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**Dissertation
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Science University of
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**Local Powers and Decentralization in
Southern Mozambique:
The Case of the Administrative Post of
Mocumbi**

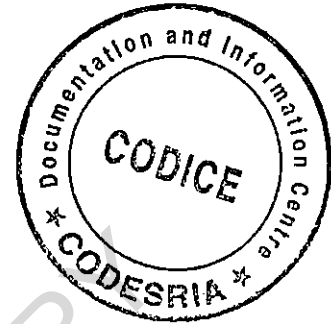**September 2004**

Local Powers and Decentralization in Southern Mozambique:
The Case of the Administrative Post of Mocumbi

By Euclides Gonçalves (GNCEUC001)

A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of
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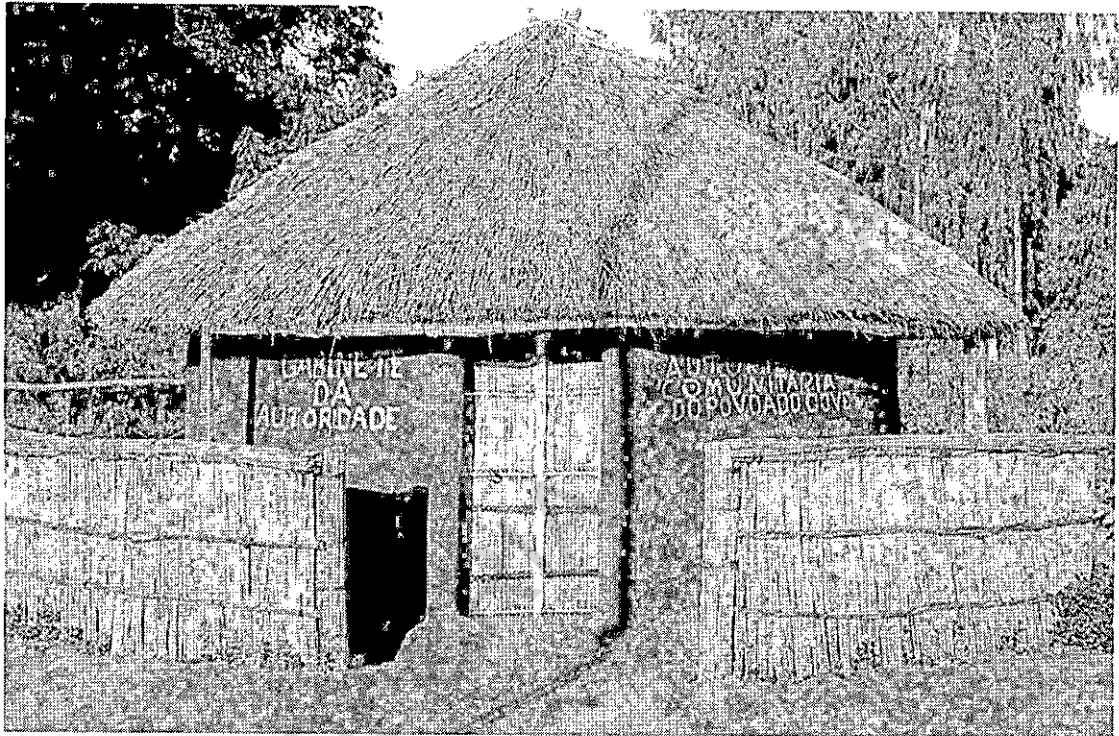**University of Cape Town**

September 2004

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works of the other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced

Signature: _____ Date: September 2004

Office of the community leader representing government's new decentralization policy in Cove, Mocumbi.

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Abstract

This dissertation is about the emergence of old and new political actors such as *régulos*, returnees and NGOs in Mocumbi, Southern Mozambique and the local appropriation of a neo-liberal democratic discourse. It explores local power dynamics in the context of post-war democratization and decentralization policies in Mozambique and provides historical evidence that suggests the centrality of family elders in local politics in Mocumbi. Due, in part, to the predominance of scattered settlements and abundance of land in this part of the country, colonial and post colonial administrative structures have respectively proved ineffective in extending Portuguese control, promoting rural development or democratising the socialist party state, instead - all external power structures have been reshaped and appropriated locally.

It further suggests that the lack of clarity in the decree 15/2000 which introduces community leaders further complicated the fluid and multiple local political arenas and fueled long-standing power disputes between chiefs, newly elected community leaders and local government officials. Elites composed of returnees who had access to colonial education and migrant workers who have succeeded outside Mocumbi are shown to be influential figures in the local political arenas as they have material and symbolic resources acquired outside Mocumbi.

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Abbreviations

AHM - Mozambique National Archive

ARPAC - Archive of Cultural Heritage

CEA/UEM - Centre for African Studies-Eduardo Mondlane University

FRELIMO – Mozambique Liberation Front

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization

OMM – Mozambican Women Organization

RENAMO – Mozambique National Resistance

UNHCR - Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

WFP – World Food Programme

Glossary

Cabo – Chief, higher authority in the settlement, also referred to as 'chief of land.'

Chibalo - Forced labour.

Chizinda - Incoma or *regulo*'s main house from where he rules.

Curandeiros - Traditional healers.

Djoni - Johannesburg (but said of South Africa in general).

Incoma - Earliest designation for pre-colonial chief, generally referred to the settlement founder.

Inganacana - Settlement headman, plays a role similar to that of the district headman.

Kuphalha - A ritual to show respect to the ancestors which is performed in different important occasions in the life of individuals and groups such as before the beginning of a new agricultural season, after the birth of a child and before a long trip.

Lowolo - Bride wealth gifts.

Machamba - Crop field where maize, beans, rice, cassava and other crops are grown.

Machongo - Fertile alluvial soil, found alongside streams.

Madota - Male elders; council that settles disputes and assist the chief.

Mafolhana - Illegal border crossers.

Milando – Quarrel, court case or dispute.

Mu hombe - Big man (see *wa hombe*).

Nhadibandze - Settlement sub-headman, usually former *mu hombe* whose influence grew beyond his sub-settlement.

Nfumba - Guest, visitor.

Nsikati - Girlfriend.

N'anga - Spirit Medium; diviner-healer.

Nyumba - House, hut, mother-centred corporate unit in house-property complex.

Rhali - Cassava first dried and then grated into granules.

Régulo - Colonial traditional chief, local king.

Regulado - Chiefdom.

Ton-ton-to - Home distilled alcoholic drink from various fruits such as orange and pineapple.

Wa hombe - Big men (plural of *mu hombe*). Referred to figures of authority who achieved the status mainly through the ability to listen and settle disputes. Also used to refer to respected people and wealthy men.

Xibongo - Clan name, surname.

Acknowledgments

I am indebted to Dr. Owen B. Sichone who supervised all the stages of my work. His mentorship during my three years at the University of Cape Town was vital for the completion of this work. I also would like to thank him for encouraging me to take other academic endeavours that had an impact on my academic and social style. All the errors, of omission or commission, are, however, my sole responsibility.

I owe my greatest debt to all my informants in Mocumbi for their time, patience and precious information. I am especially grateful to Donaldo Guambe (ti Dom) who since 2002 showed interest in the subject of my research and did the work of an interpreter in most of my interviews in Cicopi and to Francisco Nhalusse for being my host since the first time I visited Mocumbi. I extend thanks to both Guambe and Nhalusse's families for being my families in Mocumbi. I owe much of my spoken Cicopi to *tia* (untie) Clara and *avó* (grandmother) Regina. *Ni bonguile ngoto* (thank you very much). I am thankful to A. Chiure, M. Issufo Carimo and Natália Beira for being my hosts in Mahalamba, Nhapadiane and Inhambane city respectively.

I have benefited immensely from discussions with lecturers and colleagues in different departments at the University Eduardo Mondlane. My appreciation goes to my undergraduate colleagues who formed the *Circle of BIP*: Celso Inguane, Edite Cumbe and Sandra Manuel. I would like to thank my former lecturers at Eduardo Mondlane University for the encouragement and support: Alexandre Mate and José Teixeira in the department of Archaeology and Social Anthropology; Gil Lauriciano at UFICS-UEM and Dr. Teresa Cruz e Silva at the Centre for African Studies. I extend my thanks to Dr. David Hedges and Dr. Gerhard Liesegang who gave me access to their personal databases and suggested further literature in South Africa. I am also thankful to my friends Quitério Langa and Rufus Maculuve with whom I discussed fieldwork when I was in Maputo.

I would like to thank my colleagues at the University of Cape Town, Margarida Paulo, Johane Zonjo, and Sandra Manuel who discussed my research project. A special thanks to Detlev Kridge at Wits University for sharing my fieldwork frustrations and for hosting me in Johannesburg. I also would like to express my appreciation to Dr. Thiven Reddy in

the department of Political Studies for introducing me to the political science literature on democratisation and regime change. Thank you to the administrative assistant in the department of Social Anthropology, Colleen Petersen, for all the advice, especially for constantly making me aware of the deadlines.

Finally, special thanks are extended to my family: Yuran, Rui, Ducho, Paulina and Gonsa and to my partner Sandra Matanyaire. Thank you for your unconditional support.

Organizational Structure of the Administrative Post of Mocumbi

Structure of the Administrative Post of Mocumbi
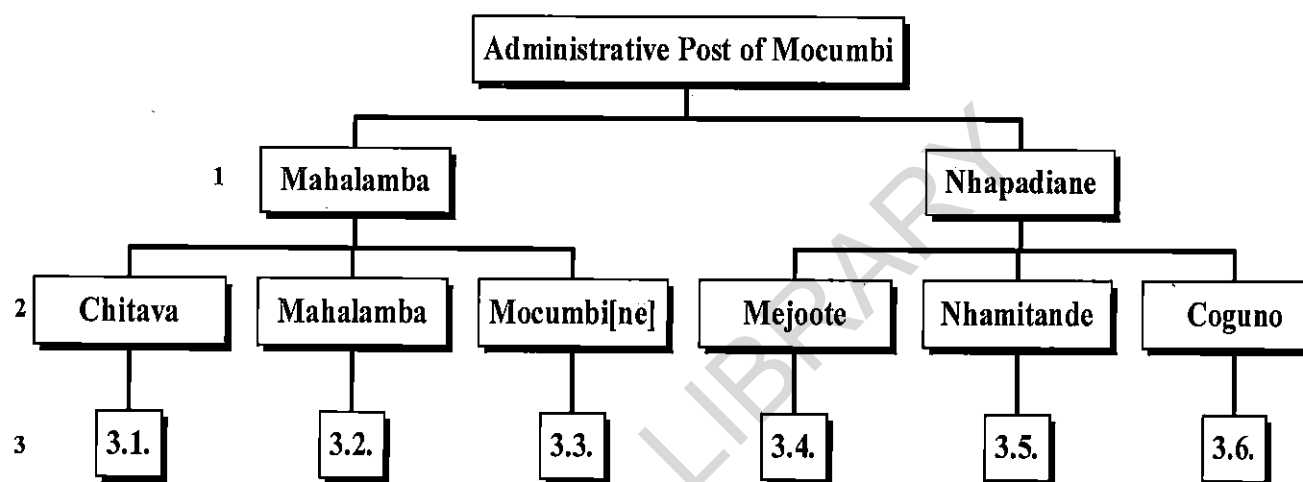
1. Localities (Localidades)

2. Areas (Circulos)

3. Settlements (Povoados)

3. 1. Chitava: Chitava, Ussaca, Massita and Fangoro

3.2. Mahalamba: Mahalamba, Nhatava, Chacane, Nhacuaha, Marrucula and Dombola

3.3 Mocumbi: Cove, Muenda, Malene, Chisseve, Ziqui-Limao, Gonzana, Nhalivilo, Mangunhana and Chambá

3.4. Mejoote: Mejoote, Cuaiaia, Boquiço and Manjongota

3.5. Nhamitande: Nhapadiane, Mussana, Ancoca, Naíla, Mavale and Senduza

3.6 Coguno: Mungongo, Dalala, Chissaca, Cúcua and Machambo
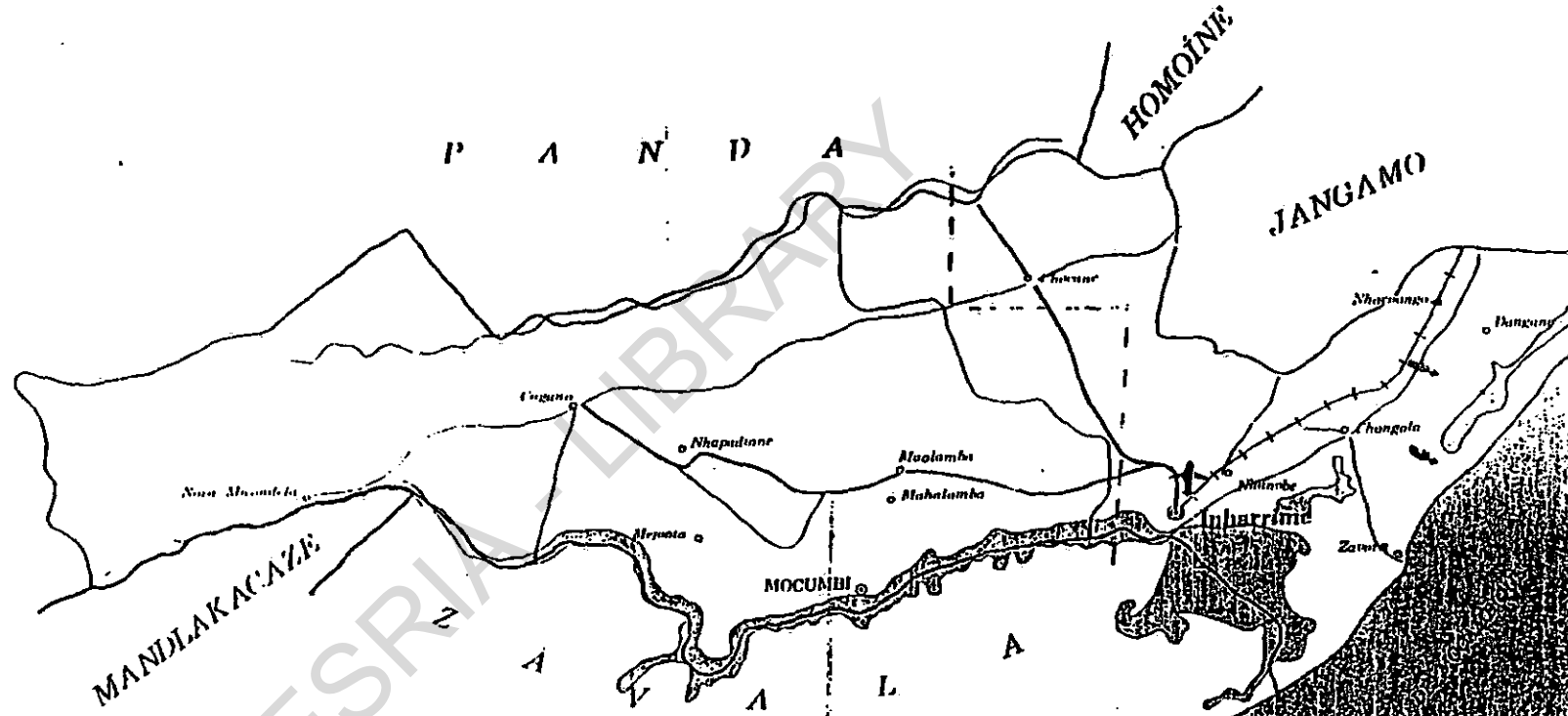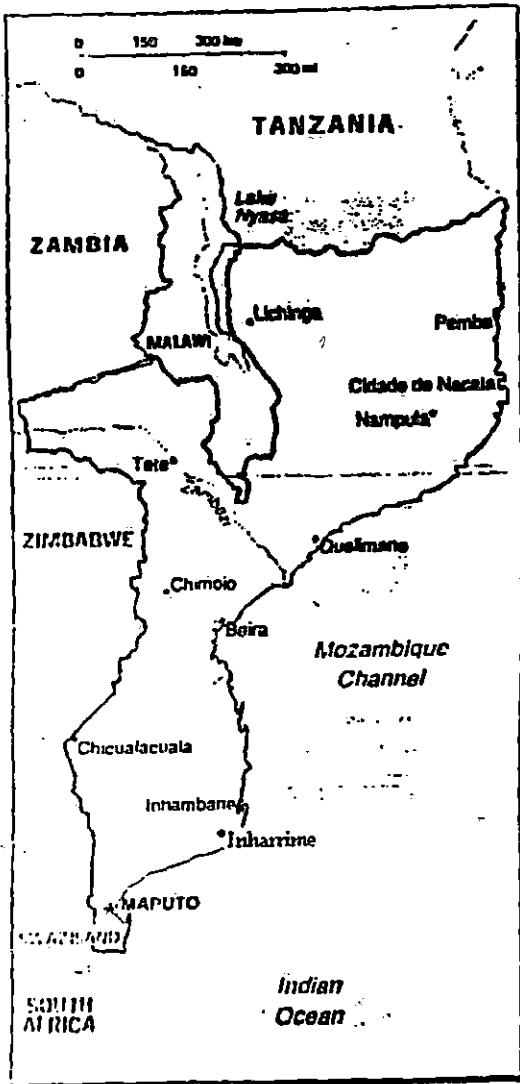
LEGENDA *Legend*

	SEDE DE DISTRITO	*District Capital*
	SEDE DE POSTO	*Admin Post Headquarters*
	POVOAÇÃO COMERCIAL	*Trading Centre*
	LIMITE DE PROVÍNCIA	*Provincial Boundary*
	LIMITE DE DISTRITO	*District Boundary*

- - - - - Border with Post of Inharrime

	LIMITE DE POSTO	*Admin Post Boundary*
✈	PISTA DE ATERRAGEM	*Landing Strip*
—+—+—	CAMINHO DE FERRO	*Railway*
	ESTRADAS PRINCIPAIS	*Main Roads*
	OUTRAS ESTRADAS E CAMINHOS	*Other Roads*

Map of the Administrative Post of Mocumbi showing the seats of the *regulados* Guambá Grande, Guambá Pequeno and Mocumbine

F A N D A

HOMOÍNE

JANGAMO

Guambá Grande

Guambá Pequeno

MANDLAKAZE

Inharrime

Mocumbine

Indian Ocean

Legend

- Seat of regulado
- ——— District border
- Border with Inharrime
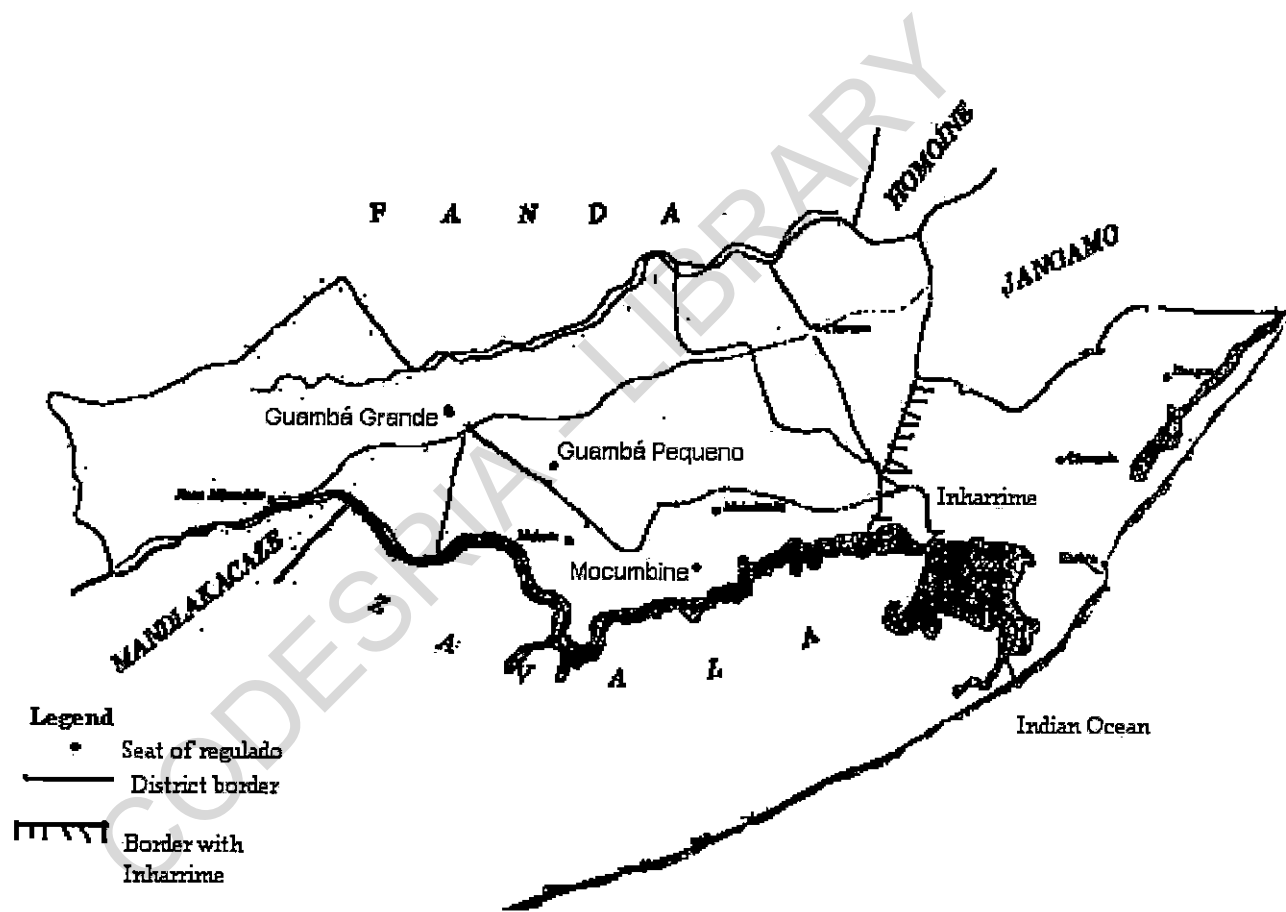
Chapter one

Introduction

1.1. Background

Following the adoption of a democratic constitution in 1990 and the subsequent first multi-party democratic general elections in 1994, the Mozambican government began – with the first municipal elections in 1998 - the decentralization reform. FRELIMO's adoption of the decentralization reform resulted from a double imposition: On the one hand, the decentralization process was requested by RENAMO during the peace negotiations in 1992 (Ribot 2002), as RENAMO hoped that it would keep the areas under its administration during the civil war (1976-1992). On the other hand, a more powerful push for decentralization came from the international donor community who imposed decentralization as a condition for aid (Sogge 1997).

Following the World Bank (1989) study on governance, democratic reform was designed to 'roll back' the state and allow and promote the growth of a strong civil society. The idea of civil society –understood in its classical sense of those institutions that are between families and the state, at the same time, distinct and opposed to the state – has been put under scrutiny by scholars who question its applicability in Africa and elsewhere (Chazan 1982, Osaghae 1994, Hann 1996, Comaroff and Comaroff 1999, Ferguson 2004). In fact, it is due to its ubiquitous character that the idea of civil society is so strong and has led to continuous research programs and administrative reforms in African governments.

Like elsewhere in Africa,[1] decentralization in the rural areas in Mozambique involved the incorporation of chiefs in local government. The process was preceded by a debate on the role of traditional authority in local government. On the one hand, detractors of traditional authority criticized the male centered hereditary character of the institution that did not allow women to compete for office and oppressed the youth (Keulder 1998). In Mozambique, FRELIMO's Member of Parliament, Sergio Viera, best represented the group that supported this position the in public debate. On the other hand, a group of

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[1] Mback 2000, Kelsall 2000, Beck 2001, Biercshenk and Olivier de Sardan 2003 and Nyamnjoh 2003.

scholars working for the Ministry of State Administration suggested that traditional authority was an inherently democratic institution with popular support in rural areas and it represented an authentic 'Africaness'. Lundin and Machava (1995, 1998) are the most well known representatives of this group.

Unable to break with the colonial legacy (Mamdani 1996) FRELIMO adopted a gradual decentralization reform beginning with the transformation of the urban areas and some districts into municipalities. Chiefs and community leaders are supposed to represent civil society in the rural areas. After a long hesitation[2] (since 1994) and academic debates[3] about the recognition of traditional authority the government began, in 2002, the process of formally establishing community leaders. The process includes local elections and the distribution of national symbols (a sash, insignia and the national flag) replicating colonial practice. Locally elected community leaders are believed to be able to better represent the state at the local level while, at the same time, they will act as a mobilizing force for local development initiatives.

1.1.1 Aim and scope

Against this background of the Mozambican democratic transition, the study aims to assess the impact of the neo-liberal decentralization reform in rural Mozambique. The study draws on the case of Mocumbi, an administrative post in the southern part of the Inhambane province, an area where ethnographic research has not been done since independence. Most of the debate on decentralization and rural politics in Mozambique draws on the experience of the central and Northern provinces.

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[2] Weimer and Fandrych (1999) and Artur and Virtanen (1999) documented the successive reverses in passing the law of municipalities and the law that recognizes traditional authority.
[3] See for instance Roesch 1992, 1993, Alexander 1994, 1997, Dinerman, 1994, Pereira 1999, and Harrison 2000 and 2002.

1.2. Theoretical orientation

In the preface to *African Political Systems* Fortes and Evans-Pritchard noted that "many dogmatic opinions are held on the subject of African political organization and are even made use of in administrative practice; but no one has examined this aspect of African society on a broad, comparative basis" (1940: vii). More than five decades later Karlström noted, "despite recent resurgence of interest in democratization in Africa, the systematic study of local democracy has barely begun" (1996:485). This section discusses, in brief, relevant literature for the study of local-level politics in Mozambique. It also seeks to make operational the notion of 'local powers', the key concept throughout the dissertation.

Maybe the best way to briefly discuss the study of politics in Africa is to engage in a critical discussion with a review article that proposes a new approach to the study of politics in Africa. James Ferguson's (2004) chapter in a recently published companion to the anthropology of politics can best serve the purpose of my discussion on the relevant approaches to local-level politics. Ferguson suggested that the study of African Politics needs to go beyond the fashionable dichotomy between "the State" and "Civil society". Drawing on Foucault's (1999) notion of governmentality Ferguson has called for an "ethnography of processes and practices of encompassment, an ethnographic approach that would center the processes through which the exercise of governmentality (by state and non-state actors) is both legitimated and undermined by reference to claims of superior spatial reach and vertical height" (2004: 397).

At first, Ferguson's project is appealing but I am in profound disagreement with his methods of research and the general approach that he advocates. First, in going beyond "the State" and "Civil Society" Ferguson (2004)[4] seems to throw the baby out with the bath water as he sees the ideas of state, civil society, international, national and local politics as of less importance in favour of his transnational approach of encompassment of governmentality. I contend that the notion of "levels" is important as I distinguish local powers from national and international powers. Second, in his quest to dismiss altogether old for new concepts, Ferguson fails to see continuity thereby failing to learn from history. I suggest that history is an important tool for the understanding of local

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[4] Ferguson's article is a developed version of an earlier essay on the subject. See (Ferguson and Gupta 2002).

level politics as in Mocumbi the political economy since colonial period has contributed for the prevalence of particular political arenas.

Ferguson begins his essay with a review of the nation building approach in which he distinguished two levels of political integration. On the one hand, the local or the sub-national level, in which the form of political integration was referred to as 'tribal organization' or 'traditional African society.' "[T]hese supposed 'givens' of African political life were thought to include structures of kinship, community and (in some formulations) ethnicity" (2004:386). On the other hand, is the national level, where the nation-building project sought to override primordial 'tribal organization' with little or no success as 'failed nation-building' saw the resurgence of primordial 'tribal' affiliations. "Above the national level, finally appears the international, understood largely as (1) a source of 'aid,' a helping hand in nation-building; and (2) a utopian image of the union of the nation states, with the key symbol of the UN as the promise of the universality of the nation form" (idem: 387).

After deconstructing the nation-building approach Ferguson does the same exercise with the fashionable idea of civil society and he notes:

> The "new" state and society approach is often posed as a simple opposition to the "old" nation-building (or "statist") model. But the two paradigms are not as different as might at first appear. In particular, the state and society paradigm uses the same division of politics into analytic "levels" as does the "nation-building" one, altering only the valuation of their roles. The "national" level is now called "the state" the "local" level "civil society."... The international, too, appears in both paradigms, but with largely opposite functions. International agencies, especially financial ones, appear in the state-and-society view less as state benefactors and providers of "aid" than as the policemen of states – regulating their functions and rolling back excesses through "structural adjustment" (2004: 388).

Finally, Ferguson suggests that both the notion of the state (the 'top') and civil society (the 'bottom') have been challenged by international organizations. From private companies that preceded the colonial state such as the Cecil Rhodes directed British South Africa Company in Zambia, IMF and World Bank impositions of structural adjustments in Africa to 'grassroots' 'civil' international organizations such as the World Vision International and 'local' Christian development organizations are all political entities that belong to the *new* transnational apparatus of governmentality.

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Ferguson's reading of Foucault (1999) is partial and made to fit his scholarship of 'desire'. If the ultimate end of government, as Foucault (ibidem) says, is to control the population it seems to me that the family is the starting point and, in the practice of everyday life, the control of families is more related to government installed community leaders than to the transnational forms of governmentality that Ferguson talks about. In his analysis of globalization, Friedman criticized current transnational approaches in the following terms:

> The new critique, which seeks to undo the old categories, consists largely of inserting the prefix 'trans-'into all such formerly closed terms. Thus: trans-local, trans-cultural, trans-national all stresses the focus on that which is beyond border, all borders. The core of all this vocabulary may well be located in a certain identity crises among a specific group of intellectuals, as it is expressed in its purest form in the work of Judith Butler (1993) and her discourse of post-gender (2002: 26).

In their quest to *trans*cend everything, starting with structuralism, transnational scholars forget to learn from history and are not able to see continuity. Ultimately, as Friedman (2002: 33) noted "less than 2 per cent of the world's population is on the move, internationally. What about these sedentary masses, most of whom have no access to the Internet?" Friedman (2004) later showed that the very idea that everything is new, and globalization is a completely new era, is not new.

Distancing itself from the transnational approach represented in the above discussion by Ferguson (2004) this study begins from a position that acknowledges the importance but not the determinacy of party and state performance at the local level as Bratton (1980) demonstrated for rural Zambia. Neither decentralization nor local chiefs are new phenomenon in Mocumbi. Both date as far back as to the colonial period, hence the need for an historical and comparative analysis. The analysis puts emphasis on informal politics (Chazan 1982) combined with a practice theory Bourdieu (1977) that puts emphasis at the same time on the nature of human action in relationship with structure and culture of a particular society. As Abélèles noted:

> Analysing power 'where it is exercised' offers the advantage of setting the state in perspective in the basis of real-life political practices. Trying to take into consideration the exercise of power and its roots in a complex soil in which society and culture are inextricably bound up can, in fact, enable us to

understand politics better, not as a separate sphere but as the crystallization of activities modeled by a culture which provides its own code for behaviour of human beings" (1997: 321).

My concept of local powers owes much to Swartz's (1966, 1968) notion of political arenas as the social and cultural space in which a political field is located. Hence my notion of local powers can be made operational if it is taken to refer to: political action that takes place in the local political arenas by drawing on both local and global resources that are perceived as relevant in the society concerned – in this case Mocumbi.

1.2.1 Research questions

From the theoretical background outlined in the previous section this research asks the following questions:

a) To what extent has the ongoing democratic decentralization process transformed the configuration of local power relations in Mocumbi?

b) How has the decentralization process, in particular the introduction of community leaders, been perceived by the inhabitants of rural Mocumbi?

1.3. Method of data collection

This study is based on nine weeks of ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Mocumbi from mid November 2003 to mid February 2004. I visited Mocumbi four times for periods from eight and to twenty days each. In Mocumbi I lived in the house of the *chefe do posto* (chief of the administrative post of Mocumbi). The house of the *chefe do posto* is locally referred to as 'the palace' in allusion to the house of the highest local authority. As expected, staying in 'the palace' meant that I was living in much better conditions than the average citizen of Mocumbi. However, there were days in which 'things were hard', especially when the local administration delayed paying the salaries of civil servants.

I used different techniques for data collection. My prime technique was participant observation. I took part in Mocumbi's family and public daily activities and attended most of the social events that I was informed of, from church on Sundays to marriages and rallies organized by local government officials and NGO's. In the meetings and

rallies I was often introduced this way: "This is Euclides Gonçalves our son who is studying in Cape Town[5], South Africa. He is here to study *a wutomi ni mahanhela ya khale* (life in general and how people here lived and live). He wants to write a book about Mocumbi so that our history can be known by our children." Then I would be asked to say something. In my broken Cicopi mixed with Portuguese I would repeat what had been said about my work and maybe add one or two lines. Then a person from the assembly would ask what my *xibongo* (surname) was. I would then explain: "My grandfather from my maternal side is Paulo Lucas Wetela Guambe from Mussana and my late grandfather from my paternal side was Silvestre Filipe Gonçalves, interpreter in the colonial administration of Inharrime." In that way I was able to meet people who had known my grandparents and were willing to talk to me about 'life' in Mocumbi.

The strategy of accessing the field through formal authorities like the *chefe do posto* and, subsequently, *régulos* and FRELIMO party secretaries had the advantage of making me known to a wider population in a short period of time. However, in the long run, my research began to be limited to the formal and public political arenas. As Foucault noted "one must analyze institutions from the standpoint of power relations, rather than vice-versa, and that the fundamental point of anchorage of the relationships, even if they are embodied and crystallized in an institution, is to be found outside the institution" (1983: 222). With Foucault's words in mind I was troubled by my ignorance in relation to the group of people that never attended public meetings. I would have wanted to know who they were and why they did not attend rallies. I wondered who played the drums I heard at night (traditional healers or Zion Christian Church). The answer to my questions came as time passed.

Formal interviews were conducted in Cicopi and Portuguese. Donaldo Guambe, my local colleague served as an interpreter for the interviews in Cicopi. I interviewed elders, young and adult men and women, *régulos*, local government officials, community leaders, FRELIMO party secretaries, teachers, priests and medical staff at the Mocumbi hospital. For the Cicopi spelling I adopted the orthography commonly used in the documents

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[5] The *chefe do posto* and the community leader always emphasized Cape Town [kaypitown] to distinguish between the South Africa that everyone knows [Johannesburg and Durban] and that place that "is in South Africa but very far!" This would always find agreement among those who have been to South Africa who would always repeat "kaypitown? Eish."

consulted in the elaboration of this work. Local terms such as *wa hombe* (big men) have multiple meanings and each should be considered in the context in which they are used. Informal conversations constituted a major source of data. Although I sought to talk to both men and women my data have a male bias. This was, in part, due to the fact that my research project in 2004 was associated with my previous project in 2002 in which I was more interested in the history of the *régulos* and succession disputes. Chieftainship was seen as men's business. Donaldo advised that "women don't know about the history of the *régulos* because they do not have a good memory." In spite of *chefe do posto* and Donaldo's efforts to explain that my research project had changed slightly and was then about "*a wutomi* [life in general]" my research was most of the times associated with men's affairs.

My Cicopi teacher, *awó* (grandmother) Regina and her daughter *tia* (untie) Clara were very good informants. *Awó* Regina would always say, "You will learn [Cicopi] faster once I find you an *nsikati* (girlfriend) who can tell you what is this, this and this" [pointing to her breasts and genitals] – then we would both laugh. Other female informants were women who brew and sold alcoholic drinks.[6] Donaldo and I would always invite them to join us in the drinking and while we drank we talked about diverse issues from men and women who abandon their families to live with a single partner only to be kicked out later and return to the original families, people getting divorced, babies who cried all night because their spirits wanted the real fathers, the local priest who "should and will go" because of his disdain and racist behaviour towards the natives and the Maputo based local *wa hombe* (big man) who built small palaces in Mocumbi with sand and bricks imported from South Africa.

As I became familiar and closer to some of the informants I collected life histories. On four occasions life histories were conducted in a formal manner. For people I met and talked to often, their life trajectories just came up as a result of my interest about a particular aspect of their lives. Then on exploring a particular life event, they would end up telling part of their life history. In that sense, it is more appropriate to talk about short life histories or life trajectories since I seldom returned to the same informant to get clarification. South Africa was a common point of reference in the interviews with migrant workers. For example, an informant who has worked in South Africa as a painter

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[6] Except for the shebeens where *ton-ton-to* (home distilled alcoholic drink) was not sold, women sold alcoholic drinks in all the places I went for a drink in Mocumbi

since 1964, knowing that I was studying in Cape Town said in English: "Oh... how are you doing? What did you say you are studying?" This particular conversation went on in English-Portuguese-Cicopi. Other two informants began by making reference to the areas where they worked "I was in Potchefstroom, do you know where it is?" or "I was in Durban-Natal..." then followed their epic journeys to *djoni* (Johannesburg but said of South Africa in general).

Archival research prior to the fieldwork was conducted in ARPAC (Archive of Cultural Heritage) and AHM (Mozambique National Archive) and at the CEA/UEM (Centre for African Studies-Eduardo Mondlane University). During fieldwork and breaks in between my stay in Mocumbi I did further research in government institutions in Mocumbi, Inharrime, Inhambane and Maputo city.

I must conclude this section by mentioning that whenever I asked about *régulos'* genealogies most of the informants made reference to some sort of written record. From forefathers' autobiographies to colonial anthropologists' records of local genealogies, all were used to support genealogical arguments, as my work was perceived to be able to impact on the process of recognition of community authorities. Geertz (1973) noted that what anthropologists do is to write ethnographies and in doing so they inscribe culture. I acknowledge that local actors and government might use this research to achieve goals not foreseeable at the moment and this raises research ethical issues. In addressing part of the ethical issues that emerge from this kind of research, in most of the cases, I do not use the real names of the people I interviewed or I make reference to. When necessary I also tried to protect informant's identity by referring to "Mocumbi" generally and not specifying locality.

1.4. Study Area

Mocumbi is an administrative post (district sub-division) situated in the hinterland of Inharrime district in the southern part of the Inhambane province. Moving north from Maputo, Inharrime is the second district in the Inhambane province, after the district of Zavala - popularized by Hugh Tracey's[7] study of the music in that area. The district of Inharrime distance 469 kilometres from Maputo and is administratively divided into two administrative posts: Inharrime (district seat), situated along the coast and Mocumbi situated in the hinterland. The administrative post of Mocumbi is 35 km from the district seat. Traveling by bus on the sandy road from the district seat the trip can take up to two hours depending on which part of Mocumbi one is going to. Alternatively one can take locally made fishing boats that cross the Inharrime River from the Zavala side of the riverbank to Mocumbi. In favourable weather conditions this trip can take between 35 to 50 minutes.

The administrative post of Mocumbi consists of two localities: Mahalamba and Nhapadiane. These localities are in turn divided into three areas (circles) each: Mocumbi, Mahalamba and Chitava in Mahalamba and Nhapadiane, Mejoote and Coguno in Nhamitande[8]. Finally the areas are sub-divided into thirty-three settlements[9] of between 30 and 300 households. The total population of the administrative post of Mocumbi[10] was estimated to be 21 363 inhabitants from which 9 426 are men and 11 937 are women.[11] Mocumbi covers an area of 1 629 square kilometres and the population density presents regional variations according to the availability of natural resources and communication facilities. Mocumbi has two natural borders with neighbouring districts. In the north the plain fields of the Inhassune River mark the border with the district of Panda and in the south the already mentioned Inharrime River with the district of Zavala. In the west it borders with the district of Panda. In the southwest is the district of Mandlacaze and to northeast the districts of Homoine and Jangamo. Finally, to the east is the administrative post of Inharrime where the district seat is located.

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[7] Tracey 1948.
[8] See figure 1
[9] See structure of the administrative post of Mocumbi on page xv.
[10] Hereafter I shall use the name Mocumbi to refer to the administrative post of Mocumbi. For the *regulado* of Mocumbi I shall use the commonly employed name Mocumbine. This will allow me to make a distinction between the (Mocumbi) area that corresponds to the present administrative division and the (Mocumbine) area that corresponds to the former and newly recognized *regulado*.
[11] Plano de Desenvolvimento do Distrito de Inharrime, 2003-2005.

In Mocumbi there is no running water or electricity. People rely on wells and boreholes as water sources. In some areas such as Boquiço, Mussana, Senduza, Naíla and Ancoca water is scarce and people have to walk up to four kilometres to access the nearest water source. The state and different NGO's acting in Mocumbi have been drilling boreholes but many of these boreholes do not last long. Boreholes are damaged more as a result of technical failure than people's misuse. While doing fieldwork I witnessed a case of a borehole that never got to function and another that operated for not more than a month. In fact I once travelled with an engineer who had been supervising the drilling of boreholes in Mocumbi and he revealed to me that sometimes the boreholes were not made of the best material and other times the water level was so low that the boreholes could not last long. However media reports always refer to people's misuse as the main reason why boreholes do not last long in the rural areas. In Mocumbi a small group of individuals own electricity generators.

A local former senior government member provides electricity for the Mission Church and to the contiguous hospital four hours a day (from 6 to 10pm). Many small shops and shebeens use solar panels and car batteries to generate electricity for the radios that play loud cassettes of national artists such as Armandinho, Avelino Mondlane, Félix Moya, Xidiminguana and Resiana Jaime. Resiana Jaime's recent release *Mihumbo* was a big hit in Mocumbi and also in the provincial capital Inhambane during my fieldwork period. She sings in Cicopi and Portuguese and some of the most popular songs frontally address issues such as the mystery around the death of Samora Machel, love, infidelity and how cars and cellular phones are keeping husbands away from wives. The success of the songs might have to do also with the fact she puts together rhythms associated with music from South Africa and the fashionable *zouk* twist from the French Antilles. International artists like Leonardo Dembo, John Chibadura (Zimbabwe), Thomas Chauke, Peny-Peny, Lucky Dube, Soul Brothers, Brenda Fassie, Mandoza (South Africa) and Filipe Monteiro (Cape Verde) were played in the different settlements as one travels around Mocumbi. In December 2003 the owner of one of the local shebeens in Cove 'rediscovered' the Swahili Kings.[12]

Mocumbi has a good reception for the national and provincial radios. Some shebeen owners never missed the 12:30 pm news on the national radio. While I did fieldwork in

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[12] A compilation of Kenyan music from the 1970s

Mocumbi people followed three main issues on the radio. First, the municipal elections [13]and the drama about which party would get more 'seats' in Beira province (in which RENAMO enjoys popular support), and how many seats RENAMO would get in Gaza (homeland for senior FRELIMO members starting with president Chissano). The second issue that kept people talking and speculating as we followed the news was the United States led 'hunt' for Saddam Hussein. The third issue was the 2004 African Cup of the Nations finals in Tunisia.

Television is a privilege of a handful of individual who can afford fuel operated electricity generators and the required DSTV dishes. However, on festive dates like national public holidays, video sessions take place in some of the local shops. There is no cellular network reception in Mocumbi although there are some spots in the higher lands where it is possible to access the network from Zavala, the district in the other side of the Inharrime River. Most bureaucrats such as agricultural extension officers, teachers, hospital staff and local administration personnel own cellular phones and have to go "network reception hunting" or to the already identified network spots when they want to receive or make calls.

Private companies provide transport services. There are daily buses that go from Inharrime (district seat) to the different parts of Mocumbi. Some of these buses come from Maputo. However in some areas it often happens that no bus comes in for one or two days, especially in the periods of low demand like after the New Year's festive season and when heavy rains make the traffic in sandy roads very difficult.

Most of the inhabitants of Mocumbi are Cicopi speakers and identify themselves as Chope. But this was not always the case. In 1941 Santos noted that "up to date the inhabitants of the *regulado* Mocumbi, as well as the *régulo* himself, Bona Pange or Sibone, call themselves Vandonge, thus in opposition to those from the south of the Inharrime River to whom they call Vatchopi (the Chopi). The Chopi from the centre and the south are not Vandonge and even among the new generations from the *regulados* of Mocumbi and Coguno the designation Vandongue has almost been obliterated, have been generally replaced by Chopi" (1941: 10). The people from this area have also referred themselves as Valoi and Langa (Matos 1973).

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[13] Mocumbi is not a municipality but some locals were interested in the outcome of the municipal elections because it was perceived as a test of FRELIMO's popularity ahead of the upcoming general elections.

There has been a debate about the origins of the Chope people who inhabit Inharrime, Zavala and north parts of the Gaza province.[14] It is beyond the scope of this study to find the 'true origins' of the people that presently inhabit Mocumbi. It suffices to say that the present inhabitants of Mocumbi have multiple origins and have mixed with previous existent groups and groups that later settled in the area. The settlement narratives of the three *regulados* in the following section are a good indication of this. Although there are different historical trajectories between the three *regulados* that make up the administrative post of Mocumbi all informants I interviewed referred to themselves as Chope.

According to oral accounts the name Chope originated from the Zulu/Nguni term *ku tchopa* that means to draw the bow. At the time of the Nguni raids the people of this area resisted the invaders using their bows and poisoned arrows. Bow and arrow are proudly mentioned when narrating battles against invaders, especially Manicusse (Sochangane) and, later, his successors Muzila and Gungunhana. Currently Cicopi is the lingua franca but people also speak Portuguese and other national languages from the neighbouring districts such as Xitsua and Bitonga.

The climate in Mocumbi is semi-tropical with very hot summers and warm winters. The land is mostly low-lying with largely sandy soils. The south of Mocumbi is dominated by the hydrographic basin of the Inharrime River and lakes that flow southwards in the direction of the River. The fertile *machongo* soil is found alongside the streams. From the river northwards there is an undulating landscape heavily wooded in the high parts and grassy in the lower parts. As one proceeds further north there are the large plain fields of the Inhassune River in the border with the district of Panda. Moving to the hinterland northwards the area is dominated by sandy-soil or 'white' earth, which is the poorest soil. It can produce groundnuts and in some areas cashew. In these areas people also hunt in the large forests from which they get meat for consumption and commercialisation.

There are no game reserves in Mocumbi. People hunt in the less inhabited areas using snares. Gazelles, wild pigs, monkeys and wild chickens are among the commonly hunted animals. There was a tradition of python hunting. I spent an afternoon with a python hunter who recalled the times he used to "master the art". His older daughter bragged of being a good python cook. Now this python hunter is a subsistence farmer and generates

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[14] See Junod 1927-9, 1936, Matos 1973, Santos 1941 and Webster 1976.

cash from selling tobacco. Fishing in the Inharrime River and in some dispersed lakes is a good form of gaining few cash. Small fish from the Inharrime River is locally called 'punished fish' (*peixe castigado*) because after being caught it is smoked then put on a stick in sets of five or ten sold and finally cooked. Bigger fish is caught when after heavy rains some of the Indian Ocean fish finds its way into the Inharrime River.

There is an emergent group of commercial farmers in Mocumbi. In general these individuals are high ranked active or retired civil servants coming from Maputo. The majority of the people in Mocumbi practice hoe subsistence agriculture usually dependent on irregular rainfalls supplemented with other sorts of income such as hunting, fishing, petty commerce and family and neighbouring social networks. Depending on the rainfalls of a particular season people grow maize, pumpkins, beans, groundnuts and tubers such as cassava and sweet potatoes. Mushrooms and leaf vegetables such as cassava and watermelons leaves are also grown. Agricultural commercialised products include beans, cashew nuts, maize, peanuts, cassava and its derivate – *rhali* (cassava first dried and then scraped into granules).

The most common fruit are cashew, mango, citrus, coconut, sugarcane, pineapple banana and *jambu* (Mulberry). *Mafurra* fruits are also used to make much appreciated cooking oil. Other fruits like mango and orange are fermented to make alcoholic drinks. The cashew fruit is squeezed to make a cashew fruit juice called *mpuelwe* that when distilled makes *sope* - an alcoholic beverage. The *jambu* is used to make the alcoholic drink that is most available throughout the year. Alcoholic drinks are also made from fermented oranges and sugarcane. The mulberry and sugar cane alcoholic drinks are the most available throughout the year. Retailers sell industrially processed gin and brandy produced in Mozambique and imported. Most of these drinks have a high volume of alcohol and very suggestive names such as Tentação (Temptation), Paradise, Caravela, (Caravel), Travel, Safari and Selvagem (Savage). Portuguese wines in cartons and plastic bottles such as Dom Barril, Bombarril, Barril do Vinhal, Terra D'Alegria and Casamor are some of the wines that circulated in Mocumbi during the period of my fieldwork.

The cashew tree is one of the important trees not only because of the commercial value of cashew nuts but also because of the social value that is attributed to the cashew fruit juice and alcoholic beverage (*mpuelwe* and *sope*). The cashew fruit season is a special

moment when friends and family get together on social drinking. There is also a sort of contest about who has the *mpwehwe* or *sope* better prepared thus attracting more people to his homestead. Usually people go around inviting each other to test the drinks in the hope that by word of mouth the quality of a person's beverage will be spread throughout the area. Socialising in drinking places is one of the activities men do after returning from the fields around 10 am. Many coconut trees died during the war period and new plantations are yet to start producing fruits.

Chapter two describes the local history of Mocumbi. It shows that historically Mocumbi has been characterised by autonomous small chiefdoms consisting of several smaller sub-chiefdoms where family elders play an important role in the local political arenas especially when it comes to the settlement of local disputes. Furthermore, the institution of the *regulado* has been transformed several times according to different historical contexts.

Chapter three analyses how three major local actors vie for power in the context of the decentralization process. It also examines the introduction of community leaders as part of the decentralization reform. I argue that local powers are diffuse and that government's introduction of community leaders further complicates the settlement of local disputes as a result of: (a) A long history of government's top-down social transformation projects, (b) Unclear division of labour among some of the major political actors.

Chapter four puts local powers in Mocumbi in the context of global dynamics. I argue against the belief that the so-called rural areas are the locus of 'traditional' power. Labour migration has historically played a role in the constitution of local elites. Furthermore mission-educated colonial elite and Maputo-based men from Mocumbi, who accumulated considerable wealth in neo-liberal Mozambique, have increasingly become important political actors as they retire or make retirement investments in the rural areas. The influence of NGO's in the local power dynamics and the appropriation of democratic discourse in conflict mediation show how politics in Mocumbi are, at the same time, local and global.

The major proposition of this dissertation is that the current decentralization process has not produced the World Bank intended reform at the local level socialist state nor has it succeeded in expanding the state control over rural subjects as was implicit in FRELIMO and RENAMO'S call for the recognition of community leaders Instead, the decentralization process has been subsumed by existing battles between local political actors. Furthermore people's perception of the process was permeated with ambiguity and scepticism as the institutionalisation of community leaders recalls the colonial exploitative regime and the failure of post-independence rural development policy. Democratic decentralization policies have to take into account local history, political tradition and how different political and administrative systems implemented since the colonial period have been locally appropriated and reshaped to serve different local-level political actors.

Chapter two

The Roots of Local Powers: History and Social Transformation in Mocumbi

2.1. Introduction

This chapter looks at the history of social and political organization in Mocumbi since the pre-colonial period. It examines the impact of different forms of governments imposed from the outside and the ways their administrative structures were appropriated and incorporated into existing political institutions. The result of the interaction between pre-colonial segmentary forms of political organization and the different forms of local government that followed colonialism are eclectic and fluid power arenas in which government appointed figures have more power than local highly respected *wa hombes*, *nhadibandzes* and *mudota* (family elders).

The first section provides oral accounts and describes the settlement pattern and the kin-based segmentary political organization that existed in the pre-colonial period. It also discusses the colonial political economy and suggests that the institutionalization of the *regulado* transformed and incorporated earlier kin-based political institutions. Furthermore, colonial labour policy and its assimilation project contributed to the emergence of a new rural elite that is now part of the Mocumbi influential figures that I discuss in chapter four. The last section looks at the period that followed the independence of Mozambique in 1975 and gives an account of the local perceptions of FRELIMO's rural development policy and the following decade of civil war led by RENAMO. The section ends with an analysis of FRELIMO's transformation from a Marxist inspired democratic centralist vanguard party to a liberal one that espouses democratic decentralization. In the rural areas, this was based on the introduction and legitimisation of community leaders. The chapter highlights the importance of *wa hombes*, *nhadibandzes* and family elders who historically have been at the center of local politics due to their role on the settlement of disputes. The prevalence of scattered settlements enhances the relevance of family elders in local-level politics.

2.2. Settlement narratives, political organization and the colonial encounter

2.2.1. Settlement narratives

Settlement narratives in the *regulados* of Guambá Grande, Guambá Pequeno and Mocumbi usually make reference to the founder of the settlement who had conquered the area before the arrival of Portuguese travelers and missionaries. Dates are hardly mentioned and colonialism is, most of the time, used as the point of reference. "When the Portuguese arrived Coguno was the chief and they made him *régulo*" or "when the Portuguese [missionaries] arrived they found Nhatchengo who was staying in Zique. Then they asked him to move from Zique to Sibonine because it was difficult for them to access the area where Nhatchengo was staying because of the lagoon."

Fuller (1955) and Webster (1976) did research in Guambá Grande/Guambá Pequeno and Mocumbine respectively. Both attempted to write the local history based on oral accounts but the task proved to be difficult. Webster (1976) saw his attempts to draw detailed genealogies frustrated by what he called 'genealogical amnesia.' I found similar difficulties when trying to draw genealogies of the *régulos*. Telescoping was also common especially at the times when local elites running for the post of *régulo* sought to write down genealogies that legitimised their election for the post of *régulo*.

Settlement narratives make reference to existing populations in the area prior to the settlement of migrant settlers who conquered the area. The bravery of the settlers who conquered the local populations is not repeated when it comes to their relationship with colonialism. There are no narratives of colonial resistance[15]. In fact, they are said to have made alliances with the Portuguese against Ngungunyane the emperor of Gaza. In Guambá Grande a group of elders noted

> When the Portuguese arrived Coguno was the *incoma*. There was no resistance or war. Gungunhana is the one who resisted colonialism because he considered that all this area [up to the provincial capital city of Inhambane] was part of his territory [the Gaza Empire]. Ngungunyane used to make raids looking out for strong and healthy men and then would kill the short and weak men. He would

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[15] The fact that the chiefs in Guambá Grande, Guambá Pequeno and Mocumbine were not able to resist the Gungunhana raids was partly due to the segmentary character of the local kin-based territorial organization that I will discuss in the section entitled 'Political Organization.'

also take people's cattle. That is one of the reasons here and in Inhambane that people joined forces with the Portuguese to fight Gungunhana.

Elders in Mocumbine also spoke of the colonial encounter in similar terms: "When the colonialists arrived [at the end of nineteenth century] Sibone was the chief. Sibone made an alliance with the Portuguese and gave them men to fight against Gungunhana."

In the following sections I present the settlement narratives of Guambá Grande, Guambá Pequeno and Mocumbine.

2.2.1.1. Guambá Grande and Guambá Pequeno

The inhabitants of the present Guambá Grande (Guambá *wa homba*[16]) refer to themselves as descendents of the Sotho and Venda. According to a group of elders I interviewed in Coguno, three brothers came from the Basotho region after they disobeyed their parents. These three brothers were: Matane, Lichuque and Zavala. On their way from Lesotho, the three brothers stopped in Xai-Xai where they mingled with the Valoi (Baloyi) who are descendents of the Venda from South Africa. A group of brothers remained in Xai-Xai while others continued the migration and settled in Guambá Grande. The inhabitants from Guambá Grande identify themselves as the Ndogue now commonly known as the Guambe.

In the pre-colonial period, Nhafungo was the chief in Guambá Grande area then known as Nhafunguanhane. Matane, Lichuque and Zavala came through the Nhamitande plain fields where they built a temporary settlement in what is now known as "the ruins of Matane". While at that settlement, Matane sent his youngest brother [Zavala] to fetch wood. Zavala refused. Angry, Matane broke and burnt the arrow that the three brothers had received from their father. Lichuque and Zavala were then expelled from the settlement. Lichuque and Zavala crossed the Inharrime River to an area called *di Dzau Dzau*.[17] Lichuque and Zavala conquered the indigenous people of *Dzau Dzau*. They received tribute in form of *mafurra* cooking oil, *tsala* [bark cloth] and wild fruits. After a while Lichuque and Zavala returned to ask for forgiveness from their brother Matane. Matane received his brothers and allocated the areas of Guambá Pequeno and *Di Dzau Dzau* to Lichuque and Zavala respectively.

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[16] Great Guambá.
[17] *Dzau dzau* means a treeless area. This area is presently called Zavala (see map 1).

When Lichuque arrived at Guambá Pequeno (also known as Guambá *wa ndoto*[18]) Mative was the chief. Lichuque defeated Mative and became the chief. Lichuque named himself *Chococha* - which means "the foreign ruler" - because he had invaded and become chief in a foreign land. "Matane put Lichuque in Guambá Pequeno to protect the area against the intentions of chief Mocumbi [Matussane] to take control over that area" – noted an old man educated in the colonial Mission Church. "*Whimbe* (elephant meat) was the central factor in the dispute between Matane and Mocumbi. According to the tradition, at the time, if an elephant was found dead the chest and the leg had to be given to the chief. That is why Mocumbi [Sibone] wanted to expand his area of influence" – he added.

The narratives about the formation of Guambá Grande and Guambá Pequeno vary according to who is telling the story. In Guambá Pequeno a local community leader rationalized that "the reason for the separation between Matane and Lichuque was that the two brothers lived in constant quarrel. At one time, Lichuque threw rubbish in Matane's well. They made peace but soon afterwards Matane did the same to Lichuque and they decided to stay apart. That is how Lichuque came to Guambá Pequeno" – he explained. The settlement narrative of Mocumbine, in the following section, presents similarities to the settlement narratives of Guambá Grande and Guambá Pequeno.

2.2.1.2. Mocumbine

There are different accounts about the origins of the inhabitants that occupy the region that constitutes the present Mocumbine. However, all informants connected the Mocumbine people to Mabuto Nhatchengo, first head of settlement who is said to have come from Ussapa. "When Nhatchengo left Ussapa with large followers, he made a stop in Gaza. There he left his brothers Nhantumbo, Chidenguele, Khau and Dacalo to rule over that region. He said to his brothers: 'you stay and reign here I am going to proceed further' " – an old man told me while the group of elders listening replied – *hum* – in a sign of agreement. The old man continued:

> When he arrived at Vilanculos he settled and became a chief there. His settlement was called 'River of the Nhatchengo stones.' There, Nhatchengo had a native *induna* called Vilanculo. When Nhatchengo died, Vilanculo went

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[18] Small Guambá.

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to speak to Nhatchengo's sons and asked them to leave the area because Nhatchengo [father] had been exploiting the local people and his succession would lead to an endless war between the ruling family and the exploited natives. The sons of Mabuto Nhatchengo were: Nhatchengo (son)[19], Zique and Come. They left Vilanculos and walked up to Macuacuene where they camped for three days. Nhatchengo then realized that the group was far from water sources. Then Nhatchengo had a dream that indicated to him to continue his journey westwards up to an area with a lagoon where there were many elephants. That is how Nhatchengo (son) arrived here" – the old man finalized.

In Mocumbine, Nhatchengo settled in the area that became known as Ziqui. The name Mocumbi came as a result of a succession dispute following the death of Nhatchengo in the pre-colonial period. During his reign in Mocumbine Nhatchengo had a trusted *induna* called Matussane who was from the Ussaca. When Nhatchengo died, his sons did not to perform the 'washing' ritual with Nhatchengo's wife, their mother, who was a very old woman. Matussane, the *induna*, performed the ritual and was enthroned chief[20].

According to Anacleto Nhatchengo, descendent of Nhatchengo and ex-contender for the post of *régulo*, "the sons of Nhatchengo did have the chance to perform the 'washing' ritual because Matussane anticipated them in order to usurp power." In fact, one of the rules of succession states that the chief should be succeeded in secret in order to avoid opportunists who might disrupt the order or usurp power after the death of a chief. As Junod noted, the death of a chief "must remain unknown during a whole year... he is said to be very ill and unable to show himself. As a matter of fact, he has been buried for some time" (1927: 414). Informants in Mocumbine confirmed Junod's findings: "You could never know when the chief was dead. There was a secrecy around the death of the régulo to avoid people who might want to usurp power" – explained a former catechist in the Mocumbi Mission Church.

Central to the inheritance of the throne is the ritual *ku samba masani*[21] (the 'washing' ritual) in which the heir to the throne has to enter the hut of the deceased chief and 'wash' by means of having ritual sexual intercourse with the wife of the deceased chief[22]. As the heir comes out of the hut, he has taken over the throne, the wife and all the

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[19] Hereafter whenever I mention Nhatchengo I will be referring to the son of Mabuto Nhatchengo who settled in Mocumbine.

[20] Settlement narratives in Mocumbi (in all *regulados* – Guambá Grande, Guambá Pequeno and Mocumbine) followed the cliché of migration, military conquests and marriage alliances that Heusch (1982) identified for Central Africa.

[21] Also referred to as *ku tchinga* or *ku samba taka*.

[22] Similar forms of royal incest ritual are found in other societies. For a historical review see Bixler 1982.

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belongings of the deceased head of settlement. Anacleto Nhatchengo further contended that:

> Their own mother and sister betrayed the sons of Nhatchengo. When a chief dies his burial and respective ceremonies do not take place immediately. There is a waiting period before the succession can occur. Mbassane, daughter of Nhatchengo that lived in Nhanombe,[23] came to participate in the ceremonies. After a while she thought that the ritual was taking long to be performed and because she wanted to return to her husband in Nhanombe she arranged with Matussane - a trusted induna of Nhatchengo - so that he performs the ritual. She also spoke to her mother and, secretly, they arranged that this induna perform the 'washing' ceremony. After that ceremony, Mbassane went back to her husband. While it was still a secret that Matussane had usurped power an elephant was found dead. Chiefs used to be the ones to go to the site and decide what to do and how to divide the animal. When the sons of Nhatchengo heard about the elephant they went to the place only, surprisingly, to find the spear and shield of their father displayed on the animal. Then Matussane came forward and said: "You hesitated to 'wash' your mother and I did it." That's how the Nhatchengo lost power.

Venâncio Mahique, who won the contest for the post of régulo in Mocumbine, tells the same story but he puts emphasis on the fact "that the sons of Nhatchengo were not courageous. The name Mocumbine came from that event. Nkumbi means old woman and Matussane was proud to have 'washed' an old woman (xicumbile). Since then Matussane started calling the sons of Nhatchengo cove (cowards) because, like mangy dogs, they put their tails between their legs when they were challenged to 'wash' the old woman." Matussane, also known as chief Nkumbi[24], died after few years of being in power.[25]

Of all the chiefs in the history of Mocumbine, Sibone Mabonapange[26] stands out as the most charismatic figure. He ruled for sixty-two years from 1880 to 1952. When the first group of Portuguese missionaries arrived in Mocumbi around 1910, Mabonapange was recognised as the chief and later became the most influential régulo in the entire region known today as the Inharrime district. Following the death of Sibone Mabonapange, the

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[23] Locality in the administrative post of Inharrime.

[24] Mocumbi in Portuguese.

[25] More than a dozen of Matussane's descendents who succeeded him in power died after ruling for short periods ranging from three to eight years (see figure 1). A high turnover of chiefs used to be very common in Mocumbine. This is, in part, a result of the succession system that I will discuss in the section 'Political Organization.'

[26] See number 16 in figure 1.

pattern of turnover of chiefs within a short ruling period returned except for the last *régulo* Samessone Juvane, who ruled for about fifteen years.
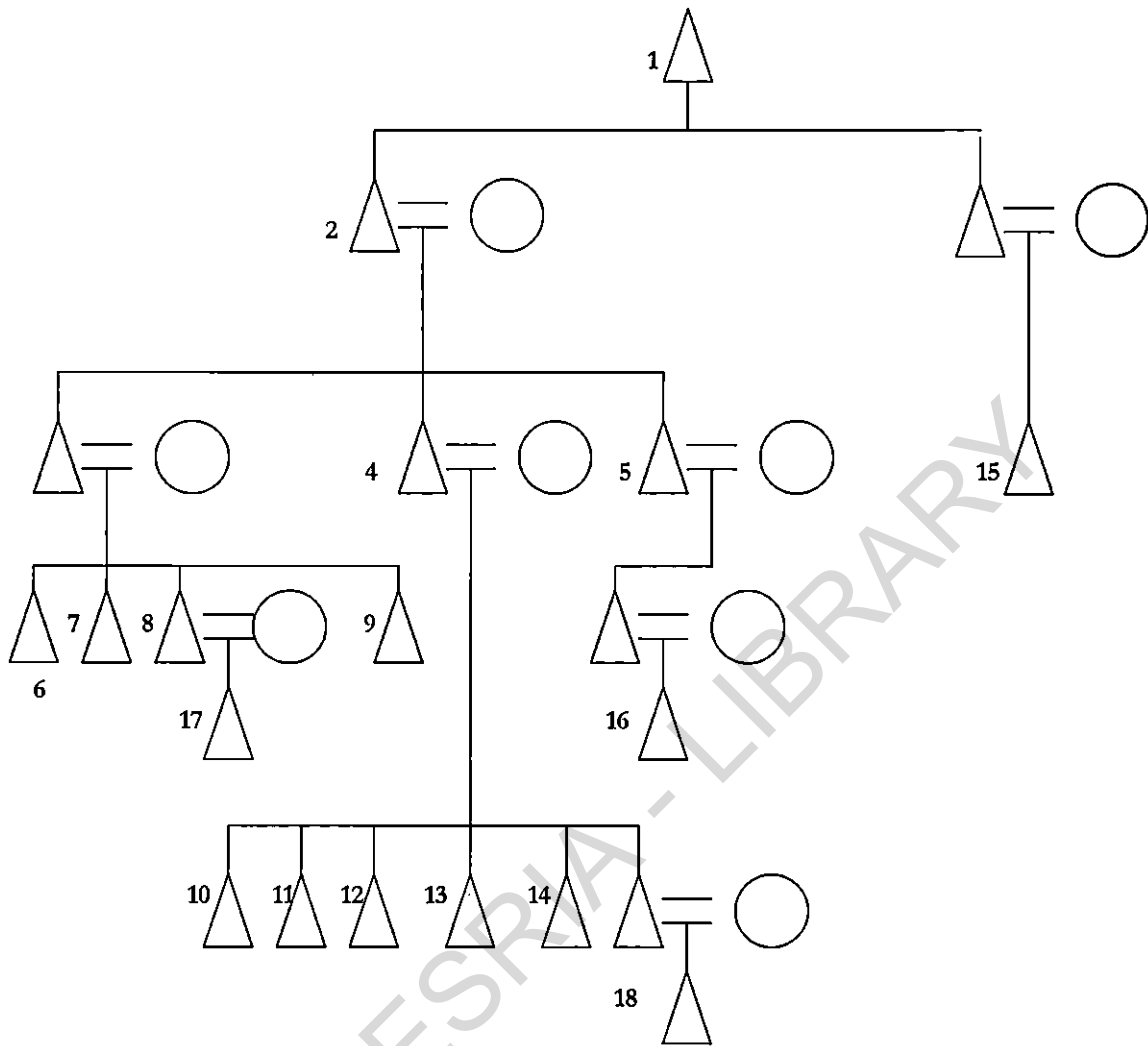
1. Matussane (Mocumbi)
2. Teto
3. Massinhane
4. Mahique
5. Ussaque
6. Mbangue Massinhane

7. Nhezi Massinhane
8. Juvane Massinhane
9. Rocunha Massinhane
10. Nhante Mahique
11. Chirrambo Mahique
12. Manhelane Mahique

13. Cuangule Mahique
14. Nhangueleluane Mahique
15. Chiguinha Manjiti
16. Sibone Mabonapange
17. Samessone Juvane
18. Venâncio Uane Mahique[27]

Figure 1. Genealogy of *régulos: Regulado* Mocumbine.

Samessone Juvane broke up with much of the earlier traditional practices associated with the post of *incoma* in Mocumbi. He moved his *chizinda* (chief's main house from which he rules) from Sibonine in Mocumbine to Nhacuaha in Mahalamba. He also refused to be buried in *tsitsova ka nkoma* (*régulo's* burial ground) let alone the fact that he was a protestant priest. All these were unprecedented events.

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[27] Current *régulo*.

It is important to note that although there are different authorized figures 'who know better' the local history no old man spoke to me alone. Whenever an old man would concede to an interview he would invite other old men to come to the interview not only to legitimise his story but to 'help him to remember' events that he could possibly forget or chronologically misplace. In this way a collection of old men would reconstruct the local narratives. In Mocumbine this was also applicable with the heirs of Mabuto Nhatchengo who were contending for power. Although men were the ones who narrated, women had a good knowledge of the local history[28].

2.2.2. Political organization

The settlement narratives above show how the population groups that made up Mocumbi took their present form. Mocumbi has a relatively low population density and land is plentiful, making it appropriate for the dispersed settlement pattern. Like the *Nuer* in Sudan studied by Evans-Pritchard (1940) the three population groups (Guambá Grande, Guambá Pequeno and Mocumbine) that compose Mocumbi had no identified form of central government. Instead, semi-autonomous kin-based fragmented groups comprised of several smaller sub-chiefdoms and smaller units made up Mocumbi. The notion of lineage is unfamiliar to the inhabitants of Mocumbi. A notion that can be approximated to that of lineage is the notion of *nyumba* that means house or hut. The *nyumba* is a unit constituted by a father, a mother and the respective children. In case of a polygynous marriage each wife will constitute a *nyumba*. Webster who studied the kinship system in the settlement of Nhacuaha noted:

> [I]t appears to be a tendency towards laterality rather than lineality in kinship, a lack of deep, kinship based corporate groups, and a relatively large amount of latitude for individual expression. The social matrix in which this is found comprises a constellation of factors including: the abundance of land; high mobility (which has the consequence of what Sanson has called a 'high tempo of sociation'); the use of 'alternative structures' (to that of agnatic kinship) in sequences of social action (1977: 196).

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[28] When I interviewed the late *madala* (old man) Xibomana (Afonso S. Cumbi) in June 2002, his wife played a crucial role not only in clarifying my questions but also in situating him at the right chronological space in relation to the events we discussed. The following section describes the kin and territorial based forms of political organization in Mocumbi.

As noted in the previous section, the three major groups were descended from the founders of village settlements. Heads of settlement were the highest authority and held the title of *incoma* (the oldest). People paid tribute on an annual basis and expected the *incoma* to be responsible for the well being of the settlement. Annual rainmaking and harvest rituals were two of *incoma's* main duties. Like all the resolutions from the *chizinda*, rainmaking was not a direct and sole responsibility of the *incoma*. The *incoma* counted on a group of trusted *madota* (elders) with whom he discussed the major issues of the settlement. On ritual related matters, the *incoma* consulted his personal *n'anga* (spirit medium; diviner-healer). In fact he relied on different *ti n'anga* (plural of *n'anga*) for different issues. For instance rainmaking and witch finding would require different *ti n'anga*. A group of *t'induna* worked as a military force and messengers assisted the *incoma*.

Madota + Incoma (chief) + *t'induna, ti n'anga*
Madota + Cabo (sub-chief) + *t'induna, ti n'anga*
Madota + Inganacana (headman)
Madota +Nhadibandze (sub-headman)
Wa hombe (big man)
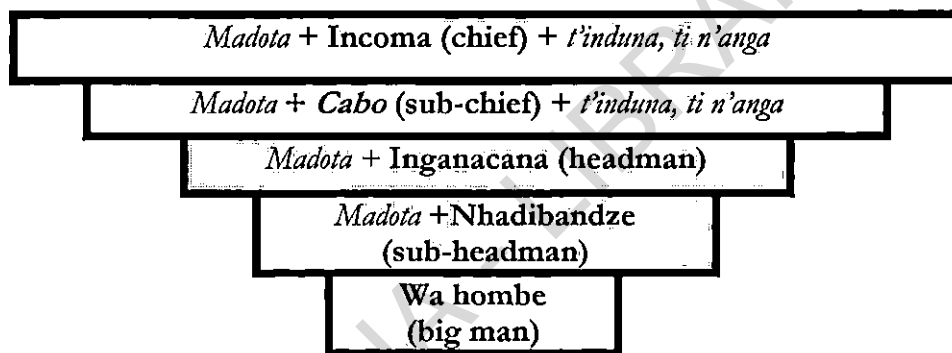
Figure 2: Mocumbi pre-colonial pyramidal structure of territorial offices ideal type

The position immediately under the *incoma* was the *cabo*.[29] If we consider the *incoma* as a chief, *cabos* were sub-chiefs. *Cabos* had the responsibility to collect the annual tribute for the *incoma*. After handing in the tribute to *incoma*, the *cabo* received from the same tribute a small share as a form of payment. The immediate rank below the *cabo* was the *inganacana*. *Cabos* appointed *inganacanas* who worked as district headman. The *inganacana* relied on council of elders and a group of *t'induna*. The criteria used to appoint both *cabos* by *incoma* and *inganacanas* by *cabos* was trust. A chief or a sub-chief would tend to secure his territory by spreading brothers, sons and brothers-in-law throughout the territory as we saw in the settlement narratives in the previous section. However, individual qualities

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[29] *Cabos* were also known as 'chiefs of land'. I was not able to find out to what extent the *cabo* is a complete colonial invention neither to find a local alternative designation for the position. This is an area that needs further research but it does not alter our argument. Earlier studies (Junod 1927-9, 1936, Fuller 1955, Matos 1973 and Webster 1976) that make reference to the political system in Mocumbi do not clarify the matter.

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such as the ability to settle disputes would also lead to appointment as *cabos* or *chiefs*. The same rule was applicable for the *inganacanas*.

The rank immediately below to the *inganacana* was the *nhadibandze*. The English translation for *nhadibandze* would be "the man of the meeting" derived from the original word *banza* (meeting). But the most appropriate translation, according to the role the *nhadibandze* played, would be: 'the man who calls the meetings' or 'the man who settles disputes.' Unlike the *inganacanas* and the *cabos*, the *nhadibandze*, did not count on the *t'induna*. The *nhadibandze* settled disputes based on persuasion and authority of the *madota* that gathered upon his call. In fact, the title of *nhadibandze* was attributed to the *wa hombe* who achieved popularity and support beyond his traditional area of influence, usually a contiguous dozen of neighbouring homesteads.

Wa hombes were influential figures on a contiguous dozen of neighbouring homesteads. A *wa hombe's* popularity would grow because of his ability to settle disputes in a group of socially co-operative homesteads. When a *wa hombe's* popularity was very strong the *cabo* or *inganacana* could give him a more formal authority post in the area by attributing to him the title of *nhadibandze*. Because of the scattered settlements and the tendency for fragmentation of kin-based groups, *nhadibandzes* and *wa hombes* were the ones at the centre of the political activity. Unlike the Nuer described by Evans-Pritchard (1940), kin-based groups were not prone to fighting. As we saw in the previous section, expulsion or abandoning the settlement just to establish a new one was one of the alternatives in case of strong divergences.

Transmission of office for each of the different ranks of the political structure of the chiefdom followed the principle of laterality. *Régulo* Venâncio put it this way: "Succession goes from *nyumba* to *nyumba*." Ideally, the throne is first passed down from brother to brother according to primogeniture and then down to sons, beginning with the eldest son of the eldest brother. It was not unusual that these rules were transgressed as shown by the case of Matussane. In case of polygynous marriages, the wives used to be positioned in chronological order according to the date of marriage. In this way when succession was finished along brothers it would go to the sons of the first wife (*nyumba wa hombe* - the big house), then the sons of the second wife and so on.

In his study in the Nhacuaha settlement Webster noted:

> [B]y the time the third generation has been reached, succession theoretically can pass between second cousins. This gives rise to extreme complication in calculating who has the strongest claims which are difficult either to verify or to falsify; the person one claims to succeed falls in the 'area of ambiguity', on the verge of the category of kin who shortly merge into the undifferentiated ancestors, i.e. where genealogical amnesia sets in (it should be remembered that the claimants would be of advanced years themselves, so there would be few people with accurate knowledge who could pass judgment on their claims, and those that are still alive would probably have vested interests encouraging them to support one of the claimants) (1976: 203).

Following the same line as Webster (1976), Burling (1974) in his work on political succession, hoped that, once anthropologists had been able to keep succession rules in written form, societies would not need to face the problem of succession. History shows that that is not the case. In contemporary Mocumbi all the chiefs that I interviewed made reference to some form of written record produced by anthropologists[30] or by relatives who left autobiographies. Still the succession problem remained because it was a contemporary political issue rather than an historical 'facts' finding matter.

The question of rules is only half way to the understanding of succession disputes. Rules and history are referred to in accordance with present contexts and expectations. Comaroff noted in his study of the Tswana Chiefdom that "transmission of office in this system is determined by factors extrinsic to the stated prescriptions; and that the meaning of these rules is an empirical problem *sui generis*, to be resolved after, and not before, the fact" (1978: 10). In Mocumbine, the heirs of Mabuto Nhatchengo appealed to succession rules in order to gain back power lost to Matussane during the pre-colonial period. Because they did not have the social and economic capital to mobilise support for their cause they ultimately withdrew their claim to the office of *régulo*.

2.2.3. The colonial encounter

Previously, I discussed pre-colonial forms of kin-based political organization and emphasized the fact that because of the highly fragmented territorial units *wa homes* and *nhadibandzes* were key actors in local-level politics. Furthermore, *wa homes* and

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[30] The work of Matos (1973) is often cited.

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nhadibandzes drew their popularity mainly from the *banza* (meeting/assembly) where, assisted by homestead elders, they settled local disputes. In this section I show how, with the advent of colonial rule, pre-colonial political institutions were incorporated into the colonial administrative system. Contrary to the pre-colonial *incoma*, the colonial *régulo* and the *cabo* were invested with unprecedented power at the expense of *nhadibandzes* and *uu hombes*.

The Mocumbi area was known to different groups of missionaries who had made crusades in the area since the sixteenth century (Junod 1936, Fuller 1955) but actual settlement in the area is recent. When, in the first decade of the twentieth century, the first group of missionaries intending to build a Catholic mission church arrived in Mocumbi, they could not find the previously identified area to build the church. It was only after a visit to chief Mocumbi that they concluded that the spot was a *machongo* (fertile soil) some two kilometres from the *chizinda* of chief Mocumbi (Azevedo 1998, Mesquita 1972). The mission church worked in close association with the Portuguese administration, which, in 1895, institutionalized the *indigenato* - system of 'indirect' administration based on the *regulados*.

The *regulado* was a system built on existing political structures.[31] The colonial enterprise transformed the existing political system by making sure that *régulos* worked as tax collectors and, with the help of *cabos*, *régulos* were supposed to provide labour to be either exported to the gold mines in South Africa or for *chibalo* (forced labour) to build roads and railways locally.

Period	Pre-colonial	Colonial	Socialist	Democratic
Formal Offices		District administrator	District administrator	District administrator
		Chief of Admin. Post	Chief of Admin. Post	Chief of Admin. Post
		Chief of locality	Chief of locality	Chief of locality
	Incoma (+Madota and *Indunas*)	*Régulo* (+Madota and *Induna*)	Circle secretary (+ dynamising and vigilante groups)	*Régulo*/Chief of locality Community leader
	Cabo	*Cabo* (chief of land)	Cell secretary (+Dynamising and vigilante groups)	*Cabo*/Cell secretary / Community leader
	Inganacana	Inganacana	Chief of zone	Chief of zone/ Inganacana
	Nhadibandze		Chairman of 10 houses cell	Chief of 10 houses/Nhadibandze

Table 1. Local level political offices since pre-colonial period

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[31] See table 1

The duties of the *régulos* included: the collection of hut tax, the prohibition of the commerce of alcoholic drinks except for Portuguese wines, the recruiting of young men to serve in the Portuguese army and for other kinds of work requested by the administrator, controlling the movement of people and reporting the existence of people without valid pass-books. "For undertaking these functions the *régulo* was not paid by the colonial regime but was allowed to collect a tax of 10 shilling for each miner returning from the mines. He received also a similar amount for each *milando* [dispute] he settled" (Serra 2000:385).

With the introduction of the colonial system of *regulado*, what in the past constituted an annual tribute with symbolic value became a multifaceted form of extraction and exploitation. *Cabos*, who also received orders and requests for labour directly from the colonial administrator, were the faces more closely associated with the regime due to their 'raids' to capture young men. On this task they counted on the help of their subordinates, the *inganacana*. The *inganacana*, the *cabo* and the *régulo* had little choice but to serve the system that had physical force to enforce its policies. If, for instance, a *régulo*, a *cabo* or an *inganacana* failed to meet the quotas of workers required for a particular task the colonial administrator would recruit members of their own families or they would be taken to the administration where they would be punished.

Although *régulos* could opt for various forms of passive resistance (Scott 1985), which in some cases they did, they were surprised after independence when the FRELIMO labelled them as *os comprometidos* (the compromised) "because they compromised themselves by voluntarily supporting the repressive colonial apparatus" (Hanlon 1984: 171). There is extensive documentation suggesting that the so-called *comprometidos* many times outwitted the colonial regime and some of them actively supported the FRELIMO during the liberation struggle.[32]

The institutionalisation of the *regulado* was part of a more complex system of the Portuguese native policy that came to be known as the *indigenato*. While through *régulos* and *cabos* the colonists guaranteed free labour to build roads, railways and administrative offices and also received foreign currency (initially paid in gold) through the remittance

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[32] For instance Alexander 1994, 1997, Roesch 1992, 1993, Coelho 1998, West 1998, West and Kloeck-Jenson 1999, Pereira 1999, O'Laughlin 2000 and Connor 2003.

system from mine workers in South Africa, the role of the colonial mission churches was to produce a group of semi-skilled Africans who would work in the lower ranks of the Portuguese administration. In Mocumbi the Jesuits had been in Guambá Grande since the last decade of the nineteenth century but the Franciscans opened the first schools for artisans in the Mocumbi Mission Church in 1915, in Mocumbine. By 1969 there were 17 Mission primary schools spread all over Mocumbi (Mesquita 1972). "The Portuguese no doubt hoped to bind an influential part of the African population to co-operate with the regime through the process of assimilation" (Newitt 1981: 105).

Social services such as health care in the rural areas were also aimed at luring the natives to the Portuguese civilising project. Contiguous to the Mission church in Mocumbi was built a hospital to serve the natives. One, like Wilson (1976) can question whether the missionaries were conquerors or servants of God. The long-term result of the missionary civilising mission was the integration of Africans into the colonial capitalist system of economic extraction. Newitt noted that "[t]heoretically this policy aimed to educate the African and to lead him on towards his ultimate social destiny as a *civilisado*, but in practice it was designed to do three things –to maintain the structure of African traditional society, to provide income for the colonial exchequer, and to produce a ready supply of labour for government and private projects" (1981: 101). In fact, Mamdani (1996: 148-65) has suggested that this feature of colonialism was applied to most of the African colonies.

People from Mocumbi had long been migrant workers but from 1897 the Portuguese administration and the Transvaal Republic signed a series of international agreements (Harris 1959) that resulted in more systematic labour recruitment. If the Portuguese native policy guaranteed for Portugal direct and indirect monetary revenues, it also had a significant impact on the traditional economy and forms of social organization. Ruth First noted that in the Inhambane province,

> [t]he wage increases on the mines and higher levels of peasant production made it possible for peasant households to improve their living standards. Cement floors began to appear in the houses, and some brick houses were built. Access to consumer items such as tea, paraffin, simple furniture and crockery, as well as relatively expensive goods such as radios and bicycles, began to increase through income from mine labour. This is the period, too, when artisan production began to expand. Builders, carpenters, tailors as well as traditional craftsmen such as mat weavers began to commercialize their products, and for

significant number of them, this work came to constitute their principal source
of income (1983 126).

Forced migrant labour and the assimilation project contributed to increased social
differentiation in the rural areas but also, ironically, contributed to the emergence of
educated Africans who led the independence struggle. A new group of mission-educated
people, sons of *régulos* included, was to become the new influential figures due to their
links to the different branches of the Portuguese administration and their integration in
the wage colonial economy (Rocha and Hedges 1993: 139).

2.3. Independence: FRELIMO, RENAMO and Democracy

The previous section highlighted the impact of colonialism on traditional forms of social
organization in Mocumbi, in particular the aspects related to the political arenas. It also
described the kinds of social differentiation that began to emerge towards the end of the
colonial period. Independence came, for a moment, as a rupture with the colonial
extractive system and humiliating native policy. But for many people, both, those who
managed to rise socially during the colonial period through education or migrant labour
and those who had been subjected to *chibalo*, the joy of independence was short lived.

This section suggests that after independence social transformation in Mocumbi
continued to be driven by 'alien' forms of government that changed according to
fashion. Like in the colonial period, all welfare-driven programs that followed after
independence were aimed at expanding state's control over rural subjects. The section
gives particular importance to FRELIMO's rural policy, to the RENAMO led civil war
and to the advent of democracy with its decentralization reform. No reference is made to
ecological factors such as droughts although they are usually associated with the
ancestors' response to the civil war (Fry 2000 and Honwana 2002) due to the lack of
space.

2.3.1. "When FRELIMO came..." Socialism and the rural policy

FRELIMO's rural policy that followed independence ostracised those who had
'collaborated' with the colonial system but also distanced itself from the peasantry
(Hanlon 1984, Alexander 1997, Cabrita 2000). Mocumbi had not experienced the
liberation struggle that took place in the northern and central regions of the country.

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However the nationalist project that had been conceived in the FRELIMO liberated areas was to be put in practice wholesale in independent Mozambique. In Samora Machel's terms a liberated zone was

> [A] zone liberated from the colonial-capitalist and feudal-traditional structures of domination. In other words, at the administrative level neither the colonial administrators nor the traditional *régulos* exercise power anymore. The form, the methods and the content of power have been transformed. The population is organized publicly and openly and live their daily lives oriented and directed by our words of order (1975: 99).

Samora Machel's definition might not reflect the complexity of FRELIMO's governance agenda but it is clear about the kind of administration that had been envisaged for the rural areas. The form of social organization was also projected from the 'experience of the liberated zones' and the 'values gained' during the liberation struggle. Thus the 'word of order' was villagisation. This is made clear in a quote from Machel's Independence Day speech:

> It is important to remember this experience [of the liberated zones] in order to prepare for the new phase. Anyone who visits our whole country can note the big problem posed by the scattered population and the difficulty, under these circumstances, for the government to organize social, educational and health services, in short, to improve the living conditions of these people. Hence under the leadership of FRELIMO, the scattered population in the rural areas will be structured in revolutionary societies, in the final analysis in communal villages, where that people will have an organized life, developing production collectively, on the basis of their traditions, and promoting the exchange of knowledge (Machel in Turok 1980: 133).

Young educated cadres, whose main tasks were to politically mobilise the masses and pass down government 'orientations', were to be the leaders of the communal villages. In order to exercise control over the rural areas and the peasantry, FRELIMO gave primacy to the political and ideological over economic and social issues. *Régulos* who had been associated with the colonial system and also with traditional-feudal forms of domination were excluded from leadership positions and, in many cases, continually insulted and humiliated (Hanlon 1984, Honwana 2002). Soon after independence the failure of communal villages was to expose FRELIMO's first misconceptions about the character of the peasantry. The relative success of communal villages in the liberated zones was determined by the war context and the need of self-defence against the attacks of the colonial army and not by a recognition and identification with FRELIMO's ideology and

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new form of social organization (Meyns 1981; Cahen 1987, Brito 1988). Only in the context of war were communal living and co-operative production viable and acceptable.

The absence of war was only the initial condition for people's return to scattered settlements. While Casal (1996) showed how villagisation was economically and ecologically contra-productive, Cahen (1987) suggested that communal villages promoted socio-political divisions among the peasantry, which in turn created a favourable environment for the expansion of RENAMO's war (Geffray and Pedersen 1988, Geffray 1990, Pereira 1999). In addition, many communal villages never received the necessary materials to run efficiently. Not surprisingly, a few years after independence communal villages were unpopular and the government had to engage different "offensives" to find those to blame. Once again the ex-*régulos* were seen as partly responsible for the peasants return to scattered settlements and visible apathy towards the villagisation project (Hanlon 1984; Coelho 1998). Often those accused of 'sabotage' were arrested and sent to re-education camps where they were exposed to the harshest conditions ranging from food shortages to attacks by wild animals such as lions (Cabrita 2000).

In the same way that FRELIMO generalised for the whole country the experience of the liberated zones, scholars should realize that findings from research in different parts of the country are not necessarily applicable to other parts. Marked socio-economic structural distinctions between north, centre and southern Mozambique inherited from the colonial political economy (Wuyts 1978, Meyns1981, Castel-Branco 1994) should not be taken for granted. When I asked in Mocumbi what had been the people's reaction to the dismissal of *régulos* shortly after independence, I got two apparently contradictory answers:

1) When FRELIMO came [in 1974] they created cells and secretaries. They asked the population to choose between the secretary and the *régulo*. The population did not choose the *régulo*. The first secretary was a merchant. In the beginning the secretary worked with the *régulo*. Then *cantineiros* [retailers] were put as secretaries. It was in 1976 that FRELIMO restructured everything and ordered that secretaries, who should not be polygynous, replaced all *régulos* (former primary school teacher, Coguno 2003).

2) After independence it was not easy for the traditional government to work. Initially the presence of the party was very strong and immediately they put secretaries. At that point the majority of the secretaries were sons or nephews of the former traditional chief [*cabo*]. That was people's strategy and in that way the traditional structures continued to do their work. But in

the 1980's when the party discovered the trick that the population was using all elements that were part of the *régulo*'s family, they had had to be removed. There was an *ofensiva organizacional* [organizational offensive] for the cleansing of the infiltrated in FRELIMO. The aim was to remove the lineage members from the party [party-state] (ex-*cabo* Mahalamba 2004).

We can address this apparent paradox by looking at the situation on the ground from three different perspectives. Firstly, from the perspective of those that thought they had been freed from an intermediary despot. Secondly, from the perspective of those who had an uncertain future in the context of FRELIMO's new policy. The last perspective is a historical analysis opposed to a synchronic analysis, as suggested by West and Kloeck Jenson (1999) and O'Laughlin (2000).

The first hypothesis to explain the apparent contradiction in the statements above is that part of the peasantry did 'not choose' the *régulo* and even celebrated FRELIMO's policy that banished the *regulado* because *régulos* were associated with the colonial oppressive regime. Oral accounts from Mocumbi make reference not only to *régulos* as intermediaries of colonial administration but also as individuals who extracted as much as they could from the peasantry in the process. "For example *cabos* would choose underage boys to be taken to work in the mines so that the boy's family would bribe them to let the boys stay. They [*cabos*] would always over-recruit so that wives, fathers and mothers would give them goats, cocks, wine or anything for them to let your relative go. And they would share all that with the *régulo*" – recalled by an informant in Chitava. Another informant in Mocumbine noted that "people celebrated just because they would not have to give chickens or work anymore in the *régulo*'s *machamba*."

The second hypothesis is that part of the peasantry, mainly those connected with the emerging elite during the colonial period, did not celebrate because FRELIMO's post independence policy was hostile to those who benefited or collaborated with the colonial regime. They opted more for a 'wait and see' strategy. Many of these were *régulos* and *cabos*' relatives, and others had occupied low ranks in the colonial administration or had served the Portuguese army. Many others from interpreters to churchgoers, who directly or indirectly could be associated with the colonial system, opted for retreat or silence.

The last approach is to look at the two apparently contradictory statements from two different chronological points of departure. In the euphoria of the independence in

middle and late 70s there was relative support for FRELIMO's rural policy. By the 80s when FRELIMO showed no sign to deliver development according to expectations at the time of the independence, sections of the peasantry began to withdraw their support for FRELIMO's modernization project. One of the former contestants for the post of *régulo* in Mocumbine noted:

> When FRELIMO came everything related to colonialism was abolished. I was sent for the first course for party members and I worked in the district committee for ten years. I joined the party but I was expecting that traditional power would be reintroduced. Things changed so much. You see my son was born in the 25 of September the day on which the independence struggle began. I reported the matter to the government many times since [19]77 but they never got interested in this special child. I was so disappointed.

In Mocumbi, peasants' reactions to the dismissal of *régulos* were diverse and were generally determined by the internal differentiation of the peasantry. While some supported the abolition of the *regulado* others passively opposed it. Many others who ascended socially during the colonial period went underground, were marginalised and humiliated. It is also important to note that peasants' positions in relation to the subject have not been the same all the time. They vary according to their life trajectory, expectations and frustrations, and the macro-political context.

FRELIMO's mistake was to play a zero sum game, opting always for the perspective that was coherent with its Marxist Leninist ideology. FRELIMO saw and continues to see the rural areas as homogeneous and the locus of the traditional. The only difference is that in democratic Mozambique that view has the back up of international donor organizations. The different reaction to FRELIMO's policy reflects the internal differentiation among the peasantry dating as far back as to the pre-colonial period and accentuated in the colonial period by the compulsory labour migration and assimilation policies.

2.3.2. "When RENAMO came..." Echoes of a civil war

In the early 1980's civil war that started in the northern and central regions just after independence reached Mocumbi. Guambá Grande and Mocumbine experienced the civil war in different ways. While Guambá Grande actually fell under RENAMO's administration most of the inhabitants of Mocumbine managed to flee to FRELIMO protected areas. A shebeen owner in Coguno gave the following account:

RENAMO arrived here [Guambá Grande] in 1982/83 and in 1984 they were already in Mocumbine. They [RENAMO] had negotiators who sought to recruit people to join RENAMO's army. Many people were recruited and many did not come back. Some people managed to run to safer regions like Maputo, Inharrime [the district seat] and to Mocumbi Mission church and to Mejoote [Guambá Pequeno] where there were FRELIMO bases. While governing this area RENAMO sought support from traditional authorities.

The war had a devastating effect on the ecology of the region and many people abandoned their crops and animals.[33] In Guambá Grande an informant who returned to the area in 1994 noted that "during the period of the war all this [area] was a bush. Houses had been destroyed and RENAMO took everything: cattle, ducks and chickens, all went with RENAMO". A similar account was made in Mocumbine where a women who returned to Malene noted that "RENAMO used to kill everything even wild animals like monkeys and buffalos. Those animals have disappeared."[34]

The war forced most of the population to flee to the neighbouring safer areas. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees estimates that about 81 percent of the population of the Inharrime district was displaced by the time of the peace agreement in October 1992 (UNHCR and UNDP 1997). Although the total population figures presented by United Nations surveys differ significantly from those of the national survey, informants noted that the majority of the population had crossed the river to the district of Zavala. When I first visited Mocumbi in June 2002, there were still land mines being removed in areas that today have residents. According to the 1994 UNOHAC[35] mine survey, the areas of Mejoote, Mahalamba, Mocumbine and Senduza were identified as having anti-group and anti-personal mines all deployed by FRELIMO between 1983 and 1984.

While recognizing the historical importance of the war in the population movement we have to acknowledge the high mobility of the population of this area resulting from its social and political organization and its integration in the economy of labour migration since the pre-colonial period.

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[33] Complementary to the social decomposition caused by the war Chingono (1996) has suggested that further research should be done in the processes of political and economic re-organizations where a grass-roots war economy not only was a source of livelihood for most of the people but also a vehicle for capital accumulation by nascent a bourgeoisie.
[34] Interview, Mocumbi, June 2002.
[35] United Nations Office for Humanitarian Assistance Coordination.

When the war reached its climax in the late 1980s, the government removed its representation from Coguno (Guambá Grande) - area in which RENAMO was firmly established, to Mahalamba where FRELIMO had an army base. After fourteen years of peace and a decade of democratic government, Mocumbi, like many parts of rural Mozambique, still is in need of basic services like health and education. Until February 2004 there was no government representation in Guambá Grande. Considering the social disruption caused by the war, associated with high levels of poverty in the area, it does not come as a surprise that Coguno is reported as one of the areas where vandalism occurs. Young men who commit crimes in the area easily escape to Maputo and other provinces where they can hardly be traced. The inverse also happens. Young delinquents coming from South Africa and Mozambique's big cities also find refuge in Coguno.

The period that followed the end of the war has also seen different dynamics in the three *regulados*. In November 1992 people began to return to their homelands partly due to the mobilization campaign promoted by the UNHCR[36]. The *régulo* of Guambá Grande noted that "many did not come back because they heard about the drought this side. Others died during the war and some decided to not come back because they began new lives in the areas where they settled and are not willing to leave the trees they planted". In contrast some parts of Mocumbine are "still receiving returnees and people who come from the cities, including Maputo, because here there is no lack of water. There is not much hunger this side," noted the *régulo* of Mocumbine. Further research is needed for a better understanding of the dynamics of the civil war in Mocumbi and in southern Mozambique in general. This should provide important information to understand settlement and power relations in post-war reconstruction of rural southern Mozambique.[37]

2.3.3. Democracy: From centralism to liberal decentralization

In Mocumbi, the arrival of FRELIMO was best remembered for its administrative reform that removed *régulos* and institutionalized secretaries, party cells and dynamising groups. In fact, present-day local administration is run very much in an old party/state style. Cells, secretaries and chiefs of ten houses are institutions without which the present

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[36] Office of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees.
[37] For the dynamics of the war in southern Mozambique see Roesch 1992 and Honwana 2002.

government would not be able to run basic functions such as tax collection and population census. It is curious that while the colonial regime drew on existing traditional forms of political organization, socialist FRELIMO used the very administrative structure of the colonial regime that it so desperately sought to reform (see table 2).[38] With the implementation of democratic centralism and the creation of a gap between people's daily needs and the party/state agenda, peasants soon realized that there was little difference between colonial and postcolonial governments. As Cabrita noted, "Mozambique merely shifted from one form of totalitarianism to another –specifically, from Fascism to Leninism" (2000: 85).

Democratic centralism initially conceived as a form of party internal organization was expanded to the whole administrative system with bureaucrats being necessarily party members. In his historical analysis of the democratization of Mozambique Cabrita is of the opinion that:

> Party cells were established at workplaces and in residential areas. In the case of residential areas, FRELIMO borrowed from Tanzania's ten-house cell system, dividing cities into communal wards. Party members living in a ward became responsible for each of the blocks making up that ward, and blocs were divided into units of ten families each. A party member saw to it that every family was registered at the local party committee. Every family unit was supposed to report to the block chief the presence of any visitors within 24 hours of their arrival... People wishing to travel outside their residential areas either within their province or to other provinces were required to carry the *guia de marcha*, a travel document issued by the respective party committee on recommendation of chiefs of a given residential area (2000: 87).

The problem with this form of organization was that the whole governmental agenda designed in Maputo then passed down in a sort of pyramidal structure to the lowest levels of the administration system. In the same way that democratic centralism did not open room for minorities within the party, it did not take into account peasants' perspectives. The party/state was so much concentrated on expanding the state that the end result was the inverse of the initial intentions. Peasants distanced themselves from the state. People's power was, to use Cahen's (1987) terms, 'a complete ideological fiction'. In the final analysis all the administrative, party and mass organizations created

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[38] This experience was not unique to Mozambique. For other African cases see Mamdani (1996) and Bako-Arifari (1998).

by FRELIMO were there to pass down the party "words of order" which most of the times were not related to people's everyday life experiences.

The ongoing recognition of community leaders is the most recent government attempt to fill in the void created between the state and the people in rural areas. The election of community leaders bears a lot of similarities with the election of secretaries during the socialist period. There is a lot of ambiguity in relation to who should be recognised as a community leader. There are also insufficient resources to undertake the project and as is evident in the next chapter, the process, has been interrupted in some areas because of the lack of materials (sashes, flags and insignias).

Although the introduction of community leaders is in the context of democracy and decentralization policies, it is still a foreign idea to many people in the rural areas and according to the decree 15/2000, the activities of the community leaders are not different from those of the former secretaries. Like the colonial government and the states in pre-revolutionary Russia or France, the postcolonial government is not able to expand its administration to the rural areas without making use of intermediaries (Spittler 1983). In some areas peasants resort to different strategies not to have a community leader recognised. For example, there are areas where peasants have not arrived at a 'consensus' about who should be their community leaders. Others nominate a person but as the inauguration day comes closer they claim not to have understood the process and that the person nominated is not the right one so they request to hold for further discussion.

Government's decentralization process is also a reaction to the RENAMO-led civil war and international pressure to democratise (World Bank 1989). Research conducted by the Ministry of State Administration (Lundin and Machava 1995, 1998) lacks depth and has underestimated socio-cultural differentiation throughout rural Mozambique. The ongoing recognition of newly introduced community leaders is also a ruling party attempt to gain support and legitimacy in the rural areas while expanding its influence and control to distant areas which it cannot reach by its own means.

2.4. Conclusion

The analysis in this chapter has demonstrated that the institutionalization of the *regulado* has transformed and incorporated earlier kin-based political institutions. Furthermore, the colonial labour policy and its assimilation project contributed to the emergence of a new rural elite that is part of present day Mocumbi's influential figures. FRELIMO's rural development policy and local party/state structures replicated most of the colonial authoritarian state. The RENAMO-led civil war not only deeply transformed local power dynamics and forced migration but also put pressure on the government to consider a reform to its socialist inspired democratic centralism. Current decentralization reform, partly donor driven, fails to take into account historical specificity and bears a lot of similarities with the previous top-down colonial and socialist approaches to social transformation.

In spite of the colonial and post-colonial attempts to produce centralised forms of local government, the local *wa hombes, nhadibandzes* and family elders are still key authority figures and are more suited for the pattern of scattered settlement existing in Mocumbi. Colonial and post-colonial attempts to produce a centralised government resulted in an eclectic political structure that resembles elements from the colonial, socialist and democratic governments all of which succeeded historically by maintaining a close relationship with *wa hombes, nhadibandzes* and family elders. The next chapter looks closely at the ongoing jockeying for power between the three major actors: chiefs, local government officials and community leaders.

Chapter three

Local Powers: Chiefs, Community Leaders and Local Government Officials

3. 1. Introduction

The previous chapter highlighted how colonial and postcolonial policy further complicated the fragmented pre-colonial political arenas. This chapter looks at the decentralization process in rural Mozambique, in particular at the decree 15/2000 that introduces locally elected community leaders. In 2002 locally elected community leaders began to be formally recognised as local government collaborators. Behind the process of recognising community leaders was the belief that while the central state would be better represented at the local level by civil servants, community leaders would act as a mobilizing force for local development initiatives in a manner very similar to the *régulos* during the colonial indirect rule.

The first section analyzes everyday politics in Mocumbi where family elders, community leaders and local government officials vie for power. The following section looks at the actual processes of legitimising chiefs within the traditional ruling families. It also looks at the local elections where legitimate chiefs competed against former secretaries for the new posts of community leaders, which were formally recognised by the government. The third section looks at how local government officials sought to control and influence the outcome of the legitimisation and election processes in order to expand party and government's control in Mocumbi. The final section analyzes people's perceptions about the introduction of community leaders. The chapter suggests that democratization, as understood in the light of the hegemonic 'good governance' discourse (World Bank 1989), is failing to reform the nature of the local state inherited from FRELIMO's socialist regime. Instead, tinkering with local government and traditional authorities reinforces long established power blocs in which community leaders, chiefs and local government officials all vie for control of local resources.

3.2. Vying for power: Politics of everyday life

> People are like wild dogs. When a wild dog finds a piece of meat it doesn't let it
> go. If the meat belongs to other dog the one that found it first will not let it go
> still because the meat is so nice.
>
>   – Anacleto Nhatchengo, Cove, June 2002.

The analogy that Anacleto Nhatchengo draws in the quote above was repeated to me
several times as I investigated succession stories within ruling families and the life
trajectories of FRELIMO party secretaries in Mocumbi. The fluidity of the local political
system allowed individuals of different sorts to dispute access to and, control of
resources. Oral accounts of succession in Mocumbi tell a long story of a high turnover of
chiefs and ambitious individuals who managed to gain and retain power for long periods.

The decree 15/2000 is not clear in relation to what community authorities are. This legal
ambiguity made local fluid political processes more complex. As defined by the decree
community authorities are not necessarily chiefs although, that is how it was interpreted
and implemented in some districts throughout the country. The decree defines
community authority as:

> [P]eople who exercise some form of authority upon a given community or
> social group. For example traditional chiefs - people who exercise leadership
> following the traditional rules of their respective community, barrio or village
> secretaries - people who exercise leadership based on the election done in the
> barrio or village to which they belong and other legitimated leaders - people
> who play some economic, social, religious or cultural role and are accepted as
> such by the social group to which they belong.

The cases I selected for this section highlight the fluidity of local-level politics and
suggest that the introduction of the ill-defined community leaders and the unclear
division of labour between traditional chiefs and community leaders fuel long existing
conflicts over power, influence and prestige.

Case 1: A borehole in no chief's land

> Mr. Bartolomeu was the father of a wealthy man born in Mocumbine and
> living in Maputo. While his son was in Maputo, Mr. Bartolomeu supervised his
> son's projects in Mocumbi. In January 2003 Mr. Bartolomeu was supposed to
> organize and supervise the opening of a borehole in his son's house. Mr.
> Bartolomeu's son had paid the borehole drilling company that passed by

Mocumbine in a number of scheduled borehole drills in the Inharrime district. The borehole was seen as a potential relief for some neighbouring families that would not have to walk a long distance to fetch water in the Inharrime River. When the borehole drilling company arrived they asked Mr. Bartolomeu to find someone to perform the *kuphalha* ritual, asking the ancestors for authorization to open the borehole. After four days workers from the drilling company and their machines were still camped in Mr. Bartolomeu's son house and the work had not started. The reason was that Mr. Bartolomeu had not been able to find an elder to perform the ritual. The two *madota* who had been asked to perform the ritual argued that the borehole was to be open in the area of each other's influence.

Drilling a borehole was expensive (around 60 000 000 MT) and keeping the workers and equipment in the area for longer than planned involved additional costs. The borehole drilling team threatened to leave because "their experience", they said, "showed that whenever they try to drill without ancestors' authorization they faced technical problems.' For example the bits could easily break or the power generator machine could stop working forcing them to go looking for parts in the province capital Inhambane. That generally compromised their timetable. When I further inquired why none of the *madota* was wiling to perform the ritual one of the neighbours said: "Mr. Bartolomeu does not respect people in the area because his son has money. He did not go to see personally any of these *madota* he wants to perform the ritual. He sends people. He even sent someone to call the *chefe do posto* so that he could intervene on his behalf. Why couldn't Mr. Bartolomeu go to the house of the *chefe do posto* and ask for help personally instead of sending someone to call him? On top of that Mr. Bartolomeu is stingy with money that is not his. It's his son's money and he was given money for the ritual but he doesn't want to spend it. What are a goat and five litres of wine for someone like him?" - asked the neighbour.

Afterwards the *chefe do posto* persuaded one of the *madota* to perform the ritual and the borehole was opened. The ritual was performed not with a goat but with chickens and wine. At least two issues were at stake here. On the one hand both *madota* wanted to see their position of authority recognised and respected. Mr. Bartolomeu and his son were known for not respecting people who worked for them. Though the money spent on chickens and wine was 'little money for someone like him' it served to acknowledge respect for the *madota*. The case shows cooperation between settlements' elders but there were also cases in which *madota* competed. In this case both wanted the matter 'excluded' from their jurisdiction since it was being requested by a person that because of his wealth he does not respect tradition.

Case 2: A community leader in search of popular recognition

In 2002 the community leader in Cove, with consent of the *chefe do posto*, arranged that a group of people working in the WFP project - Work for

Food[39], cleared a bush with the purpose of making a soccer field. In November 2003 I agreed with a group of soccer enthusiasts that I would buy a soccer ball in Maputo hoping that it would excite young men and we all would put hands together to re-clear and expand the area that had been cleared in 2002. The plan went as expected and in December there was already enough clear space for some kicks in the soccer field. In middle December 2003 Mr. Maximiano a migrant worker arrived for the festive season. He brought from South Africa two different sets of soccer equipment, two soccer balls and a whistle. Even if the soccer field was not officially finished[40] in late December the Cove team held a match against the Malene team. This challenge attracted many residents from both areas and passengers also gathered in the surroundings of the soccer field.

After the first weeks of the New Year in Mocumbi I went to Maputo in mid January 2004. When I returned in the fifth of February 2004 I was shocked to find that four people had been injured while playing in the soccer field. Two of them had serious injuries. In the last days of January a group of eight kids from the area got a soccer ball and went to play in the soccer field. After few hours one of the kids fractured his leg and was rushed to the hospital in the district capital, Inharrime. Almost a week later a 'big' game was organized in February 3, a public holiday.[41] The Malene team was invited again and there was a good public attendance. More or less three minutes into the game a teacher was seriously injured and immediately taken by motorbike to the hospital in Inharrime. "He didn't even touch the ball" – said a friend who recounted the event as I dropped from the bus.

Later in the same game another player was injured. One of the players came off the field bleeding from his nose. He had been accidentally punched during play. The last player to come off with an injury in the same game was a young man, member of the staff in the administrative post of Mocumbi. A thorn pierced his foot and he could not return to the field for the following weeks. After the game spectators commented the fact that many people had been injured that day while previously, for the two months in which we began to cut down the trees no serious injury had happen. Among the assistance the community leader from Cove commented: "It is good that it happened! How can people come here and open a soccer field without talking to the owners of the land. The ancestors are just hearing noise and people jumping. They don't know what's going on. I could foresee this but because no one asked me anything I just watched."

I spoke to different people about the events of the February 3. Same informants thought that the incident had nothing to do with rituals and ancestors. "It's just that the players from Malene are rough. Have you seen how they not only play hard but also play soccer with their hands" – told me a retired second division soccer player who lives in Cove. "You need to get some protection when you are going to play against other teams because other teams use charms. There are lotions made from oil of different animals and if you kick their players you are the one who feels the pain"- revealed a teacher from

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[39] People clean dusty roads, open drainages, construct classrooms, etc in exchange for food.
[40] It was not completely clear and the aimed dimensions had not been attained.
[41] National Heroes Day

the Mocumbi primary school. "The community leader just wants to get his father to perform the traditional ceremony but his father is a nonentity here. He does not have the right to perform any ritual. The right person to perform the rituals in this area is *madala*[42] Ngongwane." – commented a 40 years old woman. Other people interpreted the events also in different ways. Although no one disputed the community leader's claim that a ritual was needed, most people I spoke to distanced from the words of the community leader: 'What do you mean when you say it was good and you could foresee it and you did nothing about it because no one asked you? What do you think the family and friends of those injured feel about the community leaders' statement?" – criticized an informant who lives a kilometre from the soccer field.

There was no opposition to the community leader's suggestion that there was a need for a *kuphalha* ritual in the soccer field. However people did not agree with the way the community leader raised the issue. The community leader was in everyone's bad books. Local government officials complained that he was never in his office and was always somewhere pursuing his own 'businesses.' The hut built as the office for the community leader (see frontispiece) was most of the time closed and at best, served as a garage for the community leader's bicycle when he happened to be in the area. Chiefs and family elders complained that he came late or did not come at all for meetings he organized. I was present on three of these occasions. People in Cove were concerned about the money that had been given to the community leader to repair the local borehole. In this context the comments made in the soccer field in February 3 contributed to make the community leader more unpopularity in contrast to the support he expected to get from settlement elders by appealing to the performance of a ritual in the soccer field.

Case 3: Disagreement between a chief and a community leader

In the 28.11.03 I joined a group that left from Cove to Ziqui-Limão where a meeting with the population was going to take place. Cove's community leader was the leader of the group. The assistant of the community leader, two women representing the OMM[43] cell in the Mocumbine, a friend of Cove's community leader and I composed the group. The meeting's agenda was to inform about the upcoming general elections (in 2004) and the importance of people's vote. Another points on the agenda included: to reiterate that people should go to the hospital in case of malaria symptoms, discuss the delay on the construction of the office for the community leader in Ziqui-Limão, get a report on the work done in the field of the agricultural association of Ziqui-Limão and, listen to the problems of the people in Ziqui-Limão. Among the people that attended the meeting were the most influential family elders, the

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[42] Old man.
[43] Mozambican Women's Organization.

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local community leader and other *madota* from the settlement. The majority of the participants were women.

Once the agenda of the Cove's community leader was finished the meeting turned to the discussion of local issues raised up by members of the public. The community leader of Ziqui-Limão spoke about a gentleman called Silvino who was accused of smoking marijuana and raping women from the area when under the influence of marijuana. "Silvino should go" – suggested the community leader of Ziqui-Limão. No one openly disagreed with the charges against Silvino but the most respected elder in the settlement and some members of the public thought that Silvino should stay. When, after the meeting, I inquired about the reason why the community leader argued strongly for the departure of Silvino and others did not seem to agree I was told how Silvino settled in the area.

Mr. Silvino was a man in the middle thirties and lived in Nhapadiane. He settled permanently in Ziqui-Limão after his involvement with Joana, a girl from the area. Silvino introduced himself to the Joana's family and said he intended to marry their daughter. Subsequently Joana's father organized a spot in the area where Silvino and his future wife began their life together. Mr. Silvino was a relatively wealthy man and at that point his relationship with his in-laws was very good. Mr. Silvino usually bought gifts for his mother in-law and frequently paid drinks to his father-in-law. Few years later the couple began to have problems. Mr. Silvino frequently beat his wife. The girl's parents took the case to the community leader. Mr. Silvino apologized to Joana's family and the couple returned home. But Mr. Silvino continued ill-treating Joana. Weeks after the meeting organized by the community leader Mr. Silvino went to the community leader's house around 11:00 pm. When the community leader realized that Mr. Silvino was knocking at his door he did not open the door. Mr. Silvino insisted he wanted to talk. The community leader did not open still. In the following day the community leader presented a complaint to the settlement most influential elder saying that Mr. Silvino had come to his house late in the evening and threatened to kill him.

Following the community leader's complaint the local settlement elder called Mr. Silvino and his family for a meeting in which Mr. Silvino divorced his wife but was also allocated another plot where he could stay in Ziqui-Limão. Almost two years passed after the divorce and the settlement elder still received complaints from the community leader who suggested that Mr. Silvino made threats to kill Joana and claimed back assets he bought while the couple was living together.

There seem to be two main motives why the community leader wanted Mr. Silvino expelled from the settlement. First, Silvino's former wife was the community leader's niece. Second, the day Silvino went to knock at the community leader's door late in the evening the community leader was supposed to be away in business. This led the community leader to believe that Silvino was interested in his wife. The settlement elder had no apparent motive to expel Silvino. Quite the opposite as he remarked: "if we expel

him because he smokes marijuana where is he going to? Imagine that everywhere he goes he is not accepted because he smokes marijuana. If our son is doing something wrong you talk to him and not kick him out of the house." In addition, Silvino had built a house and planted many trees in the new plot allocated to him. This explains why the settlement elder and some members of the public suggested that Silvino should stay.

The case of Mr. Silvino shows how there are cases in which community leaders hold different views to those of the *madota* of a particular settlement. In this case, the view of the settlement elder prevailed but no generalization can be made from it. More than the position of authority that each of them holds are the individual skills to attract supporters and popular views on what is right or wrong. Many people became respected chiefs or *wa hombe* due to their individual skills in listening to people's problems and being able to bring solutions that were seen as fair by the contenders in specific cases.[44] In the case outlined above there was open public support for the settlement elder's decision not to expel Silvino.

Similar to the kinship system that allows for a greater degree of individuality (Webster 1976), local political structures in Mocumbi are fluid and create a context in which different individuals vie for power. The cases outlined in this section showed how, independently of the position of authority that individuals hold, there is always room for one to influence the course and outcome of particular events.

3.3. Legitimising chiefs, electing community leaders

Seen from a local perspective the introduction of community leaders resembles old failed social experiments like the banishment of traditional authority and the villagisation program that followed after independence. Theoretically, the introduction of community leaders was organized in two stages. First, the legitimisation phase in which people in the rural areas were told to 'find their legitimate chiefs.' Second the holding of local elections and the recognition of elected leaders by government officials. In practice the process was more complex. Initially, many people, including district administrators, thought that the process was about bringing back colonial *régulos*. In Mocumbi, just after the peace agreement in 1992, it was known that "traditional authority" would be reintroduced. In

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[44] Swartz (1966) refers to politics of 'persuasion'. I will return to this concept in the following chapter.

1994 succession disputes were advanced to the extent that contenders from Mocumbine made appeals to the provincial governor to mediate the dispute.

When I went to Mocumbi by the end of 2003 the position of local government officials was that the process was not about bringing back *régulos* or chiefs but about the introduction of locally elected community leaders regardless of their historical background. Local actors, including district administrators, improvised solutions to have the process of introducing community leaders going. This opened room for local government officials, chiefs and secretaries to manoeuvre in local-level politics.[45] The cases in this section look at the local dynamics of the legitimisation process and at the outcome of the elections for the post of community leaders.

While legitimisation was made a 'traditional' issue to be resolved by the ruling families, elections were public and depended on popular participation. The district administrator made it clear that he would not recognize community leaders at ceremonies attended by less than 100 inhabitants. At the ruling family level the legitimisation process followed different dynamics. In some cases the process was smooth with ruling families easily agreeing on the appointment of their chiefs. The *regulado* of Guambá Grande is a good example of this. In other cases like the *regulado* of Mocumbine the legitimisation process was permeated by long succession disputes. There were also cases in which the legitimisation process was not finished because people had not arrived at a consensus yet. That is the case of the *regulado* Guambá Pequeno.[46]

Case 4: Legitimising a chief: The case of *régulo* Venâncio

> *Régulo* Venâncio Uane Mahique from Mocumbine was formally recognised in
> July 2002. The process of his legitimisation was complex and can be traced
> back at least to 1994.[47] The succession for the *regulado* of Mocumbine was
> disputed simultaneously at two levels. On the one hand there was a dispute
> between the heirs of Mabuto Nhatchengo, first head of settlement in
> Mocumbine and the heirs of Sibone Mabonapange, most popular former *régulo*
> and also head of the ruling family at the time when chieftainship was abolished.
> The heirs of Mabuto Nhatchengo argued that the reinstallation of chieftainship
> was an opportunity to return power to their family since Sibone

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[45] Buur and Kyed (2003) and Dava (2003) reported similar situations in districts of the provinces of Inhambane, Manica and Sofala.

[46] The succession disputes in Guambá Grande and Guambá Pequeno are not discussed here.

[47] In 1994 contenders for the post of *régulo* approached Francisco Pateguana, then the governor of the Inhambane Province, to help in the resolution of a dispute that had began by the time of the peace agreement in 1992.

Mabonapange's family had usurped it in pre-colonial times. On the other hand there was an intra-family dispute to decide which *nyumba* (house) was to rule. Would it be Ussaca, Massinhane or Mahique? Ussaca, being the first *nyumba*, argued for primogeniture. Massinhane, the second *nyumba*, suggested that theirs was the ruling *nyumba* when chieftainship was abolished. Mahique suggested that theirs was the ruling *nyumba* to follow after the last *régulo*.

The heirs of Mabuto Nhatchengo never managed to attract supporters for their cause. Recently I interviewed Anacleto Nhatchengo who, resigned, told me that in a dream his ancestors told him to give up the dispute. "Our time will come. If I disobey the ancestors I might end up killed." The legitimisation processes was then discussed among the heirs of Sibone Mabonapange. Eventually after a series of family meetings from 1995 to 1998 the principle of laterality prevailed and the chieftainship was given to the *nyumba* Mahique. Venâncio was the only candidate to the post of *régulo* coming from the *nyumba* Mahique.

The *chizinda* of *régulo* Venâncio was situated in Chalauane where Venâncio Uane Mahique lived.[48] All the former *régulos*, except for Samessone Juvane (the last before independence), ruled from Sibonine where the *chizinda* of Mocumbine was located. Traditionally each *nyumba* was supposed to leave Sibonine after the end of its ruling time and return to the area of origin. When Sibone Mabonapange died in 1952 his sons refused to move back to Ussaca forcing the following *régulo*, Samessone Juvane to rule from Mavunjane, his home area. Because the heirs of Sibone Mabonapange were still in Sibonine Venâncio Uane Mahique had no alternative but to locate his *chizinda* in his home area, Chalauane.

The legitimisation of *régulo* Venâncio was one of the succession disputes that began to emerge when the message of recognition of chiefs arrived in Mocumbi. Venâncio, who was a retired male nurse, had his main house in Inharrime. He had to quickly improvise a house in Chalauane (his birth place) in order to run for the post of *régulo*. Venâncio was also, cumulatively, the community leader[49] for Chalauane.

Case 5: A dispute within a ruling family

When the Government began the process of recognising community leaders in 2002 the *cabo* from Malene was in jail serving a few months sentence for selling marijuana. From jail, *cabo* Malene designated his nephew Guitissane Malene to run for the position of community leader on his behalf. After consultation with family elders Guitissane was appointed and later recognised by the Government as the community leader for the settlement of Malene. Guitissane was a former FRELIMO party secretary but his election for the post had to do

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[48]I interviewed *régulo* Venâncio eight months after he had moved to Chalauane. It is not surprisingly that his nephew who has lived in the area for longer challenges his authority.

[49] *Régulo* Venâncio, like other *régulos* was recognized as a community leader. In legal terms it gives him the same rank as other junior member of the traditional structure (for instance *cabos*). In the practice when addressing community leaders the post he occupied previously is taken into consideration. The same is valid for former party secretaries that were treated accordingly with their previous ranks.

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more with the fact that he was indicated to represent *cabo* Malene. Short after the recognition of Guitissane *cabo* Malene was released from jail but his nephew refused to hand over power. When *cabo* Malene took the issue to the administrative post of Mocumbi he was told that it was very difficult to reverse the process given the bureaucracy involved. *Cabo* Malene has since opted to not support any of the activities that his nephew undertakes in the area. For example *cabo* Malene was said to interfere with work on the field of the settlement's agriculture association by asking people to not participate in the activities oriented by his nephew.[50]

Case 6: A family deal: the case of a secretary who campaigned for his uncle

In 2002 the ruling family in Mahalamba appointed João Mahalamba as the legitimate *cabo* in Mahalamba (table 2). According to the first perception of the recognition process João was to be recognised as the community leader in Mahalamba. But things changed in 2003 when it became clear that the election for the community leader was not automatic. Then João Mahalamba was faced with the situation of running to the post of community leader against his nephew, Luis Nomo who had been the FRELIMO party secretary in the area.

Luis Nomo was a popular secretary in Mahalamba. Mahalamba was the most developed trading center in Mocumbi due to its intermediary position between other trading centers and the district capital, Inharrime (Map 1). Although João was collectively appointed by the ruling family and was seen as the rightful traditional chief he was in clear disadvantage in relation to his nephew who had been 'delivering' development through the various NGO's that have operated in Mahalamba. When the time for the elections came Luis Nomo organized his supporters to vote for his uncle and not for him. By doing this Luis avoided a direct confrontation with his uncle who was also an influential family elder. João was elected and officially recognised as the community leader in Mahalamba.

Following his recognition João appointed his nephew Luis for his assistant. Although João was elected community leader Luis was the one that carried out most of the bureaucratic activities of the community leader thus continuing to perform his previous activities as a party secretary. The final outcome of this family arrangement was that *cabo* João Mahalamba, then legitimated community leader, dealt mainly with issues of the 'traditional' forum while the former secretary, who became the assistant of the community leader, Luis Nomo, dealt with government and development related issues.

Cases five and six are examples of other similar cases found in Mocumbi. Legitimisation and election was a complex issue that follow different dynamics according to the areas where they took place and the key actors involved. A simplistic interpretation of the

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[50] Similar situations happen in other areas. In Chalauane where *régulo* Venâncio is the community leader the roles are inverted. Venâncio's nephew who resides in the Chalauane has been making decisions such has accepting and expelling people without the consent of his uncle.

election results presented in table 2 might lead one to subscribe to the view that chiefs have become unimportant in contemporary politics. Making reference to the Nyamwezi in Tanzania Walsh suggested, "the chief's external image lent him an authority in the local community which he might otherwise not have had" (1985: 165). This is certainly the case for many chiefs in Mocumbi but it is also important to although many chiefs do not hold public and formal offices they remain key authority figures when it comes to conflict mediation and ritual performance. This was especially true when the chief was an influential family elder.

Area (circle) of Mocumbi

N°	Settlement	Name	Previous activity
1	Cove	Avelino Nhachengo	Secretary[51]
2	Malene	Guitissane Malene	Secretary
3	Muenda	Furtouoso Muenda	Secretary
4	Ziqui-Limão	Victorino de Carvalho	Secretary
5	Nhalevilo	Alexandre Macuche	Secretary

Area (circle) of Chitava Circle of Mahalamba

6	Mahalamba	João Mahalamba	*Cabo*
7	Nhatava	Simione Nhatava	Secretary
8	Chaluane	Venâncio Mahique	Retired (public functionary)

9	Mangoro	Afonso Mapasse	Retired (public functionary)

Area (circle) of Nhamitande

10	Nhapadiana	Antonio de Oliveira	Secretary
12	Mussana	Sacor Naene Buque	Secretary
13	Ancoca	Xadreque Deve	Secretary

Area (circle) of Mejoote

14	Mejoote	Francisco Dove	Retired (FRELIMO army)
15	Cuaiaia	Samuel Malele	Secretary
16	Boquiço	Alfeu Naftal	Secretary

Area (circle) of Coguno

17	Chissaca	Casting Jacopo	Retired miner
18	Cocoa	Bartolomeu Chissico	Secretary

Table 2. List of community leaders recognised in the Administrative post of Mocumbi, February 2004.

The election results available (table 2) show the final outcome of the recognition process in Mocumbi. In 2002 the local government had identified traditional chiefs in almost all the areas of the administrative post (see appendix A). In contrast the list of community leaders recognised in 2004 (table 2) shows that thirteen out of eighteen recognised community leaders were former FRELIMO party and dynamising groups' secretaries.

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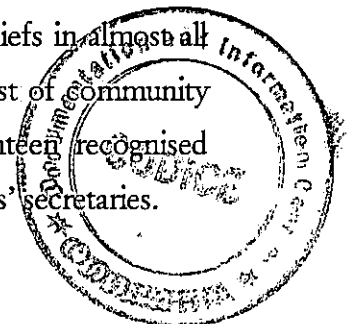
[51] There is a hierarchy of the secretaries within the party structure. I do not make that distinction here.

The election results can be interpreted in two ways. First secretaries were elected simply because people did not see a difference between what secretaries did and what community leaders were supposed to do. During the socialist period FRELIMO made sure that senior local government officials came from areas other than the ones they were appointed to work in. In contrast, party secretaries and leaders of dynamising groups were elected from among indigenous people and many of them spent most of their lives in their home areas. In everyday parlance people disqualify civil servants and government officials' opinions in local matters by saying that "they came with *guia de marcha* (transfer order)." The same does not happen with secretaries. Secretaries were intermediaries between the party/state and the people. In addition to propagating FRELIMO's socialist ideology, secretaries passed on to the 'superior structures' complaints and problems raised in the people's assembly. In this sense secretaries were never completely alienated from the people they sought to serve.

Second, chiefly power had been weakening since late colonial period and was aggravated by the post-independence abolishment of chieftainship. One of the reasons chiefs would retain their authority in postcolonial Mozambique would be the fact that chiefs played a central role in the performance of major rituals related to the well being of the people in the *regulado*. Late during the colonial period no major ritual such as rainmaking used to take place in Mocumbi. Informants said "such rituals last took place in the time of *régulo* Sibone."[52] With the banishment of the chieftainship, *régulos*, *cabos* and *indunas* were marginalised and constantly humiliated by most of the party/state local representatives.

The election of community leaders did not change the picture of local-level politics. On the contrary it reinforced the position of traditional chiefs as junior partners in the business of local government. To quote a government official in Mahalamba:

> After the election we explain to the contenders that one doesn't substitute the other. Both have to coordinate their activities but the defeated [usually the traditional chief] is the number two. In a case where a *cabo* wins there is no problem. The *secretary* will always have work because he is a member of the ruling party. It's his government. He [the *secretary* as embodiment of the government] is the one who had the idea of retrieving our tradition that once we had stopped.

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[52] Sibone died in1952

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As shown in the case of *régulo* Venâncio, the local elections created a context in which new and old actors made claims to access positions of power and influence. Family and lineage disputes are not new in the history of Mocumbi but the formal introduction of community leaders fuelled long existing disputes. As for the overall results of the local elections it is important to note that secretaries had been enjoying popular support in Mocumbi and that did not changed with the introduction of community leaders.

3.4. Local-level party politics

"Viva FRELIMO!" This is the way senior government officials began many meetings and rallies in Mocumbi. RENAMO supporters were 'invisible.' Like a bureaucrat in Mahalamba put it: "We know there are RENAMO members among us but they do not show themselves. We can only suspect that so and so is a RENAMO member." For many government officials the presence of RENAMO members was seen as a direct threat to their jobs. The idea was that if RENAMO won the general elections RENAMO representatives would be nominated as local government officials in the areas where they live. Government officials in Mahalamba believed that RENAMO provided the initial capital to some street vendors and shebeen owners in order to attract more supporters.

In areas like Coguno where RENAMO enjoyed strong support, government officials avoided mentioning politics. In an informal conversation the *chefe do posto* of Mocumbi observed: "You don't even have to mention the word FRELIMO. If you mention anything related to politics like elections for example, you will be insulted and lucky if you come from there alive!"

Officially, the government was not supposed to interfere with the legitimisation process because it was confined to the locus of the traditional. Legitimisation of chiefs should follow traditional rules of succession, a process that was restricted to the traditional ruling families. In practice government officials, who were, in most of the cases FRELIMO party members, have always been interested in who would be legitimised, because chiefs were thought to be able to expand government's control and party influence in the rural areas. Government officials used different strategies to screen candidates for the post of community leaders. At a rally in Chitava a government official said: "We cannot legitimise thieves, we cannot legitimise drunkards" clearly in allusion to

one of the candidates in the area who was known for challenging local government officials when he came to public meetings drunk. In that very rally that candidate from Chitava raised the issue of high bus fares that were seen to not correspond to the distances in comparison with the fares being applied in the district seat. He then suggested that the government official should come back after two weeks with a solution to the problem. This caused embarrassment to the government official who was forced to agree with the request knowing that even if he was to succeed in reducing the bus fares that would, most probably, happen after more than two weeks since the matter would have to be discussed at the district level.

It was also in the government official's interest that in areas like Coguno, where RENAMO enjoyed considerable popular support during the war, a chief who supported the ruling party was legitimised. Not surprisingly a community leader who was a former party secretary communicated his suspicion that the *régulo* of Guambá Grande could be a RENAMO supporter in the following terms:

> This is to inform the chief of the [administrative] post that on the 14-11-02, I Joaquim Macuacua[53] found in the notebook of *régulo* Castigo Jacopo Guambe a photo of the president of RENAMO while we were at the district capital, Inharrime in the offices of AMDU where we were waiting for an AMODEFA meeting.
> - Extract from a letter to the chief of the administrative post

When I visited Mocumbi in November 2003 the municipal elections were about to take place. At the time local government officials took every opportunity to campaign for FRELIMO thinking about the forthcoming general elections in 2004. In one of the meetings between local government officials and civil servants in the seat of the administrative post of Mocumbi, a senior local government official stressed the importance of maintaining FRELIMO in power by drawing an analogy with the period that followed independence in 1975. He said: "To campaign for FRELIMO means to secure our jobs. As we saw in 1975, the upcoming of independence meant the destruction of the colonial administrative machine and the state functionaries ended up without jobs. If RENAMO gets into power it will not be different." This was a typical way of thinking among local government officials.

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[53] Not the name in the original copy of the letter.

The idea that maintaining FRELIMO in power 'secures our jobs' was very strong among government officials. Non-collaborative community leaders were always regarded with suspicion. Some community leaders from the areas previously under the political influence of RENAMO attended fewer meetings with government officials what contributed to further suspicion from local government officials. However, one should not conclude that there was, necessarily, a positive correlation between low attendances to meetings with government officials and support for RENAMO. Some of these areas enjoyed some degree of autonomy because they are not of easy access. In some cases 'the state' distanced more than fifty kilometers from a particular settlement. This was especially true for Coguno. By not attending meetings with government officials, some community leaders managed to maintain a relative autonomy. Another strategy was that whenever a government official came, community leaders opted to misinform about the date or time of the government official's arrival. When questioned why there was such a low attendance to a meeting with government officials in Chitava, the community leader replied: "I have informed the population. They are the ones who decided not to come. Maybe it's because of the rain that fell early this morning. Many might have thought that the meeting was cancelled."[54]

FRELIMO's concern about chiefs was partly a result of RENAMO's populist agenda, which gained scientific credibility with the publication of the widely read work of the late French anthropologist Christian Geffray (1988, 1990). Geffray suggested that FRELIMO' rural policy marginalised important sectors of the peasantry (youth and traditional chiefs) and ignored the internal dynamics and differentiation of the peasantry. RENAMO capitalised on these discontent groups and was able to create a social basis that allowed them to wage a long-term civil war against FRELIMO.[55] RENAMO's demand for the recognition of chiefs was put as one of the conditions for the peace agreement in 1992. Local government officials sought to influence lineage politics in an attempt to enlarge the pool of FRELIMO supporters in Mocumbi.

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[54] Scott (1985) referred to these subtle strategies of resistance here employed by some community leaders as "weapons of the weak."
[55] The debate about Gefray's argument is far from over and this dissertation presents a contribution to it. See also Roesch 1992, O'Lauglin 1992, and Dinerman 1994, 2004.

3.5. People's perceptions about the introduction of community leaders

The introduction and recognition of community leaders has been an elite business. Government's idea of co-opting lineage politics and consequently expand its power and control in the rural areas was handicapped because chiefs were just one of the political actors in rural areas. In areas like Mocumbi, where pre-colonial political organization was based on small and relatively autonomous kin-based groups the influence of chiefs and colonial *régulos* was reduced. Furthermore in late colonial period Mocumbi was characterized by the decline of chiefly influence as a new elite composed of educated sons of *régulos* and civil servants emerged. Additionally the influence of chiefs further declined due to a long-standing tradition of labour migration, social and economic transformation resulting from the civil war not to mention the socialist government banishment of traditional authority.

Members of the traditional ruling families, formally excluded from local power positions during the socialist period, welcomed the introduction of community leaders while most of the people were ambivalent towards the process. This kind of generalization should take into account that individual trajectories and aspirations also play a role on the positions people take in relation to the process. In 2002 I interviewed an element of the ruling family in Mocumbine at his house in the district capital. Informants in Cove saw him as the rightful successor to the post of *régulo* in Mocumbine but he distanced himself from the process noting that "the whole process is fuelling feuds between secretaries and *cabos*. Now the *cabos* are called to perform rainmaking rituals but there is a war because the secretaries want to be present at the ceremonies." When I asked him about his appointment as a successor to the throne in Mocumbine, he rejected the claim and mentioned someone else who he thought was the rightful successor.

Some people saw the introduction of community leaders as another in a series of government top down intervention programs. "It is an order from the government" was the most common response among people I interviewed. Often the person interviewed would explain: "Like after the independence. They said no more *régulos* and we followed the orders. They are the government!" Other people regarded the process with skepticism because it was not clear to many of them what the process was all about. Top

down instructions about the process one day were contradicted another. One day the process was about *régulos* and *cabos* another it was about secretaries and community leaders. People also regarded the process with some skepticism because *régulos* and *cabos* were the local face of an oppressive and exploitative colonial regime. When I asked elders in Guambá Grande (Coguno) how people reacted to the banishment of traditional authority after independence I was told:

> People danced and celebrated in the anxiety of seeing how would the new government rule leaving behind the colonial system because in the colonial period people suffered a lot.[56] In the colonial period people were forced to work in the *machongos* and grow rice. That rice had to be given to the white man. If you were caught eating rice you were ingnceuc troubles. "Black eat grass because black is monkey" – they said. Who was not able to go to the plantation fields was taken to Inharrime to receive *palmatória*.

> The whole population was forced to grow coffee and the administrator would pass by to get the coffee and rice. We also were not allowed to drink coffee. They paid us 2 or 3 *escudos* for each sac of coffee. Many people died working in the plantations. There was also cotton and the sack of cotton was 60 *escudos*. They forced people to grow cotton to get paid 60 *escudos*! Many people died because of *mboma* (sjambok). The *régulos* worked with the administration. Is just like now. It is like this since the colonial period.

In Mocumbine the reaction was similar. Although a small part of Mocumbine (Sibonine) was a 'privileged labour reserve' for the Mission Church, thus excluding the inhabitants of the area from *chibalo* and recruitment to the mines in South Africa, people made reference to the despotic character of *régulo* Sibone: "He could take your daughter for one of his wife's and not pay *lowolo*. He would just call you after maybe few months and tell you that your daughter was in his house. Maybe if he felt good he could give you something but he would not pay *lowolo*." These are some snapshot views associated with the image of the colonial *regulado* that easily came to the fore when I inquired about the introduction of community leaders.

Chiefs always ruled with a group of counsellors (*madota*) and had their *n'anga* that led or performed rituals (see chapter two). Chiefs were banished but *madota* and *n'anga* always had a strong presence in Mocumbi. Lineage politics in Mocumbi were similar to those of the pre-colonial period with high a degree of autonomy and great roles played by family

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[56] See Dinerman 2004 for the case of the Nampula province

elders. In this context it is not surprising that people have ambiguous feelings and sometimes show some apathy in relation to the introduction of community leaders.

3.6. Conclusion

The analysis of the micro-politics in Mocumbi showed that family elders continue to be key actors in everyday local-level politics and are more likely to take the lead in local disputes. Democratic decentralization in Mocumbi failed to reform the nature of the local state inherited from FRELIMO's socialist regime. Many of the socialist local 'structures' are still in place and without them local government officials would hardly be able to undertake basic functions such population surveys and tax collection. The whole process was mostly directed towards state and ruling party control over rural subjects. From the outset the decree 15/2000 that recommends the coordination between local government officials and locally elected community leaders is not clear about who community leaders should be. Furthermore the division of labour between old and new local authorities is not clear. Consequently government's tinkering with local powers reinforces long established power blocs in which community leaders, chiefs and local government officials all vie for the control of local resources.

People's perceptions of the process that introduced community authorities were ambiguous because it was not clear to them what the process was all about. Taking into account recent memories of the colonial repressive regime, community leaders were easily associated with tax collection and labour recruitment. Top down 'orders' about the recognition of community authorities were not clear and the practice on the ground was likely to differ from settlement to settlement. The following chapter draws on the broader political economy of labour migration and globalisation to analyse how the movement of people and ideas transforms power relations at the local level.

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Chapter four

Local Powers, Global Networks: Migrant Workers, NGO's and Democratic
Discourse in Mocumbi

4.1. Introduction

The long-term civil war and the recent decentralization policy have contributed to major
transformation in Mocumbi. I suggested in chapter two that towards the end of the
colonial period labour migration and the *idigenato* assimilation policy contributed to social
differentiation in Mocumbi. This chapter deals with the movement of people and ideas in
and out of Mocumbi. It looks particularly at the emerging elite made up of Maputo-based
wealthy men and colonial *assimilados* - most of them mission-educated and *régulos*. It also
pays attention to the development programs undertaken by NGOs and how NGOs
projects interfere with local-level politics. Finally, it looks at how the new discourse on
democracy has been incorporated into local conflict mediation discourse and practice.

Recent literature on the rural elite shows the rural-urban continuum and is particularly
concerned with identity politics in the urban areas.[57] In this chapter I argue that in post-
war Mocumbi the emerging elite play a significant role in local level politics.
Furthermore, NGOs and ideas about democracy are locally appropriated and
incorporated as resources in local power struggles.

4.2. Returning migrants and the making of the new elite

Mocumbi, like most of Southern Mozambique, has a long history of labour migration
dating back to the pre-colonial period. People from the area are reported to have been
migrating to work in the diamond mines in Kimberly from 1866 and, by the end of the
nineteenth century, to the gold mines in Natal, South Africa (Fuller 1955, Young 1977,
Webster 1978, CEA 1979). Wilson noted that "before the turn of the century, in 1890's,
the gold mines drew 60% of their labour force from [southern] Mozambique" (1972:
109). My own informants in Mocumbi usually made reference to "Durban-Natal" as one
of the preferred destinations for young men who sought labour in South Africa.

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[57] See for example Nkwi 1997, Geschiere and Gugler 1998, Nyamnjoh and Rowlands 1998 and Englund
2001.

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By the end of the nineteenth century Portuguese colonialism was firmly established in Mozambique. Inhambane, Gaza and Maputo were then turned into labour reserves and migration to the South African mines was systematically controlled by the colonial state. At the same time the obligation to pay a hut tax, the imposition of *chibalo* and the increasing lack of fertile land (appropriated by the colonial state) forced peasants to earn cash in the South African mines where the wages were double of what an *indígena* could earn in Mozambique. The CEA report indicates that "the budget for the Inhambane province between 1913-1914 shows that 80% of the revenue came from miner's salaries from which 60% was through hut tax and 20% from migration tax" (1978: 17).

One of the consequences of labour migration was the transformation of social and economic life in the rural areas. Because of the increasing demand for cash, fathers would not be able to keep the *lowolo* earned in the marriage of their daughters to pay for the marriage of their sons. That forced young men to seek their own resources to pay *lowolo* in order to start their own families. Money became a central element in the rural economy to the extent that *lowolo* was increasingly paid in cash. Contrary to the tradition of settling on the fields surrounding their fathers' houses, young men sought to establish themselves in new homesteads resulting in increasing levels of autonomy and independence. As Webster noted "the advent of labour migrancy posed a real threat to the hegemony of the elders over their cadets, and since the resource, that had been used to control cadets – women – was now accessible to young migrants, the elders turned their attention to two areas of pervasive fear for migrants: insecurity over access to land and the fidelity and well-being of wives and children" (1978: 169).

Labour migration also played a role in social differentiation and in the emergence of a small elite composed of rich farmers who had the chance to accumulate capital due to better-paid positions in the mines in South Africa. The CEA (1979) report identified three categories of peasants in the late colonial period. The first category was made up of rich peasants whose main characteristic was to include wage labour on their farms. The rich peasants were insignificant in number due to the fact that they could hardly compete with the wages paid on the settler's farms and also because there was not an absolute lack of land to force poor peasants to engage in wage earning farming. Peasants in the middle class composed the second group. They owned the means of production and

complemented agricultural production with artesian activities. The last group, the lower class, was composed of poor peasants whose means of production could not sustain the family. This group of peasants generally opted for constant wage work as a source of cash. In many cases the boundary between middle and poor class peasants was blurred. As they grew older, middle class peasants tended to become poor as they became less consistent in farm production.

In comparison with the labour migration, the institutionalization of the *regulado* played a more important role on the differentiation among the peasantry. *Régulos* and *cabos* enjoyed the right to collect taxes, recruit labour for the mines and also had control over land allocation. Wuyts noted that "such political power as they possessed was undoubtedly used to fuel economic differentiation among the peasantry" (1978: 10).

Parallel to the role played by labour migration in the internal differentiation of the peasantry was the colonial education provided by the mission churches. Education was part of the assimilation policy that aimed more at maintaining the majority of the natives in the structure of African traditional society (Newitt 1981, Macamo 2002) while promoting a small middle class with basic skills to assist in the low ranks of the public function. Among the educated were those who only had access to training as artisans, and those who got professional training in areas such as agriculture, teaching and nursing. The latter formed the group of native educated elite that became influential in the rural areas but was also a significant part of the group that composed the first independent government in Mozambique.

In the period that followed independence, *régulos* and other groups that had enjoyed privileges during the colonial period, except for those who immediately joined FRELIMO, were marginalised. The government abolished the *regulado* and opposed 'traditional practices' associated with the feudal society. Communal villages were promoted and private entrepreneurship discouraged in favour of state owned projects such as state farms. The civil war started few years after independence and labour recruitment for the mines in South Africa declined significantly. All the above factors created disruption in the rural life and weakened the elite that had been formed towards the end of the colonial period except for those who sought better job opportunities in the provincial capital cities.

Mocumbi is emerging from the effects of the war. In spite of the decline of labour recruitment to South Africa, many young men continue to migrate to South Africa and Mozambican cities in search of better job opportunities. By legal or illegal means, South Africa continues to be the preferred destination although work in the mines is not anymore the ideal job young men expect to get in South Africa. Some of the new expectations include work in the construction industry; work in the transport industry as drivers and, in the worst-case scenario, the informal economy is seen as an option. The following case shows from the perspective of a young man why migration to South Africa is seen as the best of the available options:

<u>Case 7: A successful young migrant worker</u>

Justino Banze was 24 years old. He was born in Mocumbi and went to the local primary school. When he finished primary school he interrupted his studies because his parents could not afford to pay for his high school studies in Inharrime, the district seat. "I was not good in school anyway" - he added. When Justino was 15, he went to South Africa with his uncle who was also a migrant worker. After a year in which irregularly he worked on short contracts (usually between one to three weeks and sometimes not finding work for months) Justino got a contract job as a worker in a refrigerator repairing company. "The period of adaptation was not easy. In the first months you think of coming back home because life is hard and you can't speak the language. But you can't go home because you don't have the money. Once you get some money you start hoping that more money might come and you end up staying" – he explained.

The work on the refrigerator repair was Justino's first contract job. When I interviewed him in the beginning of 2004 he said he was working for a company that makes house ceilings. He is one of the most trusted employees because 'I do not go to work late and always try to finish my job on time' - he emphasized. The new boss in the house ceiling company helped him with the documentation and he is now a legal Mozambican worker in South Africa. That status allowed him to rent a three bed roomed flat where he stays. In turn he rented the other bedroom to other Mozambican migrant workers that were still 'organizing' their lives in South Africa.

In the first weeks of January, before I had the chance to meet and interview Justino, I had heard about him and his success story. Ezequiel, a 21 year old young man, told me about Justino.[58] Justino earned respect among young men in Cove because he had 'made it' in a relatively short period of time. By the age of 18 Justino was already able to visit home, send groceries and help with the primary education of his youngest brother.

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[58] Ezequiel was planning to go to South Africa with the help of Justino (in fact Ezequiel got to Johannesburg in February 2004 and in March he called me for the first time as we had planned in Mocumbi before is departure).

Justino is a single young man who does not intend to get married soon. He left his girlfriend from the area because, "when I came back after two years and a half she was pregnant and that couldn't have been my son" – he explained. In South Africa he did not want to get involved with South African girls because "once you get involved with a South African woman she makes you forget about your family at home and you don't come back. If you do come back you come empty handed because that woman will not let you come back and will cause you all sorts of problems" – explained Justino.

Like many young men that migrate to South Africa Justino was one of the Mocumbi *mafolhana* in South Africa. When I asked why he had taken that option Justino explained: "You see, it is not difficult to go to South Africa if you have someone who is already there and can take you with. Once in South Africa, when you get a job and the white man begins to like you, he will make sure you have documents so that you are not arrested by the police or repatriated. Look at my friends that stayed here. They still haven't organized their lives. Only the few who were very intelligent in class made it. That is the problem of Mozambique. If you want to work and you don't have a degree or a certificate you can't work. Whereas in South Africa you just go to the white man and you say you want to work. They [white men] don't want what you've studied. They want to teach you a job so that you know exactly what to do. Once you get to South Africa you may work as a baker, street vendor, driver or any kind of job. Then you hope to find a job with a longer contract. Sometimes we get annual bonuses that vary from R 4000 to R 10 000. In that way you can always come home. Now, the big problem of Mozambique is that there is no work for those who didn't go to school. A company never teaches a person a job. Even to fix parts of a machine or of a car one need to have been to school whereas there [in South Africa] they teach you a specific activity" –said Justino.

The case of Justino was seen as the ideal for young men. In practice, many *mafolhana* travel to South Africa after the age of eighteen and are only able to send money and goods back home only after more than five years in South Africa. There were also those who did not succeed in South Africa and got involved in criminal activities. Returning to Mocumbi was most of the times a way of hiding from the South African police until things 'cool down.' In the case of those who succeed on getting a permanent job and accumulating capital to send home marriage was postponed until the time that they could make regular visits home or when they were about to retire. In spite of the 'dangers' associated with South African women, it was common that young men get involved with South African girls. Indeed these relationships could end up in marriage, mainly in cases in which the 'return home' was made after the age of fifty. In fact migrant and ex-migrant workers I interviewed noted that one aims to stay in South Africa for as many years as possible.

Returned migrants usually were involved in small-scale commercial activities. One of the activities preferred by returning migrants was the transport sector where they use their personal vehicles to locally transport goods and people. Another area where returning migrants invested in was the commercial sector. There was a tendency to establish small retailer's shops and shebeens. In cases in which these small businesses became less profitable there was always the possibility of returning to South Africa.

These successful returned migrants not only earned respect among young men but were also seen as models for the younger generations. Their involvement in small-scale commercial activities made them important local political actors. A particular area could owe regular transport to the district to a returned migrant worker. The small retailers' shops and shebeen not only became the places where young men gather but also places where local people can buy on credit products of immediate need such as rice, beans or wine in case of an unexpected visitor.

Mission educated *assimilados* and ex-*régulos* that were retiring from the public function in district and provincial capitals made up the second group of returning workers who influence local politics. Vincent (1971; 1977) showed, in the case of Gondo and Teso in Uganda, the important role colonial administration played in class formation and in the creation of an African 'big men' elite. My survey in Mahalamba showed that the majority of local entrepreneurs were mission educated public functionaries some of whom were still on duty such as the district hospital director, the provincial police director, the director of the district agriculture extension office, the district administrator and ex-Maputo based retired middle rank workers at national companies such as the Mozambique Railways and Mozambique Gas Corporation. Finally close relatives of senior government members were also part of this group. Middle scale commercial farming was the main activity of these rural elite. The case of *régulo* Venâncio illustrates both: the life trajectory of the average *assimilado* and that of an ex-*régulo*

Case 8: Short life history of *régulo* Venâncio Mahique

> *Régulo* Venâncio was a retired male nurse and spent most of his life out of
> Mocumbine. After he completed primary education at the Mocumbi Mission
> Church he went to study in the district capital, Inharrime. He was enrolled at
> Alvor, a well-known school where natives were educated to become primary
> school teachers. However, other institutions in the public function, including

the Portuguese colonial administration, employed many of Alvor students. After completing his training in Alvor, Venâncio Mahique was trained as male nurse and worked in the Gaza province. In 1961 he got married in the Catholic Church and in 1988 he took a second wife. He has nine children six resulting from the first marriage and three resulting from the second. Most of his sons and daughters lived and worked out of the Inharrime district. One of his older sons left the country and was then living in Europe for many years. As he retired from the public health sector Venâncio Mahique had been staying in his main house in the Inharrime district seat. Eight months before the interview[59] he built a new house in his home area, Chalauane, from which he run the *regulado*. Since then he used to spend three to five days a week in Mocumbine but he did not show the intention to move with his wife and settling permanently in Chalauane. *Régulo* Venâncio was officially recognised in July 2002. The process that led to his legitimisation was long and was brought to my attention when I first went to Mocumbi in 2002 (case 4). By the time I interviewed *régulo* Venâncio the relationship with his nephew who had been staying in Chalauane for a longer period was not good. One of the reasons for the wrangle was the way his nephew was administering part of the family land. Venâncio thought that in spite of his long absence from Chalauane, he should have a say on how the family land was to be used. Venâncio was a devoted FRELIMO party member and his relationship with the president of the locality, who was also a FRELIMO party member, can be described as 'good'. To put it in his words: "We work in coordination since we have the same government agenda."

Government's recognition of traditional authority has opened the opportunity for those who were part of the colonial elite to regain their status. In fact newly recognised *régulos* do not enjoy the same privileges as the *régulos* in the colonial period. In any case they hold a formal position of authority and, depending on individual skills, a lot of benefits can result from it. In a society highly disrupted by the civil war and in which the presence of the state is weak, *régulos*, now legitimised as community leader, can function as a form of local moral authority. Like Venâncio, the majority of the mission educated local entrepreneurs did not live in Mocumbi. They stayed in the district seat or in the provincial capitals where they made their careers and established their families. Mocumbi is a place where they went to visit or to oversee their businesses.

Maputo-based senior government members and successful businessmen compose the last group that can be referred to as the new modern elite. Unlike the middle class mission-educated who did not pursue further education after independence – thus reducing the chances of upward social mobility – the new modern elite was based in the wealthy suburbs of Maputo city. They were locally referred to as *wa hombe* not in the

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[59] I interviewed *régulo* Venâncio Mahique in December 2003.

traditional sense of local big-man but in the sense that they were respected big-men in Maputo. Present day *wu hombe* may have been educated in the mission church but they pursued further education during the post-colonial period or had access to jobs that allowed them to rise socially. In any case, the adoption of neo-liberal economic policies from the end of the 1980's was an important condition for rapid accumulation of wealth for both government members and businessmen. The case that follows illustrates how the modern *wu hombe* influence local political arenas, even if most of the time they are not physically present in Mocumbi.

Case 9: Flugêncio: A modern *mu hombe*

Mr. Flugêncio was a man on his middle fifties. He was born in Mocumbi and through difficulties managed to study and make his way to Maputo. In Maputo he got further education in commerce and later became a senior bureaucrat in the government. About four years ago Mr. Flugêncio began to invest part of his wealth in Mocumbi. He began the restoration of his old brick house and invested in cattle. He also used local material to build a couple of guest rooms just opposite his house. In February 2004, almost three years later, these guest rooms were there and no single guest had occupied them. Locals did not understand why Mr. Flugêncio built those guest rooms since Mocumbi was not a tourist destination and apparently did not have the potential to become one.

The kind of investment Mr. Flugêncio made in Mocumbi provided some people with an extra source of income. Recently Mr. Flugêncio built a bar contiguous to his brick house and more people got some work. People were employed to cut down trees, clear the land, do the levelling, arrange the garden and skilled workers were responsible for building, painting and installing water and electricity. Two community leaders from the neighbouring settlements worked for Mr. Flugêncio. One community leader was a cook. He kept the house keys and supervised the restoration work being done in the interior part of the house. The other community leader that worked for Mr. Flugêncio was responsible for the work being done in the yard and the surroundings of the house.

Despite the fact that many people did work for Mr. Flugêncio, he was not a popular figure in the area. Locals criticized him saying, "He doesn't look like an educated man. He is rude with people who work for him." People also complained that they were underpaid and that wages often came weeks late. In one of my earlier visits to Mocumbi, Mr. Flugêncio had sent people after his herd-boy who had been missing for a month and taken two cows with him. Many people anticipated that the reason why the herd-boy had disappeared with the cattle was that he was not getting paid for the job. That was confirmed later when the case was brought before family elders and the herd-boy claimed that he had taken the cows because he was hungry. Workers also felt that sometimes Mr. Flugêncio's intermediaries (relatives or one of the community leaders) did not make payments accordingly. Not surprisingly, the weekends

that Mr. Flugêncio came to visit were awaited with mixed feelings. Some people hoped to get a job, others waited for their pay and yet others just wanted to make sure that intermediaries would not 'eat' part of their salaries.

Towards the end of 2003 the restoration of the brick house was complete and the bar opened at the beginning of 2004. There were not many brick houses in Mocumbi and Mr. Flugêncio's house stood out because it was equipped with all the facilities of a modern house in one of Maputo's wealthy suburbs. These facilities included basic commodities such as running water and electricity to 'luxuries' such as cellular phone antenna and DSTV. It was rumoured in Mocumbi that Mr. Flugêncio wanted to build a police station in the area and then hand it over to the local government. Some people believed that this was possible because "Mr. Flugêncio has money and he has invested a lot in that house and in the [contiguous] bar. He wants to secure his assets! It wouldn't be difficult for him to build a police station here." That belief is further supported by the fact that other modern *wa hombes* from the area –who from time to time gather at Mr. Flugêncio's house - might also have been interested in the police station.

By the time I left Mocumbi the new bar with national and imported alcohol seemed to be repeating the story of the guest huts. Except for a handful of visitors and a few local civil servants, locals seldom went to the bar. One of the two bar employees told me that "there are days in which we just spend electricity with the fridge because no one buys anything. Other days I just sell two bottles of coke" – he explained.

Like Flugêncio other modern *wa hombe* were investing in Mocumbi. Brick houses with imported materials were the first type of investment followed by commercial farming and cattle. While the Mocumbi brick houses might secure a late retirement they were also used as places of refuge from the city life stress. Often when investments involved more than the family of the *wa hombe*, disputes were likely to emerge.

The influence of modern *wa hombes* is likely to grow in Mocumbi. By the time I left fieldwork there was a plan at the district level to create the Inharrime District Development Association (Associação de Desenvolvimento do Distrito de Inharrime) that would include Maputo-based influential businessmen and members of government. The same group had also planned for November 2003 a "Conference of the Investors of Inharrime" that would bring together businessmen and NGOs operating or wishing to operate in Inharrime. Apparently the conference was postponed because it coincided with a period in which NGOs were making their annual reports and planning for the following year.

The above section has shown that three groups of returning migrants played an important role in different political arenas in Mocumbi. The first group is composed of successful migrant workers who accumulated wealth in years of work in South Africa. This group continued the legacy of the colonial mine workers who were, at the time, able to improve their living standards and secure retirement due to the mine wages. Migrant .workers who sought work in South Africa usually found alternative jobs to the mines but the principle remains the same: acquire enough wealth to establish a household and secure retirement. Their influence in contemporary local-level politics was due to their ownership of transport business, retailer's shops and shebeens.

Mission-educated colonial elite who did not rise sociably but throughout time were able to accumulate enough wealth to invest in any sort of retirement business compose the second group of returning migrants. Relatives of senior members of government and *régulos* were also part of this group. Mocumbi born senior government members and successful businessmen composes the last and wealthier group. Some members of this group had the same background as those from the second group but their wealth was based on the opportunities for rapid accumulation of wealth that followed the first structural adjustment programs in late 1980's and the adoption of neo-liberal policies of privatisation and decentralization in the 1990's. The impact of the investment some members of this group made in Mocumbi is similar to that of NGOs. There was local competition for participation in *wa hombe* projects. In the case used as an illustration, community leaders led the labour recruitment process.

4.3. NGOs and local powers

Like Ferguson (1990) showed for Lesotho other scholars have noted the importance of NGOs in local political arenas. In their study of local politics in the Central African Republic Bierschenk and Olivier de Sardan noted:

> Although the development aid organizations define their role as apolitical, and limit themselves to providing technical assistance, they clearly influence the structure of local political arenas through the numerous 'groups' which have been created at their instigation, albeit not covered in Ordinances specifically drawn up to define local authority law. However, they exercise considerable political power, due to their control over collective funds, and the official governing local authorities like the elected chiefs –who do not control, as we have seen, any local funds –have to come to terms with them (1997: 455).

With the end of the civil war Mocumbi became a 'paradise' for local and international NGOs. Most of the NGOs that have operated in Mocumbi undertook short time projects related mainly with the promotion of agriculture, improving livestock, building and rehabilitating sanitary units and HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns. Different NGOs were also in competition among themselves because they provided similar services sometimes in the same region. In Mocumbi, NGOs were important political actors in the sense that their "partnership" with the government or with the "social partners" (for instance farmers associations, chiefs, priests) had direct implications on local power relations.

Case 10: A *régulo* who went for a workshop in India

Eugénio Simbe was the *régulo* of Nhanombe, an area in the administrative post of Inharrime. I interviewed *régulo* Simbe with the aim of comparing historical information that relates *regulado* Mocumbine to *regulado* Nhanombe.[60] Like *régulo* Venâncio (case 8) from Mocumbine, Simbe was trained as a primary school teacher at Alvor, a famous school that trained primary school teachers for the natives. Simbe is now retired and his life trajectory is similar to many of those who got education during the colonial period. In the early 1970's Simbe joined FRELIMO and participated in the liberation struggle in the Manica province. In 1975 he returned to Inharrime for a short period and then, in the same year, moved to Maputo where he got further education at the commercial school and established himself as a primary school teacher. Simbe says he "has always been a *régulo* and even during the war period I used to visit Nhanombe to meet with the community." When, after the first democratic elections, it was said that the *regulado* would be reintroduced the people from Nhanombe sent him letters asking him to go back and take the post of the *régulo*.

Simbe disputed succession to the office with his cousin, Alberto Nguaissa, who had temporarily taken charge of the *regulado* when Simbe went to join the independence struggle in Manica. Soon after independence the *regulado* was abolished but in 1995 Alberto began to make claims for the post of *régulo* in Nhanombe. Eventually Simbe won the succession dispute and in 2002 he was formally recognised as the *régulo* of Nhanombe.

Simbe was probably the busiest *régulo* in the Inharrime district. That was, in part, because his *regulado* was located along the national road and closer to the district seat. Nhanombe was one of the first areas to benefit from all sorts of

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[60] *Régulo* Simbe from Nhanombe is often compared to late *régulo* Sibone from Mocumbine because of the popularity and respect he enjoys among the community and local government officials. Oral accounts in Mocumbine refer that the first head of settlement in Nhanombe was the son-in-law of Mabuto Nhatchengo, first head of settlement in Mocumbine. When Chissano Dombola from Gaza married Nhatchengo's daughter Mbassane, Nhatchengo allocated that area to the young couple. He also wanted Chissano Dombola to be there as a watchman for that area of his territory.

development projects ranging from education to tourism. Simbe's average day agenda started at the district seat where he did most of the bureaucratic work that included meetings with NGOs and the district administrator. In the afternoon he would go back to his *chizinda* in Nhanombe where people approach him for advice and to settle disputes.

Simbe was also known as the champion of tax collection and mass mobilisation. Simbe's supporters often mention that "when president Chissano came for the electoral campaign in 1999 he asked Simbe to perform a ritual for him; when the prime minister came to inaugurate the local cellular antenna Simbe had to perform a ritual; no South African entrepreneur can build a lodge by the beach without consulting Simbe; and even the church sisters asked him to perform the *kuphalha* ritual for the inauguration of their school of professional arts"- explained a junior civil servant in the district seat.

In 2002 Kulima[61], selected Simbe as a community representative for the Inhambane province to participate on a month workshop in India. In India, Simbe said he "met and exchanged experience with other local-based organization leaders. Social inequalities are extreme in India and because of that the government encourages local-based organizations to promote development. Local leaders there are more respected because they understand the fact that if you don't know how to read and write it does not mean you can't know how to govern or how to be a leader" – he explained.

Simbe rules, he says, "according to traditional and formal law. People sometimes misinterpret things. When a man wants to divorce a wife with whom he has lived for more than twenty years he should not expect her to go empty-handed. That's not right. In my *regulado* I try to set things right and find a solution that suits both parties. People also misinterpret the land law. The fact that you have been staying on a particular piece of land for many years does not necessarily mean that the land is yours. We [traditional authority] are here to protect those who migrate to find better job opportunities and when they come back they should have access to their land." According to traditional rules of succession a woman cannot ascend to the post of *régulo* but Simbe was of the opinion that they may and can play an important role in the life of the *regulado*. It is not by chance that Simbe's single *induna* was a woman.

Régulo Simbe's workshop in India shows how NGOs were also a source of local powers.[62] In the case, *régulo* Simbe was the fortunate beneficiary but the opportunity was there for other community leaders. The following case is an illustration of a frequent phenomenon

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[61] Kulima is local internationally funded NGO with projects in diversified fields. Initially it was established as information and documentation center to assist other NGOs in Mozambique by providing information on development issues in Mozambique, technical education, and training in project management. In Inharrime most of its work has been on improving sanitation and building low budget schools.
[62] In his study of alliance of housing activists in Mumbai, India Appadurai (2001) talks about "politics of partnership – partnership. Similarly, Robins (2003) gives an instance from South Africa, Cape Town where two community-based organizations articulate politics of the locality and those of the horizontal global networking. In Mocumbi, NGO's refer to community leaders as *parceiros sociais* (social partners) and through workshops short course incorporate local actors in global networks.

in Mocumbi in which NGOs empowered community leaders who in some cases were figures that did not enjoy popular support.

Case 11: "Work for food": How international development agencies 'empower' community leaders

The administrative post of Mocumbi was, like many other areas of Mozambique re-emerging from a decade of civil war. International donor organizations and other NGOs have been key players in the recovery process and in the promotion of development. One of the most influential organizations in the area was the WFP and its programme *Work for Food*.

The programme *Work for Food* provided food to the population in exchange for work. The most visible part of the program was the re-opening and maintenance of dusty roads that linked the main trading centres and the district capital. Community leaders were often asked to provide a list indicating the families of the settlement that should be included in a particular cohort. Not surprisingly, in many parts of Mocumbi there were stories about community leaders who became 'very important' people because of their intermediary position as representatives of the 'community'.

In Cove the local community leader "selects people according to friendships. The first to be integrated are his girlfriends" – commented a local retailer. In Mejoote, a former community leader who had been a local [FRELIMO party cell] secretary since 1977 was notorious for "finding ways of keeping the food in his house. Whenever we received projects [work for food] there were problems. He would send to WFP an incomplete list, not containing the names of all the people from the settlement. Because the project would not take back food distributed to a particular settlement he would keep it for himself. When people complained he would argue that some people did not work and also that their names were not on the list" – remembered a woman from Mejoote.

Depending on a particular project, NGOs tended to empower community leaders, local government officials and also the local government. Local government officials were quick to capitalize on the work of NGOs as it is shown in the following extract from the 2003 annual report of the administrative post of Mocumbi:

Based on modern technologies, the government, through the WULOMBE project has trained 50 apiculturists on the production of honey. Simultaneously [the government] built a shop for the commercialization of that product from which 343 kg of honey have been sold...Cattle were distributed through MOVIMUNDO and in the same project four people have been trained to and have already vaccinated 245 chickens.

Siikala (2001) has suggested that locally based chieftainship can become a way of organizing world politics. While that might not be the situation in Mocumbi, case number ten shows how Simbe not only identifies himself with leaders of local based organizations in India but also draws on the "experience" of the workshop in India to manage the business of his *regulado*. Case eleven presents a situation in which community leaders have access to NGO resources which strengthen their power but not necessarily their legitimacy or authority.

4.4. "In the time of democracy": Conflict mediation[63] in Mocumbi

In Mocumbi conflict was a pervasive event of everyday life. Different settlements in Mocumbi pointed out that the most common causes of conflict were the following: (i) land issues - field limits;[64] (ii) adulterous affairs; (iii) divorces; (iv) outstanding debts; (v) consumption of alcohol and marijuana and (vi) vandalism as a result of alcohol and marijuana. Theft, witchcraft accusations and violent crimes resulting in murder were said to occur on a small scale.

Given their different particular histories and geographic locations, each settlement is likely to witness more of one sort of conflict than the others. For example, Coguno is locally perceived to be an area where violent crimes were likely to occur. A high level of consumption of locally brewed alcoholic drinks was appointed as the possible reason for the high crime rate. Chirrambo and Nhacuaha were the areas where more vandalism was reported. Local government authorities in Mahalamba often declare marijuana smoking as the cause of vandalism.

There were multiple forms of conflict mediation in Mocumbi. Like local political arenas, the different institutions of conflict mediation are both traditional and modern, drawing on local understandings of justice and on the current democratic discourse. Ideally, family elders mediated in local disputes – excluding homicides and suicides. For example,

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[63] I follow Swartz who defined mediation as involving "the sustained intervention of the mediator, who must be concerned with more than the legal issues at stake and must utilize a variety of pragmatic techniques –ranging from friendly advice and pressure to formulation of new terms – to bring about reconciliation of the interests of the opposed parts" (1966: 36).

[64] In Mocumbi there is no land shortage and there are only a dozen of commercial farmers. Land disputes are often about the limits of neighbouring fields. One informant once made this enlightening statement: "There is no bush without an owner." It is also common that behind the land issues are hidden quarrels.

calling a gathering of the neighbouring family elders "who know the history of the area" was often a way of solving land settlements.

During the period I did fieldwork in Mocumbi, I witnessed two land disputes mediated by local elders. The meetings were assemblies of elders, adult men and women and the parties involved. Depending on the matter being discussed, the numbers of those present varied. The community leader in Cove suggested that on average a minimum of fifteen to twenty people have to be present at the beginning of the meeting. Adult men and women at the meeting may be people who are directly or indirectly interested in the matter. In any case, there was always a group of people who had no apparent interest in the matter but whose presence as witnesses was important. After the opening of the meeting each of the two parties involved argues their case. In general, the person who called the gathering opened the meeting. This person could not be an elder but certainly not any of the directly implicated parties. A discussion then follows in which, theoretically, all present had the right to participate. In practice three or four elders and the involved parties would dominate the discussion. Two or three hours later the dispute is likely to be settled.[65]

Régulos were rarely called to mediate in local disputes. The practice was that a group of *madota* mediated the matter and the *régulo* subscribed to the resolution that emerged from the settlement. At the end of the settlement a monetary contribution was made for the post-settlement party "to make sure that there is no hatred between the parties that were in contest" - explained the *régulo* of Guambá Grande. The cash was used to buy food and drinks for all present. However the amount stipulated varied according to specific cases and status of the intervening parties.

In the whole of Mocumbi there was no police station. The major institution of conflict mediation in Mocumbi is the community tribunal. Community tribunals were created to replace socialist vigilante groups and peace judges. In practice there has not been full replacement either of colonist or socialist institutions. Community tribunals worked very

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[65] Divorces and adulterous affairs can also be resolved in the same fashion as land disputes. If for some reason the parties involved do not arrive at a consensus the issue is then taken to the immediate 'superior structure'. The 'superior structure' is the immediate territorial higher authority. That figure of authority may be the *cabo*, a chief of zone, a secretary or a community leader.

much on an eclectic logic that drew on the principles of all institutions that have historically existed in Mocumbi.

The community tribunal in Mahalamba had been working since 1999. It met once a week on Wednesdays.[66] The tribunal structure, in order of importance, was as follows: (1) president judge; (2) vice-judge; (3) clerk; (4) treasurer and (5) members of the tribunal. Community tribunals were institutions that sought a democratic reputation partly due to the democratic character of the previous institutions in place during the socialist period, partly due to the recent human rights and gender discourses that were common currency in Mocumbi.

The president of the community tribunal in Mahalamba highlighted that "We try to get all groups represented. We look for a representative of each settlement and also at gender and age." In fact the treasurer of the tribunal was a young man and one of the senior members of the tribunal was an OMM[67] representative. However, "the decision making group must be composed by elders who know how to settle disputes" – stressed the president of the community tribunal. When I asked in the community tribunal in Mahalamba what were the characteristics of a good judge I was told: "A person who does not get upset easily; a person who has the ability to hear the others and not get emotional; a person who is able to calm down animosities and make people give up on their vengeful plans."

Régulos and community tribunals strongly discouraged witchcraft accusations. *Régulo* Venâncio noted, "If a person is very old his children will say – we are dying because of him. We are young and we are dying, why doesn't he die?[68] When someone is wealthy he is also accused of witchcraft. All that reflects illiteracy and ignorance" – he argued. A senior member of the community tribunal in Mahalamba shares the same view as *régulo* Venâncio when he says: "We discourage witchcraft accusations. We ask for the materiality of those accusations. Otherwise we would be going back to the past. This is the time to defend everyone. Nowadays everyone has rights. What happens, sometimes,

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[66] The other two (in Chacane and Nhapadiane) meet with less frequency.

[67] Mozambican Women Organization

[68] In an interesting study about witchcraft and young people's ambivalence towards old age Van der Geest noted that "on the one hand there is respect, a cultural code which is almost 'natural': one regards with awe and admiration what came before. On the other, old people engender resentment because of their overbearing attitude and their refusal to 'go'. The fact that young people die while old people remain alive is a reversal of the natural order and reeks of witchcraft" (2002: 437).

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is that a person gets malaria and instead of going to the hospital he goes to the traditional healer. Later he goes mentally ill or dies and then people begin to make witchcraft accusations saying he was killed."

The following case is an illustration of how a divorce case was settled with the participation of *régulo* Venâncio.

Case 12: A man who wanted his ex-wife expelled from the settlement

Agostinho Macuacua was an adult man who lives in Chirrambo. Agostinho was married to Sara, a woman from Marracuene (some 50 kilometers from Maputo city) whom he met in Maputo. Agostinho and Sara were married for more than thirty years, twenty of which were spent in Chirrambo. The couple had two boys and a girl. The two boys died in different circumstances. At the age of 19, one of the boys was hit by a car in Maputo were he worked as houseman. The other boy died suddenly before the age of 10 as a result of an unidentified illness. In 2003 the only remaining child, a twenty-four year old daughter fell seriously ill. At the time Agostinho had found another woman in Chirrambo and did not show any interest on his family. In spite of the illness of his daughter, Agostinho insisted that his first wife should go back to Marracuene. Sara refused arguing that she had to take care of her sick daughter. Eventually Mr. Agostinho's only daughter and last child died. Mr. Agostinho did not go to his daughter's funeral because she had died as a result of her mother's involvement in witchcraft.

After the death of his only daughter, Agostinho insisted that Sara should leave the settlement. She should go back to Marracuene. Although she was resigned to the fact that her husband had taken another wife Sara never accepted to leave the settlement. Even if she had accepted to go back to Marracuane Agostinho was not willing to walk her back and explain the divorce to her family. As Agostinho persisted Sara decided to take the case to the local elders. All she wanted was 'a place to build her hut and a small field to farm' – explained one of the elders who mediated in the dispute in Chirrambo. Not having arrived at a satisfactory solution at the local level the case was taken to *régulo* Venâncio who arranged a *mudota* meeting.[69]

A group of *mudota* including the *régulo* met with the *mudota* in Chirrambo and discussed Agostinho and Sara's case. The verdict was that Agostinho's wife had the right to stay in Chirrambo. The fact that she had stayed there for such a long period gave her the right to remain in the settlement. A piece of land was found for Sara and Agostinho was discouraged from visiting her. Agostinho was also persuaded to write a letter to Sara's family explaining the divorce.

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[69] As mentioned in chapter two, in Mocumbine, only few cases are reported to the *régulo*. Family elders solve most of the cases in the areas where they occur. *Régulo* Venâncio was called to intervene in this particular case due to his new formal powers that coffer him the status of government representative at the lowest level of the district administration.

When I returned from my fieldwork in February 2004 Sara was living in Chirrambo with her late daughter's children.

The participation of *régulo* Venâncio as a mediator was an exceptional case since in Mocumbi family elders settle local disputes. But it was important for Sara to report the matter to *régulo* Venâncio who was the local representative of the government because she felt intimidated by Agostinho. However, the case was to be settled by the local family elders on the *régulo*'s request.

4.5. Conclusion

The analysis in this chapter has shown that in post-war Mocumbi the emerging elite plays a significant role in local level politics. The formation of the Mocumbi elite came as a result of a long tradition of labour migration and colonial education. The new members of these rural elite are returnees who quickly accumulated wealth in post-war neo-liberal and democratic Mozambique. Furthermore I suggested that NGOs and ideas about democracy are locally appropriated and incorporated as resources in local power arenas.

Chapter five

5. Conclusion

This dissertation has studied local powers in Mocumbi in the context of the democratic decentralization reform of 2000. Contrary to the World Bank and International donor community's hope that decentralization would make local government more efficient and promote development, FRELIMO and RENAMO expected to expand party allegiance and state power and control by introducing community leaders. I argued that local political arenas have been historically fluid and that the decentralization reform, which introduces community leaders, does not necessarily reform socialist inherited local structures or promote development in the rural areas.

In chapter two I suggested that a good understanding of local power relations has to draw on the local history, political tradition and individual experiences of the ways in which different imposed forms of external government have influenced and have been appropriated in local-level politics. Furthermore, in spite of the colonial and post-colonial attempts to produce centralised forms of local government, the local *wa hombes* and family elders are still key authority figures and are more suitable for the political life of scattered settlement existing in Mocumbi.

In chapter three I contended that the recently introduced community leaders reminded people of the colonial policy of *indigenato* and also provided a catalyst for long existing disputes between local political actors. The introduction of community leaders does not necessarily promote development or expand state power and control in the rural areas as planned because a community leader is merely one of the many political actors at the local level and not necessarily the most powerful/legitimate.

Contrary to the belief that the rural areas are the locus of traditional power, I showed in chapter four, that local elites made up of returning migrant workers, colonial mission educated *assimilados* and Maputo based local *wa hombes* are increasingly influential figures in local political arenas. Furthermore, in post-war reconstruction projects in Mocumbi, development NGOs and global ideas about democracy are locally appropriated and incorporated as resources in local power arenas.

The content and form of local powers in Mocumbi is historically and situationally determined in a way that any account of local powers can only be partial. This dissertation has contributed to comparative research on the subject of local powers and decentralization in Mozambique. It has not dealt with some important questions such as the growing influence of Pentecostal religions and the role of *ti n'anga* in local power disputes, which should be subject of further research.

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Appendix A

Area (circle) of Mocumbi

Nº	Settlements	Secretary	Traditional chief
1	Cove*	Avelino Nhatchengo	-----------------------
2	Malene	António Noa Neves	Guitissane Malene
3	Muenda	Furtouoso Muenda	António Chilandane
4	Ziqui-Limão	Victorino de Carvalho	Tomás Hauze Zique
5	Nhalevilo	Alexandre Macuche	Fernando Macamanze
6	Chambá	Augusto Mavie	Américo Guambe
7	Gonzane	Fernando Binone	Fulauane Gonzane

Area (circle) of Mahalamba

8	Mahalamba	Luis Nomo	João Mahalamba
9	Nhatava*	Simione Nhatava	-----------------------
10	Chaluane	Tauzenhane Nhatave	Venâncio Mahique
11	Nhacuaha	Afonso José Nhacuaha	Armando Mavele

Area (circle) of Chitava

12	Chitava	--------------------	Sainda Chitava
13	Ussaca	Boaventura Ussaca	Augusto Pedro Ussaca

Area (circle) of Nhamitande

14	Nhapadiana*	Antonio de Oliveira	Afonso Sinai
15	Mussana	Sacor Naene Buque	Salvador Guambe
16	Ancoca	Xadreque Neves	Sitefane Simone Guambe
17	Senduza	Maguduane Julai	Sebastião Chimbuinhe
18	Naíla	Sebastião Guambe	Javidame David Guambe

Area (circle) of Mejoote

| 19	Mejoote	Venâncio Chilundo	Pechissuane
20	Cuaiaia	Mario Nhangume	Samuel Malele
21	Boquiço*	Alfeu Naftal Intsiuane	Mahumane Guambe
22	Majongota	Samuel Saize Guambe	Silvino Guambe

Area (circle) of Coguno

23	Chissaca	Titos Kamuela	Casting Jacopo Guam be
24	Cocoa	Bartolomeu Chissico	Fernando Guam be
25	Dallas	Époque Jiao Tale	Vicente Mazitutela
26	Mungongo	Simeão Júlio Guambe	Hofisuane Tambuze
27	Machambo	Afonso Nhalivilo	Armindo Guambe

List of secretaries and traditional chiefs identified by the government in the Administrative Post of Mocumbi, May 2002
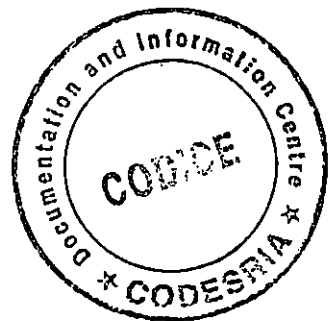
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* Cases in which it still in discussion who should be appointed as a traditional chief.

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Appendix B

Régulo Castigo Jacopo (wearing a sash) and *madota* of *regulado* Guambá Grande
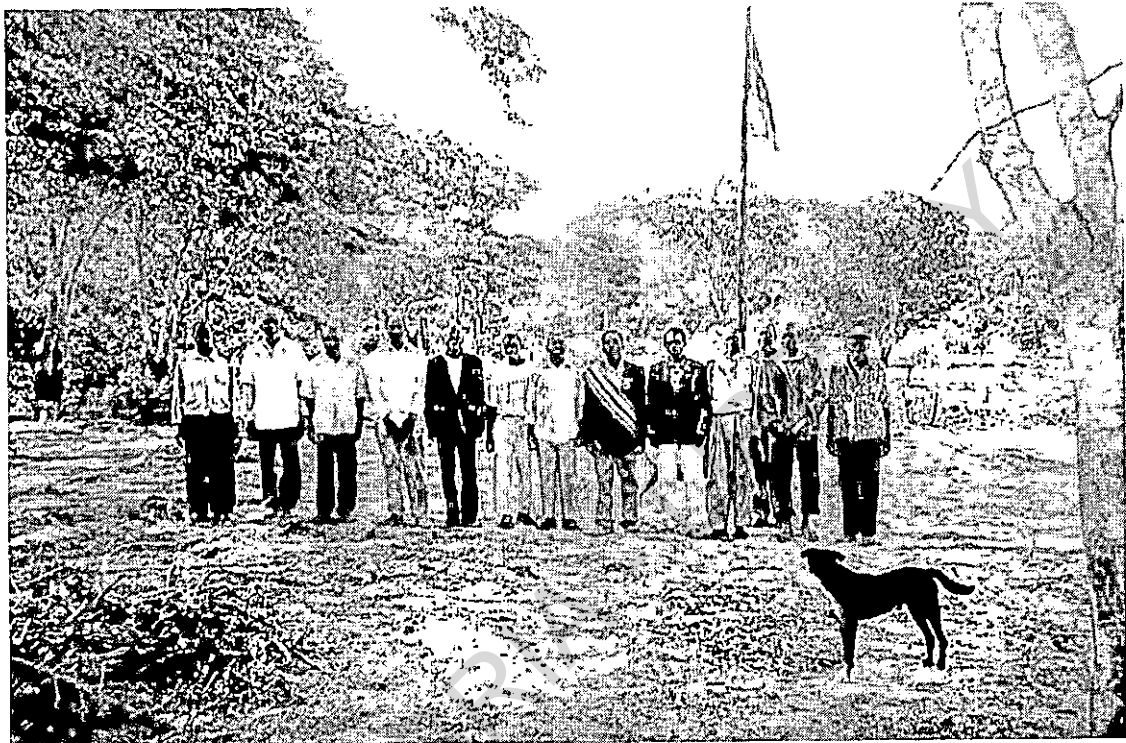
Chizinda of *régulo* Augusto Jacopo, Coguno. November 2003

Appendix C

Cove's soccer team and the two migrant workers (one has a whistle other a hat) who promoted and sponsored the team.

Malene, Mocumbine. January 2004.