Makua occupy the southern part of the province of Cabo Delgado, part of Niassa, and of Nampula, and are one of the biggest groups in Mozambique, with nearly 40% of the country's population.

54 The Yao are a small group living mostly in western Cabo Delgado and Niassa (an area north/west of Lake Malawi). They were involved in the trade of slaves and guns and their activities shaped in part the political relationships in the north of Cabo Delgado, and the population distribution. They were especially influential in the further retreat of the Makonde to the interior and in their increased defensiveness (Newitt 1995; Alpers 1969).

origin in a single major group moving into the area, followed by smaller units. West (2004) on the other hand argues that the Makonde were constituted from small communities that came together at different times, fleeing from attacks and retreating to an area that was, first, empty, or almost empty, and second, easier to defend. They built fortified settlements and raided others in order to increase their numbers. In time they started establishing alliances between different settlements, and sometimes establishing relations of dominance, and created bigger groups (West 2004). West (1997, 2004, 2005) points towards the formation of Makonde identity as a result of the pressure of the slave trade in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>55</sup>.

According to Newitt's account of the transformations brought forth by the slave trade to Mozambique (1995: 253) the Makonde correspond to the 'losers' of various migrations and escapees from war and the slave trade who had to seek refuge in previously unoccupied areas where defence against slavers was possible. This hypothesis is consistent with accounts of what was happening in the region during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Nguni<sup>56</sup> invasions reshuffled the territory that is now Mozambique (Newitt 1995; Rita-Ferreira 1975, 1982), and were responsible for big changes in settlement patterns, and in the territory occupied by different ethnic groups. The Nguni did not invade the plateau, but their movement north made the Makonde retreat further into the plateau and isolate themselves even more. Their

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55 There are some early references to the Makonde in the historical record which may point towards the existence of an early occupation of the plateau (prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> century) (Israel 2006: 115).

56 The Nguni expansion and its consequences for the population reshuffling in Mozambique is well documented in various sources: Rita-Ferreira 1975, 1982; Newitt 1995; Medeiros 1997. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Nguni invasions reshuffled the territory that is now Mozambique, and were responsible for big changes in settlement of people, and the territory occupied by different ethnic groups. Having started from what is now South Africa, the Nguni campaigns reached as far as the north of Mozambique and the south of Tanzania, and affected the people living there (Newitt 1995; Rita-Ferreira 1975, 1982). The Nguni did try to invade the Mueda plateau but were not successful. Their attacks made the Makonde retreat further into the plateau and further isolate themselves. A reported invincibility at war gave the Makonde a reputation for invulnerability, of which they are still proud today, and which is often mentioned when discussing Makonde identity (e.g. Dias 1964; West 2004). The neighbouring peoples (Makua, Mwani, Yao) would not venture into their territory for fear of being captured.

invincibility in war gave them a reputation of invulnerability, and the neighbouring people would not venture into their territory.

Wars, droughts and famine are suggested as the reasons behind the movement into the plateau. Although it is impossible to know for certain what the actual circumstances were there are diverse possibilities. Of these the most likely is that the movement followed drought and famine (Dias 1964; Newitt 1995; West 2004). This version is confirmed by the Matambwe<sup>57</sup> who also claim that they and the Makonde used to be part of the same people, and that the Makonde headed for the plateau with the need to find land with water after an extreme drought affected the area where they lived. This is consistent with reports of such droughts in recent times. It is also the explanation found among the Makonde of Tanzania (Kingdon 2002).

Older people sometimes talked about the Makonde from Tanzania, as well as the Makonde from Mueda and Macomia, originally forming one single people, along with the Matambwe, but were not able to say when that was, other than very long ago (Dias 1964; Kingdon 2002; West 2005). Occupation of the plateau probably took place during the late 18<sup>th</sup> century or early 19<sup>th</sup>, and Dias (1964) argues that this timeline would be consistent with the differentiation between the groups inhabiting Cabo Delgado, since it would take some time to make the most of the surrounding natural conditions and mark the differentiation between the groups, as is the case between the Makonde of Mozambique and Tanzania or the Matambwe. This migratory pattern might be the reason why there are common elements<sup>58</sup> (e.g. language, rites of passage) found with most groups in the area. That and a prolonged contact, through trade, war and capture of slaves, created an integration of different

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<sup>57</sup> The Matambwe are a neighbouring group, and were also moving through the area in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (Newitt 1995).

<sup>58</sup> These similarities were all remarked upon by Europeans (Thomson 1882; O'Neill 1883) who travelled in Cabo Delgado in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

cultural and social features.

Despite the numerous similarities with neighbouring groups, the Makonde also developed distinctive features of cultural, social and ritual life, and even in relation to the Makonde living in Tanzania there are important differences. The Tanzanian Makonde do not recognize the Mozambican Makonde as the same group. They call them Mavia<sup>59</sup>. Liebenow (1971) suggests that being referred to as Mavia could mean that there is a subordinate relationship with the Makonde of Tanzania. It is not clear when the Makonde from the Mueda Plateau started referring to themselves as Makonde, but they were doing so by the 1920s (Dias 1964; Kingdon 2002; West 2005). The Tanzanian Makonde were referring to themselves as Makonde since Livingstone's days, at least (West 2004).

The term Makonde is used more often in the ethnographic literature. It describes a relatively homogenous people which settled mostly in the Mueda plateau. However, it is to some extent a contested ethnonym. Dias (1964) calls the groups Makonde, but others have issues with doing so, and early writers on the Makonde like O'Neill, Livingstone, Thomson, Maples, Worsford, Weule, Biasutti, Seligman, Bauman and Westerman refer to them as Mavia (Dias 1964) as does Harries (1994) and Adam (1993). West (2005) prefers the term Muedans, that I will not use here since I am dealing with a population which has moved beyond the Mueda Plateau and whose experience is shaped by this geographical dislocation. Throughout this thesis, I am using the term Makonde, since this was how the people I spoke with would identify themselves.

Dias (1964) does present some information that would point to the differentiation between groups: between the Makonde of Mozambique, and the Makonde of

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<sup>59</sup> As with most other ethnonyms, the spelling appears differently depending on the authors. In some it is spelled Mavia, but it also appears as Mawia, Mabiha, Maviha or Mavhia.

Tanzania. There are differences in terms of language, and in terms of ritual, notably the rites of passage<sup>60</sup>, that are extremely important and that have different forms and expressions depending on the actual sub-group. The differences between groups may have come about because of their isolation and their fierce desire to stay independent and to live in remote, inaccessible areas in the plateau but also because of different experiences of colonial rule. All these groups were in the past characterised by dispersed political units, no centralised power, and autonomous villages. The authority of the village heads was very limited and was linked with their knowledge of ritual, especially the rites of passage, and the rituals linked to the clan ancestors and the village founders.

The traditional Makonde village was set on the plateau, and very well protected from visitors. It was, usually, the place of residence of a small kinship group – they generally recognised belonging to one *likola* (matrilineage) under the leadership of an elder, the *nang'olo mwene kaja* or the *nang'olo mwene shilambo* (Dias 1064; West 2004: 23).

The settlements were dispersed across the plateau, and each one was constituted as a separate political unit. Some settlements were heavily fortified for defence, since in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries this part of Mozambique was undergoing continuous warfare. A village's location was not, Dias noted, the most stable of its elements. A village was defined more as a concept of group than as a geographical location, and the space occupied by a group could change several times while under the same leader, and due to a variety of reasons. The fact that they were mostly formed by small groups of people which recognised belonging to one matrilineage

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<sup>60</sup> The rites of passage are consistently mentioned in interviews and, despite recent changes, are still extremely important in the making of Makonde men and women. People's passage through the rites is fundamental for them to be recognised as adult members of the group. The Mwani, similarly have rites of passage which are also a big part of the coming of age process.

(*likola*), each constituting a separate political unit, and that large spaces were readily available for setting up new villages made this possible. The reason for moving could be a practical one, such as the need to move closer to water sources, or whimsical, the *nang'olo mwene kaja* (elder) deciding he no longer liked the place (Dias 1964:11).

The fact that their settlements were small and dispersed across the plateau, and each was constituted as a separate political unit under a village head – the *nang'olo mwene kaja* (Dias 1964; West 2004), and that they were not subject to a foreign centralizing authority might account for the development of a strong sense of identity. Kingdon (2002) argues that the features of the plateau environment and its remoteness along with the need to defend themselves against neighbours helped create and maintain a sense of identity, which West (2005) argues to be a very recent construct. This recent definition of identity is consistent with the occupation of the Mueda plateau in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### **3. *The Mwani***

Along the coast of Cabo Delgado lives a different group, the Mwani who number around 100,000 people (Ethnologue 2009)<sup>61</sup>. The Mwani are generally linked with the Swahili networks of the eastern African coast. They are considered part, albeit probably at the geographical end, of the Swahili cultural complex<sup>62</sup>. Their links with Tanzania, and especially with Zanzibar are extremely important even today.

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61 This coastal population is formed by a small array of groups (the Mwani, the Makwe, etc.) in Mozambique, but here I will focus only on the Mwani.

62 There are, of course plenty of studies of the Swahili coast and the ways in which it forms a cultural complex of far reaching influence (Middleton 1994; Loimeier and Seesemann 2006).

Their origins and the development of a sense of group identity are as hard to trace as those of the Makonde. There are less sources detailing the history of the Mwani. The earliest references to the coastal population come from medieval Arabic documents, which show that Muslim traders had started establishing trading posts along the East African coast from the 8<sup>th</sup> century, followed by others established by Arab and Persian rulers from the 10<sup>th</sup> century onwards (Nelson 1984: 9; Sicard 2008). These are the earliest traces of what would become the Swahili complex, stretching from present day Somalia to Mozambique. The mix of populations (African, Arab, Persian, Hindu, etc.) making their way to the East African coast became known collectively as the Swahili.

The word Mwani means people of the sea, coast or margin. In the Mwani case ‘those who live by the coast’ which was the initial meaning evolved into the designation of a linguistic community (Conceição 2006: 215). They have their own language, Kimwane, or the ‘language of the beach’, which is close to Ki-Swahili, but incorporates elements from Emakua, Shimakonde, Arabic, Persian, Portuguese and English (Medeiros 1997). Although generally speakers of Shimakonde, Kimwane and KiSwahili understand each other, the languages are considered separate (Ethnologue 2009).

The Mwani lived in reasonably dense concentrations along the coast, and were under the leadership of sheikhs and subordinate chiefs. This population was the result of movement between the coast of Cabo Delgado, the space between the Rovuma River and what is now the horn of Africa and was formed by a mix of Arabs, Persians, Indians and people from nearby areas in East Africa, who after migrating settled on the northern coast of what is now Mozambique (Conceição 2006: 215 ). There is a strong Islamic influence in the area, and trade links with Zanzibar, Madagascar, the

Comoros, the Horn of Africa and the Gulf (Medeiros 1997) which were linked with the presence of *Shirazi*<sup>63</sup> clans from Zanzibar (Bonate 2006). The Mwani who lived around the area now occupied by Mocímboa, during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century were grouped under the leadership of the Sultan Muicumba. They are considered the early occupants of the area and have rights to land, despite the fact that most of their livelihood is connected with seafaring activities, and oversee its distribution to the late comers.

The Mwani had longstanding contact with the Portuguese and especially with people of Portuguese and African descent from Ibo Island<sup>64</sup> where the largest number of Portuguese in the northern part of Mozambique were concentrated, and with people of Omani origin from Zanzibar (Medeiros 1997). Some of the villages along the coast still claim to have a *Shirazi* origin. However due to intermarriage with other Muslim groups it is hard to tell whether this is true or not and to distinguish between the population of *Shirazi* origin and the population with origin in the Comoros (Conceição 2006).

The local people (Makua) were matrilineal, but the people of Arab and Swahili origin were patrilineal, and there was a mix of both systems of descent in place, with the children belonging to the mother's lineage, but keeping a strong link with the father's. There was a combination of the local matrilineal system and the Islamic system. In terms of inheritance rules, this translated into combination of Islamic, Portuguese and customary systems (Conceição 2006: 97). These populations lived in isolated

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63 The word *Shirazi* means the founders or the early rulers, and they are the 'lords' of Swahili settlements (Bonate 2006).

64 Ibo island was one of the most important places of trade (slave trade and consumer goods) for northern Mozambique. It started to decline with the end of the slave trade, but it is still considered to be at the heart of the Mozambican coastal communities. Although the population living there is not solely Mwani, who are in fact in small numbers, but a mix of Mwani, Makwe, Portuguese, Indian, Makua, this is a place referred to by the Mwani as a centre of culture 'of the coast'. Like elsewhere in Mozambique it is the mix and diversity of population, more than a single group that characterises this island.

villages, distant from each other, but which kept a kinship relationship (Medeiros 1997). The coast became a separate place for the people from the hinterland. It has its own dynamic and economic links with the western Indian ocean.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century there was also migration from Portuguese India. The first occupants of Indian origin occupied Palma, and after that other points along the coast in Cabo Delgado, including Mocímboa da Praia (Conceição 2006). The ruling elites of the Mozambican coast kept their independence from other Swahili cities in the area, and especially with respect to Zanzibar, while maintaining trade relationships with them (Conceição 2006). The increase in influence from the Portuguese was felt at a time (the late 19<sup>th</sup> century) when, like the case with the Makonde in the hinterland, new chiefdoms and ethnic identities at the coast were forming and reforming as a result of the slave trade.

The links with Tanzania are still important today with many of the fishermen from the north going there to trade regularly, and with young men going to Zanzibar for the study of Islam<sup>65</sup>. The Islamic influence continues to be very strong today, and is seen in the continuing practice of Islam, with a large number of Mosques and Islamic schools. People's names will often be easy indicators of belonging to an ethnic group, with the Mwani having Arab names, while the Makonde who were born after the arrival of missionaries to the area having Christian names. The trade with Tanzania became an important source of income for part of the coastal population.

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65 There are longstanding links throughout the Swahili coast reaching the north of Mozambique (Middleton 1992; Loimeier and Seesemann 2006). The connections established through migration for the purpose of studying Islam (Parkin and Headley 2000) are common to the whole Swahili area.

#### *4. Slave trade and definition of identities*

Among the most important economic activities along the coast in northern Mozambique during the 19<sup>th</sup> century were the slave trade and smuggling. The slave trade, especially, was a transforming factor in social relationships. The other factors contributing to change were wars and droughts, which were to have an impact on the social geography of the area, leading to continuous migration in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (Newitt 1995).

Slaving had long been practised by the Yao, who would bring their captives to the coast from the interior of northern Mozambique. Some of the slaves were not shipped out, but were instead absorbed in the coastal and hinterland societies to serve local elites (Conceição 2006) or increase the population numbers in smaller communities (Dias 1964). Those slaves sold outside the local communities were sent to various places around the Indian Ocean by Arab slave traders. The European trade in slaves in Mozambique did not start until the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Opello 1973).

The sheikhs who ruled the coastal populations, and who were politically independent from the incipient Portuguese administration on Ibo Island<sup>66</sup> in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, continued the slave trade despite efforts from the Portuguese to curb it (Newitt 1995; Alpers 1975, 1978). Though a number of agreements were signed in which the Portuguese declared to put an end to slave trading<sup>67</sup>, there was an attempt at implementing them only in the years following the signature of the agreements, and

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66 Until the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Portuguese administration was confined to a few locations – in the north these were Ibo Island and Mozambique Island.

67 In 1856 the then Portuguese minister of Overseas, Sá da Bandeira, issued a decree which aimed at abolishing the slave trade in territories controlled by the Portuguese, but which was mostly ignored in Mozambique (Opello 1973).

Mozambique sent slaves as far as Cuba or the French sugar islands (Opello 1973)<sup>68</sup>. Meanwhile, unrest which resulted from the slave trade and almost constant warfare between groups was to reshape the north. It led to a number of small groups splintering from larger and more powerful political units and seeking refuge in areas beyond their control (Newitt 1995) and following this develop an independent identity. The Makonde were one such group. Yussuf Adam claims that the 'present-day speakers of ShiMakonde were probably descendants of captives and slaves who managed to escape their captors, along the routes to the coast, or even in the slave markets at the coast. The Makonde would then be partly the result of intermarriage of people from different groups' (Adam 1993 in Medeiros 1997: 62). The plateaus (in Mueda and Macomia) which the Makonde occupied were difficult to access and were good places of refuge for escaped slaves, but they also became places from where it was difficult to travel due to slaving in the lowlands. This led to a permanent state of defence. The Makonde were thus able to resist slavers more easily than most peoples living in northern Mozambique (Henriksen 1983:7). However, the Makonde do not seem to have been the target of slavers as much as other groups in Mozambique, and were themselves slave raiders. The men from the plateaus would organise in armed groups which would protect the women who went to collect water, or the men who would go to the lowlands to hunt or to the coast to trade (Dias 1964; Medeiros 1997). These groups would also travel to the lowlands to capture women from other groups (especially the neighbouring Makua) who would then be tattooed and integrated within the Makonde lineages (Dias 1964)<sup>69</sup>. The capture of women aimed at balancing the numbers, and increasing the number of dependants, providing labour

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68 The main exports for this area were slaves, ivory and amber, which were then traded for guns, powder, beads, cloth (Medeiros 1997).

69 Alpers (1969: 411-413) describes a similar process for the Yao in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, whereby female slaves were integrated in the lineages thus increasing its numbers.

and wealth. The Makonde would call neighbouring, un-tattooed groups, *vachagwa* (sing. *mchagwa*) which translates roughly as slaves (Kingdon 2002). The raids between clans or even between different groups<sup>70</sup> for slaves, often led to warfare between the clans, and the establishment of alliances between stronger and weaker clans for protection (Kingdon 2002).

Despite claims that isolation explains the fierce character attributed to the Makonde, they were very much aware of the slave trade and also trade in general and would go to the main commercial centres in the north to trade for goods. The Makonde were not untouched by the changes in their part of the world: they had contacts with the peoples of the coast to trade goods or slaves, and were able to use the regional politics to their own advantage, while living in relative isolation. O'Neill describes the importance of trade and points to the constant contact at the boundaries of the territory occupied by the Makonde, noting that 'tribal reserve is fast disappearing before the influences of trade' (1883: 401). The main trade was rubber and gum copal, which they would take to the coast, especially Mocímboa, to trade for cloth, guns, powder, etc. These were then used as bridewealth, or as a form of compensation in dispute cases, circulating between the lineages as a form of creating alliances and preventing war (Medeiros 1997).

Into the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Makua and the Muslim chiefs in the north continued to engage in slave trading, sending slaves to Madagascar, and importing guns (Newitt 1995) and the Portuguese had difficulties stopping it. These local elites, which ruled in the 19<sup>th</sup> century would be progressively removed from positions of power during the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Conceição 2006) and their economic and political influence would decrease in the sequence of the liberation struggle (1964-1974). The

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<sup>70</sup> The Makua living towards the south of the plateau were often the target of these raids.

economic policies of the post-independence government, and the rise of the Makonde to positions in the local administration following their role in the liberation struggle and support for the post independence ruling party placing them at an economic advantage in relation to the Mwani. As I trace the history of the district the experiences and changes the Mwani have undergone will become apparent, and especially their diminishing influence and access to the state. This would lead to resentment at the local level and create tensions between ethnic groups inhabiting Mocímboa.

There was a change in the coastal structures with the increase in activities linked with the slave trade, which would be fundamental in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and a redefinition of group relationships, especially by reinforcing hostility between raiders and raided<sup>71</sup> which helped shape differing identities in an initial phase. Isolation, and the need to defend the group when it came to continuous raiding and search for slaves from neighbouring groups helped create a sense of distinctiveness and the beginnings of a separate identity.

Before colonial rule was established with its definition of borders and administrative divisions this area could be termed an ethnolinguistic 'frontier zone' (Kopytoff 1989) where the boundaries between groups were continuously formed and reformed. The changing relationship between groups in Cabo Delgado during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, often through violent encounters, follows the pattern described by Ferguson and Whitehead (1999 [1992]). This area was located outside the reach of any state (none of the African kingdoms in Mozambique reached this far and neither did the

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71 Richard Fardon's (1988) account of the history of the political organization of the Chamba describes a process in which constant raiding and refuge played a big part in the definition of group identities. The Chamba are an umbrella group that encompasses various smaller units and did not exist as a unit in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Similarly the Makonde and Mwani identities were forming at the same time as the Portuguese were establishing a stronger presence in Cabo Delgado, i. e. towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Portuguese) and constituted what has been defined as a 'tribal zone' being 'that physical and conceptual space that radiates out from the borders of the intrusive state system' (Ferguson and Whitehead 1999 [1992]: xii). Warfare was a form of establishing dominance and defining identity allegiance, separating or joining groups together: identities were emerging as a result of war between different migrating groups. This area of Cabo Delgado can also be deemed a 'contact zone' in that it fits the description of an area at the margins of state control (Ferguson and Whitehead 1999 [1992]: xii) since throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century movement and conflict of various natures led to the definition of identities.

### ***5. Colonial encounter***

The imposition of incipient colonial administration at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century regulated the open conflict between the various peoples of this area, proceeded to slowly make the different identities 'legible' (Scott 1998) especially when it came to the establishment of an administration (Bonate 2006; Kyed 2007). In doing so it helped fix and crystallize what appeared to be until then changing, flexible identities as has been discussed for other areas of the continent (*cf.* Southall 1970; Amselle 1990; Worby 1994).

Mozambique has been, for the duration of its known history, a meeting area for a diversity of populations. From the 16<sup>th</sup> century this included the Portuguese, who first reached the shores of Mozambique at the time of Vasco da Gama's voyage to India (1498). The contact the Portuguese established with the groups north of Mozambique Island was for a long time restricted to the coastal population living close to the forts

and trading posts and the contact with people from the interior was extremely limited. Nevertheless this contact did bring change to the population living in the interior as well as the population of the coast.

From the 16<sup>th</sup> century there was a Portuguese presence along the coast of what was to be Mozambique and a stronger presence in the trading posts of Kilwa, in southern Tanzania, and Sofala<sup>72</sup>, in central Mozambique. Their influence in the area was to develop due to trade and at the same time marriage with women of the local ruling elites (Newitt 1995). The increase in ivory trade, and the importance of the gold trade, were the reasons behind the larger numbers of Portuguese in this area.

However the external influence was not confined to the Portuguese (Newitt 1995), because other Europeans (British, Dutch, French) were also trading in ivory. Even when the Portuguese influence dwindled in the 17<sup>th</sup> century this area remained an important centre of trade, under the influence of Dutch and British traders (Newitt 1995).

The first European reference to the area which is now the northern province of Mozambique (Cabo Delgado) comes from the 17<sup>th</sup> century and was written by Frei João dos Santos. He described the people, the Makua, he encountered in this area in graphic detail:

The people of the mainland off Mozambique [Mozambique Island] are native Macua, very barbarian. All file their upper and lower teeth and have them as sharp-pointed as needles. They paint themselves all over with sharp iron, with which they cut their flesh. They have two holes in their lips: in the upper lip they place a thin stick like a hen feather, as long as a finger, right towards the outside like a nail and in the lower lip they insert a lead cork, so heavy that it turns the lip inside out almost to the chin, and in this way the gums and teeth can always be seen and they look like demons. Their ears are pierced all the way round with many holes in which they

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72 Kilwa and Sofala were the most important commercial centres at the time of the arrival of the Portuguese. Trade in gold and slaves had its routes through them. These posts lost their importance as Arab traders tried to avoid, successfully, the Portuguese attempts to control trade (Newitt 1995).

insert sticks, like needles, the length of a finger and they look like porcupines. Almost all the peoples of this coast have these ways and they live in the forest. The hinterland off the islands of Quirimba and Mozambique to the Cabo Delgado is populated by nations of barbarians, and most of them are Macua with holes and painted like the ones described. (translated in Kingdon 2002:10; in Portuguese in Dias 1964:87-88)

Despite describing a different group from the Makonde, and being from a very different period, this description could have been that of the Mozambican Makonde, if Frei João dos Santos had travelled to the interior of Cabo Delgado and encountered them in the late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Even today, the raised face and, occasionally, body tattoos and filed teeth are some of the most striking visual markers of belonging for older Makonde<sup>73</sup> and are considered unusual in Mozambique (West 2004). The first time I travelled to Pemba, the capital of Cabo Delgado province, at the start of my fieldwork, I sat on the plane next to a Makonde woman. She had, like most women of her generation, a tattooed face and the *ndona* (a small dark wood plug inside her upper lip). The Mozambican airline staff discussed her appearance and were unsure if she was Mozambican, and of which origin. They seemed to find the face tattoos unusual and thought she was Makua, despite the fact that Makonde face tattoos are more elaborate and diverse in design than those of the other Mozambican groups (Schneider 1973: 27-28), and also that the Makonde were the only northern group tattooing their faces during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The exoticization of the Makonde has been a recurrent aspect of the literature (Dias 1964; West 2004) and there has been an almost constant association of them with stereotypes of violence and elusiveness – the alterations of the bodies

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73 In the 1950s and 1960s there were few adults who had not been tattooed (Dias 1964). Those without face tattoos were usually Christian and were not tattooed owing to the influence of the Christian missions on the plateau. In the post-independence era the government issued statements against the continuation of these practices, so anyone going through initiation rites after 1975 is unlikely to have the raised tattoos and filed teeth. I will describe later how the external markers of belonging have changed in a later chapter. One of my informants said that if I had arrived a few years later I would not have seen anyone who had been tattooed, that they were all dying.

have played a large part in this.

In the late 17<sup>th</sup> century up to the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century the Portuguese control over the eastern coast of Africa extended basically over Mozambique island, the settlements of Inhambane, Sofala and Cabo Delgado, and some of the sheikhdoms along the coast, but the control was minimal (Newitt 1995). During this time the Portuguese developed close trading relationships with the sheikhs on the coast, to prevent other Europeans from controlling trade in this area while the sheikhs wanted help against the attacks of the Maravi or the Makua living on the interior (Newitt 1995).

Until the 1820s the populations were ruled by African kings and chiefs, some of whom recognised the sovereignty of the Portuguese crown (Opello 1973); however, Portuguese rule was weak and most populations lived without acknowledging the Portuguese rule in their daily lives. By late 19<sup>th</sup> century no unified state administration was in place, and direct European influence beyond the coast was negligible. It was only after the Berlin conference (1884-5), that Portugal had to both define the borders of the African territories it claimed, and effectively occupy and devise an administrative strategy<sup>74</sup> (Newitt 1995). At this point that there was an increase in legislation regarding the African territories under Portuguese control, although between 1820 and 1870 the African populations were legally considered Portuguese and had the same duties and responsibilities as the population living in Portugal (Opello 1973).

In the period between the Berlin Conference (1884-5), and the British Ultimatum<sup>75</sup> of 1890, Portugal and Britain moved to establish alliances with local leaders in what is

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74 Antonio Ennes, High Commissioner for Mozambique, was the architect of the initial administrative strategy for Mozambique.

75 The ultimatum was the result of the struggle for parts of the territory of what would be Mozambique and Zimbabwe. Portugal was given an ultimatum to retreat and drop their claims to some parts of what is now Zimbabwe (Newitt 1995). This caused further problems for Portugal, and was pointed to as one of the causes of the Republican Revolution in 1910.

now Mozambique. The shape of the Mozambican territory was consolidated after the Ultimatum with a series of territorial surveys, claims of effective presence and the definition of international borders<sup>76</sup>. The only areas not marked on maps as part of Portuguese East Africa were Northern Zambezia, only defined in the 1930s, and the Kionga triangle, a small area under German control south of the Rovuma mouth, in Cabo Delgado, that was annexed after the First World War (Newitt 1995).

The drawing of the Mozambican borders was also a reflection of the balance of power in Europe and of the decaying capacity of Portugal as a world power. The hardship faced by Portugal during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with internal struggles and political unrest, contributed greatly to its weakness in the international sphere. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was a belief among other European powers that the economic chaos Portugal was facing would eventually force it to give up the African colonies, and there were a number of private agreements between Britain and Germany that divided the Portuguese colonial territories between them (Newitt 1995). In the event the country would hold on to its colonies longer than any other in Europe, and only negotiate independence after a prolonged war in three different territories – Angola (1961-1974) Guinea-Bissau (1962-1974) and Mozambique(1964-1974). This is much later history though, and one which will be detailed for the Mozambican case in Chapters 4 and 5.

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<sup>76</sup> The Portuguese presence in Mozambique since the 16<sup>th</sup> century (with the Prazo scheme in Zambezia to the south), and the argument for creating what became known as the Rose-Coloured Map (comprising the territory between Angola and Mozambique and which was to remain in Portuguese hands), led to the need to establish a more complete knowledge of the Mozambican terrain than elsewhere in Africa, and to a surge of exploration in the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. These exploratory journeys resulted in a better knowledge of the Mozambican terrain. The definition of the colonial boundaries of Mozambique was not so random as elsewhere in the continent: it was based, as much as possible, on prior knowledge of the land and of the people living on it. It was, nonetheless, still incomplete, superficial knowledge. The territory was reasonably well known: there had been several expeditions, both by Portuguese and British, to survey the territory and establish alliances with local leaders. The people living on the land were less known. Newitt (1995) argues that contrary to what happened with other African territories, the Mozambican landscape became reasonably well known during this period because of the struggle to establish the limits of the territory.

Until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century the contacts between the Portuguese and the Makonde, were minimal, as were the contacts between the Portuguese and the coastal Mwani. The Portuguese government of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century backed its claims to Mozambique by intensifying its military and administrative hold on the territory, and there was an influx of explorers, treaty-makers and missionaries to the area (Neil-Tomlinson 1977). However, even with this increase in the European presence, the incipient Portuguese administration did not reach the entirety of what was then called Portuguese East Africa: the colonial presence in Mozambique was still small and mostly coastal, as was the case with many other African territories.

A plan which encompassed the whole territory did not exist, and was not to be developed for some time. Since the 16<sup>th</sup> century the development of large parts of Mozambique was in the hands of private owners in what came to be known as the *Prazo* scheme<sup>77</sup>, but even these areas had no strong links to the crown. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century the development options for Mozambique were similarly in the care of private companies in charge of large expanses of territory, which they controlled administered and exploited to produce a major cash crop (Vail 1976). These areas tended to be in the hands of private owners, many of whom had no links with the crown, but ran a private administration and even had their own private armies. In Cabo Delgado, in the last years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Portuguese administration was limited to 'a customs post and 37 soldiers at Ibo Island, and smaller token posts at Palma, Mocímboa and Quissanga' (Neil-Tomlinson 1977:114).

By 1905 the Portuguese government began to penetrate the interior with armed

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<sup>77</sup> The *Prazo* scheme was developed in what is now the province of Zambezia in central Mozambique. A number of large plantations (*Prazos*) were created and its administration given to private owners. This scheme functioned until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. For an analysis of the *Prazo* scheme see: Isaacmann 1972; Newitt 1969, 1995. Rita-Ferreira (1975) and Newitt (1995) present a good account of the relationships in Zambezia at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and its implications for the involvement of the Crown in the area and for the changes in population composition and relationships as a result of the Portuguese presence.

columns, and was experiencing a measure of success by 1910. The government also managed to attract Makua chieftancies which opposed the slave trading coastal chiefs (Newitt 1995).

The presence and influence of the Portuguese also impacted on the local authorities and their roles, since these were used by the colonial administration to govern over the local peoples (West and Kloeck-Jenson 1999; Bonate 2006). Bonate (2006) argues that though the Portuguese colonial system had little impact on the kinship system of the coastal societies, since the way it was implemented maintained the ideology of matriliney. Until that point there was a coexistence of patrilinear and matrilinear systems.

These differences in kinship terms and relationships between Makonde and Mwani are still visible today. Some of the older patterns of residence of the Makonde<sup>78</sup> changed due to differences in the use of space defined by rural policies in the post-colonial period (West 1998) and have introduced new structures of power and authority.

The Makonde are matrilineal, choosing to establish residence with the mother's brother, and up until recently with a preference for marrying cross-cousins, which was perceived as the best option to ensure access to power. Power was transmitted to men through the matrilineage, and a young man was better served living close to his mother's brother from whom he would inherit the leadership of the village and the clan he was a member of (Dias 1970: 64-65). Makonde women would be born in their father's settlement and move to their husbands upon marriage (West 2005: 32). Because their children would go and live in their brother's settlement they continuously maintained relationships with their lineage (*likola*) of origin, creating

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<sup>78</sup> In the case of the Makonde residence for men was to be with the maternal uncle (Dias 1970).

strong matrilineal networks across the plateau, which would later be used during the liberation struggle.

Mwani kinship systems are different. Descent and power transmission are done through the patrilineage. The influence of Islam and the Swahili coast extended to this part of Mozambique as I mentioned before and the ways in which descent is defined have a link with the greater regional area.

It was only as a result of the First World War and the need to defend northern Mozambique from the Germans that the Portuguese made a serious, concerted attempt to pacify and take control of the province beyond the coastal areas. Until the 1920s the Makonde were able to avoid any kind of domination by other peoples and that included the Portuguese. They were seen as aggressive and isolated and had a 'fame of invulnerability and no one dared to go into their territory' according to one of the administrators of Cabo Delgado during the 1950s and early 1960s (Chambino 1968: 153). Especially after 1917, there was an expansion into and military conquest of Cabo Delgado. Neutel de Abreu<sup>79</sup> invaded the plateau with a military column to 'pacify' it. There were battles in several areas of the plateau before the Makonde were considered conquered, and even after the battles were won, it took about two years for the area to be subdued fully (Dias 1964). The plateau was considered under control around 1922<sup>80</sup>. Cabo Delgado was the last province to come under the control of the Portuguese.

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79 Neutel de Abreu was a major of the Portuguese army with a longstanding presence in Mozambique where he lived for over 30 years. He took part in several campaigns in the north of the country.

80 A military campaign led by Neutel de Abreu.

## *Conclusion*

The northern areas of Cabo Delgado, where the Makonde and Mwani live, have been for a long time a place where identities are formed and reformed through movement and contact. The occupation of the area and its history has led to the formation of different identities for these groups. The movement caused by wars, droughts and famines has led to a separation between the groups. The slave trade added another dimension to the relationship between the groups leading the Makonde to retreat further into the plateau they occupied at the time and redefining the continuous contact the Mwani had with the outside influences of the peoples they traded with. With the intensifying of the slave trade and the start of the colonial expansion in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century this area saw even more changes which would increase the separation between these groups and redefine their perceptions of identity creating stronger, more sharply defined divisions.

When the Portuguese first arrived in Mozambique their impressions upon contact influenced the way colonial rule was established. Along with this, economic and political constraints shaped the choices of the Portuguese colonial system, and their approach to the area. These would leave marks which would shape local relationships between the groups who inhabited the area at the time of the Portuguese arrival. The policies implemented in conjunction with the geographical location close to the border with Tanganyika and the long term contacts with Tanganyika would shape the local relationships in a way that would extend well into the present.

I described what is known of the early history of the Makonde and Mwani. I addressed how the places which Makonde and Mwani came to inhabit featured prominently in their discourses about identity, self-perception and relationships with

the other occupants of the same province. The remote location of the Mueda Plateau (Map 1) which the Makonde traditionally occupied, had a strong impact on the development of a separate group identity, and made fierceness and elusiveness intrinsic parts of the this identity. The need to defend their territory from foreign invasions at various times during the 19<sup>th</sup> century made them conscious of strategy and defence, and resulted in the projection of an image of invincibility and military prowess. Less is known about the Mwani, a fact which is curious given the fact that their contact with the Portuguese was more prolonged than that of the Makonde and therefore more likely to produce records. Their identity and image as a group have generally been associated with the larger Swahili identity, of which they are considered a part. I will examine in more detail the changes brought about by colonial rule in the following chapter, especially the differing reactions and experiences of local groups. The place Makonde and Mwani came to occupy in what would be the Mozambican territory and the history of their relationship with Portuguese colonial administration are distinct from those of the Makonde, and this difference will be explored further in Chapter III.

### **Chapter III – Early forms of resistance and differing relationships**

In the previous chapter I introduced the early histories of the Makonde and Mwani and described the areas they came to occupy in Cabo Delgado. I addressed the movement across northern Cabo Delgado and the relationships established between Makonde, Mwani and the Portuguese.

In this chapter I will discuss the impact of the colonial administration and the changes it brought to group relationships in this part of Mozambique. I will then address the different experiences of colonial rule that Makonde and Mwani had, their differing responses to colonial policies, the impact of forced labour and the increase in migration to Tanganyika. In order to do this I will examine the activities of the *Companhia do Nyassa* (Nyassa Company) and of a sisal plantation, the Mocímboa Sisal Syndicate (or Mpanga), in the vicinity of Mocímboa da Praia, the Portuguese colonial administration and the differing memories that these evoke on Makonde and Mwani. Due to the nature of the development of the activities of the *Companhia do Nyassa* and the beginning of the Portuguese administrative control of Cabo Delgado there is some overlap in terms of timeline between sections in this chapter.

#### ***1. The Companhia do Nyassa: differing memories of exploitation***

As I described in the previous chapter, the northernmost provinces of Mozambique (Cabo Delgado and Niassa<sup>81</sup>) were effectively occupied and administered at a later

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81 There is a change in the Portuguese spelling of the word Niassa. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century it was still spelt Nyassa. I follow this spelling when discussing the Nyassa Company, but when referring to Niassa province I use the modern spelling.

stage than the rest of the country, with the Portuguese pacifying the interior of Cabo Delgado only in 1922. Despite territorial claims made during the Berlin conference (1884-5), Portugal had difficulties administering Mozambique, due to lack of capital and human resources. Only a limited number of districts<sup>82</sup> (Gaza, Tete and Mozambique Island) were under direct governmental control (Newitt 1995). It was left to foreign-owned charter companies to exploit the remaining districts of the Mozambican territory. These companies were granted rights to raise taxes and recruit labour, and rights to use the land under their control and its mineral riches (Newitt 1995). In Mozambique there were two such companies: the *Companhia de Moçambique* (Mozambique Company)<sup>83</sup> and the *Companhia do Nyassa*. In this section I will consider the *Companhia do Nyassa* (Nyassa Company) which controlled Cabo Delgado and Niassa<sup>84</sup>.

In Lisbon, in 1891, a charter of 25 years (later extended to 35) was granted to a company which was to be formed in the same city in March 1893, and would administer Cabo Delgado and Niassa. However it took the company a few years to establish itself. The *Companhia do Nyassa* took possession of its territories in September 1894. Despite listing as its main goal the economic development of the area, it was unable to extend its administrative control beyond a few posts along the coast until 1899 (Neil-Tomlinson 1977). The people inhabiting the hinterland of Cabo Delgado (Makonde, Makua and Yao) were all outside the sphere of influence of the newly formed company.

Although it was formed with investment from diverse origins (British, South African,

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82 During colonial rule the internal territorial divisions within Mozambique were termed districts. After independence they are called provinces. The territory they occupy is the same.

83 The southern provinces of Mozambique were administered by the *Companhia de Moçambique* (Mozambique Company) until 1948 (Lubkemann 2008).

84 The Nyassa Company controlled an area of around eighty thousand square miles (Vail 1976) which are now the provinces of Niassa and Cabo Delgado.

German), the company was seriously undercapitalised from the start and unable to provide the services agreed with the Portuguese state (Kingdon 2002; Vail 1976; West 1998). The company had agreed with the Portuguese government to establish an administrative and economic infrastructure, in exchange for the right to collect taxes in the territories under its management. However, due to lack of funds and administrative capacity the company did little more during the early years of its presence in Cabo Delgado than collect taxes on traded goods. Taxation was on a limited basis and affected mostly the coastal populations and Makua, Yao and Makonde who came to the coast to trade with the Arab merchants, but not those who remained in the interior of Cabo Delgado (Kingdon 2002).

In 1898 the company introduced hut tax, which was, again, mainly collected near the coast because the company lacked the resources to enforce tax collection in the hinterland. From the following year and until the beginning of the First World War (1914), the company started slowly expanding from the coast into the hinterland, and began establishing administrative posts which would cover the area from the coast of Cabo Delgado to Lake Malawi (Kingdon 2002). During part of this period (between 1909 and 1913) the company became a provider of migrant labour to South Africa (Neil-Tomlinson 1977). Like the *Companhia de Moçambique* to the south, the *Companhia do Nyassa* would recruit workers from the territories it controlled (Cabo Delgado and Niassa) and send them to South Africa for a work contract.

Attempts to establish administrative posts in the area of the Mueda Plateau were met with strong resistance, making the *Companhia's* endeavours to control the interior extremely costly (Neil-Tomlinson 1977) which as a consequence made the company increase their policies for extraction of revenue on the coast. The campaigns which aimed at conquering the Makonde territory (especially the Mueda Plateau) prior to

the First World War were all unsuccessful, and the Makonde were able to avoid domination by the company until 1920. At the time of the First World War (1914-1918) German soldiers marched into Mozambique from Tanganyika (German East Africa), and this increased the pressure on Portugal to 'pacify' and control Cabo Delgado. Strategically it was important to link the district's capital, Porto Amelia (now Pemba), to the area south of the Rovuma for defence. Some of the fiercest fighting in the continent during the First World War took place in the northern part of Cabo Delgado and large numbers of African lives were lost, with Portuguese estimates placing the numbers of dead at 50,000 (Neil-Tomlinson 1977: 120-121). For the duration of the First World War the Portuguese military assumed some control of the province, and the company's actions were increasingly limited. During the war years (1914-1918) the company was affected by the conflict and suffered greatly economically. However at the end of the war the Nyassa company took over again and continued to administer the two northern provinces of Mozambique. This was the first time the company actually occupied the plateau area (West 2005).

There was growing dissatisfaction among the Portuguese government with the methods of the company when the charter was about to expire in 1929. The Portuguese government saw fit not to renew the company's charter. Facing its end, the company's administrators decided to raise hut tax between 1919 and 1929. Since it depended for a marginal profit on the collection of tax (70% of its revenue came from hut tax in 1927) (Neil-Tomlinson 1977: 123), it is not surprising that the Company's management employed brutal methods. The population of the Cabo Delgado and Niassa was 'subjected to its harsh brutality and crude exploitation as it attempted to cut its losses and to recoup part of its investment' (*ibid.* 1977:127). The British Vice-consul at Porto Amelia<sup>85</sup> describes these methods in 1913:

<sup>85</sup> Porto Amelia was the colonial name of Pemba. This is the capital of the province of Cabo Delgado.

When the time came for the tax to be harvested, the *chefe do posto* sent his African policeman [*sipais*] into the surrounding villages. If men could not pay their taxes or were not to be found, then the women were seized and set to work on the *chefe's* own plantation or the roads. Unpaid and often unfed, they were also liable to be beaten or raped. Mortality was high amongst these women so forced to labour; at one post in the interior two or three were said to die each day. (quoted in Kingdon 2002:21)

In Mocímboa da Praia, older people will still have memories of the *Companhia*. Even though the town was not as actively exploited as other parts of the country, these memories are not of positive developments. In interviews people would mostly recall their first impressions upon meeting Europeans who worked for the company, and following this the various forms of exploitation that the *Companhia* engaged in. Some would refer to them as Germans<sup>86</sup>, and not Portuguese, which probably relates to the fact that the *Companhia* staff was mostly not Portuguese, but which is also linked with the ownership of the company itself, mostly in foreign hands. It is also linked to old memories of the German presence in Tanganyika before the end of the First World War.

There was less vivid memory of the actions of the company than of the presence of some of the European employees and their travels across the province. Some of the older Mwani I spoke with, who had lived by the coast and as children had encountered some of the company's employees, remembered uniforms and that Europeans were carried in a palanquin (*machila*) when travelling in the province. They remembered less the economic activities of the company or even the payment of taxes. Very few Makonde mentioned the company though. Mwani and Makonde memories of European presence were much stronger for the period when the Portuguese colonial administration was in place in this area (i.e. post-1929). An old Mwani man I interviewed in Mocímboa and who still remembered the *Companhia*

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<sup>86</sup> The word used for any foreign employee of the *Companhia* was *alemãos*, which is a corruption of the Portuguese word for Germans (*alemães*).

had this to say:

Those white people are from the time of the Companhia do Nyassa, a long time ago. [...] Then we didn't call it Companhia do Nyassa. The white people that governed at that time we called Companhia. It was in the time of the *machila* (hammock in which the white people were transported when they were travelling). (Sumail Buanada)

The strategies of the company to create profit and administer the territory under its control, despite the criticism received, were to be followed by the Portuguese administration once it took hold of the territory. The closer relationships the Company established with the coastal populations would be continued by the Portuguese as well. In the section below I describe the Portuguese colonial administration and the different memories evoked by their presence for Makonde and Mwani.

At the end of the rule of the Nyassa Company Mocímboa was the third largest centre of Cabo Delgado, having a population of around 20,000 people (Conceição 2006: 78).

## ***2. The Portuguese colonial administration***

The colonial presence in Cabo Delgado was sparse as I described in the previous section. However, even with a small presence there were still signs of presence of a colonial administration of sorts. The Portuguese first established a Catholic parish (the parish of *Nossa Senhora do Rosário*) in 1893, but it was only in March 1959 that the town was officially created by decree (Mpalume 2003). In the years between the establishment of the parish and the official creation of the town much had changed.

Despite the early date for the establishment of the parish in Mocímboa, most

interviewees would place the arrival and influence of the Portuguese at around the start of the First World War, which is consistent with the historical record for this part of Mozambique (West 2005; Dias 1964; Medeiros 1997). It is clear that explorers had been to this area earlier than that and that contact had been established for trade. Accounts of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, from Mwani interviewees, refer to the presence of officials of the Company of Nyassa. Between 1914 and 1917, during the First World War the Portuguese government occupied this area and Ntamba became known as Mocímboa da Praia. It was around this time that the first neighbourhoods were established, under leaders recognised by the colonial administration (Mpalume 2003).

In the colonial period there were two major neighbourhoods: Nanduadua and Pamunda, and an area for the houses of the Portuguese administrators and colonial officers and the Portuguese settlers called *Bairro Cimento*<sup>87</sup> (Cement Neighbourhood). This followed the usual architectural pattern for towns in the former Portuguese colonies.

At the same time as the establishment of Mocímboa as a centre for the colonial administration was being set, the Portuguese began their more coordinated expansion to the interior of Cabo Delgado. The Makonde were still considered at this point to be outside the control of the Portuguese. The Makonde were seen by the Portuguese as 'quarrelsome, treacherous, liars (...). They are continuously fighting each other, because of theft of women from their enemies, who are all indigenous of different races.' (Pires 1924, in Chambino 1968: 153). However this state of affairs was to end,

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87 This translates literally as cement neighbourhood and it relates to the material the houses of Portuguese settlers and administrators were built in. The cement neighbourhood built during the colonial period is characteristic of most Mozambican towns. They would be divided between an area of houses in European style, and the areas where the population of Mozambican origin would live. There are still, in most towns the remains of the buildings of Portuguese origin, some of which are in use as administration buildings.

and by the end of the First World War the Portuguese were beginning to have some control of the interior. The political alliances of the Makonde played a part in this too.

Dias (1964) claims that the fragmented political organisation<sup>88</sup> of the Makonde and the warfare between clans made it easier for the Portuguese to beat them in battle, but harder for the actual conquest of the whole plateau, since there was no single leader the Portuguese could negotiate with to establish the terms of peace. The warring parties were usually small, or, if constituted by people from different villages, badly integrated and relatively easy to overcome. The internal warfare among the Makonde may have contributed to their weakening and made territorial occupation and domination easier for the Portuguese. Kingdon describes this:

The Plateau Makonde were able to hold out against the company [*Companhia do Nyassa*] until October 1920, but some clans were weaker and less hostile than others in the face of armed excursions into their territory. In 1914 Colonel Massano de Amorim ordered Antonio Pires to lead a reconnaissance and road-building expedition into the Makonde region. The fact that Pires managed to 'subdue the region, building a road of over 100 kilometres and some fortified places, without having to fire more than 640 bullets and having paid only 700 escudos in salaries to the Makonde workers', suggests that the acephalous, segmentary nature of the Makonde social organization, and the animosities created by clan warfare, worked against the large scale, combined action [of the Makonde against the Portuguese]. (Kingdon 2002:19)

In an account presented by West (2005) of the conquest of the plateau, the enmities between clan leaders feature prominently. He encountered a number of Makonde elders who still remembered the Portuguese conquest of the Plateau, and who explained to him how two of the more powerful Makonde leaders of the time, Malapende and Namashakole, were fighting against another leader, Mbavala. There were conflicting versions of these stories, though. In some Mbavala set out purposefully to meet with the Portuguese and get their help against his enemies,

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88 The Makonde were organised in small villages under the leadership of a lineage head.

before or after several (usually three) attacks from the Portuguese, while in others he went to the coast to trade, was caught, bound and made by the Portuguese to show the way to the Plateau. I heard this version from one of my informants (Yalama Jacobo) who was a member of Mbavala's lineage.

Mbavala was a magical elder and everyone feared him. Mbavala was a *régulo* [leader recognised by the colonial administration] and he was the one who convinced the population of the plateau to let the Portuguese come in. He went to welcome the Portuguese at Nanende. He worked for the Portuguese government. Long ago the elders were all killing each other, there was a war and people would kill anyone, you didn't choose whom you killed. Mbavala and Namashakole were enemies. Namashakole was on the route to the creek one day and ambushed Mbavala's sister and cut off her head. Someone took her head and carried it to Namashakole's village. They told Mbavala that he would never see his sister and insulted his father. He took a slave woman to where his sister's body was, cut the slave's head and placed it on his sister's body and put *ntela* (medicine) in it. They called the sister by her name and she replied. She went home and only died after independence.

Mbavala set out to the coast, met with the Portuguese and helped them find their way to the settlements of Malapende and Namashakole. This account suggests the reasons Mbavala might have had to assist the Portuguese in their conquest of the plateau. Most versions do recognise the hostility between Malapende, Namashakole and Mbavala. There was also relatively superior fire-power on the part of the Portuguese. Although the Makonde were not strangers to firearms<sup>89</sup>, and the Portuguese were not terribly well armed, there was an advantage on their part which could also help explain their success.

Until the early 1920s the Portuguese had had contacts mostly with the Mwani population on the coast. This population had, in the recent past, been slave traders and this had created tensions between them and the Makonde further inland (Henriksen 1983:8). The Portuguese used the perceived enmity between the Mwani and the Makonde to their advantage when establishing their administration, by

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<sup>89</sup> The slave trade in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was accompanied by trade in firearms. The Makonde had been acquiring firearms since they had been introduced in the areas now occupied by Cabo Delgado (Alpers 1975).

pursuing a policy of divide and rule (Henriksen 1983:10) as they did elsewhere in the country. This was the way it was perceived by the local populations with people mentioning often how the Portuguese officials would pit one group against the other: by giving one a higher status while conscripting the other into forced labour; by restricting travel; by spreading rumours which would make one group suspicious of the other<sup>90</sup>. The ways in which these measures were implemented early on will be discussed in the following section, especially when discussing the different experiences of forced labour in the sisal plantations around Mocímboa da Praia and the memories of the period (1930s-1950s) that still linger.

The Portuguese relied on the coastal population when it came to finding staff for the local administration at low level, while the population in the hinterland, considered 'primitive' was used for labour and generally would not be a part of the administration<sup>91</sup>. The only way in which the population from the hinterland gained schools and health care was through the work of Christian missionaries.

At the time of the establishment of effective colonial administration in this part of Mozambique (the 1930s), when the Portuguese government took over from the Nyassa Company, the Portuguese state and the Catholic church had established an agreement giving the Catholic Church special privileges and restoring much of the power and influence the Catholic Church had lost during the more secular First Republic (1910-1926)<sup>92</sup>. At the same time the Catholic Church was expected to

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<sup>90</sup> I was told the Portuguese had told the Muslim Mwani that if they went to the Plateau they would be forced to eat pig.

<sup>91</sup> Liisa Malkki (1995) points that her informants would discuss the different attitudes of the colonial government towards Hutu and Tutsi to explain how the Tutsi had risen to higher social standing within the colonial administration in Burundi. It was not unusual for colonial administrations to use a system of divide and rule, and to single out groups which they deemed better suited to certain types of work.

<sup>92</sup> The role of the Catholic Church in Mozambique and its relationship with other organised religions (Christian or Islamic) was an ever changing one. For the duration of the New State regime the Catholic Church had preferential treatment, but other religious organisations still maintained their standing in Mozambique (Cahen 2000). In Cabo Delgado, especially on the coast, Islam had and still has a very strong presence.

establish missions in the overseas territories, provide education and health care.

The Makonde territory was chosen for the establishment of Catholic missions because the coastal Mwani were deemed too entrenched in their Muslim ways to be susceptible of conversion to Christianity (West 2005). The missions were established at various points in northern Cabo Delgado ((Nang'ololo, Nambude, Imbau) and the missionaries started their work of conversion, setting up a number of schools and health posts. The one which was the biggest, the Nang'ololo mission in Muidumbe, is still there and functioning. The other missions no longer have missionaries living there. These Christian missions are located mostly in the hinterland and far from the coast where the population has been largely Muslim for a long time. Mocímboa da Praia (the town) never really had a large Christian mission, just one small parish church, which was mostly for the Portuguese people living in town during the colonial period. The church is much smaller than the churches of the missions on the plateau, since the Christian population in this area was small during the colonial period when the church was built.

The Makonde resisted conversion for some time, but after realising the advantages of cooperating with the missionaries became Christian in large numbers.

In 1924 two priests from the Monfort order, Fathers Alain Lebreton and Emile Martin went to the Mueda Plateau to establish a mission. This would later be known as *Missão Nang'ololo*. West (2005) describes the aims of the Monfort Fathers as in line with those of the Portuguese colonial state. The main aim of the Portuguese was 'to “counterbalance [the] influence” of British Protestant missions already established in the Lake Nyassa region and they were interested, specifically, in seeing a mission built among the “newly subjected” Makonde, who remained “restive toward civilization”’ (Lebreton and Vloet n.d. 1 in West 2005: 109).

Despite an inauspicious beginning in which the missionaries reported a number of difficulties in their task, and difficulties relating to the Makonde (West 2005: 110), and communicating across language barriers which seemed insurmountable at times, the missionaries slowly started converting a small number of the Makonde.

Conversion of Makonde people progressed slowly at first. The first two converts were baptised in May 1928 (West 2005: 112), but even with a slight rise in the numbers the effects of the presence of the missionaries were still small at this point. In the same year the French Monfortinians were replaced by Dutch missionaries of the same order who had a different approach to conversion: they created a Shimakonde-language catechism and a Shimakonde-Portuguese dictionary. The Monfortinians gradually changed from a very strict approach which forbade the use of the vernacular and which focused on the observance of all the precepts of religious doctrine, to a more relaxed approach, with translation of the catechism into Shimakonde and in a few years gained a measure of success. The mission still had difficulties recruiting people for catechism classes and to work in the mission. It was at the time the colonial state took over the province and implemented harsher work policies that work at the mission started to be attractive for the Makonde, since it was much better than work in road construction or at the Mocímboa Sisal Syndicate (Mpanga). The mission offered better work conditions and better pay (West 2005: 111) than the various colonial enterprises.

There were a couple of missions established in the district of Mocímboa da Praia as well. The first one in Nambude was established in 1946 and the second one, in 1960, in Chitolo (West 2005). These missions are located towards the interior of the district, in an area where the numbers of Makonde rose as the coastal Mwani became fewer, and where therefore the presence of Islam has been weaker.

The coastal areas were considered difficult for the work of missionaries because of the strong, longstanding presence of Islam. This religious divide would prove problematic in the future, and be a source of rifts between ethnic groups, and of stereotypes of each other used by Makonde and Mwani. In Chapter 7 I describe the religious divide and detail its impact on local group relationships.

An inclusive development strategy for Mozambique was only devised under the rule of the New State<sup>93</sup> in the 1930s. The end of the charter companies and the start of the forced cotton cultivation in 1938 are seen as markers of the increase in administrative control of Cabo Delgado by the Portuguese (Hedges 1999; Israel 2009: 104). After the military coup of May 1926 and the subsequent start of the New State regime in Portugal in the 1930s, the new Portuguese government looked to administer and control the overseas territories itself and designed new forms of approaching overseas administration. It was only at this time, despite the longstanding presence of the Portuguese in Mozambique, that a formalised system of indirect rule was devised for the country. The change in approach happened at the same time as the passing of the new constitution of 1933 with a more uniform approach to state administration and indirect rule, reflected in the *Lei da Reforma Administrativa Ultramarina* (The Overseas Administrative Reform Act) of the same year. This law defined the territorial boundaries and hierarchies of the chieftaincies, the duties and obligations of the chiefs and the requirement for popular acceptance of the chiefs as a requisite for their role within the state administration (Kyed 2007).

A united development strategy for the entire country was only put in place in 1948, with the end of the charter for the Mozambique Company, and meant that

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93 The New State (*Estado Novo*) was the regime that started after the military revolution of 28 May 1926. This revolution ended the first republic (1910-1926) and was a reaction against its disastrous economic policies. The New State regime ended with the revolution of 25 April 1974.

Mozambique became a united administrative unit (Young 1990: 51). The development strategy attempted to bring the whole territory under the same kind of development principles, and to devise a way of taking advantage of its unique location bordering a number of landlocked territories under British control. Mozambique was set to become both a service provider – mostly in terms of the transportation of goods; and a labour provider – especially for the South African mines. This strategy led to uneven development throughout the country, and to different regions becoming linked more strongly to different neighbouring countries than to each other<sup>94</sup>. The Maputo port (Delagoa Bay) in the south was extremely important in providing a way for South Africa to import and export goods. The south's development was closely connected to South Africa especially through labour migration to the mines in the Rand. The transfer of the country's capital in 1902, from Ilha de Moçambique (Mozambique Island) in the centre-north to Lourenço Marques (later Maputo) in the extreme south, further tipped the focus of development policies toward the southern areas of the territory (Cahen 1987). The concentration of most of the development efforts in that area can be linked to the increasing importance of economic relations with South Africa. Mozambique was also to serve as a transport route, and there were plans to expand a series of railway lines linking its neighbours to the ports from where goods could be transported<sup>95</sup>. These cut across the territory of Mozambique, linking the coast to the landlocked neighbouring countries, rather than connecting different regions within Mozambique. There was little in terms of transport routes linking the country vertically, and little

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94 The way that the different regions were developed meant that closer links were established with the neighbouring territories. The northern part of Mozambique was therefore more closely linked with Tanganyika/Tanzania, while the centre had closer links with Rhodesia and the southern districts with South Africa (Young 1990: 51).

95 These railway lines were built in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The railway line linking Lourenço Marques to South Africa was completed in 1912, and the line connecting Beira to Rhodesia began its operations in 1898. Though there were also plans for building railway lines in northern Mozambique (the Nyassa Company was to build them) they were never fulfilled (Newitt 1995: 393-397).

integration of the different districts. Newitt (1974) described this as a series of corridors which provided connections between Central and Southern Africa and the coast (Hall 1990).

At the local level, though, the change in responsibility from the company to the Portuguese state produced few differences in the form of administration, which may also be linked with the limited hold the Portuguese appeared to have in the northern part of Mozambique.

The Portuguese administration and presence in this part of the country though never very strong, had lasting effects on the traditional hierarchies of power. As in other areas of Mozambique the existing political structures were used for more effective administration<sup>96</sup>(West 1998). The Portuguese administration, like the *Companhia do Nyassa* before them, tried to use the local power structures to make up for the small numbers of colonial officers in a territory which has the same area as mainland Portugal. This proved difficult, however, since local power was not organised in a centralised form. After the end of the charter for the *Companhia do Nyassa* in 1929 the Portuguese colonial administration used a system which combined the hierarchies used by the company with the system of rule it was implementing elsewhere in Mozambique (Kyed 2007). The Portuguese introduced a three tier system of *waziri*, *capitão-mor* (captain) and *régulo* (a Portuguese word that translates roughly as little king), similar to the system employed by the *Companhia*. The three tier system was the same for the whole territory, and would not reflect the differences in political structures between the different regions of Mozambique (West and Kloeck-Jenson 1999; West 2005; Kyed 2007).

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<sup>96</sup> It can be argued that in this part of the country, as well as elsewhere in the Portuguese colonies, the administration was never truly effective, and the actual administration of the territories confined to the urban and semi-urban centres.

The system put in place by the Portuguese aimed at implementing the policies defined by the government in Lisbon: to assist in administering the area, collecting taxes and gathering people to work in road building, street and field cleaning, and in some cases to work in local cashew and sisal plantations. This system does not reflect the local power relations, but was to influence their change. The company's administrative posts were transformed into colonial administrative posts, and the colonial administration continued to work with the local chiefs as intermediaries in its dealings with the population (West 2005), and continued the policies of taxation and forced labour followed by the company. Although there was a formal change of hands in the administration the differences felt at the local level were not dramatic.

Prior to the Portuguese conquest of the plateau area, the Makonde were organised in small villages under the leadership of a settlement head<sup>97</sup>. This elder would be responsible for solving all the issues related to the life in the village: land issues; marriage and divorce; adultery; inheritance; conflict (West and Kloeck-Jenson 1999: 470). The village head was named *nang'olo mwene kaja* or *nan'golo mwene shilambo*, depending on the time of the lineage head's arrival to the place where they set up a village and the rights to land. The *nang'olo mwene shilambo* was the elder who had arrived first to an area and who had established rights to the land. The *nang'olo mwene kaja* had gotten his rights to land from the *nang'olo mwene shilambo*<sup>98</sup> (West and Kloeck-Jenson 1999). Leadership was passed through matrilineages. The villages were relatively autonomous, but where the leaders were not powerful enough, they would form alliances with more powerful village heads. Military prowess and invincibility played a big part in choosing alliances, as did

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97 Dias (1964) gives the numbers of inhabitants for some of the villages, and places them at usually below 100 people.

98 The Yao had a similar structure with territorial chiefs 'owners of territory' (*asyene cilambo*) and headmen 'owners of village' (*asyene musu*) (Alpers 1969: 413).

personal relationships and grievances.

When the administrative structure put in place by the Portuguese was established the village heads (*nang'olo mwene kaja*) were given a title (*waziri*) and expected to cooperate with the *capitão-mor*, who was drawn from the *waziri* and was expected to coordinate them. The *régulo* would be drawn from the ranks of the *capitães-mor*. The *régulo* would be the one dealing with the Portuguese administration more directly (West and Kloeck-Jenson 1999: 470). In some cases, at least on the Mueda plateau, new people were introduced as 'traditional authorities'<sup>99</sup> in a way that would keep the pre-colonial bearers of authority away from the influence and control of the colonial state (West 1998, 2005). Where the traditional leader of the area refused to work with the Portuguese administration, he would sometimes send someone in his place, and this person would, unwittingly, be taken as the representative of the political hierarchy for that area, thereby changing the structure of power in a subtle way. However, the traditional leader was still known by the population, and the process of handing down power still followed the local rules.

In the early days of the colonial administration, the population on the coast was mostly Mwani. The inhabited areas along the bay where Mocímboa is now located were divided into two groups, one in Ncimbwa (now called Mocímboa Velha located on the opposite side of the bay), and the other in Ntamba<sup>100</sup> (now Mocímboa da Praia), where the people were under the leadership of a man by the name of João Vicente Dias (Mpalume 2003). The people lived in Ncimbwa and came to Ntamba to tend to their fields. It was only much later (and I got no real date for this) that they moved to Ntamba, and that the name changed to Mocímboa da Praia.

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99 This would later be part of the argument the government made when deciding to abolish 'traditional authority' since it was claimed that these were not in anyway traditional, but had been an invention of the Portuguese government (West and Kloeck-Jenson 1999).

100 Ntamba is a creeper, which when cut gives water. The area where Mocímboa is now located was covered with this plant in the past (Mpalume 2003).

In the 1950s the district of Mocímboa da Praia had a population of 37,687 (Dias 1964), while the last census (2007) gave the population of the town alone as 40,863 and of the district as over 90,000<sup>101</sup>. Some of this growth is due to the natural increase of the population, but part of it can also be explained by the arrival of refugees and migrants after the end of the civil war in 1992. The sudden influx of people to this area has changed the social dynamics between those who have lived here since the town was established and those who came more recently. If we add to this change in population composition the religious divide, the ever-changing assertions of identity, with their recent rigid understandings and expressions, and the role of politics, then we have the background for the events of 2005.

One of the accounts I heard, which referred to how the town was about 60 years ago, described the area now occupied as mostly empty and the areas where the town extends to as bush. It was only from the 1950s onwards that the town became bigger. I got to hear this story quite often from older Mwani men and women<sup>102</sup>. When I asked to meet people who knew the history of the area I was usually directed to older Mwani people living in Pamunda and Nanduadua. They felt they had the right to tell the story and tell it in detail. One Mwani informant, Abili, described the occupation of Pamunda:

Most people in Pamunda came from Mocímboa Velha. Pamunda is the first neighbourhood. Even now if someone dies in Milamba they are buried here, because this is the origin.

Pamunda, closer to the seashore, was the largest neighbourhood until the end of the

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101 The official census results for 2007 are available at: <http://www.ine.gov.mz/censo2007> The town's results were broken down locally immediately after the end of the census.

102 There are some minor variations of this story, but the structure and content of the versions I heard were very similar. Sometimes there was disagreement as to what exactly the name of the town meant – some people would say it meant 'the place where lions come to drink' while others said it derived from a plant which used to be abundant there. The initial settlement was called Ncimbwa, and its inhabitants came to the place where Mocímboa now exists, a place called Ntamba – because of a plant, a creeper which was abundant there – to cultivate. After some years, some of the people left Ncimbwa and established a settlement in Ntamba (Mpalume 2003).

1950s, but on 9 December 1959, a cyclone destroyed both Pamunda and Ntamba. The colonial administration re-housed the population in a different part of town (Nanduadua) and the area occupied by Pamunda remained empty. The rationale for this, was to free this area so that the port could be expanded and used in a more efficient fashion. A pier was built at this point, and is still in use today. The area where Pamunda was initially located only came to be occupied again in the late 70s and early 80s. This would account for the mixed Mwani and Makonde population that inhabits it, since it was in the 1980s that the Makonde started settling in Mocímboa in larger numbers. It is one of the neighbourhoods where there is a bigger mix of the population. However, certain areas are predominantly Makonde and some predominantly Mwani. The Makonde occupy the area to the left of the main road in larger numbers, and the Mwani concentrate closer to the sea, on the opposite side.

Nanduadua grew after the cyclone, with the influx of people who relocated from Pamunda. In some ways this neighbourhood resembles the spatial organisation of Pamunda, with a clear distinction between the areas occupied by Makonde and Mwani. Behind the administration buildings there is a depression, which usually floods during the rainy season; during the dry season one can walk through it to the older part of Nanduadua. This part is occupied mostly by small houses, built close together. Its population was mostly of Mwani origin. The streets are narrower, and the plots of the houses smaller. The space for the houses was worked out before independence. The clear divisions of space, with standard sized plots, would be a post-independence development. Nanduadua has two sections built at different times. The older section is occupied mostly by Mwani people, while in the newer section is a mix of Makonde and Mwani.

Milamba, another neighbourhood which received people from Pamunda after the

cyclone of 1958, is located by the shore overlooking the bay. This is the largest of all neighbourhoods in town and has a predominantly Mwani population, which in 2007 numbered about 20,000. It does not occupy the largest area, but since it has the houses built closer together than all the other neighbourhoods in town, it manages to pack together the largest population. The houses in this neighbourhood tend to be smaller, with less ground around them. The roads are smaller and narrower. The neighbourhood does not have a planned structure, having developed with time and not according to post-independence government plans.

Most Makonde regardless of their age and period of residence in the town would say that they did not know the history, as it was not 'their' history<sup>103</sup>. These stories generally described the early occupation of the area, and the initial contacts with the Portuguese and the Makonde. The contact with the Portuguese was, up until the establishment of the administration, generally limited Portuguese men who married Mwani women, mostly of the ruling families<sup>104</sup>. However 'early occupation' usually referred to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, since this was the period some of the people in town remembered hearing stories about from their ancestors and which is consistent with the increase in contact between the Portuguese and the coastal, and later inland, populations as I detailed in Chapter II. Anything before that was not usually part of local accounts, except to refer to an ancient past when the Arab and Persian traders started making contact with the coastal people and introduced them to Islam, but

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103 During an interview with N'janjaula, who had been the neighbourhood leader for Pamunda for the last 17 years, when discussing different histories about Mocímboa, and he told me he could not help me with the history because it was not his. If I wanted the history of the struggle he would be happy to oblige, because he had taken an active part in it. For the history of the town I would have to go talk to the *donos* (owners). N'janjaula is a Makonde man, a former fighter from the liberation struggle who moved to Mocímboa in the late 1980s and has lived there since then. Although not unusual that he would still consider himself from the plateau in the hinterland, since his origins were there, his refusal to know the history of the place where he lived for so long, and where he had an active role puzzled me at first. With time, and many more interviews with similar conversations, I came to realise that people only felt comfortable telling their history, the one they had lived through.

104 In the settlements along the coast there were ruling Shirazi families, who would come into contact with the Portuguese since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In some instances there were intermarriages and alliances between the Portuguese and members of these families (Mpalume 2003).

which was generally undated.

The increase in size in the town was a result of the presence of the Portuguese administration, increase in jobs brought by the sisal and cashew plantations, and also the rise in numbers of Makonde who were brought forcibly to the coast to work. I will discuss their experiences and those of the Mwani who worked alongside them in the section below.

### ***3. Mpanga – differing experiences of labour***

After the introduction of hut tax by the *Companhia do Nyassa* in 1898, people who were unable to pay would be made to work to make up for the tax. At the time of the company's hold of this area, its methods for extracting labour were considered extremely violent and attracted criticism from outside observers (Neil-Tomlinson 1977). The Portuguese colonial administration, continued some of the practices of the *Companhia* with respect to the administration of the area. Forced labour to make up for the failure to pay taxes and the hut tax were some of the policies continued.

One of the major causes of suffering in the colonial period was forced labour. People would sleep in the bush, trying to escape from forced labour, but only those who had gone before could be free from it (Jorge Benjamim<sup>105</sup>).

This was a common tale of the suffering experienced during the colonial period, and was recurrent in interviews whenever I discussed forced labour or the early presence of the Portuguese administration in the district. However, as will become clear throughout this section not everyone had the same experience and part of the coastal population had different memories from the period.

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105 Jorge Benjamim was an older Makonde man, aged about 70, who had been brought to work forcibly in Mpanga.

When unable to pay taxes people would be arrested ('caught' was the expression most used), bound and taken to the town's prison (*calabouço*) from where they were then taken to one of the plantations in the area (cashew or sisal plantations) where they would work to pay taxes and for some extra money. The pay was usually extremely low, and in no way comparable to what could be earned doing the same work in neighbouring Tanganyika. Along with the money, people would also get a blanket (*manta*), shorts (*calção*) and a shirt (*camisola*), which most of the people I spoke with said were worth more than the salary they were entitled to at the end of their work. The memory of how much was received was generally hazy. Some people would refer to the value received in *meticais* (the current currency of Mozambique), others in *escudos* (the former Portuguese currency). The general consensus, however, was that the pay was low.

People would be asked at the beginning of their six months labour whether they would like to be paid in *posso* (food) and *indala* (salary). Some people would only get *posso* and some would also get *indala*. The distinction between these was based on the distance to the workers' homes. People who were from nearby would be able to go home for food, or have it delivered to them by a member of the family (usually a child) would be able to get only *indala*, which would mean they would have a higher income than people from far away who would have to split the income of their work between *posso* and *indala*.

There were not many ways to get paid work within Cabo Delgado apart from working for some of the colonial settlers (who were not numerous and together employed around 50 people (Adam and Gentili 1983:45, in West 2005:104)) and in the Catholic missions where a few more people would find employment and where payment was slightly better. For the large majority the only way to pay taxes was

through forced labour. People would be made to work for the government (e.g. building roads, cleaning gardens ) or for some privately owned sisal or cashew plantation.

The people were caught by the administrators of Mueda and Nangade, and they brought them in to work. Vieira would go to make contracts and say how many people they needed to work. (Ali Bacar Inguasse<sup>106</sup>)

One of the main sisal plantations to use forced labour in this part of Mozambique from the 1930s was the Mocímboa Sisal Syndicate, in a place named Mpanga, and referred to that way by the Makonde<sup>107</sup> (Map 2). Located at a short distance from Mocímboa da Praia, it was German owned, but managed by a Portuguese (Vieira e Baptista) and became one of the largest sisal enterprises of the region.

Due to its large size<sup>108</sup>, Mpanga required numerous workers in various functions to maintain it and keep it working. There was the need to plant the sisal, transplant it, cut it, to cut wood for the machines which would prepare the sisal, wash and dry the sisal, place it in the machines which would shred it, stack it and prepare it for sale.

The Makonde would generally work in Mpanga as a part of the labour requirements to pay taxes for about 6 months at a time. Some would work only once, others several times. Along with the Makonde a large number of Mwani worked at the plantation but usually in a different capacity. Some would be temporary workers, some would be semi-permanent, and some would work there for years in areas which required skilled labour.

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106 Ali Bacar Inguasse is a Mwani man who had been born and worked in Mpanga for a long period as a volunteer. His experience and memories of the time spent there were considerably different from those of the Makonde who had been forced to work in the plantation.

107 Mpanga was not just referred because it was close to where I was doing my work, I had heard of it long before that, as the place where most Makonde would be forced to work. It is referred in the work of West (2005), Alpers (1984). There were of course other plantations, including a cashew plantation close to Mocímboa as well, but Mpanga was the one mostly alluded to and the place that stuck in the imagination of many Makonde as the place of forced labour.

108 A number of informants who had worked in Mpanga for a few years described the size in terms of how long it would take to walk around the entire plantation: about a day was the general consensus.

Ali Bacar Inguasse described his experience in Mpanga, thus:

I was born in Mpanga. The white people who came to open the plantation have found me there. First came the English, then the German and then Vieira. I worked there until the war started and then I worked at the airport. [...] An English man called Ling was the first to open the plantation. The English man was in charge of the *machamba* (fields) and the German of the machines. The English got upset and left because he didn't want to be in charge of the *machamba*.

The people employed on longer term contracts would mostly be from the coast, and in most cases from very close to the plantation, so that they could remain in their houses and did not need to relocate to the plantation. They would do some of the jobs which required more specialization and experience. They would usually work in the processing of the sisal, which required knowledge of the machinery, or in the repair of the machines and not so much in the planting or harvesting of the sisal. They would also work more closely with the people in charge of the plantation. These employees worked under different conditions and were better paid. They had the option of choosing when to work in the plantation or when to work in their own fields. The voluntary aspect of their employment and choosing to work there because of the advantages it brought, were always emphasised during interviews. This was a major aspect in the differing experiences of plantation work.

The first people who worked in the plantation were volunteer. It was only later that they started employing forced labourers because the *machamba* was big and the contract workers alone were not enough. For us [contract labourers] it was a normal job and we liked it. (Ali Bacar Inguasse)

People who came from the area close to the plantation and where unable to pay taxes would be employed in a different capacity and would generally work for the local government (cleaning streets, tending local gardens, doing repairs to administration buildings, etc.) or have the option of working voluntarily in the plantations.

I was not forced, I went there by myself. On the Plateau people were caught and forced to come to Mpanga to work. People from here volunteered, and many decided to go and work there, to make money to be able to buy clothes. It was easy for me. I

would leave my house and went to work and came back at night. I lived close to Mpanga. (Adamo Ansumane<sup>109</sup>)

A person 'caught' and made to work to make up for unpaid taxes was asked about who was the headman of their village and where they were from. If they were from areas closer to the plantation they would be sent to work elsewhere. At the time of checking whether someone had paid taxes or not and therefore deciding if they were to be sent to work in one of the plantations, a person would be asked who was the *régulo* of their village and after that assigned a place to work. In most cases a person would not work in their area of residence.

It was usual for people from the plateau to be forced to work in plantations closer to the coast where they were expected to know fewer people, and from where they were supposed to have a more difficult time escaping. Escaping from the plantation was, however, still a common occurrence.

Adamo Mashud was a contracted labourer in Mpanga for many years. He had been born in Mpanga at the time when his father was working there as a contract worker and lived in the plantation as a child. Later he returned to work there and stayed for several years. His status was different from that of forced labourers who would often try to escape. Adamo said:

Many escaped, those who had been captured to work escaped in large numbers. Some would go to Tanzania, and some would go home. They escaped at night. There was control of the workers, but they always found ways to run away. They left because the work was hard and they couldn't cope with it. [...] We did the same work, but we couldn't run away because we were home, and only went to work when we wanted, while the others had to work for 6 months.

Although most of the former workers at Mpanga I spoke with claimed to have worked for the duration of their time (6 months), they all remembered that many had

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109 Adamo Ansumane was a Mwani man, over 70 years old, who had worked in Mpanga as a volunteer for some time.

escaped shortly after arriving, or sometime into their time there. These tales were often full of ethnic stereotypes, and value judgements as to the working abilities of the groups involved. Issa Momade, a Mwani man who worked in Mpanga, described the situation in these terms:

Many ran away, especially Mwani, because Makonde can work. When a 'Mwani'<sup>110</sup> was caught they would run to Tanzania. When someone missed a day no one paid attention, but on the second day they would be searched for, and by then they would be far. The Makonde were many, and came from Muidumbe, Mueda and Nangade. They were the ones who worked the most, but for those living close to the border it was easy to escape. (Issa Momade<sup>111</sup>)

The work was considered physically demanding. The combination of difficult work and conscription led many to try, and often succeed, in escaping from Mpanga.

People complained a lot and others escaped because the work was very hard. [...] It was difficult to work on the first few days and people had to learn. Most of those who escaped went to Tanzania. People could escape during the work and no one would notice. There were many people. Too many. The plantation was very big – it took about a day to go around it. [...] When people escaped they just wanted to find refuge. (Ali Bacar Inguasse)

Along with the workers there were other Makonde there too. People who were not working forcibly, but who were often there to support their family members, helping sisters with children, or parents, or other relatives. Older children would often go to help take care of younger siblings or nieces and nephews while their parents worked on the plantation. When a married man was caught and made to work in the plantation, his wife would usually follow so that she could take care of him and, sometimes, work in the plantation for money as well. Sometimes other relatives, especially children, would also come. Some of my interviewees came to Mpanga to help a brother or sister when they were there. Because they were too young they were

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110 Issa used the word Mwani, but upon further discussion he explained that he meant anyone who wasn't Makonde. By Mwani he meant Yao, Makwe, and any other Muslim people who was working in Mpanga at the time. This grouping together of people under a same blanket name was relatively usual, and was mostly shorthand for describing one group in opposition to another.

111 Issa Momamde was a Mwani man of around 70 years of age, who had been born in the district and who had worked in Mpanga for some years as a volunteer.

not 'caught' themselves, but still lived in the plantation in order to help with raising the children and preparing food or fetching water. The plantation became more like a village (albeit one where most of the population lived temporarily). It had a village like organisation and a hierarchical structure where the people who worked on a more permanent basis had a higher status than the temporary workers. They also had, as would be expected, a more stable relationship with the people in charge of the plantation. The experience of the voluntary workers always, unsurprisingly, stood in sharp contrast with the memories of the Makonde who were forced to work there.

Though people remember Mpanga less now, and stories about forced labour seem to not be told as often, there are still many people alive who remember working there in different capacities. The physical remnants of the plantation are disappearing fast as well, and what was left of the machinery and train tracks which connected the plantation to the town has long since been used for other purposes.

The first time I heard about Mpanga, while talking to a Makonde man who had not been there but who had simply heard stories about the place as a child, I was told a story of someone losing their arm in these machines which were used to process the sisal. However, during the interviews with people who actually worked there this was hardly ever mentioned. I assumed it to be a story told on the Plateau and with no connection to the real experiences of the people who had actually worked there, a story told to make Mpanga a scarier place, and which stuck in the imagination of some of the people who had heard of Mpanga, but were too young at the time to have worked there.

The plantation was closed shortly before the start of the liberation struggle in 1964. The effects of the continuous movement of population from the hinterland to the coast, and the differing experiences of Mwani and Makonde when it came to forced

labour, along with the memories of the period, however, have had a lasting influence in local level relationships in the area.

The plantation economy, and especially the conscription for labour, was responsible for large numbers of migrants from inland to the coastal areas (mostly forced migrants) and stimulated the settlement of some of these migrants in Mocimboa da Praia long after this. Long-standing relationships between the coastal and hinterland populations, were changed and the dynamics got altered which had been the result, not of friendly relationships but of commerce, slave trading, raiding, which had established patterns between the populations which became upset, and later turned on their heads by the colonial administration and the post independence government. This is a much later story and will be detailed in the following chapters. Along with the movement from the hinterland to the coast, another form of migration stemmed from the policies of forced labour, and that was migration in large numbers to Tanganyika.

#### ***4. Routes of escape – crossing the border and creating relationships***

The drawing of the Mozambican borders had important consequences for the population of the Cabo Delgado as it did elsewhere on the continent<sup>112</sup>. Their relations with the neighbouring colonial state, Tanganyika, started to change, as did people's ability to move more or less freely. On the other hand it gave the people who inhabited this area an option when it came to escaping some of the more

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112 For a review of population movements before the borders were defined in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century: Rita-Ferreira 1975; 1982; 1982b. For comparative studies of the consequences of the drawing of international borders elsewhere in Africa see: Leopold 2005, Nugent 2002, Nugent and Asiwaju 1996, Lentz 2003, McDermott Hughes 2006.

unpopular policies of the colonial administration.

After the colonial administration was ‘effectively’ established on the plateau, and its policies implemented, the international border with Tanzania and the geographical location of the Mueda Plateau became increasingly relevant. The colonial policies entailing diverse forms of exploitation were met with resistance and avoidance, the most common of which was migration to the then Tanganyika. This was not an entirely new phenomenon, as the three northernmost districts of Cabo Delgado (Mocímboa da Praia, Nangade and Palma) have had for a long time a very mobile population, with close links to Tanganyika and especially the Swahili coast. But from the 1920s onwards the numbers increased exponentially<sup>113</sup>. The history is one of influence through contact and trade that have developed in the Swahili coast for centuries<sup>114</sup>. This was not an unusual response when it comes to people living close to an international border in Mozambique (Murray 1995; Schmidt 1996; McDermott-Hughes 1999, 2006; Connor 2002; Englund 2002), or elsewhere in the continent (Nugent 1996, 2002; Leopold 2005).

Migration to Tanganyika in larger numbers started around the time the exploitative policies of the *Companhia do Nyassa* weighed heavily on the northern population and increased dramatically throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1927 General Vieira da Rocha<sup>115</sup>, adding his voice to the number of critics of the exploitative practices of the *Companhia do Nyassa*, said: “finding themselves exploited, without hope of redress, thousands of natives have taken the only course open to them and fled” (Neil-Tomlinson 1977:125).

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113 Although the data is not reliable for earlier than this period, and even in this period it is hard to know if the numbers are more than estimates, it is fair to assume that this was on the increase, from what is known of the early histories of the Makonde, which I have detailed in the previous chapter.

114 For a good account of the history of the Swahili Coast and the relationship between the coast and the hinterland see Middleton 1992, chapter I.

115 General Vieira da Rocha was the Minister for the Colonies until 1926.

After changes in the political system in Portugal following the military revolution of 28<sup>th</sup> May 1926 which ended the very unstable 1<sup>st</sup> Republic<sup>116</sup>, and Salazar's rise to power in the beginning of the 1930s, there was a different political approach to the colonies<sup>117</sup>, and the north of Mozambique was destined to begin cotton production. Cotton production was 'encouraged' by the colonial government, and it was claimed that due to the influence from Zanzibar and Angoche, the coastal populations of Mozambique were already cultivating cotton (Bravo 1963: 59). The forced labour in the plantations, detailed above, and the imposed cultivation of cotton prevented peasants being able to do their own agricultural work, and led to hunger and under-nourishment<sup>118</sup>. The Makonde resisted the forced cotton production and employed several forms of resistance such as sabotage (e. g. one way to do this was by boiling the seeds before planting, thus preventing them from growing; giving the wrong measurements for the plots so that less had to be planted), arson, and flight. These 'everyday forms of resistance' (Scott 1985) were used often in reaction to perceived exploitative colonial policies. The stories of resistance such as the boiling of the cotton seeds were told in a way that expressed an enduring pride in having resisted the colonial government.

Alpers (1984) shows how migration was a response to economic and political change. The Makonde accepted the benefits that came from colonial rule (e.g. the increase in consumer goods), but resisted government control and the imposition of production. Alpers does not deny the importance of repression in helping create the

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116 The 1<sup>st</sup> Republic in Portugal, which lasted between 1910 and 1926 was notoriously unstable with continuous changes in government, which caused serious economic and political difficulties to the country and made overseas government comparably difficult.

117 The colonies were to become classified as overseas provinces, which would change their status within the Portuguese 'empire'.

118 Isaacman (1992) provides a good account of the violence in forced cotton production for Mozambique and the problems it created for the local populations in terms of reduced food production, while Bravo (1963) presents an extensive, if uncritical, study of the numbers involved in production and also of the profits for the state involved in the cotton cultivation in Cabo Delgado.

conditions that would make people look more favourably at the idea of moving, but he does stress that so many people moved because of the geographical location, which presented them with an alternative to their situation in Mozambique.

Dias (1957) lists the reasons behind the movement to Tanganyika as being the higher salaries in Tanganyika, the free work contracts, and the fact that though taxes were higher, they were easier to pay in instalments. A seasonal migrant worker going to Tanganyika could earn more money, which would allow him to buy household items, or a bicycle, or cloth (*capulana*), or to pay bridewealth<sup>119</sup> upon returning to Mozambique and, in many instances, be able to marry earlier than his counterparts who stayed in Mozambique. The ability to provide these goods and to afford bridewealth meant that a migrant worker would be able to achieve a higher status, and would allow the young men to become less dependent on family networks and their heads of settlement (West 2005: 83). Buying a bicycle, or a sewing machine, for example, would allow a man to start providing a service for a fee, which would in turn increase their income. Specialising in something like carpentry could also bring in extra income, which could then be used for goods and the payment of taxes.

There are no accurate migration figures, but the estimates put the numbers of migrants to Tanganyika at around 75,000 in 1921 and 144,170 in 1931 (Neil-Tomlinson 1977:125; Kingdon 2002:22). In the district of Lindi, in Tanganyika, the migration rate had increased to between 3,000 to 5,000 a year during this period, and was expected to continue rising (Neil-Tomlinson 1977:125). Alpers (1984: 375) refers to a census that mentions the presence of 27,489 Mozambican Makonde in Tanganyika. The number of Mozambican Makonde in Mozambique in 1950 was 136,079, with about 48,120 living in the plateau (Dias 1964: 16-17; West 2005: 104).

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<sup>119</sup> The payment of bridewealth is still usual today. This does not entail as high a value as what is paid by the coastal population, but is still considered an important aspect when discussing marriage.

This makes the number of migrants to Tanganyika a large proportion of the total population.

With the increase in the growth of sisal, the higher demands for labour on the sisal plantations on the coast, and the emphasis on cotton production, there were larger numbers of Mozambican Makonde moving to Tanganyika to look for work in sisal plantations and elsewhere (Alpers 1984). These migrants did not have much access to formal education and had to keep low-level jobs, being unable to progress to higher level posts, but they were considered hard workers by their Tanganyikan employers, and were sought-after by plantation owners on the Tanganyikan side (Liebenow 1971; Kingdon 2002).

There were many preconceived ideas about the Makonde in Tanganyika. Some of these were linked with accusations of cannibalism and the belief that they did not bury their dead (Kingdon 2002). Most Makonde would end up working for Europeans, or for other already well-established Mozambican Makonde, since they found it harder to get jobs with the Tanganyikan population. The continuing migration created economic links between the Makonde from Mozambique and those living in Tanganyika, and there was a continuity of movement between Mozambique and Tanganyika, making it easier for new migrants to establish contacts and find employment through friends or relatives who had worked, or were still working, in Tanganyika. They would try to avoid paying taxes in Tanganyika as they had in Mozambique. Though some migrants would only stay in Tanganyika for a short period (a few months or a year), or worked there repeatedly but never really settled permanently, others remained for long periods of time. Some of my interviewees had stayed in Tanganyika/Tanzania for decades only returning to Mozambique after the end of the civil war.

In the late 1950s the Makonde who had migrated to Tanganyika became politically active and were exposed to the new nationalist ideas (Alpers 1984). These migrants had experienced first hand, the changes which were taking place in Tanganyika and which would lead to its independence, and were well aware of the political changes taking place elsewhere in Africa, and longed for the same developments to take place in Mozambique (Alpers 1984; West 1998) and started organising in proto-nationalist movements. When returning home the migrants brought not only more money and consumer goods obtained in Tanzania but a host of new ideas and influences which would slowly transform the perspectives of the countryside and impact on social relationships and even change the economic hierarchy (West 2005). The return of migrants with money led some of them to create new businesses. One of these men, Lázaro Nkavandame who worked in Tanganyikan plantations for several years, and worked in cross-border trade, returned to Cabo Delgado to develop a cooperative scheme. Those who took part in the cooperative scheme were free from forced labour (West 2005: 107). This cooperative scheme was to have an important role in the political organisation in the north and be one of the building blocs on which Frelimo would rely during the liberation struggle as I will discuss in the following chapter.

Migration has been, and continues to be, an important phenomenon in Mozambique. The importance of Mozambican migrants to the South African mines throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century is well documented (Covane 2001; Lubkemann 2008). Migration in southern and central Mozambique was mostly linked with male labour contracts to South African mines and within a framework of agreements between the Portuguese and the South African governments. In the northern provinces it was not. The migration in this part of the country had a different character and pattern from the migration to South Africa. While migration to South Africa was actively desired and

encouraged by the Portuguese administration as it would bring revenue to the colonial state, in the northern districts, migration was more an individual quest than a policy, it was said to have a more 'spontaneous' nature (Alpers 1984). This was not encouraged by the administration. In Cabo Delgado the high numbers of migrants worried the colonial administration and were a factor in the change to the labour laws (Alpers 1984: 374) with emphasis on 'extraction of peasant labour through market factors' and a 'more selective use of force' (Isaacman 1982: 10 in Alpers 1984: 374). As the labour laws changed many Mozambican Makonde came back. When they returned, as had been the case previously, many of these migrants brought news of what was happening in Tanzania and of the changes leading up to independence. These news were to inspire the residents of this area, of which the Makonde were to constitute the largest number, to engage in actively fighting the Portuguese.

### ***Conclusion***

In the early days of colonial conquest, the coastal Mwani had been considered better suited for working within the Portuguese administration, which had a stronger implantation along the coast than in the hinterland, where the infrastructure was harder to put in place. Being more open communities, with flexible structures, and economic activities that were harder to frame than those of the peasants, the coastal people had a different perception and experience of colonial exploitation. They were not taken into forced labour as often as the Makonde. They were, instead, employed by the sisal and cashew plantations along the coast for extended periods of time on a voluntary basis. This allowed them to pay taxes and thus avoid the six months of forced labour conscription which many people from the hinterland had to endure.

What little was known of the Makonde led the officials of the *Companhia* and later the Portuguese colonial administrators to believe they were 'too primitive' (O'Neill 1882) and because of this to give preference to the Mwani when it came to appointing workers among the administration or with settler families.

The implication of the work patterns developed and the reliance on migrant work to increase the household income meant that there was constant migration between Mozambique and the neighbouring countries. The consequent crossing of international borders led to the establishment of relations with groups in the new country – sometimes even with the relocation of residence and the permanent acceptance of a new citizenship, or maintenance of a double citizenship. It also gave the Makonde a deep knowledge of the Mozambican north and of travel routes to Tanzania. This knowledge would be extensively used during the liberation struggle.

In the following chapter I will discuss the changes brought forth by the claims for an independent Mozambique. I will start the chapter by describing a massacre in Mueda (1960), and its implications for other districts in Cabo Delgado and move on to discuss the liberation struggle (1964-1974). I will discuss the contrasting experiences of the war that Makonde and Mwani had. The counter-insurgency campaign and the fencing of towns in these districts along with the experience of the liberated zones will be contrasted and compared. The lasting memories people have of this period, and some of the tensions between sections of the population can be linked to differing experiences of the liberation struggle.

## Chapter IV – The Liberation Struggle

The liberation struggle was fought in Mozambique between 1964 and 1974. The area where the fighting was the longest and most intense was the province of Cabo Delgado. In this chapter I will detail the experience of the war in this province and the changes it caused. I will start by explaining how some of the present day relationships between the population of this area can be traced back to this period, and how memories and re-enactment of events have an impact today. Many of the present local tensions have their origin in this period and in the impact the struggle – *luta* – had on this area.

Starting with the account of a massacre in the town of Mueda in 1960 I will trace the path of resistance followed by a large number of Makonde. I will also show how fighting was not the only option undertaken by the northern population. While a large number did fight, or assisted Frelimo in their efforts by supporting them with food and information, a significant proportion of the population either escaped to Tanzania, living in refugee camps or striving to find work in Tanzanian towns, or lived and worked in Portuguese controlled towns. The experience of the war, for these two last groups, differed dramatically from that of the people living in liberated areas<sup>120</sup> and fighting the Portuguese. While there is generally one official narrative of the liberation struggle (*luta de libertação*), the experiences of the struggle were much more diverse, and memories of these years form an important part of present day relationships between Makonde and Mwani.

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120 The liberated areas were the areas under the control of Frelimo during the liberation struggle. It was in these areas that Frelimo first tried its hand at administration and tried for the first time some of the policies it would later implement in the country.

## *1. Before the struggle*

If the Makonde were the last to be dominated by the Portuguese<sup>121</sup> they were also among the first to actively rebel and fight against them. The northern part of Mozambique had a strong tradition of resistance to Portuguese colonial rule as I described in the previous chapter. This resistance initially meant active fighting, later it took the form of 'foot-dragging' (Scott 1985) – avoiding work in the colonial plantations, refusal to do forced cotton cultivation, and migration – and would again entail active fighting from 1964.

By the early 1960s, Mozambican migrants in Tanzania had organised an underground proto-nationalist movement which opposed the Portuguese state and the colonial presence in Mozambique. A few representatives<sup>122</sup> of this movement went back into Mozambique and made claims for the independence of the country, and also for changes in the prices paid to Mozambican farmers (Alpers 1984). The Portuguese administration responded by arresting them. In response to these arrests, on 16 June 1960, a demonstration was organised and large numbers of people gathered outside the buildings of the administration in the town of Mueda, where these men were being held. This demonstration ended in a massacre, after the police appeared to lose control of the situation, panicked and opened fire on the crowd (Hall and Young 1997; Kingdon 2002; West 2005). The number of casualties is contested: while some accounts claimed more than 600 dead (Hall and Young 1997:12; Kingdon 2002), others place the number at between 60 and 80 (Henriksen 1983:19), and others at a

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121 See previous chapter for an account of the conquest of the plateau and the administration of the province.

122 The most prominent of whom were Ernesto Vanomba and Chibiliti Diwani. Ernesto Vanomba and Chibiliti Diwani were both young Makonde who had lived in Tanganyika for some time and who had become involved in Makonde associations there. Their presence in Mueda in 1960 was linked with demands for workers rights, and especially to 'ask for the independence of the country' as many of my informants put it.

much lower 30 to 40 dead (Graça 2005:274). Regardless of the numbers, the violence remains one of the important moments in the period leading to the struggle. The Mueda massacre and the Makonde tradition of resistance to the Portuguese administration would later become one of the reasons for choosing Cabo Delgado as the initial theatre of operations for the liberation struggle (Israel 2009). It would also be an intrinsic part of the history of the victors of the liberation struggle, as told in the post-independence period.

There are various accounts of the massacre (Hall and Young 1997; Graça 2005; West 2005; Henriksen 1983) and participants tell different stories. It has been looked at by various witnesses and researchers from diverse viewpoints since it happened; it has become a cornerstone of the memory and the history<sup>123</sup> of the struggle, and people would refer back to it when discussing and remembering the causes of the war.

Regardless of the differences when it comes to the telling of the story of the events, it became very much a part of the imagination of (at least) older Makonde. When being interviewed they would mention it frequently as one of the examples of repression and violence in Portuguese colonialism, and the few who had been present gave accounts of what happened on the day. The memories remain powerful – these are still events that mark the early days of active resistance from the Makonde. The Mueda massacre is considered a watershed in the relationship between the Makonde and the Portuguese, and features prominently in the histories of the struggle, providing the background for Makonde discourses of active resistance.

I met Eduardo Chambone, an old Makonde man, early on my fieldwork, and asked him about his memories of the history of the area. The first thing he recalled for me was his presence in Mueda on the day of the massacre. One of the people attending,

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123 Nora (1989) describes the difference between the uses of history and of memory, and it is his distinction I am using here.

but not one of the organisers (he worked with the *régulos* as a *capitão mor*<sup>124</sup>), he recalled the events carefully:

The people had heard of the arrests of Chibiliti and Vanomba, and congregated outside the buildings of the administration in Mueda. Chibiliti and Vanomba, who had come into Mueda to make claims for better pay for agricultural products and for the independence of the country, were arrested there. They were brought outside, while a driver was called to take them to Pemba. It was at this point that the commotion started, and a man of Indian origin called China threw a rock at the people and ran into the administration buildings. The crowd gathered outside looked for him to beat him up or kill him. After this initial outburst the guards decided to handcuff Vanomba and Chibiliti, but the handcuffs broke. They tried killing them but the guns shot water and not bullets. The administrator tried beating them up but somehow did not manage to. When the car finally arrived it was stopped from getting to the men by the people. Because of the situation with the car one of the *cipaios* [African policemen] started shooting into the air and still the crowd did not move away from the car. One of the men in the administration building started shooting directly at the people, and the first few were hit. After that people panicked and started running. The *cipaios* started shooting directly at the crowd.

Eduardo then named the *cipaios* he remembered being present and the *régulos*. He went to help one of the *régulos*, Machangana, with the bodies of those who died and who were placed near the prison, and then left. His account was very factual, but had also an element of the fantastic which is mentioned in other accounts of the event.

Marcelino, a former fighter I interviewed later on my fieldwork, used similar terms:

'Chibiliti and Vanomba were part of MANU<sup>125</sup>, which was founded in Kenya. They had Mau Mau *mitela* (medicine) to be able to face the bullets and not get hit.' This is not at all unusual in the narrative of past events in the area<sup>126</sup>. West (2005) argues that

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124 These were part of the hierarchy of power put in place by the Portuguese administration – I will expand on their functions elsewhere.

125 MANU's acronym came from the English words and closely resembles the Tanganyikan (TANU – Tanzanian African National Union) and Kenyan (KANU – Kenya African National Union) acronyms.

126 There is plenty of ethnographic work on the importance of witchcraft for the understanding of local languages of power in this part of Mozambique (West 2005, 2007; Israel 2009). However, here I will not include witchcraft for lack of space, and because even though I did discuss it with people, and it is an aspect that permeates everyday discourses, it was never the primary aspect of my research. It is also not as strongly associated with mobility in Mocimboa, similarly to what happens in Tanzania (Sanders 2001). Elsewhere in the continent discourses associated with witchcraft are often linked with modernity (Geschiere and Roitman 1997; Moore and Sanders 2001; Sanders 2001b; Ranger 2007) but also issues of the articulation between tradition and modernity (Sanders 2003). After having been a much researched topic (Evans-Pritchard's 1937 *Witchcraft, oracles and magic among the Azande*, is still one of the defining texts on the issue) witchcraft fell out of favour in the 1970s and early 1980s, only to regain its place in the early 1990s with the reframing of ideas surrounding witchcraft as a set of ambivalent discourses incorporating modern changes, which denotes the engagement of witchcraft beliefs with changes in the world (Geschiere and Roitman 1997; Comaroff and Comaroff 1993).

the Makonde explain power and authority as being acquired or maintained by people who have access to an 'invisible realm', where the use of sorcery of construction or sorcery of destruction are part and parcel of the exercise of power. In an account of the massacre, by referencing the inability of the Portuguese officers to handcuff their prisoners, to shoot, or to reach the car, Eduardo is alluding to the power these Makonde representatives had, which was superior to the power of the Portuguese authorities. The Portuguese may have had the firearms, but they did not know how to control the 'invisible realm' (West 2005) of power, hence their initial failure to submit the crowd and the Makonde representatives to their will.

Following the massacre of 1960 there was a generalised movement to organise a political and military opposition to the Portuguese. In 1961 the Makonde living in Tanzania formed a political union, the MANU. MANU stood for Makonde African National Union, and was later changed to Mozambican African National Union. At the moment of its creation it was heavily influenced by its Tanganyikan counterpart TANU (Tanganyikan African National Union). MANU evolved from a Makonde mutual aid association called the Tanganyikan Mozambican Makonde Union, which had been created in 1954 by Makonde migrants in Tanganyika, and which had received the support of TANU and KANU (Opello 1973). Marcelino, who discussed the massacre earlier, did not make the distinction between the two organisations, treating them as a single entity.

In May 1962, MANU and UDENAMO (*União Democrática Nacional de Moçambique* – National Democratic Union of Mozambique) began negotiating to form a united front. Pressure from CONCP<sup>127</sup>, Julius Nyerere and Kwame Nkrumah,

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127 *Conferência das Organizações Nacionalistas das Colónias Portuguesas* – Conference of Nationalist Organisations of the Portuguese Colonies. CONCP joined together all the liberation movements from the Portuguese colonies and aimed at establishing cooperation between these movements. It was founded in 1961 in Casablanca, Morocco, by PAIGC, from Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde, MPLA, from Angola, Frelimo for Mozambique and MLSTP for S. Tome and Principe. Of

two of the early supporters of the Front (Brito 1988) led them also to join forces with UNAMI (*União Democrática Nacional de Moçambique Independente* – National Democratic Union for Independent Mozambique). The three organisations had their origins in different parts of the country, and had different ethnic and regional constituencies. This meant that their members had experienced different regional histories<sup>128</sup>. They had also been influenced by the development options taken by the administration of the area that was most closely linked with them, and had (sometimes very close) links with the countries bordering the areas where they originated, and resembled the anti-colonial movement in the country where it was formed, especially in their commitment to armed struggle (Brito 1988).

The three movements were joined by the elite<sup>129</sup> from the south of the country (Magode and Khan 1996) and Frelimo was created after 5 days of meetings in 25 June 1962 (Opello 1973). Eduardo Chivambo Mondlane<sup>130</sup>, was chosen to be the president of the Front, in the first congress held in Dar-es-Salaam in September 1962. Having been away from the country for a long time and having few connections and allegiances with the emerging elites from southern Mozambique along with the international experience he had acquired in his work for the United Nations made him the ideal candidate to be the president of Frelimo. There are two phases for this

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course it didn't bring together all the liberation movements leaving out UNITA and FNLA from Angola.

128 For an account of the different regional experiences of the colonial administration see Cahen (1988).

129 This elite was an incipient middle class of educated men and women of African and Portuguese origin. Mostly originating from the southern provinces of the country and educated in Mozambican secondary schools, mission schools (the Protestant missions in the south would have an enduring influence in the education of these elites), and later, mostly, in Portuguese and South African Universities, they developed a strong opposition to the Portuguese colonial rule (Cabrita Mateus 1999). Their ideas were heavily influenced by developments elsewhere in Africa and political ideas developed in newly independent countries. Like elites elsewhere in the continent (e.g. Algeria, see McDougall 2006) their ideas were strongly nationalistic and would develop closely to the socialist ideals. Brito (1988) provided a good view of their role in the development of Frelimo and of the biases that their educational background brought to Frelimo.

130 Eduardo Mondlane was the first Mozambican to have a PhD (in Sociology from Northwestern University) and who had experience as a University lecturer (Syracuse University) and worked for the United Nations.

period: from September 1962, until September 1964, phase I, was the politico-military consolidation and organisation. Phase II, from September 1964 marked the beginning of the liberation struggle.

Frelimo had problems organising a cohesive force out of a very diverse group. The combination of different movements helped shape the character of the Front, but also contributed to some of the fissures within it (Birmingham 1992). Unity would enable the three groups to campaign more successfully and became an aim that endured through the struggle and into independence. However there were constant internal fights, and the first years of Frelimo were marked by internal struggles for power and influence, by dissent, expulsions, different visions of what the front should be, and the ideal course of action (Cahen 1999; West 2005). Unlike Angola where the liberation struggle was fought by three movements at the same time (MPLA, FNLA and UNITA)<sup>131</sup>, in which none ever had a good grasp of the territory, or a real chance of winning the war, Frelimo emerged as the single force fighting the Portuguese for the independence of Mozambique.

Cabo Delgado was the first place where serious fighting took place, and indeed where most of the war was fought<sup>132</sup>. A number of reasons led Frelimo to select Cabo Delgado as their primary area of action. Not least was the Mueda massacre mentioned above. Other reasons included the support of the president of newly independent Tanzania, Julius Nyerere. This support enabled Frelimo to launch military actions from Tanzania and keep training camps in various parts of the country, making military actions considerably easier at this point.

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131 MPLA – Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola); FNLA – Frente Nacional para a Libertação de Angola (National Front for the Liberation of Angola); UNITA – União para a Independência Total de Angola (Union for the Complete Independence of Angola).

132 Fronts were opened in Nyassa Province as well, but, at least in the early days of the struggle, Frelimo's presence was never as strong there as it was in Cabo Delgado.

The initial success of Frelimo also depended on the support of the northern population, especially the Makonde. The Makonde, who along with the Chewa and Nyanja, were some of the first to be involved, formed the backbone of the army throughout the liberation struggle. At the start of its campaign in rural Cabo Delgado Frelimo found willing ears for their arguments and strong supporters for their actions among the Makonde population (Newitt 1995: 524). The majority of the Makonde supported Frelimo, and when not actively fighting would find other means to help: through contributing food, assisting Frelimo recruiters, hiding the soldiers, helping with the transport of material, and passing on information. Their familiarity with the terrain proved invaluable. Mobility and constant travel provided the Makonde with extensive knowledge of the general travel routes and of the best places to cross the river which were extremely useful (and often used) during the struggle<sup>133</sup>. This knowledge was unavailable to the Portuguese army, and even to the Portuguese administration officers who lived in the country for longer stretches than the soldiers. Because they were mostly concentrated in the urban areas, their knowledge of the terrain was limited. Large parts of the countryside, referred to as the bush (*mato*) did not have roads, which made them inaccessible without local guides. These proved difficult to find, especially for people from the coast. The same is true for the social networks which could be tapped into and to which the Portuguese military and intelligence had no access. Children and women worked for Frelimo too, gathering and passing on information easily because, as one interviewee put it, they 'would not arouse suspicion'.

In the early 1960s, MANU had used the matrilineal networks in the plateau to spread

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133 A good knowledge of travel routes, and personal networks has proved important in other conflicts providing more diffuse networks of resistance and making it harder for those who do not have access to them (the Portuguese in the case) to be able to make sense of the spread of information and support (*cf.* Swedenburg 2003 on the rebellion of 1936-1939 in Palestine for an analysis of local networks of resistance).

its ideas for independence and gather support from the northern population. Frelimo continued to use the same networks. Frelimo's leadership would send young people, who were called *vashilo*<sup>134</sup> (night people) to the villages to recruit further supporters for the cause against the Portuguese. These *vashilo*, mostly young men, would come into the villages at night and talk to other young men. Initially they would not talk to elders for fear that they would turn them in to the colonial authorities (West 2005). Those who supported them would buy a Frelimo card. This would work both as a form of fund raising and as means of establishing allegiances, gathering and confirming support. If in the early days it was dangerous to have a Frelimo card at home, prompting some to bury them so as to avoid discovery. Later it became dangerous not to have them, as it signalled a lack of support for Frelimo. The ways Frelimo worked in those early days, convincing people of their ideas, and making them see the need for change, slowly evolved into a more muscular approach as its support grew. When people were not supportive, Frelimo used violence to get its message across. *Régulos* who worked closely with the Portuguese, as well as those who refused to join Frelimo, were issued death threats. Houses were burned. Sometimes this alone worked, but in some cases people were killed for their lack of support of Frelimo, or for continuing to support the coloniser (West 2005).

As support for Frelimo grew, more and more of the rural population was informed of its demands for independence and self-determination, as well as the need to fight to liberate the country. There was increasing awareness by the Portuguese of the movement in rural Mozambique, and a greater effort was made to gather information on Frelimo's activities. The Portuguese were no less violent in their approach than Frelimo, imprisoning people they believed to be supporters of the Front and torturing

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134 *Vashilo*, being night people, also meant people associated with stronger powers (i.e. sorcery) who would not be afraid to travel at night (West 2005).

them for information on its activities and supporters.

Some of the early supporters of Frelimo managed to maintain an ambiguous role, working for the colonial state while carrying out other functions for Frelimo, such as the sale of cards which would identify loyalty to the Front, and the gathering and passing on of information. Eduardo Chambone for example, with whom I spoke about the Massacre in Mueda, also told me what had happened to him after the events of that day. He said he continued to work with the Portuguese administration voluntarily, mostly in road construction. His work within the Portuguese colonial system was due to an old family connection, and he worked as well with the proto-nationalist movements emerging in the late 1950s and later with Frelimo selling party cards. He was arrested sometime after the massacre and was one of the political prisoners who stayed in custody for the duration of the struggle. Eduardo's was not an unusual experience. It was common to have worked with the Portuguese, sometimes in direct connection with the administration, or to have been part of the administrative hierarchy, and at the same time to have worked with the proto-nationalist movements and later with Frelimo.

The number of political prisoners from Cabo Delgado was also high, and their experience of the struggle often passes unacknowledged (West 2003).

Miguel Ntumbati had been a political prisoner for most of the struggle, and his is one of the first stories I listened to one morning as we sat in the yard of his house. He described where he had been and what had happened to him during the years he had been imprisoned by the Portuguese. Tissa and I were with him several hours, and unlike other interviewees and who questioned us on the relevance of what they were saying and the point of saying it, he seemed to find it important to tell and record his story, and he told it at length. Given that their stories sit uncomfortably within the

official history (West 2003: 356), it was not at all outlandish for him to believe so. The political prisoners are in a strange and difficult position. While they worked for Frelimo early on, and were arrested for that reason, they still had not fought the war, and as a consequence some of them do not receive the pension the war veterans are entitled to. These people were, as West says, *comprometidos* (compromised)(2003: 353), and therefore not the template of the heroic Frelimo fighter who should be celebrated and remembered. Although the present government recognises their importance, there is not an overt celebration of their role as there is of the soldiers in the struggle (Santos 2010; Israel 2010).

Miguel was arrested early on and held in Mueda for some time, where he was beaten and made to tell to whom he had sold Frelimo cards. He had to show where he kept the documents<sup>135</sup>. He almost escaped from his captors once thanks to the kindness of one of the soldiers. Shortly after that when one of the soldiers was beating him and the Commander made him stop, claiming that the mission was not to kill Makonde people. His account of his ordeal was extremely detailed, full of information on dates and places. He seemed to remember every detail of his arrest and time spent in jail.

On 12 October the plane for the Ibo [Ibo Island] came. At Ibo I was not beaten because they had organised the process. But many died: we ate dried cassava and did not work. We would put dried cassava, beans, water to boil in the sun. Many died because of the food.

Miguel spent some time in prison on Ibo Island, before being transferred to Maputo and then Gaza and spending the rest of the struggle there in different prisons. He was only freed at the end of the struggle.

He told his story in a way that made it clear that he was used to telling it, and felt like

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<sup>135</sup> He recalled in detail what he kept with the documents: 30 cards; 60\$00 (escudos – was the Portuguese currency of the time); 4 pens; 4 notebooks; 1 photo of Mondlane; and a Frelimo flag. His long imprisonment and the experience of it were constantly remembered which explains the details he provided when we talked to him about the struggle.

this was an important story to tell: 'It is very good to collect these stories, because we are getting old and will die soon, and these stories will die with us'. West (2003) describes a similar situation when discussing the memories of political prisoners and their post-war experiences. He also notes the need these men had to tell their story, and that they had been telling their story since independence. In part this constant re-telling of the story accounts for the rich detail, and for the maintenance of the differing elements. It also sets the narrative and detracts from questioning the events and the interpretation of those who tell the story<sup>136</sup>. Whenever I interviewed political prisoners I was struck by the rich detail, and by the fact that these stories were never vague. While other interviewees would say things like: 'it was all good' or 'we lived well' or 'there was a lot of suffering' without going into detail unless they were prompted with more specific questions, the political prisoners would generally give long, elaborate answers, full of details which included names, places and dates and which would reflect on specific events, conversations and responses. However, research on memory has remarked on the way these narratives become 'set' (Smith 2004) and form a story in themselves, denying, like the accepted narrative of the liberation struggle, competing histories.

## ***2. Fighting***

Frelimo prepared for the start of the war by sending about 200 men to Algeria in 1963 for military training in guerrilla tactics (Opello 1973, 1974). These men would later organise the army that was to fight the Portuguese. Following these men another

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<sup>136</sup> This is the case with the telling of war stories elsewhere (e.g. Algeria). The narratives acquire a format which is deemed appropriate and there is less space for interpretation of the stories and experiences of war (Smith 2004; Scheele 2006) and, in this case, prison. These stories also become a set part of nationalist narratives (McDougall 2006).

group received training in Tanzania and plans for starting the armed conflict were undertaken.

The shot that started the liberation struggle (*luta*) was fired at Chai on 25 September 1964. The date and place were decided for military and strategic reasons. Location of the village and time of year, all played an important part in the decision to start the war at that point. One of the Makonde men present at the first attack described his experience in these terms:

I went on 22 September. Slept one day, and then the next day we prepared to start the *luta* (struggle) the day after [25 September]. On the 25<sup>th</sup> Chipande [one of Frelimo's Generals] was supposed to lead the group from Chai. Antonio Saide Kandingwela was supposed to attack Muidumbe. Antonio Escapa was supposed to attack Diaca. Hilario Macumbe should attack Mueda, and Kalatashi was to attack Mocímboa. I was in the second group, and we all managed to shoot on the 25<sup>th</sup> except for the groups for Mueda and Mocímboa, who were not ready. The group from Mocímboa made an ambush in N'totwe. The ones for Mueda attacked the Muila road. The first group to shoot was the group at Chai, because Chipande was the head of the army [Commander in Chief] and according to the information they had, Chai would be easy to attack. The other groups stayed in Muidumbe, Mocímboa, Mueda and Diaca. All the groups had agreed on the time for the attacks, but because of the distance between Mueda and Mocímboa, communication was not easy. Between Muidumbe and Chai the communication was easier. When Chipande shot [in Chai] Muidumbe and Diaca responded because the communication was good. Mocímboa and Mueda didn't. The [Portuguese] troops from Mocímboa went to see what was happening in Chai, and were ambushed. The troop from Mueda went to Muidumbe and was also ambushed. (Duas Bissali Mponda)

Chai is still today a small village alongside the main road that connects most places in the northern part of Cabo Delgado. Like so many other villages it has a small market and a health post. Unlike the other villages by the side of the road, it also has a small sign indicating that this was where the first shot of the liberation struggle was fired. On 25<sup>th</sup> September of each year there are usually celebrations with former fighters in Chai to mark this event. However, all the other places referred to by the former soldiers were within a relatively short distance from each other, and the noise from shots would be easily heard. Most of these places were also small villages and the bigger centres – Mueda and Mocímboa – were the places where Frelimo was

unable to establish control in the early days of the struggle. Frelimo was also unable to attack bigger centres at the start of the war.

In the early days of the war there was considerable inconsistency in the planning of Frelimo's attacks. Whilst some appear to have been well organised, others were ad-hoc and dependent on the preparations for war made by the local population. Frelimo would, throughout the war train its military men and women<sup>137</sup>. However, due to the need to fight from the start and the lack of a completely trained army some of these soldiers could only be sent to Tanzania for training later in the struggle and would fight for years with minimal instructions. Many of my interviewees remarked upon the fact that they had been fighting for a few years before having been sent to Nashingwea in Tanzania for training.

As the struggle progressed the actions of the fighters and responses from the Portuguese army changed the nature of the conflict. Opello (1973, 1974) divides the struggle into four main phases. I follow his division<sup>138</sup> roughly when discussing the war. The first phase runs from 1964 to the end of 1965; the second from 1966 to the end of 1969; the third is the campaign in 1970; the fourth and last from 1971 to the end of the war in 1974.

In the first phase Frelimo fighters were trying to organise combat while having to deal with the lack of arms and trained soldiers. An old veteran in Chinda, whom I asked about the early days of the war, first explained how at the start of the war all they had to fight with was *espera-pouco*<sup>139</sup>, an old muzzle-loading gun used in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He also explained that they used to ambush the Portuguese, letting the

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137 The women returned to their more traditional tasks after the war, though their war experience was often remembered (West 2004b) and celebrated (Santos 2010).

138 Other divisions of the war (Hastings 1974: 264) would claim the first period of the war went from 1964 to 1968 at the time of the Second Congress held in Mozambique.

139 This expression is a corruption from the Portuguese 'espera um pouco' and means wait a little, which was the time it took to load the gun.

column of soldiers pass, and then start shooting. After shooting they would run away. He said they used 'chemical weapons' at this point, meaning they would load the gun with a bullet and a mixture of ash and chilli. Along with killing soldiers this would also make those not injured cough and would hurt their eyes, leaving a number of soldiers of the Portuguese army unfit to fight for a while. The fighter then went to his house to get one of the guns he had fought with and demonstrated how they used to fight with them. Although the Portuguese army was armed with obsolete weapons (Henriksen 1983; West 2005), the *espera-pouco* used by Frelimo soldiers in the early days of the struggle makes Portuguese guns seem the height of sophistication. The guns Frelimo was using at the time had come from Tanzania. It was only later in the struggle that Frelimo started receiving better weapons from Cuba, Russia and China.



Figure 7 – Lucas Udami carrying his old *espera pouco*.

The Makonde leadership<sup>140</sup> was extremely active in the early days of Frelimo, but the

140 Especially Lázaro Nkavandame who had been at the forefront of the cotton growers cooperatives and who was considered very influential with older Makonde elders and was later appointed Cabo Delgado regional commissioner by Frelimo (West 2005: 140).

options they defended for the Front (ideologically and economically) were considered more traditionalist, and a preference for the capitalist system led to severe disagreements with the more radical and progressive leaders of Frelimo based in Tanzania. The leaders of the movements who initially formed Frelimo were put aside after some time and replaced by new ones, some of whom had been studying abroad and some who were part of the southern elites of the country (Opello 1975; Israel 2006) and who had little knowledge or connection with rural Mozambique. However the members of Frelimo who complained about this were not able to get the support of either other African leaders or other members of the Frelimo rank and file (West 2005; Leão 2004).

At Frelimo's second congress, held in Niassa in 1968<sup>141</sup>, these differences were extreme and Lazaro Nkavandame, the Makonde leader of a successful cooperative scheme was absent<sup>142</sup>, along with some other elders. The more progressive faction, led mostly by people from the south of the country eventually prevailed<sup>143</sup>. Issues of political alignment were being discussed at this congress and the more traditional views were put aside, whilst the more progressive line espoused by Mondlane and Machel was chosen. Nkavandame made attempts to take over the liberated areas of Cabo Delgado and was expelled from the front. Despite this, the Makonde continued to take an active part in the liberation struggle. Nkavandame was later accused of assisting the Portuguese in the murder of Eduardo Mondlane, Frelimo's first leader,

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141 Having the congress take place in Mozambique was seen as a sign of strength of Frelimo. This was not a peaceful decision though, with Nkavandame advocating for Tanzania where his support was considered stronger (Opello 1975).

142 Nkavandame was a Makonde politician and had been responsible for the implementation of a cooperative scheme in Cabo Delgado in the 1950s. After internal disputes he abandoned Frelimo in 1969. Nkavandame was accused of assisting the Portuguese in their war efforts and of having a hand in the assassination of Eduardo Mondlane. He remains a controversial figure of the liberation struggle. More details on his role are discussed by White (1985), West (2005), Cravinho (1998), Isaacman (1982).

143 This more progressive group included along with Mondlane, Samora Machel, Marcelino dos Santos, Uria Simango, who would all have a big part to play in the leadership of Frelimo.

in 1969<sup>144</sup>. The change Frelimo went through during the war, and especially after the death of Eduardo Mondlane, helped define the type of government they wanted to establish in the country and the main political options. Samora Machel<sup>145</sup> captured the leadership after some internal struggle following the death of Mondlane, and the Front's political orientation was set towards Marxism-Leninism<sup>146</sup>.

After the death of Mondlane, the Portuguese intensified their actions and on 17 May 1970, General Kaúlza de Arriaga arrived in Mozambique, vowing to finish the war and vanquish Frelimo by the end of the year, and started what was to be known as *Operação Nó Górdio* (Operation Gordian Knot). This had as its final objective forcing Frelimo to surrender. However the financial means necessary for this operation would prove too costly for the already cash-strapped Portuguese government.

Kaúlza de Arriaga was trained in counter-insurgency measures, having studied in the United States and learned from the American campaign in Vietnam. The army started by opening up and tarring roads (Henriksen 1983) to permit access to more isolated areas of the plateau where the population was hiding and where Frelimo had their bases. The main military Base – Base Moçambique – was divided into four sub-bases, each with specific functions: Moçambique A in charge of military operations; Moçambique B for air defense and artillery; Moçambique C responsible for crops and livestock; and Moçambique D for internal security. The need to maintain sharp

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144 Eduardo Mondlane was killed by an explosive parcel in Dar es Salaam. As with other deaths of political leaders in unexpected circumstances, there are rumours that point to different causes. One of the stories I heard claimed that he was having an affair with the wife of a Tanzanian general, and this made the general kill him. The story was vague in details, and without much to substantiate it. This story was never mentioned by any of the former fighters I interviewed and who always referred to the death of Mondlane by referring the letter that had killed him, and mentioning on occasion, some of the possible culprits (which included Lazaro Nkavandame and Uria Simango). These were people who would leave Frelimo soon after the death of Mondlane.

145 Samora Machel was a nurse, born in the south of Mozambique, in Gaza Province. He joined Frelimo early on and by 1969, following Mondlane's death, he became Commander in Chief of Frelimo.

146 A formalised stance on Marxism-Leninism was taken in Frelimo's third Congress in 1977.

vigilance led to an increasing sense of mistrust amidst Frelimo's fighters. They would fear that if they compromised themselves they would be taken into one of the bases and punished (West 2005). The Portuguese military also used defoliant sprays to destroy the forest which up until then had provided very good cover for Frelimo and the population living in the liberated areas. The scale and impact of the actions began to increase. One of my interviewees, a Makonde man who had been engaged in Frelimo's army, described the period in these terms:

In the beginning of the war we had bigger breaks [in the fighting], but after Kaúlza de Arriaga we had war every day. This lasted until we started fighting in groups of three and it was this way that we beat Arriaga. When he left we went back to normal fighting and ambushing. (Crisanto Donaciando)

Along with the military campaign Arriaga started a campaign for the 'hearts and minds' of the Mozambican people and sent people into areas under Portuguese control to provide vaccination, and tried to implement a number of development schemes to counter Frelimo's claims that the Portuguese administration was not doing anything for the Mozambican people. The Portuguese dropped fliers into Frelimo-occupied areas with information that Frelimo guerrillas were surrendering to the Portuguese army, messages from Lázaro Nkavandame saying that Frelimo was no longer welcome in the Makonde areas, and messages in Shimakonde broadcast from airplanes asking fighters to surrender to the Portuguese army (West 2005; Henriksen 1983).

Kaúlza de Arriaga's campaign captured 61 bases and 165 camps, most of them deserted (West 2005). The Portuguese side, however, sustained heavier losses in 1970 than previously (Opelo 1973). Frelimo strategy by this point had changed and they were using highly mobile small groups of combatants (usually three) and mining the roads the Portuguese built and ambushing them. Frelimo strategy

consisted of small, concerted attacks and then retreat into the bush. Portuguese soldiers stayed mostly close to their garrisons, returning at night from missions. At times they would go further from their areas and would be subjected to what Frelimo called *flagelação* (flagellation) – hit and run ambushes with small but constant numbers of casualties. These smaller units proved extremely effective and the results of their actions boosted the morale of Frelimo during a period in which the Portuguese investment in the war was at a high point. The Portuguese would inflict punishment on the population, but this simply caused more resentment, flight to Tanzania and in many cases extra recruits for Frelimo (West 2005).

Following Kaúlza de Arriaga, the military were led by General Tomás Basto Machado, who took command of operations in 1973. His tactics were less reliant on technology and more on espionage and infiltration, and therefore less of a burden on the Portuguese military budget.

Frelimo's control over the country increased as the war continued with the influx of new, better weapons, and a better command of military strategy, with the fighters being trained in Tanzania, or at the military bases in Mozambique at regular intervals during the struggle.

In 1974 the war came to an end after the 25<sup>th</sup> April revolution in Portugal. With the Revolution in Lisbon the Portuguese army stopped fighting against Frelimo, who quickly expanded their actions to the rest of the Mozambican territory. When it came to independence they had spread to the whole of Mozambique. Frelimo, the front fighting the Portuguese, was handed the government of the country after negotiations with the new Portuguese regime. However, the experience of the struggle in Cabo Delgado goes well beyond that of the soldiers. The people living in Cabo Delgado, and those who sought refuge in Tanzania have different memories of the struggle.

Memories which are often absent from official accounts of the struggle. Below I describe the different experiences of life during the struggle for those who did not engage directly in fighting.

### ***3. Villages and towns in northern Mozambique – sites of resistance or ‘collaboration’ (Liberated zones, and fenced towns)***

Cabo Delgado during the liberation struggle became spatially divided into areas controlled by the Portuguese and areas controlled by Frelimo. The actions of both armies contributed to redesigning the landscape and introduced long-lasting changes to social relationships. In this section I will address the different changes introduced by Frelimo in the areas it came to control, and by the Portuguese administration in the areas kept under colonial rule throughout the course of the struggle. Although people would sometimes describe these areas as completely separate, others would recall moving between liberated areas and fenced towns depending on perceived danger, family connections or political opinions. One informant who had lived in both areas described it as follows:

I worked in Mocímboa at the start of the war. My mother's uncle called me and told me to get out of the city because I could die if the war reached there. I went to the bush. On that same day I saw troops from Mocímboa [Portuguese] and the troops from the bush [Frelimo] caught me. I was arrested because I was wearing a watch and nice clothes, and the soldiers suspected I was *turra* [Portuguese soldier] and I spoke in Portuguese which made them more suspicious. I was sent back to Mocímboa and told to build houses in the area of Nautchemene [on the outskirts of town]. Some time after that Frelimo got in contact with us and we left for the bush on a Saturday. This was before they made their controls tighter. (Safia Sinepo)

As the war progressed and Frelimo established some territorial control they began to administer and control parts of the hinterland of Cabo Delgado (Henriksen 1983;

West 2005) and Niassa, and was able to establish military bases and civilian areas under its administration where the population on which they drew support lived. The rationale for doing so is similar to the reasons that led the Portuguese to group people in large villages: it was easier to control the population and also easier to provide services for them. In these areas they provided social services, organised production and political administration (Meyns 1981:46). Rudimentary schools and health centres, staffed by Frelimo members, were created in these areas, as were agricultural fields which would provide food for both the population and the guerrilla. Providing these services also allowed Frelimo to make claims as to what the Portuguese were not providing the Mozambican population, and claim that all the Portuguese had done in all the centuries of colonial rule was exploit the Mozambican people. Throughout the war these bases became bigger and gave rise to what were to be known as the *zonas libertadas* (liberated zones). Frelimo claims to the importance of maintaining and administering the liberation areas do not necessarily correlate with the extension of the areas wholly under Frelimo control. Samora Machel explained what the liberated areas were in these terms:

'Liberated zones' does not mean the complete expulsion of the physical presence of the colonialists. There are still Portuguese there but they are isolated in a few small garrisons. The basic question is: who do the people follow? [...] In our zones the work is open. [...] That means freedom from exploitation, from forced labour. That is a liberated zone. (Hall and Young 1997:31)

This is a common appreciation of the importance of the liberated areas as an initial experience of administration for Frelimo. The liberated areas were seen as a laboratory where Frelimo gathered experience which would be used in ruling Mozambique post-independence (Meyns 1981:55). The experience of administering these areas was used as a template after independence for some of the policies followed in the administration of the country. This was however a rather limited

experience, since it was mostly confined to the north of the country, and the situation and historical development elsewhere were rather different. The future first President of Mozambique, Samora Machel, had this to say about the liberated areas:

The establishment of liberated zones creates the material bases for the transformation of the anti-colonial liberation struggle into a revolutionary struggle, a struggle for the establishment of a new political, economic, social and cultural structures which give expression to the complete power of the masses over society in its totality.' (quoted in Meyns 1981:49)

In early 1965 entire settlements were moved to the areas of Cabo Delgado under the control of Frelimo (West 2005) and the first military school in a liberated area was created (Opello 1973). In some cases the heads of settlement moved as well (West 2005). The power structures of the abandoned villages would be thus maintained. The groups of people who moved would remain in the liberated areas until the end of the war. When the new settlements grouped people from various smaller settlements, people would group together according to the areas they originated from. However in these areas, even when the heads of settlement accompanied the people, they seldom continued to rule them. Instead this would be done by the younger generation who had started work with Frelimo earlier, and many of the former *vashilo* (night people) rose to the control and organisation of the liberated areas (West 2005: 139-141). This would continue the change in power and authority that had been occurring in the plateau for several decades. At the same time, the people living in there provided Frelimo with food, shelter and information. Life in these areas was at the beginning extremely difficult. Some accounts tell of suffering and fear while living in the *mato* (bush):

In the bush there was a lot of suffering, people had lice, couldn't wash, or look for clothes, they would wear the same clothes for days. At night if there was an attack they would have to run [...] and could only return after learning that there were no soldiers. When they came back sometimes they would start to cook and would have to run away again. It was very bad. There were many attacks. They [the Portuguese] would come by helicopter, by foot. There would be no food and no salt. They could

not look for salt or for clothes. (Eugenia Bwanda<sup>147</sup>)

The initial years of the war were a constant game of hide and seek (West 2005) with people moving continually and staying attentive to the movements and actions of the Portuguese:

The Portuguese would come but the population had signals and would play the horn or shout and warn of the arrival of the *tropa* [*tropa* – troops – was the term used for the Portuguese; Frelimo fighters were called *camaradas* – comrades] and the population would run into the bush to different places. After the ambush the helicopter would come to collect the Portuguese troops and the people would return to their houses. (Albano Amissi<sup>148</sup>)

While talking about the lack of food and basic goods, my interviewees would also remember the excitement of building a free area within Mozambique which was to be controlled and administered by Frelimo. However other interviewees had a very different recollection of life in the liberated areas, one which appears to be impossibly rosy, and in which everything was perfect.

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The liberated areas were by and large remote areas from the Portuguese army, which was concentrated in towns and in garrisons at smaller administrative posts. The Portuguese soldiers would travel within the province in convoys on the main roads, but would not stray much from these areas: the lack of knowledge of the terrain and the unpredictability of the guerrilla presence were reasons for not moving far from the places where the garrisons had been established (Henriksen 1983). The population in the areas where the Portuguese were stationed was usually under surveillance and concentrated in fenced towns and villages. The semi-urban centres of the north were fenced and guarded. Larger villages were also created gathering population from smaller settlements and they were subjected to the same degree of

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147 Eugenia Bwanda was a Makonde woman who had lived in the liberated areas for the duration of the struggle.

148 Albano Amissi was a Makonde man who had spent most of the war years living in liberated areas.

control. I will detail the impact of this policy in the next chapter.

The liberation struggle introduced major changes in the patterns of settlement. Some of these changes were introduced by the colonial government, with the creation of *aldeamentos* (village settlements), where people would be contained and monitored, especially in a way which would prevent their contact and cooperation with Frelimo fighters. Large areas of territory were emptied of people and they were relocated by the Portuguese to bigger villages. One of my informants, a Mwani man, described the process thus:

When the war started I was making a *machamba* (field) in N'totwe and we ran to Nanchemele. The government ordered that people were gathered and taken to the town. Trucks came and took the people to the area where the administration buildings are, even if people did not want to do. There was food, but we were all cramped around the administration, until they finished surrounding the town with barbed wire. I stayed here until independence, but my brother didn't because he was selling cards, and sold cards here too. He was arrested and sent to Machava. Inside we had a signal to know who had bought cards and who hadn't, and we would go at night to talk to those who hadn't bought cards and sold them to them. (Issa Jabili)

In towns and fenced villages the population was subjected to a curfew, and the town was surrounded by barbed wire in order to better control the population. Most of the people who stayed and lived here – and sometimes became a part of the Portuguese administration – were Mwani. They were the ones who, while I was conducting fieldwork, remembered the colonial administrators better and described life in a [Portuguese-controlled] town at the time of the liberation struggle.

One of my interviewees in Diaca had been part of the militia created by the Portuguese to assist the army in the villages and towns under Portuguese control.

This man had been in the Portuguese army, having undergone military training before the start of the liberation struggle. He described what the militia was supposed to do:

Our job was to go out in the morning and make the rounds in the *machambas* (fields)

around the village. If the situation was good [meaning that they hadn't encountered Frelimo guerrillas] we would shoot into the air and the population would get to work. We would control the population, and would also work in our *machambas*. We would return from the fields at noon. The village was surrounded by barbed wire and had three well guarded doors: one on the side of Mocímboa, one on the side of Mueda and another door which the population used to go to the fields. (Rashid Momade)

Rashid stressed the lack of a relationship with the Portuguese military, claiming that: 'we'd go get leftover food from them, but there was no conversation'. However, the situation was still difficult for these men once the war was over, and Frelimo rose to power.

The soldiers went with the population to the fields, so that they would not escape. They suspected that we might give information to Frelimo, or that we might be captured, and let them know what was happening here. [...] Often those guarding the doors were not the whites. All the older people were militia and they controlled the gates. Because they had family or personal relations it was easy to ask to go to the bush. There were ways to communicate with those in the bush. (Fatima Suleimane<sup>149</sup>)

Concentrating the population in order to better exercise control was widely used in Cabo Delgado, where the war was mostly fought (Henriksen 1983). The traditional villages which had been relatively small, with only a few families under the leadership of a lineage head (Dias 1964, West 2005), grew much bigger, gathering hundreds, sometimes thousands of people. The concentration of people in larger villages had an impact on the way villages were organized and changed the traditional patterns of land use and power (West 1998, 2005), as well as population distribution and group relationships. The villages would concentrate mostly population from similar ethnic backgrounds, but in some areas they would have a mix of people particularly in areas of transition between territories mostly occupied by one ethnic group.

The confinement of people by the Portuguese and Frelimo had another consequence: it contributed to an increase in divisions between the various ethnic groups of the

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149 Fatima Suleimane was a Mwani woman who had lived in the town during the liberation struggle.

north, separating them along opposing lines of those who supported the Portuguese and those who fought against them. The coastal populations became more closely associated with the Portuguese, fostering resentment between them and the population from the hinterland, which were actively fighting the Portuguese in larger numbers or living in the liberated areas. The rift between coastal and inland societies increased. Although the Muslim population had been active in their support for the liberation movement up until 1968, after that their support seemed to wane. The repressive actions of the PIDE-DGS (Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado – Direcção Geral de Segurança)<sup>150</sup> against the Muslim populations in northern Mozambique, with large numbers of arrests, torture, murder and exile of Muslim leaders between 1965-68, may have stopped people from being as active as before in the liberation movements. As with other political prisoners these people would be considered *comprometidos* (compromised) (West 2003) by Frelimo in the post-independence period (Bonate 2009: 290-291). Between 1968 and 1972 the Portuguese administration undertook a campaign for the support of the coastal population (Bonate 2009).

Mocímboa was one of the towns where fencing was implemented. Being one of the largest semi-urban centres in the northernmost part of the province, it was under Portuguese control. It was a place where the Portuguese had, if not support from the coastal population, at least not open hostility as was the case in more contested areas such as Mueda or the hinterland where the control of the territory was scant (Henriksen 1983). The presence of the Portuguese army is still marked in the town landscape today. Remains of the main barracks occupy a large area beside one of the main streets and are used as a primary school, though the buildings are in a state of decay. This was a strategic town for the Portuguese because of the port which

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<sup>150</sup> For details see Gallagher (1979); Costa Pinto (2006, 2008).

provided relatively easy and safe access by sea to the south of the province compared to the greater possibility of attacks faced by overland convoys.

Those who stayed in town remember the war as a difficult time. Fatima and her daughter Tonga, two Mwani women who lived there most of their lives, described the life in Mocímboa during the war.

Life here was also running. Frelimo would bomb here while the Portuguese bombed there [in the interior, where the Frelimo had their military bases] and we took refuge at the beach. It was all surrounded by barbed wire. We went to the fields with the soldiers. They shot in the air and that was the signal to return. We had cards with our name and picture which we left when we went to the fields. They were returned when we got back. If someone didn't return, it was because they had been captured by Frelimo. Some ran away, but many were caught.

Far from being the easy option, the life of those who stayed in town, was dangerous and full of fear. Fatima and Tonga described this as well.

When the war came, I was here. Frelimo came until Nkomangane [a village near the town] and started bombing. Those in Milamba could see the houses burning and heard the shots. A bomb hit a store and it burnt down. A rocket launched at the market hit a woman who was going to the bathroom and she was cut in two. In the garrison a soldier and his wife died. They [Frelimo] couldn't come in, but bombed from afar. There was war here and there. Nowhere was safe. We had PIDE [the Portuguese secret police]. Many people were denounced, and were arrested, beaten, killed.

Those living in town faced suspicion from the Portuguese and Frelimo equally and were placed in an increasingly difficult position. A Mwani woman who had lived in the town for the duration of the struggle described the level of distrust the Mwani population endured from Portuguese and Frelimo alike.

We suffered with the Portuguese here, because they suspected we were supporting Frelimo, and Frelimo suspected that we supported the Portuguese. My family was kidnapped [by Frelimo]. Sometimes the Portuguese troops would beat us. We were in a very difficult situation. (Lukia Ali)

The stories from those who stayed behind are not those of people who chose to stay away from the war, but stories of people who had little choice. Their experience of

the period of the struggle was in many ways similar to the experience of those living in the liberated areas. These experiences are seldom mentioned in the official accounts.

#### ***4. Life on the other side of the border***

In the previous chapter I detailed how travelling to Tanzania became a way to escape the most unpopular policies of the Portuguese colonial administration. The initial move to Tanganyika, either for longer or shorter term stays, was extremely important in creating routes and links with the country, and preparing the paths for future migrants. It created or developed knowledge about access routes to Tanganyika which were extremely relevant when fighting the liberation struggle.

The Portuguese army was never able to fully close the border with Tanzania, although there was a serious attempt made during Kaúlza de Arriaga's period. Soldiers, arms and information came in from Tanzania through the Rovuma river, and people moved to Tanzania for refuge or military training continuously during the struggle. Important as well was the identification of this territory with safety, and freedom, and the support of the Tanzanian government (Macqueen 1998). Most soldiers from Frelimo would at some point go to Tanzania for training. They would mostly join the training camps in Nashingwea, and get specialised training in communications, strategy, infantry, etc., which was important for Frelimo. Their presence there was limited in time (lasting up to 6 months) and very different from the experience of the refugees.

The Makonde responded to the increasing insecurity in their territory during the

struggle by further migration to Tanzania. As I pointed out in the previous chapter, migration rates to Tanzania (as far as the numbers are known) were consistently rising from the start of the 20th century. In the early days of the liberation struggle the numbers rose again. Shortly after the start of the war in 1964 about 10,000 refugees crossed the border to Tanzania, to escape the war and the actions of the Portuguese military (Egero 1979). This number grew and reached 29,000 in 1969 (Egero 1979). Most of these people were classified as refugees<sup>151</sup> and some did indeed live in the refugee camps provided by the Tanzanian government.

The longstanding migration to Tanzania created a background of support for Frelimo's war efforts. Life on the Tanzanian side during the struggle also gave Frelimo the first taste of administrative duties. Establishing and managing refugee camps with populations which kept increasing and, facing a number of crises, Frelimo had their first experience of policy-making which went far beyond the war effort. How successful this effort was and how important were the lessons learned (or not) from the times of war will be detailed below.

Life on the other side of the border was not easy. Crossing the border was difficult enough. Even though people were generally familiar with the paths and routes which would lead to safe areas on the river, it was still a dangerous enterprise and could entail meeting Portuguese soldiers, or running into a skirmish between the Portuguese and Frelimo, which could have dire consequences. Once in Tanzania people had two options, neither very attractive. They could go to one of the refugee centres which were created by Frelimo with the help of Tanzania and international organizations, or they could try and find a place to live outside these and stay in one

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<sup>151</sup> Tanzania classifies as refugees those who are declared as such, register with UNHCR and receive assistance. Bearing in mind that many Mozambicans from Cabo Delgado were familiar with travelling to Tanzania, it seems fair to assume that the numbers in people escaping from the war, but who did not declare themselves refugees are significantly higher.

of the Tanzanian towns.

The refugee camps were organised by Frelimo with the help of Tanzanian staff. The largest refugee camp was in Lutamba (in the southern province of Lindi). In the first years the sudden increase in influx of refugees meant they were overstretched and the staff and refugees alike had to deal with a number of problems which seemed to put the people in the camps in danger. Overcrowding and the spread of diseases such as cholera, along with lack of food, or chances to plant their own crops caused hardship in the initial years in the camps.

Frelimo staff started organising schools, health centres and orphanages in the refugee camps but also in the cities of Tunduru, Bagamoyo. However by the time these structures were put in place, many people had made the decision to live outside the camps and were refugees in Tanzania without refugee status. They had followed the same options which had been exploited since the 1920s and 1930s. Some of the refugees had been to Tanzania before to work at least once and relied on networks of friends or family which could help them find employment and a place to live. It was common for my interviewees to say that Tanzania was full of Mozambicans during the struggle, and by that they would mean the towns and not the refugee camps.

There were Makonde, who constituted the largest part of the refugee population, living throughout most of Tanzania, where many claim they were welcomed by the Tanzanians: 'The Tanzanians received us well. Even before the struggle there were no problems with the Tanzanians.' (Berta Duma<sup>152</sup>)

However, others would bemoan the life of a refugee and what it entailed. One of my interviewees put it this way:

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<sup>152</sup> Berta Duma, is a Makonde woman who had lived for a long time in Tanzania and explained how the relationship with the Tanzanians was a positive one during the liberation struggle.

In Lutamba we did not have a good life. We lived as refugees. The government from TANU and Frelimo cooperated to take care of us. In the first phase the houses were very close together and that led to many illnesses, causing many deaths. After that a white man came, saying that they were not living well and that they needed streets and the houses to be more spaced. (Jorge Benjamim)

As the liberation struggle continued, more camps were created so that the refugees would have the chance to live in better conditions. People would remember this period in a better light.

In Lutamba we would have food, clothes, blankets which we would get for free. The Tanzanians would bring it. I don't know where it came from, but some of the oil drums would say Canada. Each family would get the plot to build a house and a *machamba*<sup>153</sup>. How they would cultivate depended on them. (Januario Jonker Unkuvila)

Bernardete, a Makonde woman who now works with Frelimo and the Mozambican Women's Organisation in Mocímboa, started to work with Frelimo early. As a 14 year old she was already part of the military, and became a leader early as well, acting as a liaison head between the population and the military even before she went for training. Her job consisted of selecting women for transport of material, and for dealing with provisions, and allocating tasks. When she became pregnant in 1967 she was sent to Kuchindano in Tanzania, where she stayed until she had the baby. After that she went to Mtwara and from there to Lutamba (Lindi), where she was in charge of organising the camp. She described the life in the camps and stressed the number of dead:

Many died, and the men would be busy burying people. [...] There were no houses and no facilities. People would eat well, but die in large numbers, and many would escape the camps because of that.

A cholera epidemic shortly after the start of the war led many refugees to decide not to live in camps but to move instead to one of the towns and look for work. Bad living conditions, diseases, cramped spaces, and lack of food were some of the

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153 A *machamba* is a small family plot.

problems. It was only later in the war that the camps were better organised and had better support from international organisations.

Later Lutamba was organised into sections and neighbourhoods were built:

Kunambavala, Kunamatide, Kushilela, Kamuntu, and Kunamahuta. These neighbourhoods had Mozambican leaders and were organised based on the villages people came from, but the people in charge of the whole camp were Tanzanian.

The status of the refugees both in the camps and in the towns was low. Even though many people claim that the Tanzanians were very good to them, they still had difficulties making a living. Similarly to what Malkki (1995) describes for the Hutu refugees from Burundi in Tanzania, both the refugee camps and the towns presented difficulties for the newly arrived Mozambicans. Since there was already a big number of Mozambicans who had chosen to live in Tanzania after migrating there earlier, this new wave of war refugees was not always welcome, despite the Tanzanian government's claims to the contrary. One of my informants expressed it in these terms:

Life in terms of the relationship with the Tanzanians was not good, because they made fun of us. They would say: 'These are Mozambican, they ran from the war, and are refugees'. (Tomás Cristiano Mpunda)

Those (mostly Makonde) Mozambicans who were living in Tanzania but not working directly with Frelimo or living in refugee camps, would let houses from the Tanzanians and work for them or in the *machamba* (fields).

Choosing to move to Tanzania, while apparently the most obvious decision for people living closer to the border at a time of war, was far from easy<sup>154</sup>. All choices when it came to the war were hard choices. Lubkeman (2008), when discussing the

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154 This has been pointed out for other areas of Mozambique as well, with respect to the civil war(1976-1992) (McGregor 1997, 1998; McDermott-Hughes 1999; Englund 2002; Lubkemann 2008).

experiences of war and refuge in Machaze, Manica Province, describes how refugees during the civil war made the decision to stay or go depending on more than the war – it depended on personal relationships and an evaluation of the situation. The same rationale applied for the people in the northern part of Mozambique when it came to the decision of staying or moving, and the decision of where to move as well: whether to a refugee camp or to one of the Tanzanian towns.

Migration during the war years took on a more forced aspect than it had in the previous years. If people had moved voluntarily before, during the war they moved in search of refuge from violence. This aspect made them take the label of refugees, and rely on relief aid. But even here the aspects of migration and refuge followed very personal contours. Englund (2002) when describing a similar situation at the border between Malawi and Mozambique mentions the heated arguments between migrants and refugees, and the differing perspectives on ‘uprootedness’<sup>155</sup>.

### ***5. Memories of the struggle***

During the liberation struggle the Mwani and the Makonde had a very different experience. Their accounts of this period and of the ensuing years are consequently distinct. Mocímboa da Praia had been a base for the Portuguese army during the struggle in the province and this meant that its inhabitants had a very different experience of the struggle from that of the people who lived in the liberated areas and who had fought.

While conducting interviews and trying to learn about the history of the region and the dynamics in group relationships, I was often presented with a seamless, polished

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<sup>155</sup> Uprootedness is used in literature about refugees often. Liisa Malkki (1992, 1995) defines the term and the ideas behind it, as well as the implications of using such expressions.

version of history of the struggle, almost one straight out of a history book. When I first discussed national history with N'janjaula, a Makonde former fighter, he said he would explain it to me. He proceeded by detailing the timeline of the formation of Frelimo and the choice of Mondlane as its first leader, explaining at the same time the relationship between the Mozambican leadership and the Tanganyikan leaders and how these influenced the choices made. Aware of the general country political situation and of the Portuguese responses to demands of independence, he nevertheless failed to account for much of the internal tension of Frelimo during those years. However, despite having fought for the duration of the struggle, his initial account did not provide any personal details of his experience. It was only after asked for specific examples that he did provide them. Similar versions were recounted mostly by former fighters, who had had first-hand experience of the events of the struggle but who nevertheless passed on the official rhetoric. They would present a short account of the struggle, and of how Frelimo liberated the country, naming the most prominent leaders. They would not discuss the complexity, contradictions and entanglements of events. It was only after recounting the official version that they would describe their more personal experiences of the period. However their stories would never describe the other side of the story, that of the people who had stayed in the Portuguese controlled towns and villages.



Figure 8 – Celebrations of national holidays, like the women's day, were often marked by celebrations of the role played in the struggle (in this case the part the *Destacamento Feminino* – Female Battalion – played). The women returned to their old uniforms for a commemoration of their effort in the struggle.

The official history of the struggle is mostly told from the perspective of those who took an active part in it and who are still very much aligned with Frelimo. It is the version of the victors. What is missing from this history is the experience of those who did not fight with Frelimo. In Mocimboa da Praia (district and town) there were many who did not share the experience of the veterans of the struggle. Different versions of the history were alluded to by people who had stayed in town or in a few of the fenced villages, and not taken an active part in the struggle. When telling their personal history, they would describe what it was like to live in a fenced town, what their everyday life consisted of, how their movement and options were confined by the presence of the Portuguese army. They would stress especially what were the implications of having been considered aligned with the Portuguese.

When told with the inclusions of these perspectives, the history of the struggle gains

different overtones and becomes a much richer picture. It allows us to understand the situation with all the subtleties and none of the perfect black and white separations which we get from the official history. It also provides a basis to understand some of the present day relationships between groups in this part of Mozambique, since the experiences and memories of the period inform people's relationships and understandings of present day politics. The memories and the representation of the past are not a truth set in stone (*cf.* Das 2000), on the contrary, they are constantly formed and reinforced through the telling of past stories, representations of the struggle and commemorations of the role Frelimo played in those years.

I argue that memories of the armed struggle contribute to the persistence and worsening of identity divisions. The relationships between Makonde and Mwani were manipulated to serve colonial interests (Henriksen 1983). The coastal population took a more passive stance during the period of the struggle, and stayed within the confines of the Portuguese controlled areas eschewing a more active part in the events. The divisions during the war replayed old relationships: those between a world that thinks of itself as more developed (the coastal population) and a world that presents itself as more traditional (the people from the hinterland) (Conceição 2006:195). This situation is however reversed at present. The people who were considered by the Portuguese more open to development (Conceição 2006), the coastal Mwani, are now considered 'backward' by the some of the Makonde I spoke with. The latter will claim that Mwani are not interested in development, are 'complicated' people, and do not want to study, and point towards the lower rate of Mwani enrolment in local schools as evidence.

The representation of the past struggle is very much appropriated by the ruling party of the state, which has excluded/silenced the alternative perspectives and experiences

of all those who, while living in the province, did not take part in the struggle or fought with the Portuguese. The Makonde were, for practical reasons, the backbone of Frelimo's army, and are strongly associated with the ruling Frelimo party, and take part in reproducing the official history, denying the possibility for competing versions. Sharing the same town another group, the Mwani, had a very different experience of the colonial struggle and their story, though not often told, is very different.

The period of the liberation struggle, as any other in the history of this area, can not be defined by one single narrative: it was a time for defining alliances and fighting for the liberation of the country, but also a time when some people allied with the Portuguese. People moved within the territory, and had very different experiences of the struggle. What comes out of many reports, and especially of the official history (Cahen 1999), is a very homogenous treatment of the population and their approaches to the struggle. However there was a fair amount of internal tension and the allegiances chosen during the struggle reflect this (Bonate 2009). The experience of colonial rule was different for different groups and even within a group for different categories of the population, and this determined what people chose. Below I trace different options and approaches to the struggle, which have their basis in identity, territory and self interest to trace a more complex picture of what happened during this period.

### ***Conclusion***

The liberation struggle brought huge change to the northern province of

Mozambique. I do not mean by this that the previous decades had not seen important changes and that the social structure and organisation of this province had remained the same through time. What I mean was that the war brought ruptures and very rapid change to this area. Being affected by the actions of two different armies and by their different approaches to the conflict the population was moved around to areas under the control of Frelimo, was confined and controlled in towns and fenced villages, migrated to Tanzania and lived there in refugee camps and in towns, and had to recreate and re-shape their social and kinship relationships and adjust to new ways of living.

The Makonde were extremely important as soldiers. Their knowledge of the region and personal relationships were explored during the war. They used this knowledge to their advantage. They knew the escape routes and the places where it was easier to cross the river and get to Tanzania, which villages provided the best hiding places, and could generally rely on a network of relatives throughout the region.

Location of residence was then to have an impact in the experience of the struggle. As were the alliances that the population was, sometimes forced, to make. Being placed on the side of the Portuguese or on the side of Frelimo meant different things and led to the establishment of allegiances and more importantly resentments which have developed into cleavages and political and ethnic divisions with unforeseen consequences. For an area where different ethnic groups come together and share the same living space, the heightened awareness of this division make coexistence difficult. This becomes increasingly relevant when the Makonde who have arrived and are occupying spaces in town in recent years are perceived as occupying a higher social position and as having access to more (in economic and political terms).

In Mozambique, like the prisoners of war whose experiences are silenced (West

2003), the experiences of those who stayed in the towns controlled by the Portuguese are not considered as part of the same history. Their memories of the liberation struggle are ignored, like a past that never happened. The memories of the struggle deemed worthy became part of the uniform, official narrative of the past and the only politically and socially sanctioned history. When asked about the history of the area, the former fighters would present, along with their personal history, a very uniform history of Frelimo and the struggle to liberate the country. Most of them would not go beyond the official version of the story. Even when their personal history was contradicting some elements of the official version they would still not change it or acknowledge the different, sometimes contradictory elements in the two histories. In some cases they expressed contempt for the experiences of those who lived in towns occupied by the Portuguese during the struggle. Their experiences were not valued, and if expressing disagreement or resentment for preferential treatment the former fighters received, their argument would not be perceived as legitimate. They were considered outlandish since, having not fought, or lived far from Portuguese controlled areas, they had no right to make claims on the state. This was especially contentious when discussing rights to state provided pensions (I will expand on this later), which the veterans of the struggle were entitled to. Since the Makonde had fought, while large numbers of Mwani had remained in towns controlled by the Portuguese, they could make claims to these pensions and therefore reap the financial benefit of their role in the struggle. This caused tensions between the groups, unsurprisingly.

In the following chapter I will address the issues brought forth by independence and the impact of the government's policies in this part of the country, especially with respect to space, as well as the experience and impact of the civil war (which began

in 1976 but mostly affected Cabo Delgado in the later part of the 1980s).

## **Chapter V – Independence – national territory and local space**

In the previous two chapters I described how during colonial rule increasing numbers of Makonde used the international border with Tanzania to escape forced labour, taxes and violence. Throughout the liberation struggle (1964-1974) the international border was used strategically, with the Mozambican fighters finding refuge and starting military actions from Tanzania, where they had the support of Julius Nyerere's government. I also described the life of the people who were left behind, contrasting the experience of those who lived in the liberated areas and in the fenced towns of northern Mozambique and the differing memories of the period of the struggle.

In this chapter I will look at how the national territory was understood by Frelimo<sup>156</sup>, following independence, and what impact this had on local uses of space, power and administration. I will begin by addressing the importance and significance of the Rovuma river, which marks the border with Tanzania, as part of the imagined and real national space: from being used in political discourse to being adopted into local discourse, it marked the beginning of the country – a country which extended from the Rovuma river in the north to the Maputo in the south. I will also describe how spatial organization changed after independence following rural development policies implemented by Frelimo. These policies combined with the civil war, which lasted for 16 years, redesigned the local landscape and affected local power structures, personal and group relationships.

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<sup>156</sup> At the time of independence Frelimo was the only political force with credible claims to national representation. It was with them that the new Portuguese government negotiated and, when the independence came, power was handed to them.

## *1. 'Do Rovuma ao Maputo' - Mozambican borders and national space*

On 25<sup>th</sup> April 1974 a military coup in Lisbon led by junior army officers<sup>157</sup> (who became known as the April Captains) put an end to the New State regime and subsequently to Portuguese colonial rule. Mozambique became independent on 25<sup>th</sup> June 1975, after period of transition with joint government<sup>158</sup>. Frelimo assumed power, as the only group with national expression that had contested Portuguese rule. The hasty decolonisation process and the handing over of power solely to Frelimo was to have serious consequences for the future of the country. Other political groups were forming at the time that were willing to run for government (Cravinho 1995; Henriksen 1983; Chabal 2002). But no other political forces took part in the negotiations that led to independence (the Lusaka Accord)<sup>159</sup> or were a part of the new government. The incipient political parties which were appearing throughout the country were more regionally or ethnically based than Frelimo, if not in their political claims, at least in their support base (Adam 1992) and their claims were seen by the international community as less 'legitimate', since they had not taken part in the liberation struggle.

Following independence, and because Frelimo leaders were very aware of how divided the country was and of the possibilities for internal rifts, a great emphasis was placed on territorial integrity, the need to maintain the national borders as they

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157 The Revolution was the outcome of 48 years of dictatorship and a perceived failure of the anti-colonial war in African. Fought on 3 main fronts (Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique) the war had been long and costly. In the case of Guinea-Bissau the Portuguese army was heading for failure. Although in Angola and Mozambique the situation was not as calamitous it had been deteriorating, and the human and economic costs were high. The government's refusal to consider decolonisation, and a number of professional grievances, led the (mostly) captains to stage a coup.

158 This government was formed by Portuguese delegates and members of Frelimo.

159 The Lusaka Accord was signed in Lusaka on 7 September 1974 between the Portuguese government and Frelimo. It established the terms for the transference of power and granting of independence to Mozambique.

were in colonial times, to have a centralised administration and to inscribe the country as a strong unit in the imagination of its population<sup>160</sup>. The possible contestation and division of the country was tackled forcefully in the early days. Unity was also strongly emphasised.

The Rovuma river was continuously mentioned in discourses of territorial integrity not only because it marks the border with Tanzania, which it had done since the borders of Mozambique were established in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, but also because it became a significant element in the imagination of the country. In political speech, and later in popular discourse, expressions such as ‘*Do Rovuma ao Maputo*’ (From the Rovuma to the Maputo) were used continuously post independence and reinforced the idea of the country as a single territorial. That many of the liberation struggle fighters had to cross the river when fighting the Portuguese adds to the imagery and makes it a stronger aspect of the ‘Mozambican identity’, or at least an important element of the country's recent history. Land and identity become linked in one concept of nationality and citizenship: territorial integrity becomes enmeshed in the construction of the national identity, and is connected with the idea of modernity and newness of the Mozambican citizen (Cravinho 1995). National and regional identity – *Moçambicanidade*<sup>161</sup> (Mozambican-ness) – were, and still are today, very contested issues, but issues which the government deemed important.

The idea of a 'New Man' was launched shortly after independence and gained legitimacy through references to the history of the liberation struggle (Israel 2009).

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160 One of the most commonly used political slogans was “Moçambique: do Rovuma ao Maputo” meaning that Mozambique starts at the Rovuma river to the North, and ends at the Maputo in the South, and that this territory was to stay unchanged, and there would be no option of contesting the country's borders. A march undertaken by Samora Machel, Mozambique's 1<sup>st</sup> president, from the Rovuma to the capital in the south had a similar aim.

161 Many authors debated the importance of establishing and defining this idea of national identity, and why the Mozambican government considered it such an important aspect of the construction of the country (Cahen 1987; Brito 1988).

Although the idea of a New Mozambican Man<sup>162</sup> was an urban construct, and a southern construct at that<sup>163</sup>, influenced by the Marxist-Leninist rhetoric of Frelimo's leadership, it did have echoes in some areas of the countryside, and especially in Cabo Delgado where the liberation struggle had such a strong impact and where a large proportion of the population could claim to have worked to liberate the country. Frelimo's ideology was characterised by strong nationalist, civilizational and cultural transformative aspects.

The problem with the concept of a New Mozambican Man was that Mozambique is a very diverse country, and this idea embodied a monolithic version of citizenship which would override diversity. Mozambique's differences in population composition, history, languages were to be somehow annulled to give way to a New Man free from the constraints of tradition and ethnic allegiance. In its plans for change, and the pursuit of the creation of a New Man, the government aimed at unity, and at a levelling of ethnic identity. However the means by which such objectives were implemented were cause for resentment and alienation from the Frelimo state.

At the local level, this implied a reorganisation of power and authority in order to transform Mozambique's rural societies. Old structures of power were abolished and replaced by elected<sup>164</sup> hierarchies. However the post-independence state was not successful in integrating part of the coastal population (Conceição 2006: 55). These peoples lack of participation during the liberation struggle was one of the reasons behind their lack of integration.

There was no desire to change or contest the borders inherited from the colonial

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162 The New Mozambican Man was free from tribalism, obscurantist tendencies and feudal economic beliefs. He was an enlightened citizen, a modern man.

163 There have been claims that it is people from the southern provinces (especially Gaza and Maputo) dominating Frelimo (Manning 1998), and that their understanding of the country, and policies proposed are sometimes inaccurate because of the bias towards the south of the country.

164 These were to be elected from within each village, in order to better exercise local power or as it was termed at the time *poder popular* (popular power) (West 2005: 168).

period<sup>165</sup>, and after independence one of the government's main aims was to achieve national unity, so that the territorial unity would not be disturbed (Cahen 1987; Brito 1988; Cravinho 1995). Apart from some ideas about creating a federal state, which were not considered seriously<sup>166</sup>, the country has been ruled as a single unit, with limited powers ascribed to the province and district governors but the main powers concentrated centrally in Maputo. The integrity of the territory was central to Frelimo's national unity project<sup>167</sup>. However, although the Frelimo state strove for unity, the government had extreme difficulties in establishing its control over the territory. Mozambique is a vast country and the state, much like the colonial state beforehand, lacked staff and resources to administer it effectively. At the outer edges of the territory this became increasingly clear. The onset of the civil war in 1976 did nothing to diminish this: on the contrary it contributed to limiting the reach of the state administration when it came to dealing with places which were far from the urban centres. Due to the lack of proper infrastructure connecting the country, in some cases, even reaching the urban or semi-urban centres during the war years was difficult.

## ***2. Civil war***

The civil war started in 1976 shortly after independence and lasted until 1992,

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165 Except in the case of the proposed creation of a separate country that would include the north, from the Rovuma to the Zambezi, and that would be called Rombézia, but it did not follow through (Englund 2002).

166 Nkavandame had proposed the creation of an independent Cabo Delgado – 'another Biafra' – before the end of the liberation struggle (Fauvet 1984: 109). By the time Mozambique became independent however, his influence in Frelimo was null. After independence he was sent to a re-education centre in the north of Mozambique, along with a number of other political opponents of Frelimo (Uria Simango, Joana Simião, Paulo Gumane) (Fauvet 1984: 112). Their ultimate fate was not accounted for by the Mozambican government (Young 1990: 509).

167 For the main points of Frelimo's national unity program see: Birmingham 1992; Cravinho 1995.

causing 1 million deaths and 4.6 million displaced persons (internally and internationally). Frelimo's political decisions<sup>168</sup> in the geopolitical situation of the 1970s and 1980s<sup>169</sup>, caused alienation from, or even direct confrontation with, some of its neighbours, especially Rhodesia and South Africa and this was determinant for the course of the civil war. However resistance to government policies was not only from the outside: the development options pursued by the government met with resistance inside the country<sup>170</sup> as well. These policies (e. g. villagization<sup>171</sup>, abolition of traditional authorities, hostility towards religious practice, polygamy and payment of bridewealth) were said to have greatly alienated large segments of the population in the countryside (Roesch 1992; Geffray and Pedersen 1985; Geffray 1991; Cahen 1987).

The civil war affected even in the most remote areas of the country (including places which barely experienced violent acts) as access and communications became increasingly difficult. The destruction of the country's basic infrastructures (roads, bridges, train tracks) increased the difficulty in reaching areas that are far from the main centres, or more specifically far from Maputo.

Before Mozambican independence, Frelimo established a good relationship with ZANU<sup>172</sup>. After independence Frelimo followed the same principles the Tanzanian

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168 Especially the formalised adoption of Marxism-Leninism in the Third Congress of 1977.

169 The geopolitical situation in which Mozambican politicians found themselves after independence is well detailed in a number of sources which describe the policies undertaken by the government and the way they affected local and global political relationships (Simpson 1993; Reilly 1992; Cahen 1987; Brito 1988; Cravinho 1995).

170 The choice for planned economy, and especially the establishment of big communal villages, for agricultural production, and for a more structured organization of services such as education and health, implied resettlement of large sections of the population and was strongly resisted. It was abandoned in the mid-1980s.

171 This policy was introduced early on and meant a transformation for the social landscape and land use in Mozambique. It meant concentrating people in large villages, with their own political structures, schools and health posts. It was a form of control, and justified as a more efficient way of providing the population with services. It caused resentment throughout the country, and was one of the reasons which led many people to supporting Renamo.

172 Zimbabwe African National Union.

government had followed previously when it came to offer their support for other liberation movements in neighbouring countries. Frelimo allowed ZANU fighters to take refuge in Mozambique, and develop military actions from there. The Rhodesian government supported the Portuguese government. After independence, Frelimo continued to support ZANU. In March 1976 the border with Rhodesia was closed, and Frelimo gave aerial support to ZANU's fighters (Reilly 1992), and in early 1977 there was a situation of undeclared war between the two countries with about 10,000 ZANU fighters in Mozambique and constant attacks from the Rhodesian army (Simpson 1993). It was in this scenario of near war that Renamo (*Resistência Nacional Moçambicana*) was created. Its actions at first were military rather than political, mainly focused in the central area of the country that bordered Rhodesia. But the Rhodesian involvement was more a matter of support than actual direction (Derlugian 1989).

The creation of Renamo in 1976, with the support of the Rhodesian government and a group of Portuguese who had lived in Mozambique during the colonial period was related to regional and world politics. The post independence political positioning of Mozambique, its alliances with the Eastern Bloc and China, and its political stances with respect to the neighbouring powers<sup>173</sup> and their perception of regional balances were to have important internal consequences. Its initial members had been in large numbers part of the *flechas* (arrows), the anti-insurgency units created by the Portuguese during the liberation struggle, along with Frelimo members who had encountered problems within the Front (e. g. accusations of corruption, theft), and who were sent to re-education centres<sup>174</sup>, and members of groups which had broken

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173 Chiefly among this was the early imposition of sanctions against Rhodesia, which would have high economic and political costs (Hall and Young 1997).

174 A number of these camps were set in the former liberated areas in Cabo Delgado (West 2005: 173).

from Frelimo during the leadership crises of the late 1960s (Morgan 1990; Hall 1990; Young 1990). At the time of its formation Renamo was comprised of a small group of rebels led by André Matsanagaissa<sup>175</sup>, and its actions were limited to the borderlands of Mozambique and Rhodesia. Until 1980 the actions of Renamo were limited to a few targets in the Provinces of Manica, Sofala and Tete, and were less destructive than the actions of the Rhodesian army (Honwana 1996).

From 1980 to 1989 Renamo was supported by the South African government, and the scope and level of its military actions changed as did its perception by the international community and international connections. Along with changes in international politics during the 1980s, this led to noticeable modifications in Renamo from the time it was created until the end of the war: by the early 1990s its actions, objectives, composition and demands<sup>176</sup> were quite different from what they were at the start of the war in 1976. As was its control of the Mozambican territory. In the early 1980s Renamo publicised a programme and objectives which would firmly place it politically<sup>177</sup> (Morgan 1990). However, these were mainly characterised by being the opposite of Frelimo's policies and were never seriously pursued by Renamo, making them remain a mystery and hard to place politically in the broad spectrum of regional geopolitics.

At the start of the war Renamo would make small scale incursions into Mozambique, coming from Rhodesia and then retreat. With South Africa's support<sup>178</sup>, the war that

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175 *Matsanga* is still the name used to describe the Renamo fighters, even though André Matsangaissa died in October 1979 during an attack on Gorongosa town (Young 1990: 495).

176 Renamo released a manifesto in August 1981. This stated their opposition to communism forms of government and support for the free market, and its commitment to a social programme (Morgan 1990: 607). The structure of Renamo was only known much later (Manning 1998) and until the end of the war Renamo remained to some extent a mystery.

177 However, despite the stated objectives, Renamo was still seem mostly as a group of violent guerrilla fighters and not a serious political alternative to Frelimo. Its stated objectives in the document of 1981 were linked with the establishment of multiparty politics and democratic elections, the respect for traditional ways of life (i.e authority and religion), and economic freedom. It was very much the opposite of what Frelimo stood for in the early 1980s.

178 South Africa's support to Renamo was part of the country's strategy for the region. It was also a

before 1980 had only affected areas along the border with Rhodesia extended to the whole of the Mozambican territory. After the signing of the N'komatti Agreement, in 16<sup>th</sup> March 1984, Renamo's strategy began to change, as the organisation prepared for a more autonomous existence. The N'komatti Agreement was a non-aggression pact signed by Mozambique and South Africa, agreeing not to permit the use of their territory to plan or undertake actions that would jeopardize the security of the neighbouring country<sup>179</sup>. It was discovered later that South Africa never truly upheld their side of the agreement<sup>180</sup>. By 1985-1986 Renamo's actions had extended to all the Mozambican provinces. Renamo's strategy mainly targeting roads and railway connections, caused the disruption of communication within the country. It made travel and transport to neighbouring countries more difficult, or even impossible<sup>181</sup>. War also put a stop to economic production. As a result of Renamo's actions, by 1987 Mozambique's productivity had been reduced by two thirds in relation to pre-independence values, and agricultural production was one sixth of what it had been in 1973 (Simpson 1993). By the end of the war the rebel movement had control of large areas of the Mozambican countryside and its numbers were estimated at around 20,000 members (Morgan 1990: 608). Their presence was only negligible in the largest cities.

However, early research, especially the research produced in the later 1970s and

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response to a sense of political isolation that derived from the apartheid policy, and from the increasing number of countries that chose a Marxist political agenda, and the presence of Cuban troops in Angola (Simpson 1993).

179 South Africa and Mozambique agreed not to support Renamo and ANC (African National Congress) respectively.

180 In late 1985 after an attack from the Mozambican army on Casa Banana, the main Renamo headquarters in what is now Gorongosa National Park in central Mozambique, a series of documents were found which described the level of support that South Africa continued to provide to Renamo even after having signed the N'komatti accords. Other documents described the actions Renamo was to undertake and the targets which were a priority: communication routes, preventing the work undertaken by foreign agents (*cooperantes*), and economic targets associated with the SADCC (Hall 1990).

181 These routes were important for landlocked countries to diminish their dependence from South Africa, and increase their exports.

early 1980s, was very sympathetic to the Frelimo stance and did not allow for a critical appraisal of its policies. In general this research was 'patchy and anecdotal as well as being directly or indirectly partisan' (Young 1990: 499). For a long time knowledge of what Renamo was and what their claims were was extremely vague<sup>182</sup>. Perspectives on the war were biased by the political views of researchers, many of whom supported the more attractive Frelimo. Part of the research was done by young *cooperantes* (cooperants) who saw Frelimo as a force for good and as bringing development and freedom to Mozambique. Renamo had a considerably, albeit justifiably, more negative image and their actions seemed considerably harder to justify. It acquired a reputation for brutality and cruelty, which Hall claims to have been 'instrumental and achieves certain goals' (1990: 52) being used consciously to control the population. The way Renamo was created, the support it got, and the extreme violence of the actions it engaged in were reason enough for an extremely bad image, and the perception of them as mercenaries, *bandidos armados* (armed bandits), and puppets of the white regimes of Rhodesia and South Africa (Fauvet 1984), with no political agenda of their own all made it easier to dismiss them as such and not look at some of the issues their actions raised which could cast a negative light onto Frelimo. However, Renamo was fully implanted in Mozambique, with few external bases (Hall 1990: 53), and this meant that they had to garner support from the local populations.

Gersony in a report in 1988 described the ways in which Renamo controlled different areas, and what this meant in terms of differing relationships with the population. He described three zones of contact: tax, control and destruction. Tax areas were those where the population could escape violence with contributions of food. Control areas, were located close to Renamo bases and suffered exploitation for forced

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<sup>182</sup> For Renamo see: Hall 1990; Morgan 1990; Young 1990; Vines 1991; Manning 1998.

labour, portage and other forms of abuse. Destruction zones were those areas ravaged by Renamo (Hall 1990: 53). Recruitment under such difficult circumstances, especially in the early years of the war, was mostly forceful. There were reports of young men kidnapped and held under guard until they took part in attacks, at which point they would be warned that if they escaped Frelimo would execute them (Hall 1990: 54).

Throughout the 1980s, the war was looked at by the international community, researchers and journalists mostly as a war of foreign aggression. Looking at the war as a civil war that reflected a rebellion against unpopular policies by the government was less usual and it was only towards the end of the 1980s that this perspective gained credence with the publication of research with a strong component of empirical data. However both these perspectives had a tendency to overlook some important aspects and some relevant regional elements. It was only late in the 1980s that research showed that both were valid perspectives, and revealed a need to analyse both local causes and the international setting, and understand what caused people's allegiances to move from one group to the other. This 'paradigm shift' in Mozambican studies came about with a series of studies that developed a more accurate perspective of the situation and that had empirical data from different areas of the country<sup>183</sup>. It also meant a more dispassionate view from of the actual impact of the policies of Frelimo, and the acknowledgement that some of its policies created the space for the growth in support to Renamo, especially when it came to its extremely repressive and antagonistic policies with respect to 'traditional' authorities and religious belief (Geffray 1990; Hall 1990; Young 1990; Simpson 1993).

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183 For more balanced case-studies of the civil war see: Geffray 1991; Geffray and Pedersen 1986; Simpson 1993; Vines 1991; Alexander 1997; Roesch 1990; Dinerman 1994, 2006.

Christian Geffray's *La cause des armes*, first published in 1990, though flawed<sup>184</sup> in some of its approaches presented a more balanced view of the war, and pointed towards reasons which might explain the support Renamo gathered in some areas of the country. Geffray pointed to the discontent that certain Frelimo policies (namely the villagization policy) and the way they were enforced in the countryside led to resentment on the part of the local population, and created a fringe of dissatisfied population which would eventually support Renamo. In some areas of the country, especially the centre and centre north, support for Renamo grew out of the resentment for Frelimo policies. Renamo provided an alternative, and the fact that it had, during the war, very little by way of a political statement other than it opposed Frelimo policies to which large sections of the rural population objected strongly (Manning 1997). In its aim to transform Mozambique quickly into a thoroughly modern state free from the institutions of the past, Frelimo alienated a large proportion of the Mozambican population.

Michel Cahen's work, especially *La révolution implosée* (1987) also points to some of the causes of discontent that stemmed from Frelimo's post-independence policies, especially harsh policies such as sending various urban dwellers (e.g. vagrants, unemployed) to re-education camps, where harsh measures were employed to change their ways; the extreme demands of the party in the late 1970s and early 1980s which had little space for personal failure when it came to party standards of behaviour (drinking and polygamy were both looked down upon and could slow promotion at work); the need to have travel permits (*guias de marcha*) to move between provinces

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184 Dinerman (1994) presents a good criticism of Geffray's work, and points to some of the areas where his analysis is not very balanced. Roesch (1990) does the same, by contrasting the situation in Nampula where Geffray did his research with the situation in the southern parts of the country especially in Gaza, where he has done his work, and where experiences of the post independence period and the civil war are considerably different. Roesch points to the need to analyse the different socio-economic relationships in diverse parts of the country and warns against the use of the data from Geffray's work in Nampula for the whole of Mozambique noting the very different provinces which form the country.

in Mozambique was also a measure that created resentment.

From all the case studies of the civil war (Roesch 1992; Englund 2002, 2005; Lubkemann 2008; McGregor 1994, 1998; Nordstrom 1997) we get a much more complex picture than was initially expected. There is no single narrative for the country – the experience of the war being extremely localized and changeable throughout the 16 years of its duration. In some areas Renamo was seen as inherently foreign, a 'Ndaou political project'<sup>185</sup> (Roesch 1992: 469), while in others they were looked at as an alternative (Geffray 1990). In other parts support for Renamo or Frelimo changed according to personal circumstances, grievances, and experience of the government's policies and the course of the war (Englund 2002; Lubkemann 2008).

The diversity of experiences of the rest of Mozambique is mirrored in the different experiences in Cabo Delgado. In Mueda Renamo was never capable of establishing a base, with the Makonde continuing to be very invested in Frelimo's nationalist project (West 2009) but along the coast the Mwani grew increasingly interested in the alternative posed by Renamo. Even though Cabo Delgado was spared much of the worst violence during the war it was increasingly cut off from the rest of the country. One interviewee recalled it in these terms: 'It was a problem to travel, go to Pemba and Mueda. Even to Awasse was a problem'<sup>186</sup>. (Januario Jonker Unkuvila). Despite the difficulties in travelling, migration to Tanzania continued during the civil war, and large numbers of people decided to settle there.

However, more than the lack of access to the rest of the country and the difficulty in

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<sup>185</sup> The Ndaou occupy part of central Mozambique and straddle the border with Zimbabwe. Because Renamo was seen as largely Ndaou it was considered foreign in parts of Mozambique with no Ndaou population, such as Gaza province in the south.

<sup>186</sup> Pemba is located to the south at nearly 400 Km distance, while Mueda is at about 100 Km, and Awasse less than 30 Km. The difficulties in travel increased for the duration of the war and in the late 1980s when it was at its worst people wanting to travel to the southern parts of the province would have to fly, or take the boat. Travel overland was only by convoy and very dangerous.

travelling, it was the different nature of the war and the fact that it was a civil war that stayed in people's minds.

It was brother against brother, and we didn't know who our enemy was. In the other war [against the Portuguese] we knew who we were fighting and why we were fighting. This was different, and it was much worse. (Focas Tiago Mingonda)

Focas was an older Makonde man who had been living in Mocímboa since the colonial period. He was not likely to have seen any of the violence of the civil war first hand but still his impressions of it were strong and he described killings and mutilated bodies vividly, and in crude detail, which he later explained he had only heard about, much like what is described for other parts of the country (*cf.* Morgan 1990; Hall 1990; Young 1990; Hall and Young 1997). Many other people I spoke with would describe the civil war in similar terms. A recurrent story was that of pregnant women killed and their babies cut out of their bellies. These stories, constantly retold, added to the horror of the war and the role of Renamo in it. It was their notorious reputation, more than the actual experience of the war that people remembered.

The civil war was considered much worse than the liberation struggle. Objectively the liberation struggle affected this region in a much harsher way than the civil war. However the civil war was harder to understand and take in. The fact that, despite the external support from Rhodesia and South Africa, the war was an internal affair made it much harder to understand and explain. From my interviews the urban and semi-urban centres in Cabo Delgado were not greatly affected by the war, with Renamo soldiers making a few attempts to enter some of the villages towards the end of the war, which were mostly unsuccessful. Life continued during the war, as elsewhere in the country (Englund 2002; Lubkeman 2008), but the impact of the violence remains leaving enduring changes in local relationships.

Despite the fact that Cabo Delgado is an area where Frelimo support (much like the southern provinces of Mozambique – Gaza and Maputo) has consistently been high, people would complain about the hardship of the initial years of independence. They resented the strictness of the state, the lack of basic goods, the unfulfilled expectations when it came to development. They mentioned over, and over again the lack of goods in the shops<sup>187</sup>, the lack of basic foodstuffs, of clothes, soap. ‘We lived naked in the bush’, ‘We had no soap and no clothes’ were constant complaints made about those initial years after independence. Some recounted the first time they saw with amazement biscuits or soft drinks, and pointed out that this had been sometime in the 1980s. Due to the dire economic situation, and the constant unrest caused by the war, there was a nearly complete lack of imported goods<sup>188</sup> in this part of the country for a long time, and local production was badly affected by the war as well with people saying that because of the instability it caused they were unable to travel to their fields for fear of being taken by Renamo and as a consequence food production suffered.

Though this is an experience that Makonde and Mwani share, their views of the period and their relationship with the post-independence state are diverse. The Makonde, because of their role in the liberation struggle, had a much more privileged access to the state and had a large participation in the state administration, being recruited to work throughout the province and continuing to find employment in the army. For the Mwani, however this experience was much harsher. Having been associated with the former colonial power and not having strong claims to

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187 Goods were supposedly provided by the state in state owned shops (*Lojas do povo* – people's shops), but the system implemented failed almost everywhere in the country. The state was unable to stock them and 'empty shelves were the most common characteristic of the *lojas do povo*.' (Borges Coelho 1998:81).

188 What was available was mostly brought in from Tanzania, either by people who went there to work for a short period, by return migrants, or by merchants. Items brought from the southern part of the country were rarer since the connections were severely cut by the civil war.

participation in the struggle they saw their participation in local politics diminish (Conceição 2006).

Mwani support for Renamo grew less from their actions in this province, or an identification with the party's ideas, and more out of resentment against Frelimo's stance, and the feeling of alienation and abandonment with respect to its policies. The Mwani seemed to resent the advantages given to the Makonde, and the economic benefits they gained from having fought with the Frelimo in the liberation struggle, although this was not by any means the only explanation for the support given to Renamo in the coastal areas of Cabo Delgado. Contrary to what had happened in the Mueda plateau, where Renamo never established a lasting base or garnered any support of note, by the coast those who saw Frelimo's increasingly strict policies with resentment turned to Renamo. It will be clear later in this thesis the importance of this support and the divisions it causes today. As in other parts of the country (Englund 2002; Geffray 1990; Lubkeman 2008; Manning 1997) support for Frelimo or Renamo had a basis in social and personal relationships and in longstanding local history and in the political histories and connections with Frelimo's fighters or the Portuguese colonial system which positioned different communities in this part of the country in different sides of the political divide.

Despite economic difficulties and lack of goods the Makonde I spoke with miss the purity of politics in those days – a time when there was order, and some sort of legal orientation, hard as it may have been on the people. This longing for the past order comes out in different ways according to the person who tells the story. Old soldiers, especially those who fought in the liberation struggle, crave the almost military rigour of those times, and resent the *laissez faire* of the present. They also miss having a relevant role, and being respected for it. Others are extremely happy to have

opportunities, and to have ‘development’ although this is understood with mixed feelings. People generally feel abandoned in a way that reflects their out of the way location - they feel disconnected from the rest of the country, and would more often than not travel to Tanzania instead of Nampula (the biggest centre in the northern part of the country) when they needed health care or goods. Travelling to Nampula entailed a dangerous overland journey, usually by convoy with soldiers for protection, or sea travel. In very few cases people would travel by plane, but that was costly for the majority of the population. The, much shorter, trip to Tanzania was generally preferred, since it would guarantee access to markets and health services untroubled by a destructive war.

The civil war period is also recalled as one where Cabo Delgado, and particularly its northern districts had been abandoned by the government. I would hear complaints about how much people in this region fought for the country’s independence, suffered, and were now left without development. There is a notion that they were left out, that development is limited to the south of the country, and does not relate to their daily lives. In this part of the country people live mostly of subsistence farming, fishing and small businesses (petty trade, crafts such as tailoring and rug making or carpentry). One economic activity does not preclude another, and since farming yields, and fishing revenue are often small, people will develop different economic activities in order to have a more secure income. Work outside these is limited to state employment, either in government administration, or schools and hospitals. Private employment is in short supply and only with the arrival of lumber companies did it increase a little.

### ***3. Villagization***

'The Makonde no longer live in the bush (*mato*), they moved to the side of the road' – this was one of the things I was told on my first weeks of fieldwork. The implications of this change became apparent as I asked people more questions. The policy of villagization, implemented in the period which followed independence as part of the rural development strategy of Frelimo changed the use of space: it meant a change in the way people live, the residence patterns, the way land is used and allocated, and the power structures. It was much more than a simple change in the preference for the place where residence was to be established, and a redesigning of the northern landscape. It meant reordering of personal and social relationships with complex results (West 1998). The village layout changed, as did its location, and the people sharing its space became more numerous. This interfered with old patterns of residence and kinship developed in the much smaller units which used to be scattered in this area, and which are now mostly joined in much bigger villages. Dias (1964) tells of villages with six houses. Some were bigger with 26 or 39 houses. When compared with the size of today's villages, these numbers are extremely small. Some villages today comprise hundreds of houses and include schools, health posts and markets.

The villages were built in a carefully planned fashion with the houses constructed in a grid, with straight rows and large streets between them. The village divided into neighbourhoods, each with a neighbourhood chief. The village would have its own leader, who would consult with the neighbourhood chiefs when decisions needed to be taken or enforced.

Cabo Delgado was one of the few provinces where villagization was enforced with a

measure of success (Hall and Young 1997: 183), and where the policy was followed consistently. Although there were attempts to fight the policy and set up new villages, avoiding the government set villages (Hall 1990: 56-58), and villagization was implemented forcefully to some extent in Cabo Delgado, there were less repressive measures to make the people move to the larger villages than in the provinces which were most affected by the civil war in the centre of Mozambique (Englund 2002; Lubkemann 2008). I have not heard tales of older settlements being burnt and houses destroyed to make people move, as appeared to have been the case elsewhere in Cabo Delgado (West 2005: 172) or in provinces where the policy was strongly resisted (e. g. Englund 2002; Lubkemann 2008). For some of the other provinces this proved a policy which would create strong resentment and opposition towards the government (Geffray 1991; Geffray and Pedersen 1986; Cahen 1987; Borges Coelho 1998; Casal 1996; Roesch 1992). In the previous chapter I described how the colonial government and Frelimo both resorted to grouping the population in bigger villages as a measure of control and as a way of providing services for the population. Once the liberation struggle ended, part of the population stayed in the larger villages. With the civil war people moved increasingly to the towns, in search of security initially. Although people often keep their houses in the village and maintain their rights to the agricultural fields, they tend to want to keep a house in town if they are able to afford it.

Though there was less heavy-handed approach when it came to establishing communal villages in Cabo Delgado than elsewhere in the country, decisions about the location of these villages were not peaceful. In one village, Mangoma, an old resident told me how in the post-independence period there were several discussions and in the end arrests because of where the village was going to be placed.

Adumarques Chano was one of the first to build a house in the area where Mangoma is now located. However because of that he was arrested twice during the 1980s, as the government had not allowed the construction of a village there. Although the administrator had given his permission for building houses, people from nearby villages complained that the construction of a new village would make theirs disappear. They left for the old villages and were arrested and later forced to go to Mangoma. People did not want to stay there because it was far from their lands. Adumarques wanted the village to be located where it is now, because it was also close to the lands he was allowed to cultivate.

Another village where there were problems beginning to build houses was Chimbanga, where houses were destroyed three times because the administrator of the time did not want a village built there. It was only later that people were allowed to build a camp there, but not a village. The smaller villages, still starting to be established, are not qualified as villages but as camps (*acampamentos*), and there are a number of these along the road, usually between more established, and bigger, 'proper' villages, and closer to newly cleared fields. Only in 1997 was Chimbanga elevated to village status. This village is divided between Makonde and Mwani people, living in separate areas on opposite sides of the road. This follows the usual pattern for recent villages, where residence is organised along ethnic lines where possible. These Makonde living in these villages no longer follow the old residence pattern of establishing the new house near the husband's matrilineal uncle.

Although people live side by side in the same villages they still develop closer relationships along ethnic lines. The choice of area where one will build a house, and how one relates to the neighbourhood, and the place occupied socially are expressed in very visible form in the layout of the village. This was one aspect I observed in

every village I went to. And people are also very explicit about it and discuss it openly, pointing towards the areas of separation as we walked along the villages. During various interviews I found myself discussing politics of space, how and why this area was chosen, political pressures and implications. The place where a house is built does not depend only on the space available or on having the money to pay for the plot. It depends on the relationships which already exist with the other people whose houses are in the same area.

Villagization as a process altered the patterns of residence and land use in the coastal districts of Mozambique. It also provided the state with a way to control the population and to exercise the changes it deemed appropriate.

#### *4. The politics of space*

The villages in the district of Mocímboa da Praia (Map 3 and 4) and the town by the same name have undergone major changes spatially. I will discuss the changes in villages here, and detail the major changes the town has experienced in Chapter 6. The traditional<sup>189</sup> layout of the villages, observed by Dias in the 1950s no longer exists<sup>190</sup>. The changes the villages have undergone are visible upon simple observation. After the policy of villagization in the late 1970s (Geffray and Pedersen 1986; Geffray 1991; Cahen 1987; West 1998) and the change in residence patterns during and after the civil war, villages changed, and so have social relations within

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189 By traditional I mean what was considered as such in the 1950s when Dias and his team did their research. Due to the changes in this province during pre-colonial and the colonial period there is no way of knowing how long and how 'traditional' this pattern of village was. I use traditional here in the sense that people used it there, to refer to the what was considered the usual form (even the appropriate form) of doing things in the relatively recent past.

190 None of the villages I visited maintained the traditional layout. Most of them were of recent construction, and therefore heavily influenced by the design of the communal villages which had been set up in the 1970s.

them.

The recently built villages are very different from the old ones. They are designed in a grid, with big, open streets between the houses, and a carefully planned lay out. By focusing on the way people use space, and speak about it we can discuss change, and the historical transformation of social relationships, and local history<sup>191</sup>: by focusing on the ways the environment is perceived, and how much it is a product of what is given and what human interaction produces. These approaches prove useful when addressing issues of resettlement and movement.

The most usual form for the village was the circle, with a small number of houses. The centre would be the men's meeting house, the *shitala*. Because most villages no longer have a centre the *shitala* is no longer as visible. People meet instead in the market area. This is now the social centre, even if it is not a geographical centre, and is often located by the side of the road, sometimes close to the bus stop, in order to get more profit from passing buses and *chapas* (small, privately owned minibuses or pick up trucks which are used as public transport). Alternatively, the Frelimo headquarters in the village is used as a meeting place. This last option has, of course, strong political implications, and in a time when political allegiance is becoming less clear than it once was easily marks supporters of the ruling party and the opposition party. It also generally provides a strong understanding of local politics and allegiances, while still defining Frelimo as the somewhat more 'legitimate' party, even in a multiparty system.

The place where a village was to be built after independence depended on a variety of reasons: the government defines the place, there are associations with old village

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191 Recent anthropological theory dealing the uses and understandings of space thus opens new ground from which to research the subtle ways in which people represent themselves (Parkin 1991; Gupta and Ferguson 1997; Low and Lawrence-Zuñiga 2003).

sites or people were grouped there during the liberation struggle. Lately, the proximity of a road, especially in the case of the main road that leads to Pemba, and where many people travel, is becoming increasingly a deciding factor for the construction of villages. The villages are stretched along the road, and not grouped in clusters. This allows people to travel more easily and also get goods and news. Being in bigger villages also, ideally, provides people with services which would not be feasible in the small units of the old days. Rudimentary primary schools and health posts are present in most villages. The villages are now bigger centres, far more complex than the family units they once were.

I will now describe two different villages and link changes in the organization of the village layout with wider changes in local relationships.

Nango or Awasse is a big village, with between 2,000 and 3,000 inhabitants. It is located at the intersection of the main road that comes from Pemba (the provincial capital) and leads to both Mueda and Mocimboa da Praia (the two biggest semi-urban towns in the north of the province). It is occupied mostly by Makonde and Makua, with the areas occupied by both clearly visible in the landscape<sup>192</sup>. People were very aware of the divisions.

Even the name of the village is contentious. For the Makonde population it is Nango, because of the Nango river which is very close to the village. For the Makua it is Awasse, named after a local Makua *Mpene* (chief) who ruled in this area. Although people refer to it in different ways, they will still recognise the other name.

Sometimes if I was talking to Makonde I would be told off for referring to it as Awasse: still this is the name on the local road plaque.

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192 While being shown around the village for the first time I was told I was either in the Makonde section, or the Makua section. These were on opposite sides of the main road, and part of different neighbourhoods.

Nango/Awasse is organised in straight rows of houses, aligned with the main road. It is divided into four neighbourhoods each with its own neighbourhood head (*Chefe de Bairro*). Each neighbourhood head has its own council of elders – respected members of the community with whom the *Chefe de Bairro* meets and makes decisions in case of local problems. This village is organised along ethnic lines, with Makonde and Makwa sections being the most prominent divisions. There are also smaller numbers of Mwani and Tanzanians living there. This is by no means unusual. Most of the villages I visited had populations of diverse ethnic origins. The main difference between the villages is the proportion of each ethnic group living there. Closer to the coast, the Mwani tend to be in larger numbers, while towards the hinterland the numbers of Makonde rise.

A different example is the village 1º de Maio (1<sup>st</sup> of May) which is located just outside the town of Mocímboa to the north, along the road that leads to Palma. This is a very recent village, having been established about 2 or 3 years ago. The name was chosen because it was on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May that people started the construction of the village. People who inhabit it come to Mocímboa frequently to attend to their business, go to the hospital, and work. This means a 45 minute cycle ride, or a 2-3 hour walk. The layout of the village is very similar to others that sit along the road, having the same small thatched houses with a clear space around them and the same well aligned streets. The village organization is also very similar to any of the other local villages, with the same hierarchies, and same power divisions.

The village is without an immediate water source. There is no well in the village, and the river is 30 minutes walking distance from it. The women collect the water for the daily needs. It does appear strange that people chose to locate the village away from a water source but close to the road. This does not bring, as far as I know, any

advantage to their daily lives. It does not increase commerce, and there is no significant market area in the town. However people still prefer the road.

Locating villages close to the road, in contrast to the older pattern of placing the villages in hidden areas of the bush could be explained by several things. The older villages were located in hidden areas as a safety measure, since this area of Mozambique was, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, an area of continuous warfare and of intense slave raiding. It made sense hiding the villages, creating confusing pathways, and traps and building a fence around them. Nowadays, however, there are greater advantages to being closer to the road: people still relate to memories of the civil war, and to the ease that they got from being closer to the road, and from having access to more goods bought in Mocímboa da Praia. Unlike other areas in Mozambique which were affected more strongly by the civil war, in the north the road was not as dangerous, and convoys of trucks travelled through bringing goods and news. These villages were, however, easier to control by the government officials. The communal village policy has led to a major change in the use of space and as a consequence in the establishment of personal and social relationships.

There are however issues with living in communal villages still, access to water being one of the major problems. In one of the villages I visited (Mitope) I was told that people would usually travel a few kilometres away from the village, dig a hole in the ground, sleep next to it while waiting for it to fill up with water and then carry the water back to use. In another village I was told:

People are now leaving the communal villages because there is no water here. The villages are far from water sources, and the wells are damaged. People move because of the distance to water. Frelimo tricks us saying they fought the war so that we could live well. But how can we live well when there is no water? An old woman like me cannot get water. Are we living well? (Abdala Suleimane Ibraimo)

These changes are not due solely to the events of the civil war. They have deeper,

more long term roots than that. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, during the liberation struggle people moved from their villages, and either went further into the bush, or to Tanzania, and grouped in larger villages and camps. The Portuguese grouped large numbers of people in bigger villages as well. After independence they returned home, but the old settlements were changed. The state's rural policies strongly encouraged the grouping of people in large, planned villages, which were intended to become the centres for modernity, and would have schools and health centres. The change in village layout and the use of larger settlements marked a break from old uses of space, and had an impact on land use and the distribution of resources.

##### ***5. Administering the countryside: post-independence views on traditional authority***

Shortly after independence Frelimo's government attempted to impose a different, more modern type of administration and move away from what Frelimo government considered obscurantist and feudal, and potential sources of division in the country – the authorities the Portuguese administration had relied on heavily and called the *autoridades gentílicas* (or traditional authority). In its first administrative reform in 1978, Frelimo abolished chieftaincy (Gonçalves 2006: 29). Frelimo believed these 'traditional authorities' had no space in the new model of state they were seeking to implement after independence.

The traditional authorities were understood to be a creation of the Portuguese administration and not 'traditional' or 'indigenous' *per se*. Especially because some of them had worked closely with the Portuguese colonial administration they were

regarded as compromised (*comprometidos*) and as collaborators with the colonial regime, and therefore removed from government positions of any sort (Cravinho 1995; West and Kloeck-Jenson 1999; Gonçalves 2006). During the liberation struggle Frelimo's approach went from eliminating some of the traditional leaders whom it believed were supportive of the Portuguese (West 1998) to including in its structure those who were actively supporting Frelimo (Cravinho 1995). However, following independence, the view was that these authorities had no space in the new state.

In an attempt to break with the colonial system of administration and to build a state based on Marxist-Leninist ideas, the new government abolished the traditional authorities and replaced them with *grupos dinamizadores* (dynamising groups) (Buur and Kyed 2006: 850) shortly after independence and were to be the way for Frelimo to contact and organise the peasants in the areas where it had not come in contact with the peasant population during the struggle (Collins 1978:12). The former chiefs were excluded from Frelimo's hierarchy<sup>193</sup> (O'Laughlin 2000) and seen as collaborators with the Portuguese regime.

The central government is, since the late 1980s, more open to, and in some cases even encouraging of these structures. In 1991 the Ministry of State Administration (*Ministério da Administração Estatal*) started a research project under the leadership of Iraê Baptista Lundin<sup>194</sup>, in order to develop an understanding of the importance of 'local authorities', and make policy recommendations that would help integrate them into the state system. Renamo had been effective at integrating the traditional authorities, since they did depend on these structures to relate to the people and to

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193 As were those who openly practised a religion, who were healers, or any other group seen to stray from the ideas informing the new society to be brought forth by Frelimo.

194 Lundin is a Brazilian-Swedish anthropologist who has lived and worked in Mozambique since the 1980s. Her work on this project was criticised for assuming a timelessness in the traditional power structures in the pre-colonial period, despite claims to the contrary (Lundin 1995, 1996; West and Kloeck-Jenson 1999; Kyed 2007). It was also criticised by some Frelimo members, notably Sergio Vieira as an 'exotic quest' (West 1998).

administer the areas under their control (Geffray 1991; Morgan 1990). For Renamo traditional authorities provided a ready-made network of authority which, because of Frelimo's policies was thoroughly disengaged from the power structures implemented by Frelimo after independence. Frelimo had, since independence, successively alienated them with policies which either completely took the power away from these leaders, or at the very least minimised their influence.

During the campaign for the first multiparty elections (1994) the president, and candidate for Frelimo, Joaquim Chissano met with traditional authorities<sup>195</sup> (West 1998) and at the same time workshops were organised throughout the country which included them and tried to devise a role for them in the new democratic order of the state (West 1998). So far nothing was really defined, and even though the government seemed to have a more open approach to the traditional authorities than it did immediately after independence, there was no strategy to include them in the state structure, and their role is still very much linked to traditional roles of counselling with no real access to power. It was only in 2000, with the decree 15/2000, that there was a formal framework for the integration of the community authorities. Recent research (Kyed 2007; Kyed and Buur 2006; Buur and Kyed 2006; Gonçalves 2006) describes the initial implementation of this decree and points towards the return to patterns of authority which are more closely related to the pre-independence patterns. The use of a registry with the names of former *régulos* compiled during the colonial period to see who are the legitimate authorities for each area of the country (Kyed 2007) points to a return of pre-colonial and colonial lineages to power.

When I first started setting up interviews in one of the villages of the district, Chinda, and asked to speak with the village president in order to introduce myself and discuss

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195 West and Kloeck-Jenson (1999) suggest that the tag 'traditional' marks the institution and its office holders as anachronisms (Buur and Kyed 2006: 848)

the work I was intending to do in the village, I was asked whether I wanted to speak with the other village head. This man turned out to be the *traditional* head of the village. Although his influence was to some degree limited, and, in this case, more ceremonial than effective, he was still heard and consulted on some matters. Both leaders seemed to discuss the problems in the village, with the village president appearing to have the final say in decisions taken. This is, however, not always the case, and in various villages the traditional village head is consulted more often, because of his knowledge of the area's history, land politics, and ceremonial matters. However, being asked if I wanted to speak with the *traditional authority* would not have happened during the period when villagization was a policy which Frelimo tried to impose. The bearers of authority according to the traditional ways, were not allowed to hold positions of responsibility, and were kept away from the government. This does not mean they were indeed away from running, or helping to run, the affairs of the village. Research done by Alexander (1997) and West and Kloeck-Jenson (1999) suggests that state officials relied on traditional chiefs for solving day to day problems (including issues of land allocation). The village presidents had to rely on the knowledge of the elders to solve some of the issues that would arise. If they were respected elders people would still go to them for advice, and in many cases they were the people to go to to solve land disputes and to ask for advice when it came to land allocation. However, Buur and Kyed (2006) point to the fact that these same chiefs were often punished if found to be solving community problems. West and Kloeck-Jenson (1999) analyse the path that traditional authority has travelled in the last century. Although in their opinion the *vanag'olo vene kaja* (sing. *nang'olo mwene kaja*) of the old days were still present and exerted some influence in the mid 1990s, their influence was diminishing quickly. Their research was done

in an area where the presence of these traditional authorities was still quite strong. However, in the area where I did my fieldwork the differences are striking. Most villages I went to did not claim to have a traditional authority present and when they did, as in the case of Chinda, their role was extremely limited and the chief was more of a figurehead. He would have to work alongside the new *Chefe de Aldeia*, whose role was defined after independence. These authorities are now integrated, even if not officially, in the power structure of the village. This creates a hybrid system of authority with both the traditional and modern types of hierarchy coexisting. Some villages maintain openly, now that this is allowed, both structures of power, or they choose a person respected in the community.

In West's (2005: 164-173) account of the changes in the Mueda Plateau, he describes how the bringing together of people in bigger settlements, and Frelimo's attempt to change Mozambican society, had a perverse effect in that it disrupted normal cycles of transference of power causing problems in well established matters such a land use.

The hierarchies of power in the villages changed, and this (despite the political changes brought forth by democratization, and the acceptance by the government of traditional forms of authority following the peace agreements in 1992) is still the formulae of hierarchies in most villages. There is one village president, who gets elected<sup>196</sup>, and a number of neighbourhood (*bairro*) presidents, and other smaller units (such as vice-president, secretary, and block chief). The choice of who would be village president was at first defined by the party, and these were mostly men who were neither part of the village, nor at least part of the ruling lineage, in order to break with the former power structure. Often they would be young men who would

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196 When there is no obvious leader, people would meet in an assembly and discuss the merits of various potential new village heads and later make a decision.

have worked with Frelimo during the liberation struggle.

When I first arrived in Nangade, one of the most northern districts, and one which is very isolated and difficult to reach, to conduct interviews and gather some comparative material which would enable me to better understand and analyse the situation in the district of Mocímboa da Praia, I set up meetings with the various neighbourhood chiefs, who would show me around and help me understand the place. On the first morning, as we set out to do this, we were greeted by the chief in full garb, with the uniform which had been given him by the government. I was surprised to see him in uniform, as until then I had come in contact with numerous neighbourhood heads and no one had worn any form of uniform. All the other chiefs we met while we were in Nangade followed his example. In the district of Mocímboa da Praia, there were fewer neighbourhood presidents who did the same, but some still had the uniform and wore it on occasion. These were mostly neighbourhood or village heads who had maintained the leadership for longer (some since the 1970s).

Since 2002, around 4,000 former Frelimo secretaries and traditional leaders have been officially recognised, have signed a contract with the state and have received emblems of the republic to wear and a national flag to place at their homestead. (Buur and Kyed 2006: 848)

More than sudden breaks in the way authority is understood and used, recent research suggests that there has been continuity (West 2005; West and Kloeck-Jenson 1999; Buur and Kyed 2006; Kyed and Buur 2006; Gonçalves 2006). The colonial system had its basis on existing forms of authority<sup>197</sup>, and while following independence there was a break with these forms of authority from a formal perspective, the population tended to find ways in which the former traditional

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<sup>197</sup> Though it did not always work in a clear cut way, and it was often manipulated by local populations – making use of the general ignorance of colonial administrators on local issues – the three tier system implemented by the Portuguese did roughly follow some of the local power hierarchies (*cf.* West and Kloeck-Jenson 1999).

leaders were still consulted and their authority was still recognised, even if informally. Often villagers would seek their former *nang'olo mwene kaya* to consult on various personal matters (family problems, conflict resolution), but would do so discreetly, so as to not alert the new authorities (West 1998: 156). Following the peace agreements the Frelimo government attempted to incorporate them in the structure of the state. A series of attempts were made and in 2000 a decree was passed establishing the forms in which these authorities would be recognised and integrated in the state hierarchy. This was the first post-independence legislative attempt to recognize traditional authority (Buur and Kyed 2006: 848).

Regardless of the change in policy with respect to traditional authorities: the openness to the older patterns of leadership, and an acceptance of 'traditional authority' by the government, the structure of the village has changed almost beyond recognition, and these changes have broken some of the structures of power. There is continuity, with the knowledge of whom is the leader of the old lineage and traditional head of the settlements. However, with newly built settlements and the influx of migrant rising to positions of village head there are also ruptures with the past. The ways in which space is organised, the recent increase of population and the setting up of new villages in previously unoccupied areas have all contributed to alter the transfer of power, residence patterns and new patterns are emerging combining traditional and post-independence elements.

### ***Conclusion***

The Mozambican space was transformed after independence. Frelimo's government

ideas about the national territory informed the definition of the nation and the meaning of citizenship. Their policies with respect to the development of the rural areas have affected local level organisation of space and on the establishment of personal and group relationships.

Rewriting the landscape and changes in the use of land and the establishment of villages changed power and personal relationships in this part of Mozambique. There is a number of new villages close to the road that appeared in the last 10 years or so after the war.

The communal village scheme developed by Frelimo's government continued the policies implemented during the liberation struggle by Frelimo and also by the Portuguese. Although it did not confine people in villages it did move people from the smaller settlements into bigger units, therefore redesigning the use of space.

Where the old Makonde villages had been small, scattered across the hinterland and with a village head, who was the elder of the matrilineage, the new villages were big concentrations of people, many times joining together different groups (Makonde, Mwani, Makua) and having very different structures of power, set in motion by the new government. The power hierarchy in these was defined by the government brought a number of changes to personal relationships. Even though it may be argued that people did maintain the old hierarchies and they were still relevant, moving the location of the village and the increase in size had implications in the change of the power structures. The changes in location introduced alterations to residence patterns, whence the children now stay with their fathers, and not move to stay with their uncles in their matrilineage territory, transforming the processes of transmission of power, and the *likola* (matrilieance) seems to be loosing relevance. During my fieldwork the only time people referred to the *likola* they belonged to was when

directly asked about it. There was an attempt to get away from the traditional leadership, and the village head became someone who ideally had no connection with the former ruling lineage. In the early 1990s with the political transformations and the search for peace most policies implemented in the 1970s and 1980s were revised.

The policies implemented in the post-independence period (villagization, abolition of traditional authority, hostility towards religion and various forms of tradition) all had an impact in the diverse communities living in northern Cabo Delgado. If the Makonde maintain an allegiance to Frelimo, the Mwani responded to Frelimo's policies by seeking political options with Renamo. In the post-independence period, relationships of both Mwani and Makonde with the state and government were another factor contributing to increasing divisions between the groups.

In the following chapter I will discuss the impact of the return of refugees and migrants from Tanzania after the end of the civil war and how this changed the local politics of space, and affected local politics and local relationships. I will detail the changes in land occupation and the rise of tensions between the 'owners of the land' (the long term residents of this area) and the newly arrived.

## Chapter VI – Peace, movement and belonging

The civil war in Mozambique ended in 1992 with the signing of the General Peace Agreement in Rome<sup>198</sup>. The country had its first multiparty national elections in 1994 and continued its transformation into a neo-liberal state. After peace became established, and the country was 'safe', many people who had taken refuge in neighbouring countries moved back to Mozambique. The return of refugees and internally displaced persons was accomplished either with the help of NGOs or individually. As elsewhere in the country, this return had a significant impact on the already changing social landscape of northern Mozambique.

This chapter traces the return of refugees to Mozambique and their resettlement in Mocimboa da Praia. I explore what happens when people move back to their areas of origin, or resettle elsewhere in the region and how this affects personal and social relationships and is expressed in the use of space and the changes in the landscape. I will describe the movement back to Mozambique and its implications for the people who spent a long time living in Tanzania. The choices made after returning, in terms of personal allegiances and residence location, are relevant and will be addressed. I will look at the interaction and connection between the travel and the establishment of social and personal relationships.

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198 The Rome Peace Agreements were signed by Frelimo and Renamo in 4 October 1992 and mediated by the Community of Sant' Egidio. The negotiations were lengthy and difficult lasting for about 2 years. For more details on the Agreements and the peace process see: Zuppi 1995; Rocca 2003; Synge 1997; Alden 1995; Alden and Simpson 1993.

## *1. Returning home – what home? Where is home?*

As discussed in the previous chapters, colonial rule, two consecutive wars, and rural development policies implemented by Frelimo's government have reordered the social and physical landscape of northern Mozambique. Following the Peace Agreements changes at the economic and social level were implemented (West and Myers 1996: 28). At this point many started moving back to Mozambique from Tanzania and to resettle. The recent history of the area has led a large number of Makonde to move from their original area in the Mueda Plateau to other neighbouring districts and affected their relationship with other groups that inhabit the area – especially the coastal Mwani. The civil war had major disruptive effects in the country with a high number of dead and displaced people<sup>199</sup>, and the destruction of the country's infrastructure.

In Cabo Delgado the situation at the end of the civil war was very different from the situation in certain provinces further south, where the numbers of refugees had been much higher (especially in the provinces close to Malawi, a country which received about half the total number of refugees) and where international agencies put in place a series of plans for the return of refugees (Wilson and Nunes 1994; Lubkemann 2008; Englund 2002). Although the civil war affected Cabo Delgado to a lesser extent<sup>200</sup> than some other provinces south or than the liberation struggle, it still had an impact and caused hardship and insecurity, which in turn caused many people to flee to Tanzania. The civil war was fought mainly in the central provinces, and

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199 Of the 4,6 million displaced, about 2 million moved to neighbouring countries. Malawi received about 1 million refugees during the civil war, making it the country which received the largest number of refugees.

200 The direct impact of the civil war was felt later here and was never as strong as in other parts of the country where the destruction and impact on the population has been well documented (Geffray 1991, Englund 2002, Nordstrom 1997).

though it reached northern Cabo Delgado in the 1980s its destructive effects here were not comparable to the central provinces. During the civil war people felt they had better work opportunities in Tanzania and the possibility of a safer life.

A large number of people who had lived in Tanzania during the liberation struggle and who did not return to Mozambique immediately after independence decided to stay at the onset of the civil war. Others migrated in the late 1970s or during the 1980s when the war situation in Mozambique was becoming more difficult and unstable. There is a range of patterns, from people who moved at different periods and from people who moved for different lengths of time. This is what Kunz (1973, 1981 in Wilson and Nunes 1994) calls different 'vintages' of refugees. When looking at the different patterns of movement during the wars it is important to pay attention to these and to the differences that inform people's experiences and decisions.

Though Wilson and Nunes (1994) offer criticism of Kunz's main ideas they do agree that 'vintage' is a useful concept. In their case study of the refugee situation in Milange in Zambezia Province in central Mozambique, they point to different periods of movement in response to Renamo's actions in the area. They explain how different situations caused a differing response from the people, but that this generally entailed flight. These differing responses derive from a person's understandings about his or her safety and options. This may delay the move or hasten it.

In northern Mozambique a person moving to Tanzania for the duration of the civil war is bound to have different reasons than someone who moved at the end of the 1980s when the war was affecting this province more intensely than before. Their experiences were different and depended on the establishment of relationships in Tanzania, or on previous knowledge of the country. They also depended on local

histories. People who moved to Tanzania in the 1960s and 1970s and stayed during the civil war had a much more stable presence in the country than people who moved for shorter periods during the 1980s. They would also find it more difficult to return and in some cases would return much later than people who had moved to Tanzania in the late 1980s.

After the signing of the peace agreement in 1992 people started moving back to Mozambique, and in 1993 most of them had effectively returned<sup>201</sup>. Some figures by Cuny and Stein (Wilson and Nunes 1994:172) point to the overwhelming majority of the refugees (over 90%) returning without a repatriation plan put in place by the government and without state support since 1975. As in many other cases throughout the country (Wilson and Nunes 1994, Englund 2002, Lubkemann 2008) people did not wait for the help of organizations that support refugees and just made their way home independently. This movement was not completely spontaneous, but it was organised by the refugees themselves and dependent on their perception about safety and upon weighting the advantages and disadvantages of return.

The return of refugees is often taken for granted in the general literature and seen as the 'natural' response at the end of the conflict. However, recent research has countered this idea (Hammond 2004; Lubkemann 2006, 2008; Malkki 1992, 1995), pointing out that the experience in a different country often changes the options available to refugees and they will choose to remain in the country they moved to. This is ultimately linked with the idea of what constitutes home and where the refugees then choose to resettle if deciding to return to the country, or region of origin.

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201 For an account of refugee repatriation from Malawi, see Wilson and Nunes (1994). Englund (2002) also examines the return of refugees from Malawi, while Lubkemann (2008) describes the situation of refugees and migrants in Manica province.

Most of the refugees from Cabo Delgado in Tanzania, during the period of the civil war, lived with the local population instead of living in refugee camps. This makes it harder to quantify the numbers of people returning. There are not, to my knowledge, exact or reliable figures for the numbers of refugees or migrants from Cabo Delgado, since so many people moved around Tanzania and lived there without having to go through official channels<sup>202</sup>.

The border between Mozambique and Tanzania (the Rovuma river) is relatively easy to cross and there are few controls along it. Most people in the north would have acquaintances or relatives living on the other side, and at least some knowledge of Swahili, which would allow them to get by unnoticed, and to move between the territories relatively easily.

When people returned from Tanzania at the end of the liberation struggle, in 1974-5, support was available from the state and humanitarian organisations. Some came by their own means but others returned with the help of the government and were housed in Quissanga, Ancuabe and Balama to the south of the province of Cabo Delgado. Following the end of the civil war in 1992, although there was no governmental plan for relocation in this part of the country unlike after the end of the civil war. Consequently people just moved to the places where they wanted to build a house.

The return home does not necessarily mean a return to where one was originally from. Often it would simply entail returning to the country of one's citizenship. This is not unusual elsewhere in Mozambique (Lubkemann 2006). Although most returnees moved back to the region/province they were originally from, many would

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202 Ranger (1994), when discussing the situation of refugees in Africa, warns of the need to not be too overwhelmed and happy by the data produced in refugee camps and ignore the number of refugees who are not qualified as such because they blend in with the population of the host country.

choose to live in areas far from their villages of origin, thereby reshuffling once more the population composition of the northern districts. Urban/rural divides were often considered important for my informants who had gotten used to living in urban settings and were reluctant to return to the smaller villages they were from<sup>203</sup>. Many Makonde, upon returning from Tanzania, chose to settle close to the coast, either in villages or in the town of Mocímboa da Praia. The place where the returnees moved to, at least based on the interviews I did in the districts of Mocímboa da Praia and Nangade, were places to which they already had connections and where it was assumed that they could make a living. This still meant readjusting to a new place in many cases and creating new networks of support. This was not unusual in Mozambique at this point since most of the rural population was no longer living in their areas of origin by the end of the war, many having been displaced several times (Wilson and Nunes 1994: 170). The decision regarding where to return to reflects a series of considerations, mainly socio-economic, which often overrule attachment to the place of origin (Lubkemann 2008: 261). Most accounts of refugee situations in Mozambique point to this (Englund 2002; Lubkeman 2008; Wilson and Nunes 1994). Although much has been written about refugees in general (Malkki 1992, 1995; Turton 1996, 2004; Kibreab 1999; James 2007), and there is also a vast literature addressing displacement and refuge with respect to Mozambique (Englund 2002; McGregor 1994, 1998; Schmidt 1996; McDermott Hughes 1999; Wilson and Nunes 1994). Less has been written about what happens when refugees return home (Allen 1994; Nunes and Wilson 1994). This return either to their areas of origin or to other places in the country entails a readjustment and a re-occupation of space.

Ranger (1994) points to the importance of understanding what is meant by home and

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203 As I showed in the previous chapter the social geography of Cabo Delgado had undergone dramatic change, and therefore the village of origin was often no longer there to return to.

identity in order to understand how people integrate in their areas of resettlement upon return. Home could mean the country of origin, the smaller unit of the province or district or the even smaller one of the village. Ranger further argues for the understanding of what constitutes the 'primary identity' (1994: 289) and whether this is in fact the nation. The nation could be, and in many cases is, one of the dimensions of 'home' as it 'encapsulates 'home' in terms of language, culture, rights to citizenship and land' (Ranger 1994: 289). Refugees and returnees are usually, despite all the movement they experience, rooted in a place (Malkki 1992): either the place they seek to escape from or return to. Malkki notes that assumptions about refugees are often based on national discourses that 'territorialise national identity' (1995). Home was broadly defined as the territory of Mozambique – the *national home*. This notion has nevertheless been questioned.

(the) implicit assumption that at the end of the conflict, a return to a 'place' called 'home' is both possible and desirable...can be questioned in both its aspects: return 'home' may (in fact) be impossible (Koser and Black 1999: 7). In short, both the wartime transformations of former homelands and of notions of 'home' themselves may profoundly affect how wartime migrants contemplate and carry out (or not) projects of post-conflict return. Rather than reproducing the sedentarist bias that assumes post-conflict return should and will occur, it is therefore crucial to investigate how wartime social transformations potentially problematize "... refugees own meanings of repatriation and their perceptions and expectations of 'home'"(Koser and Black 1999: 10). (Lubkeman 2006: 4)

However, it is not just the national home, but also the place of origin that confers belonging. It is a more layered, multidimensional idea of belonging, which goes beyond the claims of citizenship. It includes the ethnic allegiance, the clan, and claims to belonging to a place – a village. All these are incorporated in the idea of home. Although some authors (Cahen 2000) claim that the identification with the national state is small, in this part of the country, possibly due to the closeness of the border and the prolonged and changing contact with citizens from a different country, there is an acute awareness of being a Mozambican citizen.

Most of the people of Makonde origin living in Mocímboa da Praia had been born somewhere else. When I asked people to tell me their life story most would usually start by saying where they had been born. They would tell me the name of the village and explain where it was. Older people would often explain that the village where they had been born no longer existed and the people who were originally from there were now mostly living in a bigger village which would incorporate several of the much smaller old villages.

The town of Mocímboa da Praia, appears to integrate well these two populations: the long-term residents and the newly arrived. These groups follow closely ethnic lines: the long-term residents are the coastal Mwani and the newly arrived are the Makonde. However a closer look makes us realise they live parallel and un-integrated lives. They interact, but the core of the relationships is mostly linked with the ethnic group one belongs to. They maintain their separate languages, Shi-Makonde and Ki-Mwane, and use them for daily communication. They have different religious beliefs and practices. The Makonde are Christian and the Mwani Muslim. Their political affiliation is also different, with the Makonde aligning with Frelimo, and the Mwani being mostly Renamo (there are some prominent members of Frelimo who are Mwani, but I could not find any Makonde who claimed to be Renamo)<sup>204</sup>. Walking through distinct neighbourhoods both in this town and in nearby villages brings these differences to light. The language spoken is different, the houses are built differently, the domestic space is also distinct, people present themselves in different ways. It is not only the face tattoos of old Makonde men and women, and the nose rings of Mwani women, and Muslim dress of Mwani men that

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204 Historically the Makonde have always supported Frelimo, having been the backbone of the Frelimo army during the liberation struggle. The Mwani have a more complicated political stance, with many having felt alienated by Frelimo during the civil war years and looking for Renamo as an answer to their political claims.

set them apart. There is an array of smaller, less immediate differences that start surfacing after a little time spent there. One learns to identify immediately the differences and one learns to navigate through the neighbourhoods, and distinguish the streets.

The town has expanded in the recent past, especially since the end of the civil war, when more people have come to live there. Some of the more recent arrivals are still trying to create their own networks and tapping into the town's. Recently, groups of veterans from the liberation struggle (mostly of Makonde origin) organise weekly meetings which do much to help people who have arrived recently and to allow them meet others with a similar experience.

When choosing a place to live, people would generally choose along ethnic lines and the neighbourhoods in town, though not segregated, are organised along ethnic lines<sup>205</sup>. This can be due to length of occupation, but also preference. People would choose to live among others of the same ethnic origin because they say it would feel better. Language and religion similarities may be one explanation for this, although not the only one.

In fact in Cabo Delgado, many of those who had sought refuge in Tanzania did not return 'home'. Upon return they chose other areas of the province to resettle and established new networks and relationships in these places. These new relationships were, however, not always simple and tension-free. In the following section I will look at different reasons for return and a diversity of strategies when adjusting to new environments.

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<sup>205</sup> This is also linked to the expansion of town and villages and to the time of arrival and occupation. Older neighbourhoods tended to have a larger number of Mwani than newer neighbourhoods, where Makonde were in larger numbers.

## *2. Choosing a place and (re)building networks*

Although work has been done with the refugees in the process of returning home (Englund 2002; Wilson and Nunes 1994), and shortly after they returned (Lubkeman 2008) resettlement in the longer term remains largely unaddressed. Now that it has been over ten years since the signing of the peace agreement and the first general elections (with two more having already taken place), and the refugees have returned home, how are they integrated in the villages and towns of Mozambique, and what are the tensions created?

It is not only the population movement to Tanzania that is relevant here: internal migration has also had a bearing on the changing nature of relationships in northern Mozambique. Colonial rule and forced labour were responsible for people being moved from their areas of origin to work in plantations, and even though many did not stay in the areas they were forced to work after the 6 months of labour were due, some did. These people, mostly of Makonde origin, and in small numbers, were relatively easily integrated into the coastal population, some converting to Islam. Depending on when a person moved to Mocímboa their experience of the place and its changes impacts on how they perceive it now. Abili, a Mwani man who had arrived to Mocímboa during the civil war, described his impressions of Mocímboa when he first arrived and chose to emphasise the positive developments that he had seen since:

I came to Mocímboa during the war. I saw many damaged cars, burnt cars. It was hard to get here. I did not come in a military column, I came in a car at night. I haven't left until now. I came to look for treatment and lived with my sister. When I arrived there were only Mwani here. The town was very dirty and small. Now it's developed. There were no houses with corrugated tin roofs, but now the town is very developed, with many houses with tin roofs, and many people. (Abili)

A large number of people, especially of Makonde origin, have moved to Mocímboa in recent years. Most of those who had recently come to live in the city told me they had chosen this place simply because they 'liked it'. Liking a place was often offered as a reason strong enough to move there. I heard many times: '*Gostei de ficar aqui*' (I liked staying here), as the only reason for choosing Mocímboa da Praia as a place of residence. Once they were asked more specific questions they would say that they preferred to live in towns rather than villages, because they could do business here, there was more development, and referred to the proximity of schools and hospitals<sup>206</sup> as a reason for choosing towns over villages.

Boavida Tadu had joined Frelimo in 1964 and was a soldier during the struggle. He continued in the army, living in Maputo, until demobilization in 1994. After that he chose to move to Mocímboa and settle. He explained how he came to be in Mocímboa:

I came here after Mueda [the massacre in 1960], but I was told that as a Makonde I would die here, so I went back to Nambude<sup>207</sup>. [...] After demobilization I went back to Mbau but I found it strange to be away from the road, because I was used to living in the city. My wife wanted to stay there, but I came to live here.

After settling in Mocímboa he worked within Frelimo's party hierarchy and was elected president of 30 de Junho, one of the neighbourhoods, a position he kept until 2003. He still maintained strong links with his village of origin and his wife spent most of her time there, while he remained in Mocímboa.

André Michael was born in Mpanga in 1940 while his parents worked there. Shortly after, his parents migrated to Tanzania where he lived until 1977.

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206 This is not unusual for refugees who lived for long in urban centres. Upon return to their country of origin they find it easier to settle in urban, or semi-urban areas instead of their village of origin (Lubkemann 2000, 2006). Many refugees return to their country of origin, but not the rural area they were originally from (Allen and Morsink 1994; Kibreab 1999).

207 Nambude is one of the small villages on the plateau Mueda and Boavida's place of origin. Boavida incidentally means 'good life' or 'good living' in Portuguese.

I decided to come back home. But I didn't know it. When I got here, I met my uncle in Kionga and he said I didn't have family in Macomia, and gave me money to buy a house in Mocimboa. I worked there until 1984 and then I moved to Chimbanga. Before Tanzanian independence there were no problems between Mozambicans and Tanzanians. I voted for Nyerere in the first elections. In the second elections we couldn't vote because we were refugees. I was called Mkimbia [refugee in Swahili] because when I got to Mozambique I didn't speak ShiMakonde or KiMwane, and my wife spoke ShiMakonde, so people thought we were refugees. I think it is more developed here. The problem is that people hear about Tanzania and don't know the reality. I lived there, I know it is more developed here. Here if you go and ask for cassava from your neighbour they will give it to you. In Tanzania they don't. Life is harder there.

André's experience of life in both countries belies a common experience for Mozambicans who had lived in Tanzania. It also shows the difficulties many returnees faced upon return because of the length of time spent in Tanzania.

For older people, living in a semi-urban centre means an easier access to state-provided services, such as hospitals and social security in the form of pensions. It meant not having to travel from the village to collect pensions or wait for the payment to get to them. Living in the villages could mean going through a few months without receiving any money, if the social services official did not travel to their village that month, or sometimes missing them altogether, since there was never a fixed date for the visits. Some of the people I spoke with about this also claimed that, because they had been soldiers of the Mozambican army and had travelled and worked throughout Mozambique, they had gotten used to living in towns and therefore liked it better.

Catarina and Zeinabo were two sisters living next to each other at the outer edge of Bairro 30 de Junho. Their houses were small and in need of repair. Whenever I spoke to Catarina she would complain of some pain (*madodo*) and that she had nothing to eat. She would make comparisons with life in Tanzania where she had been for most of her life and where she had a well established network of friends and relatives.

Born in Mozambique, Catarina had moved to Tanzania at the time of the liberation

struggle like so many other Mozambicans and had stayed there until after the end of the civil war. Some years after the end of the war she decided to return to Mozambique and chose to live in Mocímboa where she hardly knew anyone. She never really explained her reasons for moving back apart from the vague response of 'I liked staying here'<sup>208</sup>. Her sister, Zeinabo, who lived next door, appeared to be the single source of support, and she did not seem to relate to most of her neighbours. When, on one occasion, Catarina had to go to hospital because she was sick with malaria, they both said she would not stay in the hospital. Staying there would mean that Zeinabo would have to stay with her<sup>209</sup>, and they had no one to look after their houses. They were very afraid people would steal their few possessions and whatever could be carried from the houses, such as the doors.

When I returned for a second stint of fieldwork, Catarina had returned to Tanzania to live with her family. Her sister was still living in Mocímboa and looking after their houses. Zeinabo was much younger than Catarina, and had an easier time relating to people and making friends. She was healthier, and able to take care of her own plot and get some food from it. All these things were extremely difficult for Catarina, who was continually ill and, because she had a very poor diet, was unable to work most days. Catarina expected to be supported better by the Mozambican state or the local church. Neither truly happened to the degree she expected, although she received a small pension from the social services, and the sisters living in town visited regularly to see how she was. Catarina never really felt at home or settled in Mocímboa. She never really belonged there. She had no network of friends or relatives apart from Zeinabo, and all her immediate family was in Tanzania. She did not develop close

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208 By the time I spoke to Catarina about her reasons to move back to Mozambique I had heard the phrase: 'I liked staying here' often as an explanation for moving to Mocímboa. It was not usually explained why the person actually liked staying in Mocímboa, unless I asked more specific questions.

209 It was common practice at the hospital for the patients to be accompanied by a relative, who would help with meals, getting the patients water, and make sure they had what they needed.

relationships. Being old, sick and with very few resources made living arrangements even more difficult for her. She was also not an easy person to relate to.

Catarina's story is a good example of how disjointed the social fabric is in this town. Catarina and her sister Zeinabo were extreme cases, because they had no friends or relatives in the town. They had chosen to return to Mozambique because they thought they would have a better life in their country of origin – they would be better 'at home'. However choosing a town where they had no connections made this harder to achieve. Their decision to return and to live in Mocímboa da Praia puzzled me for a while, but after realizing that they had no close relatives elsewhere in the country, it became easier to understand. Their lives would have been harder in one of the villages with less access to goods, or the social services and a much harder journey to the hospital.

For other families, though some members of the family were established in Mocímboa, others were more mobile and living between Mozambique and Tanzania for part of the year. For example, Jorge, a Makonde veteran of the liberation struggle, whose house I visited a few times, had lived between Mozambique and Tanzania during the different war periods. Following the Peace Agreements, he had then returned with most of his family and chose to settle in Mocímboa like many others of his generation. One of his daughters, Lucia, had married a Tanzanian man and lived in Tanzania (Mtwara) for part of the year. At the time of my fieldwork she was spending an increasing amount of time in Mocímboa because her son (also called Jorge) was seriously ill, and she was relying on family to help care for him. The child died after some time and Lucia and her husband returned to Tanzania to look for work again.

This kind of family set up was not unusual, with many families still having some of

their members living in the neighbouring country. These were people who had decided not to return upon hearing of the peace agreement, much like some people in Southern Mozambique had decided to stay in South Africa and not return to Mozambique (Lubkemann 2006). Questions of livelihood, especially access to jobs were often invoked as the explanation for not returning. Other reasons, such as a stronger support network were also given.

Some people, like Susana, a Makonde woman who had lived most of her life in Tanzania, only returned long after peace was established and this return had more to do with personal circumstances (Susana's first husband died, and her second husband thought they would have better opportunities living in Mozambique) than with a perception of peace and safety upon returning home. Economic considerations were generally at the forefront of decisions to return or remain in Tanzania.

Others had much more simple explanations for why they were living in Mocímboa often that they were linked with close relatives living in the area:

I came here after independence. I have stayed here since I came back. I have my house, my brother's house is in front of mine, and my son's is next door. (Issa Jabili)

Explanations would often refer to Mozambique as home. Even if Mocímboa was not the place of origin people it was still Mozambique and the country was also equated with home and belonging:

Those who could not continue as military men took off their uniforms and became civilian. After that I came here, because I preferred to stay at home. (Ansumane Chipepe)

Ansumane was not originally from Mocímboa, but was one of the people who decided to settle there after the struggle.

The people who moved to this area have different backgrounds and experiences and

that is reflected in the way they establish their relationships locally. Gender, age, personal experience all have a bearing on the ways in which the choice of where to resettle was made. The impact of a large influx of new population to a small town with poor infrastructure, a small number of potential paid jobs can be felt at present. Mocimboa keeps expanding and the tensions that have arisen recently between the various groups occupying its space can be easily linked with the increase in population.

### ***3. Visiting relatives and choosing wives***

While asking a Makonde friend, Cristiano Navadela, questions about marriage, I was treated to a lengthy description of his three marriages. These were all different experiences, and very different ways to go about deciding who to marry and where to live. His first marriage had been to a young girl of 14, with him being 15 at the time. They had lived with her parents for some time, but had gotten into arguments and after a while he 'returned'<sup>210</sup> her. Sometime after his first marriage collapsed, he had met another woman, to whom he was married for some years before they decided to divorce. In marrying his last, and at the time current, wife he had decided on a different approach. He had visited his relatives (the uncle on his mother's side) in a village in a different district (Nangade) and had asked for his help in choosing a wife. They had searched for one and found the woman who would become his third wife. They had no children together, but she had a child from a previous marriage. The way they decided on the marriage by following kin networks and looking for the advice of elders was not unusual, in the same way that his previous marriages had

<sup>210</sup> Divorce, when initiated by men, is often described as 'returning' the wife. The woman goes back to living with her family and, if there are no children, bridewealth is paid back to the husband.

not been at all unusual.

It was common for people to have a number of marriages, and for the early marriages to last for a shorter time, and then for men and women to have longer lasting subsequent marriages. A marriage would not entail a long drawn out process or complicated ceremonies, regardless of whether it was a marriage where the man and woman met and decided they wanted to get married or one which was arranged through relatives. Either would entail the payment of bridewealth, which was considerably less than the payment the Muslim population made (one of the reasons I was given for the low rate of intermarriage between Makonde and Mwani)<sup>211</sup>.

Although the Makonde and Mwani do not intermarry in significant numbers, the reason for that is not simply religious, it has mostly to do with expectations, and practices. And in the opinion of one informant, the main reason is a practical one: Mwani women's bridewealth is considerably higher than for the Makonde. So although it is rare for a Makonde man to marry a Mwani woman, Makonde women marrying Mwani men is more common. The woman would be expected to convert to Islam, and in all the cases I encountered this was the usual situation and did not appear to be a source of problems within the families. Bridewealth payments for instance follow the area's traditional division (Parkin 1986) of high payments in patrilineal societies (Mwani) and low payments for matrilineal societies (Makonde). Then the couple would start living together. If after some time problems arose they would divorce. In this case women would often lose their home and have to move back with their families, even when they had children. This was also the case with widows. There was very little protection for women from customary law<sup>212</sup> or from

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211 These differences when it comes to payment of bridewealth have been discussed elsewhere (Parkin 1987, 1990) and are a common feature when it comes to areas where Christian and Muslim populations live in close proximity.

212 In case of widowhood, the husband's family is entitled to his possessions, including the house, and Bernardete (who was involved with the women's association in town and part of the newly formed

state law, and while I was doing fieldwork the women's office was trying to establish a court department to assist women in times of divorce or when their husbands died.

Marriage appears to be transient, at least for the first one. Despite the differences in marriage systems for the Mwani and Makonde this is a common feature to both (Dias 1970; Conceição 2006). There is acceptance for consecutive marriages for men and women, and that is in fact expected. The marriage ceremonies are different for Mwani and Makonde. The groups' different descent systems, religions and bridewealth account for this.

The Mwani often have polygynous households, but this is allowed by their religion. Most will be careful to have different houses for each wife. It was very common to meet men in the morning travelling between one house and the other. The Makonde, by contrast, would often have all their wives in one house, along with all the children. In the house living next to where I lived there was a Makonde family, formed by a husband (Abilai) and his two wives (Virginia and Inês), their children and children from the man's previous marriages.

#### 4. *Travel made easy*

As discussed in the previous chapters, the Makonde migrated to Tanzania in large numbers during colonial rule (before and during the liberation struggle), and also after independence and during the civil war. The reasons for moving and the patterns of movement have changed throughout this period as have the places people migrated to. Initially linked with the excessive force employed by the colonial

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women's court) described how these possessions were taken from women who had just lost their husbands. The word used to describe these was 'ripped' which described well the dramatic situation the widows found themselves in.

regime and the later with the impact of the liberation struggle and the civil war, migration is now mostly related to work and trade, but also with family relationships, as many people have relatives on both sides of the border.

The North of Cabo Delgado is not densely populated and its population has been extremely mobile (with different types of migration), and many of the relationships in the area have been shaped by this. The three northernmost districts – Palma, Nangade and Mocimboa da Praia – have had a long history of migration (Conceição 1988). The inhabitants of this area of the Rovuma have always had a pragmatic vision of the border, and exploit it for their convenience (Conceição 2006: 67-68) seeing the border as a ‘conduit of opportunity’ (Nugent and Asiwaju 1996) more than as a constraint to movement. The types of migration that the Makonde and the Mwani experienced are very different though. In the colonial period, the Makonde would migrate to Tanzania in order to escape forced labour, and later either to participate in the war effort or to seek refuge. In the case of the Mwani, migration would often be for religious motives or for business (transporting goods back and forth by boat for instance).

One morning I was asking Cristiano Navadela, a young Makonde man who had been born in Tanzania around the time of independence, questions about his life as we were waiting for the boat to cross to the other side of the Mocimboa bay to go to Malindi. At one point in our conversation he talked about visiting his mother soon because he hadn't seen her in some time. ‘Where is she?’ I asked. ‘In Tanzania’ was the not unusual reply. He also said he would stay there for 6 months. As he was employed in town and had a wife and child, this struck me as somewhat complicated. However the more I spoke with people about their travels the more I realised this was the usual way to understand, and talk about, travel in this area. People would talk

about moving through different countries, and throughout the region with an ease that I found disconcerting sometimes.

'It's full of Makondes in Tanzania' said many of my Makonde informants when discussing Tanzania and movement. There are still large numbers of people living in Lindi, Mtwara<sup>213</sup>, and even Dar-es-Salaam who moved there around the time of the liberation struggle and have not moved back to Mozambique. Some people moved back after independence, but the civil war created new reasons for moving, and some moved back to Tanzania shortly after. Some of these people moved for short periods to find seasonal work in Tanzanian sisal and cashew plantations at a time when the Tanzanian economy was doing much better than the Mozambican one and when it was easy to get jobs in Tanzania<sup>214</sup>. However the situation is slowly changing: there are fewer jobs and the pay is not as good as it used to be in the past. Seasonal migrants are facing an added problem: they are not getting paid for work already done in the recent past.

Cristiano would often hitch a ride with me so that he could go and visit a relative, and that way save the *chapa* (minibus) fare and pay visits to relatives who lived too far to visit by bike. Visiting relatives, in order to find out the latest news, or in order to re-establish relationships with family and friends is common everywhere. Because movement is such an important part of the history of the region, these visits become even more important. The process of travelling to visit friends and relatives results in a wide network established across villages and towns where one has a family connection. Extended families, though they are not supposed to be imposed upon for

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213 Lindi and Mtwara are the two most southern provinces of Tanzania and the areas where the largest numbers of Makonde were said to reside. There are, again, no actual figures as this population tends to be very mobile.

214 Migrants with whom I spoke and who had worked in Tanzania until the early 2000s had a different experience from more recent migrants. They had easily found work and had gotten paid without much, if any, trouble.

long stretches of time, mean that there is usually someone to stay with in most villages and towns.

Travelling to visit relatives, and migrating both constitute forms of mobility, but in their essence are distinct and their consequences and implications are diverse.

Travelling and migrating does not constitute for many people in the world an abnormal or out-of-the-ordinary phenomenon. On the contrary there are many tales of movement as part of the everyday life and not just as a result of economic hardship, war or natural disaster. I argue that movement can be used as an idiom of identity and can be a form of expressing political and social relationships.

Descriptions of travel were, as I pointed out earlier, a usual part of the narratives of one's life, marking different periods and relationships.

The population movement in the province has caused the original coastal population, the Mwani, in recent times, to be continuously pushed towards a marginal position, and the newly arrived Makonde, who are originally from inland, are rising to prominent jobs and have seemingly easier access to money, through work in the state administration or pensions for former soldiers.

The Tanzanians who, since the peace agreements of 1992, have been slowly arriving and establishing businesses, are sometimes used as scapegoats for the problems that affect this area of Mozambique. Migration is always more than people moving, it is also about permanence and the interaction between those who are 'the owners of the land' (i. e. the Mwani who have inhabited the coastal areas for longer) and those who arrive to live in a place and by sharing it establish relationships of various natures.

McDermott Hughes (1999, 2006) explores cross-border movement and refugee crises by looking at the situation in the Mozambique-Zimbabwe border. He argues that the ease of movement on this border is more apparent than real, and that locally there are

difficulties that constrain the border crossers. I would make the same argument for northern Mozambique. It is a border which is physically easy to cross, and which is not heavily guarded, making it easy to go to the neighbouring country without having to deal with immigration procedures. The languages spoken on both sides are similar, and most people living in this northern Cabo Delgado often speak Swahili, making it easier to travel to Tanzania for work or visits. However, what is on the other side is sometimes less easy to deal with. The difficulties for border crossers are linked to the establishment of different categories of people, and there are, as McDermott Hughes (1999, 2006) and McGregor (1994, 1998) note, subtle forms of discrimination between national citizens and migrants which are present in this case as well. The different developments of Mozambique and Tanzania and the expectations of the people created sharp differences in cultural values and concepts between people living in close proximity. The different colonial and post-colonial histories created different attitudes towards the chiefs, and the two countries have different state administration structures. The fact that crossing the international border made Mozambicans illegal residents in the neighbouring country had a considerable impact on their negotiating capacity. They were more ready to accept without discussion what was given to them, especially when it came to land allocation.

McDermott Hughes (2006) argues that in spite of the geographical proximity the developments on either side of the border created tension and difference. The different political agendas, and historical development created economic and social differences that were more and more acute. In the Mozambican case the colonial history, which differs from that of Zimbabwe<sup>215</sup>, the independence struggle, the civil war, and post-colonial development had consequences for the different strategies that

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215 Differences in colonial rule, including distinctive administrative and tax systems, led to different relationships with the colonial and post-colonial state (McDermot-Hughes 1999, 2006).

people undertook in their daily lives. Although the border is relatively recent having been traced in the aftermath of the Berlin Conference of 1884-5 and changed following Germany's defeat in the First World War<sup>216</sup>, there were some differences arising from a few years of different concepts of administration, and even different capacities to impose a system by the colonial state.

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Movement and migration have always been a part of anthropological studies. However, the focus of this work has changed through the years. In Mozambique much has been written about migration, especially when it comes to labour migration to South Africa (Covane 2001) and the same has been the case for cross border movement (notably in the work done by McGregor 1997, 1998; Englund 2002; Schmidt 1996). Earlier anthropological studies have looked at a variety of aspects, from labour migration to relocations and forced movement, and have looked at how these influenced 'tribal' life. However, mobility was usually only mentioned as a consequence (Sanders 2001:27) and not as an aspect of living. In some parts of the world mobility is very much a feature of everyday life. Currently anthropologists are focusing increasingly on the '*imaginings* of landscapes and people's movement across them' (Sanders 2001: 27). The case of this part of Mozambique further illustrates the need to address people's understanding of the landscape and the changes brought forth by the return of large numbers of refugees and migrants and their choices of places to live.

The study of migration and movement allows us to understand how people on the move make sense of and create meaning from their travels, and also how they imagine place and construct the landscape. We see this in places where refugees

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216 With Germany's defeat in the 1<sup>st</sup> World War Portugal was granted the Kionga triangle at the mouth of the Rovuma River (Newitt 1995).

imagine and re-write their history and their belonging to a place where they no longer live and to which they may never return (Malkki 1995), or places where the journey becomes such a big part of the people, and is in fact the norm, so that it is the journey that makes them (Turton 1996). Sanders although pointing out that anthropologists have become increasingly interested in the *imagined* side of mobility and of the landscapes people cross, reminds us that the imaginings associated with mobility are not 'culturally-concocted fantasies that can therefore be ignored' (2001:28), but are ways to understand movement, and make sense of the processes and ways by which people describe and live through the process of moving. He suggests a link between mobility, witchcraft and ethnicity. Here I follow his idea of a link although I will leave witchcraft out of the equation.

The movement between Mozambique and Tanzania and between the hinterland and the coast has produced and been produced by change in residence patterns, and led the Makonde and the Mwani to re-work their relationships and their understanding of it. The ideas of tradition and modernity, especially, come into clear focus here, with a shift in the way the different groups see them. The Mwani were considered by the Portuguese administration, and considered themselves, modern, during the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but in comparison with the Makonde they are now seen by the Mozambican state administration as traditional. By contrast the Makonde have embraced change and modernity, brought by political ideas and a vocal desire for 'development', by which is generally meant access to goods and services.

The movement, and especially the recent return, of refugees and migrants from Tanzania has also made another relevant impact with respect to the lands one is allowed to cultivate. This part of Mozambique has been characterised by constant movement and the coming and going of diverse populations, it has been referred to

as a *transit area*<sup>217</sup> - It is an area of contact and also an area of transitory occupation. Although the population appears to be in almost permanent flux, and is described as such, there is a group who lives there permanently, the Mwani – who are the owners of the land.

Frelimo's post-independence rural policies, associated with villagization and a focus on state farms, has contributed to social discontent (West and Myers 1996: 29). Since 1992, these processes have become more flexible, with less interference from the state. People now discuss with the 'owners of the land' what land they have at their disposal. In most villages there is someone who oversees this land distribution, even if most people will claim that land is free and they can cultivate wherever they want. Claiming belonging and having rights and networks of support in certain parts of the province proves more complicated and people have to ask the owners of the land for permission to use and cultivate a plot. This is arranged by the local leadership but entails some obligation towards the hosts. The language used to describe these negotiations for plots of land and places to build a home is one of hosts and guests, and that is also used when describing personal relationships. These are often temporary relationships and it is not unusual to find people who lived in various parts of the province and moved when they felt that it was necessary or convenient.

##### **5. 'The Tanzanians are eating us'**

Although the idea of Makonde 'identity' was initially linked with a place – the Mueda Plateau – travelling and moving has been a part of the Makonde identity as

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217 The description of the area as a *transit area* was a usual one, but also one that come up in conversations with politicians, academics and foreigners living in the district. It was not usually described as such by the people who had lived there for long.

well. The Mwani identity is linked with their occupation of the coastal area. As I described in chapter II in both cases it is the place which gives origin to the name of the group.

The migration to Tanzania<sup>218</sup> is still very much a part of a young man's life, and many still head to the cashew fields in Tanzania to work for a few months or a year. These are generally small farms in the southern provinces of Tanzania (Mtwara and Lindi) and are well known to the Makonde men, as the farms have recruited workers for a long time. This relationship is changing mostly due to the fact that most of these young men do not get their pay after the work is done, and keep returning to Tanzania to ask for their money with no result. The experience of work that the Makonde men had in the past, and which was generally a positive one, is changing and so is the perception of Tanzania as a place to go for work.

I spent a long time in the villages of the district of Mocímboa and in the towns of Mocímboa da Praia and Nangade talking to young men who had been to Tanzania and discussing their experiences in different jobs. I heard countless tales of hard work which had gone unpaid, or which had been paid less than initially agreed. All the stories had the same structure: a young man would go to Tanzania to find work in one of the cashew or sisal plantations not far from the border with Mozambique, hoping to get a little money which would allow them to either start a business back home, build a house, or provide for their family; they would work for the agreed period (six months or a year) and would agree on a form of payment as well; when their contracted period was over, however, the employer would tell them that he

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218 Although Tanzania is a very poor country, for a long time it was still an attractive choice when compared with Mozambique. During most of the 1980s and 1990s Mozambique had the dubious honour of being the world's poorest country (Hanlon 1996; Plank 1993). This led to the country receiving large amounts of donor help, but at the same time meant that its political and economic choices were limited by the donors (Cliff 1993; Plank 1993; Hanlon 1991, 2002). Politically this influenced the peace process and the choices undertaken by the government and the opposition parties at this stage (Alden 1995; Alden and Simpson 1993).

would not be able to pay the agreed amount, and would either give them a fraction of what had been agreed or not pay at all. After that they would make a few trips to Tanzania in the hopes of getting paid, mostly without success. These men were disillusioned with the work conditions, the effort they had made travelling, and the poor results of their travel. Most said they would not return for their money, as the few who did had come back empty-handed. They no longer trusted their Tanzanian employers, as their fathers and grandfathers had in the past. They felt resentful against the Tanzanians who moved to Mozambique and who worked for no-one, instead owning their own shops and small businesses.

The young men I spoke with complained about the ease with which Tanzanians who are moving to Mozambique recently set up their own business, because when they go to work in Tanzania they feel as if 'they were slaves', while the Tanzanians make money in their country. Some men qualified their work in Tanzania as one of *nandandosha*, or zombies, whose work is consumed (eaten) by the person who controls them (usually a sorcerer – *feiticeiro*) in order to get rich.

*Tanzanians* is becoming a category encompassing a variety of foreigners in this area, and not just citizens from Tanzania. Any migrant from abroad (Somalia, Tanzania, Uganda, Congo) is called a Tanzanian without distinction made to their actual origin. Economic crisis, political upheaval and conflict in the region have led to a constant income of traders, workers and refugees from neighbouring countries. The term is acquiring new meanings and a negative connotation, and the *Tanzanians* are generally found guilty of all sorts of misdemeanours (and are considered bandits) and are a convenient scapegoat for the things that go wrong in the area, and many of the local problems including crime. They were often blamed for thefts, and for exploiting the local population. The general animosity towards Tanzanians on the

part of the Mozambican population was evident. N'janjaula<sup>219</sup> told me one day as we discussed the recent changes in town: 'Now there are many bandits, they steal, hit, but there were none during the struggle. The bandits are from here, but learn with the Tanzanians.' Another Makonde man described the situation in these terms:

We have Tanzanians here who come for work and live well, but there are also social outcasts (criminals) who are bad and exert bad influence on Mozambicans leading them to criminal activities. We have been having more problems, robberies, muggings, always by Tanzanians or Mozambicans under their influence. (Fiel Agostinho)

These are often said to be local youth with no job prospects. In the mornings the town was often full of stories of robberies from the previous night. Where the thief or thieves had been caught they would be held and taken to the police station, since this was a 'criminal matter', as the president for 30 de Junho put it when I arrived at his house once. That morning he was waiting for the police to come and arrest a young man caught stealing from the house of a local teacher.

In cases of crime, it seemed much easier to blame someone from outside, with few connections within the town, or without a support network, than to actually think about the socio-economic problems within the villages or the town which might be causing a rise in petty crime.

On the other side of this there are the Tanzanians who come to live in this area of Mozambique, and who try to make a living here. There are many of these, mostly self-employed in commerce and some providing services, such as car repair or truck driving, to the local population. Some of the merchants though not of Tanzanian origin, become classified the same way, and are referred to as Tanzanian. However there has been a greater influx of people of other nationalities recently, especially

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219 He was a former fighter, Makonde, who had lived in Mocímboa since the 1980s and who had seen the town change dramatically. He was also involved in various levels of government, being neighbourhood chief and an active member of the local branch of Frelimo.

Somali migrants looking for better work opportunities. They end up occupying the same economic niche as the Tanzanians.

The Tanzanian migrants make attempts at integrating locally if they plan on staying a little longer than just a few months, or if they are more than itinerant merchants.

They would build their houses in the main neighbourhoods and as far as I was told there was not a separate section that they generally occupied in any of these. They would try to mix with the local population and would have their stalls (*barracas*) in the same markets (*bazar*) as everyone else. There would be often a confusion as to where someone came from, and some people were said to be Tanzanian, only to later explain that they considered themselves Mozambicans who had been born in Tanzania, and lived there most of their lives. Their command of Shi-Makonde and Ki-Mwane was often weaker than their knowledge of Ki-Swahili and they would feel more comfortable conversing in this language.

Beka Mohamed was a good example of one such migrant from Tanzania. Fluent in Swahili, English and Shi-Makonde (but from the Tanzanian side which is slightly different from the Shi-Makonde spoken in Mozambique), he was born in Newala, in Tanzania and had moved to Mozambique a long time ago (around 2000, although at first he was still going back and forth between Mozambique and Tanzania), and now had double nationality for work purposes (this is not legal, but he did manage to get documents from both countries). He, like many other young men, works and studies. He makes his living selling a variety of goods – having started with videos brought from Tanzania, and after that radios, he now sells mostly food produce in a local market in the outlying neighbourhood of 30 de Junho. Despite all the claims to the ease of doing business in Mozambique, and to travelling between both countries, in the same interview he described his route to Tanzania to collect more goods to trade

and explained how he would go via Nangade. Since he was not carrying anything he took the hardest route, on foot, trying to escape the immigration officials so as to not have questions asked and bribes to pay. Beka would also try to avoid immigration officials on his way back to Mozambique. On his way back he takes the Palma route, and carries goods by truck to the Rovuma, then crosses by barge, and after that gets another truck to get to Mocímboa. Close to Palma there are immigration offices on both sides of the border. If the paperwork is handled legally there are no problems and it is safer to handle business legally in order to avoid having the goods confiscated at some point on the trip, or to avoid paying higher bribes. Beka claimed that it was easy to do business because he knew how things worked in Tanzania and knew the language. He said: 'they just threaten, but I don't have to pay much. For Mozambicans trying to do the same thing, it is harder. The police make them pay more.' Having two sets of documents proved advantageous, since he could choose when to show them or when to keep them hidden. He would not show the Mozambican documents in Tanzania, and would only use them in Mozambique if he encountered problems with the Mozambican authorities. He would use the citizenship of both countries instrumentally: when asked if he was from Mozambique, he would claim to be Mozambican, and when asked if he was Tanzanian, would claim Tanzanian citizenship, naming the bearer of authority from his place of origin. He would say: 'It's enough to have money, and no one makes things complicated for me'. However he also claimed belonging to Mozambique, saying he believed he was Mozambican now, only going to Tanzania to gather goods for trade. He had his own house in Mocímboa da Praia, for which he already bought corrugated iron sheets for the roof. Buying corrugated iron sheets is usually a big investment, and Beka's claim to having them meant that he was intending to stay and

make a life in Mocímboa.

However other Tanzanians who followed a similar route to Beka were not without problems in their endeavours. I did witness, on a few of my bus trips in the province, customs officials coming into the buses and checking cargo, and if it was not accompanied by the correct permissions the person carrying them would have problems with the officials, having the goods confiscated and being made to pay fines. Because the searches on buses and trucks are made seemingly at random, the merchants have no prior way of knowing whether it will be advantageous or not to avoid the immigration authorities.

Although people move between Mozambique and Tanzania with regularity, it is not as easy as they claim. People who travel often enough, or who talk to friends who do and ask for advice, would know how to get to Tanzania and back avoiding the authorities. They would know which paths to choose, and where to cross the river. Like so many other borders in Africa the border at the Rovuma was not guarded fully, and there are many places where people would be able to cross without being noticed and were therefore unaccounted for in the immigration numbers.

Mozambicans do not need visas or paperwork to get into Tanzania, or at least that was what most people believe. When people spoke Ki-Swahili they found it easier to go there and move around unnoticed. On one occasion a friend, Juma, a young Makonde man, told me how he went to Tanzania with a friend of his father, who did not speak Ki-Swahili, to help him as an interpreter in case it was necessary. They had no problems moving around, though. The same is true for people looking for work, and there is still a large number of migrants, mostly men, going to Tanzania in search of employment. They look for informal work, and do not have work permits, which can leave them in a weak position with their employers making them less able to

make claims when they go unpaid.

An ability to circumnavigate the legal procedures of going to another country was necessary, and most people I met in Mocímboa, Nangade and the villages nearby were fully familiar with the ways to go and return with minimal contact with the immigration officers. They also knew enough to be able to blend in with the Tanzanian population, so as to not be identified and bothered by the authorities. Tanzania still stands as a big influence, both as part of the collective memory and also as part of the current events. It is also important in terms of getting information. People watching the news on television or listening to the radio, will frequently get their information from this country. The town may be in Mozambique and located at 100 km from the Tanzanian border, but in many ways it seems closer to Tanzania. The Mozambican television channel TVM<sup>220</sup> was almost impossible to get on a normal receiver. The Tanzanian channels are much easier to pick up, and the same is true for the radio as well. With most of the people being fluent in Swahili, it really made sense to get the Tanzanian channel. People sometimes speak Swahili better than they speak Portuguese, so getting radio or television in this language is much better than the Mozambican equivalent.

When the ease in travel seems to benefit one category of people more than others tensions and resentment arise. In the present case, this would be the Tanzanian citizens who are perceived as benefiting from movement in a way that Mozambicans going to Tanzania no longer do.

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<sup>220</sup> *Televisão de Moçambique* – Mozambique Television.

## *Conclusion*

Despite being marginal to the centres of power (geographically and politically), the north of Cabo Delgado has changed and been influenced by the political transformations within the country. Mocímboa da Praia had seen an increase in population during the civil war, when many people felt they would be safer and have access to more goods if they were living in the town. After the peace agreements the town continued to grow. Especially relevant in the last decade and a half are the changes brought by the perceived security, which led many people to return home from Tanzania, where they had lived for a long time. Many of the returnees moved to the town of Mocímboa da Praia, and considered that they could have a better life there than in one of the villages. The town continues to expand now, and in the latest census had a population of 40,000, and when I was last there I saw plans for a new neighbourhood. Along with the new neighbourhood, a new secondary school that serves all the northern part of the province was inaugurated in February 2006, a new professional school for health workers was being built and there were plans for the expansion of the hospital.

The marginal location of this area and the proximity of the border had a huge impact on the choices people made. Far from being irrelevant, as is sometimes said of the African borders, the presence of the international border played an important role in people's choices (Nugent and Asiwaju 1996; Englund 2002; Schmidt 1996; Leopold 2005; James 2007; McDermott Hughes 1999, 2006; McGregor 1994, 1998). People were, and are still, extremely aware of their status as citizens of one country moving to another, and of both the advantages and disadvantages of that. The ease with which they sometimes describe travelling has no real reflection in their perception of

the difficulties they face when they go to a different country for work, or even for refuge as they did during the liberation struggle and the civil war.

Mobility, because it is so prevalent, becomes a language used to describe one's life experiences, and especially the changes. Every aspect of life seems transitional, and in a way, prepares people for mobility. The house, the family unit, the social connections, are all permanent yet temporary. People describe their lives by saying where they have been, when they moved, what made them move, and how that impacted on their lives. The causes for the movement and change are part of the country's major historical events: the colonial period and forced labour, the liberation struggle, the civil war, peace time. All of these are connected and were expressed when my interviewees were talking about their lives.

In the following two chapters I will address more localised forms of expressing and defining identity, by analysing group relationships in Mocimboa da Praia. First I will look at some of the basic divisions used as markers of difference, such as space, religion and politics and the ways in which these impact on the way identity is defined locally. In the final chapter I will describe and analyse how these were expressed and understood through violent riots.

## **Chapter VII – A town divided? Local relationships between Makonde and Mwani**

In the previous chapters I described the history of Cabo Delgado, focusing on the district of Mocímboa da Praia. I described the changing relationships between Makonde and Mwani, especially with respect to definitions of boundaries between the two groups, and the different experiences of events which the two groups had. The changing circumstances brought about by two consecutive wars and the political options followed by the country's government led to almost continuous population movement, internally and across the border with Tanzania. This resulted in a reshuffling of the social geography of the northern districts, with effects on the balance between the groups inhabiting the coast at the present.

Part of the outcome were issues specifically connected with the riots of September 2005 in the town of Mocímboa da Praia, which I now bring to the forefront in this chapter. I set the scene for some of the divisions which have a strong bearing in the way people discussed the violence and its context. I describe changing perspectives on identity, religion, and politics, linking them with the changes the town underwent during the period described by this thesis, and which are expressed in the spatial divisions of the town with which I open this chapter. In order to explain the changes in perspective and assertions of identity I use often non-discursive clues, since “all the various non-verbal dimensions of culture, such as styles in clothing, village layout, architecture, furniture, food, clothing, music, physical gestures, postural attitudes and so on are organised in patterned sets so as to incorporate coded information in a manner analogous to the sounds and words and sentences of a natural language” (Leach 1976: 10), providing much information, which can then be correlated with

local discourses about identity and belonging.

### *1. Space – mapping divisions*

Here I describe the town of Mocimboa da Praia. I will focus specifically on spatial organisation, and on what it tells us of the personal relationships that developed against the background of the town's space. I will describe how the space is understood, seen and used and how it has changed dramatically in the past decades as the demographic composition of the town has been transformed by an increase in numbers of, mostly, incoming Makonde.

I focused on spatial organization at the start of fieldwork. It helped me move about, but also helped me begin to understand local politics of space and relationships between longstanding residents and newly arrived<sup>221</sup> which are inscribed in the landscape. When I first started walking around in the neighbourhoods and finding my way, I would often get lost and was unable to find reference points which would allow me to find the houses of the people I was aiming to interview and get to know. In the first few days, if walking by myself, I would not venture from the main roads when visiting informants for fear of getting lost in the maze presented by some of the neighbourhoods' inner streets, which all looked alike to me. In my first few weeks I was unable to read the town's landscape and make use of spatial clues. After some time, however, it became easy, as I slowly got used to the space, and the way the town was organised. When I asked for directions to a house I wanted to visit I would

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221 Getting to know the space one does fieldwork in is a learning process (Scheele 2009). Navigating the town space and understanding the barriers and divisions, which are sometimes invisible to new people, can lead to insights into the ways people define 'their' space and the space of others.

often hear things like 'it's the house with the mango trees'<sup>222</sup>, or 'it has a blue door'.

Trees, a door painted in a different colour, plants outside the front door, flags, were all signs I learned, and slowly I learnt which ones were useful and would help me get to particular houses in the same way the people inhabiting these neighbourhoods did.

Moore in her study of the Marakwet states that:

the organization of space is not simply a backdrop to social activity, but is the active and interactive context within which social relations and social structures are produced and transformed. Space in this context is never neutral, but neither is it ever fixed or static. (Moore 1996: x)

The same is true of Mocímboa The differences in the houses, both styles of building and the way they were set up along the streets, indicated differences in period of occupation and sometimes whether the person living there was a Makonde or a Mwani<sup>223</sup>, and are an easy way to understand the way the town has grown and the different periods of change which are easily marked in the landscape. The layout of the town, like that of the villages described in chapter 5, tells us the living, changing history of the place. It gives a number of small clues that took me some time to decipher, but which once understood helped me see better the divisions in town and how they were understood by the people who lived there. Moreover, the spatial divisions have become increasingly politicized, and were talked about in political terms too.

Mocímboa da Praia, the town but also the district, has seen many different people come and go, settle and move on over the years. It is considered by the people living

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222 This was a particularly frustrating piece of direction, since virtually all the houses have mango trees. They are used for the fruits, but also for the shade they provide and are a preferred spot to sit under when discussing daily events with neighbours and friends. Mango trees in public areas are also preferred places for meeting, discussion, sale of alcoholic drinks (mostly home made brews). The same groups of neighbours would gather under the trees daily and discuss town and personal news.

223 The way the houses are built is not overall very different for the two groups. However, for my friends and informants it was easy to identify a house of a Mwani or a Makonde just by looking at the way the roof was built. Mwani and Makonde use different techniques to build the roofs of their houses. There are other features which would help understand ownership of the house, but this was an easy one to spot immediately.

there a 'place of transit'<sup>224</sup>. It is described as an area of constant movement even though part of its population, the Mwani, has remained stable for a large part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the early 21<sup>st</sup>. However, there are also large numbers of people who do come and go, stay for a few years and then move elsewhere, or who, even though they spend their lives there, do not consider Mocímboa their home. The population from the hinterland, the Makonde, would come to the coast occasionally for trading while the coastal population remained reasonably stable, as I described in chapter 2. During the liberation struggle and the civil war, however, larger numbers came to live in town for safety. Following the peace agreements of 1992 the numbers once more increased with the return of refugees who had stayed in Tanzania.

Regardless of claims to ownership of the land, from the Mwani, in a few of the accounts I heard or read there is a mention of migration to this area: 'The inhabitants are emigrants who due to war and trade came and settled on the coast forming a large group of populations called va-Mwani' (Mpalume 2003: 9). Their claims to 'ownership' derive from the fact that, of the people presently living in Mocímboa, they were the first to arrive. The areas they occupy denote this, with the larger numbers of Mwani concentrating in the older neighbourhoods. People were very aware of the distinctions and the ways in which occupation meant a measure of legitimacy and ownership of the land and its history.

The neighbourhoods were built at different periods, depending on the expansion of town, and the increase in population. The oldest, Nanduadua and Milamba, are built in a different style from the more recent ones such as Muengue and 30 de Junho. The layout of the houses and the organisation of space differ among neighbourhoods and

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224 This expression was one of the forms the politicians and the administration in town used as a shorthand for the changes in town population in the recent past. It was used similarly in Nangade by the district administrator.

are connected with the length of occupation and time of construction. The ethnic composition is as well. The differences between neighbourhoods are related to their different histories and, to some degree linked, as well, with the history of the country.

Pamunda was built initially during the colonial period. Later it was destroyed and the population moved to Nanduandua and Milamba. In the 1980s, however, it was occupied again and has a mix of Makonde and Mwani population divided by a main road and a market. If we move through the neighbourhood, and pass its central market, we get to a large road which somehow marks the middle of the neighbourhood. North of this road the houses are much bigger, the roads larger and straighter, more planned. This is the most recent part of the neighbourhood. The people living here are a mix of older Mwani families and Makonde families who arrived at some point in the 1980s and early 1990s. South of the road, the smaller houses, and crowded spaces are mostly occupied by Mwani families.

Milamba and Nanduadua, the neighbourhoods with sections of oldest build are mostly occupied by Mwani families. This is especially clear in Milamba. The neighbourhood has the largest population concentration of the town, with some 20,000 inhabitants. Yet it occupies an area no larger than Nanduadua, or 30 de Junho. The smaller houses, crowded yards, and narrow streets, all evidence a much older construction.

The most recently built neighbourhood, 30 de Junho, is at the opposite end of the spectrum in terms of population, length of occupation, and planning. Located at the other extreme of town, along the road that links Mocímboa to the rest of the province. It was established after floods in 1998 had destroyed part of another neighbourhood, Muengue, and is located at the outskirts of town. It has a predominantly Makonde population consisting of people who arrived after the peace

agreements were signed in 1992. The houses are much bigger than in Milamba, with larger yards around them. The number of houses with corrugated iron roofs is greater than elsewhere in town as well, denoting the better economic situation of the inhabitants of this neighbourhood. 30 de Junho was the neighbourhood where I was more likely to see the reconstruction and enlargement of houses.

The floods of 11-13 February 1998 destroyed large parts of Muengue. The area where 30 de Junho was built is much dryer and does not risk flooding. It is also an area where there was considerably more space to build new houses. This is, like Muenge, a very planned neighbourhood, and the council assisting the neighbourhood president decides, along with the municipality, on where the new plots should go and demarcates them.

Muengue is a flat neighbourhood with abundant water sources, which is good for the small gardens attached to the houses, and provides people with their own boreholes, but meant that the neighbourhood floods easily. It is a transitional neighbourhood, located southwest of Nanduadua, with the dirt road leading north to Palma and the border with Tanzania marking the division between Nanduadua and Muengue. In some ways similar to Nanduadua, and in others very much like 30 de Junho. It is located between these two neighbourhoods. Like Nanduadua, its population is a mix of Mwani and Makonde, and it was easy to identify areas occupied by larger numbers of each group. Although seemingly continuous, the space is divided between Mwani and Makonde sections which in some cases correspond to the neighbourhood divisions. This is, of course a very simplified division, but one which points towards both period of occupation, defining 'owners of the land' and newly arrived, and also to the grouping together of people of the same ethnic background which creates distinctive areas in town. Most of this division is determined by length

of residence, with the Mwani inhabiting the older neighbourhoods, or older sections of newer neighbourhoods such as Muengue.

Considering how the town is organised and what constitutes the centre around which all other neighbourhoods develop, the area that stands out is where the administration is placed, with its cement buildings from the 1950s and 1960s. In the 1950s the colonial regime encouraged the growth in construction and the establishment of public services: the port, the schools, the maritime administration, customs, shops, immigration department, post office, church and mosques, town club, hospital, airport and garden (Mpalume 2003). These buildings are still used by the administration post-independence. It is a place where people go to take care of administrative business, but where hardly anyone lives except state officials. The different neighbourhoods are where life mostly happens even if they are not regarded as the geographical, political or administrative centre.

Near the administrative buildings there is a small neighbourhood called *Bairro Unidade* (Unity neighbourhood). This is wedged between Milamba and Nanduadua, separated from them by the hospital and the main road. Small, of relatively recent construction, it houses Mwani who did not have space to build a house in Milamba, and some Makonde who worked in the administration. It lacks space, and the houses are much closer together than in the outlying neighbourhoods. Though it appears to have increased in population recently, it is a far older neighbourhood than either 30 de Junho or Muengue.

The space used by people marks in some ways their personal and group relationships. Who visits whom and when is usually defined along ethnic lines. For example the funerary ceremonies I attended in 30 de Junho were all attended solely by Makonde, which may be linked with both the religious aspect of these ceremonies

and with the networks of friends and neighbours who develop in the same neighbourhoods. These included a strong religious aspect, and the laying of the cross on the grave of the deceased was one of the important elements carried out some time after the initial rites were performed. They were also spatially contained and ethnically segregated. The same is true for Mwani funerals<sup>225</sup>. I observed a number of them and participation was also along ethnic lines. The cemeteries are also separated, with one for the Christian (Makonde) population and one for the Muslim (Mwani) population located in distinctive parts of town. In some cases, though, the dead, especially if they are small children, are buried in the yard of the house they used to live in.

Though I have presented a picture of neatly distinct spaces, this is but one of the pictures I could present. The neighbourhoods are close together, there are no barriers between them and the space is continuous. There is a continuity, indeed, in the way the town is built and the change is mapped out on to the landscape, with an easy visual identification of different periods of construction, just by looking at the houses and the way they are built. The differences in population are easy to pin point as well.

As I mentioned before, ethnic groups are becoming increasingly segregated. If in the past the newly arrived Makonde (in much smaller numbers) would find a place to live among the Mwani in one of the neighbourhoods, and would sometimes convert to Islam and slowly integrate in the town, at the moment there is a sharp division between Mwani and Makonde. From some of my discussions with people about where to live and why to choose one neighbourhood over another, especially in the case of people who had few connections in the town, I noticed a trend towards

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<sup>225</sup> I could not attend these, because only men were allowed to attend the entire funeral.

choosing places closer to those occupied by people of the same ethnic background.

This came into sharper focus after the riots.

In Mocímboa, although Makonde and Mwani people have been living together for a very long time, the differences between groups are at least as strong as they ever were. The acknowledgement of who are the 'owners of the land', and who are the 'newcomers' is a part of this. Makonde are clearly considered by Mwani as invaders, who are there by an accident of history but do not belong there. This is usually acknowledged by the Makonde themselves, who speak of the Mwani as the 'owners of the land'. Identity politics and relationships were being played to a high degree at the start of the fieldwork because of the recent riots, but this doesn't mean that at other points on time the choice of location for a house isn't thought through as carefully, or doesn't obey similar rules.

The length of occupation of neighbourhoods and areas in towns and villages in the district is very much linked with the local history and the changes the area has undergone in recent decades. It is also, because of this, indicative of the local level relationships between groups: between the winners and the losers in recent history, between those gaining influence politically and those whose influence is waning. The history of the area can be traced by looking at the use of space and tracing the periods of occupation of village and town areas. The way the town has grown, which can be directly related to waves of migration – during the liberation struggle, the civil war and in the post-peace agreement are well displayed in space. As we move through the neighbourhoods it becomes clear, through an observation of the spacial layout and the distribution of the population which are the older and newer areas. The Makonde occupied the outlying neighbourhoods or Pamunda, which are all of more recent construction, while the Mwani resided in larger numbers in Milamba and

Nanduadua, which are the older neighbourhoods. Very few people lived in the cement part of town. Those who did were either associated with the state administration (the judge, the district administrator, the council president all lived in big, colonial buildings) or were foreigners. However, more interesting than this is the fact that people will continue to use these areas along ethnic lines despite the fact that they are often well integrated.

Meeting places were generally associated with the neighbourhood of residence. The markets, where good and gossip are exchanged existed in each neighbourhood. Alcohol was often sold outside the home of those who brewed it, and was bought by friends and neighbours. Relationships are developed along ethnicity, and maintained this way. Proximity of language, religion and political affiliation all have a bearing in this, as I will show below (and in the following chapter).

## ***2. Representing identity***

For some of my interviewees the Mwani identity and the Makonde were not distinct, since they believe both groups share a common origin and have the same clans. They also supported the claim that today's differences are recent. For most people I spoke with, however, these identities were not the same. They would disagree with the idea claiming that they are very different peoples, who share the town space, but not an identity. By discussing the mutual conceptions of the other uttered continuously by Makonde and Mwani, I hope to shed light on mutual and persistent, if often changing, representations of ethnicity.

Ansumane is an old Mwani man, who had lived in Mocímboa all his life. He had

very strong views about the connections between Mwani and Makonde identities. His was an extreme perspective, denying the differences between groups and pointing towards a common origin. In some ways it is consistent with the history of contact and migration in the area, and the ways in which both Mwani and Makonde histories are related.

Mocímboa da Praia is all Makonde. The Mwani clans (*Kabile*) do not exist. The *Kabile* that existed in Mueda or here were all the same. When I travelled and went to Ibo or Nampula<sup>226</sup> they would say that the Makonde from Mocímboa were arriving. This area all belongs to the Makonde. The Mwani are part of the Makonde. I am va-Shitunguli which also exists in Mueda and Ibo. Mwani is the one who lives along the beach, so even if they are Makonde living here, they are Mwani. The lineages that exist here are the same that exist in the plateau.  
(Ansumane Momade Oga)

Although unusual, Ansumane's perspective presented a more nuanced and continuous understanding of belonging in the area. He stated that most people who claimed Mwani or Makonde identity were in fact related and shared some of the clans<sup>227</sup>. It was the external factors which made them different, and some of these were a product of historical change. The religious divide, for instance – which was introduced by the missionaries to some extent – was there to begin with, since the Makonde and the Mwani did not practice the same religion. However, present claims of being either Muslim or Christian are stronger and have created further division, which for some people are unbridgeable. Political affiliation and livelihoods, said to create divides between Makonde and Mwani, were, similarly, the result of recent transformation and the result of historical change.

However strong Makonde or Mwani identities appear to be in current discourse it is still a very recent phenomenon, developed throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. West claims

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226 Ibo is an island off the coast of Cabo Delgado to the south, and Nampula the largest city and biggest economic centre in the north of Mozambique and capital of the province to the south of Cabo Delgado.

227 It is not unusual for the same clan to be shared by different ethnic groups (Schlee 2004), especially when these groups are of recent formation as is the case with the Makonde and Mwani.

that 'Makonde identity and Makonde “tradition” have been configured and reconfigured in historical moments of interaction and juxtaposition with other identities and traditions – whether Makua, Yao or Nguni, whether Arab, Portuguese or Dutch, whether Christian or Muslim, whether socialist or democratic' (West 2003:82). The same can be said of the Mwani identity. Although it is proclaimed to be much older, it is likely to be also linked with the 19<sup>th</sup> century territorial reshuffle, slave trade and movement of various peoples in this area as with the Makonde.

Far from being immutable, ethnic categories are ever changeable and assume diverse importance at different times. Recent theories on ethnicity point towards a need to avoid fixity and to an understanding of ethnic groups as more flexible units, integrated in both local and global worlds (Malkki 1992, 1995; Gupta and Ferguson 1997; Appadurai 1996). This does not fit with local understandings of identity, however, which portray Makonde and Mwani as having distinctive, fixed and immutable identities. Local discourses pointed much more towards a reification of identity, clearly establishing categories and defining separations between groups. Labelling can then be a difficult process, and one in which the categories are difficult to define. In a region such as this, where so many different groups<sup>228</sup> share a geographical area, matters of boundaries between groups become increasingly complicated and fraught with confusion if looked at from a perspective of continuity and historical change. If looked at with a basis on local discourses of identity and belonging to a group, on the other hand, these divisions acquire much clearer, sharper boundaries.

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228 For this thesis I focus on the Mwani and the Makonde, but in this area there are a number of people claiming different identities: Makwe, Andonde, Swahili, Makua are all present here, and there are subtle differences between the groups. The Makonde and the Mwani are present in larger numbers and their identities, in this district are often described in opposition to one another, in sets of binary oppositions designed to make the understanding of the differences easier, much like what was described by Cohen (1978).

As is usually the case, Makonde identity, and similarly that of Mwani, is relational, dependent on context, created and maintained by contact (Barth 1969, Eriksen 1993). Turton (1997: 4) emphasises the fact that identity, although an 'imagined' category, is not an 'imaginary' one, since it is a factor of motivation and mobilization, and is also the product of historical situations, which is what I argue here.

Both Mwani and Makonde devise derogatory ways to talk about the other, and base this, mostly, on the perceived rules that guide either group. This stereotyped discussion of the other is not at all unusual, and neither is the negative aspect associated with it. Fardon (1987) discusses how 'cultural habits, sexual morals and so forth of exclusive categories have been found wanting under the lens of the inclusive category's perception of its own life habits. Ethnic stereotypes are usually based on the self-regard of the classifiers' (Fardon 1987: 170). In this area of Mozambique both groups would often make disparaging comments on the habits and practices of the other group, setting themselves as the inclusive category by exclusion of the other. Issues such as religious practice ('The Makonde are like monkeys, they worship their God under trees'), food taboos ('They [the Makonde] will eat anything', or '[The Mwani] pretend they don't eat during Ramadan, but that is not really true'), to observance of marriage rules ('You see all these Mwani men walking from house to house in the morning' [going from the house of one of their wives to the other in order to make sure they spent the same amount of time with all of them], 'The Mwani will not marry Makonde women because they think we are impure'<sup>229</sup>), were remarks I heard throughout my fieldwork. They marked a less hostile relationship than the comments I heard in the aftermath of the riots, but they are still examples of a

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229 A Makonde friend, Bernardete, remarked this when we were discussing the rights of women and her new appointment as a secretary in the local family court. This was contrary to the fact that indeed Makonde women married Mwani men. They would generally convert to Islam at the time they married though. Makonde men marrying Mwani women was much rarer and this was attributed to the much higher bridewealth for marriages with Mwani women.

relationship which is not quite easy between the two major groups.

I was talking to a young Makonde man of about 20 years old, Daniel, about local and national history, and about Makonde identity, and he said that the things that were important were the language and religion, and being born in a Makonde family.

Others would add to this the initiation rites, the way they build their houses, what they eat. These are not the same elements that were mentioned to Dias (1964) at the time of his ethnographic mission in Mozambique.

Dias (1964: 85) stated that the Makonde have an integrative concept of belonging, a 'cultural notion of nationality' – that was seen in their habit of taking women from neighbouring peoples and integrating them, as mentioned in the story about the foundation of Mocímboa in chapter II. This raiding and kidnapping led to their settlements – each referred to as *kaja* – having diverse groups of people. By tattooing these captives in the same way they were themselves tattooed the Makonde made them part of their group. When the captives were men, their children, because the Makonde are matrilineal, became part of the mother's *likola* (lineage). If the slaves were women their children would have no *likola*, but this would not entail a lower status among them. However if this was true of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, it is not the case today. In the present day one is born a Makonde, not made one. This change can be linked with the differing experiences of the Makonde through the recent past. There is no longer a need to integrate new people in the group through capture. There is no longer war between different factions of the Makonde, or between the Makonde and neighbouring groups. The need to increase the numbers in order to be able to fight was part of the reason behind the inclusive aspect of the Makonde identity.

Dias heard stories of how people were 'made' Makonde by having their faces

tattooed<sup>230</sup> and their teeth filed or by wearing the *ndona* (a hardwood lip plug). It is very different now, because people no longer do the face tattoos or wear the *ndona*, so other ways of defining and showing their identity are used. None of the permanent visual markers of belonging which made one a Makonde are in use today. In the 1970s, following independence, the government's policies aimed at creating a Mozambican identity (*Moçambicanidade*), and a New Man which would be opposed to the diverse ethnic identities (I described these policies in chapter 5). I did not meet anyone born after independence who would still consider going through the ordeal of the face tattoos or the filing of the teeth. The label Makonde remained the same, but the features informing this label have changed. The Makonde have, in recent times, started wearing rosaries around their necks as an immediate symbol of their religious affiliation and belonging, in the same way the Muslim men wear the *cofió* (prayer hat). I will discuss the importance of the religious divide below.

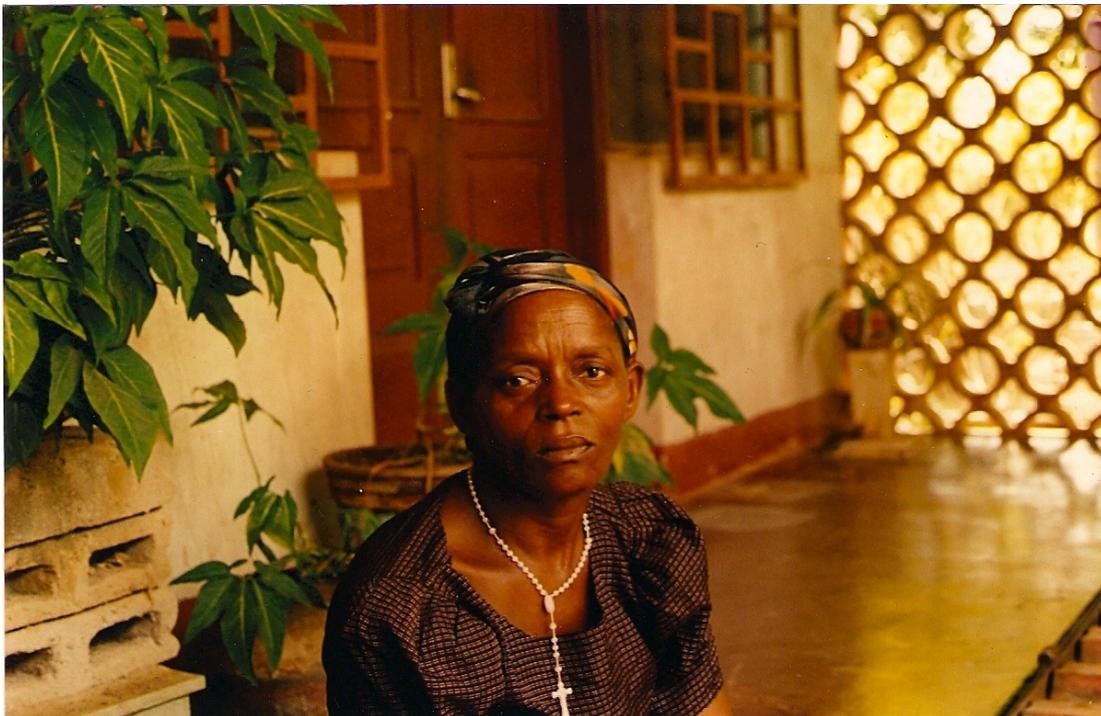


Figure 9 – Susana is a Makonde woman, and one of the many to wear a rosary around her neck.

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230 Schneider (1973) describes the usual explanation for the tattoos as “To show I am a Makonde” (1973:28).

Identity has long been understood as being linked to places, but it is accepted that time is important in the understanding of what constitutes identity. Both space and place have a bearing on the construction of Makonde and Mwani identity as I detailed in chapter 2. There is a vast anthropological literature on identity, and as is sometimes the case with large bodies of literature or with concepts which are used too often, identity is a concept which is often defined without rigour<sup>231</sup>. However, trying to understand local expressions of identity and how this impacts on relationships between groups on occasions when there are important cleavages between groups, it is still relevant despite the definitional imprecision of the concept. Expressions of identity and especially the changes in the forms these take are in the case described here very important to understand. Their changes and the forms which these have taken, lead us into understandings of history and change when it comes to boundaries between groups and the ways in which these are formed and reformed in the light of historical events. Despite anthropological theory pointing towards identity as constructed and ever-evolving, the local discourses on identity were full of clear cut assertions, and itemisations of what defined Makonde or Mwani identity. Language and religion were generally at the top of the lists presented with dietary restrictions and marriage coming in a close second. Mostly these discourses provided a-historical discussions of belonging, with no acknowledgement of change in the definitions of identity.

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231 Literature on ethnicity has grown much in recent times (Fardon 1987) and the use of the word has become ubiquitous and diverse. It is used to replace tribe and race, which have become, with good reason, problematic terms. However, while being used in such distinctive situations it has lost part of its meaning and became too much of an umbrella like term to be analytically very useful, while remaining unavoidable for lack of a better term that encapsulates its meanings. When discussing the uses of the term *traditional medicine* Luedke and West (2006: 5) describe the difficulties of finding an alternative expression and dismissing the term. Following Ferguson's discussion of *modernization* they decide to use 'not as external to the social field to which they have been historically applied but instead as objects of study in their own right' (Luedke and West 2006: 5). I am using a similar rationale when continuing to use ethnicity here.

### *3. Widening religious divisiveness*

Makonde and Mwani positioning and assertion of different identities, are clearly expressed in external markers on the self, and also on the landscape. The marking of sacred spaces in villages is one such example. The Makonde, who are largely Christian, have been scattering crosses in the villages where they live. The Mwani have marked their areas of worship as well, and in recent times have marked their religious presence by installing loud speakers in the mosques. These were very recent developments and the marking of separation between religious beliefs has become shaper than before.

Religion has therefore become an important issue of contention in town, and a source of several divisions. The main one is between Muslim Mwani and Christian Makonde, whose relationship is in part mediated through their different beliefs. The Mwani population has been Muslim for a long time. The lasting influence of Islam along the Swahili coast is well known (Middleton 1992) and this part of Mozambique is still part of the Swahili cultural complex. The Makonde on the other hand are Christian – mostly Catholic. Below I will describe the different views and experiences of Makonde and Mwani and the way they have been interacting in recent times.

The numbers of Christians kept rising consistently throughout the colonial period. At present, most Makonde will identify themselves as Christian, and of these, most are Catholic, though in Mocimboa da Praia there were two evangelical Christian churches and foreign missionaries who worked with the members of these churches and visited villages nearby to proselitize. Their allegiance to and understanding of religion is still mediated by cultural practices which are older than the presence of

the missionaries. They integrate well the religious belief and practices such as the initiation rites and funeral rites which have a much older origin.

These days the initiation rites are no longer frowned upon by the church, and people who are practising Christians happily host and attend initiation. Members of the church hierarchy (the priests and the sisters working in Mocimboa da Praia) were also usual presences at these celebrations. When considered friends by the families of the children undergoing initiation they were invited to the parties as well.

However it took some time for the missionaries to change their views and accept initiation rites. Long after the first missionaries had trouble communicating with the Makonde, the Catholic priests now say mass in Shimakonde. The choir in church sings in the same language and the hymns are sung accompanied by drumming and dancing. Local practices, language and music have been incorporated in the ways religion is practised. The missionaries also changed their approach towards some of the cultural practices earlier prohibited by the French Monfortinians (West 2005).

The Dutch missionaries had a more open approach to the Makonde cultural practices (initiation, *Mapiko* dances, funerary rites, ancestor cults) than their French counterparts. The church changed their approach to the initiation rites, and started organising their own version of them, following the advice of the *vanalombo* (master of rites), and changing the aspects which were deemed against the church's doctrine (West 2005).

The numbers of Christians slowly increased as a result of the more open approach of the missionaries, and higher numbers started living in the missions and get teaching there. These new Christians found that their allegiance to the church, their knowledge of Portuguese (even if small) and the Virgin Mary medallions they took to wearing made their lives easier with respect to the authorities (colonial administrators and

*cipaios*) (West 2003).

The *Mapiko* dances, in which a masked dancer performs for the crowd, are extremely important for the Makonde. In various interviews when I asked people about the years of the liberation struggle, these dances along with the initiation rites were mentioned as a reminder of a sense of normalcy in their lives during the time spent escaping from the Portuguese and living hard lives in the bush.

The initiation rites have gone through changes recently, and have been made shorter. While in the past children would be secluded for a year, and sometimes close to two years, learning about Makonde traditions and about what was expected of them as grown up men and women, now children are secluded for about a month during the school holidays, so as not to disrupt their school work. If living in towns or far from their areas of origin they will return and spend the time required for the initiation rites with elder relatives. Initiation rites are an economic strain on the families, since there is a need to provide food for the children while they are secluded, and then give them new clothes and presents which will mark their entry into adulthood. The whole event is also celebratory and not just for the families of the children undergoing initiation. Neighbours and friends also take part in the festivities which mark the end of the initiation rites. During my fieldwork between the months of December and February there seemed to be the celebration of initiation every weekend, and people gathered to congratulate the children and their families and to enjoy the *Mapiko* dances.

While I was in the field, people would come up to me, unprompted on the street, and say they were Christian. This would not prevent them from, in practice, being extremely lax Catholics, having polygamous households, which would shock their Muslim neighbours. It was also a source of gossip, both between Makonde and

between Mwani.

Most Makonde I knew, if practising Christians, would choose to get married in church later in life when their relationship was more secure. Since many early marriages were short lasting this seemed to be a rational approach for people who wanted to get married only once as the church expected. The matter of polygamy was also an important one, with a large number of Makonde men still having polygamous households. In the house next to the one I lived in, was a family of Makonde consisting of a man, his two wives and their 4 children. Their older children were already married and living in their own houses. Both the wives suspected their husband had a third wife elsewhere in town. This was not an unusual arrangement, much to the shock of their Muslim neighbours who, when polygamous, keep their wives in separate houses and divide their time equally between them. Some of the people I met who had roles within their local churches had to give them up because they continued to maintain polygamous households and this was not condoned by the priests or the bishop.

The Muslim presence in this area is much older, of course, than the influence of Christianity. However it has been far less researched, especially when it comes to the role played by Muslims in recent decades in Mozambique (Bonate 2009). Along the coast there have been Arab traders for centuries and one of the influences they brought with them was religion. It was considered such a strong influence that the Portuguese deemed this area difficult for conversion to Christianity, and as I said previously, the missionaries concentrated in the areas occupied by the Makonde. The missions established in the district of Mocímboa da Praia were placed on the outlying eastern slopes of the Mueda plateau, which were still mostly occupied by Makonde people. The larger numbers of Mwani who live in the district of Mocímboa occupy

areas closer to the coast leaving the hinterland largely to the Makonde and to a smaller degree to the Makua.

The relationship between Muslim and Christian is a polarising one. I have heard both make jokes about the followers of the other religion, and criticising their ways. One of the reasons the cross at the entrance of town created such contention was that it represented an alien religion not followed by those who had rights in the town, the religion of the past colonialist and the new invaders. There has been in recent times an increase in the outward expression of belief from both camps. An increasing number of mosques were getting loudspeakers for their call for prayers when I was in Mocímboa during the year I was in the field. When I was there in the summer of 2007, I noticed an increase in the number of veiled women as well, and the number of men wearing the *jalabiya* also seemed to be on the rise. I had first noticed large numbers of women wearing the veil in Nangade, closer to the border with Tanzania. It was very rare to see veiled women in Mocímboa. Muslim women would wear a *capulana* (measure of printed cloth), usually of the same pattern of the one they would use as a skirt, covering their hair. I only saw the *hijab* being worn in Mocímboa on a later stint of fieldwork.

Though not always difficult, the relationship between Muslims and Christians in Mocimboa has recently become increasingly tense and hostile. Along with politics, it has become a strong sign of differentiation between Makonde and Mwani.

#### 4. *Political differentiation*

Mocímboa da Praia has the highest electoral participation in Mozambique<sup>232</sup>. It has

232 In the 2003 elections Mocimboa had the second highest turnout in the country with 46% of the

been for long, and still is a highly contested political terrain, with Frelimo and Renamo investing heavily in the political system of the area. The division between Frelimo/Makonde and Renamo/Mwani leads to some interesting strategies and attempts to conquer and maintain power. This is why the elections of 2005 proved to be important to Frelimo and Renamo.

In 1998<sup>233</sup>, Mocímboa was established as a municipality and the first municipal elections were held, on 20 and 30 June (Mpalume 2003). Since 1998 Frelimo has won every local election. Prior to this Mocímboa had been long established as an important centre in the north of Cabo Delgado, with a large population. Along with Mueda it is the largest semi-urban centre in this part of the country, and has been growing consistently since independence. However, the electoral process in Mocímboa is not as clear as the electoral process generally is in Mueda where Frelimo still maintains a large majority of the votes. In Mocímboa elections are much more strongly contested because there is a real possibility of political change. There is a much higher turn out and a much more disputed campaign.

Politics are an important source of division in town and one also associated with historical change. There is a prevalence of 'the Party' – by which people would mean the ruling party in Mozambique since independence, Frelimo. However, there is also strong support for Renamo, the main opposition party in the country and the movement which fought the civil war. Since the peace agreements, which I

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population voting ([http://www.mozambique.mz/awepa/source/awepa\\_29b\\_ing.pdf](http://www.mozambique.mz/awepa/source/awepa_29b_ing.pdf), p. 2, 13). The municipal elections of 2003 saw a distribution of votes of 51,07% to Frelimo and 48,93% for Renamo ([http://www.mozambique.mz/awepa/source/awepa\\_29a.pdf](http://www.mozambique.mz/awepa/source/awepa_29a.pdf)) and a seat distribution of 7 to Frelimo and 6 to Renamo (<http://www.cartercenter.org/documents/1645.pdf>, p. 26). The difference in votes was 197 ([http://www.mozambique.mz/awepa/source/awepa\\_29b\\_ing.pdf](http://www.mozambique.mz/awepa/source/awepa_29b_ing.pdf), p. 13). This difference was wider in the 2008 elections with Frelimo winning 62,6% of the votes to Renamo's 37,4% (<http://www.eisa.org.za/PDF/moz2008results.pdf>, *Mozambique Political Process Bulletin* 37 – 15 December 2008 – p. 16).

233 In 1997 the law of municipalities was passed after some lengthy discussions in an effort to decentralise power. The Mozambican cities and a few of the smaller towns were constituted as *autarquias* (municipality). Mocímboa, though not classified as a city was granted the status of *autarquia*.

described in the previous chapter, and the first multiparty elections Mozambique is a democratic country. However, locally, such understandings are not always perceived as positive.

The political situation in the coastal north is especially complicated. In Cabo Delgado, Frelimo has traditionally won the elections held since 1994 (both national and local), and has managed to keep a strong basis of support, but this is mainly due to the overwhelming support of the Makonde in the hinterland. The coastal areas present a different case, and Renamo has managed to get support from the population which has not seen any benefits from supporting Frelimo, and which has consistently felt alienated by its policies since independence. Their relationship with the Makonde, who formed the backbone of Frelimo's army, and who are still some of the most vocal supporters of Frelimo has created the basis for political antagonism. Renamo has been effective in attracting these populations in a way that Frelimo has not, by addressing their grievances and giving them hope for change. This pattern is similar to what has been seen in other areas of the country, especially the centre and centre north (Manning 1998; Dinnerman 2006; Geffray 1991), and was most evident during the civil war and at the time of the first national elections (held in 1994).

Mocímboa da Praia is known for not being a town fully affiliated with Frelimo, and for having strong and vocal Renamo supporters. However, there was still no equality in public speaking when discussing politics, the most dramatic example being the riots following a contested election in 2005, which I analyse further in the following chapter. When I talked to people about their plans for the day, or asked for directions to some place in town, they would frequently mention they were going to the Party, or that it was located close to the Party. This, as I learned soon, meant Frelimo's headquarters.

Involvement in politics and discussions about it were extremely important in this town. There was constant reference to meetings to attend, to issues that required discussion. Despite this constant discussion, the people involved directly in politics were a small percentage of the population. The people who were the most active in Frelimo, for example, were those who had taken part in the liberation struggle. The participation was generational and gendered, mostly older men, and fewer women of the same generation. The younger generations took far less part in active party politics. They would still participate in voting, but were much less in the party structure. To further complicate the picture, younger Makonde, though not politically active, still vote Frelimo. The Mwani support for a political party seemed less connected to ethnicity. Though Mwani voters tended to be pro-Renamo, there were some high profile members of Frelimo of Mwani origin. Among them the local council president. Allegiance to Renamo was chiefly associated with disappointment with Frelimo, and with longstanding grievances which had arisen from Frelimo's rule and the constant alienation of Mwani people. From a position of dominance in the town and nearby villages, the Mwani had seen an influx of Makonde who had taken positions of power within the local and district administration. With stronger links to the ruling party due to their role in the liberation struggle (as discussed in chapter 4) they were much better positioned at the time of independence to secure posts left by the Portuguese colonial administrators and their local 'collaborators', who by then were considered compromised and removed from power. Like elsewhere in the country (Geffray 1990; Manning 2002) this created dissatisfaction and prepared the ground for support to Renamo, who in the late 1980s was increasingly presenting a political alternative to Frelimo.

In Muidumbe, one of the districts of the interior, with a predominantly Makonde

population, and 'the cradle of Frelimo'<sup>234</sup>, these views are even more extreme and supporters of Renamo are either looked down upon, spoken of badly, or outright threatened. Israel (2006) describes a case, during the electoral campaign for the last elections when one of the sisters in the Nang'ololo mission was considered to be a supporter of Renamo and was under threat from some of the population. The situation with Frelimo's supporters in Mocímboa was similar. However when it came to Renamo's supporters there were some differences.

In Mocímboa, where there is an almost equivalent support for Renamo and Frelimo, there is still a difference in the way people refer to both parties and their supporters. Frelimo supporters would generally describe Renamo supporters as confused, prone to creating confusion, unreliable, and a number of other equally derogatory expressions delegitimising the support Renamo was given and minimising its importance as if the support granted to this party was a mistake or an accident. If I had to wait for an appointment with a Mwani man or woman, or if they missed it altogether this was immediately attributed to their unreliable nature which was then linked with their support for Renamo. A shrug and a 'what do you expect' look were often the response Tissa had for missed or rescheduled appointments. This was never the case when a similar situation occurred with a Makonde. Although in Mozambique political affiliation is more often along regional than ethnic lines (Brito 1995), in Mocímboa it was mostly along ethnic lines and there was often an overlap of ethnic and political categories in discourse.

'Renamo supporters are only good for singing and dancing' was a phrase I would hear often from Makonde men and women when discussing local politics. This referenced

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234 In Muidumbe the support for Frelimo is almost complete. In the 1999 elections Frelimo gathered an impressive 94.1% of the votes and its presidential candidate, Joaquim Chissano, an even more impressive 97.8% (Israel 2006).

specifically the months during which large numbers of Renamo supporters gathered under the mango trees behind Renamo's headquarters and protested against the results of the municipal elections of May 2005. It also referenced the lack of political power and the fact that Mwani men and women could resort only to protest and did not have any real power, or hold influential posts in the state administration.

When I asked Makonde informants about political allegiance they would look at me with bewildered expressions as if it was a given which party they supported. I would sometimes ask whether they would consider supporting Renamo if they did not agree with Frelimo's policies and the answer was always no. 'No Makonde supports Renamo. If anyone thinks about it, it goes unmentioned, because it would be too shameful to even say it' Tissa explained countless times. 'You won't find Renamo supporters in the plateau. Only here, the Mwani support them' was another statement made often. This last statement was often followed by allusions to the confusion which explained this support, or to the lack of proper national pride, or to some personal flaw which might explain why the Mwani supported Renamo. That Renamo constitutes a legitimate alternative to Frelimo did not seem to come into the reasons for supporting the party<sup>235</sup>.

Some of the descendants of the early Mwani rulers of the area still live in the town and take active part in local politics, though much of their political influence was lost through the 20<sup>th</sup> century. One in particular, Antonio Cheira (who was also known as Momade Cheira), the great-grandson of the Sultan Muicumba, had, from an early age, been very active politically and was still involved in the administration, although at a lower level these days, being responsible for the groups in charge of

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235 There are doubts at the moment as to whether Renamo does in fact constitute a legitimate political alternative in the current Mozambican political scene (Hanlon 2010, personal communication). The disarray that has become part of the way Renamo deals with politics, their lack of a clear political strategy, and good electoral results in the last elections have all raised doubts about the party and their real capacity to provide a credible alternative to Frelimo.

landscaping the town's gardens. This was a common story for people who had had positions of power in the early days when the town was established, and who had seen their influence diminish after independence. His was a story that followed closely the pattern of the lives of many Mwani people. Cheira was born in town in 1927 and still lived in the same area of Nanduadua where he had lived most of his life. He had worked for the Portuguese administration like many of the town's residents between 1947 and 1961. Then his life took a slightly different course when he joined Frelimo and was later arrested as a political prisoner. After the war, however, he joined Renamo when Frelimo failed to meet his expectations. Later he went back to support Frelimo and is now an active member of the party. His changes in political affiliation are a good example of how fleeting politics is in this part of Mozambique. While Makonde allegiance to Frelimo appears to go unquestioned and be expected, Mwani political allegiance is much more fluid. Free from the heavy weight of historical affiliation there is more opportunity to give or take support in response to specific policies, or especially as a way of contesting some policies. The minor presence of Mwani in the public administration and their comparative lack of influence in politics have created space for dissent and for contestation which do not exist in the case of the Makonde.

When interviewing Makonde there would be a number of visual reminders of their support for Frelimo. Party cards were often produced, there were posters on the walls, flags in the yard and clothes with the symbols of Frelimo or with the face of the president. I do not recall the same thing being true for my interviews with the Mwani. The only party flags and posters I saw were the ones at Renamo's headquarters in town. Yet the support for Renamo is unquestionable and at times expressed strongly. It is just seen as less legitimate and harder to understand by

Frelimo's supporters who sometimes still refer to them using the expression *bandidos armados* (armed bandits) used in the 1980s, and who remind anyone asking of how Renamo had no part in liberating the country. Mwani people on the other hand resented the newly arrived and their stronger hold on power and the state. They claimed that the Makonde were invaders.

Party allegiance was openly discussed especially at one point during April 2006 when a large number of Mwani publically started supporting Frelimo. Those who had run for Renamo in 2005, and whose inflammatory speeches had been the cause of the violence that ensued, moved to Frelimo in April 2006. When walking through Nanduadua to conduct interviews, I was told which former members of Renamo had now moved to Frelimo, and which part of the neighbourhood they inhabited, and which were their houses. About 40 people had changed party allegiance in the space of a week. During a provincial dance festival held in Mocímboa marking the 1<sup>st</sup> of May, the leaders of Renamo at the time of the riots, whose lives had been threatened should they return to Mocímboa, and who had changed their support to Frelimo sat in the main platform along with the district administrator, the town president and the head of Frelimo on town. This was not the first time such a move had taken place though. The town president elected in 2005 had previously been the candidate running for Renamo.

In his classical work on the African state, Bayart (1989) described its patrimonial character. Being a part of the state in some form guarantees access to economic power and influence. In a situation when the state has a hold on much of the local economy, this becomes increasingly important. Corruption and a blurring of boundaries between the state and the non-state realms have been described at length for other parts of the world (Gupta 1995; Mitchell 1991; Pierce 1996) and have

provided an explanation as to why access to the state becomes fundamental.

Although multipartism is accepted and celebrated, there is still for part of the population the idea that the opposition party is intrinsically wrong, and that its claims to power are undermined by the role it played in the civil war. For the people who support Frelimo<sup>236</sup>, Renamo supporters are confused at best, and at worst they are ungrateful to Frelimo for having liberated the country. Support for one party or the other is linked with personal and group histories, and stems from the long term history of the area.

It was less easy to identify Renamo supporters, although this area did have a large proportion of them, especially amongst the coastal population. One afternoon in December 2005, on one of the days a high official of Renamo was expected to visit Mocímboa (in the end he failed to do so), a large crowd was gathered outside Renamo's party headquarters. Unlike Frelimo's headquarters which occupy an old house from the Portuguese colonial period in the cement part of town, Renamo's headquarters occupy a small building in the centre of one of the town's neighbourhoods. This is indicative of the place each party occupies in the political sphere, with Renamo still being somewhat marginal. It is a very busy area with commerce, and buses coming and going, and one of the largest, busiest neighbourhoods in town. Renamo's headquarters have a large plot behind them, where people usually gather. On that day, people were not only gathered on that plot, but due to the large numbers, they were occupying most of the main road as well. It was an impressive show of support, and though Renamo supporters may have less of an outwardly, visual display of their support (I do not recall seeing anyone wear *capulanas* (measures of cloth) with the picture of Afonso Dlhakama, Renamo's

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236 Makonde voted overwhelmingly for Frelimo in all the national and local elections that took place after 1992.

leader, or with the party's symbols<sup>237</sup>) they were still extremely vocal.

The political divisions echo fears of divisiveness and more violence. Even before the riots of September 2005 there were fears of a repetition of the events of November 2000 in Montepuez, further to the south of Cabo Delgado. Following demonstrations from Renamo supporters against the government, 84 people died in an overcrowded prison after having spent 3 days without food or water (Cahen 2000). The politicians' reactions to the riots of 2005 were informed by what had happened in 2000.

##### ***5. Peasants and fishermen: increasingly strong economic separation***

Economic activities and modes of livelihood are often part of the issues that contribute to the increase in separation and divisions between Makonde and Mwani. Discussions about access to the state, about modes of livelihood were a constant feature of everyday conversations. In the same way that complaints about lack of water and schools denote an awareness of what is necessary, there was also an acute realisation of who has access to the state and who doesn't.

There is a simple division between the economic activities traditionally pursued by Makonde and Mwani. The Makonde have been traditionally linked with agricultural production, while Mwani are associated with the sea and fishing activities. Of course there are other economic activities developed by each group with a stronger association of the Makonde with those requiring education. The nurses at the local hospital, and village health clinics, were mostly Makonde. The exception being the doctors who were from southern Mozambique, and some nurses of Makua origin

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<sup>237</sup> Due to the diminishing economic power of Renamo, it was also likely that these items were more difficult to come by than Frelimo capulanas or flags.

from further south in the province or from Nampula (the province south of Cabo Delgado). Likewise the teachers tended to be of Makonde origin. Educated up to the 12<sup>th</sup> grade, or having been teachers with Frelimo during the liberation struggle and having acquired their training this way, they had a regular, if small, income, which placed them well above the majority of the population when it came to income.

A few examples will illustrate this.

Upinde is a Makonde man in his mid-fifties. Having fought with Frelimo during the liberation struggle, he received training as a teacher and worked in education since independence. Along with the teacher income, he has the pension veterans receive and is very well off by local standards. His family lives in a big house, and his only son was educated locally. Now grown up he is married, has a son and has his own business. This family was generally pointed as a hardworking, prosperous family.

Mbavala is a young Makonde man in his early thirties who also works as a teacher in one of the local primary schools. He is married with small children, and has his own house. In 2007 he was looking to move and build a bigger house in the outlying neighbourhood. He was prosperous enough to be able to afford to buy a plot and build a bigger house.

Though there would be plenty of examples of Makonde men and women who had serious economic difficulties, it was the fact that a visible proportion of Makonde were well off, by local standards, that fuelled tensions at the local level.

There was no comparable example of young Mwani men. The main economic activities for Mwani men were still linked with fishing and sea transport. Boat construction, transport of building materials from the islands off the coast of Mocimboa, and transport of persons and goods to and from Tanzania amounted to

some of the largest activities among the Mwani. The Mwani have been engaged in fishing and seafaring activities for long, usually within small family groups (Conceição 2006: 113) and their activity takes place around Mocímboa and the islands off the coast. They also take part in trade activities which take them to Tanzania and Zanzibar increasing the connections with the neighbouring country.

In semi-urban areas such as Mocímboa the numbers of fishermen are a small percentage of the population, when compared with the villages around the town where they form the majority (Conceição 2006: 123). Fishing is also mostly a male occupation, with the women taking part in agricultural tasks to make up the family income. The need to rely on agriculture places a strong pressure on the available land and with the increase of Makonde, whose reliance on agriculture is stronger creates space for tensions and struggles for resources. Because of the pressure on the land some of the women are having to go further and further away in order to find lands to cultivate.

The growing prominence of Makonde in Mocimboa in economic and political spheres has increased the distance between them and the Mwani. It has also contributed to intensify grievances from the Mwani side. The Makonde are becoming ever more prominent in politics, administration and small business in Mocimboa. Their demographic pressure is also greater.

Economic differentiation is one usual source of tension which should not be overlooked here. Competition for scarce resources and limited economic rewards has led the Mwani to become limited to a marginal position in terms of access to resources and goods. The Makonde on the other hand, due to their preferential access to the state and also to their role during the liberation struggle have, in general a somewhat more regular income. However, the economic access is not as clear cut as

it appears. Generational access is also differentiated, with younger Makonde facing difficulties when it comes to securing jobs and income, and therefore creating further tensions between different sectors of the population.

Development is a big issue in this area and part of the claims of both Frelimo and Renamo supporters. Issues of development and local socio-economic tensions are at the root of the problems between the local population, and are the causes of tension that one sees when discussing politics with people. It was only after the riots that this district, which is one of the most developed districts in the north received more attention. Plans for a new airport, and a new hospital were under way when I was last there, and new schools were also being built (one new secondary school, and a new vocational school for health practitioners). The other districts of the extreme north (Muidumbe, Mueda, Nangade and Palma) have not had such developments. People in town would claim they were done for political reasons, and to appease the supporters of Renamo.

The history I traced throughout this thesis has always had a dimension of fight for the control of resources and this has affected the relationships between groups. In that sense, the trade routes along the coast a to the interior, the slave trade, and the contacts or rejection of the colonial power have all played a part in the definition of proximity or divisiveness. In recent times, access to the state and politics having a bearing in access to economic resources has shifted the area of tensions and moved it to the articulation between religion, politics, economic power and ethnicity.

It is not unusual that tensions and grievances arise from the fact that newly-arrived group appropriate more land and manage to obtain considerable success in terms of jobs and small businesses, while the 'owners of the land' see their economic space diminish (*cf.* Colson 1970).

## *Conclusion*

In recent years the relationship between Makonde and Mwani in Mocimboa has become increasingly complicated and tense. The reasons for tension are linked with politics, religion, assertions of identity (which are increasingly crystallised) and local economy. The spatial organisation of the town provides clues towards the understanding of this relationship. When speaking of the different sections in the neighbourhoods it became increasingly clear that they were defined according to identity and belonging and were understood in this way. Boundaries between neighbourhoods or sections of neighbourhoods can be fashioned and refashioned in ways that express the less tangible boundaries between the groups.

I started this chapter by quoting from Moore (1996) and saying that space is 'never neutral' but that it is also far from unchanging. Space can be used to explain issues of identity, to identify reasons linked with religious conversion, and as the site of political discussions. It can express historical continuity or disruption, and can give information about change.

The increase in divisiveness happening in Mocimboa is nothing new (e. g. Colson), and is a process which has developed all over the world. The combination of different religions, ethnicity, politics and economic advantage has reinforced differentiation. What began as a simple categorical distinction, with fluid boundaries between groups, and a somewhat easy process in becoming (i.e. 'being made') part of a different group has made way for much more fixed processes of belonging. The colonial and post-colonial histories, described throughout this thesis, have had a hand at polarising the population. Southall (1970) first pointed that it was the process by which colonial governments set about demarcating the populations under their

control which contributing to fixing what were before that often fluid ethno-linguistic communities. This process has imposed boundaries between groups which have persisted (and often became more sharply defined) to this day.

In the following chapter I will explain how space can be the setting for violent events and what the location of such events tells us about their meaning by tracing the 'geography of violence' and the interpretation behind the events of September 2005.

## **Chapter VIII – Local conflict – the riots of September 2005**

It is time now to come full circle. In the introduction to this thesis I stated that the riots of September 2005 provided an unexpected focus for my research. I also posed a number of questions and went on to explore the history of Mocímboa da Praia in a way that would provide context to the events and also go beyond a one dimensional explanation of what happened. I tried to explore interconnections, and tensions between groups that go beyond the political, and pick apart some of the layers that are present in any situation, and especially so in situations of tension when dismissing problems with a simple explanation becomes tempting. I tried looking at long term historical trends and established the ever changing relationships between the Makonde and the Mwani.

In the previous chapter I discussed the divisions in the district of Mocímboa da Praia and addressed the main points raised by the riots of September 2005. In this chapter I will come back to the events of September 2005, and I will discuss some of the most relevant issues they brought to the forefront, and try to weave them together with the data from the previous chapters, so that they form the whole they were when the riot took place, even if this is not the way people in Mocímboa da Praia discuss them.

Along with this I aim to discuss the theoretical approaches to the study of riots and propose explanations that go beyond reducing the riots to ethnic or political clashes, or even religious ones, but which address grievances brought to the forefront by socio-economic differences and by changes in the occupation of space.

## *1. Description of the riot*

Very early in the morning of 6 September 2005, people gathered in the main road, close to Nanduadua neighbourhood, where they started throwing stones and attacking the buses that were due to leave town by 5 am. These were, reportedly, the same people who had been meeting every day since the highly contested municipal elections of 21 May 2005, under the mango trees behind the headquarters of Renamo. The violence that followed was the end of a few months of public demonstrations and of growing dissent.

The local council president Camissa Adamo Abdala, elected as Frelimo's candidate in 2002, died in 18 October 2004, and early elections were required. While some accounts describe the electoral campaign as 'quiet', others qualify it as disputed, with both sides in the contest claiming early victory, and plenty of street demonstrations from both. People were brought in from the villages by each contesting party, even though they could not vote<sup>238</sup>, so that they could enlarge the numbers of party sympathizers, marching, singing and dancing while the campaign was going on.

The elections were held on 21 May 2005. The members of both parties stayed in the polling stations until the announcement of results. The count was difficult, and there were several recounts. The final count gave the victory to the Frelimo candidate, Amadeu Francisco Pedro<sup>239</sup>, but the result was not accepted by Renamo and its candidate, Said Assane. Two days after the election results were out, Renamo party

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238 These were municipal elections, and that means that only people living in the town and registered to vote there are allowed to vote. The people living elsewhere in the district would vote for local and general elections only. The municipal law 2/1997 had created 33 urban municipalities (*autarquias*). Administration in the rural areas was defined later, by the decree 15/2000. Since 2002 little over 4,000 'community authorities' had been recognised (Kyed and Buur 2006).

239 Pedro was Renamo's delegate in Moímboa before defecting to Frelimo. Renamo protested that he was not born in Mocimboa, but in Mueda instead (Mozambique News Agency, AIM reports, n. 304, 9 September 2005).

members started demonstrating. First a big group tried to invade the STAE (*Secretariado Técnico de Acção Eleitoral* – Technical Secretariat for Electoral Action) headquarters, but were stopped by the police. From then on there were constant, daily demonstrations, and a concentration of Renamo sympathizers close to the Renamo headquarters. The mango trees under which they gathered everyday for months became a symbol of resistance. This was where opposition was vocalized and celebrated with song and dance. During the time the protests lasted there were continuous speeches, made by Renamo's losing candidate Saide Assane, and other members of the party (Armando Milaco and Ali Mocutunha), denouncing the unfairness of Frelimo's win in a town which has a large Mwani contingent who supports Renamo, threatening to make Pedro's mandate impossible, and stressing the fact that Frelimo and its Makonde supporters are alien to this town<sup>240</sup>.

There were other demonstrations, notably one on 20<sup>th</sup> July, when members of the Renamo party (in a big group) marched through town 'naked'<sup>241</sup>. The various descriptions I had of this demonstration, and there were plenty, all emphasised the nakedness of the demonstrators, and to how important this was as a sign of disrespect for the authorities. The demonstrators were men and women of all ages, mostly Muslim, and therefore Mwani. They marched from one of the major Muslim neighbourhoods (the most populated neighbourhood in town) – Milamba, passed the hospital, walked down one of the main roads, and went to the district administrator's house. There they chanted, threw sticks and some flashed their genitals in the direction of the administrator's house. This event, more than the riots and the

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240 [http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200509/12/eng20050912\\_207952.html](http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200509/12/eng20050912_207952.html)

241 Although not marching fully naked, this was how people referred to the demonstration when describing the march. In a town where people dress conservatively, the fact that the demonstrators walked wearing underwear was tantamount to walking naked. This march was considered so unusual and shocking that it was reported outside the country including on the BBC news website <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/4708497.stm>.

violence of early September, stayed in the imagination of the people, and was referred to as the extreme of disrespect. This was a most unusual and disturbing event for the people in town. The nakedness of the demonstrators in a largely Muslim town, where people dress conservatively, demonstrated the strong opposition to the election results.

The whole situation escalated when, at the beginning of September, the elected president was formally sworn in. He took office on 5 September 2005, and at the same time Renamo enacted a formal handing over of power to its candidate, Said Assane, chaired by Augusto Mateus (Renamo central leadership)<sup>242</sup>, and established a shadow government. This was the effective trigger of the riots. After this a big group of Renamo members headed to 30 de Junho, a neighbourhood built at the edge of the town, aiming to bring down a cross that was placed there by the Christians for the Jubilee of 2000. On their way they would beat up any non-Renamo sympathizer. The inhabitants of 30 de Junho, who are predominantly Frelimo, Makonde and Christian, mobilized and went to meet this group. There were confrontations that resulted in a few wounded.

That night Renamo mobilized for the 'war', and built barricades along the main road. At 5 am, as people were getting ready to travel to Pemba, Nampula or Mueda, the violence began. People were beaten, and one of the buses (the Mecula<sup>243</sup> to Pemba) was unable to move. After this people started looting and destroying residences, especially aiming at houses where known Frelimo leaders lived, but burning others in the process. The police intervened, shooting into the air, and that made the demonstrators turn against them. One of the policemen was seriously wounded with

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242 Mozambique News Agency, AIM reports, n. 304, 9 September 2005

243 Mecula is the name of the company that owns the buses making the connection between the main towns in the north of Mozambique. There are other companies offering a similar service, but they generally have more limited routes. It is also the name of a town in the interior of the province.

a machete and died, along with three other people.

The former fighters of the liberation struggle (1964-1974) who live in 30 de Junho and Muengue, and who are mostly Makonde and Frelimo supporters, got together and prepared to fight. However the police commander informed them (wrongly) that he expected the arrival of police and army reinforcements by helicopter and they would handle the situation. The Renamo demonstrators continued the looting and destruction and proceeded with burning residences, causing more wounded and deaths. When all was finished the total of burnt or destroyed houses was 128; there were 47 wounded who were assisted in the hospital; there were 12 official deaths. It is believed that these estimates are low, and some accounts point to much higher numbers.

I arrived in Pemba, the provincial capital, some 380 Km south of Mocímboa, on 7 September. The city was full of contradictory rumours, and everywhere I went I heard stories of what had happened. People had no idea what would happen next, and the fact that these riots had a base in political divisions between Renamo and Frelimo brought thoughts and fears of the civil war. Most people I spoke with, not knowing, like me, what the real situation was, kept advising me to go elsewhere, and come back a month or two later, maybe, and then start fieldwork. While waiting to go to the field site I was continuously told about all sorts of rumours and small bits of information that failed to shed light on the situation. There was risk of further continuation of the violence, people were leaving the town, the Makonde going inland to their old areas on the plateau, and the Mwani towards the islands off the bay. There were different types of information every day, often contradictory, always difficult to establish as true, sometimes very alarming, and mostly inaccurate as I realised once I got to Mocímboa.

When I finally arrived in Mocímboa, less than two weeks later, I could still feel the tension, and the problems people were dealing with in the aftermath. Shortly after arriving I was taken to the neighbourhood where most of the burnt houses were. Whole rows had been completely destroyed. Political leaders, especially the newly appointed district administrator, went on a series of good-will campaigns, trying to unite people from different areas of the town. Peace was apparently in place by November. However, as time passed, I kept wondering how much was still to come, and if the people in the town had indeed solved the underlying problems that led to the conflict. There were several occasions when gossip would point to the likelihood of further violence. When I returned for a shorter period of fieldwork two years after the riots I heard the same gossip again, and references to the same fears, at a time when I thought that maybe the events had been forgotten, or that they would be less vivid in people's minds.

## ***2. Why are the riots important?***

A number of issues stand out immediately when looking at these riots and what they express. Identity and ethnicity, religion, socio-economic divisions, power, local and national politics, are all present in very striking form in the narratives of these riots. Less immediate, but no less powerful are the accounts of historical relationships in this area, the continuities and changes through a century that saw colonial occupation, two wars, and a recent peace process with the change from a single party system to a democratic system. The economic basis of the country changed from a highly authoritarian Marxist-Leninist orientation, to the acceptance of neo-liberalism, and has generally wreaked havoc in the local systems. This region is highly

underdeveloped and people see themselves as forgotten by the government.

Adding to the tension caused by population trends, there is also the important and ever-changing role played by religion. The Makonde are vocal about their Christian beliefs, and have been making a point of populating the landscape with crosses. Most villages now have them, and indeed a large cross stands at the entrance to Mocímboa. In this predominantly Muslim town, the cross has been a cause of discontent; since the “Jubilee year,” the year 2000, when the cross was put up, there have been many attempts to bring it down. One of the most difficult aspects of the riots—the one that could most easily have led to more violence—was linked to its religious aspect. This Jubilee cross is associated with the unwanted Makonde presence, who are believed to be “invaders hostile to Islam”.<sup>244</sup> The Mwani have become increasingly demonstrative in their beliefs as well: for example, loudspeakers were installed in a number of mosques in order to transmit the call to prayer throughout the day.

The first accounts I heard of the riots were narrated in terms of clear-cut ethnic difference: one side was Islamic, the other Christian; one group farmed, the other fished; one was Frelimo, the other Renamo, and so on. These differences are important, and, when combined with the sort of political manipulations that were occurring at the time, were likely to produce violent results. However, deeper issues are also expressed by these conflicts, issues of land use, access to money, and political influence: these are the issues that I believe are the root cause of the riots. Land use and occupation, though easily overlooked, are fundamental matters nonetheless. This is not in any way a new phenomenon and has been noted in a variety of other places (Colson 1970; Kopytoff 1989). The use of land is intrinsically linked with the movement which has been an important feature in this area of

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<sup>244</sup> Relatório da Paróquia de Nossa Senhora da Conceição, Mocímboa da Praia, 26 October 2005.

Mozambique for a very long time. The tensions that developed throughout different periods of the history of this area have a strong bearing in the present relationships between the groups living here.

When starting fieldwork all these categories were brought to the forefront, and used as shorthand to explain the riots. They were also influential when it came to beginning to understand local power relationships. While I still have a problem accepting the reductionist explanations these categories provide, and the lack of space for understanding what doesn't fall into these neat categories, they have had an enduring part in the way I conducted fieldwork, and still have now, when analysing the material. All of these categories need to be looked at more carefully, as people are very keen to use them as shorthand to explain life and events in town, but they do not necessarily have as strong an impact on people's actions during peaceful times. At times they appeared to lose all the meaning and became 'hollow categories' (Ardener 1989). They are used as if unchanging, when in fact they are fluid. People would use or discard them according to convenience, played them up and down depending on circumstances. Both Makonde and Mwani tended to use them as categories of opposition, like easy or convenient binary opposites they could just rely on for explanation, and that is not necessarily expressed in real life events: the divisions were never as clear cut as when people spoke about them.

### ***3. Space – the 'geography of violence'***

Shortly after the riots, I visited most of the families whose houses had been burned. I had attached myself to a local group<sup>245</sup> that was trying to assess needs and provide

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245 This was a group of people from the local Catholic church, but also included teachers and the

immediate assistance to the families who had been worst affected. The burnt houses were, for the most part, close together. Most of them were located in a single “line”<sup>246</sup> in Nanduadua, with some closer to the edge of the neighbourhood. Most of the houses were located in the area where the Mwani sector of the neighbourhood (which is of older construction) meets the Makonde sector.

The part of Nanduadua that was most strongly affected by the riots is very different to the older, original neighbourhood. Nanduadua is, essentially, split in two along its central road. To one side there are buildings of much older construction: smaller, with narrower streets and less space between the houses. The other side—where the houses were burned—is organised according to the standards used to build the communal villages and the new neighbourhoods in town. The streets are carefully aligned, with straight rows of houses and wide streets. The older part of the neighbourhood, most of which was built during the colonial period, has narrower streets and is considerably more crowded. When walking through the neighbourhood, the differences between the older and newer part are obvious, and interviews later confirmed that the newer sector was indeed occupied by those who had moved to Mocímboa da Praia in more recent times.

The area where the houses had been burned is closest to the main entry to the neighbourhood, where there are stalls selling food, as well as a few “hotels,” and where the buses and *chapas* (minibuses) stop every morning to collect passengers. It is a very busy area, and it was here that the problems first began, with the stoning of the buses. The rioters then started destroying nearby houses that they knew belonged to Frelimo members, or, more importantly, to people in the Frelimo hierarchy. The

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owner of one of the local coffee shops.

246 The construction of the new neighbourhoods obeys rigid planning rules, and the rows of houses are now built in carefully determined “lines”; thus, this was the name people used to refer to the rows of houses.

houses were not attacked indiscriminately. N'janjaula, the neighbourhood leader for Pamunda, at the end of a conversation about the civil war began talking about the riots and mentioned that the allegiances to each of the parties were well known.

We know who is Renamo. We have the experience of the war and can see who is Renamo by the way they talk, look and walk. We suspect and observe until we know for sure. The chief in Milamba<sup>247</sup> had a meeting alone with Renamo.

Another Mwani informant, Fatima Suleimane, put it this way:

That's why we had that confusion. People know very well who is Renamo and who is Frelimo. Trust depends on the side one is. This is true even within families. There was a time that if someone from Frelimo died, their relatives who are Renamo could not go to the funeral.

A long established knowledge of who your neighbours are, and which party they support, was linked with the non-random destruction of houses. The house of the first secretary of Frelimo was one those destroyed; luckily, he was on holiday in Tanzania; another high Frelimo official, though, was caught by the rioters and burned to death. Some houses were spared because of their location: the house of Julieta—a well-respected Makonde woman, former fighter, and active Frelimo member—was passed over because it was just next to the house of an important member of Renamo. Most of the houses on the other side of the road were burned: there was a long line of burnt houses stretching from the beginning of the street almost to the end, and other burnt houses scattered across different areas of the neighbourhood. What remained of them stood untouched for a couple of months, forming a constant reminder of the violence and destruction.

Despite the promises, from the central and provincial government, of corrugated iron

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<sup>247</sup> Milamba, the largest neighbourhood in town as I described in the previous chapter, is usually associated with Renamo, and it was easy to assume that the neighbourhood leader had meetings with Renamo's representatives. In fact, there was plenty of talk of 'secret' meetings between Renamo and some of the neighbourhood leaders. This was however a few months after the riots and not immediately in the aftermath.

sheets, food, and other forms of assistance, by November not much had been delivered. Food was initially distributed in merely symbolic quantities, consisting mostly of dried cassava and smaller amounts of corn flour. Later on, iron sheets started arriving, most coming in time for the rains, and people rebuilt their houses. The speed with which the landscape changed was impressive. In a matter of weeks, the neighbourhood went from having rows of houses that had been burned to the ground, to new houses, generally bigger, with corrugated iron roofs. Where these new houses were built next to houses that had not suffered in the riots, the difference was marked. Iron roofs, which are expensive by local standards, are generally taken to signify wealth, and in this context they highlighted the improvement of the houses of those affected by the violence. The new houses were a reminder of violence and destruction; but also of change and development.

The changes in the landscape of the neighbourhood, and the features of the new houses, serve as reminders of what happened and of the relief that was received. They also mark a return to the everyday, and, while the changes were undertaken in an effort to repair the damage caused by the riots, they also stand as a reminder that those affected benefited materially from the violence. While the help provided by local groups of Christians demonstrated the kindness of some members of the neighbourhood, it could also lead to more tension in cases where the victims of violence are seen as being better off after the destruction of their homes. When this is articulated in connection with the tensions that were previously the causes of the violence, it is easy to see why relief efforts can be a delicate exercise.

#### ***4. What the Riots Tell Us: Theoretical Approaches from Anthropology***

Using a particular event to understand a social situation is not a new approach in anthropology (Gluckman 1958; James 1997; Pieke 2000). Events provide a starting point from which to address the issues at hand, and in some cases highlight situations which are not spoken about openly, making them visible even for the people who took active part. This is an approach, however, which is fraught with pitfalls<sup>248</sup>, since it can lead to oversimplified explanations of complex situations. Events can provide a useful starting point for the investigation of a social situation (Gluckman 1958), but, in looking for the patterns that could provide clues to underlying causes, it is essential to proceed with care.

In the case of the riots, since so much of what happened during them is deeply related to the changes that the people in this area have experienced in the relatively recent past, they provide a starting point for an investigation of the history of the area, the way social relationships have developed, and underlying grievances and resentments which are not generally discussed. Part of the issue stems from political decisions taken initially by the Portuguese and, following independence, by the Mozambican government. The impact this history has had on local relationships shaped to some extent what happened in September 2005.

The riots highlighted tensions that had seldom been verbalised<sup>249</sup>—or, at the very least, not verbalised in the way they were in the aftermath of the violence. I am not claiming that people were unaware of these tensions; rather, that they were often

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248 Ardener (1989) analyses some of the issues that can come up when looking at events and explains why is it that often they provide a biased view of a society.

249 Violent events have the capacity to highlight tensions which are present in everyday situations; and yet, as Chatterji and Mehta (2007: 62) point out, they also depart from the everyday, being heightened expressions of underlying tensions, and moreover ones which are acted upon.

overlooked and ignored. The violence brought these tensions to the forefront, and, with time, people in town would speak about them openly. As is not unusual in a situation like this, remembering the violent events brought fears of a possible repetition, and people would reflect on everyday tensions in the light of the riots.

The explanations of the causes of the riots, which were offered to me on my arrival Mocímboa da Praia, appeared to me unsatisfactory. This was one of the reasons why I went on to look deeper into local history and address social relationships in the area as a way of providing a more comprehensive explanation of what had happened: I wanted to understand the larger frame of events, by mapping out local relationships and the changes the region had experienced through time. My other reason for researching the riots was simply my own inability to ignore them: it was no longer possible to consider this area of Mozambique without factoring in the impact of the riots on everyday life. The way people discussed—or avoided discussing—what had happened became a significant part of my understanding of the town.

I heard a series of attempts to explain the riots, or, at least, to try to make sense of violence that seemed random, as riots often do. The riots were initially talked about in either purely political terms, i.e., Renamo versus Frelimo; in ethnic terms, i.e., Mwani versus Makonde; or in religious terms, i.e., Muslim versus Christian. In general, the discussions reinforced existing boundaries between the groups. Although some of the explanations I heard aimed at bringing all these categories together, in general they did not, and one strand of explanation was generally allowed to prevail above the others. When a more complex explanation was offered, it was still in a very descriptive way, using simple dichotomies and basic opposing categories as if they provided all the explanation necessary. This perspective left very little space for analysis. These were excessively simplified ways to talk about a complex issue.

The history of the province has shaped the relationships between the groups inhabiting the town, and to understand the riots it is important to look at longstanding relationships, the impact of colonial and postcolonial policies, and the changes which have been experienced since the end of the civil war. Migration (both internal and international) has had an extraordinary influence in reshaping the social geography in the north. This is very much connected with issues of space and older notions of hosts and guests. When looking for a deeper understanding of the events, it is important to address the ways in which each of these factors has changed the area and created tensions that were then used politically.

Despite the common claims that the Makonde are newly arrived in the coastal areas, there has in fact been a large Makonde population living close to the coast for a long time. In the late nineteenth century, trading parties from the hinterland that came to the coast to engage in commerce provided accounts of their presence; and more information about them comes from the colonial period. Data from the colonial period, when the censuses took ethnicity into account, show that, at least in the 1950s and 60s, the Makonde were present in this area in significant numbers (Dias 1964). It is the increase in number of the Makonde, rather than their arrival in the region *de novo*, that has made them more influential and visible than in the past. The present-day numbers of Makonde in the town (they constitute about 30% of the town's population), and their socio-economic status, create reasons for resentment not unlike those Colson describes with respect to changes in patterns of acceptance of aliens among the Plateau Tonga (1970).<sup>250</sup>

Authors who have studied situations of collective violence in South Asia (Das 1990, 2000, 2007; Tambiah 1996; Spencer 2007) point to the fact that riots, although

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<sup>250</sup> Those defined as “alien” were all those who were not part of, or integrated into, the Plateau Tonga—even though they might have been living in the area for a long time.

spontaneous events, do not start for no reason: they have both an immediate cause or trigger, and an underlying structure of longstanding issues. Riots also take on a specific character depending on the situation in which they occur and the way they are instigated. Tambiah (1996) gives as an example the instigation of religious riots, in which a pig was sent into a mosque, or a cow slaughtered in a Hindu temple; the riots Das analyses, which occurred in more political contexts, have different features—although religious symbols are still involved, especially when they provide an easy means of identification of people on each side. Riots, these authors argue, are a heightened expression of underlying patterns of social interaction; but they do not necessarily bring something new into existence (Das 1990, 2007; Spencer 2007).

Das's writing on riots focuses on the "geography of violence." She argues that, by looking at the location of violent events, we can partly reconstruct the reasoning which underlies the violence. As is pointed out in the anthropological literature on the construction of place (Hirsch and O'Hanlon 1995; Bender and Winer 2001; Stewart and Strathern 2003; Feld and Basso 1996), there are emotional and historical values attached to places, which can explain why certain events take place in some areas instead of others. For the Mocimboa da Praia riots, the spatialization of the violence, and the targeting of certain people who represented the structures against which the crowd had grievances, resulted in the sections of town that were more closely associated with Frelimo supporters coming under attack; however, these were also areas close to the Renamo headquarters.

Das (2007) stresses the fact that when the violence is over people resume their daily lives as best they can. In her research on the violence associated with the 1947 partition of India, and the assassination of Mrs Gandhi in 1984, she studies the implication of these events for people's lives, along with the ways people found to

cope with them. By detailing the violence of both events, she brings these “coping strategies” to the fore in a stronger way, and shows how “everyday life absorbs the traumatic collective violence that creates boundaries between nations and between ethnic and religious groups” (2007: 16).

The riots described in the present chapter were the result of months of dissatisfaction with the way the election results had been handled by local and national politicians. They were also linked to the politicization of identities, and polarising claims which contributed to resentments and tensions that, though neither new nor imaginary, were not usually voiced. There had, as we have noted, been daily demonstrations between May and September, in which people showed their unwillingness to accept the election results: but it was only after the new council president formally took power that there were acts of violence. Prior to this, the demonstrations had been reasonably peaceful: the swearing-in of the president marked the end of the period in which expression of dissent was possible, and in which there was still hope of a change in the course of politics through the normal channels.

Following Das, in her work on the anti-Sikh riots of 1984,<sup>251</sup> I would not attribute “agency”<sup>252</sup> to the crowd<sup>253</sup>. Nevertheless, the individual people who comprised the crowd were clearly not acting indiscriminately, since most of the places attacked were houses of Frelimo supporters. Of the people killed, some were policemen and others were linked with Frelimo; some of those injured either belonged to these categories, or were simply at the wrong place at the wrong time. Below, I give some examples.

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251 Notably, her essay “Our Work to Cry: Your Work to Listen” (in Das 1990). Here she presents a detailed study of how people reacted to the riots and managed to return to “normality.”

252 The concept of “agency” is too often used without being properly defined and—like “discourse”—is too ubiquitous to be truly useful. For a good treatment of the history and usages of the term, see Ahearn (2001) and Ortner (2006).

253 I use “crowd” in the same way that Tambiah (1996) and Parkin (2007) do: crowd as a destructive mass of people, the sum of its parts.

Bandera is a Makonde man in his mid-thirties who lives in Muengue, and works as a guard in one of the houses in the cement part of town. As he was walking to work on the morning of September 6, he ran into the rioters and, having gone to “see what was happening” (and possibly to take an active part), was seriously injured with a machete blow to the head. As a result he had to stay in hospital for a few weeks. Many others had a similar, if slightly less extreme, experience: many people were wounded, although not all seriously. The number of those who went to the hospital was low compared to the number of people commonly claimed to have been injured. Mwani in particular were disinclined to go to the hospital: most of the hospital staff are Makonde Frelimo supporters, who, I was told, would not be particularly sympathetic to the Mwani. In Pemba, a nurse told me that some Mwani were left without bedding, and with minimal care during their stay at the hospital, because they had been identified as Renamo supporters. So, whereas the official numbers of injured were around 45–50 lightly injured and 11 hospitalized, I was told that the real figure was higher; given the reports of people hiding in the villages, escaping to the islands, and dying without it being reported to the hospital, this seems highly likely. In other parts of town, people ran and hid from the crowd. Older women told me about fearing for their loved ones, and not knowing where they could go for safety. One of the first descriptions I heard of the riots was not so much about the events themselves but about people’s reactions. Marcelina, an old Makonde woman, described the reactions of the younger women in her family and the panic and fear they experienced. One of them did not know where her youngest child (a two-year-old boy) was at the time the violence started, and was looking for him frantically. Others just cried and ran, trying to find places where they would feel safe. People usually ran to places with which they had strong personal and social links; places

where respected elders lived were very much sought. One of my interviewees described how his house was suddenly filled with people seeking refuge or security in numbers. This was an old man who was well respected in his community, being a former fighter of the liberation struggle, a member of the local council who advised the neighbourhood president, and someone whose balanced opinions on issues were often sought.

The crowds were described in ways that emphasised their ad hoc composition and instability, recalling Tambiah's description:

Rioting crowds are heterogeneous in composition, short-lived, and unstable. On the one hand, the sheer massing of persons in a crowd gives them a feeling of great power, even of omnipotence. But at the same time, since the crowd's members have tenuous links, united by heightened affect but no long-lasting interactional bonds, they are liable, under certain circumstances, to disintegrate and lose their sense of mutuality. The reverse of their sense of power is their sense of vulnerability. (Tambiah 1996: 284)

Like the riots he describes (*ibid.*: 298), the crowds in Mocimboa da Praia set out to destroy, to physically level persons and possessions, and destroy the economic, social, and political advantages of the opposing minority. When describing what had happened, people would emphasise the loss of possessions and homes. The need to rebuild, and in some cases start from scratch, was highlighted by the images of people sitting around the remains of their homes, discussing what they would do next and what they were expecting from the government.

Parkin (2007), similarly, describes crowds using Durkheim's concept of "effervescence" and the idea of the "visceral" to describe the feelings in crowds at times like this. Following Tambiah (1996), riots are linked with sudden surges of orgasmic violence. This is an apt description for the events in Mocimboa: the violence was limited in time (the main violent events unfolded over the course of a single day), and the aftermath, which was characterised by uncertainty and rumour,

lasted only a few days more. After that, people made an effort to go back to normal life and resume their daily activities. It was the memory of the event which endured, and way in which what had happened was conceptualized left a permanent mark on people's perceptions of local relationships—the widespread knowledge of what had happened and of who had been attacking whom, naturally added strain to already complicated intergroup relations. Parkin also points to the need to address violence stemming from assertions of identity, claiming that as long as studies of ethnicity place “such analytical emphasis on ethnic quests for identity, competition for resources, cultural misunderstanding and intolerance, and colonial or nationalistic marginalisation,” there is a danger that we might “forget that the associated violence is sometimes the most horrendous and brutal kind. It may need to be explained as, at some point, autonomously self-perpetuating, however much precipitated by ethnic or, say, religious tensions” (Parkin 2007: 243–44).

In some of the neighbourhoods where the Makonde were less than dominant, the stories I heard were of fear and panic. Some of the people I spoke with talked about the different escape routes they were considering. Susana, a Makonde woman who had lived in Tanzania for most of her life, described how she stayed at home, keeping very quiet, holding her smallest children, Luciana and Mateus, and hoping she would not have to try to make an escape. Her house being at the far end of town, she would have had to go through the area where most of the violence was taking place to reach the road to Tanzania, the only place she felt she would be safe. This was common for many Makonde, who had a feeling that they were in a place where they did not belong: many left for the villages outside town, or the plateau. The Mwani, I was told, headed for the sea, and looked for refuge in the islands just off the bay, even though they were the true “owners of the land.”

## **5. Rumour**

In the events of September 2005, political rivalry, prolonged and intense political agitation, with constant pitting of Renamo/Mwani versus Frelimo/Makonde took place, were fuelled by rumour, from various origins. As noted elsewhere when addressing the issue of riots or violence (Das 1990, 2007; Tambiah 1996; Simons 1995) rumour is generally widespread, and contradictory. The same was true here. The number of different versions of the same events, and the conjecture of future events was impressive. Shortly after the riots when people were running from town, they were doing so not because of continued violence but because the rumours which were being spread were generally alarming<sup>254</sup>. The contradictory, conflicting versions of what had happened and what was about to happen led people to run away from the town and go where they would feel safe.

There were plenty of stories of Makonde who went to the hinterland, back to their old villages, and Mwani who escaped to the islands nearby. Some of these people, I was told, never returned. The majority eventually made their way back to the town, when the situation was quiet. One of the fruit sellers in the market by the beach (Zalala) only came back after about 6 months. He was said to be a Renamo supporter, and because he was not seen for such a long time after the riots was thought to have died during the violence. Some people decided to move to their villages of origin and stay there because they were afraid it might happen again.

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254 While discussing the riots and their aftermath with various informants they would describe what they had heard and what had caused them to flee their homes. Susana, a Makonde woman, recalled the civil war one afternoon and said that in the riots it was the same. If you were perceived to be Makonde you would be killed immediately with a machete. Susana, it is important to notice, had lived in Tanzania all throughout the civil war, returning to Mozambique only after the peace agreements and had no first hand experience of what had happened in that period. Albertina, another Makonde woman from Muengue, ran to her house where the money and the container with the Eucharist and hid them, because she had heard that the Mwani/Renamo supporters were on their way and feared that they might destroy it or be disrespectful towards it.

Simons (1995) described her fieldwork at the time Somalia was in crisis. She describes the importance of rumour, and how one would gather and be influenced by diverse, sometimes contradictory pieces of information. Who one knew, met, and got news from, affected the view of the conflict. Rumours are knowledge, and they are exchanged as valuable information, but they sometimes have no connection to actual events. They can also lead to the increase in fear, and the rapid spread of inaccurate rumours leading to more violence. Though not responsible for the violence themselves, rumours can still fuel it<sup>255</sup>.

While I was doing my research it was frequent to hear rumours of impending visits by high officials from Frelimo or Renamo. They hardly ever materialised but were generally occasions when the town would be full of tension and when people would speak about politics, and would also discuss violence and voice concerns at the repetition of riots. One such occasion, in December 2005 when a high official of Renamo was expected to visit there was a large crowd by Renamo's headquarters, sprawling on to the main road for nearly a kilometre in the direction of the airport. This was the first and only time I saw a crowd that size showing their support for a party.

Before getting to my field site, I heard rumours everyday about the situation in Mocímboa and everyone I spoke to would have a different story. After I arrived in town, and throughout the time of my stay I would hear different, sometimes alarming, rumours every day. Most days, as I walked to meet someone for an interview, and discussed the previous day's work, and what happened after work, with my research assistant, he, or I, would have some story to tell about some new

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255 Michelle Osborn (2008) describes how the spread of rumours after the Kenyan elections of 2007 was linked to some of the violent events. Although they were aimed at protecting and warning friends and family, rumours heightened fear and tension.

rumour, about some visit of a political leader, some news about meetings which could then become demonstrations, which could, again, be the source of violence. People were generally expecting something else to happen. Fortunately it never did. However, when linked with the local history, and with the area's tensions, rumour can lead, and feed on, violent clashes but also longstanding resentment. It can also perpetuate the sense of tension and the imminence of further violent events.

In 2007, two years after the riots, the town was again full of rumours and everywhere I went people would talk about violence even without being prompted, much to my surprise. This was very different from what had happened when I first started fieldwork right after the riots, when people would not talk about them directly<sup>256</sup>.

Unless I was with someone they knew well and trusted, it would take a bit of effort to get them to discuss the events, and some degree of talking around the issue was usually involved. People would talk about the events surrounding the violence, especially the naked march, but, not surprisingly, would be less willing to describe the violent events.

Most people I spoke with, talked openly about the fear they had of it happening again without having to be asked, and most of the time after just a simple greeting. When I asked what were the news since I had left, people would usually talk about how they were afraid of the violence happening again, and also how they were preparing. I found them more open to talking about it then they had ever been before. During an interview with one of the neighbourhood presidents (Jaime Januario Punda from 30 de Junho), he interrupted what he was saying, went inside the house and came back with a bow and a number of arrows, claiming that he was prepared for whatever

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<sup>256</sup> Except in some surprising occasions when people would just talk about it without even being prompted. This happened a few times, right at the beginning of my fieldwork, but in most of these occasions people would put a comedic tone to it, and joke about how bad it was to run away, and make fun of how scared some people were. Most of these descriptions were delivered by older women, not men who had been preparing to fight and would describe it as a very serious affair.

could happen. Like him, a number of other people were as well. I found the Makonde I knew best more apprehensive than before, more willing to talk openly about the riots, and about the fears they had of a repetition of the events. I also found them extremely defensive.



Figure 10 – Punda had been a fighter during the liberation struggle and the civil war, having been demobilised after the peace agreements. He was strongly supportive of Frelimo and usually recalled his time in the army fondly. One of his children, behind is wearing a shirt made from a *capulana* from the Guebuza presidential campaign, while the other is carrying a Frelimo pamphlet.

## ***6. They own the land, we are visitors: We are not the owners of the land***

'The Makonde are invaders, hostile to Islam'<sup>257</sup> - this sentence was part of a report on the riots written by members of the local Catholic church as one of the reasons considered responsible for the violence. Apart from an immediate othering of the Makonde, it also locates part of the tension within religious difference and goes a long way to explain how, seemingly peaceful relationships are not easy at all, and have underlying tensions, which found an outlet in the events of September. It marks two of the main issues brought to light by these riots: the assertion of belonging and the religious, and in my view, political, socio-economic, divides. A simple statement conveys the main arguments in town at the time of my fieldwork and the idea of us versus them. This was not a one sided view, since both groups made very similar claims. In fact in many situations they did agree with each others assertions. There were many cases in which during interviews I was told I should ask the 'owners of the land' since my interviewee did not feel like he or she had legitimacy to tell a story, or make a statement about a past event. All of this is in turn associated with length of stay in the area and claims of ownership. These claims of ownership can be of land ownership, but they can also be of ownership of history.

Land ownership is easier to talk about and understand. It is generally associated with the earlier inhabitants as these are the people who have the right to assign land plots and distribute land. Though the Mwani are not traditionally agriculturalists, as I have mentioned before, they still practice agriculture for subsistence purposes and to supplement their diet, and therefore have lands which they use for this purpose. Makonde use of the land is more intensive, and much of their economic activity is

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<sup>257</sup> Relatório da Paróquia de Nossa Senhora da Conceição, Mocimboa da Praia, 26 October 2005.

linked with agriculture still.

When a Makonde first arrives in a place, I was told, he or she needs to ask the 'owners' for permission to plant in the area, and ask to be allocated a *machamba* (field). This is generally granted easily and they are pointed towards a place which they can use. There is in all of this a relationship of hosts and guests, with one group having the power to allocate or deny (if they choose to do so) land to the newcomers, and a need to respect the 'owners' of the place.

However at a time when these newcomers are increasingly in charge of politics and have more access to resources there is scope for resentment. Much like the situation described by Colson (1970) for the plateau Tonga, and similarly for some parts of Kenya, newcomers are well received up until the point when they become increasingly dominant. After that, their claims can be made to be unreasonable and there is space for rifts between the two, or in some cases more, groups.

The balance between the groups occupying Cabo Delgado has always been fragile, and ever changing. The slave trade and the different wars were ways in which this balance was changed and reasserted. With independence and the policies aiming at the construction of the Mozambican state this led to increased cleavages. The claims for political legitimacy are also linked with economic gain, and 'identity' becomes something that is manipulated. Remembering history, and especially forgetting different periods or events, has to do with the need to reframe history, and the different groups' participation on it, re-asserting privileges and legitimating alienation of others (Conceição 2006).

The Makonde I spoke with were always extremely aware of the fact that they are not the owners (*donos*) here, and that their presence has to be negotiated with the true owners of the land. This was also true when dealing with local history. Every time I

asked about the local history and tried to get people to tell me more about how the town changed I would encounter an unwillingness to speak. People would say I should 'speak with the *antigos* (old people)' in the hinterland if I wanted the history of the Makonde, or speak with older Mwani if I wanted the local history. The right to tell the history, and to tell it right is usually associated with having lived through it. In most of my interviews people would describe events they had witnessed and not so much events they had heard of but not lived through.

If the 'past is a foreign country', it is also a country which many people in this area of Mozambique don't feel entitled to travel to, preferring to point towards others who do have the right to visit and tell about it. The issues of ownership of history are many, and generally complicated, but in the case presented in this thesis they are mainly linked with the feeling of owning that history, and at the same time of doing it justice by telling it, since it 'belongs' to them.

### ***7. Ongoing reasons for tension***

The newly arrived, i.e. the Makonde, are usually better off and this has been the cause of strong resentment for the Mwani, the original population of this town. Many people are extremely poor and there are plenty of social problems. It is a highly dysfunctional town. The Mwani tend to be more affected by poverty than the Makonde, and live in worse conditions. The Makonde of a certain age, are in huge numbers, former fighters of the *luta* (liberation struggle), and thus entitled to receive a pension. The pensions are quite good by local standards, and depend on what one did in the *luta*. The former fighters (*antigos combatentes*) and their families are

usually better off than the rest of the population. The first thing people will generally do when getting the money is invest in a new roof for their houses, so you can usually tell a former fighter by the corrugated tin roof in the house. Next they will buy a bicycle, and *capulanas* (cloth) for their wife or wives.

The socio-economic advantages that these former fighters enjoy due to the pensions they receive from the state are clearly visible, and create serious tensions with the people who have no way of enjoying such advantages. The bigger houses, the visible wealth, by comparison with large proportions of the inhabitants of this district are a source of envy. This quickly lead to accusations of sorcery, which are based on the fact that it would be impossible for wealth to come by by any other means than witchcraft. At the same time, the sheer visibility of the economic advantage, proudly displayed in the houses, are a constant reminder of the recent arrival of the veterans to this town, of their role in the liberation struggle and of their easy access to political advantage and money creating resentment among those who can not access the same advantages.

The pension issue is a seriously big issue in the area because it means getting a regular income in a place where not many people have access to regular employment or salary. This income however is only going to get to the people who can in some way claim they have fought for the liberation of the country in some capacity (part of the army, porter, support). People who have no way to claim this, such as the ones left in towns where the Portuguese were and which were, like Mocímboa da Praia, fenced in and where people were rigorously (as much as possible anyway) controlled, have no possibility to claim these benefits.

Younger people also have no way to claim this, and this is starting to create rifts even within families. A number of problems are emerging which are linked to the

differences in economic power and in the capacities to get resources. Children start demanding things (bicycles, clothes) from their parents when they get their pensions, and if they aren't given these things they will threaten or attempt to steal some of the money. One afternoon in 30 de Junho I was told, in hushed tones about what had happened the night before in Moises' house. His son, after Moises denied him a bicycle, said he would kill himself. He did try, or at least he made it look like he was trying (not everyone was convinced when they were telling the story) by drinking battery acid and leaving a suicide note. These events were widely discussed and people expressed conflicting ideas. Most thought this was disgraceful behaviour, but noted the fact that it was becoming increasingly common for children to demand more and more from their parents, and sometimes even to go to the extent of threatening them or stealing from them.

When I went back to Mocímboa in the Summer of 2007 the government was conducting the last campaign for registration of all those who could still claim pensions but had not until then done so. Trucks full of people from nearby villages were brought into Mocímboa, so that they could get their documents done and then proceed with the filing the forms to claim the pension. Most of these people were Makonde from the villages (easily identifiable from the face tattoos and lip plugs) who had not heard of the pension, or that they had the right to them, but who were now, with the deadline approaching, willing to spend days in the sun waiting to get their papers. I met with Marcos Mandumbwe in Pemba, where he works in the office of the *Antigos Combatentes*, before going to the fieldsite, and he told me he was also going on a mission to some villages in the Plateau. 'Not to ask about people's stories this time', he said, 'but to get them to claim what is rightfully theirs'. This claim, however was a contested one, since it was also believed that not everyone had

a rightful claim to a pension as a former fighter.

The fact that most of these people will be Makonde of an older generation creates resentment among those who can make no claims for benefits, e.g. the young and those who can not claim to have taken part in the liberation struggle. The fact that some of those who make claims only have marginal evidence of actually having fought in the struggle, but will, nevertheless, get a pension, is another source of problems. The perceived unfairness of it all, and the Makonde bias, only contributes to create more divisions and to reify the separation and crystallize the boundaries between ethnic groups. Being able say that one is Makonde, and of a certain age brings with it strong privileges. And alienates ever growing sections of the population, namely the youth, creating more tension. The younger generation, along with anyone who can not prove that they were of reasonable age when the liberation struggle was going on, and that they could have fought, are becoming increasingly disgruntled with the lack of prospects, jobs and economic development.

When describing the events some people would speak of past tensions as well as old relationships to explain them. They seemed extremely aware of the role these played in the unravelling of the violence and, especially, how much, after the riots they were still present, and were still a source of danger for future events. In the summer of 2007, close to the second anniversary of the riots people were still talking about them, and with increased apprehension. Some of the Makonde men I spoke with were extremely weary of the possibility of it happening again. They were much more defensive than they had been right after the riots and were, as they said, preparing. I saw a number of meetings held by older men (most of them former fighters) and they were all discussing the riots, and the new rumours which abounded in town, in various instances. There was fear of demonstrations to mark the anniversary of the

riots, and that these could lead to a new surge of violence. When I went to interview a man with whom I had not been able to conduct a formal interview during my first stint of fieldwork (Mariano Nakatembo, an old fighter and a respected figure in the neighbourhood he lived in), I found him talking to a friend about the violence of the riots and the possibility of it happening again. When his friend left, he spoke about him being afraid, and how unfortunate it was for his friend to live in Nanduadua (where most of the violence occurred the first time), and not in 30 de Junho ro Muengue, where he would be safer, and protected in the event of violence, since the neighbourhoods, being mostly Makonde could provide safety in numbers. As I described in previous chapters, the 'geography of the violence' became part of the way people talk about it, and also an important element of where they feel safe, even if, for the Makonde, Mocímboa is not theirs, because they are not the 'owners of the land' there, but simply 'visitors'.

When I was interviewing a neighbourhood leader in the summer of 2007, he stopped the interview where he was talking about the role of the neighbourhood leader and its implications, to 'clarify' some issues when it came to the riots and the reasons behind them. He then launched into a tirade against all these Mwani who had fought with the Portuguese as a special unit created in Cabo Delgado, and had not joined Frelimo because they were 'lazy'. He claimed that it was their fault they were not eligible for the pensions Frelimo was awarding the former fighters and that they 'could not even fake the fact that they had been fighters' because he, and others like him, still remembered all the ones who stayed behind and helped the Portuguese while they did all the work of liberating the country. As I noted in chapter 4, however, staying behind was often not a matter of choice or lazyness.

## *Conclusion*

One of the issues on my mind, upon returning to the field, had been how much were these riots actually important for the people there, and whether I was reading too much into them. In fact they were more relevant than I had anticipated in lasting in the local discourse, and in forming part of the local imagination and defining group relationships. People talked about different groups in a more polarising, definitive way than they had done before. When discussing a variety of events<sup>258</sup>, people would describe Mwani and Makonde as two opposing entities, almost as if they had no point of contact, when in fact there is much in common between them. The differences were reinforced and taken as definitive, crystallising ideas of identity which were not always so clear cut.

Politics and fear of the violence are still part of the picture long after the occurrence of riots in town. In the recent municipal elections held in Mocímboa in 2008, Renamo complained that they were not being allowed to campaign in 30 de Junho and Muengue<sup>259</sup>, which as I described are seen as Frelimo strongholds, and where the larger numbers of Makonde live. According to the district's police commander, Silva Paulo, mentioned in the same news article, Renamo had not told the police they wanted to campaign in those neighbourhoods, and if they did they should warn the police so that there could be protection provided for the campaigners.

What appears to be a simple local riot has the capacity to give us insights into local relationships and the consequences of national politics. Anthropological literature on

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258 I was speaking to a friend who had just been elected to take a course to be part of the women's court about marriage and she said Mwani men didn't marry Makonde women because they were 'impure'. When asked to elaborate, she said it had to do with the differences between the groups, especially the observance of food taboos and started describing them making a list of these differences. This was not the first time someone decided to 'explain' to me the differences between both groups, and this generally included a listing of the relevant differences.

259 <http://www.gg.rhul.ac.uk/Simon/GG3072/2008-4.pdf>

riots goes well beyond superficial analysis—of the sort evinced by the participants themselves—and looks into long-term trends and consequences. If we dig a little deeper into Mozambican colonial and postcolonial history, it becomes clear that the divisions in this town are not the product of some essentializing notion of what constitutes identity, but of a continuous history which encompasses the local, the national, and the global. When writing about riots in Sri Lanka, Spencer claims that “what happens is not only the reproduction of local structures of antagonism, but also an opportunity for a remaking of local social order. In that respect the violence, like the political more generally, is productive. And what Das calls in the title of her article ‘the spatialization of violence’ is also the spatialization of the political” (2007: 133). In Mocímboa, however, the riots did not bring change to the social order. On a field visit two years later, I heard similar grievances being vented, and concerns were once more voiced in recent (2008) municipal elections. Although there were early efforts, mostly led by local politicians, to appease the different communities, diminish resentment between the groups involved, and establish dialogue, these attempts were not enough to dispel the grievances which had been at the forefront of the riots.

On the other hand, there is the risk of reading too much into the riots, using them as an all-encompassing event and not thinking of the reality beyond them. Although at the time of their occurrence they were indeed a “total event” (Mauss 2002), and it was hard to discuss either local events or history without the riots intruding into the conversation, there is plenty in the history of the town that has little connection with the riots. The riots were important as a reminder of divisions that exist beneath the surface in a town in which the ethnic divide is relevant, but at the same time not acted upon, and yet, which was easily manipulated for political gain. They proved

important in bringing to prominence the underlying tensions, which would ordinarily have only made themselves visible to a researcher after a few months of work, despite being there all along. The riots are not, however, explained by these divisions: they merely highlight them. I do not believe these events were caused directly by the social, political, and ethnic divisions in the town; rather, I believe that it is possible to understand the events better by tracing the history of the area. Historical events and relationships can be—and in this case, were—manipulated in a way that leads to unpredictable, violent, and destructive events.

More than the war of liberation, and the civil war that affected the way people live now, and introduced major change and upheaval, I argue that the political manipulation that was going on at the time was more relevant: the discourse of foul play, of one group as opposed to the other, of domination all added fuel to the situation. There are, however, deeper issues, such as land use, and access to money and politics, which are not necessarily present in everyday discourses about the ‘other’ but which are expressed in a strong way by these conflicts, and these are the issues that I believe are the root cause for them, and not some ‘essentialized’ idea of each of the group’s cultural belongings.

## **Conclusion**

In this dissertation I have investigated the historical construction of difference between Mwani and Makonde in Cabo Delgado. I have tried to bring in the changing nature of identity in Mocimboa da Praia and articulate how historical events played a part in shaping it. In doing so I combined theoretical perspectives developed when discussing issues of memory, violence and ethnicity, in order to understand continuities and ruptures in the relationship between Mwani and Makonde. Though each of these areas has an extensive body of literature, I argue that when looking at events such as the riots of 2005 using a single perspective would be reductive.

I started this thesis referencing an event which changed the nature of my research and my understanding of Mocimboa da Praia. A large number of anthropologists rely on various types of events in order to make sense of social situations and use them as a way of making sense of social relationships and various local concepts. The riots which took place at the start of my fieldwork were one such event. They shaped the way I understood the place and the way in which I conceptualised the local relationships. The violence brought much to the forefront and offered an immediate, if excessively destructive view of the social, economic, religious and political tensions in this part of Mozambique.

In a way this thesis is part of an Anthropology of events, and yet I have placed it firmly within theoretical approaches brought forward by studies of violence, history and memory and ethnicity. In doing so I aimed at creating a continuity in this study and instead of isolating a single event placed it within a historical sequence. I argued that this gives us a longer term perspective and a stronger understanding of what is

happening in this area and the relevant changes. This is certainly important from the perspective on a shared, but differently understood history which shapes present day relationships and influenced the way the violence took place in 2005. I also placed the local history within the national history, and attempted at providing evidence of the linkages between the local and the global, the past and the present.

The history of Mozambique and especially the differing experiences of historical events in this part of the country have led to very different outcomes where identity is concerned. The experiences of Makonde and Mwani during the colonial period and the post independence have shaped very distinctive concepts of identity and very different ideas about politics. The histories of the Mwani and Makonde in the period covered by this dissertation are at times parallel and at times overlapping in terms of experiences of events and policies. Though at first there was a mild differentiation between these identities, with colonial rule and post-colonial developments difference has been reinforced. If in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century there was an apparent ease in transitioning between these groups, with the Makonde being 'made' and therefore integrated into the group as opposed to being 'born' Makonde, there is now a sharper demarcation of the boundaries between the groups. This process was increasingly defined by colonial rule, administrative practices and efforts to make different ethnic groups 'legible' (Scott 1998) to the colonial state, thereby crystallizing what had been until then much more flexible boundaries between groups. This was pointed out earlier by Southall (1970) when he describes the processes colonial definition of 'tribes' and the ways in which these fixed shifting, flexible boundaries between close ethno-linguistic and socio-cultural groups and altered previous categorical distinctions.

The nature of events, in this case violent events, which are singular, often have

meaning solely in the places where they occur, and are therefore not only conditioned by history, but also by place and time (Moran 2005), has a way of creating a window which allows us to bring together past and present and giving a complete understanding of connections and fractures. When they become 'total events' then everything around them becomes imbued with meaning that is often elusive outside these moments. We can assume that 'what constitutes an "event"', what differentiates one moment from another or endows it with particular significance, is always socially constructed and locally meaningful. This is no less true for those who study events-whether as historians, philosophers, or anthropologists-than it is for the informants, subjects, or collaborators for whom the events in question make up the fabric of life' (Hoffman and Lubkemann 2005: 317). I have invested much significance in the events of 2005, and often questioned whether they were truly relevant. I have always come to the same answer – they were important locally, and like the violence in Montepuez in 2000 were also important nationally, and full of significance and consequences. More generally, though they do not influence worldwide events, understanding local level politics and their importance is what anthropologists often do best, as is providing an explanation of events that goes beyond the buzzwords. The questioning of taken for granted categories and of the importance of history and memory prove a worthy pursuit and provide more answers which allow for a better understanding of the situation in present day Mozambique. By taking a single event and locating it firmly in the history of the country, and the region, I hope to provide an insight which gives a better understanding of the articulations between the global and the local. At the same time I emphasise the importance of remembering the past which is often brought forward by traumatic or violent events which place in evidence the fissures within longstanding relationships.

Anthropologists have long looked at events in order to understand continuity and rupture. Gluckman's (1958) classical work comes to mind as a prime example, but more recent ones continue on the same vein (e.g. James 1997; Hoffman and Lubkemann 2005). In his account of the inauguration of a bridge in Zululand, Gluckman describes a 'social situation' and asserts that events are 'the raw material of the anthropologist' (1958). Events become fundamental ways to address social situations and to understand them.

In presenting a study of the events of 2005 the chief preoccupation of this dissertation was with trying to establish linkages between events in Mocimboa da Praia and the situation in the country (national politics but also Mozambique's place in the world), bringing together the local and the global. There is another feature, which is the concern with placing the events in Mocimboa within the wider history of the area, and bringing in this history, and especially the memories of past events to try and understand present day events and relationships. A long-standing relationship between Makonde and Mwani has been changing throughout history and the way one group is placed with respect to the other has led to the surge of tensions throughout history, especially as a result of differing experiences of historical periods and events. This thesis, though clearly divided in chapters ordered chronologically has a thematic progression as well. It can be divided into three main themes or parts. Part I comprises the introductory chapter and chapter II and provides the context for the district and the background of relationships established, while defining the thematic focus of the thesis and general theoretical approaches.

Chapters III and IV provide insights into different forms of resistance and experiences of the colonial period, which will later form part of discourses and narratives of the past, while being used to justify animosities and rifts between the

peoples living in the district of Mocimboa da Praia. The various forms of resistance during the colonial period – from avoidance and escape to overt fighting – have shaped, as I have shown, opposing experiences and memories, which are constantly referred to when addressing present-day relationships, stereotypes, social and political options and positions.

Chapters V and VI provide a discussion of the post-colonial period and of the reactions to government policies, the civil war and the period following the peace agreements. In these chapters I discuss the ever-evolving relationships between Mwani and Makonde, their experience of politics and the differing allegiances this has led to.

The final two chapters focus more directly on the riots of 2005. In chapter VII I set the scene for the events, by providing the background of divisions in Mocimboa da Praia which are most directly related to the violence. Chapter VIII provides the discussion of the riots, and places the violence within the more general theoretical approaches to sudden violence.

The articulation between the historical construction of identity of Mwani and Makonde, and distinctive narratives of this history and memories of past events, form the core of present day relationships between the groups especially when it concerns political allegiance and the growing resentment on the part of those who feel themselves removed from politics and access to the state.

The understanding of what politics means and what the state is are an important part of the events. Understandings of democracy, of voting rights and legitimacy were all manipulated by Frelimo and Renamo in the run up to the elections and in its aftermath. They were also strongly associated with the local history and especially with the long term definition of identity and the establishment of difference over

time. When these became mixed with political contest and with discourses which made use of past events, allegiances, and historical schisms they created the circumstances that explain the violence to some extent.

In this thesis I argued against the essentializing of ethnicity on the grounds that ethnicity is constructed and the issues in the defined categories are changing according to historical period and circumstance. In order to make this argument I investigated the different ways in which Mwani and Makonde have been constructing their identities, especially during the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. The way history has been experienced by these groups has changed their expressions and assertions of identity and has led them to define these differently from what they had in the past. Though the final chapters focus on present day relationships between the groups, there is a constant preoccupation with history, especially in the way it is experienced and remembered differently by both groups.

The way in which memory shapes the boundaries between Makonde and Mwani and their understanding of each other remains a central focus of this study. These boundaries have been flexible and are understood differently at different points. What constitutes them, how they are marked, and how historical developments influence them are all part of the present day relationships and there is a constant reference to the past and to the ways in which this shared past is present today.

Memories and especially experiences of past events are very different for Makonde and Mwani, and are constantly alluded to and referenced to explain the present. Often they are validated by official histories, and some of the past becomes silenced, especially when it sits uneasily in the state making efforts of Frelimo.

With the population movement caused by colonial policies, the liberation struggle and civil war, the social landscape changed. As has changed the group balance in the

area, and with it there was a redefinition of personal relationships. I will address both the changes in movement throughout recent history, and the impact of resettlement after independence. I will address the importance the government attributed to the integrity of the national territory following independence, and also the changes the central policy brought to local concepts and uses of space, bearing in mind especially how this redesigned the landscape and impacted on personal relationships.

Interestingly, although people live side by side in the same villages and town they still develop closer relationships along ethnic lines. The choice of area where one will set up a house, and how one relates to the neighbourhood, and the place occupied socially are expressed in very visible form in the layout of the village. This was one aspect that was recurrent and which I observed in every village I went to. People are also very explicit about these divisions and very aware of them. During various interviews I found myself discussing politics of space, how and why this area was chosen, political pressures and implications. How this creates resentments, or helps develop relationships.

There are limits to this study, of course, and they are mostly linked with the fact that it was impossible to make it balanced with respect to Mwani and Makonde, having a stronger bias towards the Makonde. The political situation, as I pointed out in the introduction made a balanced study difficult.

Though Mocímboa is geographically and socially at the “margins of the state” (Das and Poole 2004), the policies of the Mozambican government still impact strongly the lives of those living there. The Makonde and the Mwani construct their notions of marginality in different ways (Tsing 1993). The history of the Makonde is full of this idea of being far away, elusive, and different; of being fierce, untouched and unchanged by others, and of maintaining their own uniqueness (West 2004). There is

plenty of evidence of contact and of use of the ‘other’ either by trading or raiding, and of constant contact with the colonial power (through forced labour, and then fighting) and all this has changed the idea of the Makonde as this isolated entity, living alone, and being very protective of their isolation, living in the bush. The Mwani, living as they do on the coast, have more history of contact with the wider world, but are at present the marginal ones, socially, politically, and economically. This has created ample fuel for resentment against the Makonde, and was one of the main reasons for the September riots. The Mwani allegiance with Renamo — itself a “marginal” party, both now as in the past—is a good indicator of how far they are from the political centre. The Makonde can still claim some sense of being at the political centre of things, they are more heavily involved with the administration and have traditionally been very linked with Frelimo, having been very active since the liberation struggle, and having been a part of this party since it was initially founded. The expression of one’s ethnic identity was seen in the period following independence as a sign of clear obscurantism, and tribalism that the government was trying to wipe out. The ‘new man’ that the regime tried to create after independence was a Mozambican, not a Shona, Ronga, Karanga, Makonde, Chewa, or any of the other various ethnic groups that exist in the country. He or she was not traditionalist, feudalist, tribalist, all almost swear words under the regime. Only in the 1990s did the government become more open to accepting the cultural diversity, and richness of the country. Before that cultural diversity was usually reduced to the folkloric elements. Politically things started to change by the late 1980s, when Frelimo, decided to change their policies, in face of overwhelming problems. The war was not showing signs of decreasing at this time, in spite of the weaker support granted by the South African government to the rebels, and some of the policies implemented by

Frelimo were considered to be the cause for the increased support Renamo was gaining in the country, so there was time for a change. The peace accords settled the options, elections were held, and have been since then with regularity – although some argue that Mozambique is now an elected one party state, since power has stayed in Frelimo's hands since the first elections held in 1994.

Though with other peoples description of their origin (Turton 1996; Parkin 1991) there is an inability to identify the place where one comes from and where the group originated, with both Makonde and Mwani, there is a strong memory of the place each group 'owns'. This changes the claims to belonging to the place the Makonde are now migrating in larger numbers and where they have to interact with the 'owners' of that landscape.

The articulation of all these elements of history lead to a better understanding of the tensions and relationships which made way for the riots in 2005, and the fraught relationship between Makonde and Mwani, mediated through historical events, differing experiences and the memories this build. A relationship with a distant, but present central state and a perceived advantage given to the newcomers builds space for friction and can, when instrumentalised lead to violence.

In the post riots period this resentment and the ways in which it is developed has led to anxious relationships between Makonde and Mwani and occasional fears of a repetition of the violence. During the year following the riots there were various allusions to possible demonstrations and more violence. Two years after the riots, and with elections taking place again, the Makonde I met were anxious and discussing possible ways to deal with more violence. This was generally associated with memories of the relationship between the groups and different experiences and understandings of the past.

This is still a very forgotten part of the country, very detached and a much less developed than the south. Only recently did signs of ‘development’ start to appear. A new secondary school opened in 2006, with an impressive building and many students from outside town, now teaching students up to the 12th grade. The old hospital from the colonial period will be refurbished and expanded, and a new centre for the teaching of health related courses. There are plans for the extension of 30 de Junho, what will for now still be part of the neighbourhood, but will eventually become a separate neighbourhood. The plans include a new market, a football pitch, a primary school.

Recent news on the discovery of oil in the basin of the Rovuma river could point towards a rapid change in the district. The already tense and fragile relationship between the groups inhabiting the town could be further complicated by rapid economic change, and the influx of people from elsewhere to work in the oil industry (in case this proves to be commercially viable) which therefore makes this dissertation and the themes discussed here all the more timely when addressing Mozambican transformations.

In early September 2010 Maputo was once again shaken by violent riots (the last had taken place in 2008) and there was much discussion of its causes. The immediate cause pointed was a rise in food prices. Though different in nature, scale and cause, if investigated the riots of 2010 would also provide insight into economic relationships and understanding of politics. Riots often provide, through sudden violence insights into history, politics and group relationships.

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