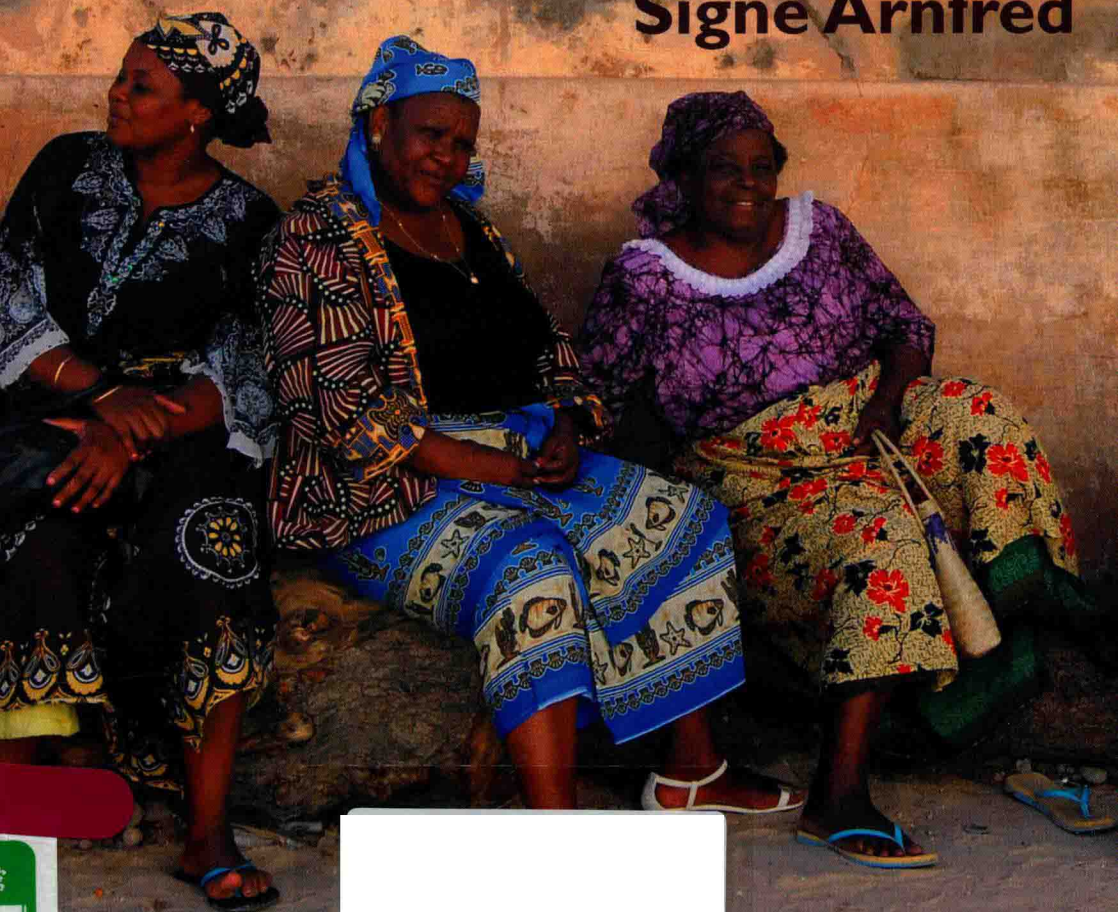


Sexuality and Gender Politics in Mozambique

RETHINKING GENDER IN AFRICA

Signe Arnfred



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Rethinking Gender in Africa

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Rethinking Gender in Africa

For my daughters

Anne Julie & Katrine

Acknowledgements

The work on which the chapters of this book are based started thirty years ago, when in March 1981 I was employed as an in-house sociologist at the Maputo headquarters of the *Organização da Mulher Moçambicana* – the OMM, the national women's organization in Mozambique. The idea was that I should assist the OMM in the preparation of an Extraordinary Conference for debating 'women's social problems'. My period of work with the OMM (March 1981 to June 1984, with a return visit for the Extraordinary Conference in November 1984) was decisive not only for development of my knowledge and my thinking regarding women in Mozambique, but also for my general political and feminist orientation. A co-worker, interpreter and personal friend during these early years was Adelina Penicela, then an employee of the OMM secretariat of Maputo province. I remained closely connected to Mama Adelina throughout my life in Mozambique, until her death in May 2008; to me she was somewhere between a friend and a mother (she was ten to fifteen years older than me) and an extra grandmother to our daughters. Mama Adelina was a remarkable woman. Born and raised in Manjakaze in the province of Gaza, she had come to Maputo where at the time of Independence she worked as a market woman. Through Frelimo she had attended alfabetization classes, thus she spoke Portuguese in addition to her native XiChangane. The OMM selected Mama Adelina as interpreter for my work in the XiChangane speaking parts of the country. My relationship with the city of Maputo is closely connected to my relationship with Mama Adelina. Thanks to her I moved with ease and confidence in the *bairro* of Chamanculo, where she lived, and where through the 1990s and 2000s – after Structural Adjustment Policies (in Mozambique the PRE, *Programa da Re-estruturação Económica*) with concomitant pauperization – not many whites would move around. Thus I want to acknowledge the memory of Mama Adelina in this book.

During my years with the OMM I was employed by the Danish Development Agency, Danida. In the second half of the 1980s I did some work in Mozambique for the Norwegian Development Agency, Norad, which made it possible for me to take leave from university and stay on in Maputo, in order to read through the material collected from all over the country during the preparation process for the OMM Extraordinary Conference 1984. These readings and subsequent analysis of the data, facilitated by a research grant from the Danish Council for Development Research (1988-1990), made me keen to return to the matrilineal north of the country, particularly to Nampula province, for proper fieldwork. Eventually the Frelimo/Renamo war came to an end, and it was again possible to travel outside the cities in Mozambique. By the end of the 1990s I again got research money, this time from the Danish Social Sciences Research Council

(1998–2000), allowing me to spend eight months – November 1998 to June 1999 – in Nampula province, mainly in Ribáuè district (inland) and in the coastal town Ilha de Moçambique.

In Ribáuè I worked with Ricardo Limua, who at that time was District Director for Culture in Ribáuè. Ricardo Limua was himself very interested in Makhuwa culture; he suggested himself as a collaborator shortly after my arrival in Ribáuè. He knew all important people in Ribáuè district: traditional healers, initiation ritual counselors, male and female chiefs. He was invaluable as a helper, friend and interpreter, and I want to acknowledge his importance for my work. Also in Ribáuè I stand in debt of gratitude to Salama, a Nampula-based NGO working with community health. The then head of Salama, Dona Michaela da Silva Sale, whom I met through friends in Nampula city, invited me to settle in Salama's small house in Ribáuè town, one of the few brick houses, which had remained standing through the war. Here I got my own room with electricity and access to water, being well looked after by Salama's cook, Esmínio. I also owe thanks to the Danish NGO MS (Danish Association for International Cooperation) from whom I borrowed a 4x4 car – very useful for getting around on the sandy trails of Ribáuè district, and also for helping informants with transport tasks. At one point my car was used as a wedding carriage for bringing the young couple to church.

In Ilha de Moçambique I worked with Maria da Conceição Amade, a friend of Flora Pinto de Magalhães, whom I met through a mutual friend, and in whose house, *Casa Branca*, I stayed through all research periods and later visits to Ilha, always in the same room with a wide view over the ocean and light curtains waving in the breeze. Maria da Conceição was/is a native of Ilha and I got the impression she knew every one of the 13.000 inhabitants of Ilha, or at least the 8,000 men and women, who were proper islanders, those born and bred in Ilha de Moçambique – as distinct from those who had settled on the island during and after the war. Maria da Conceição had a job as a pre-school teacher; she knew everything worth knowing about Ilha's history and culture, and she was a very sensitive, precise and poetic translator. The translation from Emakhuwa to Portuguese of Tufo songs (see Chapter 14 for some of these songs) is her work. I want to acknowledge Maria da Conceição for her importance for my work, and for her friendship.

In Maputo I have a circle of gender scholars and friends with whom I have met over the years, for discussion of my work and their work, and for coffee and gossip in Maputo cafés. Centrally placed in this group are those who are and have been connected to the Mozambique branch of the Women and Law in Southern Africa research project, such as Isabel Casimiro, Maria José Arthur, Ximena Andrade, Conceição Osório, Terezinha da Silva and Ana Loforte. It has been important to me over the years to have this circle of gender scholars as a reference group in Maputo.

From 2000 to 2007 most of my trips to Mozambique, including two shorter fieldwork visits to Nampula province 2003 and 2005, were funded by the Nordic Africa Institute in Uppsala. I was an employee of this institute from 2000 to 2007, the first six years as a research programme coordinator (the *Sexuality and Gender in Africa* research programme), the last year as Acting Research Director. The years in Uppsala gave me a lot in many different ways (see further in the

Introduction) and I want to acknowledge the generous funding from the Swedish Development Agency, Sida, which facilitated this work – including the travels to Mozambique, and to many other countries and Centres of Gender Studies on the African continent. Towards the end of my stay in Uppsala I received research funding from the Sida Department for Research Cooperation (SAREC) for final writing up on my Mozambique material. This funding was crucial for getting together the bits and pieces of this book, also because it encouraged me to concentrate on this work, rather than on all the other projects in which I tend to get involved.

Individual chapters have been written over quite a long time span. Some have been published before in different versions. Chapter 1 was first published 1988 in *Review of African Political Economy* vol. 15 no. 40; it is reprinted by permission from Palgrave Macmillan, who re-published the paper 2010 in a volume edited by Meredith Turschen: *African Women. A Political Economy*. Chapter 2 was published in 1990 in a volume of writings by colleagues from International Development Studies at Roskilde University, Agnete Weiss Bentzon (ed.): *The Language of Development Studies*, New Social Science Monographs, Copenhagen. Chapter 3 was published in 2000 by CEAN (Centre d'Etude d'Afrique Noir) Bordeaux, in *Travaux et Documents*, no 68-69. Chapter 4 was first published in 2001 in a Swedish conference report: *Svensk Genusforskning i Världen*, the Swedish National Secretariat for Gender Studies, and again in 2002 in *JENdA: A Journal of Culture and African Women's Studies*, vol. 2, no. 1. Chapter 5 was published in 2004 by CODESRIA (Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa) Dakar, in their Gender Series no 4: *Gender Activism and Studies in Africa*. Chapter 6 was written for *Qaderns d'Anthropologia* no 6, a special issue focusing on bodies, published in 2010 by CSIC (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas) Barcelona. Chapter 10 was published in 2010 in Alex Ezeh (ed): *Old Wineskins, New Wine: Readings in Sexuality in sub-Saharan Africa*, Nova Science Publishers. Chapter 11 was published in 2006 in *Studia Africana* no 17, CSIC Barcelona. Chapter 12 was published in 2001 in Rachel Waterhouse and Carin Vijfhuisen (eds): *Strategic Women, Gainful Men. Gender, Land and Natural Resources in Different Rural Contexts in Mozambique*, Nucleo de Estudos de Terra (Universidade Eduardo Mondlane) and Action Aid Mozambique. Chapter 13 was published in 2007 in *Sexualities*, vol. 10 no. 2. Chapter 14 was published in 2004 in *Lusotopie*, CEAN Bordeaux. Some chapters have been changed only slightly to fit the context of the book, others have undergone more substantial changes. Their character as individual articles – written at different points in time – has, however, been maintained. The years of writing are indicated in brackets alongside the chapter titles.

The woodcuts at the chapter openings were crafted in the early 1980s by artists in Nandimba, Cabo Delgado. They were sold as postcards in Maputo 1983, published by the Mozambique Angola Committee. They are reprinted here with the kind permission of the Mozambique Angola Committee.

Acknowledgements usually include family members. In my case I have three fellow travellers, who have been close to me from day one of this project, thus having followed its ups and downs through all of the thirty years. They are first my friend and *companheiro*, and after fifteen years together also my husband, Jan Birket-Smith, and second our two daughters, Anne Julie (born 1977) and

Katrine (born 1980). Anne Julie and Jan feel as close to Mozambique as I do; the years in Maputo in the early 1980s have been very important for all of us. Katrine was very young when we returned to Denmark, thus she is less connected to Mozambique – but she has become a gender scholar, thus providing a different kind of sounding board for my ideas and concerns regarding this project.

The book is dedicated to my daughters. This book has been a key project of my life over thirty years. So have they. Only they flew from the nest before the book got going. Now it follows.

Signe Arnfred

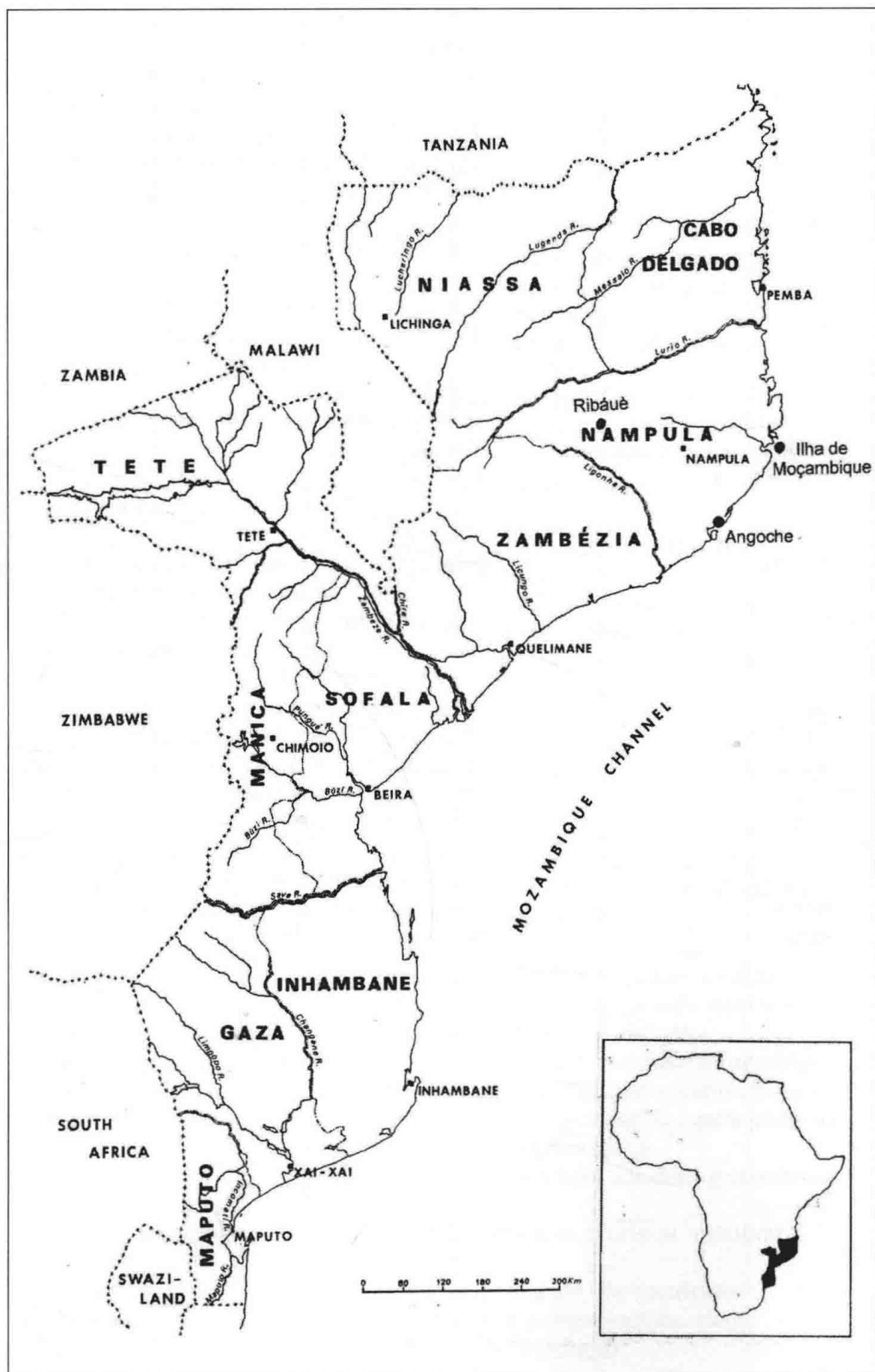
Roskilde University, January 2011

Glossary

<i>aldeia comunal/aldeias comunais</i>	Frelimo-organized re-grouping of people in villages
<i>amante</i>	lover, male/female
<i>amantismo</i>	informal polygamy (usually with one formal wife and additional informal wives, i.e. <i>amantes</i>)
<i>autoridade tradicional</i>	traditional authority
<i>bairro</i>	part of town
<i>batuqueiro/a</i>	man/woman who beats the drum
<i>caniço</i>	reed; building material for houses in <i>bairros de caniço</i>
<i>capataz</i>	overseer, expression used in colonial times
<i>capulana</i>	women's clothing. An often brightly coloured piece of cotton cloth, 1.00 by 1.80 meters. In the coastal culture of northern Mozambique <i>capulanas</i> are sold in pairs, one to be used as a skirt and (part of) the other as a scarf. <i>Capulanas</i> are used by women all over Mozambique.
<i>carrama</i>	large festive gathering of Tufo groups
<i>chefe da família</i>	family head
<i>chocalhos</i>	rattles, used by <i>curandeiros/as</i> and during rituals
<i>colono/s</i>	Portuguese during colonialism
<i>conselheira/s</i>	woman in charge of initiation rituals; assistants to woman in charge
<i>curandeiro/a</i>	traditional healer m/f
<i>erukulu</i>	family unit at household level, literally meaning 'womb'
<i>escudo/s</i>	Portuguese coinage, used in Mozambique until 1980
<i>esteira</i>	woven mat made of grass/weeds
<i>feiticaria, feiticeiro/a</i>	witchcraft, witch (male/female)
<i>Frelimo</i>	<i>FREnte de Libertação de MOçambique</i> : Mozambique liberation front, in 1977 turned into a Marxist-Leninist Party. Mozambique, since 1994, has been a multi-party country, however with Frelimo still in power.

<i>halifa</i>	in Ilha de Moçambique: the <i>xehe</i> 's deputy – generally a woman
<i>ikano</i>	chanted advice, given during initiation rituals
<i>indígena/s</i>	native/s
<i>ithuna</i>	elongated <i>labia minora</i>
<i>kulukana</i>	traditional healer m/f
<i>lobolo</i>	usually translated as 'bride price', but better translated as 'traditional marriage' in the patrilineal south of Mozambique. Without <i>lobolo</i> the ancestral spirits are not informed about the marriage, and the children do not properly belong
<i>lobolar</i>	<i>lobolo</i> turned into a Portuguese verb: to marry through <i>lobolo</i>
<i>machamba</i>	field
<i>macuti</i>	palm leaf thatch for houses
<i>madras, madrasa</i>	Quranic school
<i>madrinha</i>	already initiated woman, supporter of initiates during initiation rituals
<i>makeya</i>	finely ground flour of <i>mapira</i> . <i>Makeya</i> is used for communication with the ancestors; it is produced and administered by women.
<i>mandioca</i>	cassava
<i>mapira</i>	cereal grass with glossy seeds, something like millet or sorghum
<i>mato</i>	bush
<i>mestra</i>	woman in charge of initiation rituals
<i>metical/meticaís</i>	Mozambican currency after 1980
<i>miropo</i>	yeast made of <i>mapira</i> for the production of <i>otheka</i> , ceremonial beer
<i>missangas</i>	glass beads
<i>msiro</i>	ground weed of a certain tree; used for making skin light and smooth. Also used at specific ceremonial occasions.
<i>munumuzana, mulumuzana</i>	man of importance, southern Mozambique
<i>mwali, amwali</i>	young girl(s) undergoing initiation rituals
<i>mwene, mamwene</i>	chief(s); in other parts of Nampula province the <i>mwene</i> is called <i>humu</i>
<i>nakhapa</i>	home-made briefs for use during menstruation
<i>namalaka, anamalaka</i>	woman/women in charge of initiation rituals
<i>nihimo</i>	matrilineal descent, the matriclan
<i>nkhonsikaze</i>	first wife in a polygamous marriage, southern Mozambique
<i>noivo</i>	fiancé

<i>npichi</i>	bush plant with oily seeds
<i>olimiha</i>	day of mutual work on somebody else's farm in return for <i>otheka</i> and/or food
OMM	<i>Organização da Mulher Moçambicana</i> , the national women's organization
<i>otheka</i>	ceremonial beer made from <i>mapira</i> and <i>mandioca</i> (cassava)
<i>padre</i>	Catholic priest
<i>peneira</i>	broad, flat winnowing basket
<i>pilão</i>	mortar
PLF	<i>Projecto da Lei da Família</i> : family law project
PRE	<i>Programa de Re-estruturação Económica</i> = SAP, Structural Adjustment Programme
<i>povoação</i>	village, settlement
<i>puxamento</i>	Portuguese for vaginal lip-elongation
<i>pwiyamwene, mapwiyamwene</i>	female chief(s)
<i>rainha do lar</i>	queen of the home, housewife
<i>régulo</i>	Portuguese for chief, with colonial connotations
<i>Renamo</i>	REsistência NAçional de MOçambique, Mozambique National Resistance; opposition army during Frelimo/Renamo war, since 1994 elections opposition party
<i>tariqa</i>	way, path (Arab); Sufi order
<i>tiquiri</i>	Arab = <i>dhikr</i> ; remembrance of God, prayer
<i>unyango, unyago</i>	Yao name for female initiation rituals
<i>wineliwa</i>	'to be danced to'. Name for female initiation in parts of Nampula province
<i>wula</i>	menstrual blood
<i>xehe</i>	Arab = <i>shaykh</i> : leader of Sufi order/respected man of learning
<i>zauria</i>	'woman's mosque' in Ilha de Moçambique
<i>ziara</i>	large religious gathering



Map of Mozambique

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