



University of Pretoria

**CHANGING LIVELIHOODS IN MICAÚNE,
CENTRAL MOZAMBIQUE: FROM COCONUT TO LAND**

**By
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DECLARATION

I declare that **Changing livelihoods in Micaúne, Central Mozambique: From coconut to land** is my own work, that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

José L Adalima

2016

Signature

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ABSTRACT

CHANGING LIVELIHOODS IN MICAÚNE, CENTRAL MOZAMBIQUE: FROM COCONUT TO LAND

This thesis examines the rise and fall of a coconut-based enclave economy in the administrative post of Micaúne in the district of Chinde, Zambézia Province. Residents of Micaúne derived their livelihoods from the coconut economy for over a century. My research is based on ethnographic fieldwork undertaken between 2010 and 2014 over a period of eight months in this administrative post. Although coconut had been a familiar crop to people in the Micaúne area for centuries, it became central to the local economy only after the advent of colonial settler capitalism in the 1880s.

I argue that the longevity of the coconut economy, and the stability and predictability that it brought to Micaúne residents, were the outcome of its embeddedness in the local social organisation and mode of production. From the last decades of the 19th century, Micaúne's economy was dominated by *Société du Madal*, initially a French-owned company that established coconut plantations in the area and produced commodities derived from the coconut palm for sale on international markets. Madal became a 'total institution' in Micaúne because it was the major landholder, employer of local labour, supplier of goods through its shops and the main purchaser of coconut from growers in the area.

This study suggests that a 'customary' law relating to inheritance in Micaúne reinforced the centrality of the coconut economy in local society for much of the 20th century by making specific reference to the inheritance of trees. The implication of this law was that control and ownership of trees rather than land was the major determinant of local livelihoods. But as in any enclave economy, when the resource on which it is based is depleted, the collapse of the whole system is inevitable. In the case of Micaúne, an ecological crisis in the 1990s, in the form of a plant disease known as Coconut Lethal Yellowing Disease (CLYD, infected and

killed most of the palm trees, both on Madal's and local families' land, which were the backbone of the local economy.

As a result, the company-based welfare system that Micaúne residents enjoyed for more than a hundred years disappeared overnight, a catastrophe that caused unprecedented uncertainty and despair in the area. The local people's main sources of income and employment shrank and there have been many confirmed reports of hunger and starvation amongst the Micaúne population in the 2000s and after. In sum, the majority of Micaúne residents are now 'food insecure', except for a few who are local businessmen and people employed by or getting stipends from the state.

It is evident from my research that attempts by the government and NGOs to promote food security initiatives failed to solve the problem. On the contrary, these initiatives have fuelled a growing demand for land, which has led to its increasing commodification (including the emergence of an illegal land market). This development has also triggered emergent claims of land ownership based on a new notion of autochthony. A clear distinction between 'natives' and non-'natives' (newcomers) is now being drawn in Micaúne. Claiming to belong to the category of autochthons is seen as a basis for entitlement to prior rights over resources such as minerals recently discovered in the district.

I argue that the promise of minerals resources might explain why, despite the extremely harsh living conditions that local residents have faced since the demise of the coconut economy, they have decided to remain in this area while scouting in the interim for alternative livelihoods options, which are limited to subsistence farming and fishing, and petty trade. They seem to be waiting for the materialisation of big investments in mineral resources or in other development initiatives often touted by the central government in Mozambique.

Keywords: Micaúne, Madal, land, livelihoods, coconut economy, armed conflict.

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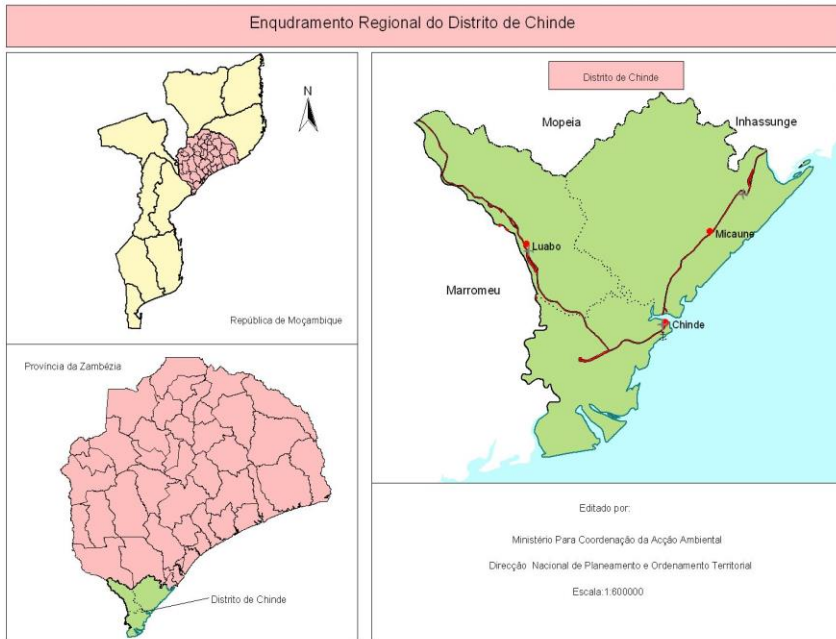
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | |
|-----------|---|
| AAA | <i>Acção Agrária Alemã</i> / German Agro Action |
| ACDI/VOCA | Agricultural Co-operative Development International/Volunteers in Overseas Co-operative Assistance |
| ADECRU | <i>Acção Académica para o Desenvolvimento das Comunidades Rurais</i> / academic action for the development of rural communities |
| ADFAPM | <i>Associação das Forças Armadas Portuguesas em Moçambique</i> / Association of Portuguese Armed Forces in Mozambique |
| AGRICOM | <i>Empresa Estatal de Comercialização Agrícola</i> / State Company for Agricultural Marketing |
| AIDS | Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome |
| AMETRAMO | <i>Associação dos Médicos Tradicionais de Moçambique</i> / Association of Traditional Healers of Mozambique |
| CIP | <i>Centro de Integridade Pública</i> / Center for Public Integrity |
| CIRE | <i>Comissão Inter-Ministerial para Reestruturação das Empresas</i> / Inter-Ministerial Commission for Enterprise Restructuring |
| CLYD | Coconut Lethal Yellowing Disease |
| CNT | <i>Comissão Nacional de Terras</i> / National Commission on Land |
| COGENT | Coconut Genetic Resources Network |
| COMECON | Council for Mutual Economic Support |
| CSOs | Civil Society Organisations |
| DFID | Department for International Development of the United Kingdom |
| DINAGECA | <i>Direcção Nacional de Geografia e Cadastro</i> / National Directorate of Geography and Cadastre |
| DNTF | <i>Direcção Nacional de Terras e Florestas</i> / National Directorate of Land and Forestry |
| DUAT | <i>Direito de uso e aproveitamento de terra</i> / state-granted land right |
| EDR | <i>Estratégia de Desenvolvimento Rural</i> / Rural Development Strategy |
| ESAP | Economic Structural Adjustment Programme |

| | |
|----------|---|
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations |
| FDD | <i>Fundo de Desenvolvimento Distrital</i> / District Development Fund |
| FEG | Food Economy Group |
| FISP | Farmer Income Support Project |
| FRELIMO | <i>Frente de Libertação de Moçambique</i> / Mozambique Liberation Front |
| HEA | Household Economy Approach |
| HIV | Human immunodeficiency virus |
| IESE | <i>Instituto de Estudos Sociais e Económicos</i> / Institute of Social and Economic Studies |
| IIAM | <i>Instituto de Investigação Agrária de Moçambique</i> / Institute of Agricultural Research of Mozambique |
| IIASA | International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis |
| IIED | International Institute for Environment and Development |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| INE | <i>Instituto Nacional de Estatística</i> / National Institute for Statistics |
| IPCC | <i>Instituições de Participação e de Consulta Comunitária</i> / Institutions of Participation and Community Consultation |
| ITC | <i>Iniciativa de Terras Comunitárias</i> / Community Land Initiative |
| MCA | Millennium Challenge Account |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organisation |
| NorWatch | Norwegian Organisation |
| ONUMOZ | United Nations Operation in Mozambique |
| ORAM | <i>Organização Rural para Ajuda Mútua</i> / Rural Mutual Support Organisation |
| PADSA | <i>Plano Estratégico de Desenvolvimento do Sector Agrário</i> / Strategic Plan for the Development of the Agricultural Sector |
| PAEI | <i>Política Agrária e Estratégia de Implementação</i> / Agrarian Policy and Implementation Strategy |

| | |
|---------|--|
| PAPA | <i>Plano de Acção para a Produção de Alimentos / Action Plan for Food Production</i> |
| PROAGRI | <i>Programa Nacional para o Desenvolvimento Agrário / Agriculture Development Programme</i> |
| SAP | Structural Adjustment Programme |
| SARL | <i>Sociedade Anónima de Responsabilidade Limitada / Limited Liability Company</i> |
| SISE | <i>Serviços de Informação e Segurança do Estado / State Security Services</i> |
| SPGC | <i>Seviços Provinciais de Geografia e Cadastro / Provincial Geographic and Cadastral Services</i> |
| SSE | Sena Sugar Estates |
| TVM | <i>Televisão de Mocambique/Mozambique Television</i> |
| RENAMO | <i>Resistência Nacional de Moçambique / Mozambican National Resistance</i> |
| UNAC | <i>União Nacional dos Camponeses / Mozambican Farmer's Union</i> |
| US \$ | United States Dollar |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |
| UTRE | <i>Unidade Técnica para Reestruturação de Empresas / Technical Unit for Enterprise Restructuring</i> |
| WB | World Bank |
| WV | World Vision |

POLITICO-ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION OF THE DISTRICT OF CHINDE



Source: Zambézia Provincial Directorate for Environment Affairs 2012.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

This study is set in the administrative post¹ of Micaúne, a district of Chinde in Zambézia Province, central Mozambique. According to the 2007 population and housing census, the total surface of the area is 2,094 square kilometres and the population was 34,132 (16,147 men and 17,985 women) (INE 2007). Data provided during fieldwork by the head of the administrative post in 2012 indicated that the population of Micaúne was 34,252 people, within 27 big settlements and 14 small settlements.² My study is about how Micaúne residents currently make their livelihoods³ in a context of recent dramatic changes as a result of the demise of what I call the coconut economy of Micaúne.

Although I have analysed the local economy in detail, as the writing of the thesis evolved I made a choice of focusing on the political history of Mozambique from the colonial period to the present and how it affected the place, the people and private investors. This allowed me to move from the macro to the micro level in the different historical periods analysed in the thesis as well as to link land, labour, and livelihoods following Hart & Sitas (2004).

This economy, which entailed production and trading of coconut as well as copra⁴

¹ This is a direct translation of the Portuguese term *posto administrativo* which is a subdivision of a district.

² Interview conducted with Né Abdul Mutumpua in Micaúne-Sede on 10 April 2012.

³ In the this thesis, I use the concept of livelihood to refer to ways in which people make a living by using capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities at their disposal to meet that end of living” (Chambers & Conway 1991). In this context, I explore in historical perspective the capabilities, assets and activities that Micaúne residents have applied in order to make a living over the past hundred years.

⁴ Copra is the dried kernel of the coconut from which coconut oil is extracted. Coconut oil has a multitude of uses such as in cooking oil; in body and hair lotions; in medications for abrasions, skin rashes and burns;

exports, was developed at the beginning of the 20th century and it was promoted by the French-owned *Société du Madal* (hereafter Madal),⁵ established in 1903.

From its inception, Madal gradually expanded its land holdings by establishing several plantations, to the point of occupying more than 50 percent of the area of Micaúne. However, this did not mean that the rest was occupied by local residents because vast areas were mangroves, swamps, small islands and a desert. Moreover, other areas were occupied by a few Portuguese white commercial farmers⁶ and at a later stage, particularly after the 1960s, by coconut traders. This meant that the area available for local residents was very small, approximately a quarter of Micaúne.

In this context, the promotion of coconut production by Madal depended on two factors, namely cheap labour and outsourced production from the local residents, in order to compete in the international market. As a result, a symbiotic relationship of mutual dependence between Madal and local residents was developed. Within a few years, Madal became the main employer in Micaúne employing mostly men as seasonal workers on its plantations while local residents were able to sell coconut from their palm trees to the company. As it will be discussed in Chapter Six, local residents combined, to different degrees, these two sources of income to generate their livelihoods for more than a hundred years.

In the post-colonial period (socialist and neoliberal), Madal kept the land it had acquired

as lighting and engine fuel oil; and as a feedstock for soaps and detergents (Foale 2003, p. 89; COGENT 2000; and Krain et al. 2002).

⁵ As from 1910 Norwegian investors came to occupy a dominant position in the company until recently. For an analysis of Norwegian entrepreneurs in Madal, read Reiersen (2015).

⁶ These commercial farmers had arrived without any capital and without any intention to invest; their interest was to sell wine and spirits to the African population, to save a few pounds and get back to Portugal. But at the beginning of the century they were able to be all over the delta due to the facilities provided by an easy access to land and labour (Lupi 1909 quoted in Negrão 2001, p. 84).

in the colonial period as no state farms or collective villages were created in Micaúne. It can be argued that the socialist experiment was not strong enough to compete with or replace the long established capitalist regime. Moreover, replacing Madal would have required the government to maintain the reproduction of the production system, which included, among other things, control over people, seasonal work contracts, and intensive labour and low wages. This was against the rhetoric of the newly independent government which advocated a society free of exploitation of man by man (Chapter Three).

As highlighted by my informants, the coconut economy was a harsh system, but it was predictable in the sense that it provided a secure source of income as indicated above. However, the collapse of the economy in the 2000s as a result of the upsurge of Coconut Lethal Yellowing Disease (CLYD) in the early 1990s led to uncertainty and contributed to food insecurity, as it will be demonstrated in Chapter Two.

Madal's plantations died, leading to loss of employment. As a result, the majority of the population directly or indirectly involved in coconut production is now redundant. Moreover, the company did not leave the area, since it is using the land for other purposes – waiting for the disease to disappear; promotion of cash crops such as sesame, game farming, and tourism – and it has not returned land to the local people. However, since 2005 Madal has been returning land to the state, but the pace has been slow. There is other pressure on areas of communal occupation now, which has to do with the granting of land rights to other private interests for livestock, game farms, exploitation of mineral resources and other commercial activities as a result of the adoption of neoliberal policies by the government since 1987.

Equally, residents' palm trees died, meaning that they can no longer sell palm tree products to Madal. The implication of this has been a hardship for most residents (Chapter Four), despite endless government and NGOs attempts to stimulate small-scale agriculture, Micaúne residents have not become agriculturalists in any extended sense, as

discussed in Chapter Five. But also no massive migration has been documented or reported, as will be discussed in Chapter Eight.

Most Micaúne residents are currently trying subsistence farming, mainly in the hinterland, and fishing in the coastal zone but with limited results, while a few practise petty trade with limited success due to poor transportation and roads and a lack of capital (Chapter Six). The sale of crops is common for most households but it is not for commercial purposes, but simply to meet households' daily needs.

Labour options outside formal employment are very limited and consist basically of clearing fields, preparing the land, weeding and harvesting for better-off households. But the payment for such work is little, which by the time of fieldwork was around 25 Meticais ⁷ for piecework. The promotion of agriculture has led to new meanings attributed to land and to competition over it.

As discussed in Chapter Eight, the value of land associated with palm trees has changed and it is currently seen as a commodity. This has resulted in overlapping claims to land involving different interests. As a result, land available to residents is diminishing, while other livelihood options are not increasing. The symbiotic relationship between Madal and local residents, which prevailed under the coconut economy, has been replaced by antagonism, and new sources of conflict between local residents have also emerged.

1.2. Research questions

This thesis is guided by four main questions. First, how did the political history of Mozambique since the colonial period affect Micaúne, its people and private investors? Second, how is the collapse of the coconut economy currently affecting the livelihoods of Micaúne residents? Third, how successful are recent government policies regarding land

⁷ This is the Mozambique's currency which replaced the Portuguese Escudo in 1980.

tenure reform in protecting Micaúne residents? Fourth, what are people doing in the context of recent changes in livelihoods and land tenure systems?

1.3. Objectives

This research analyses the relationship between livelihoods and land tenure in the context of current ecological changes affecting Micaúne. It also identifies and describes current sources of livelihood in the area; interrogates the role of the state, market and civil society (particularly local organisations) in mediating access, use and management of land; investigates the mechanisms producing public authority through encounters with public officials and the local population; and explores local social configurations resulting from the collapse of the coconut economy.

In order to address these questions, I analyse the establishment and development of the coconut economy of Micaúne over the past hundred years, arguing that this economy was based on the model of wealth in people and things (Nyerges 1992; Guyer 1995) that was consistent with the colonial project of controlling both labour and land, while transforming the Africans into a labour reserve.

As noted by Kopytoff and Miers (1977) the principle of wealth-in-people stands for a system in which the number of members determines the wealth of a group. The control of persons, their reproduction, and labour is a direct expression of wealth (Kopytoff (1989). For instance, chiefs and male elders seek to control the loyalty and labour of subordinates, namely women and junior men (Kopytoff 1989, p.23-25). This can also be applicable (as in the case of my study) to companies' relations with their labour. In the thesis, I show how Madal's control of the land and labour underpinned the longevity of the coconut economy.

The combination of Madal's monopoly, the lack of law enforcement, and coconut's embeddedness in the local social organisation and the mode of production was responsible for the longevity of the coconut economy until its collapse due to Coconut lethal yellowing disease (CLYD). Finally, this thesis argues that the economic collapse

opens up space for an analysis of changing livelihoods that focus on how people respond to such livelihood shocks.

1.4. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this thesis is informed by debates on livelihood diversification and changing tenure in Africa. Generally speaking, livelihood shocks are addressed in the literature in terms of a diversification of options with migration assuming a prominent position whether through permanent movement to a new environment or temporary migration for work allowing remittances to be sent back to support households (Reardon & Vosti 1995; De Haan 2000; Ellis 2000; Hart 2002; Osbahr et al. 2008; Crush 2013).

Migration for work purposes had been prominent in different parts of Mozambique during the colonial period. For a very long time, particularly since the 1880s, the South African mines and plantations were the most important destination for people from Mozambique. Individuals could travel to find work in the mines and plantations either under labour agreements between both governments or informally (which at some stage was considered illegal). To a lesser extent, there was also migration to other destinations such as the farms and plantations of Rhodesia, Nyasaland and Tanganyika (Vail and White 1980; Head 1980; First 1983; Harries 1994).

But, since the 1970s, migration to the mines, farms and plantations was drastically reduced due to changing political and economic conjunctures. First, the end of colonial rule in Mozambique after the proclamation of independence in 1975 led the Apartheid regime of South Africa to reduce the number of Mozambique migrant workers. Additionally, the drop in the international gold price led the mines to reduce labour from the southern African region, in particular, Mozambique (Middlemas 1980; Munslow 1984; Hanlon 1984).

Historically, migration in Micaúne has been low because local residents could derive their income locally without having to migrate in search of work (Head 1980; Negrão

1995). While recognising the general relevance of migration and remittances as a diversification option and strategy, this thesis provides a contrasting example of how migration is not always the first resort. On the contrary, selection of livelihood options is complex and depends on factors such as the performance of the economy, the availability of resources, people's expectations, their ability to generate income and the significance of other available options. Diversification of livelihoods for most people in Micaúne is constrained by the absence of such alternatives as subsistence farming.

The two factors that most influence the livelihoods of small farmers are access to land and security of tenure (Chilundo et al. 2005). A tenure system is a set of rules, authorities, institutions and rights that determine access to, control over, and transmission of land and related resources; it defines the rules and rights which govern the appropriation, cultivation and use of natural resources in a given piece of land (Negrão 1995; Waterhouse & Vijfhuizen 2001; DFID 2007). All in all, 'a parcel, plot or an area of land is a factor of production around which a tenure system is built' (Negrão 1995, p. 100).

Historically, tenure systems have been evolving as a result of political and economic transformations. Many authors claim that current land tenure systems in Africa are a colonial invention as they were tailored to facilitate the exploitation of both human and natural resources. Post-colonial states attempted to change these systems through a number of reforms such as nationalisation of the land, as in the case of Tanzania, Ethiopia and Mozambique, or de-racialization of access to land in the case of Zimbabwe, South Africa, Namibia, and Swaziland. But these reforms fell short of their intentions (Shivji 1986; Mapolu 1986; O'Laughlin 1995; West & Meyers 1996; Moyo 2004; Peters 2007).

The combination of failed postcolonial land development programs and the triumph of neoliberalism in the 1980s made inevitable the liberalisation of land ownership, which became a priority for the development agenda by focusing on the creation of individual freehold titles, emphasizing heightened security of holding, marketability, and access to

credit (Dickerman 1987; Lastarria-Cornhiel 1997; Toulmin & Quan 2000; Haaland 2008; Markussen 2008).

It is therefore not surprising that most land reform programs have been sponsored by international financial institutions such as the Agency for International Development (USAID), the World Bank (WB) and the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom (DFID) with the objective of pushing forward neoliberal ideas for expanding the market economy. One effect of such developments was that African governments had to implement land reforms in order to get financial support from donors.

It has been argued that neoliberalism has ‘pushed African land tenure systems toward Western-styled private property regimes and away from indigenous customary (often communal) land tenure systems’ (Joireman 2008, p. 1317). But this is only partially true since Joireman overlooks the fact that not all indigenous systems were egalitarian in the communal sense but were stratified along gender, age and status lines.

This line of thinking is informed by a notion of “the commons” which defines a property right as the authority to undertake particular actions related to a specific domain and it comprises sets of rules that define access, use, exclusion, management, monitoring, sanctioning and arbitration of users’ behaviour with respect to specific resources (Schlager & Ostrom 1992; Ostrom 1993). However, “the commons” idea considers property rights or land tenure to rest on either private or communal ownership. This model is not always helpful, for in reality, as in my empirical material confirms, things do not always operate according to this schema. The boundaries between private and communal ownership are blurred. In different contexts, there are private gardens on collective farms or family farms, but communal grazing and access to water.

This empirical complexity has led Nonini (2006, p. 165-166) to make the following clarification: the distinction between common and private property is misleading in that *all* commons (with the exception of global commons, such as outer space or Antarctica)

include some people and exclude others from membership, and are thus private in a sense. Strictly speaking, private property is anything from access to which its owner, not just individuals but public bodies too, can exclude others; in a capitalist economy, it may be bought or sold as a commodity, whereas members of a commons lack this degree of exclusiveness.

Findings from different studies indicate that property rights to land are best characterised as fuzzy due to overlapping rights and uses (Verdery 1997; Hann 2005; Peters 2009; 2013). Certainly, in some circumstances, this is responsible for conflicts, but in others, it may favour sustainable livelihood development.⁸ It is not surprising that some national governments, for instance in Mozambique, have tried to harmonise customary systems of land law and an imposed foreign legal system through granting more circumscribed rights such as leaseholds or rights of occupancy (Dickerman 1987; Rose 1992).

Some authors suggest that ‘the dual systems of law in Africa may have a positive benefit in allowing flexible responses to regional and ethnic differences in custom’ (Lastarria-Cornhiel 1997, p. 1240). But flexible responses can mean different things and may lead to unwanted results, as pointed out by Nelson, Tilly & Walker (1997, p. 478) who observe that ‘lack of coherence between formal and informal institutions gives rise to widespread noncompliant behaviours, including corruption and the formation of underground economies’.

Many studies undertaken in different African countries have shown that there is no necessary link between privatisation (exclusive land title) and increased investment in peasant agriculture with the aim of raising its productivity. On the contrary, land title

⁸ A sustainable livelihood is defined as the ability to cope with and recover from the stresses and shocks, and maintain or enhance capabilities and assets both now and in the future, without undermining the natural resource base (Chambers & Conway 1991; Krantz 2001).

efforts have often triggered land grabs by corporations, local elites and state bureaucrats (Dickerman 1987; Brasselle, Gaspart & Platteau 2001; Quisumbing et al. 2001; Hann 2005; Peters 2007; Peters & Kambewa 2007; Markussen 2008; Deininger et al. 2008; and Joireman 2008).

According to Li (2011) in Africa and in other parts of the world corporations are acquiring poor people's lands but not their labour, and the dispossessed cannot be absorbed in any economically productive sectors of the economy. There is abundant evidence that an ideology of privatisation that focuses on giving formal titles to land to as many people as possible can only speed up land sales, especially to foreign companies, and lead to increased migration out of agriculture and rural society. Moreover, banks do not give loans to peasants merely because they have title deeds; they prefer to invest in profitable projects such as oil extraction, mining, and sugar plantations.

All these points suggest that context and institutional arrangements matter if one is to understand property relations (North 1990; Nelson, Tilly & Walker 1997; Nonini 2006; Verdery 1997; and Peters 2009). Other factors such as demographic change, market penetration, and state policies are equally important as they affect the ways resources (in this case, land) are managed (Agrawal 2003). This line of argument fits with the so-called new political economy perspective which emphasises human agency, as suggested by O'Laughlin (2002) for Mozambique.

The "new political economy" combines theories of agency with contextual theories that analyse structures institutionally and historically (Gamble et al. 1996). Thus, to understand the present, the new political economy focuses on the historical backgrounds of people and communities and on changes in social relations of production. It also looks at the structure of power relations, accumulation processes, labour exploitation, inequalities of access and deprivations in order to understand persistent poverty (Nyasulu 2012, p. 39).

Given that my thesis tries to understand a coconut-based economy and how people

historically derived their livelihoods from it, the new political economy perspective is apt. In this context, I draw on the historical background of Mozambique and Micaúne, the colonial and post-colonial state, Madal and informants in order to understand the unfolding of the coconut economy and its linkages to local livelihoods. I focus on an analysis of state policies, market penetration and demographical revolution over time.

Further, such an approach allows for an exploration of the connection between the global and the local, as well as an examination of long-term social and economic transformations in the lives of Micaúne individuals and households. For instance, coconut and copra produced in Micaúne were traded on the international market subject to global prices. Similarly, changes in the world market were felt locally, whether in terms of increased production or the improved quality of crops to meet the demands of the international market.

1.5. Relevance of the study

The study of processes of how local long-term changes in land relations have affected different actors and interests is a topic under-researched in Mozambique. A relevant and interesting example of the unfolding of long-term land relations is provided by plantation systems developed in Northern Mozambique in the colonial period. These were managed by private international companies which alienated land from the local people.

Of special interest here is a plantation system based on copra production which was established in Zambézia Province by Madal. This was an enclave economy which has received little attention compared to other big colonial companies such as the French-owned Boror Company and the British Sena Sugar Estate (SSE). The former has rich collections of reports and managers' correspondence at the national archives in Maputo (Liesegang 2009) while the latter was the subject of a Ph.D. thesis by Head (1980) as well as several dissertations on sugar production. Moreover, there are historical accounts that deal with the nationalisation of both companies. The Madal case differs from the labour-based enclave economies developed in southern Mozambique and linked to the

South African mining complex.

As pointed out by Wilson (1997), the complexity and fluidity of Mozambique's Zambezi Valley make it one of Africa's showcases for exploration of the relationship between politics and economics, and specifically for the study of the relationship between trade and imperial expansion. According to Wilson, we need to conduct a different kind of research to understand the colonial history of Zambézia. In the relative absence of written sources, oral history is essential for any understanding of the production systems and societal values of the area. In particular, as noted by Liesegang (2009), the social and economic history of the areas cultivated by Madal during the colonial period is almost unknown and warrants basic research. Throughout the colonial and early post-colonial period, little was written about Madal, except for some scattered reports of the company that are not public and a few studies such as Vail & White (1980) and Negrão (1995) where the company is mentioned only briefly.

A report by NorWatch (Rønning 2000), an honours dissertation by Mavie (2001) and a book chapter by Bertelsen (2014) are among the few recent studies entirely dedicated to Madal. The first analyses Madal's operations since the colonial period focusing on its land acquisitions and use, labour practices, wages, working conditions and the environmental effects of logging. The study concludes that part of Madal's activities, in particular, those related to its plantations may be described as exploitation of people and natural resources in ways that did not contribute to the economic development of the area.

Mavie (2001) focused on Madal's liabilities on the Mozambique stock exchange in 1999. The dissertation analysed its business objectives, restructuring of shareholdings, its main activities, and the diversification of the business. It concluded that the company's low financial capacity could be overcome by using its assets, provided that there was a secure source of funding to revive its production. So far, the policies adopted by Madal, which included the purchase of new plantations (ex-Boror Company), the construction of a new

sawmill in Quelimane and the purchase of equipment for forestry, have added to its losses and reduced its financial autonomy.

Bertelsen (2014) locates Madal not only as a colonial actor in a narrow economic sense but rather as an important player within the colonial political field. This study stresses the prominent presence of Norwegian shareholders in the company's ownership and management for more than 50 years. It was during their involvement that Madal was transformed into a *total institution* in the sense that it controlled and structured nearly all aspects of the lives under its command; the plantation was a *node* – a singular point in a network – in a vast economic and political colonial system; and Madal was an integral part of Portuguese colonial rule and strategy in Mozambique (Bertelsen 2014).

My research also relates thematically and geographically to a number of other studies carried out in the district of Chinde, the region where Micaúne is located. For instance, Jessen (1994) analysed the potential natural resources of the Chinde district, Samajo (2002) dealt with recognition of traditional authorities and their articulation with the state in the district of Chinde, and Mwaniki & Chagutah (2011) analysed climate change-induced conflicts in the Zambezi basin including a case study of the district of Chinde.

The present ethnographic study draws substantially on Negrão (1995) which is the most comprehensive study of the economic history of the Zambezi Delta. It documents how policies and ecological changes have contributed to changing livelihoods in Micaúne. I investigate, in a historical perspective, the relationship between land tenure and the livelihoods of people inhabiting the administrative post of Micaúne District of Chinde in Zambézia Province. A premise for such an analysis is that understanding how, historically, the people of Micaúne derived their livelihoods is inseparable from the history of Madal, a company which acted as a “total institution”, being the major employer, the main supplier of goods, the main purchaser of coconut from the family sector and the major landholder in the area.

This study was developed with a particular concern for understanding how Micaúne

residents derived their livelihoods considering that Madal controlled most of the land. It became clear that there were other private landholders besides Madal in the area, which made land a critical asset for local people's livelihoods. By focusing on labour and land, the thesis provides elements for an understanding of social relations of productions, power dynamics and processes of accumulation and dispossession. During the colonial period, both labour and land legislation were approved and implemented to transform Africans into a pool of labour subordinated to private interests. The generation of a relationship between production and power is reflected in the life histories collected, highlighting people's agency and trajectories within different periods, in particular, the colonial and post-colonial (socialist and neo-liberal).

1.6. Contribution of the thesis

First, this thesis provides a contribution to the history and historiography of Mozambique with regard to colonial companies - in particular, Madal and its plantation system. The coconut economy of Micaúne and its sustainability resulted from Madal's ability to influence centres of political and economic power at different levels and in different contexts. More important, the thesis illustrates how Madal gradually transformed itself into a total social institution and was able to adapt to the country's transformations.

Second, it is a contribution to the fields of anthropology and the history of colonialism (Cooper & Stoler 1989), given that it provides an analysis of relations between colonisers and colonised through the lens of a private leasing company. The presence of the colonial and post-colonial states remained marginal in the area as they delegated their sovereignty to Madal. This highlights why, for local residents, the state is an ambiguous entity.

Third, my thesis contributes to the anthropology of property and livelihoods by moving away from binaries between private and communal ownership. In this context, it expands on livelihood studies by going beyond the description of household strategies and focusing on the household economy through an understanding of how income and expenditure determine the capacity to respond to shocks and crises. Considering that

there is a big demand for land by corporations in the area and elsewhere, the thesis sheds light on the role and consequences of (agro) business enclave economies which apply an operational model resembling that used by colonial companies such as Madal.

1.7. Research methods

This thesis is based on ethnographic research undertaken in the administrative post of Micaúne, in the central province of Zambézia. In all, fieldwork took eight months in different phases between 2010 and 2014. This research combined a historical approach with contemporary ethnographic accounts in order to uncover social patterns and dynamics over time. As highlighted by Wilson (1997), this approach helps in understanding historical production systems and societal values in different contexts. Given that most publications related to the topic were published in Portuguese, I had to translate the information from the indicated sources into English.

After two exploratory fieldwork visits of six weeks to Chinde and Micaúne in 2010 and 2011, I decided to settle in Micaúne-Sede because it was the most suitable place to understand the dynamics of the coconut economy (Mathew 1986). The relevance of this concept is based on the fact that the coconut business had been the main source for the livelihoods of local residents for more than a hundred years.

In this regard, fieldwork was focused on understanding contexts, processes and interactions (including events) involving peasants, development agents (in particular NGOs), state officials and private companies' staff throughout the five localities that comprise the administrative post of Micaúne: Micaúne-Sede (the capital), Magaza, Mitange, Arijuane and Nhamatamanga. These localities are located at the perimeter of Micaúne-Sede. Nhamatamanga is 12 kilometres to the south; while Magaza is 12 kilometres, Mitange 18 kilometres, and Arijuane 25 kilometres to the north, respectively.

This was thus a multi-sited research project (Chimhowu 2002; Hannerz 2003) covering households in the four localities of Micaúne as well as information from Chinde – Sede and Quelimane. Such an approach helped with exploring the dynamics around land and

allowed for seeing both individual and collective practices related to land use and livelihoods.

My research applied a combination of different techniques for data collection including interviews, observation, life histories, a survey and media reports. According to Sender, Oya & Cramer (2006, p. 315)

There are important methodological advantages to be gained if researchers can crosscheck their own quantitative survey data with qualitative data they have collected themselves, as well as with a wide range of historical and secondary sources.

Fielding and Fielding (1986 quoted in Farmer et al. 2006, p. 378–9) added that “[t]hrough ascertaining the complementarity of various data sources, multiple dimensions of the same research issue can be exposed, increasing our level of understanding”.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with staff at the *Serviços Provinciais de Geografia e Cadastro* (SPGC) - Provincial Geographic and Cadastral Services - and district administration, as they are responsible for processing land concessions and registration. This was intended to expand my knowledge of land management in the district, especially in the administrative post of Micaúne. Through “snowball sampling”, it was possible to engage with different people including government officials, NGOs staff, local entrepreneurs, community leaders, peasants and fishermen.

Although local people predominantly speak the Mahindo language, there are a considerable number of people who speak Portuguese. To be more precise, around 11,000 people out of 34,000 speak or understand Portuguese, according to the last population census (INE 2007). Moreover, I was able to understand most conversations due to the similarities between Mahindo and ci-Sena because I understand ci-Sena very

well.⁹ Again, this made it easy for me to interact directly with some of my research participants and other local residents.

I was able to forge good working relationships with NGOs' staff working both in Chinde-Sede and Micaúne-Sede, namely the staff of the *Organização Rural para Ajuda Mútua* / Rural Mutual Support Organisation (ORAM), Concern Worldwide (Irish) and World Vision (American).

These NGOs have been crucial for service delivery in the area. For instance, ORAM was vital because of its long-term involvement in land issues in Mozambique since its inception in 1992. It was established to promote, support, and defend the land rights of rural peasant farmers, mainly through the acquisition of titles to land. In 1996, ORAM was nominated as a member of the national commission on land (CNT), and by 1998, there were 227 peasant associations affiliated to it in all provinces of Mozambique (ORAM 2001). It was reported that ORAM had invested more than three million American dollars in rural development programmes in Zambézia Province in the triennium 2006–08.¹⁰ In 2007, ORAM implemented a food security programme in Micaúne that focused on the rehabilitation of roads and bridges to facilitate the outflow of produce and the movement of people as well as the distribution of cattle to promote livestock production.¹¹

World Vision (WV) is an American Christian relief, development and advocacy organisation dedicated to working with children, families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice. It began its operations in Mozambique in 1983 and Zambézia was

⁹ According to Funnell (2004), the Mahindo lexicon is similar to *ci-Sena* by 92 percent.

¹⁰ Jornal Notícias, 22 de Junho de 2009.

¹¹ Interview conducted on 15 August 2010 with Mr Michaque, ORAM's employee.

one of the first provinces to receive emergency support from it (Wrangham 2004). In Micaúne, WV implemented a food security programme under the Farmer Income Support Project (FISP) for the period 2009 - 2013. This was part of the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) which was responsible for rural extension work that entailed establishing smallholder groups, training for increased productivity and the introduction of intercrops, community nurseries and communities' surveillance in the control of CLYD. This organisation is currently integrated into the health sector and employs a nurse who is in charge of community health in Micaúne.

Concern Worldwide started working in Micaúne in 2005, providing training and institutional support to the education sector. This included supporting all the local schools and communities through school councils. Considering that schools are spread over the region, this organisation reached the entire administrative post of Micaúne. As from 2013, the organisation started implementing a food security programme in order to provide local residents with the capacity and ability to produce food for consumption. This new programme consolidated its presence in the area.

Apart from the above, I was also able to interact with staff from another organisation, such as the German Agro Action (AAA) which, at the time, focused on environmental matters and emergencies. In one way or another, the three above-mentioned organisations had a vast network of members and/or partners which provided an opportunity to select research participants and understand land issues from different perspectives according to their level of involvement. The relevance of these initiatives will be dealt with in Chapter Five.

Similarly, I came to develop good relations with a few government officials. One of them was Mr Benjamim Pedro who, at the time, was the chief secretary of the government and reported directly to the district administrator. Mr Benjamim lived in Micaúne for approximately 10 years and he knew a lot about the area and people. He introduced me to many people and provided useful information particularly on land issues, the workings of

private companies based in the district and, government politics in general. Another person who became crucially important for this research was Mr Sérgio Vilanculos who was, from 2007, the district director of planning and infrastructure, which is the most important department in the district as it deals with and manages the district budget and planning process. From him, I was able to collect data about government plans and investments.

Micaúne's geographical location and lack of infrastructure make access to the area difficult, especially during the rainy season, due to poor roads, lack of transport and extensive wetland areas. Having experienced this during the exploratory phase of my research, I approached Concern Worldwide for logistical support, in particular for local mobility and accommodation, which was granted. Through this arrangement, I could follow the organisation's staff on their duties while at the same time making observations and contacting my research participants. This provided a good entry point to engage with local residents as well as getting support from the organisation's staff who became interested in my research.¹²

As a result, I developed a good relationship with Mr Lucas who was the organisation's driver. He was keen to assist because he found the research interesting and, by following me, he could gain more insight into the history of the area. Mr Lucas, a man on his 40s, is a father of 15 children who are based in Quelimane where he has his home. He was hired in Quelimane and started working for Concern Worldwide in Micaúne. Mr Lucas is an example of a newcomer in a better-off position when compared with the locals. He is well-known and respected and my association with him allowed me to enter his social

¹² To protect the identity of my research participants I have changed their real names and for some I excluded the name of the places where the interviews were conducted, when sensitive issues were mentioned. Where interviewees, in particular government officials, presented factual information I did not change their identity.

and professional networks. Through him, I went to many places within Micaúne and met most of my research participants and key informants who I present next due to their centrality to this thesis.

Mr Bruno is believed to be 105 years old and is considered to be the oldest inhabitant of Micaúne. When I started my fieldwork, many people suggested that I should talk to him for two reasons: first, because as the oldest Micaúne resident he would be able to tell me about local history with more accuracy and second, he would be an important informant because he owned a considerable amount of land.

Mr Samajo was born in Micaúne in 1950, served in the colonial army in 1971 and was later demobilised in 1975. Afterwards, he worked for a printer in Beira city (in the neighbouring Sofala Province) and later for Minerva Central in Maputo (the capital of the country) in the composition department. In the late 1990s, Mr Samajo decided to go back to Micaúne and invest in his home area. He started in the coconut business but later opened a guest house. As a former Portuguese soldier, Mr Samajo is a member of the association of former colonial soldiers (ADFAPM) established in 1990 but only recognised by the Mozambican government in 1997.

According to Jossias (2007), this association includes Portuguese as well as Mozambican nationals and they get a monthly income provided by the General Pension Fund of Portugal. Mr Samajo is a current presiding judge of the Micaúne-Sede community court.

¹³ He is an example of a few local people who have different sources of income which puts him in the small category of the prosperous.

The overlap referred to above is also present in the case of Mr Armando, a man in his 40s

¹³ Community courts operate fully with elected lay judges and they are formally not considered as part of the state's structure of justice (Meneses 2006).

and the grandson of an important landowner in Micaúne-Sede. Mr Armando inherited land from his late father and, over the years, was able to expand his holdings in order to generate an income. Since 2008, he has been an elected neighbourhood secretary in Mugorre (Micaúne-Sede) and he is also the current caretaker of the local state cemetery. From these two positions he earns a regular income which is complemented by transactions involving land under his control. There is a reason to believe that his position as secretary and the role he performs in the management of the local area give him leverage in land dealings.

A combination of archival sources and informants' accounts was used for historical information about the area for two reasons. First, for the older informants it was difficult to remember remote events concerning the area, and second, younger residents could not comment as they had not experienced or learnt anything about such events. Methodologically this fits with the new political economy approach.

My participation in local events such as government rallies, soccer matches, funerals, video sessions and NGOs' activities in education gave me exposure to people's discourses and practices. The days in Micaúne were normally calm and the routine was basically made by students and teachers going to and coming back from school during the day, people who cross Micaúne coming from Chinde and going to Quelimane and vice-versa, and a few people who go to their fields in the lower area of Micaúne.

Direct observation focused on people's daily practices and behaviour in order to capture the web of relationships involved in their encounters and to grasp how they related to land as suggested by Tadesse (2005), as well as how these relationships affected or constrained individuals' or groups' livelihood choices. Observation also aimed at understanding the politics of land tenure in the area by seeking to grasp common practices and discourses on land, gender and power relations; the nature of land transactions, both formal and informal; the dynamics of associational life; the history of disputes and their management mechanisms, both formal and informal; household

production strategies; and commercialisation and marketed output, among other aspects.

Life histories through interviews were also collected to complement observation and explore individuals' experiences relating to land and their livelihood trajectories. According to Kaag (2001), the use of life histories to study “diagnostic events” can be helpful in revealing the interplay of different processes underlying changes in current livelihood practices and their gender dimensions. The analysis or comparison of participants' biographies not only helps to highlight how diversified local livelihood strategies are but also helps to explore other processes of social change (Helgesson 2006). This allows going beyond “local ‘communities’ in order to comprehend both intra-household relationships and significant inter-household social relationships as these change over time” (Murray 2002, p. 501).

I conducted a small survey with 50 primary school pupils from grades four and five from four of the five localities of Micaúne to explore family histories and trajectories. However, most of the responses did not bring new information. Nevertheless, this was an entry point to explore population migration and mobility patterns, current livelihoods, the role of Madal and the relationship between Madal and other actors in the area.

As luck would have it, an extensive survey was undertaken on the household economy by Concern Worldwide in August and September 2012 in four districts, namely, Tambara and Guro (Manica Province) and Inhassunge and Chinde (Zambézia Province). The survey was coordinated by two consultants of the American-based Food Economy Group (FEG)¹⁴ with the involvement of 20 surveyors divided into two groups into the two surveyed provinces. I was invited by Concern Worldwide to join the research team that conducted the survey because this organisation felt I was one of the few people with good

¹⁴ For details, see their webpage at <http://www.feg-consulting.com/>

knowledge of the area. I was integrated into the survey team which did three weeks of fieldwork in Micaúne and I was also involved in the preliminary data analysis which took place in Quelimane.

The survey used a Household Economy Approach (HEA), a livelihoods-based framework for analysing the way people make ends meet from year to year and how they survive (or fail to survive) through difficult times. The approach is essential for assessing how livelihoods are affected by wider economic or ecological changes and how these may undermine their existing survival strategies. At its heart is an analysis of 1) how people in different social and economic circumstances get the food and cash they need; 2) their assets, the opportunities open to them and the constraints they face; and 3) the options open to them at times of crisis. It involves the analysis of the connections among different groups and different areas, providing a picture of how assets are distributed within a community and who gets what from whom (Food Economy Group, n.d.).

For the purpose of this thesis, I focus only on data which I collected myself from the district of Chinde, in particular, Micaúne. This will be used against the backdrop of the FEG's final report. I conducted six group interviews with approximately 10 people each in Mucinde, Madome, Muio, Mitange, Arijuani, Alfazer, Matotombo and Magaza. These group interviews were complemented with information provided by the traditional leaders. In this thesis, I focus on these households to provide evidence about current changes in local people's livelihoods. This does not mean that the targeted households are a representative sample of all local households, but rather that they suggest certain patterns.

Throughout the survey, I was able to deepen my knowledge and understanding of living conditions in Micaúne. The survey generated detailed socio-economic data relating to households economy and demographic information on locally relevant livelihoods. The data included, for instance, existing source of income (including distribution of income), main economic activities, employment situation, number and size of households, number

and size of land properties, existing structures and mechanisms of land and conflict management, both formal and customary, patterns of use, both formal and customary, main crops and their cycles of production and the main source of social differentiation.

The survey complemented and confirmed the qualitative data I had previously collected and it allowed for triangulation of survey findings with secondary data. Through a combination of observation, interviews and biographies, it was possible to know who formally held land rights; how they came to acquire them; what and where the disputed land was; and the discourses and strategies advanced by individuals or groups to claim rights over land.

Finally, throughout this research, I benefited greatly from media reports supplied by the internet, television and radio broadcasts, where important information on land, development projects and witchcraft was presented. For ethical considerations, all research participants were asked for their consent to participate in this research and, to protect their identity, all names have been changed. Where necessary, detailed quotations from research participants are provided as evidence for the patterns found in the data and its sources.

1.8. Data analysis

Data analysis is based on a phenomenological approach which aims to account for and describe things or phenomena that are inherent parts of people's activities and lived experience (Barnard & Spencer 2002). This also reveals relevant information about what people might not express verbally but reveal in their behaviour. For this research, information was categorised according to themes that emerged from participants' experiences and activities with regard to their livelihoods in Micaúne.

In this context, coconut and land served as the basis for capturing research participants' lived experiences as well as exploring meanings and values associated with both. This was subjected to methodological and data triangulation. The former involves the use of more than one research method or data collection technique while the latter includes the

use of multiple data sources and respondent groups (Farmer et al. 2006). Narratives were analysed against secondary data by making connections between the literature and people's accounts which allowed continuous interplay between data collection and analysis.

One of the major limitations of this study is the uniqueness of Micaúne's geographic location which might not allow for generalisation. The history and land dynamics created a social configuration which is specific to this area. Historically, the state assumed a minimal role while Madal functioned as the state and controlled most land in the area, as it does today. Despite these singularities, this case gives insight into the power of (agro) business corporate investments and the effect they can have in shaping and controlling economies elsewhere.

1.9. Organisation of this study

The thesis is organised around different themes, all of which have a common denominator: livelihoods and land tenure. Its nine chapters are organised as follows: Chapter One situates the study scene and the problem statement, which are followed by the research, questions, objectives, theoretical framework. The relevance of the study and contribution of the thesis come next. This is followed by the research methods, data analysis and organisation of the study.

Chapter Two concerns the establishment and development of a coconut economy in Micaúne by the *Société du Madal* and how this company transformed local residents into its dependents. Although coconuts had been a familiar crop for Micaúne residents since the seventh century, it was not central to the local economy until the establishment of colonial capitalism in the 1880s. Madal, for that matter, benefited from colonial government's labour and land laws which compelled Africans to work as cheap labour for private companies. The central argument is that the longevity of the coconut economy reflects a combination of policy reforms and capitalist monopoly as well as its embeddedness in local social organisation and modes of production. However, this

changed with the upsurge of CLYD which killed most palm trees, undermining the coconut economy and livelihoods of local residents.

Chapter Three highlights how post-colonial policy changes not only failed to transform land tenure during the colonial period but also led to the intensification of land-based conflicts. It starts from the establishment of the post-colonial state at the country's independence in 1975, and its attempt to implement a socialist regime through a number of radical revolutionary reforms. This is followed by an analysis of the land question under the first post-colonial land law and the problems that accompanied its implementation. It is argued that the land question in Mozambique continued very much to be tailored to the interests of big investors to the detriment of local communities, which contributed to the intensification of conflicts over land.

Chapter Four analyses how the upsurge of CLYD at the beginning of the 1990s, which intensified in the mid-2000s, changed the livelihoods of Micaúne residents. It discusses how, suddenly, the stability and predictability that people had enjoyed for so long was replaced by precariousness, uncertainty and social instability. It is argued that the rise of witchcraft discourse and the related killing of old women were some of the major consequences of the collapse of the coconut economy.

Chapter Five documents the various responses different actors are pursuing in order to restore the local economy and their livelihoods. It is possible to distinguish discourses and practices associated with alternative sources of livelihoods. The overarching thesis here is that current livelihood discourses do not correspond with the local livelihood options undertaken by the people. On the contrary, current discourses are rooted in state and NGOs plans and projects, while people's practices are underpinned by survival strategies. State and NGOs initiatives consider subsistence farming as the main alternative to coconut production, but the scarcity of land associated with population growth is creating an opposite outcome, namely, increased demand for and multiple claims on land. One of the consequences is an increase in the number of land-related

conflicts.

Chapter Six presents the main livelihood options available in Micaúne through four categories of households as I found them in 2012. These options included a) subsistence agriculture; b) subsistence fishing; c) petty/informal trading, and d) formal employment and state stipends. Evidence shows that most local people combine at least two of the first three options while the last is dominated by newcomers and well-connected Frelimo cadres. The main argument here is that there has been an important shift from coconuts to livelihoods based on multiple options, but this has benefited only a small number of people who have formal employment, which is, by far, the most significant source of livelihood. This has contributed to a distinction between locals and newcomers based on the latter's prominence in formal state employment, which has been facilitated by bureaucratic procedures that undermine locals' access to formal work. This suggests that households with a financial backing have been able to take advantage of development projects implemented in Micaúne.

Chapter Seven focuses on various relationships between the state and the people of the Administrative post of Micaúne in the post-coconut economy era. By exploring the details of a state-sponsored event, I show that there is certain apathy of the local people towards the state owing to the negative legacy of the armed conflict in the area and the increased control of the state apparatus by outsiders or newcomers. The state's response to this apathy, both here and elsewhere in Mozambique, was the establishment of a legal framework which provided an articulation between the local state institutions, the recently reinstatement traditional leadership now designated community leadership, and the local people. It has been under this framework that development funds have been made available at the local level across the country. My study shows that these government efforts have created a specific local dynamic, which benefits sometimes in promiscuous ways those who have access or proximity to the state.

Chapter Eight focuses on how the coconut economy crisis has led to a change in the

meaning and value that local people attribute to land. The main argument here is that there has been a shift from land conceived merely as the host for palm trees to three new dimensions which are: a) land as a commodity; b) land as a source of identity; and c) land as a reserve of wealth. This is premised on the high demand for land for farming as well as on the recent discovery of minerals which has made the “genealogical model” (Ingold 2000, p.12) an important dimension of attachment to land. People have high hopes that the future solution to their current predicament lies in their ancestral land, and this might explain why, despite the loss of their main sources of livelihood, there has not been mass emigration. On the contrary, they seem to be waiting for the materialisation of big investments, either in mineral resources or other development initiatives.

In the conclusion, Chapter Nine, I explore the implications of Micaúne’s residents’ hopes for mineral resources in contrast to broader inquiries about natural resources in Africa. I argue that the materialisation of the promise of natural resources depends on a number of factors which are beyond their control. One important conclusion this case study offers is that the coconut economy crisis forcefully pushed the people to think about their future and about new alternatives which had been absent before. This has opened them up to initiatives to pursue different activities and possibilities. The claim that the land and, by default, all the resources on it belong to their ancestors is an important statement about their need to take control of the future. Although illegal, selling and renting out of land is an explicit example of how people are ready to search for alternatives.

CHAPTER TWO: THE COCONUT ECONOMY OF MICAÚNE IN THE COLONIAL PERIOD

The chapter has five sections. The first gives a background on the *Prazo* system of Zambézia before introducing the *Prazo* Mahindo, which is the focus of the thesis. Section two discusses the development of plantation system in central Mozambique, in particular in *Prazo* Mahindo. Sections three and four present labour and land legislation and show how they helped to promote the plantation system in central Mozambique. Section five focuses on the establishment and development of the coconut economy of Micaúne.

The overall objective of this chapter is to give historical background and highlight the political and economic development of Mozambique since the 1880s in order to understand Micaúne's economy. It starts by introducing the *Prazo* system to show how Portugal's failure to convert this institution into a modern administrative unit and prove effective occupation rights led to the granting of land to foreign companies and plantation owners, as well as the approving of labour and land policies aimed at facilitating the work of these companies.

By doing so, Portugal transferred its sovereignty to those companies in exchange for a fee and stepping back from administrative management of its territories. This resulted in the appropriation of the local people's land and their transformation into a reserve of cheap labour. This led to the establishment of a plantation system which relied on cheap labour. One example is the coconut economy of Micaúne which ended only recently.

The long-lasting coconut economy is a result of two interconnected factors. First, colonial capitalism consolidated an existing principle of wealth in people and things through several policies and legislation. Second, local customary law was adapted to the colonial law leading to the coconut economy becoming embedded in society. There was a balance between control of people (labour) by Madal and of things (palm trees and land) by both Madal and local people. The pattern of social reproduction is similar to that of other colonial economies where companies paid low wages in order to keep labour working

while households were obliged to carry a large burden.

2.1. The *Prazos* of Zambézia

Before the arrival of the Portuguese, the Arabs were involved in long distance trade in Mozambique's coastal areas and in the hinterland domain of the Mwenemutapa Empire, but with no intention other than the exchange of cloth and beads for gold and probably ivory. Unlike the Arabs, the Portuguese conquerors of the 16th century and the first half of the next century came with the objectives of occupying the gold and silver mines of the Mwenemutapa, replacing the Arabs through military conquest, and religious assimilation of the African people (Negrão 1995, p. 101-2).

The territorial area on which the "*Prazos* of the crown" were established became relevant after the treaties signed with Mwenemutapa in 1607 and 1629, which recognised Portuguese Crown ownership of vast areas in exchange for military aid (Negrão 1995, p. 101-2). The *Prazos* were an institution established in Mozambique in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by the Portuguese "Crown" along the Zambezi River valley, stretching from Quelimane, on the coast, to Zumbo on the west border with Mashonaland (present-day Zimbabwe). The *Prazos* comprised land grants for three generations with mandatory or preferential succession in the female line. The Crown retained ownership rights but ceded use rights against payment of a leasing fee in gold after 1633 (Isaacman 1972; Capela 1999; Serra 2000; Rodrigues 2000; 2008).

According to Negrão (1995, p. 103), there were three categories of *Prazos* according to their geographic location, namely, the *Prazos* in the Zambezi Delta; those north of the Zambezi River, and finally those in the area of the Mwenemutapa Empire. The first had abundant land but did not represent an immediate interest to the adventurers because they lacked gold and ivory; the second were located in an area administered by the Marave Empire and produced cotton and ivory which were a source of income neglected by the Portuguese; the last were under the Mwenemutapa Empire's control and produced precious metals, which was the reason for the Portuguese presence in the area.

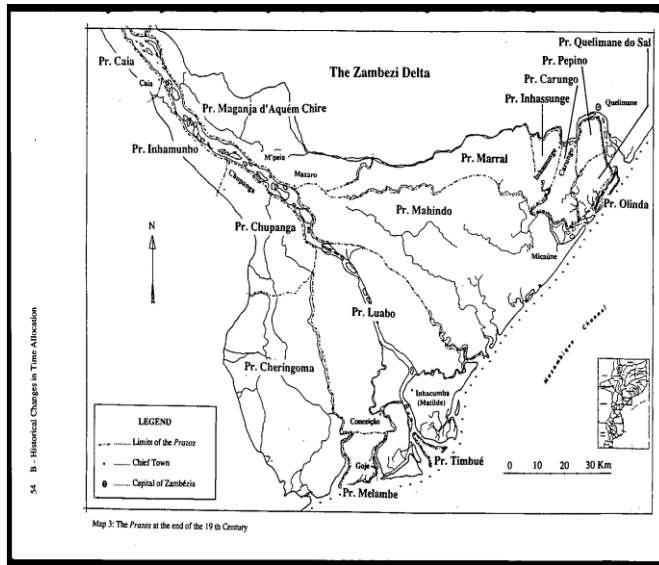


Figure 1.1: Map of the *Prazos* in the Zambezi Delta.

Source: Negrão (1995, p. 54).

I am concerned here with the first category because it is where my fieldwork site is located. As mentioned before, the absence of precious metals and ivory made the area unattractive to adventurers despite its abundant land; and the *Prazos* maintained ownership of African land untouched. The *Prazos* of the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries were essentially land concessions occupied by a *Praza*-holder and his family, African settlers, slaves and animals (Negrão 1995, p. 101-2).

2.1.1. *Praza* Mahindo

The earliest mention of the Mahindo (Mayindo) land that I found is from 1630 and it was under the control of Simão de Fegueredo (1633 – 1649). Mahindo land passed under different *Praza*-holders up to 1807. For instance, Manuel Fegueredo de Sá (1650-1674), Henrique Faria Leitão (1675-1699), Maria de Guerra (1700-1724), and Manuel de Sousa (1725-1750), while from 1760 – 1808 there was no specific land-holder mentioned although it remained a *Praza* (Rodrigues 2002, p. 301; 323-325; 387-8).

The total surface of *Prazo Mahindo* was 700,000 acres, the equivalent of 280,000 hectares (Capela 1999; Linder 2001). It was an *aringa* made of brick, with four bastions built to defend it from the ‘natives’ who, by then, were not submissive at all (Corungo n.d). *Prazo Mahindo* was located on the coast and apparently it was not densely populated. Negrão (2001, p. 181) shows the evolution of the population of Micaúne since the 1890s as follows: about 20,000 people between the 1890s and 1920s; 29,000 between the 1930s and 1950s and 28, 000 between the 1960s and 1970s.

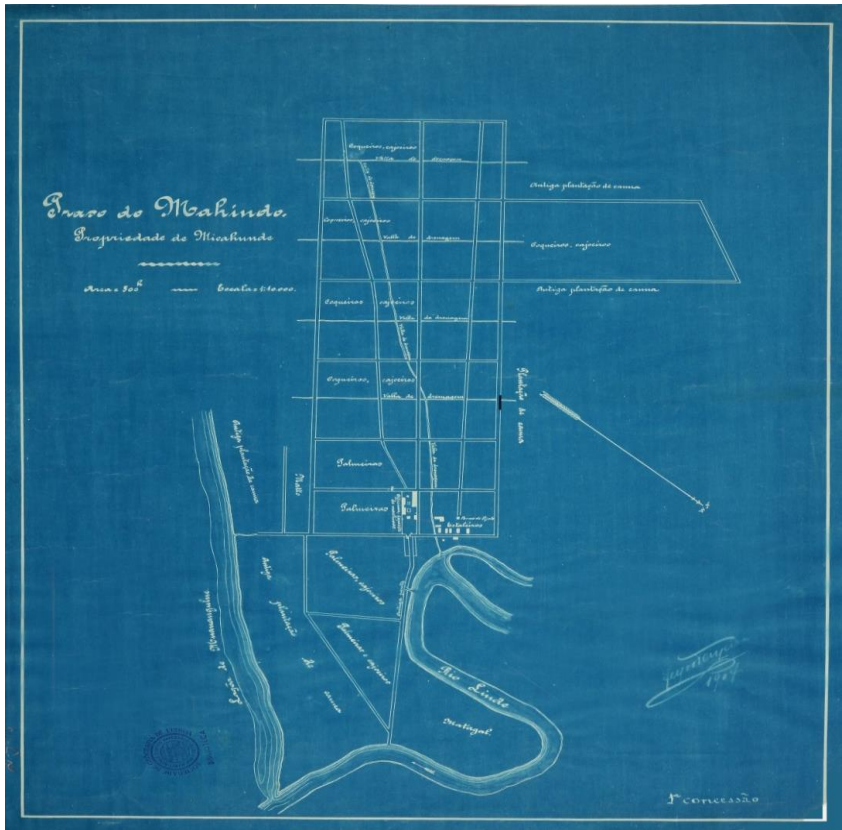


Figure 1.2: Map of Prazo Mahindo.
 (Source: Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa).

The people occupying the area of Micaúne are identified as *Podzo* (Isaacman 1975; Rita-Ferreira 1983). During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, they actively participated in the slave trade, capturing and selling other Africans to Portuguese traders (Azevedo 1991). The *Podzo* cultivated maize, sorghum, millet, sweet potato, rice, beans, cassava and peanuts. Cultivation was women's responsibility while men were responsible for toppling trees, site preparation, construction of defences and surveillance against animals that might cause loss of crops. Among the *Podzo*, a right of ownership over land was granted provided that it had some trees, such as palm trees, and some citrus (Zonta 2011, p.77). During the boom in oilseed production in Zambézia from the late 1860s and 1880s, the *Podzo* were largely responsible for the production of sesame and peanuts (Rita-Ferreira 1983; Zonta 2011).

There seems to be no consensus on the identification of the *Podzo* as an ethnic group. Isaacman (1975) argues that the *Podzo* are not an independent ethnic group but rather part of the *e-Chuabo* ethnic group, while, for Rita-Ferreira (1983), they are one of the peripheral minorities of the *ci-Sena*. This inconsistency might reflect the confluence of different aspects of both the *e-Chuabo* and *ci-Sena* as well as Islam and Christianity in shaping local culture.

The distinction between autochthons, slaves and migrant labour has faded out entirely from local memory. At present, my informants do not characterise themselves as either *Podzo* or *ci-Sena* but rather as the *Mahindo*, meaning those who speak the *Mahindo* language. Indeed, in current official documents, *Mahindo* designates the people who inhabit Micaúne.

The end of the distinction between autochthons and newcomers was accelerated by colonial companies' recruitment of labour from elsewhere which led to people's self-identification with the place rather than to a specific ethnic group. As pointed out by Zonta (2011; p. 82) "the replacement of the indigenous chiefs by the *Prazo*-holders at the top of the African political organisation was undertaken without major cracks in the

social fabric of peoples of the region, who come to see the new tenants as the heirs or representatives of chiefs. The *Prazo*-holders began to collect taxes on the production of peasant land, but, as has occurred with the old chiefs, they could never claim any ownership of the land, which continued belonging to the community according to the indigenous law”.

The *Prazo*-holders, particularly after the 1880s, were granted the right to administer the territories under their jurisdiction, which basically meant the development of agricultural production, trade, and tax collection which should have been channelled to the Portuguese treasury (Negrão 2001, p. 72). Trade was the main activity developed by the *Prazos*, following the routes and networks established before the arrival of the Portuguese (Bowen 2000; Teixeira 2008). However, the *Prazo* system did not, in many cases, involve changes in the relations of production of the local people who carried on with subsistence production much as before. According to Negrão (2001), the African population was allowed access to a hectare per hut.

This would change in the 1880s as a result of Portugal’s failure to convert the *Prazos* into a modern administrative unit and the pressure put on it by other colonial powers, particularly after the Berlin Conference of 1884-5, to prove that it had control over the territories it claimed historical rights to. In the case of Zambézia, Portugal’s presence was limited to what was then Quelimane, occupied in 1870 (Isaacman & Isaacman 1991; Serra 2000), and a small coconut plantation in Micaúne that belonged to the Correia and Carvalho company (Vail & White 1980, p. 107).¹⁵

This led the Portuguese state to introduce land reforms. The first was undertaken in 1871

¹⁵ After the Berlin conference, effective control of the population increased considerably and between 1884 and 1909 there were at least 28 major military confrontations in Zambézia (Pelissier 1988 quoted in Negrão 2001, p. 75).

and was aimed at establishing a land tenure system to promote Portuguese private investment in agriculture through a prudent allocation of land concessions on the *Prazos*.

As a result, in January 1873, the Mining Company of Zambézia (*Companhia de Minas da Zambézia*) was granted a *Praço* for the exploitation of coal and ironstone in the district of Tete (current Tete Province) (Vail & White 1980).¹⁶ In the same year, João Correia, a nephew of Isidoro Correia, a Zambesian slave trader of long standing, rented the *Praço Mahindo* in Micaúne and together with Carlos Nandim Carvalho founded the Correia e Carvalho firm. This started producing bricks, cargo boats, and spirits from its sugar cane plantation and later from the sap of the Africans' palm trees (Newitt 1973; Vail & White 1980; Negrão 1995; 2001; Capela 1999).

Initially, the company did not use many workers because it had acquired a steam engine. At the same time, it hindered any external attempt to recruit labour from its possessions. As a result, local people continued to use their time as they wished (Negrão 2001, p. 83).

The establishment of the Portuguese colonial state in the 1890s led to the introduction of labour and land laws which gradually ended the autonomy enjoyed by the Africans in the different *Prazos*. It was during this period that relations of production began to change significantly as all Africans took part in forced labour of various kinds as we will see.

2.2. The plantation system

The failure to attract Portuguese-based investors for the *Prazos* and the need to comply with the deliberations of the Berlin Conference which demanded that colonial powers prove that they *de facto* occupied certain areas, contributed to the government's decision

¹⁶ Following these, other companies were established, namely the Mozambique Opium Cultivating and Trading Company (*Companhia da Cultura e do Comércio do Ópio*), which was granted concession to the *Praço Maganja aquém Chire* in 1874, and Sugar Company of Mozambique (*Companhia de Açúcar de Moçambique*) in 1890 (Vail & White 1980).

to lease two-thirds of the country to foreign companies mainly of British, French, German and Swiss origin (Vail & White 1980; Serra 2000; Bowen 2000).

The state retained control of the remaining areas, which included south of the Save River (Inhambane, Gaza and Maputo Provinces). This was already integrated into a service economy exporting labour to the South African mines and the complex transport system linking South African railways and ports to the Port of Maputo (Bowen 2000).

In this context, two main chartered companies were created, namely, the Mozambique Company and the Nyassa¹⁷ or Niassa Company. The first was founded in February 1888 and occupied Manica and Sofala Provinces in an area of approximately one hundred and forty thousand square kilometres. This company had Portuguese, British and French investors and its headquarters were in Lisbon with branches in London and Paris. The second was established in September 1891 and occupied Niassa and Cabo Delgado Provinces in an area of approximately two hundred thousand square kilometres (Vail 1976; Vail & White 1980; Negrão 1995).

These chartered companies were granted powers to: organise a police force to ensure the pacification of the territories under their jurisdiction; facilitate colonisation through the construction of infrastructure (especially roads); create and develop small industries, e.g. cotton and sugar; engage in trading agricultural surpluses and rural business; and ensure the transit of goods to neighbouring countries (mainly South Africa and Rhodesia). In exchange, the companies earned the right to collect taxes (*mussoco* and hut tax); negotiate through sub-concessions the exploitation of land for agriculture and mining; exploit marine wealth; exercise exclusivity in the recruitment of labour (including forced labour); and issue currency and postage stamps in the territories under their

¹⁷ The literature in Portuguese uses Niassa while that in other languages use Nyassa. I will be using the term according to the literature at end.

administration (Duffy 1959; Wuyts 1980; Cabaço 2007).

The Portuguese government granted leasing rights to the Zambézia Company, which was founded in 1892 as a merger of the Society of the Founders of the General Company of Zambézia, established in 1880, and the Central Africa and Zoutpansberg Exploration Company (Vail & White 1980, p. 114). A decree of 24 September 1892 gave the Zambézia Company the right of administration for 10 years of the Crown *Prazos* situated north of the Zambezi River and west of the Luenha and Mazoi Rivers in an area of one hundred thousand square kilometres. Most of this company's territory remained in the hands of different investors even after Mozambique's independence in 1975 (Great Britain 1920). Unlike the two chartered companies, the Zambézia Company had no chartered rights and most of its shares were bought by South African, English, German, French and Monacan investors. It had two main offices, one in Lisbon and another in Paris (Vail & White 1980; Negrão 1995).

The Portuguese government, which had shares in the Zambézia Company, decided to sublease part of the company's territory, which resulted in the establishment of the following companies: *Maganja Aquém Chire* (founded in 1894), Boror (1898),¹⁸ *Société du Madal* (1903), *Companhia Agricola de Lugela* (1906) and the Sena Sugar Estates (1920)¹⁹ (Great Britain 1920; Serra 1980; 2000). These companies were mainly devoted to plantations producing one or more of the following crops: sisal, copra, sugar, tea, rice and cotton.

This marked the beginning of the plantation economy in Zambézia. According to Serra

¹⁸ The *Praço* was rented by Baltazar Farinha and three years later, it was transferred to the firm Eignan & Pereira (by then designated Eignan, Pereira & Stucky), which was later transformed into the Boror Company on 15 November 1898 (Carvalho 1914).

¹⁹ The Sena Sugar Estates was established as a result of the 1890 *Companhia de assucar de Moçambique* (Mozambique Sugar Company), and the 1911 Sena Sugar Factory and Marral (Serra 2000; Chichava 2007).

(1980, p. 44), “the plantations in Zambézia stretched along the following areas: the most important one was the coconut area located between the mouths of the Zambezi and Raragra Rivers; the second zone—the sisal and cotton area—included the river banks of Licungo; the third - the cane sugar area - extended along the Zambezi River with incidence in Luabo and Mopeia; and the fourth zone which covered the regions adjacent to the Shire River”. Two factors of production were fundamental to the development of these economies, namely, labour and land. In the next sections, I explain how these two factors were deployed and the outcomes they produced.

2.3. The exploitation of African labour

Leasing of the territory was an attempt to respond to two basic problems. First, it assured effective occupation of the country, which had been pursued since the 15th century, and, second, it promoted the economic development of Mozambique through the exploitation of human and natural resources. As a result, the government approved labour and land legislation (the first labour law was published in 1899) tailored to foreign investors’ interests, particularly the provision of cheap labour and extraction of natural resources. Through this process, the Africans were transformed into a reserve of cheap labour and work become compulsory.

Four categories of labour were distinguished in the legislation, namely, correctional, obligatory, contract and voluntary. Correctional labour was applied as a legal penalty for those who had violated criminal and labour codes; obligatory labour was imposed by the government for public works in situations where voluntary workers were not enough; contract labour referred to Africans who could not prove that they were or had been recently employed. Voluntary labour was where there was a direct contract with the employers, instead of being recruited via the administration. The main difference between voluntary and contract labour was that the first was usually carried out in the region where the worker lived. Although, in theory, the four types described above indicate a clear separation of labour categories, in reality, the conditions under which all the Africans worked could be considered forced labour because it was considered to be a

moral and legal duty of the indigenous people, which they could not refuse (Harris 1958; Anderson 1962; Houser & Shore 1975; Isaacman 1992; Martinez 2008).

To ensure that the Africans would work, “indigenous authorities (traditional chiefs) were deployed, both to identify indigenous people who were not fulfilling the obligation of work, as well as to compel them to work. For their work, the chiefs were rewarded through their recognition as agents of the Portuguese authorities and were paid for each person recruited” (Martinez 2008, p. 115). However, law enforcement remained a major problem for Portugal due to a lack of human, financial and administrative capacities and conflicts between the metropolitan political elite and the administrative staff in the colonies.

In this context, some plans and projects from the colonies were opposed by the metropolitan elite who had control of the budget, managed the national treasury and controlled expenditure and income in the colonies. It must be mentioned that the responsibility to run the colonies was centralised in the Minister of Marine and Overseas Affairs based in Lisbon (Duffy 1959; Derrick 1972; Smith 1991).

The labour policy pursued by Portugal led to increased competition for manpower, not only between the companies established in Zambézia but also between them and foreign employers. There was high demand for labour from the South African mines, which paid higher wages compared to disadvantaged local plantations in the country. This resulted in clandestine migration to South Africa contributing to the shortage of labour for local businesses (Harris 1958; 1959; Rita-Ferreira 1963).

Some critics of the labour conventions between Mozambique and South Africa argued that Mozambique was not benefiting enough from them, in particular, the payments for labour were low and the wages of Mozambican workers were spent mostly in South Africa, which affected the circulation of money in Mozambique. Others argued that, despite labour exports giving Mozambique needed resources, they were also undermining the use of such labour for the development of the colony (Newitt 1974). Nevertheless,

labour exports to South Africa and Southern Rhodesia continued to constitute a major source of revenue and foreign exchange for Mozambique.

In Zambézia, too, competition for labour was high for the following reasons:

First, the absenteeism and constant threat of migration to less demanding *Prazos* allowed the Africans to establish their own *modus vivendi* with the companies, limiting the demands on their labour to some two to four weeks annually. Secondly, as the Mozambique Sugar Company, the Boror Company and Madal Company expanded their plantations, their labour demands increased to a point which could not be satisfied by levies within the company *Prazos* (Vail & White 1980, p. 148).

Third, some companies actively engaged in labour export, such as the Agricultural Company of Luggela (*Companhia Agricola de Luggela*), the Zambézia Company, and Boror. In the first decade of the 20th century, labour from Zambézia was exported to São Tome and Príncipe, which had become the world's third-largest cocoa producer after Ecuador and Brazil (Vail & White 1980, p. 164). Moreover, it was estimated that from 1904 to 1912 around 10,000 workers left for the Transvaal through the ports of Quelimane and Chinde (Serra 2000, p. 40).

At the same time, these companies could afford to have massive production through the use of forced labour (*shibalo*)²⁰ which increased from 8 days per annum at the end of the 1800s to 180 days in 1919 (Negrão 2001, p. 76), and by means of levying *musso*²¹ in labour as well as in kind, in particular rice, alcohol and coconut (Isaacman 1975; Vail &

²⁰ This comprised “native labourers assembled at the local administrative centre and arbitrarily assigned to government projects or to various European employers who had submitted requests to the administrator” (Harris 1959, p. 60).

²¹ By 1912 it was estimated that sugar and copra companies controlled in their *Prazos* some 181,745 people from whom they deducted tax (Vail & White 1980, p. 162).

White 1980). *Mussoco* was increased from \$400 to \$800 réis²² in 1896 and three years later it was increased to \$1200 réis (Negrão 2001, p. 76). According to Sousa e Faro (1902, p. 93),

The collection of *mussoco* in kind, which was seen by the government as a feasible and practical process to define the progress of agriculture in the African (indigenous) settlers, led to a counterproductive result because the settlers have almost abandoned the work on their crops, preferring to work for the lessee.

For instance, alcohol (locally known as *sura*), which was distilled from the sap of the African-owned coconut palm, was given back to the workers as their wages or in exchange for cash crops produced by the local families. Child labour, for example, was paid by both Madal and Boror companies at the rate of five litres of rotgut spirit per week. Given its widespread acceptance, alcohol was also used in bridewealth payments (Vail & White 1980, p. 158; Negrão 1995).²³

The collection of taxes, forced wage labour and land expropriation were not specific to Portuguese colonisation, but rather a common strategy by colonial powers at the time. According to Amin (1972), colonial governments elsewhere in Africa were able to transform Africans into a reserve of labour for colonial enterprises. Arrighi (1970) has shown that in the case of Zimbabwe the development of an African wage labour force was historically associated with the deployment of extra-economic measures, in particular, political measures through government legislation and policies; Webster (1986) argues that there is ample evidence that migrant labour in South Africa was

²² This was the Portuguese currency between 1430 and 1911 (Codrington 1994).

²³ The *Praza* companies were obliged to stop the alcohol trade to Transvaal after the prohibition of alcohol exports, following the 1890 and 1899 Brussels conferences and the 1897 law approved in Transvaal. But local families continued to produce alcohol clandestinely (Vail & White 1980, p. 128).

precipitated by coercive methods, such as land expropriation and the imposition of taxation.

Alcohol was also an important element in other plantation systems such as the South African farms which practised the “dop” (tot) system. European settlers in the Cape also used alcohol as part payment for labour from the 17th century (Schneider et al. 2007). For over 300 years, the “dop” system was institutionalised as a mechanism of social control of indigenous people on the farms in the Cape, playing an important role in the recruitment, retention and reproduction of agricultural labour, as well as providing an important market for low-grade alcohol products (Shaffer 2008, p. 43).

The sense of impunity with which the *Prazo* companies operated was a subject of complaints raised by government officials based in Zambézia during the first 20 years of the 20th century. The *Prazos*-holders were accused of involvement in the recruitment and supply of labour, making high profits despite this being against the law. The governor of Zambézia district, Filipe Carvalho, in his 1912-1913 report, went even further suggesting that the *Prazo* system should be abolished on the grounds that the *Prazo*-holders were not respecting the laws/contracts and were fighting against government supervision of their activities.

He suggested that it was time for the government to take back control of the *Prazos* and impose its authority in the district, first through approval of a compulsory labour law for Africans and the establishment of an office for labour issues under the control of the government; second, by Africans being exempted from paying *mussoco* if they could prove that they had been working for the past six months for companies or individuals who paid their business taxes (Carvalho 1914).

Probably to address the concerns raised above, the government expressly prohibited charging *mussoco* in kind by approving Decree 5713 of 10 May 1919 (*Decreto 5713 de 10 Maio de 1919, art 23*). Nevertheless, “labour demands continued to increase and there was an indication that during the period 1890-1920, children and women were also

recruited by private farmers and companies for jobs such as transporting goods and cooking for companies' employees" (Negrão 1995; 2001).

The introduction of a concessions system at the end of the 1920s and in the 1940s increased the demand for female labour. In Zambézia Province, the first cotton concession was awarded to the Company Lopes & Irmão, Lda in 1933 and in the Zambezi Delta it was granted to the Sena Sugar Estates (SSE) in 1935. In the delta, cotton was produced mainly by women.

The first rice concession was established in 1942 and the main actor was the *Sociedade commercial e Industrial do Zambeze e Chire* which started trading rice produced by rural families of the coast in the following year. Again in the 1940s, in the Zambezi Delta, women were the main target for rice production (Negrão 1995). Although labour legislation had given priority to Portuguese over foreign employees, recruitment at the same time limited the number of foreign workers in companies.

Foreign companies, including Madal, were able to contract foreigners for their operations in Mozambique particularly because they were able to convince the authorities that they could not get enough qualified people locally, as well as paying attractive salaries varying from around £18 in the first year to £20 in the second year and £22 in the third year (Linder 2001, p. 75). In this context, in 1920, there were around 300 Swiss citizens in Zambézia as well as a small number of other nationals. Of that number, 54 worked for Madal, 9 for the Zambézia Company, and 67 for Boror (Linder 2001). One informant born in the 1920s recalled the presence of Madal's white managers in Micaúne in the 1930s, in particular, Théophile Bonnet, a Swiss citizen who served as its director at the time.²⁴

²⁴ Interview conducted with Mr Afonso on 17 May 2012.

2.4. Land legislation

The *Prazo* system laid down the principles of future land laws in Mozambique. In fact, legislation on land concessions aimed not only at simplifying the procedures for land concessions but also at facilitating a more intense exploitation of the land and indigenous (Martinez 2008, p. 172).

Although a decree was issued in 1897 authorising the general government of the province of Mozambique to lease land for the development of trade and industry,²⁵ the first land law was approved only in 1901, declaring as state property all land that was not privately owned. The law's provisions excluded any type of traditional (African) ownership as their land was not considered to be private property. However, there was an allocation of large tracts of land for the exclusive use of the Africans. The government could grant land, on request, to anyone interested in investing in it but, because part of this land had been occupied by Africans for generations, the concession of land to private interests resulted in Africans being gradually pushed to the margins or onto less fertile areas (Mondlane 1983; Zamparoni 1998).

Indeed, different land reforms included a few innovations such as the establishment of "native reserves" (decree of 9 September 1909) and land classification into grades one, two and three (1961 Land Law). This classification was not related to the quality of land, but rather to the purposes of its use. Thus, grade one land comprised all classified settlements, including their suburbs, while grade two comprised the demarcated areas for a population's common use according to their customs and traditions, and grade three consisted of all vacant land not included in the other two.

Tenure was granted for land of grades one and three which was for agriculture, agro-

²⁵ *Decreto lei de 30 Maio de 1897* – Decree of 30 May 1897.

livestock, industrial or forestry use.²⁶ Nevertheless, the Africans continued to be unrecognised as subjects of land ownership unless they could prove that they had occupied a plot for twenty consecutive years.²⁷ They were allowed to grow crops on the land but, in areas outside state reserves, the ‘natives’ had to apply to the cadastral services and applications had to be confirmed by the Secretary of Native Affairs.²⁸ For their request to proceed the Africans had to prove that there was no other person claiming the same area while for non-African individuals, whether Portuguese or foreigners, land could be granted for renewable periods of 19 years (Zamparoni 1998).

Whoever applied for land that was already occupied was forced to pay for the leasehold improvements.²⁹ Although the regimen stipulated that all expropriations of ‘native’ farmland would be subject to compensation, in practice the law was not always followed. The method of expropriation was much more straightforward and, with some variations, followed the following script: a *mulungo* (a white man) looked for an area which pleased him, regardless of its occupation by ‘natives’ (black people); he would request the land at the Agriculture Office, stating that the area was vacant; as he had the resources to pay for the demarcation of the plot, he would receive ownership or tenure title and afterwards surround it with wire, confining the ‘natives’, their crops and cattle to a small area (Zamparoni 1998).

A land survey conducted in Zambézia by the Portuguese authorities in 1913 showed that out of a total of 9 million hectares of land in Zambézia, 5.4 million were controlled by concession companies and 3.6 million were retained by the colonial state under its nominal control. Out of the 5.4 million hectares, only 0.5 percent (45, 000 hectares) was

²⁶ *Lei de terras de 1961, Artigo 50* - 1961 Land Law, Article 50.

²⁷ *Lei de Terras de 1961, Capítulo IV, Artigos 13 a 37* - 1961 Land Law, Chapter IV, Articles 13 to 37.

²⁸ *Lei de Terras de 1909, Artigo 29* - 1909 Land Law, Article 29.

²⁹ *Lei de Terras de 1901, Artigo 8* - 1901 Land Law, Article 8.

registered as agricultural land (in 1924, the figure had increased to 0.7 percent) (Serra 2000; Bertelsen 2014).

2.5. The origin and expansion of the Micaúne coconut economy

There have been two main trends in describing “plantation economy” and “coconut economy”. Some scholars have used the concept of plantation economy coined by Lloyd Best and Kari Levitt (1967) to describe Caribbean economies and their relationship to globalisation in a historical perspective. According to Girvan (2009), the term ‘plantation economy’ is used to characterise a typical Caribbean economy, its historical origins, its development cycles of ‘boom’ and ‘bust’, and its dependence on a foreign-owned and export-oriented ‘plantation sector’.

This theory has been used in other contexts to describe economies based on monoculture produced in a regime of plantations. Amin (1972) argues that what came to be known as a plantation economy was a product of the fact that the American and African continents became an integral part of industrial capitalism as peripheries of Western Europe by supplying labour, and producing raw materials and agricultural produce.

This is, according to Wright (1976 quoted in Cooper 1977, p. 136),

Typical of many economies in history based essentially on extractive resource—intensive exports, which expand rapidly during a period of rising external demand, but which do not lay the institutional foundations for sustained growth once this era has passed.

Moreover, some economists define plantation economies according to their structural weaknesses, namely, “reliance on slave labour, stronger linkage to the outside context than within the local economy except for labour, competition with other sectors of the economy for land and low-paid labour” (Cooper 1977, p. 137).

In Mozambique, too, the economies developed in Zambézia in the colonial period shared these characteristics and have also been defined as plantation economies. However, it might be argued that a plantation economy can best be understood by focusing on the

specific crops at hand as there are different plantation economies based on a variety of crops produced under a plantation regime. The present case is concerned with coconut and its centrality in the economy and, therefore, I adopt the concept of “coconut economy” as used by Mathew (1986).

According to Mathew (1986, p. 59)

Coconut cultivation occupied an important place in Kerala, India, as it was the second most important crop, next only to paddy, occupying about 24 percent of the gross cropped area as in 1977-78. Coconut in Kerala accounts for about 68 percent of the area under coconut in India and its share in all-India production is about 66 percent.

Moreover, Kerala has about 50 percent of the coconut-cultivated area in India.³⁰ Thus, argues Mathew (1986), it is right to assume that the coconut economy is the backbone of Kerala. Similarly, coconut has been central to the economy of Micaúne since the 1880s.

Negrão (1995, p. 67) argues that

By the time the Portuguese reached East Africa in 1498, the coconut was well established in the settlements along the coast of East Africa. Coconut production in the delta was introduced to the African continent by the Indonesians who came from Java, Sumatra, and other south-east Asian islands in the years before AD 500.

It is believed that palm oil was already being traded by local communities and the Arabs in the eighth century (IIASA 2001). According to Negrão, “the exchange and trade of market surpluses of coconut were a practice dating back to the 15th century when the Moors’ vessels were supplied with coconuts as the main sustenance product” (Negrão 1995, p. 46). Prior to the arrival of colonial companies, which began producing coconut on a large scale, the *Mahindos* were very much involved in the oilseed trade, as were

³⁰ http://deejayfarm.com/?page_id=60. Retrieved on 1 April 2014.

other groups in lower Zambézia.

The boom in oilseed production in Zambézia was triggered by high demand from Europe as a result of the Crimean war (1853-1856), which interrupted sales of fatty oils from East Russia and Eastern Europe. Companies trading vegetable oil began to seek alternative sources in Africa where production costs were very low. In 1853, France and Portugal signed an agreement establishing full freedom of commerce and navigation between the two countries and permission for French ships to export from the Portuguese possessions any type of goods (Chilundo 1998 quoted by Negrão 1995, p. 44). The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 became a much easier and quicker route to eastern Africa and Europe (Negrão 1995, p. 44).

Similarly, in the coastal *Prazos*, the Portuguese government granted the new companies a monopoly of the copra the people were already producing (Vail & White 1980, p. 155). As stated by my Micaúne informants, generation after generation of people were engaged in the production and trading of coconuts even before the establishment of plantation companies. However, the production of this crop remained relatively low when compared with the 1900s, when forced labour and land expropriations became the *modus operandi* of the colonial state and private companies.

It appears that the first major attempt to establish massive coconut production in Micaúne was undertaken by the Correia & Carvalho Company, which started its venture in the copra business in 1877 with a small plantation of 70,000 palm trees. In 1883, the company decided to invest strongly in coconut, which led to production reaching 130 tonnes annually by the end of the century (Vail & White 1980, p. 120).

The copra market was liberalised in 1886 and two years later there was a significant increase in the copra and coconut trade. This rapid response to liberalisation was possible because the coconut trees and a market surplus of coconuts already existed (Negrão 1995, p. 46). As a result, Carvalho & Correia was able to reach a market share of four percent of the copra exported through Quelimane by 1891. This was possible because the

company benefited significantly from existing coconut production by local African families which was, at the time, already oriented to the market (Vail & White 1980; Negrão 1995).

Over the years, most copra produced in Mozambique came from Quelimane and it was “entirely exported to European markets, in particular, Marseille (the main market), Hamburg, Antwerp, London, and Lisbon among others centres; only a small part was absorbed by oil and soap factories based in Lourenço Marques” (Ribeiro 1932, p.131).

In Micaúne, it was through Madal, founded in 1903, that the coconut economy was established and received its biggest impulse. Madal bought the firm Correia & Carvalho and revitalised the coconut plantations which had been initiated in 1877 and a year later rented *Praço* Mahindo and started other coconut plantations by clearing forests and planting trees (Sequeira 1944; Vail & White 1980; Negrão 1995; 2001).

By leasing other areas and consolidating ownership in a number of *Praço* Mahindo areas nearby, Madal had the largest patch of ordered palm trees within the area structurally designated by a third section, based in Micaúne (Brandão 2008). By 1908, Madal had planted 544 hectares of palm trees (Negrão 1995, p. 62) and, by 1920, the numbers of palm trees had increased to some 225,000 of which more than half were bearing (Great Britain 1920, p. 166).

According to Brandão (2008), Madal was responsible for building production infrastructure which included houses for managers, roads and a network of stations around which copra production was organised, usually with a central house and supporting facilities, and housing for workers surrounding it in a wide quadrangle, with plantations arranged around them. Madal then designed a management model by promoting the control and monitoring of plantations from various stations through which coconut was channelled and transformed into copra. From Micaúne towards Mitange and the seafront were Muio and Barra stations, while, towards Chinde, heading from Micaúne to the south, Magodo was the last station. Copra was taken in boats from Micaúne to the

port of Quelimane where the company owned warehouses.

This meant that Madal controlled the whole coconut production chain and determined incentives within it. My informants commented that there was little land which did not have palm trees on it. This seems to confirm Negrão who stated that “in average, there were around 100 palm trees per hectare but in some cases, one could find between 120 and 160 palm trees” (Negrão 2001, p. 84-85). In this way and through Madal, coconut became central to all activities in Micaúne and, in a sense, the whole society revolved around this cash crop and little could be done outside of it.

This study suggests that the bilateral kinship system that prevailed in Micaúne for much of the 20th century reinforced the centrality of coconut in local society by making specific reference to family, property and inheritance customary rights (Negrão 2001, p. 188).

According to the above-mentioned inheritance system, both sons and daughters inherit land and trees from their father and their mother. Although the system may have some patrilineal characteristics, the rule regarding the inheritance of land and trees marks a departure from a strict patrilineal system. It is for this reason that marriage is not accompanied by the giving of bridewealth. Bridewealth can be seen as compensation from the groom's family to the bride's for the fact that the children the bride has with her husband will belong definitively to his descent group and not hers, and their rights to land will come from their membership of his descent group and not hers.

When a man and woman began to live together there was a transfer of work from one family to another, through the allocation of land to a non-member of the family. The nuclear family was constituted by an alliance between two or more families, preserved by a multitude of institutional arrangements aimed at the nuclear family's reproduction, and the sharing of risk, savings and incentives (Negrão 2001). The groom's father played a crucial role in ensuring the stability of his son's household because it was his responsibility to allocate land at the moment the bride came into the family, and search for a new plot when she became pregnant (Negrão 2001, p. 218).

The inheritance law allowed the transmission of real estate from parents to children but for this to take place the children must marry before the death of their parents. When a man or woman died the inheritance was divided into equal shares among the sons and daughters. With regard to the daughters, they were allowed to keep land inherited from their father despite moving to their husband families after marriage (Negrão 1995).

To get a sense of what the coconut economy entailed from the perspective of local people I give a brief indication of a typical male life cycle. A boy worked on his father's land until he was old enough to accompany his father to Madal to learn to work there. He earned a wage which eventually enabled him to marry and start a separate household. He received a plot of land from his father which contained palm trees. In this case, he managed two sources of income - from the coconuts on his plot and from wage labour. This enabled the development of mutual obligations and solidarity between fathers and sons. When the father became old or unable to work it was the children who had the obligation to support him from the coconut palms they had received from him as well as from the income they earned from Madal as a result of replacing their father as workers.

According to Negrão, "in the 1960s, the (average) nuclear family of the delta was composed of one husband, one wife, one girl and two boys. A family had to guarantee that in 10 years (which corresponds to 15 to 16 years due to pregnancy) the two boys would eventually have the same amount of coconut trees as their father. The rate of 30% new plants per year over ten years trebled the original number of trees and was enough to assure the same numbers of trees (or level of cash income) for the two sons" (Negrão 1995, p. 92). In this way, family plots and palm trees were scattered around the area making it difficult for families to have a concentration of large holdings.

By making sure that there were enough trees and land for their children to inherit, the local families contributed to the expansion of the coconut economy. But this expansion was also a result of the advantages that both labour and land laws gave Madal, and other companies, to run their businesses. Companies' success or failure could be measured by

the extent to which they used forced labour, tax collection and denied the Africans' right to land ownership.

In the case of Madal, from 1910 to 1930 the company controlled 30,000 to 50,000 people from whom it used their labour and collected the *mussoco* tax (Pélissier 1994; Serra 2000; Bertelsen 2014). Until 1930, Madal had acquired only 3,654 hectares in Inhassunge and Micaúne (Negrão 1995, p.135). But, thereafter it started to expand its holdings taking advantages of the new political and economic dispensation. In the next few paragraphs, I briefly give a background of the importance the 1930 transition.

A new era in Portuguese politics began in 1930, as years of political instability³¹ and conflicts within the state administration precipitated a military coup in 1926 which led to the inauguration of the so-called New State (*Estado Novo*), a regime implemented between 1926 and 1974 (Newitt 1974; Isaacman et al. 1980; Smith 1991). The New State systematised, for the first time, all the laws under its colonial project (Duffy 1959; Mata 2007). Some important legislation with economic effects from the 1930s included the Colonial Act (*Acto Colonial*); the 1933 Constitution; the Organic Charter (*Carta Orgânica do Ultramar Português*) of 1933 (modified in 1935, 1937 and 1946); the 1951 constitution; and the 1953 and 1955 Overseas Organic Law.³²

The New State emphasised economic nationalism as a strategy to promote Portuguese control over the economy, in particular of the colonies, and make Portugal the main destination of exports from the colonies and vice-versa. The colonies' human and natural

³¹ According to Derrick (1972, p. 39-40), "between 1910 and 1926 there was a succession of eight presidents of the Republic. The first government was in power for approximately ten weeks while the longest lasted a little over a year. Forty-three different ministries were created during this period and the nation appeared to be administered in a very short-sighted interest of an oligarchy".

³² All the legislation (colonial and post-colonial) quoted in this thesis are my own translations from Portuguese.

resources had to be directly and effectively exploited to benefit the metropolis (Isaacman & Isaacman 1983, p. 39). This aimed at reversing the fact that, until 1930, the Mozambican economy was in the hands of private companies and France was the main destination of Mozambican exports, accounting for more than two-thirds of all exports (Estudos Coloniais Portugueses 1975, p. 52). As a result, the different currencies used by several foreign companies were replaced by the Portuguese *Escudo*³³ as the only official currency throughout the Mozambican territory (Newitt 1995; Sopa 2011).

Additionally, contracts with some foreign companies, such as the Nyassa Company, were not renewed and their assets were nationalised.³⁴ According to Abrahamsson & Nilsson (1995), this decision aimed to create and strengthen the development of a Portuguese bourgeoisie. Vail (1976) contends that non-renewal of contracts with the companies was associated with their failure to promote Mozambique's development and preserve Portuguese sovereignty. Although Neil-Tomlinson (1977) partially agrees about the companies' failure to promote Mozambique's development, he rejects the argument that the chartered companies, in particular, the Nyassa Company did not succeed in preserving Portuguese sovereignty because they did collect tax and maintain control over the Africans in the areas they leased.

It is evident that, under the new regime, it was important to secure not only economic control of the territory but also a sense of politico-administrative control. Therefore, a combination of both was behind the New State's desire to have full control of the

³³ *Escudo* replaced *Réis* as the official currency in use in the Portuguese Empire from 1911 onwards (Valério & Tjipilica 2008, p. 7).

³⁴ The other chartered company, the Mozambique Company, continued operating until its leasing contract expired, leading to its nationalisation in 1942 through the Decree Law number 31896/42. From this date onwards, the company was operating in Mozambique, Portugal and Brazil as the Entrepoto Group (*Grupo Entrepoto*). "In 1964 Entrepoto created MOFLOR, Moçambique Florestal, which currently has four Eucalyptus plantations with 2,300 hectares in Manica Province and four concessions to harvest native forests of 41,000ha in Manica and Sofala Provinces" (Hanlon 2011b, p. 28).

colonies and their inhabitants. Another decision taken by the government was to abolish the *Prazo* system in 1930 which allowed the state to regain direct administrative control over more than 260,000 square kilometres - more than one-third of the entire country (Isaacman & Isaacman 1983). The *Prazos* of Boror (Boror, Macuze, Licungo, Tirre and Nameduro), *Société du Madal* (Madal, Tangalane, Cheringone, Inhassunge and Mahindo) and Zambézia Company (Anguaze and Massingir) passed their functions of sovereignty to the state (Negrão 1995; Chichava 2007).

Significantly, a few leasing companies which also occupied *Prazos*, such as Madal, Boror, SSE, Zambézia and Angoche, were not negatively affected by the nationalisation of capital (Clarence-Smith 1985) and benefited from the nationalisation process. For instance,

The SSE took control of the tea plantation of Luggela and developed the export of cashew nuts. Boror was granted the infrastructure built in the plantations of some nationalised companies, and by 1929 Boror controlled an area of 14,000 square kilometres of which 16,000 hectares were used to plant 2,111,315 palm trees (Linder 2001, p. 47).

Surprisingly, it was during this period that Madal considerably expanded its holdings and

By 1932, over all its possessions, Madal was managing plantations of about 30,000 hectares divided into three sections, with almost 40 outside posts and employed around 3,000 workers (Linder 2001, p. 63).

Micaúne had the largest number of palm trees planted and bearing by 1935 (Muralha 1925). Madal's continuity and expansion under the new political regime can be explained by the fact that a Portuguese aristocratic family, the Bobones, became prominent shareholders in the company in the 1930s and they enjoyed good relations with the Portuguese political elite.

Madal consolidated its palm possessions in the Zambezi Delta using different strategies, including the purchase of titles from former landowners (particularly from the *Prazo*-holders), and land appropriation from African farmers via the deduction of debts incurred

by peasants' failure to pay the *mussoco* tax. Those who failed to pay their *mussoco* taxes ended up losing their plots. The occupation of land without prior authorisation was later followed by the registration of this land once it was already in production. Small private farmers followed the same strategy of land occupation without prior authorisation, which over the years, resulted in significant land restrictions for the local people (Negrão 1995). With regard to Micaúne,

At the beginning of the 1960s, more than 50,000 persons were confined to a strip of land of 10 kilometres to 12 kilometres wide and 40 kilometres long, between Nhangama and Mitange, containing 125 inhabitants per square kilometre. The situation was even worse at the end of the 1960s, where in an area of 400 square kilometres, local residents were living on only 250 square kilometres (Negrão 1995, p. 137).

Land restrictions worked to the advantage of Madal by pushing people into becoming dependent on it. As one informant put it, "Madal was like a government as it had more land than the state (government). No one could complain about it". Madal would become, in Bertelsen's (2014) words, "a total institution", meaning that the company determined, to a great extent, the living conditions of Micaúne residents as it was the major employer, a supplier of goods through its shop and the main purchaser of coconut from the family sector. The Africans' "money from copra was used to buy food while chicken, fish, eggs and rice were exchanged for cassava, sorghum and cereals" (Negrão 2001, p. 89).

With regard to trade, Madal revitalised in the 1910s an existing network of previously Indian-run shops and employed those Indians to carry out its business. These shops not only supplied all goods to the local people but also were coconut selling points to the company (Vail & White 1980; Negrão 1995). Madal ran a *de facto* monopoly system. First, people's dependence on the coconut economy operated at two levels. Madal provided seasonal employment based on a quota (piecework) system, which meant that every worker had a number of nuts to be treated, cut, and carried for a fixed payment per day. The company also made sure that every household sold its own produce to them through the company shops.

In Micaúne, most people were employed by Madal and they preferred to work near home, receiving cash, food and clothing, rather than go to Luabo for six months a year (Negrão 1995). The income derived from selling coconuts or labour to Madal and local traders encouraged Micaúne residents not to migrate in search of work (Head 1980; Negrão 1995).

This does not mean that there were no people who had decided to migrate. In fact, I came across four informants who had worked in the South African mines and farms during the colonial period. Three of them came back because they had reached their working-age limit and became chiefs. There must have been many others, but it was not a general practice as in other areas of Mozambique. Southern Mozambique was a whole other story, and scholars such as Head (1980), Darch (1981), First (1983), Munslow (1984), Harries (1994) and O’Laughlin (2002) have documented how migration to the South African mines was the main livelihood option for people of this region for several generations.

Second, the company promoted coconut production by distributing seedlings and making sure that every household could produce coconut, for which it was the main buyer. In relation to this last aspect, Vail & White (1980, p. 158) argued that

This represented an advantage for the companies as it would contribute to reducing mass migration and it had the long-term financial advantage of encouraging the African sector as a saving on investment and a buffer against recession benefits.

I may add that Madal transferred part of the burden of production costs to the families, ensuring the growth of their palm trees while the company could concentrate on its own plantations. This strategy guaranteed that there was enough production for export over the years.

With regard to labour, the level of dependence differed between those recruited locally through chiefs and those recruited elsewhere. The first category lived in their plots surrounding Madal’s holdings and was able to intercrop in their own palm trees as well as

supplementing their income by working for Madal. The company also encouraged children to learn their father's profession on a daily basis. This worked as a type of training and preparation to secure labour when the generation of fathers had to retire or died. It was through this process that children came to replace their fathers as Madal's employees.

The second category of workers, in some ways replacing the earlier slaves, were housed on company land but were not allowed to cultivate it independently. They were provided with food, shelter, clothing and health care. It could be said that they were more completely dependent on the company than the first category.

Madal also resorted to different tactics to keep these workers dependent. Throughout the history of the company, it was a common practice for it to deliberately delay the payment of wages to force workers to take goods on credit which often reached or exceeded their wages.³⁵ This reduced workers' ability to obtain essential cash for other transactions, keeping them attached to the company. In this way, workers were trapped in a vicious circle where they had continuously to work to pay off their debt to the company. Similar examples have been reported from farms in southern African countries such as Zimbabwe (Addison 2014) and South Africa (Ewert & Hamman 1999).

Cocoa plantations in Ghana provide a contrasting example of how to increase production. There, land was controlled by local farmers, not foreign companies and investors, which boosted local production and allowed Ghana to become the world's largest cocoa producer. Cocoa was integrated into the "traditional system of food farming" by migrant farmers who were familiar with the cash economy and their principal source of wealth was palm oil (Hill 1961).

³⁵ Interview conducted with Mr Jaime on 11 April 2012.

The coconut economy deepened gender differences at the household level as most people working for Madal were male, given the nature and manual difficulty of the work. Women were employed to transport coconuts on the plantations, but they were also responsible for producing food crops at home. When the demands of producing food crops increased, women were not able to continue working on the plantations and were obliged to stay at home in order to take full responsibility for the production of food and surpluses and the education of children (Negrão 2001, p. 90). This is made explicit in a report by the governor of Zambézia in 1902 showing that

The situation of women in the *Praço Mahindo* was of a lower status nearly comparable to a slave rather than a wife. Women's work included the cultivation of land and delivering children. The man could establish sometimes, without much work, a saleable property, as the wife and the children delivered by her could be regarded as immobile (Sousa e Faro 1902, p. 2).

It could be argued that even with the introduction of forced rice production in the 1940s when women got involved in a paid activity in Micaúne and were required to pay their taxes in rice, the structure of power at the household level did not change. Women were still not able to compete equally with men, given the prominence of the coconut business.

The increasing condemnation of the Portuguese colonial policy (e.g. forced labour and forced crops production) by other colonial powers and anti-colonial movements from the 1940s onward forced the Portuguese government to implement political and economic reforms. These reforms aimed at accomplishing multiple objectives, namely, the promotion of massive Portuguese settlement which would strengthen the state administrative apparatus and expand the control of the economy by Portuguese nationals; the increase of key raw material production; and fostering of the integration of small economies and households in the market economy through expansion of demand for

manufactured goods (Isaacman 1975; Mosca 2005; Almeida 2008).

As a result, businesses, state administration, traditional authorities (chiefs, heads of groups of villages and heads of villages), *Cipaios*³⁶ and interpreters, who became civil administration assistants, started enjoying some incentives and privileges from the state (Gentili 1991).

In the districts of Chinde and Micaúne, these improvements were evident in the living conditions of the local residents. For example, some infrastructure and services were established to serve a number of settlers who came to be based in the area. Cement houses, power generators, a market and a small airport were established in the area during this period. Moreover, these settlers' activities helped boost the local economy through the provision of work for the Africans as domestic workers, tailors, and assistants, to mention a few. According to Negrão (1995, p. 77), during this period, Madal employed 84 percent of the labour in Micaúne. This shows that there was widespread access to income which was reflected in increased demand for consumer goods.

With the income generated from their work and palms, a few Micaúne 'natives' started to expand their landholding through palm tree transactions. By this time, people such as Zeferino de Jesus Maria, Francisco Vitranja John (Bonde), Francisco Miguel, Miguel Guente, Luis Elias, and Severino Temane were already people with considerable holdings among the 'natives'.³⁷

³⁶ "*Cipaio* (*Sipaio*, *Cipai*, *Sipai*) was an African police officer usually assigned to a lower-level administrator or to the *régulo* (African chief) in colonial Mozambique. When attached to the *régulo*, the *cipaio*'s function was to help recruit workers, arrest and beat individuals suspected of crimes or disobedience, and carry messages" (Azevedo et al. 2003, p.35).

³⁷ Interviews conducted separately in Micaúne in 2012 with Mr Samajo and Mr Bruno Jr.

With the beginning of the liberation war in Mozambique in 1964,³⁸ the Portuguese state intensified its investments but this had two-fold objectives, a) attracting non-Portuguese investors for big projects, b) strengthening political and military alliances (e.g. with the South African Apartheid regime) in order to face the colonial war (Isaacman & Sneddon 2000; Mosca 2005). This contributed to an influx of foreign investors particularly from South Africa and the United States, although countries such as Britain, France, Japan, Belgium, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland, just to mention a few, were also important. These investors were mainly interested in the extraction of minerals, as well as small processing industries, which had become more important than agricultural production (Mondlane 1983).

Although their effects were not felt everywhere, there were a few places which directly benefited, in particular, the region south of the Save and a few places in the north such as Micaúne in the district of Chinde. It was during the 1950s and 1960s that oil prospecting explorations were undertaken in Micaúne by the American Gulf Oil Company (Mondlane 1983). Two Micaúne residents recalled that, in 1967, for approximately six months (three to open the hole and the other three to thread the tubing), Muguiaia was a different place. According to one of them,

During this period, the landscape of Micaúne was changed radically, in particular in the area of the exploration. It benefited from good and large roads, power generators and many cars. It looked like a city in the middle of a palm tree jungle. There was heavy machinery all over and power generators producing electricity twenty-four hours a day on the perimeter of the compound. There were also pre-fabricated houses for the people involved in the exploration.³⁹

³⁸ For details on the Mozambican war for independence, read Mondlane (1983), Houser & Shore (1975) and Rita-Ferreira (1988).

³⁹ Interview conducted with Mr David in Muguiaia on 8 May 2012.

Another resident noted that, “I never saw a gathering of white people in the area as big as during the oil prospecting. My father was working in this project and I had close access to its operations”.⁴⁰

Economic growth was also reflected in a substantial increase of the population in the 1970s.⁴¹ In Micaúne, the influx of a few Portuguese settlers in the 1960s, in the context of the Portuguese government’s settlement policy, did not affect Madal’s copra production and labour monopoly and landholdings. In fact, some settlers became intermediaries between Madal and the local population while others bought coconuts from the local people and sold it in Quelimane to other copra exporters.

At Mozambique’s independence in 1975, some of these traders fled from the political transition to socialism, but Madal remained behind to carry on its business. Throughout the 1980s and, until recently, Madal remained the major employer and source of income for Micaúne residents.

In this chapter I have highlighted policy developments, in particular, those associated with land and labour, and how they compelled Africans to become a reserve of cheap labour to benefit the companies, a situation which has continued until the present. All efforts underpinned an attempt by Portugal to establish a modern colonial state in response to the threat of losing its possessions to rival colonial powers, mainly Britain and Germany. It was this threat that led Portugal to grant two-thirds of Mozambique to foreign companies as a strategy for maintaining effective control of the area.

⁴⁰ Interview conducted with Mr Carlos in Muguia on 8 May 2012.

⁴¹ According to the censuses, Mozambique had a population of 6,465.5 in 1950 and by 1970 the figure was 9,407.7 (Langa 2010, p. 16). For Rita-Ferreira (1972) this was an authentic demographic explosion, since in a decade (1960 – 1970) the population growth rate was around three percent, which was similar to countries such as South Rhodesia and South Africa.

It can be argued that these companies carried out the colonial project and controlled the economy. An example of this is the coconut economy of Micaúne which was developed by Madal using various strategies and tactics. Despite its exploitative nature and the paternalistic approach adopted by Madal, its legitimation by local communities helps to explain why the coconut economy lasted for so long.

Madal created a system which was harsh and exploitative, but also predictable. In some respects, it bears comparison with the system of labour migration to the South African mines. Madal's workers probably earned less than their counterparts in the mines, but they were able to avoid long absences from their families and homes. Madal's workers invested a portion of their wages in acquiring land for planting coconut trees so that they could distribute it to their children when they got married and still sell coconut when they were old and unable to continue working for Madal. There are parallels with miners investing part of their wages in livestock or other agricultural assets so that they would have something to live on after retirement. The point is that both enterprises had large labour requirements, and workers could get a job with them relatively easily in the first half of the 20th century. In that sense, they were harsh but reliable, and men were able to plan their lives around them.

In some ways, the gold mining industry was able to shape state policy in Southern Africa. In South Africa segregation was the key to the migrant labour system – without it, the migrant labour system would have been difficult to sustain. Madal was in an even better position to exert its power relative to the state. It took over the land of *Prazo* Mahindo, one of the *Prazo* settlements that had had virtually complete autonomy from the Portuguese colonial authorities in the 19th century. Even in the 20th century, the Portuguese colonial authorities had been obliged to cede many of the functions of sovereignty to Madal and companies like it elsewhere in Mozambique. As will be demonstrated in the next chapter, this autonomy continued even after independence, despite the Frelimo socialist government's attempt to undo and eliminate the exploitation that had been inherited in the colonial economy.

CHAPTER THREE: THE COCONUT ECONOMY IN POST-COLONIAL MOZAMBIQUE

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first focuses on the establishment of the post-colonial state with the country's independence in 1975, and its attempt to change the land question through a number of radical revolutionary reforms. The second analyses the land question in a neoliberal context. The main argument advanced here is that the land question did not change radically in this phase. Unequal relations continued because local people still had limited access to land and remained as a pool of labour for state/government collective farms and companies. I use the case of Madal and the coconut of Micaúne to show how this company, like a few others, continued to operate as they had in the colonial period despite the rhetoric of the newly independent government about nationalising private companies.

3.1. The socialist era

Ten years of liberation war and the overthrow of the fascist regime in Portugal in 1974 led to the signing of the Lusaka Agreement between the Portuguese Government and Frelimo on 7 September 1974. Through this agreement, Frelimo was recognised as the sole legitimate representative of the Mozambican people and a transition government, including Portuguese officials and Frelimo members, was created to run the country. This government was to work on the transition of power and preparation of the Proclamation of Independence to be made on 25 June 1975.

At the time, Frelimo did not have any experience in running the country but its leadership was imbued with a revolutionary vision reflecting the ideologies of the 1960s (Newitt 1995). For instance,

Just after the formation of the transitional government, Samora Machel, who was to become the first president of independent Mozambique, argued that with regard to the state and its institutions, it was necessary to decolonise, and to build the appropriate structures for People's Democratic Power (Pitcher 2002, p. 53).

But in reality, the political and administrative organisation of the country did not change, as the post-colonial government maintained the same administrative structure of the colonial period, a hierarchy as follows: province, district, administrative post, locality and community.

Frelimo's attempt to build People's Democratic Power created fear among owners of big and small companies, managers and functionaries who felt that their future was uncertain. Moreover, the transition of power to Frelimo was accompanied by high levels of violence, a sense of insecurity and political mayhem. Rural and urban populations launched, without any opposition, a crescendo of disorder and violence. There was looting of thousands of shops, farms, offices and other infrastructure, and many of those affected sought refuge in other urban/rural centres which were still enjoying relative safety (Rita-Ferreira 1988).

A cap on monthly wages equal to or above 10,000 *Escudos* was a major blow for qualified manpower and for employers who sought to attract qualified labour.⁴² Between 1974 and 1976, *Grupos Dinamizadores* (Dynamising Groups) were composed of eight to ten people who served as local councillors, social workers, factory managers, and courts and in some areas, they replaced the Portuguese-appointed *régulos* (chiefs) (Hanlon 1984; Egerö 1990). This added another dimension to the dissatisfaction of foreigners whose almost uncontrolled reactions led to accusations of economic sabotage and treason against the state (Rita-Ferreira 1988).

All of this led many state employees, owners, managers and technical staff of private companies to take their valuables, leave the country and abandon everything. The figures of fleeing foreign nationals at Mozambique's independence vary. For instance, it is

⁴² *Decreto-lei 24/74 de 23 de Novembro* - Decree 24/74 of 23 November.

estimated that 200,000 out of a total of 250,000 Portuguese left Mozambique between 1974 and 1976 (Adam 1996, p.80; Robinson 2003, p. 143). Middlemas (1980, p. 216) argues that, by July 1975, the white population had been reduced from 230,000 to 80,000.

In response to this massive exodus and to avoid economic collapse, the transition government decreed state intervention in and protection to all abandoned and sabotaged companies.⁴³ Moreover, threats to dismiss workers, stop or reduce production, destroy equipment, and undermine investor confidence were all treated as economic sabotage. A company was considered abandoned if it had not been working normally for ninety days. After this period of idleness, the government nationalised the company, transferring *de facto* but not always *de jure* ownership to the state. The owners of abandoned companies were not entitled to any compensation as they were seen as enemies of the people and the revolution.⁴⁴

It was in this atmosphere that Mozambique's independence was proclaimed by Frelimo on 25 June 1975, immediately establishing the People's Republic of Mozambique. According to the constitution, Mozambique was a popular democratic state in which all patriotic citizens were to be engaged in building a new society free from exploitation of man by man. Power belonged to the workers and peasants united under Frelimo's leadership.⁴⁵

Frelimo's conception of a new society was a product of its leaders' experience, acquired through international co-operation and support from progressive countries such as Sweden, Norway and Denmark and socialist countries such as the Soviet Union and China. It also drew on the experience of other liberation movements from whom

⁴³ *Decreto-Lei nº 16/75 de 13 de Fevereiro* - Decree 16/75 of 13 February.

⁴⁴ *Decreto-Lei nº 18/77 de 28 de Abril* - Decree 18/77 of April 28.

⁴⁵ *Constituição da República de 1975, Artigo 1* - 1975 Constitution, Article 1.

Frelimo's leaders had received military training and the opportunity to observe the working of socialist ideals in practice (Sellström 1999; Hanlon 2007; Peltola 2010; Minter 2007).

Inspired by Tanzania's Ujamaa, Algeria's communal villages and the relative success of production in the zones liberated in Mozambique during the war, the newly independent government identified agriculture as the base of its economic policy.⁴⁶ In this context, land and natural resources in the soil, subsoil, territorial waters and continental shelf of Mozambique were considered state property and the state would determine the conditions of their access and use.⁴⁷

The government's economic policy was approved at Frelimo's third congress in 1977; it focused mainly on agriculture and the need for higher production levels, reflecting the socialist prioritising of big agricultural projects. This congress also marked the adoption of Marxist-Leninism as state ideology and made the country increasingly dependent on the support of the Soviet Union, China, East Germany, and Cuba, among other socialist countries.

In this context, a new Land Law (Law 6/79 of 3 July 1979) was approved to regulate access to and use of natural resources, in particular, land, as well as to establish forms of production in line with the political ideology. Primarily, this law established state land ownership and decreed that land could not be sold, alienated, mortgaged or pledged.⁴⁸ It also distinguished land for commercial and non-commercial purposes. Non-commercial purposes included family farms aimed at the satisfaction of the needs of households which owned livestock but did not employ wage labour. Cattle were allowed to graze on

⁴⁶ *Constituição da República de 1975, Artigo 6* - 1975 Constitution, Article 6.

⁴⁷ *Constituição da República de 1975, Artigo 8* - 1975 Constitution, Article 8.

⁴⁸ *Lei de Terras 6/79, Artigo 1* - Land Law 6/79, Article 1.

common (public) land.⁴⁹

According to this law, land could be accessed and used on a permanent or temporary basis. Temporary use, which included land for non-agricultural economic purposes, was limited to renewable periods of five to 15 years. However, in the case of mixed enterprises, the state guaranteed use for the duration of the activity and also encouraged and stimulated co-operatives for the development of the economy.⁵⁰

The constitution and organisation of cooperatives were regulated by Law 9/79 of 10 July 1979. Along with state ownership, cooperatives were considered by the state as the economic basis of popular democratic power. Co-operatives were regarded as socio-economic organisations of the working masses that contributed to the development of the national economy, as well as the development of the “new man” by creating new values and habits of collective life.

For this reason, the government made remarkable efforts to expand the co-operative movement in the country in the early 1980s. According to Gemo (2009), many agricultural co-operatives were based on small and isolated farms abandoned by Portuguese settlers, but others had to be created from scratch in new areas. Between 1977 and 1981, the estimated number of co-operatives grew from 180 to 375 while membership increased from 25,000 to 37,000. The land they cultivated never exceeded 30,000 acres and actually began to fall in 1982 while production fell by half from 1979 to 1981 (Hanlon 1984; Gemo 2009).⁵¹

⁴⁹ *Lei de Terras 6/79, Artigo 15* - Land Law 6/79, Article 15.

⁵⁰ *Lei de Terras 6/79, Artigo 16* - Land Law 6/79, Article 16.

⁵¹ The slow growth of cultivated areas and production might also be attributed to a severe drought between 1981 and 1984 which affected eight of the ten provinces of Mozambique, in particular, the southern provinces where approximately 100,000 people died of famine (Pélissier 1984; Gunn 1986).

Considering the number of people living in the country and the efforts made by the government to promote co-operatives, this was modest growth which may be explained by an unrealistic legal requirement which ruled that a co-operative had to be established through “a written document (statute) and signed by at least ten of its members”.⁵² This was a major challenge with an illiteracy rate of around 90 percent.

It appears that many people joined the co-operatives not because they were committed to building socialism, but because of the “tangible benefits” their membership could bring. Better-off peasants saw in collective agriculture a route to capital accumulation, skills acquisition and educational advancement while poorer smallholders were primarily pursuing a risk-spreading strategy: collective agriculture provided a potential alternative source of food and income in the event that their own fields failed (Dinerman 2001).

Contrary to the expectations of cooperative members, the government then decided to concentrate its resources in state companies. It is estimated that between 1977 and 1983, 90 percent of total state agriculture investment went to state farms, two percent to co-operatives and virtually nothing was invested in household production (O’Laughlin 1981; Mackintosh & Wuyts 1988; Coelho 1998; Dinerman 2001).

This situation not only weakened household agriculture but restricted its access to markets for products and infrastructure, condemning it to disappear owing to marginal investment by the state (Bowen 1992; Coelho 1998). Because of the priority given to state farms, the cooperatives’ members concluded that the post-independence state was bent on controlling their wealth and independence, much as the colonial state had done.

⁵² *Lei 9/79, Artigo 3 - Law 9/79, Article 3.*

Co-operatives and communal villages⁵³ had in common the use of labour-intensive production techniques; given the aim of “self-reliance” production using these techniques was meant to be oriented towards direct consumption as well as marketable surpluses. The distinction between cooperatives and communal villages was decided by the quality of their members. The members of a co-operative formed a distinct sub-group within a communal village and the leaders of the two did not overlap (Harris 1980).

Like the colonial *aldeamentos*, the communal village policy fell short of expectations. Socialisation of the countryside was limited, leading some analysts to consider it a failure. First, only a small proportion of the population had any experience with communal villages and those who had often detested them because they did not deliver on their promises (Coelho 1998).

Second, the new policy did not resolve the outstanding problem of the control of local community land which had been usurped by plantations and other private interests in the colonial past. In fact, the government replaced the plantations by occupying the same land for new plantations (so-called state enterprises) and transforming the peasants into wage labourers (Cahen 1993).

Third, concentration of producers without a corresponding concentration of the means of production, such as fertiliser, pesticides and irrigation schemes, brought about either the rapid exhaustion of overworked soils (which could not be left fallow) or the exhaustion of the producers themselves as a result of walking long distances to cultivate their previously fertile but scattered fields. This resulted in deep social divisions, with

⁵³ A communal village was a human settlement that was characterised by collective or co-operative production as the basis of its economy; a planned physical setting with distinct residential and productive areas; and institutions of local administration which ran village development and life in general (Coelho 1998, p. 65).

displaced lineages struggling first to have the village built on their ancestral land, and then, if unsuccessful, falling under the dominance of the lineage on whose land the communal village had been built thanks to their making the land required available for this purpose (Cahen 1993).

Finally, the failure of the government to deliver on promised wells, dispensaries, schools, agricultural marketing and farm machinery undermined people's confidence in the state (Cahen 1993; Harris 1980). As a result, only 18 percent of the rural population was living in communal villages by the 1980s and only 230 out of about 1,300 communal villages had organised co-operatives in 1983. Consequently, most of the inhabitants of these villages were scarcely touched by Frelimo's economic policy (Ottaway 1988, p. 216).

This resonates with Hyden's (1980; 2008) argument that, in most African post-colonial contexts, peasants were uncaptured, in that they maintained their relative autonomy, living outside the control of both state and market. This made them less responsive to policies, which provides one explanation for the current low level of economic development in most African countries.

3.1.1. Uneven privatisations

The state economic sector was identified as the driver of the national economy.⁵⁴ At the same time, there was recognition of private property, but this was not supposed to work against the interests set out in the constitution,⁵⁵ and foreign investors were allowed to operate only within the framework of the state's economic policy.⁵⁶

According to Caballero (1990 quoted in Gemo 2009, p. 154), at independence

⁵⁴ *Constituição da República de 1975, Artigo 10* - 1975 Constitution, Article 10.

⁵⁵ *Constituição da República de 1975, Artigos 12 e 13* - 1975 Constitution, Articles 12 and 13.

⁵⁶ *Constituição da República de 1975, Artigo 14* - 1975 Constitution, Article 14.

It was estimated that approximately one-seventh of the more than 4,000 commercial farms (*explorações comerciais*) were agricultural companies which controlled about 1,6 million hectares. Only a dozen of these companies were substantially extended endeavours dedicated to the production of coconut, tea, sugar, sisal, cashew nuts and cotton, and employed 100,000 individuals. Following independence, around 2,000 of these agricultural farms were abandoned.

Abandoned companies, houses and other assets including land were nationalised by the newly independent government and converted into state enterprises (Pitcher & Kloeck-Jenson 2001). From a total of 1,675 companies existing in 1975, the government had intervened in more than 300, mainly small, by the end of 1976 (Hanlon 1984; Serra 1991; Pitcher 2002). “Of the top 100 companies, the government only actively intervened in, or nationalised, approximately 25 percent” (Pitcher 2002, p. 40).

At the peak of intervention and nationalisation, the state sector included some 600 firms, many of which were created from the amalgamation of several former colonial companies (Pitcher 2002, p. 66). By 1982, only 27 percent of the firms involved in industry, commerce and agriculture remained private; the rest had become state enterprises (*empresas estatais*) or continued to be “intervened in” (*empresas intervencionadas*) (Hanlon 1984, p. 76).

Madal was among the few companies not nationalised, along with 28 other companies with Portuguese economic interests (among them Entrepoto, João Ferreira dos Santos, Mabor, Tudor, Agricultural Society of Incomati and Zambézia Company (Adam 1991). Analysts have highlighted different aspects of why these companies were not nationalised. According to Adam (1991), the fact that Portugal was the largest Western creditor of Mozambique might have led the government to avoid their nationalisation. Indeed, the *Acordos de Lusaka/Lusaka Accord* (1974) stated clearly that Frelimo was to become liable for financial commitments that had been undertaken by the Portuguese state.

Adam's (1991) argument is expanded by Pitcher (2002) who claims that the origins of investors mattered since some companies came from countries that had supported Frelimo during the liberation struggle for independence. The external social and political forces associated with these companies thus prevented their nationalisation. This might be true in the case of Madal which had been dominated by Norwegian investors from the 1910s up to the 2000s.

Moreover, Pitcher (2002; 2003) argues that the majority of capital held by these companies was based in Mozambique and some of their managers did not leave the country at independence, as other companies' personnel had. However, Mosca (2005) challenges this, claiming that there was nothing the government could do, given that the transfer of resources remained through exports and that the pattern of accumulation was kept outside the country, where reproduction of capital took place. Other authors suggest that the newly independent government had no managerial capacity or capital to intervene in every company, particularly those with greater technical capabilities (Isaacman & Isaacman 1983; Hanlon 1984; Clarence-Smith 1985; Ottaway 1988; Serra 1991).

According to Ottaway (1988, p. 222),

The state ... was poorly organised and lacked personnel, experience, skills and money. As a consequence, it had little effective control over either the economy or the society; the Government had a very limited capacity to affect what actually happened; it could draw up plans, make laws, and issue decrees, but it could not implement them.

In a similar vein, Newitt (1995, p. 541-43) argues that

Frelimo was well organised and established in only three of the country's nine provinces, and it took power without any formal party organisation in most of the country. This was a major challenge for the government to manage a very extensive country with many challenges.

In my view, Madal was not nationalised because the state (government) did not manage

to penetrate into Micaúne where the company had run a coconut plantation since 1903. The co-operative movement, communal villages and state farms and companies did not make an appearance in this area. Furthermore, Madal had (and still has) control over not only the land but also over the coconuts produced by the families because it was the main purchaser. The critical issue here was that the company relied on wealth in people through the use of intensive labour which the new government was not prepared, or was not able, to mobilise. This was because the socialist experiment was, arguably, not strong enough to compete with or replace a long established capitalist regime.

Against expectations, the socialist experiment did not lead to changes in relations of production in Micaúne. Although Mozambique experienced a change of political regime, there was economic continuity from the colonial period in Micaúne and the area was never liberated from capitalism - the exploitation of man by man, to use the government's rhetoric of the time.

Indeed, the post-independence government was caught in the difficult situation of having to replace a colonial company well established in the area, which had been the major employer since the beginning of the century. Running this company would have required the government to maintain the conditions for work and the reproduction of labour already established by the company, which included, among other things, control of people, seasonal work contracts, intensive labour, and low wages. This was hardly compatible with the government's advocacy of a society free of exploitation.

Even if the government had succeeded in implementing its socialist policy in Micaúne, it would have been expensive to manage coconut production because the cost of reproduction of labour depended on the provision of food by traders' shops and Madal. Associated with this was the high cost of transport required to carry and load coconut and copra from the plantation for export. Given Micaúne's geographical location, surrounded by water, the transportation of coconut from the plantation to Quelimane port has always been done with boats.

Having survived nationalisation, Madal Company continued to have a monopoly on the commercialisation of copra in the country, given that its rival company, Boror, was nationalised at the end of the 1970s.⁵⁷ During this period, Madal reported profits, even when the price of copra in the international market fell from US\$750 to US\$140 in 1985-1986. In 1983, the company reported profits of 14,940,908 Meticaïs.⁵⁸ Between 1983 and 1986, Madal exported 18,819 metric tonnes of copra for US\$6,830,000 which represented more than 60 percent of the exports of copra by Mozambique during that period. For domestic industry, Madal produced another 8,961,134kg of copra (Madal 1987).

In Micaúne, there were a number of private copra traders who did not leave at independence and among them were Portuguese who remained there until the war reached the area in 1986. But others continued operating until the 2000s, as was the case with Mr Campos (a Portuguese national). It was said that Mr Campos had three shops/stores and he refused to leave behind what he had built up in Micaúne. Moreover, he regarded himself as a Micaúne ‘native’ and expressed the desire to be buried in Micaúne. Mr Campos died in 2004 and was buried in the local state cemetery in Micaúne-Sede.⁵⁹

The number of traders who remained and were still operating after independence is uncertain. Mr Durão indicated that there were two big copra traders in Arijuane and Micaúne-Sede. There were three trade fairs in Micaúne-Sede, Mitange and Arijuane.

⁵⁷ Boror owners were accused by the government of depleting the company’s capital, sabotaging equipment, destroying documents, neglecting to pay employees, while the company’s managers were accused of smuggling copra out of the country (Pitcher 2002, p. 39).

⁵⁸ *Registo comercial número 2025 de 23 de Janeiro de 1985* - Commercial register number 2025 of 23 January 1985.

⁵⁹ Interview conducted with Mr Durão on 21 May 2012.

Another informant pointed out that between 1975 and 1986 there had been eight shops in Arijjuane.

These contradictory statements show that a certain trading dynamic was a legacy from the colonial period, and it was strengthened by local Mozambican entrepreneurs playing a crucial role in the copra trade during the socialist period. Eventually, Madal and the copra trade network ran in parallel with the state company AGRICOM which was in charge of the commercialization of agricultural crops. Local households supplied all the above actors directly or through the mediation of local traders. AGRICOM sold clothes, foodstuff and other goods.

By the 1980s, Mozambique was involved in an armed conflict that began in 1976 and lasted until 1992 between the Frelimo government and the Mozambican National Resistance (Renamo), established in 1976.⁶⁰

During this armed conflict, Madal continued to operate⁶¹ and to pay low wages (even below the minimum wage established by the government of Mozambique) and did not improve its working conditions. The process of copra production has not changed for several decades and “production methods are simple and labour-intensive, and not dependent on electricity” (Rønning 2000, p. 8).

One interviewee,⁶² who was a Madal employee in Micaúne during the 1980s, stated that the company remuneration scale was as follows: 10.00 Meticais/day⁶³ for the so-called

⁶⁰ For details on the development of this armed conflict read Hall (1990); Geffray (1991); Vines (1991; 1998); Della Rocca (1998); Robinson (2006).

⁶¹ Due to its geographical location, surrounded by water, Micaúne was never a battle ground between the government and Renamo. For both sides, it was logistically difficult to move around the area.

⁶² Interview conducted with Mr Abudo on 12 August 2011.

⁶³ At the time this research was conducted, the exchange rate was R1 for 3 Meticais.

specialised workers and 7.50 Meticaïs for the non-specialised, which included coconut pickers and loaders. Each of these was supposed to complete his assignment of 1000 coconuts per day. The mechanics and carpenters earned more, around 20.00 Meticaïs. Most work was done by men because it required greater physical strength. Women were involved in domestic affairs like taking care of children, cooking, fetching water and subsistence farming.

In Micaúne, Madal continued to use methods it had applied in the colonial period because they were profitable. During the 1980s, the company encouraged children to work with their fathers in order to learn their craft. One informant recalled Madal's role in his own life:

When I was a kid, I used to follow my father to Madal every day. I was always assisting him in his work and in this way I learned the work he was doing. Madal did not pay me a wage, but when my father was unable to work, the company decided that I could replace him. This is how I became a Madal employee. Apart from me, other relatives were also working for them. In my whole family, almost everyone was a Madal employee at some stage of their life.⁶⁴

Mr Ricardo's family is originally from Muio (Magaza locality) where Madal's headquarters in Micaúne are based. His father was born in 1920 and died in 1992 after being captured by Renamo soldiers in the district of Mocuba around 200km away. During his life, he worked for Madal as a blacksmith until he retired in 1985. Mr Ricardo replaced his father and started working in May 1986 at the Muanaio station. He was in charge of recordkeeping for the following stations: Muanaio, Micaúne-Sede, Muio, Barra and Mugodo. In June of that year, Renamo attacked Micaúne and, fearing the worst, Madal removed its equipment (machines and tractors) to the locality of Mitange on the

⁶⁴ Interview conducted with Mr Ricardo on 31 May and 1 June 2012.

coast. Just 15 days after the first attack, Renamo occupied the area, discovered the equipment and seized the trucks and tractors.

Madal's production in Micaúne was affected between 1986 and 1988 because of security problems occasioned by the armed conflict, which led people to flee to neighbouring districts. However, the company did not stop production and it resumed in full force after the end of the war in 1992. At the time, Madal employed around 7,000 people in Micaúne.⁶⁵ This may be explained by the fact that when the armed conflict ended in 1992 many refugees returned to their areas of origin, while others just established themselves in new areas, increasing the number of relocated people. In spite of Madal's ability to make a profit, company wages remained low, and their use of seasonal labour through the quota system was still in force.

By the mid-1980s, the combined effects of war, droughts and inappropriate policies led the Mozambican economy into a serious debt crisis (Adam 1996). This debt was partly inherited from the colonial government but was enhanced by loans sought after independence. The country's total foreign debt rose to almost US\$3 billion between 1982 and 1985 and, owing to increasing budgetary shortfalls and high expenditure, the government was obliged to seek international credit (Plank 1993).

After Mozambique's application for membership of the Council for Mutual Economic Support (COMECON) was rejected in 1982 (Schoeller 1982 quoted in Napoleão 2000), the government turned to Western countries for support. Mozambique's membership of the Bretton Woods Institutions was formally accepted in September 1984,⁶⁶ with the main condition being liberalisation of the economy and polity (Hanlon 1991). By

⁶⁵ Interview with Mr Mário on 28 May 2012.

⁶⁶ *Decreto 6/84* - Decree 6/84.

adhering to these conditions, Mozambique benefited from the cancellation of over US\$2.3 billion in bilateral and multilateral debt under the bank's debt relief programme (Dinerman 2007, p. 6). Nevertheless, "the country's debt continued to increase from US\$2.7 billion in 1985 to US\$4.7 billion in 1991 while the commercial and service deficit reached US\$500 million per annum" (Minter 1998, p. 355).

In line with donor requirements, the Mozambican government approved Law 4/84 of 18 August 1984 on foreign investments; this established the conditions, basic guarantees and obligations for investment in the People's Republic of Mozambique. This was in effect the official opening for foreign and national companies to take part in the Mozambican economy.

This marked the beginning of the neoliberal era and with it the growing dominance of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB) over Mozambican politics and development (Hanlon 1991; 1996). Within this neoliberal dispensation, various attempts for the privatisation of land are being undertaken but they have resulted in growing struggles over land, as it will be discussed in the remaining chapters.

3.2. The neoliberal era

With regard to land, the government approved an amendment (Law 1/86 of 1986)⁶⁷ to the first land law (Law 6/79) by altering section 3 of article 10. This section had made provision for granting land use rights for a renewable period of between five and 15 years; the 1986 amendment extended this period to 50 years. Law 1/86 recognised two systems of land use rights, namely, formal and customary, with the aim of safeguarding the security of land tenure for local communities. The new law was an attempt to attract foreign investment in response to donor conditionalities. But its recognition of two

⁶⁷ *Lei 1/86 de 16 de Abril* - Law 1/86 of 16 April.

systems of land use intensified competing claims over land ownership.

Although land use rights were ostensibly liberalised through Law 1/86, in reality, there was no significant change since the focus remained on big state farms and cooperatives as at the height of the socialist experiment. As Hanlon (2011b) points out, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, there were different draft policy papers on the future of former state farms, but the government was still undecided about their fate. On the one hand, donor policy favoured their privatisation and, at the time of the drafting of the 1990 democratic constitution, there were calls for land to be privatised. On the other hand, however, peasant interests and peri-urban co-operatives protested against privatisation and a constitution was approved maintaining the existing formulation on state land ownership (Hanlon 2004; Marshall 1991).

In 1987 new legislation on investment was approved, namely Law 5/87 of 19 January, Decree No. 10/87 and Decree 8/87 of 30 January which established investment incentives for domestic private investors. In 1989, Decree 21/89 of 23 May made provision for the sale of state-owned assets through public tender and laid down administrative procedures for those sales. Privatisation of the state's holdings took the following forms: sale by public tender; public offer of shares; private negotiation (preceded by prospecting for investors) or restricted tender preceded by pre-qualification; joint ventures through an injection of private capital; transfer or sale of shares to managers and employees; management or lease concessions (Pale 1996).

These measures were implemented under the jurisdiction of two institutions created to coordinate the restructuring of large enterprises, namely, the Inter-Ministerial Commission for Enterprise Restructuring (CIRE)⁶⁸ and the *Unidade Técnica para*

⁶⁸ *Lei 27/91 de 21 de Novembro* - Law 27/91 of 21 November.

Reestruturação de Empresas - Technical Unit for Enterprise Restructuring (UTRE)⁶⁹ (Ministry of Planning and Finance 1997). But without an explicit directive from the central government, “state local officials began to allocate state farms’ assets and land to a wide range of people - from local peasants to government and party officials, and to foreign and national investors. Some, like Lonrho,⁷⁰ had high-level government backing” (Hanlon 2011b, p. 11).

As a result, between 1989 and 1997, the Government, through national and provincial evaluation and sale commissions as well as executive privatisation commissions, sold large state farms and gave 50-year renewable concessions to thousands of acres of agricultural land, restructured approximately 740 enterprises, and created 120 new privately-owned enterprises (Ministry of Planning and Finance 1997).

Over 90 percent of all enterprises privatised in Mozambique were acquired by Mozambican individuals and enterprises; but about half of these were partnered with foreign shareholders, mainly from Portugal, South Africa, the United States, Great Britain, Holland, Denmark, Norway, Cyprus, Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Mauritius, India and China (Bowen 1992; Pitcher 1996; Ministry of Planning and Finance 1997; Lahiff 2003; Bruce 2007).

Although Mozambican law stipulates that foreign ventures must have a Mozambican partner, most Mozambicans lacked the capital to compete with foreigners in terms of purchasing state assets. But, from 1979, a small number of Frelimo party members and state leaders took advantage of the re-privatisation of small and medium-sized businesses such as grocery shops and beauty parlours. They formed the nucleus of the Mozambican

⁶⁹ *Diploma Ministerial 87/92 de Junho* - Ministerial Diploma 87/92 of June.

⁷⁰ This was a British based multi-national which started its business ventures in Mozambique in the 1960s in agriculture and industry (Vine 1998).

business elite which emerged in later years (Adam 1996; Hanlon & Mosse 2009; Hanlon 2011b).

These elites accumulated money as “silent partners” and then invested their resources in “safe”, but non-productive options such as property (Bowen 1992; Pitcher 1996; West & Meyers 1996; Harrison 1999; Lalá & Ostheimer 2003; Sumich 2005; Bruce 2007; Hanlon 2007). As Hanlon (2002) says, they generated much of the pressure for privatisation of former colonial concessions and plantations since they had hopes of selling the land they grabbed in the 1990s at a profit.

As a result, joint ventures between private companies and the state or Mozambican nationals mushroomed in the 1990s and are now a common feature of the national investment landscape.⁷¹ In fact, by making this possible, the government, or rather the party in power, ensured that a small group of individuals with connections to the party and government, in particular sitting and former cabinet ministers, senior public officials, high-ranking Frelimo party members, and military and security officers, had abundant opportunities to participate in and benefit from the transfer of state enterprises to the private sector (Costy 2000; Castel-Branco, Cramer & Hailu 2001; Pitcher 2002; Sumich & Honwana 2007).

Instead of creating a free market and empowering a new group of indigenous capitalists, liberalisation empowered a state-led, or more specifically, a Frelimo-led effort at creating rentier capitalism (Pitcher 2002; Sumich 2005; Sumich & Honwana 2007). This was common when other socialist countries’ adopted neoliberal policies. For instance, Russian oligarchs displayed similarities with the Mozambican elite. Born out of the need to create a capitalist class following the fall of socialism, people closer to the political

⁷¹ For an overview of current state joint ventures in Mozambique, see Centre for Public Integrity website www.cip.org.mz.

regime of the day had privileged access to privatised state assets and were able to build business empires (Guriev & Rachinsky 2005).

Madal appears to be one of these beneficiaries. Through its connections to the political elite, the company benefited from privatisation by being able to purchase several state enterprises and participate in joint ventures with the government (Pitcher 2003; Lundin et al. 2004). In fact, one former Minister of the Frelimo socialist government became a manager of Madal Company at the beginning of the 1990s (Hanlon 2001).

Madal seems also to have benefited from the post-armed conflict (after 1992) conjuncture by attracting seasonal labour particularly among those displaced by the war who came to establish themselves in Micaúne. According to a Madal employee Madal employed around 7,000 people in Micaúne by ended in 1992 and this suggests that the coconut business was booming. For Madal, the abundance of labour during this period was an opportunity to increase its production.

It was also during this period that a new generation of coconut traders emerged in Micaúne, working as intermediaries between Madal and household coconut producers. They bought coconuts from local families at lower prices and added a margin of profit when selling to Madal and other companies. They were also involved in the production of coconut oil which they sold in Quelimane.

Mr Samajo, who had just decided to come back home after living in big cities such as Maputo, the capital of Mozambique, and Beira, the second largest city, saw trading coconut as a profitable business. He bought coconuts from families at four Meticais (approximately R1.30) each and sold them to Madal at six Meticais (approximately R2). As a result, he and other traders made enough money to provide for their families and invest in other activities.

Another trader, much younger than Mr Samajo, found his way into the coconut business under different circumstances. Mr Durão was born in Micaúne and is the first of seven

siblings. He started primary school in Micaúne but when the war reached there in 1986, his entire family had to flee to Quelimane and then to the Carungo refugee centre in the district of Inhassunge. There he completed standard six and moved to Nicoadala, then to Quelimane while his family went back to Micaúne. In 1993, Mr Durão was enrolled in standard eight but he had to abandon his studies and go back to Micaúne to provide for his family after the death of his mother, given that, at the time, his father was working in South Africa. He started doing business in 1994, grating coconut to make oil which he then sold in Quelimane. From Quelimane, he brought goods to sell in Micaúne.

Mr Durão got married in 1995 and soon two children were born. When the coconut business started waning due to the disease, he decided to shift activity in 2000 and started selling fish in north Zambézia. With that money, he bought second-hand clothes in Quelimane to sell in Micaúne. Mr Samajo and Mr Durão are two examples of how local residents became engaged in the coconut economy without being employed by Madal or another company.

3.2.1. The liberal Land Law (19/97)⁷² and the bet for large land concessions

The Land Law (19/97) was approved in 1997 and was internationally praised by the WB and other agencies such as DFID for the way it protected peasant rights and dealt with collective and community tenure (Hanlon 2004). However, despite strengthening customary land rights, it did not change the highly unequal and dualistic nature of property relations, which had been a feature of Mozambique since the colonial period. In this sense, the land question continues to be shaped by a history of dispossession, exclusion and exploitation, and Mozambique shares much with its neighbours, Zimbabwe and South Africa (Lahiff 2003).

⁷² *Lei 19/97 de 1 de Outubro* – Law 19/97 of 1 October.

According to Law 19/97, local communities have the right to apply for the so-called DUAT (*Direito de uso e aproveitamento de terra*) which is a state-granted title conferring formal rights for permanent land use. DUAT title has two related aspects: delimitation and demarcation. Delimitation involves identifying the limits of lands claimed by local communities, including registering information in the national land survey about the areas they occupy.⁷³ The delimitation process entails a) information and dissemination; b) participatory appraisal; c) land sketches and memory; d) return/devolution; and e) registration in the national land registry.⁷⁴

The demarcation process comprises a technical survey, placement of milestones, measurement and elaboration of the technical process aiming at establishing, on the ground, the necessary conditions for issuing DUATs applied for by local communities and nationals.⁷⁵

Demarcation also determines the exact area in which national or foreign individuals or companies plan to develop economic activities or ventures.⁷⁶ The distinction between the two processes is that demarcation is a legally recognised written agreement by the local community and its neighbours while delimitation is an intermediate legal arrangement for recording community land rights.⁷⁷

According to Anderson (2000), demarcation is crucial as it permits a community of local residents to become an organised and legally recognised unit for land development,

⁷³ *Decreto Ministerial 29-A/2000, Capítulo 1, Artigo 1, No 3* - Ministerial Decree 29-A/2000, Chapter 1, Article 1, No. 3.

⁷⁴ *Decreto Ministerial 29-A/2000, Capítulo 2, No 5* - Ministerial Decree 29-A/2000, Chapter 2, No 5.

⁷⁵ *Decreto Ministerial 29-A/2000, Capítulo IV, Artigo 20* - Ministerial Decree 29-A/2000, Chapter IV, Article 20.

⁷⁶ *Decreto Ministerial 29-A/2000, Capítulo IV, Artigo 15* - Ministerial Decree 29-A/2000, Chapter IV, Article 15.

⁷⁷ *Decreto 66/98 de 8 de Dezembro* – Decree 66/98 of 8 December.

without the delay and expense of official demarcation, while delimitation paves the way for resolving land rights conflicts and encouraging investment from outside the local community. The National Directorate of Geography and Surveys (DINAGECA) is the state agency in charge of the management of delimitations, demarcations and issuing of DUATs.⁷⁸ Its responsibilities also include the maintenance of proper cadastral records, ensuring compliance with the Land Law, the provision of technical services and the collection of land use taxes (Law 19/97; Norfolk & Liversage 2002).

The government has established a three-layered structure to manage large-scale foreign investment in land. At the national level, DUATs for areas over 1,000 ha are the responsibility of the National Directorate of Land and Forestry (DNLF) in the Ministry of Agriculture. The responsibility for authorising requests for DUATs in areas covered by urbanisation plans (and for which there is a public cadastral service) falls to mayors, heads of villages/locations (*povoação*), and District Administrators where there is no municipality.⁷⁹ For areas not covered by urbanisation plans, the provincial governor authorises applications for land use rights for up to 1000 hectares; the Minister of Agriculture covers between 1,000 and 10,000 hectares while the Council of Ministers can authorise any area above that (Hanlon 2004; Deininger et al. 2011).⁸⁰

In the same year, the new land law was approved, Madal acquired three plantations belonging to Boror, then a state company. By the 2000s, Madal was the largest private land holder in Mozambique and it “employed about 500 workers on its Micaúne

⁷⁸ According to the Mozambican government, only 12,198 DUATS were issued out of the 17,953 DUAT (an area of approximately 10.75 million hectares) requests made between 2008 and 2012 (Di Matteo & Schoneveld 2016, p.20).

⁷⁹ *Lei 19/97, Artigo 23* - Law 19/97, Article 23.

⁸⁰ *Lei 19/97, Artigo 22, No. 1, 2 e 3* - Law 19/97, Article 22, No. 1, 2 and 3. A recent study noted “no investors obtained DUATs larger than 10,000 ha, which would have required approval from the Council of Ministers, in the two provinces since 2010” (Di Matteo & Schoneveld 2016, p.22).

plantation, some 30 of who were permanent. Seasonal work was performed in a quota system which could be undertaken in the same day or in several days. In busy season from January to March, the quota was 500 nuts, in the slack season, 350. This was because a cutter had to climb more palm trees to gather his quota in the slack season when there were fewer ripe nuts” (Rønning 2000, p. 7).

By 2006, Madal was paying its workers a daily wage of 25 to 30 Meticais.⁸¹ Using those values to calculate the monthly wage, it comes to 550 to 660 Meticais, which was well below the official minimum monthly wage for the agriculture sector of 1,024 Meticais. Moreover, the company maintained seasonal contracts for many years, which is against the labour law provision that once a contract is renewed, it becomes permanent. The company’s strategy was to hire and fire the same people several times to avoid awarding them permanent contracts.

The problem with seasonal employment is that despite being an important source of income and survival for many people, in the long-term, this kind of job makes workers and their dependents vulnerable as they are not able to accumulate enough income to invest in economic activities that allow them to diversify their income sources and make savings (Ibraimo 2013, p. 276).

Generally speaking, however, Micaúne residents enjoyed economic stability despite the harsh working conditions. This was confirmed by Mr Samajo who pointed out that

Our life was stable, we had considerable income from the sale of coconuts and those who worked for Madal could support their families despite the meagre salaries. There was no hunger and coconut was our main source of income, complemented by small-scale

⁸¹ October 2006 Micaúne administrative post report. A recent study noted that “for casual labor, the majority of investors paid a daily wage of between MZN 50 and 90, illustrating the high degree of informality associated with such positions (Di Matteo & Schoneveld 2016, p.47).

subsistence agriculture.

Another interviewee noted that “coconut has been our life for generations. We do not know another business than growing and trading coconut. Everything I have was acquired with the money from coconuts”.⁸² Expanding on this comment, the coconut business not only contributed to a stable social life but also enabled the smooth succession of generations. Young men could get married in their own right since they had cash from coconut trading and they could gradually replace their parents and pursue their own businesses.

Other studies (Isaacman et al. 1980; Hanlon 1991; Bowen 1992) have shown that there is not much difference between World Bank approved investors and colonial plantations in terms of the tactics used to dispossess local people, expand their control, use local labour and promote monoculture. Despite the problems associated with large-scale foreign investment in land, the Mozambican government continues to support it. In fact, this type of investment has grown since 2002 in the belief that there is abundant vacant fertile land which is not being used productively. The total land area of Mozambique is 80 million hectares of which 15 million hectares are protected areas and 10 million hectares are municipalities and roads. Of the remaining 55 million hectares, only 36 million hectares are potentially arable land (Hanlon 2011a, p. 3).

The Ministry of Agriculture undertook agrarian zoning in 2008 in order to have a clear understanding of available land in the country and to identify more areas for large-scale foreign investors. The result indicated that there were 7 million hectares of land for large-scale agricultural activities (19.4 percent of the total arable land), of which 3.7 million hectares were suitable for large-scale agriculture, including agrofuels, and 3.2 million

⁸² Interview conducted with Mr Bruno on 24 August 2012.

hectares for other purposes, including forestry and grazing. However, the Council of Ministers did not accept this zoning because it was not detailed enough, and commissioned a second zoning study, by an outside consultant, which was to be completed in 2012 (Hanlon 2011b, p.14).

Owing to investors not complying with agreed investment plans and conflicts with local people, the Mozambican government decided to stop making new large-scale land concessions over 1,000 hectares from the end of 2009 until 2011. Moreover, several existing concessions were in the process of being cancelled in October 2011 (Hanlon 2011a, p. 1). Mozambique had already granted 2.7 million hectares of land concessions to investors between 2004 and 2009, which represent three percent of the country's area and seven percent of its arable land. More than a million hectares went to foreign investors of which 73 percent was used for forests and 13 percent for agrofuels and sugar (Hanlon 2011b, p.2).

The land use titles given to investors often overlapped with areas previously delimited for communities. To date, this has occurred in 418 cases covering 1.4 million hectares (about 20 percent of the total allocated to foreign investors), raising concerns about the possible escalation of conflicts. Moreover, a land audit undertaken in 2009 showed that some 50 percent of this land was unused or not fully used by the investors (Deininger et al. 2011, p. 61).

Government intentions expressed in policy documents do not match realities on the ground which favours granting large-scale land concessions to foreign and domestic investors. As noted by Hanlon (2011b, p. 3), "there remains a division within the government ... whether the priority should be given to large scale or small scale investments".

According to Nhantumbo & Salomão (2010, p. 29),

Prioritisation of large private investments is at odds with the national strategy for rural development. Strategic Objective 2 of the Rural Development Strategy of 2007, which

relates to productive and sustainable management of natural resources and the environment, determines that at least 50 percent of the land titles issued by 2010 must be in favour of rural communities, while at least 20 percent should be issued to individuals and the private sector.

Bruce (2007, p. 24) points out that “contrary to what many casual observers conclude, the large holdings are not, in fact, efficient in terms of land use”.

Peters (2013, p. 253) argues that,

The tendency to assume that ‘the’ future for Africa is through large-scale, input- and capital-intensive ‘industrial’ agriculture as embodied in conventional ‘modernization’ and ‘neoliberal’ views, much agricultural policy, and prominent African Green Revolution programmes is a matter of concern since this approach failed in both the colonial and post-colonial periods.

The case of Mozambique shows that large-scale foreign investments in land and other private sector activities have failed to promote rural development and poverty reduction (Hanlon 2011b). This strong reliance on large-scale investment which provides little benefits for the country has led some analysts to label Mozambique an “extractive economy” (Castel-Branco 2010).⁸³ In 2012, it was estimated that 95 percent of the land in Zambézia Province was already occupied by both investors and local people.⁸⁴ However, most concessions were left idle although on paper they remained occupied.⁸⁵

⁸³ According to Castel-Branco (2010), this type of economy generates, but does not accumulate, wealth socially (at the level of the economy as a whole). It is characterised by extraction as a means of accumulation and by disregard for domestic markets and needs (this is not the same as extractive industries and goes far beyond it), a narrow pattern of investment, production and accumulation, weak linkages and porosity.

⁸⁴ Jornal Notícias, 8 de Abril de 2011.

⁸⁵ Interview conducted with the head of the Zambézia’s Cadastral Service, Mr Tito Matlava. Quelimane 29 March 2012.

The land situation in Micaúne resembles that of other parts of the country and Zambézia Province, where private investors have been granted with large tracts of land to the disadvantage of local people. I discuss this aspect in some detail in chapter six.

This chapter has dealt with the creation of the Mozambican post-colonial state and its attempt to change the land relations that had prevailed in the colonial period. As Lahiff (2003, p. 2) has suggested that “the struggle for land and rural livelihoods that has characterised rural Mozambique for the past century has not abated, but has rather entered a new (neoliberal) phase”.

Although the rhetoric of the new government was about a radical change from the past, in reality, unequal land relations benefiting the state and big investors continued to happen. Madal is an example of continuity of colonial practices in a post-colonial context as well as continued acquisition of land concessions. In sum, land reforms undertaken in the post-colonial period did not help to reconcile big land investments with communities’ access to and use of land. Moreover, the government still makes concessions of large expanses of land to foreign companies with limited benefit to the local and national economy.

Certainly, it was the current neoliberal policy’s withdrawal of state support from subsistence farming that led to the collapse of small-scale production; and there is no indication that this situation is changing. So far, the Frelimo government does not appear to be worried about peasants’ declining food security as a result of its land and development policies. In the long run, this situation is likely to lead to more land dispossession and major conflicts unless the government addresses land tenure to genuinely benefit local people.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE COLLAPSE OF THE COCONUT ECONOMY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

This chapter has two sections. The first describes the upsurge of the Coconut Lethal Yellowing Disease (CLYD) and its effects on the collapse of the coconut economy of Micaúne. Section two establishes a connection between CLYD and the breakdown of social solidarity manifested in the killing of elderly women accused of witchcraft. As the deaths associated with witchcraft and their actual causes always depend on rumours,⁸⁶ it is hard to know their accurate number. Therefore, we can estimate only. But their trend may help to support the argument that CLYD is one of the causes of the social breakdown and consequently the increase in witchcraft related deaths.

4.1. The catastrophic CLYD

The upsurge and spread of the Coconut Lethal Yellowing disease (CLYD) in the early 1990s changed the local economy radically. According to Eden-Green (2006), the term “lethal yellowing” was originally coined for a disease affecting coconut palms in Jamaica. This disease has also been reported in Tanzania over the past 100 years and “it is very prevalent in Central and South America, Jamaica and in Africa” (FAO 2009, p. 6).

Although the disease had been reported in Cabo Delgado Province in the 1950s and in Zambézia Province in the 1970s, its peak in Mozambique was in the 2000s. Before the upsurge of CLYD, the coconut subsector contributed to the economy of Mozambique with approximately US\$20 million per year (FAO 2009, p. 8).

The fact that before the disease 65,000 hectares of palm trees were owned by families and 44,200 hectares by agribusiness industrial farms, suggests that poor rural households

⁸⁶ For a comparative analysis on witchcraft and rumour, read Bleek (1976).

have been severely affected by the spread of the lethal yellowing disease (FAO 2009). In Zambézia Province, which produced 70 percent of the country's coconuts in the 2000s, the CLYD expanded considerably after a survey undertaken in 2003, affecting up to 30 percent of the population that depends directly or indirectly on coconut production (Eden-Green 2006; Bonnot, Franqueville & Lourenço 2010).

In Zambézia, apart from lethal yellowing disease, there have been reports of the *Oryctes Monoceros* pest which lays eggs on dead trunks and multiplies. The larvae grow and feed on the same trunks. Data from Farmer Income Support Project (FISP) reports called attention to the fact that while *Oryctes* takes some time to kill old plants, it goes easily to the meristem of new plants and stops the growth cycle, thus killing the plant with ease (IIAM 2010, p. 12). The beetle with pointed horn damages developed leaves and flower branches (Cogent 2000) turning the leaves yellow and killing the palm in a short space of time (Rønning 2000, p. 10). The combined effect of lethal yellowing disease and *Oryctes Monoceros* has caused nearly 100 percent loss at the original foci and widespread loss of productivity in Zambézia Province (Eden-Green 2006; IIAM 2010, p. 12).



Figure 5.1: Palm trees in their terminal phase in Micaúne.
Source: Governo do Distrito de Chinde (2007, p. 26).

Local residents in Micaúne first observed that coconut palms were being attacked by a pest in 1998 on two local islands, Deia and Chavunga, and two coastal regions, Mitange and, Arijuané (Concern Worldwide & Universidade Pedagógica 2008, p. 20). This date coincides with the one reported by Madal. According to Rønning (2000, p. 10),

The CLYD was observed for the first time in Madal's coconut plantation in Micaúne in March of 1998 and it was rapidly spreading through the palms of the local people bordering the company's plantations.

The disease spread and became critical in 2004. A Madal employee based in Micaúne told me that no one knew how the disease entered Micaúne but others said they had noticed that it tends to spread after the rains. By 2006, around 12,200 hectares of palm trees had been affected in Micaúne, of which 10,000 hectares belonged to the local families, 2,100 hectares to Group Madal and another 100 hectares to other private interests (Eden-Green 2006, p.6).

Employment provided by Madal started to diminish around the end of the 1990s owing to the effects of the disease. The company reported to the government that it had 400 workers in its coconut plantation in Micaúne and that it was the only company operating in the area in 2005.⁸⁷ Nevertheless, the company believed that it would overcome the problem by planting new palms resistant to the disease in subsequent years but this was not the case. Madal's plan to increase its copra production in Micaúne from 146,350 in 2007 to 375,330 tonnes in 2008 did not materialise. However, there was an increase in the number of coconuts collected from 70,000 in 2007 to 254,000 in 2008.⁸⁸

This increase in the number of collected coconuts might have been the result of purchases

⁸⁷ Micaúne administrative post report, 30 May 2005.

⁸⁸ October 2008 Micaúne administrative post report.

from local families, particularly those in Chinde-Sede where the disease was not yet severe in 2008. This was confirmed by Madal's Micaúne manager in 2011 when he told me that the number of coconuts available in Micaúne was still very small and not enough to sustain the copra production. In consequence, he had had to travel several times to Chinde-Sede to buy coconut in order to produce copra in Micaúne.⁸⁹

By the end of the 2000s, it became increasingly difficult for Micaúne residents to maintain their regular source of income and sustain their households as their palm trees had stopped producing. In various places I went in Micaúne between 2011 and 2012, there was no sign that palm trees had ever existed. The situation was so critical that people had to buy coconut, even for cooking, in Quelimane and Chinde-Sede where there was still some production.

According to my informants, coconuts had been so abundant a decade earlier that no one had ever had to buy them for cooking. But by 2012, coconuts were no longer part of the diet of many households because they could not afford to purchase them. Similarly, Micaúne residents were unable to enjoy the benefits of other applications derived from palm trees, including the production of *sura*, the use of its leaves to cover roofs of houses, and the use of the wood to manufacture furniture, to mention just a few.

Madal, too, was seriously affected and was practically inoperative in 2012. Only a few administrative and workshop staff, between five and ten, still went to the office in Madal's headquarter in Magaza (Micaúne), although there was little work. There had been delays in paying wages even in other plantations in the Quelimane district.

In March 2012, I had an opportunity to go to a Madal plantation located 10 km outside Quelimane city. The company security guard there told me that that station had 50

⁸⁹ Interview conducted with Mr Mário on 28 May 2012.

workers who were extremely dissatisfied because they had not been paid for the past five months. On that day, before I had got there, the workers had tried to take the local manager hostage as this was the third time that wages had been delayed in the past year and they were furious. They blamed Madal's managing director for their plight. He was also accused of blocking the possibility of direct contact between them and the company's shareholders. The workers believed that the shareholders did not know what was happening on the ground because the managing director did not provide them with information.

At the time of my fieldwork, Micaúne was affected by huge unemployment, hunger, and limited access to public services such as water and sanitation, roads and electricity. The situation had not improved since 2009, when the local government had reported that Micaúne was characterised by high levels of poverty, with outright starvation in some areas. It was noted, for example, that in Arijuane the residents survived by eating bananas, small aquatic snails (*tódue*), potato-like tubercles (*elide*), aquatic tubercles (*mamucuire*) and dry cassava (*magagada*).⁹⁰

The precariousness of life in Micaúne led the President of the Republic of Mozambique, Armando Guebuza on his visit to the area in 2010 to state in his address that:

[W]e have problems in Micaúne. There is a lack of food because it did not rain enough, there is a shortage of water, health facilities and nurses, 90 percent of schools are of precarious material. There is no road in good condition and life on the Micaúne Islands is difficult.

Data from the survey undertaken by Concern Worldwide in 2012 showed that local households were struggling to make a living. According to the survey, about 60 percent

⁹⁰ Nota 7/PAM/2009 of 27/01/2009. Communication presented by the head of the administrative post of Micaúne to the Administrator of the district of Chinde.

of the households in the hinterland of Micaúne were considered poor, while at the coast the figure was 57 percent. These households had hardly any source of income; they lacked food and access to water. A considerable number of them, which included those headed by women, lacked basic assets or had a low return on these assets, and faced numerous other obstacles.

Even if extremely poor households had assets the returns were meagre. For instance, “the number of meals consumed per day, which is a measure of food availability at the household level, had reduced from three to two per day in medium wealth groups⁹¹ or to one meal in poor wealth groups” (Concern Worldwide 2012, p. 20). In the lean season, poor households had to resort to collecting foods such as wild roots (rhizome-*Mankui*) and wild tubers (*Minani*) to complement their diminishing stocks of daily food (Concern Worldwide 2012).

In some of the households I visited in the course of taking part in this survey, people said that they often went without even one meal a day owing to lack of money or food or both. On a few occasions, even I experienced food scarcity although I had money. As far as purchasing food in the local market was concerned, my routine became similar to that of the ‘newcomers’ who inhabited the centre of the village. We had either to sit in the market waiting all day or return to it at frequent intervals to check whether something had become available to buy in order to prepare a meal.

At such times, I was able to hear how people waiting at the market blamed the economic crisis for the disruption of the local social fabric. They said that children were

⁹¹ Thus, in the HEA, a wealth group is defined by local communities according to their current living conditions as households that share similar capacities in terms of food and income options within a particular livelihood zone. It involves an analysis of the connections among different groups and different areas, providing a picture of how assets are distributed within a community and who gets what from whom (Concern Worldwide 2012).

increasingly dependent on their parents, putting pressure on the extended family's stability. Apart from killings associated with witchcraft accusations (on which I will expand in section two of this chapter) they noted that there had been increases in the numbers of school dropouts, early marriages and pregnancies. The magnitude of this problem might be higher if one considers that approximately 57 percent of the population of Micaúne was under 15 years old (INE 2007) which is the peak school-going age.

With regard to school dropouts, some parents complained about the irrelevance of the education system for the local children since they were not able either to continue with their studies elsewhere due to financial constraints or to find employment locally due to a lack of skills. Young girls and boys, therefore, left school to join their mothers when they went to grow food on the islands of Micaúne where land is fertile. Every year, women and children migrate temporarily to cultivate their plots on the islands and they stay there for several weeks or months. This is one explanation for the fact that illiteracy is perpetuated from mothers to children and, in the long run, contributes to low formal employment opportunities.

The problems of school attendance cannot be attributed only to the collapse of the coconut economy, but rather pose a more structural problem. The colonial government did not prioritise education and, as one interviewee indicated, in the colonial period there were only two schools in Micaúne—one for whites and the other one for the local population. The situation did improve in Micaúne as a result of the post-colonial government's aggressive reform in social services (particularly health and education) in the first years of independence. But these achievements were reversed because of the effects of the armed conflict and recent neoliberal policy budget cuts in social services. For instance, there was no school built with cement in Micaúne until 2005 (Governo do Distrito de Chinde 2007).

Pregnancies and early marriages seem to be encouraged by parents as an alternative to ensure the survival of their households. I was told that girls get pregnant strategically and

hope they will be married or taken care of by the father of their future child. In such circumstances the man (or rather the boy) is expected to support the “wife-to-be” in her domestic expenses while she remains at her parents’ household, thereby helping to lessen the parents’ burden. This suggests that these girls have some sort of consent from their parents or, at least, the parents are not against the practice.⁹²

This has resulted in a high birth rate, confirmed by the last population census conducted in 2007 which indicated that about 20 percent of the total population was less than four years old. On different occasions, which included public events such as soccer matches, government rallies and public video sessions, and during hospital attendance, I was amazed by the high number of teenage girls with children. Young girls in their teens were already mothers to three to four children but they relied on their parents and their boyfriends’ parents for a living. According to a local judge, the community court of Micaúne receives on average 50 to 60 cases in which young mothers sought to secure support from their children’s fathers annually. This indicates the magnitude of the phenomenon.

This situation differs from the past where young men got married and could get a piece of land from their parents to plant palm trees and start their own households. With time, this gave these young men ownership of the trees and a permanent income through the sale of coconuts. Therefore, the new couple could live without being dependent on their parents, but today they can hardly afford such an endeavour due to the scarcity of land and income. It is therefore no longer possible for young couples to live the way their predecessors lived. One of the consequences of this situation is that the girls move from

⁹² This is not specific to Micaúne. Research has shown that in context of economic stress there is a tendency of sexual relations (not limited to prostitution) for material ends. For a comparative analysis read Hunter (2002; 2004).

their parents to their in-laws' control. In the new home, women are doubly subordinated to their husbands and in-laws. It is the boys' parents who complain most about this situation as they feel the burden of taking care not only of their own children, but also their sons' wives and their grandchildren.

Most of the people I interviewed saw young people's sexual behaviour at a young age as a result of their having abandoned their culture, in particular, cultural and moral teachings and the performance of initiation rites. One informant complained that

Young people do everything by themselves and sometimes surprise their parents with an unwanted pregnancy. Early marriages are a direct result of the lack of teaching and initiation rites, as they have completely disappeared or, at least, they are not practised as young people reject them, claiming that they do not make sense in the current era.⁹³

This sentiment was shared by Mr Hanifo who was born and grew up in Micaúne. After the armed conflict started in 1976, he enlisted in the government army in 1978 where he served until 1987. After demobilisation, he became an instructor of the local militias who protected the area, given that there were no soldiers or police based there. Mr Hanifo is currently the local head of the Association of Traditional Healers (Ametramo) and is a father of four children, all of them living with him at his house. One is studying in grade 10 and is not working, but he already has a wife and three children who are living with him. Mr Hanifo has no hope that when his son finishes his studies in Micaúne he will be able to get a job locally or could continue his studies elsewhere, leaving his wife and children behind. As he told me on one occasion "young boys here are condemned to become delinquents".

This does not mean that no people manage to proceed with their studies elsewhere or get

⁹³ Interview conducted with Mrs Madalena Soares in Micaúne-Sede on 19 November 2013.

employment after completing their studies, but the majority of these young people are rarely able to escape the trap of poverty. Like Mr Hanifo, there are many parents who are frustrated with the current situation in Micaúne. Another parent, Mrs Madalena Soares, regretted that “there is nothing that we can do besides continuing to live with our grown children and their families and hope that things are going to change in the future”. In brief, the increasing number of single mothers and female-headed households, which according to the 2007 population and housing census was around 2,840 (33 percent of the total), is one consequence of the collapse of the coconut economy. There has been a breakdown of the mutual obligations and solidarity that had prevailed since the onset of the coconut economy, as will be evident in the next section and subsequent chapters.

4.2. Witchcraft-associated killings: An internal frontier?⁹⁴

The killing of old women accused of witchcraft is on the increase in the entire country. The Forum of Elderly Citizens reported that from 2010 to 2011, 20 elderly women were killed countrywide after being accused of witchcraft.⁹⁵ Police statistics from Tete Province indicate that, during 2012, there were 92 people killed, mainly in the districts of Angónia and Tsangano (north) and Cahora Bassa (south). Most killings followed accusations of witchcraft. Youngsters kill their parents and grandparents on the grounds that they are disrupting their lives.⁹⁶ The national radio RM, quoting official sources, reported that of the 80 people killed in Inhambane in 2012, 90 percent were elderly women.⁹⁷

A well-known Mozambican sociologist, Carlos Serra, dedicated research to

⁹⁴ I borrow from Kopytoff (1989) the concept of frontier to account for the new social configuration currently taking place in Micaúne.

⁹⁵ Jornal electrónico “A Verdade”, 17 de Junho de 2012. “A Verdade” electronic newspaper, 17 June 2012.

⁹⁶ Agência Lusa, 2012 – Lusa Agency, 2012.

⁹⁷ Rádio Moçambique, 22 de Maio de 2012 – Radio Mozambique broadcast, 22 May 2012.

understanding this phenomenon of the past few years by reference to the notion of ‘lynching’. He argued that there are three types of lynching in Mozambique namely, a) physical lynching generally on charges of theft or rape; b) physical lynching due to suspicion of witchcraft, and c) psycho-moral lynching which results from the second type. He suggests that the problem has to do with popular perceptions of a social and cultural collapse, and a widespread feeling that society has become unsustainable, that life has taken a turn in the direction of chaos and that formal institutions have weakened (Serra 2008; 2009).

With regard to Micaúne, my informants pointed out that the accusations of witchcraft targeting elderly woman were not new. According to Mr Hanifo,

This practice was there in the colonial period, but it did not involve killings, or at least not on the scale we see these days. People accused of witchcraft could accept that they were guilty and the problem could be solved amicably by traditional healers through the performance of certain treatments and the accused person would pay a fine, burying the matter there. It was rare for someone to be killed on the grounds of being a witch, but when the war between the government (led by Frelimo) and Renamo reached Micaúne in 1985, the situation changed dramatically, affecting negatively the working of the traditional authorities, including traditional healers.

Some authors suggest that Renamo was able to co-opt and use some local traditional leaders. But this is a controversial issue because during the armed conflict both Frelimo and Renamo used traditional leaders when they fought several times to gain control over Micaúne. What seems clear to me is that the dynamics of the war exacerbated all kinds of violence from both sides, including the appearance of different militias such as the *majubas*. These militias acted somehow autonomously from both sides in the battlefield, although finally, they ended up being a sort of Renamo proxy.

The *majubas* were usually armed with machetes, axes and knives. Their duties included policing the population, sometimes brutally, guarding captives, and organising and collecting food and clothes for Renamo fighters (Finnegan 1992; Nordstrom 1997). In the

process, *majubas* were instrumental in killing people who were suspected of creating instability or providing information to the government army.

Through the support of the *majubas*, Renamo was able to defeat the government army in various places, including Micaúne. Frelimo suffered high casualties in regaining control of Micaúne from Renamo. According to accounts from people I interviewed during my fieldwork, the government army killed many people in revenge, based on the indiscriminate suspicion that every adult had been a *majuba*. This is reinforced by Finnegan (1992, p. 68) who stated that “in Zambézia there had been reliable reports of the summary execution of *majubas* by Frelimo commanders”. In this context, it seems plausible to indicate that women were caught in the middle of these retaliations and, once again, ended up being one of the main victims of violence.

According to Mr Elton, “whenever someone complained about a certain woman the leadership of Renamo ordered a killing, and it became a habit”. As we will see, the special position of women in the kinship and inheritance system may have helped to reproduce violence against women once the war was over.

Despite the fact that the war ended in 1992, the practice of killing women accused of witchcraft did not stop in Micaúne —on the contrary, it increased, particularly from 1993 and the situation became extremely serious in the 2000s. For instance, according to an informant, at least, five killings per month were reported on average in Micaúne between 2005 and 2009. This suggests that the phenomenon was not associated simply with the presence of Renamo in the area.

The initial peak of witchcraft accusations was around 1993 and resulted from rivalry among war refugees who, under the post-war reintegration initiatives, were allowed to go and live anywhere they wished. This led to people from different regions moving to new areas, which, in some instances, created conflicts. The increase of accusations and killings in the 2000s might also be associated with the onset of the coconut disease which had started devastating palm trees in the area, as indicated earlier.

For most of the people I interviewed, the year 2009 was the worst in terms of killings, and this coincided with the lowest coconut crop ever. One local state official stated that “we, as the government, recorded in that year about 84 murders, most of which were associated with accusations of witchcraft”. In that year, “the perpetrators reached a point of placing lists of potential witches on trees and walls with an indication of their day of death”.⁹⁸ The situation was considered by many local residents to be extremely frightening, as a comment by one local leader, Mr Samajo, illustrates: “I almost abandoned Micaúne due to the critical situation of the killings but what kept me here was my business”.⁹⁹

I was not able to confirm the number of deaths from police records, but I did discover that there had been an average of five deaths a month in the past five to seven years randomly distributed in the five localities of Micaúne. As Micaúne residents recalled, the main suspect was nicknamed *Boneca* (Doll). Despite being arrested on several occasions, he was always released. There were also others associated with the killings:

The “killers” are people from Zambézia Province who are currently based in Maputo and are engaged in informal economic activities. Most of these people operate at one of the biggest informal markets in the country named “Estrela Vermelha”.¹⁰⁰

This market flourished as a result of the armed conflict which led many people to migrate to Maputo for both security reasons and a better life. The market served as a platform for people to make a living from informal small trade, but it gradually expanded to become a place where one could buy all sorts of things from needles to cars and even hire people who killed for money.

⁹⁸ Interview conducted with Mr Benjamin Pedro in Chinde - Sede on 15 August 2011.

⁹⁹ Mr Victor Árabe Samajo is currently the presiding judge of the Micaúne-Sede community court and he has been in this position for 14 years now.

¹⁰⁰ Interview conducted with Mr Benjamim in Chinde - Sede in 2011.

The following account shows how a person was hired in Maputo to kill an elderly woman in Micaúne. At the end of December 2008, a man contacted Mr Benjamim Pedro to report a killing:

A man came to my house to report the murder by machete of an elderly woman in her 70s. It was early morning at around 6 o'clock at the time that some people were going to church. After an investigation by the local police, two brothers who were carpenters were arrested but later one was released. The other one, named Júlio, was also released after five days of detention, but not before he had confessed to the police who was behind the murder. According to Júlio, the perpetrator's name was Duko, but he had acted under his brother's orders. The reason for the killing was his daughter's sickness which was not showing signs of improvement after a long time. Duko was paid 250 Meticaís for the service.

According to Mr Pedro, Duko escaped and was not charged for this crime, but was eventually arrested in connection with another killing in 2009. On that occasion, he was violently beaten by the police, leaving him seriously injured, and it is said that he swore not to get involved in killings again. He was sent to jail in the provincial capital and no one has heard of him again. Although a few suspects implicated in the killings were caught and kept under police custody, they were soon released owing to a lack of evidence against them. This led the population of Micaúne to accuse the authorities in charge of the administration of justice (the district court and the police command based in Chinde) of protecting the murderers.

The horror of the killings and the incapacity of the police to curb the violence made some people abandon Micaúne for neighbouring areas, in particular, Quelimane, Chinde-Sede, Luabo and Marromeu. However, even in places like Marromeu and Luabo, killings associated with witchcraft have been a serious issue in recent times. The district administrator of Marromeu, Simões Zalembessa, reported that 25 elderly women who had been accused of witchcraft were murdered in the district of Marromeu, Sofala Province, central Mozambique, in the first half of 2013. The number of deaths of elderly women from January to June 2013 exceeded the number of killings of the elderly in the previous year

when 24 elderly died violently.¹⁰¹

Ametramo, the association of traditional healers established in 1992 to regulate the provision of health care by traditional healers, plays an important role countrywide in diagnosing cases of witchcraft. The association is supposed to ensure the neutrality of the witch-finding process by selecting traditional healers who are competent to undertake it and by deciding on the ordeal they may use in the course of doing so (Meneses 2006). However, this is a rather ambitious objective since Ametramo fails to do so, on many occasions.

As in any medical consultation, the victim of witchcraft (in this situation, the patient) explains the history of the problem to the traditional healer. After questioning the patient, the latter produces a diagnosis which points to the accused, normally an old woman of the family. With this information to hand the patient or others close to him or her sentences the suspected woman to death.

This has led to the killing of innocent people and Ametramo was challenged over the part it played in the resolution of witchcraft cases. As a result, Ametramo took the decision to stop witchcraft consultations in the provinces where it is represented. On 27 August 2012, I heard a Radio Mozambique report that Ametramo in Inhambane had confiscated work material from a traditional healer there who was accused of making judgements that contributed to the spread of violence and killing of elderly people.¹⁰²

In 2013, Ametramo of Inhambane took the strong step of suspending 50 traditional healers accused of committing irregularities in performing their activities. The healers

¹⁰¹ Jornal electrónico “Diário de Notícias”, 17 de Setembro de 2013 - Diário de Notícias (online newspaper) 17 September 2013.

¹⁰² Rádio Moçambique, 27 de Agosto de 2012 – Radio Mozambique broadcast, 27 August 2012.

were accused of inciting violence within families through their diagnosis of witches, charging exorbitant amounts for their services, and accepting girls in payment of a debt owed by their parents.¹⁰³ However, Radio Mozambique quoted the vice-president of Ametramo in Inhambane, Vilanculos Ruben, as downplaying the case by explaining that “many traditional healers who have committed excesses are not Ametramo affiliates, but people who pretend to be our members in order to extort citizens”.¹⁰⁴

As in other parts of the country, Ametramo in Micaúne took the decision to stop its associates from assisting people who approached them to diagnose witchcraft accusations. According to Mr Hanifo, the combined efforts of the Frelimo party, local government and traditional leaders have been able to reduce the killings of elderly women since 2009. As he proudly pointed out “we are working together, raising popular awareness and condemning this practice”.

But my fieldwork data contradict him. As mentioned above, I was able to trace the number of deaths in government reports over the last seven years. The averages for those years are similar to those I discovered during my fieldwork. During August and September 2012, I realised that the killing of women was still a major problem in the area and the police were unable to handle it. At least five women accused of witchcraft were killed during the time I was in the field and I suspect that, up to the end of that year, ten people in all were killed.

It became apparent during fieldwork that some of the people who were behind the accusations against elderly women had died of AIDS. According to Mr Benjamim, they

¹⁰³ Rádio Moçambique, 17 de Setembro de 2013 – Radio Mozambique broadcast, 17 September 2013 .

¹⁰⁴ Jornal electrónico “Folha de Maputo”, 17 de Setembro de 2013 – online newspaper “Folha de Maputo”, 17 September 2013.

were Micaúne ‘natives’ who, having been away for a long time, came back very sick, mostly in the terminal phases of AIDS. According to the head nurse in Micaúne, there are a large number of HIV-infected people who live in denial of the disease. Without the means for performing HIV tests locally, people die of AIDS due to late diagnoses. These people are sent to the provincial hospital in Quelimane, where they die.¹⁰⁵

Given bad living conditions, poor diet, diseases such as malaria and AIDS and a lack of medication, the number of people dying in the area is on the increase. As the socio-economic conditions worsen, social tensions are channelled in various ways and witchcraft accusations are one of them. This might explain why, despite Ametramo’s decision to stop consultation on witchcraft accusations in Micaúne, local residents are using the traditional healers of neighbouring districts. Thus Mr Hanifo:

We are no longer performing diagnosis of cases of witchcraft, but people here in Micaúne travel to other areas to consult with traditional healers. The killings currently taking place in Micaúne have nothing to do with us.

This statement suggests that the situation is beyond the control of both the police and local traditional healers.¹⁰⁶ Recent literature on witchcraft beliefs and practices contends that witchcraft accusations are a manifestation of frustration over unequal distribution of wealth and power (Comaroff & Comaroff 1999a,b; Geschiere 1997; Moore & Sanders 2001).

Comaroff and Comaroff (1999; 2000) contend that, in recent times, the upsurge of witchcraft accusations should be understood in the context of people’s uncertainty

¹⁰⁵ Interview conducted with Tadeu Missão in Micaúne-Sede on 25 May 2012.

¹⁰⁶ A similar situation is reported in Kenya by Smith (2005) with regard to the state’s lack of knowledge about local issues, power, and internal cohesion (p. 141). For the Tanzanian government’s unsuccessful efforts to stop the killings of people accused of witchcraft, read Miguel (2005).

resulting from the radical changes in capitalism. In a sense, witchcraft is a response to increasing inequalities and the widening gap between rich and poor. In the case of South Africa, they argue, belief in witchcraft is linked to the experience of exploitation and deprivation. It appears that for the above-mentioned scholars, the language of witchcraft is a weapon of the poor.

Based on his research in Cameroon, Geschiere (1997) agrees with the analysis of witchcraft as an alternative modernity discourse in the context of postcolonial political economy, but he claims that witchcraft discourse is an everyday strategy for both the poor (a levelling force) and the rich (an accumulating force). On the one hand, the poor employ ‘occult forces’ to intervene in others’ success; on the other, the wealthy people use it in order to protect themselves from others’ envy and intervention.

Smith (2005, p. 141) agrees partially with the argument that witchcraft is a result of the erosion of local social and moral boundaries worsened by recent economic and political liberalisation. For the author, witchcraft accusations in the context of his study in Kenya highlight political conflict and transformation (particularly the inadequacies of state power). This last aspect is closer to that suggested by Kapferer (2002) for whom witchcraft is not a political programme against modernity but rather an element of societies’ social order not directly related to the modernity project.

A different reading is provided by Rutherford (1999) who did his study in Zimbabwe. The author rejects the association of witchcraft with modernity, global capitalism and state structures because such analysis fails to recognise the social projects, social identities and power relations involved in witchcraft. Similarly, Niehaus (2005) drawing on data collected in South Africa, refuses to associate the upsurge of witchcraft accusations with new forms of wealth, the commodification of labour, and the crisis of reproduction. The author suggests that witchcraft is a discourse and practice which is indeterminate and multivocal in meaning. As such it “eludes essentialist interpretations, defies attempts at the unification of meaning, and allow for discrepancies between discourse and action” (p. 206).

My fieldwork material highlights inadequacies of state power (Smith 2005), society's social order (Kapferer 2002), social projects and social identities (Rutherford 1999) and the indeterminate meaning of witchcraft (Niehaus 2005). My fieldwork data indicate that the killing of a woman accused of witchcraft may be a result of a combination of the collapse of the coconut economy, demographic revolutions¹⁰⁷ and the scarcity of land.

Given that the population is growing while the land remains the same, there is pressure on available land. This is so because, currently, land is the only option available for people to generate a livelihood. The combination of lack of sources of income, land scarcity and longevity make elderly women a burden for many households. It is clear that in Micaúne as elsewhere, the reported killings associated with witchcraft are part of everyday struggles over the control of rights, either of access to or ownership of goods.

The bilateral kinship system in Micaúne means that both sons and daughters inherit land and trees from their father and their mother (Negrão 1995). This shows, as indicated before, that women occupy an important position in the inheritance system, given that a widow controls what she has inherited from both her late father and her late husband. A widow takes control of her husband's land and trees after he dies (in a strict patrilineal system that would be lineage property on which she might be entitled to live out her life, but over which she would not have definitive control). She also faces a category of younger individuals unique to her - principally her children (both male and female) - who all have an interest in her dying so that they can inherit from her and their father.

According to my interviewees, the perpetrators of the killings are generally young male relatives, mainly sons and grandsons, who feel that their lives are cursed by their elderly relatives. It is also not unusual that sons-in-law are perpetrators on behalf of their wives.

¹⁰⁷ On the current debate on the demographic revolution in Mozambique read Francisco (2011).

The targeting of elderly women as witches resonates with what Passador (2010, p. 185) found in southern Mozambique where

Women are consensually seen as having a certain kind of power and as perpetrators of a certain kind of violence related to spiritual forces or impurities, which subjects them to a regime of constant mistrust and violence, conceived in these terms as a form of counter-violence.

The general breakdown of solidarity and mutual obligation makes old women the main victims because they have control over land which has become the most important mean of livelihood. Old women are killed not only as a way of getting rid of the burden of feeding them, but also to secure control of rights in land tied to them. This is particularly crucial in cases where an old woman is a widow and she is being taken care of by her children.

According to one informant when an old woman accused of witchcraft is killed, the land stays under her children's control. In some instances, the land is left unused and other people may request its use by loan or lease. The children are in charge of negotiating the fees payable on any transaction on the land.¹⁰⁸

The major focus of the present chapter was an analysis of how the upsurge of the lethal yellowing disease at the beginning of the 1990s, which intensified in the mid-2000s, changed the livelihoods of Micaúne residents. All of a sudden, the stability and predictability that people had enjoyed for so long was replaced by precariousness, uncertainty and social instability. It is argued that the rise of a witchcraft discourse and the killing of old women is one of the major consequences of the collapse of the coconut economy. This is the context which people are presently obliged to scan for livelihood alternatives, which are the focus of the next chapter.

¹⁰⁸ Interview with Mr Juca on 10 March 2014.

CHAPTER FIVE: LIVELIHOOD DISCOURSES AND MULTIPLE LAND CLAIMS

This chapter has two sections. In section one, I introduce a discussion of discourses about promoting alternative sources of livelihoods to coconut production. I argue that these discourses are rooted in the state's and the NGOs' "paternalistic"¹⁰⁹ plans and projects to help Micaúne residents to cope with their current situation.¹¹⁰ In these plans, subsistence farming is considered to be the main alternative to coconut production, despite the fact that local residents are unenthusiastic about it. Over the past few years, there have been a number of unsuccessful food security initiatives, which have attracted only marginal interest from local residents.

In section two, I show how the promotion of subsistence farming is creating pressure and multiple claims on land, particularly between local residents and Madal. In recent years, there have been new land grants not only to Madal but also to other private interests which have affected the amount of land available for local residents. It has also resulted in increased sales of land by local residents which, in the long run, might lead to land dispossession and land-related conflict on a large scale. This might result in a change from family-based to more individualised land tenure systems.

The chapter presents how rights to property actually work pragmatically in the area by exploring multiple instances where local people have subtly challenged and adapted to changing policies and approaches to land use.

¹⁰⁹ Paternalism is here defined as a system under which an authority undertakes to supply needs or regulate the conduct of those under its control in matters affecting them as individuals as well as in their relations to authority and to each other (www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/paternalism).

¹¹⁰ For a comparative analysis on the role of development discourse in local context read Ferguson (1990).

5.1. Changing livelihoods through plans and projects

As indicated in the previous chapter, the collapse of the coconut economy led to an erosion of income and food scarcity. Since Micaúne is not self-sufficient in food, and a large percentage of staple goods must be brought in from other places (Concern Worldwide 2012, p. 40), both Government (through the Department of Agriculture and the Local Administration) and NGOs, with their plans and projects, have recently been involved in promoting agriculture and livestock as the solution for current socio-economic problems.

These efforts are based on a faulty diagnosis of the local situation.¹¹¹ Historically, local households have been dedicated to growing food crops in a limited fashion only, and subsistence agriculture has never been more than a supplement to income generated through coconut production and trade and wage labour in this area.

At the administrative post level, the government draws up annual agricultural production targets to be reached by households. According to these plans, everyone in Micaúne is involved in subsistence farming and their produce will lead to food security. However, considering that farming has not been a dominant activity in the area and that production is undertaken with virtually no agricultural extension services, it is unrealistic to think that these targets will be met.

Although government plans and reports tend to portray an image of people's full

¹¹¹ Castel-Branco & Mandlate (2012) and Woodhouse (2012) have made a similar observation with regard to the Action Plan for Poverty Reduction (PARP) and Strategic plan for the development of the agrarian sector (PEDSA), two of the most important agriculture policy documents in the country. In both documents it is stated that the main problem affecting Mozambique's agriculture is low productivity which is derived from deficiencies or a lack of technology, access to markets, infrastructure storage, producer organizations, among others. But after carrying out an empirical examination, Castel-Branco & Mandlate (2012) and Woodhouse (2012), point out a more dynamic picture which includes lack of growing demand for agricultural products and poor market access among small scale producers.

involvement in farming, my own observations suggest that the reality is different. Throughout my fieldwork in Micaúne, I saw only one man who could be called a farmer. He cultivated an area of about a hectare and supplied the local market with vegetables. The government itself had a long time ago recognised that agricultural production in Micaúne was limited due to a combination of poor soil fertility, lack of improved seeds and scarcity of machines such as tractors.

Although the elaboration of annual agricultural production plans is not new, they have gained particular importance with the end of coconut production as the government is trying to mobilise all households to engage in food production. However, reliance on these plans contains a big contradiction. On the one hand, the government plans annual agricultural production figures which assume that all households will engage effectively in agriculture, but, on the other, the local people have limited access to land. Moreover, the soils are inadequate to practise agriculture and there are adverse climatic conditions which undermine agricultural productivity.

Similarly, NGOs have implemented a number of food security initiatives in Micaúne which consisted of distributing seeds to promote food and cash crop production. Three NGOs, namely ORAM, World Vision and, more recently, Concern Worldwide, stand out for implementing food security programmes in the areas where their staff are deployed.

In Micaúne, ORAM rehabilitated local roads and bridges to facilitate outflows of production, the movement of people and the distribution of cattle. This part of their initiative was a complete failure because the rehabilitation undertaken did not last. Roads and bridges were damaged even before the end of the process. When I got to Micaúne in 2012, the road was impassable because it was raining and two small bridges collapsed when I crossed them on a motorcycle.

It appeared that the rehabilitation project was not completed, with the staff deployed for this work having abandoned the area. As I learnt later, there were rumours of misappropriation of funds at the headquarters of the organisation in Quelimane. This was

not an isolated case, as I was told by the head of Arijwane locality that funds committed by an international NGO to build a hospital had disappeared, leaving locals wondering about the seriousness of the project and of the government too.

The second component of ORAM's programme achieved some success particularly among certain livestock farmers, but these were all drawn from a handful of wealthy households. At the time, it was estimated that there was around 200 heads of cattle in the ORAM project.¹¹² The fact that, in 2007, the Chinde district government purchased 67 head of cattle from a local breeder in Micaúne to be allocated to people displaced by floods in Chinde-Sede and Luabo is an indication that livestock activity was developing rapidly.

This is not unprecedented because, historically, there has been intense livestock activity in Micaúne. For instance, "Madal Company established a cattle farm in 1965 mainly to provide draught animals for the plantations, but the operations eventually evolved into stock breeding" (Rønning 2000, p. 12). A Madal employee indicated that in the 1960s, the company had around 40,000 head of cattle in Micaúne but most of the livestock disappeared at the time of the armed conflict. Similarly, in the 1960s, the district of Chinde was the main producer of cattle for the whole Zambézia Province, but this production came mainly from private farmers/traders who were based in Micaúne (Jessen 1994).

Livestock has been a popular investment in the area in recent years. Since the beginning of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), land concessions in Micaúne to outside investors have been biased towards livestock grazing, representing 40 percent of all land granted between 1988 and 2011. The remainder comprised game farms (20 percent), a

¹¹² Interview with Mr Jaime on 11 April 2012.

combination of agriculture and livestock (20 percent), agriculture (6.7 percent), trade (6.7 percent) and other activities (6.7 percent) (Serviços Provinciais de Geografia e Cadastro da Zambézia 2011).¹¹³ This might suggest that investors do not regard agriculture as a viable economic activity despite government's and NGOs' insistence on people's growing involvement in subsistence agriculture; rather, livestock and game farming seem to be the most promising endeavours.

World Vision (WV) and Madal implemented a food security programme in Micaúne, through the Farmer Income Support Project (FISP) which was part of the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA). Both WV and Madal were sub-contracted by the Agricultural Cooperative Development International/Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance (ACDI/VOCA)¹¹⁴ for a period of four years starting in September 2009. ACDI/VOCA oversaw the general management of the entire programme which included the development of strategies, community mobilisation, capacity development, and monitoring and evaluation.

WV was included in the project because of its experience in rural development and its food security involvement in Zambézia Province and elsewhere. Madal, in turn, was selected in the light of its long-term experience in the coconut industry in Micaúne, and because it was in charge of cutting and destroying diseased palm trees and providing new coconut seedlings.

The interventions were channelled according to the severity of the disease in different parts of Micaúne. In the endemic areas, WV promoted the planting of new coconut

¹¹³ In Zambézia, foreign investors hold 54.5% of the total land area titled for commercial agriculture (Di Matteo & Schoneveld 2016, p.21).

¹¹⁴ ACDI/VOCA is an American based non-profit development organisation which was established in 1963. Its headquarters are in Washington DC and it has been operating in Mozambique since 1994, supporting associations of farmers and agricultural business projects (<http://activoca.org/>).

seedlings, helping smallholders to clear their land of dead palms and replant with selected Mozambique green tall seedlings and alternative short-term crops. In epidemic areas, the intervention also addressed clearing the land and replanting seedlings, but there was also an attempt to control the spread of disease by prompt removal and destruction of infection sources.

The project tried to maximise the economic value of felled trees by making the timber available to oil-processing companies as fuel for drying copra, and to local people for building houses and making handicrafts, furniture, flooring and charcoal. WV introduced other cash crops such as sesame, cowpeas, pigeon peas and peanuts. The distribution of seeds was accompanied by demonstration fields where people could learn how to produce these crops. It was expected that, through this range of activities, it would be possible to improve and sustain incomes from cash crops and newly introduced crop options (MCA 2013).

During my fieldwork I went to Arijuane and Mitange, two localities included in the MCA project as part of the epidemic area. I had an opportunity to observe the project's working and to talk to local people and government officials. I saw then that the palm trees were all dying due to a lack of rain and adequate clearing of the area. Despite the natural disaster, the project was not well received initially.

According to a WV field official, when WV began implementing the food security component of the programme, it faced difficulties in involving and engaging local people. WV distributed cash-crop and horticulture seeds to the people as part of a rotating scheme, but the first group of beneficiaries simply consumed them all, leaving many households without seeds.¹¹⁵ Furthermore, in 2009, there was a delay in distributing the

¹¹⁵ Interview conducted with the late Mr Gabriel on 18 August 2011.

seedlings which led to major losses. It might be speculated, based on development projects elsewhere, that because the crops were imposed from outside without proper consultation about the objectives of the project, it was not done in the interest of the local population.¹¹⁶ But the latter suspected, as one informant indicated, that once coconut restocking had been a success, they would be chased away, since the land on which this project was implemented was under Madal's control.¹¹⁷

Concern Worldwide started a food security project in 2012 with two main components, cash crop production and nutrition. The project aimed at improving food and economic security for 5,700 people. In this context, 57 vulnerable households, or 1,400 people, received a variety of rice that matures 30 days faster than other varieties. It was argued that this was particularly important for farmers in Mozambique as rice crops are often destroyed by floods and cyclones. In previous trials, it was found that the new variety of rice could increase yields by 250 percent, which would boost families' incomes as well as their food security (Concern Worldwide 2012). With regard to nutrition, the organisation promoted demonstrations of how to prepare food using vegetables such as tomatoes and other horticultural items. This component was meant to help change eating habits and introduce food leaves into the diet in response to food scarcity.

When analysing the implementation of these projects, it is obvious that they have been informed by a mainstream definition of food security developed by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in 1996 and improved in 2009. According to this definition,

Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food

¹¹⁶ For a similar argument with regard to other African contexts, read de Sardan (2005).

¹¹⁷ Interview conducted with the late Mr Maturino on 15 August 2011.

preferences for an active and healthy life (FAO).¹¹⁸

This definition has, however, been subject to criticism. Barnard & Spencer (2002, p. 366) show that “Sen’s (1981) entitlement theory demonstrates that hunger and starvation result from the loss of entitlement to food, rather than from a decline in food availability”. While Shepherd (2012, p. 197) argues that,

FAO’s definition is biased towards an economic dimension by framing food security as primarily an economic problem: one of supply (of sufficient, nutritious food), demand (to meet the dietary needs of all people at all times) and making supply meet demand (by physical, social and economic means of access). It is based on the availability of food and is essentially about the challenge of procuring, and distributing scarce resources.

Raikes (1988, quoted in Friis-Hansen 1995, p. 65), states that “food shortage at the household level is not always related to the production level or physical availability of food in the area but also to a lack of other means of access to food”. The Micaúne case is a combination of both aspects. Not only is there not enough food production, but people also lack the means of access. Ecker & Breisinger (2012, p. 1) criticise “interventions that often focus on agriculture-based approaches and consider the household the sole unit of focus concerned with food security”

Food security interventions in Micaúne seemed to be based on a conception of reality that is problematic, for they assumed that changes happen overnight. It is not surprising that both the government (at province and district level) and NGOs have assumed that agriculture is a blueprint for solving the problems local Micaúne residents are facing. In this sense, the government equates their plans with change. Stated differently, the government assumed that planning for households to be engaged in agriculture would

¹¹⁸ <http://www.fao.org/cfs/cfs-home/en/>

result in *de facto* involvement in this activity. While the NGOs assumed that the distribution of seeds to local residents would lead to people's enthusiastic involvement in agriculture, this was not the case, as mentioned above in the case of the WV project.

Unlike the government (at province and district level) and NGOs, who seemed to ignore the fact that agriculture was never central to Micaúne livelihoods, heads of localities came to realise that change is a long process which requires a lot of effort to adapt to a new reality. Therefore, the prospects of reaching targets set at the higher levels of government might take some time to be realised.

As the head of one of the localities pointed out, "the government has a big task to stimulate local people to practise agriculture and fishing, since these two activities are not commonplace".¹¹⁹

Household vulnerability might be one of the reasons that NGOs and the government have been encouraging local people to create associations that would allow them to work collectively, reducing the challenges imposed by the environment and the market.¹²⁰ So far, the existing associations (fewer than ten) have not been able to change the scenario owing to several problems such as a lack of resources and the members' lack of commitment.¹²¹ Generally speaking, people do not participate enthusiastically in collectives involving different households, as evidenced by the survey undertaken by Concern Worldwide in 2012. According to this survey,

agricultural work in groups, by which households prepare or harvest their land jointly on a rotation system, is not common and is only ever arranged by the church at the request of an

¹¹⁹ Interview conducted with Ms Lúcia on 16 May 2012.

¹²⁰ For a similar argument in relation to other contexts in Mozambique read Osbahr et al. (2008).

¹²¹ On the dynamics of associational life in Mozambique read Dijkstra & Lodewyckx (2006); Francisco et al. (2008); Adalima (2009).

individual who has the capital to pay for the work to be carried out. Similarly, there are no co-operatives or other types of collective; income-earning schemes also do not exist (Concern Worldwide 2012, p. 8).

In conclusion, plans and projects do not bring about change unless they are based on a proper diagnosis of the situation they are intended to solve. Apart from the resources needed, they also require the commitment of those involved. The fact that Government and the NGOs failed to understand the historical development of the coconut economy and its embeddedness in the local social organisation might explain the inadequacy of the solutions they proposed. Moreover, this inadequacy has been responsible for the recent proliferation of land-based claims and conflicts in the area. This is the focus of the next section.

5.2. Multiple land claims

As mentioned in Chapter Three, the liberalisation of the economy and implementation of the structural adjustment programme led the government to grant new land concessions. As will be explained later in this section, apart from Madal new national and foreign private investors emerged in Micaúne since 1987, which contributed to reducing the amount of land available for local residents. With regard to national investors, there are individuals and companies from outside Micaúne as well as a few local entrepreneurs who acquired land concessions and are implementing some projects. All in all, this multi-layered configuration has contributed to land conflicts among various stakeholders since the local population had also increased due to the arrival of displaced people at the end of the armed conflict in 1992.

In the context of Mozambique's post-war reconstruction recovery, a large number of displaced people returned to their areas of origin, thanks to a resettlement programme undertaken by the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) and development agencies. This led to people's high mobility as some received financial packages to start a new life where they wished.

In the case of Micaúne, many conflicts emerged with regard to land. Those owners of palm trees who did not return after the armed conflict continued to come and collect coconuts to sell, and they often found other people occupying their land. It was believed that many people had died or would not come back, and the local government, therefore, started reassigning their land to other returnees or newcomers.

Considering that most land in the area has historically been controlled by Madal, that other private interests in land have emerged in recent years, and that the government and NGOs have called for people to farm, the demand for land and competing claims have increased considerably. Land has now become one of the central aspects of local livelihoods but is also a source of conflict. In 2012, the local community court reported that it had received an average of 30 to 40 cases of land disputes annually over the past few years.¹²²

In recent times, Madal has become the target of the local population's demand for land, and they insist that it is time for Madal to return their land. One government official in Micaúne pointed out that

Madal still occupies a large stretch of land (nearly 90 percent of Magaza locality) and it is preventing us from using it for our livelihoods. Although the palm trees are already dead and the land is unused, Madal is not willing to let the people use it for food production. Madal managers make us cross when they say 'we pay land rights fees and there are no grounds for the government to instruct us to return the land.'¹²³

At a meeting of community leaders from the whole Micaúne administrative post, it was repeatedly argued that the government must negotiate with Madal to return the land for

¹²² Interview conducted with Mr Victor Árabe Samajo in 2012.

¹²³ Interview with Mr Elton on 17 May 2012.

the people to use when necessary, particularly because of changes in rainfall patterns which lead them to seek fertile lands in Madal's possession.¹²⁴

Although land scarcity is not new, it has acquired new meaning in the light of people's current need to turn to agriculture for a livelihood. Their situation is made worse by the effects of climate change, in particular, the changing patterns of rainfall, droughts, floods and cyclones.¹²⁵ Lack of rain has contributed to an increasing demand for the isolated pockets of wetland which hold moisture for long periods.

Some of these pockets are located on a few islands far from the residential areas; on these islands, crops are destroyed and people attacked by wild animals such as boars, hippopotamuses, crocodiles, buffaloes and monkeys, particularly around Madal's Mahimba Game Farm. Therefore, people look for suitable land nearby, and the fact that most of this is under Madal's control leads to conflict.

Overall the conflict between Madal and local residents has two dimensions: first, Madal's animals raid people's plots, destroying crops, and occasionally their homes, even killing people. Second, people invade land under the company's control. It was common before 2008 for Madal's cattle to intrude on local people's farms, destroying their crops. One recent example took place in 2008 when 30 local people had their cassava and sweet potato plots destroyed by the company's cattle and were promised compensation for the damages of between 15 Meticaís and 50 Meticaís (equivalent to between R5 and R16). By the end of July 2008, only 16 people had received any money.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Group interview conducted with local chiefs and secretaries in Micaúne - Sede on 20 May 2012.

¹²⁵ For an analysis of the effects of climate change in Mozambique read, Chemane & Achimo (1998); Patt & Schröter (2008); Toulmin (2009); Artur (2011).

¹²⁶ Magaza locality report, 27 July 2008.

A government report of January 2009 indicated that two herds of buffalo overran the Magaza population's farms bordering the Mahimba Game Farm five times in two weeks.

¹²⁷ Mr Elton, the head of one of the localities, also reported that, in recent times, there were occasional attacks by game from the Mahimba Game Farm which Madal owns.

With regard to people's invasion of Madal estates, several incidents have been reported. For instance, in 2009, some residents in Magaza planted cassava on Madal's land and the company's local manager ordered the removal of all plants, causing anger among the people affected and furious reaction by the community at large. The complaint was brought to the attention of the head of the post which led to the company manager's arrest. However, three days later, the manager was released, once again causing resentment among the people as they were not compensated for their losses.

In 2012, I witnessed a strike where cultivators, mainly women, marched to the government building to complain that Madal had destroyed and burned the huts they used during rice planting and harvesting. Rice is a traditional crop in Micaúne that was produced in the colonial period mainly by women, as indicated in Chapter Two. Rice production continues today, although not under similar conditions; it is undertaken mainly by women but men are increasingly called on to join forces with them and produce food.

As in previous incidents, people invaded Madal's estates to grow rice and, at the same time, they built huts where they stayed to protect the crops against birds and other animals. According to one of my informants, the group's representatives demanded that the government take firm measures against Madal's recurrent destruction of their crops and assets. Two hours later, the government promised to contact the company to get its

¹²⁷ Nota 7/PAM/2009 de 27/01/2009 – comunicação do chefe do posto ao administrador do distrito.

version of the story; but, as far as I know, Madal did not compensate those affected. This is the normal outcome in conflicts involving Madal and local residents, as has been documented in various reports and affirmed in local people's accounts.

These issues with Madal have been regularly presented by local residents to state and government dignitaries on their visits to the area. The government of Micaúne has been trying to address the matter by asking Madal to return some areas, in particular, those idle due to the death of palm trees. However, Madal has been reluctant to return the land to the people considering the size of the areas involved and the slow pace of any handover.

Even when the process of returning land to the population was started, it was not a willing decision by Madal, but a result of the company's inability to repay a debt it owed to the state. Not having money available for this purpose, Madal agreed to return some land to the government in 2005 in exchange for the cancellation of the debt.¹²⁸ But Madal chose this land carefully – it was land that was already being used by local people with the consent of the company's station heads.¹²⁹

The Micaúne authorities reported that Madal returned 12 hectares of land to the government which was to be allocated to agricultural associations in Arijuane and another area located next to Mahimba Game Farm. This last land was subsequently flooded, which made it impossible to allocate it to the local people.¹³⁰

In 2012 local people cleared an area of land in Magaza but it was not clear whether Madal had formally returned the land to them or given them permission to use the land as a strategy to have the area cleared. According to the head of the administrative post and

¹²⁸ Interview held with Mr Edgar in 2012.

¹²⁹ Interviews held separately in 2012 with Mr Gabriel, Mr Matlava and Mr Edgar.

¹³⁰ 2007 Micaúne Administrative Post report.

one of Madal's employees, Madal was in the process of returning more land to the state, but it was not clear if the area in question was part of the transfer. Until 2012, Madal had returned only 7,415 of the 49,839 hectares it controlled. The table below shows the areas under Madal's control and areas returned to the state between 2005 and 2012.

| Location | Madal total area | Area returned to the state | Area under Madal |
|----------|------------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| Micaúne | 20,564 | 4,811 | 15,752 |
| Mahimba | 29,275 | 2,603 | 26,672 |
| Total | 49,839 | 7,415 | 42,424 |

Table 1: Area in hectares controlled by Madal and the state between 2005 and 2012.

Source: Serviços Provinciais de Geografia e Cadastro da Zambézia (2012).

The slowness of the land return process has led local people to invade Madal's areas, leading to recurrent conflicts between the company and local residents. People usually invade areas which Madal left unfenced and plant their foodstuffs there, mainly rice and cassava. The area in question in Magaza was used by Madal for cattle grazing and after the armed conflict the company introduced 1,000 heads of cattle to help in the demining process, and the people gradually started to occupy the mine-free land.

According to Madal's local manager, cattle grazing was abandoned as a result of the effects of the tsetse fly, which lowered the number of cattle. In 2008, the company transferred a considerable part of its livestock to other stations due to the danger of losing them all because of tsetse.¹³¹ However, other private investors, the government and ORAM were investing in livestock in the area, as indicated in the first paragraph of section 5.1 in page 134. It can be argued that Madal's withdrawal of cattle from Micaúne might have had other motives than the tsetse fly.

¹³¹ Interview conducted with Mr Mário on 28 May 2012.

In 2005, production of jatropha was a top priority for the newly elected president, Armando Guebuza, under his Green Revolution programme. In response to the central government's appeal to produce jatropha as a contribution to national self-sufficiency in fuel by reducing dependence on imported oil, Madal and other companies embarked on the production of this crop.

For Madal, planting jatropha in Micaúne was important for diversification and probably to replace copra production, which was already in decline; but it would also serve as a physical boundary to limit the company's grazing area, thus avoiding conflicts with local residents. But the production of jatropha was a failure and many companies including Madal abandoned its cultivation after an initial trial when they concluded that it was not viable.¹³²

The failure of jatropha to establish a natural boundary between Madal's and local people's areas meant that land remained vacant and the local population started planting food crops. Madal's response was the destruction of local residents' crops. Episodes like this create a feeling of powerlessness for both local government officials and the population, as the head of one locality told me:

I am concerned that Madal has been exercising its authority without consideration of the authority of government and the state. This compromises government efforts and is creating uncertainty in the people.¹³³

Although the government recognises that Madal is entitled to legal rights over the land, it

¹³² Manuel Cardoso, Madal manager in Micaúne—report 16 June 2008. Several NGOs have publicly identified the negative effect of jatropha on the soils, which would undermine food production (Ribeiro & Matavel 2009). According to Di Matteo & Schoneveld (2016:15) “Of biofuel investments, 90.0% focused on the inedible oil-seed-bearing crop jatropha, which in most cases failed to generate anticipated yields. Of the 27 jatropha investments, only two could be confirmed as being operational at the time of research”.

¹³³ Interview conducted with Mr Elton on 17 May 2012.

is also concerned, at least at the local level, about the living conditions of the population. The local government is in a dilemma because, apart from Madal's holdings, new land concessions are made at the provincial government level (cadastral services) without its involvement. In fact, the district, as an administrative entity, has no role in issuing DUATs, although it can monitor investment projects which have been granted DUATs (DFID 2013).

The land question in the post-socialist period has become complex in that land tenure reforms have increased private interests' control over communal land. Apart from Madal, which retains land from the colonial period, there are other private landholders in Micaúne who have been acquiring land under the privatisation process which started in 1987, as indicated in section 5.1. During this period the government granted around 39,962 hectares of new land concessions in Micaúne of which 19,428 hectares belonged to Madal, while the remainder was distributed among three other companies namely: *Companhia de Sena, S.A.R.L* [previously The Sena Sugar Estate]–102.59 hectares, *Sociedade Micaúne Eco-Turismo, Lda*–9,400 hectares and Pro-Hunter Safari, *Lda*–9, 600 hectares) while 1,431.20 hectares belonged to six individuals and the Quelimane Diocese.

By 2012, Madal controlled 42,424 hectares while by 2014 approximately 55,241 hectares in new concessions were granted to mining companies, mainly in the coastal area. Approximately 118,199 of the 200,000 hectares that comprise Micaúne are privately controlled and the remainder is shared by the state, communal ownership, desert, mangroves, and rivers. Most of these concessions, as in the case of Madal, comply with the legal obligation to pay an annual levy for land occupation which “is around US\$ 0.40 (40 cents) per hectare per year which is ridiculously low” (Castel-Branco & Mandlate 2012, p. 120). According to Rønning (2000, p.25), by 2000 “Madal was paying to the government a total of 30,000,000 Meticais (USD 1.968m) per year for the utilisation of plantation lands”.

It appears that the government is trapped in a difficult situation. On the one hand, the

companies have legal rights over the land on which the population want to grow food and the government must ensure that these companies enjoy their landholding rights. On the other, the government is unable to provide or create conditions for food production and basic services.

This pattern of land occupation suggests that both independence and privatisation have not brought real change to the lives of the majority of Micaúne residents, at least as far as land is concerned. While the government replaced the small private farmers or cattle breeders who fled at independence, the Madal Company and others continued to control the land and, more critically, benefit from the privatisation process by acquiring more land. Furthermore, as will be discussed in Chapter Eight, the government’s new initiatives and potential investment in Micaúne are biased towards natural resources. As a result, the land available for a growing local population is limited. The situation of formal land occupation in Micaúne in 2012 is illustrated in figure 5.2. below.

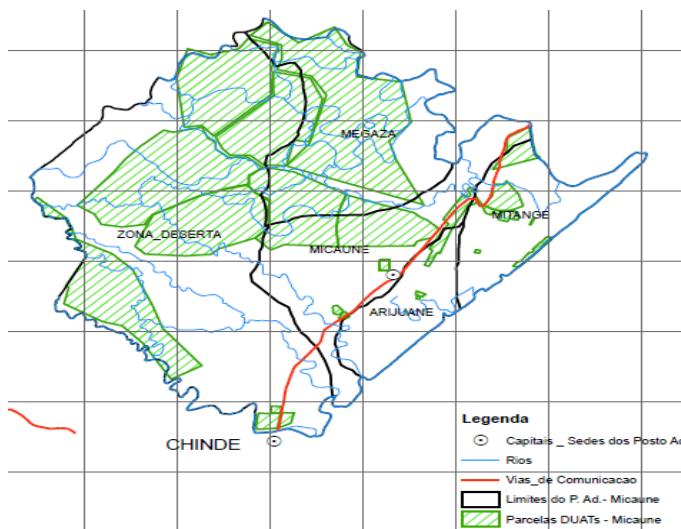


Figure 5.2: Map of Land Use Rights (DUAT)

Source: Serviços Provinciais de Geografia e Cadastro da Zambézia (2012)

In figure 5.2., the areas in green show the current situation of DUATS, meaning all formal land occupation or concessions; the black line indicates the geographic limits of localities while the blue line represents local rivers and the red line symbolises the main road of the administrative post of Micaúne. Magaza, the upper part of Micaúne-Sede and a small area of Mitange are occupied under DUATS. Magaza is where Madal has its main station and office, and where the biggest plantation is located. This means that Madal still has land use rights over that area. The coastal area, which includes Arijuane and Mitange, appears not to be formally occupied, but a number of mining extraction projects are being implemented (see Chapter Eight). In reality, the coastal area is populated and according to the 2007 census, there were 7,019 people in Arijuane and 8,455 in Mitange.

This map does not reflect the real situation on the ground, which is more critical and has fuelled conflicts at two main levels. On the one hand, there are conflicts between the community at large and companies such as Madal and, on the other, between local entrepreneurs (Chapter Six) and specific residents living in the area. At independence, when small private farmers and traders fled the country, the land was nationalised and allocated to local people to grow food. Because of their long use, local residents claim rights over this land. It is in part of this land that the government approved new concessions for cattle breeding by local entrepreneurs, which led to conflicts with other residents.

This juxtaposition of land rights results in contested claims and tension. However, such tension has not led to physical violence, since the people involved are able to manage them cordially. What some entrepreneurs did was to fence their area, blocking anyone from getting in to cultivate the land. Nevertheless, in some instances, the people affected decided to invade the area and plant their foodstuffs without prior authorisation from the formal landholder. Unfortunately, the produce was usually destroyed by animals.

Most conflicts reported in Micaúne are a result of the juxtaposition of land rights. By the 2007 land law, households/individuals who have been living on or using land for more

than ten years are entitled to legal use rights. At the same time, private interests (companies such as Madal) and local entrepreneurs have been granted land rights by the government for the same pieces of land. This is a situation where both sides have legal rights, but it appears that the government privileges the few who have DUATs to the detriment of the majority.

The long-term conflict between Madal and local Micaúne residents is ultimately a test of state authority in the area and the extent to which it mediates the interests of its citizens. Due to current demand for land for investment, it is expected that multiple claims for land will increase in the near future. These conflicts might happen at two main levels. On the one hand, conflicts over boundaries given that the natural landmarks—palm trees—are no more, and on the other, the fact that land is becoming increasingly unavailable and local residents' lack of income will put them at a disadvantage as compared to outsiders.

This situation will get worse due to population growth. In fact, granting land rights to private interests (whether companies or individuals) and population growth, both put pressure on the available land. As Berry (2002, p. 656), reminds us

Where land is subject to multiple claims, based on contested historical precedents, protracted land disputes may serve as fora for on-going debate over the legitimacy of claims to public office.

The material presented in this chapter suggests that questions of property are nuanced, more complex and open to contestation than a simple opposition between private and communal suggests. As discussed in this chapter, the focus on subsistence farming as the only livelihood option is not sustainable in the long run owing to population growth and the fact that there is limited land for expansion. The mobilisation of local people by both the government and NGOs has fuelled demand for land, and one of the main consequences has been overlapping land claims. In the long run, if this state of affairs continues, it will result in many being dispossessed from the land and in the alienation of local residents due to their lack of DUATs. The following chapter describes in detail current people's livelihoods in Micaúne.

CHAPTER SIX: CHANGING LIVELIHOODS

This chapter explores and describes the main livelihood options in which Micaúne residents engage. Four main options emerge from the data: a) subsistence farming; b) subsistence fishing; c) petty/informal trading; d) formal employment and state stipends. The chapter is divided into three sections. In section one, I explore the extent of the material and social differentiation among the residents of Micaúne in 2012 by dividing their households into a number of categories. Section two is on development projects and I show the variable extent to which these projects stimulated, or failed to stimulate, food and cash crop production by making reference to the different household categories. In section three I show that development projects in Micaúne failed to disaggregate the population under consideration, and, in fact, benefited only those households which had other sources of regular income. Those who promoted the development projects deal in aggregates – if an initiative increases production overall it must be a success. I conclude by showing that financial backing from sources outside the local economy is a major determinant of people’s capacity to respond positively to development schemes and that it is more important than the inculcation of an entrepreneurial spirit and a dedication to hard work.

6.1. Household profiles

Research on Southern Africa has shown a regional dimension of households’ studies connected to the mining industry and its labour reserves. These studies have highlighted the important role played by remittances (Arrighi 1970; Murray 1981; Sharp & Spiegel 1985; Hart 2002; Hart & Sitas 2004; and Mosoetsa 2011).

In the Mozambican literature this has been labelled as the “dual economy”, whereby, income from the mines could be remitted back home to be reinvested in subsistence agriculture. However, this created or widened differentiation among households due to their differentiated involvement in the market including labour markets. For scholars such as First (1983), the pattern of differentiation could be characterised as cyclical depending

on the development cycle of the domestic groups. My research seems to suggest that this pattern is becoming permanent as I will show in the remainder of this chapter.

To illustrate this point, I group households into wealth categories based on the 2012 survey conducted by Concern Worldwide in Micaúne. The survey used the Household Economy Assessment (HEA)¹³⁴ (see chapter four, page 113) to identify wealth groups or, as I prefer to call them, categories. Wealth categories are defined by reference to current living conditions as perceived by members of a local community. A wealth category comprises households that are perceived to share similar capacities in terms of food and income options within a particular livelihood zone. Wealth categories are typically defined by reference to their land and livestock holdings, financial capital, education, skills, labour availability and social capital (Concern Worldwide 2012).

Gender and social status play important roles in determining access to food and cash and responses to shocks and change. Poor female-headed households with little land may work for better-off households to get money to buy food; the better-off may use the profits from agriculture as capital to engage in trade. In the event of a crisis, poor and better-off households will be affected differently and, therefore, warrant separate treatment (Food Economy Group, n.d.). My findings show that most local people combine at least two of the first three livelihood options mentioned above while the last is dominated by newcomers. This pattern is reproduced by the state through bureaucratic procedures which undermine the possibility for local people to enter formal employment in the public sector. The absence of a vibrant private sector in the area makes the state the main employer.

¹³⁴ The HEA framework is based on the economic activities of households, not individuals, since the household is the smallest economic unit by which people manage and within which economic decisions are made (Concern Worldwide 2012, p. 11).

The survey produced the following household profile. Very poor (VP) households represented 40 percent of the total number of households and had on average five to six members. Their land holding was between 0.25 and 0.5 ha in both lowlands (closer to the rivers) and highlands (slightly more elevated than the lowlands and much drier). The distinction between lowlands and highlands is associated with soil fertility. VP households use hoes (one) as their main productive asset. A few households possessed either a fishing net or fishing cage. In terms of animal husbandry, VP households had only poultry (one to four chickens or ducks, on average).

Poor (P) households represented 20 percent of the total households and had an average of six members. Like VP households, their land holding was between 0.25 and 0.5 ha in both lowlands and highlands, and they used hoes (two) as their main productive asset. A few households in this category possessed either a fishing net or fishing cage. With regard to animal husbandry, P households kept poultry in slightly higher numbers than their VP counterparts (an average of five to ten chickens or ducks per household).

Middle (M) households also represented 20 percent of the population with an average size of six members. In terms of land holdings, households in this category had plots in the lowlands measuring 0.5 to 1 hectare and 0.3 to 1 hectare in the highlands. Their productive assets included hoes (two to four), bicycles (at least one), fishing cages/nets (nine or ten), and a few could hire canoes for fishing. In terms of animal husbandry, they possessed poultry (10 to 15) and goats (one to four).

Finally, the Better Off (BO) households also represented 20 percent of the population and had an average of six to seven household members. Their land holding was around 1 to 1.5 ha in the lowlands and 0.3 to 1 in the highlands. In this category, households' productive assets included bicycles (at least one), canoes (at least one) and 20 to 25 fishing cages/nets. Canoes are not only used for fishing but also as a means of transportation for passengers and cargo. They often used their canoes to transport other

people across rivers and were paid small amounts in cash or kind for this service. Animal husbandry for BO households included poultry (20 to 30) and goats (1 to 10).

As it can be seen from the description above, household size, which refers to the number of people living in a household for the majority of the year, is fairly homogeneous across wealth groups. Very poor households are the smallest in size and contain more vulnerable members: elderly people, female heads of household and child heads of household. At the other end of the scale, better off households have the capacity to host additional members of their extended family (nephews, nieces, orphans) and hence, are often slightly larger. Monogamy is the rule across all wealth categories (Concern Worldwide 2012, p. 36).

It is noted that a small number of young men (including some heads of household) have left Micaúne since the onset of LYD in search of labour opportunities outside the area, in Marromeu, Quelimane, Beira or further afield. The extent of this outmigration is as yet unclear, and so is the role that remittances now play in the circumstances of their households of origin (Concern Worldwide 2012, p. 36).

There was no great differentiation between the two poorest wealth groups. But greater differentiation existed at the upper echelons. The better-off households represent those who have been capable of capturing local market opportunities, both inside and outside the zone. They trade different natural resources outside the zone; they are suppliers of staple foods and household goods inside the zone, and they also provide some agricultural employment in their villages. Middle households have less capital to participate in significant trading activities but nevertheless, continue to look for opportunities. A large number of the middle households are engaged in fishing or brewing (Concern Worldwide 2012, p. 36).

Livestock holdings are very small. Cattle are not commonly kept and only a small handful of better-off households own any. Goats are kept in small numbers by the middle and better-off as a way of investing part of their surplus income and to provide meat for

the main annual festivities. Chicken and ducks are common across all household categories and their sale provides an emergency source of cash when in need. Rearing pigs is not common; they are found in some villages but not in others (Concern Worldwide 2012, p. 36-7).

6.1.1. Very Poor (VP) and Poor (P) Households

Given the fact that there is not much difference between these two categories, I decided to analyse them together. Poorest households in 2012 had limited access to land, an unfavourable ratio of people able to work in the fields to not economically active dependents, and were pretty well confined to one or more of the subsistence activities or, indeed, to earning small amounts of cash or food by working for others. But these earnings were not enough to cover their basic needs.

6.1.1.1. Subsistence farming

Households in this category rely solely on subsistence farming, which in the literature is defined as “production for own consumption needs with no commercial *or market* orientation” (Heidhues and Brüntrup 2003, p. 15). The map below shows the livelihood zones of the district of Chinde where the administrative post of Micaúne is located.

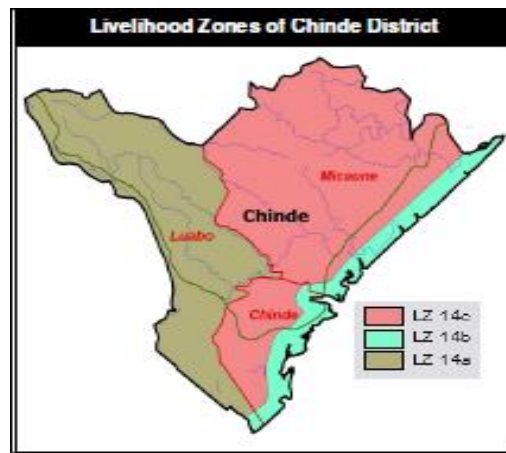


Figure 6.1: Map of Livelihood Zones in the district of Chinde.
Source: Concern Worldwide (2012, p. 23).

The red in the figure above represents the hinterland, which is the agriculture livelihood zone while the blue is the coastal area and represents the fishing livelihood zone with small agricultural plots. Most households have access to one or two small plots of land (*machambas*) close to their homes, where they grow cassava and sweet potatoes. Households also practise home gardening in their house yards to grow some food crops such as cassava, sweet potatoes and fruits.

VP households' production depends mainly on intra-household labour, and sometimes their labour is more advantageously hired out to better-off households for cash. However, in food crisis periods, very poor and poor households prefer payment in kind (rice, sweet potatoes, cassava flour or fish) to cash since they can't find and buy goods locally (Concern Worldwide 2012, p.39). In-kind payments were common in the previous year (2011), especially during the rice planting season (November and December) and the lean season. There is hardly any off-farm employment for household members in these two categories.

Subsistence production in Micaúne is marginal because large parts of the district are not suitable for agriculture. In Micaúne, three types of soil predominate: sandy greyish brown, yellowish brown sandy and greyish brown sandy loam. These soils are unfit for most crops except rice, sweet potato, coconut, cassava and fruit trees.

Sweet potatoes are planted in the lowlands after the rice harvest, taking advantage of the moisture left in the soil (Concern Worldwide 2012, p. 34). The harvest is usually quite substantial and occurs twice a year, in January and in August/September (Concern Worldwide 2012, p. 25). Cassava is the most important crop produced in the highlands and it may be intercropped with sweet potatoes, beans and maize (in very small quantities). Other crops tolerant to drought, such as cowpeas, are also produced in the highlands.

The existence of many river streams in Micaúne could provide a source of irrigation to farming fields but saline intrusion, which according to Johnson (2007) is the seawater

contamination of freshwater aquifers, is a problem. To a certain extent, groundwater pumping for freshwater wells is exacerbating the contamination of local water sources. At the time of my fieldwork, some of the existing 21 water wells (with hand water pumps) produced salty water owing to saline intrusion. In practice, the main alternative for clean/potable water for household consumption and farming is rainwater harvesting, but this depends on regular rains and people's capacity to keep large amounts of water to be used for long periods of time.

In recent times, owing to the effects of climate change, rains have been irregular in Micaúne; in some years they come early and in others, they come late. Moreover, in some years, it rains beyond the normal level, leading to floods mainly in January, as happened during my fieldwork in 2012. When the rain stopped, people planted new seeds expecting that these would grow but unfortunately, since it did not rain again, the product was lost. To make things worse, a cyclone hit the area leaving many households in difficulties.

Food leaves from cassava, beans and sweet potatoes, which abound in the area, could be an alternative source of income and nutrition,¹³⁵ but this was not the case. I was surprised to discover that no one was selling green leaves and beans at the local market, and people were not eating food leaves, despite their nutrient value, simply because they considered this as food for animals.

This differs considerably from the other two neighbouring administrative posts in the district of Chinde. Moreover, it also differs from the situation in Quelimane, and other major cities in the country, where food leaves can be as expensive as other goods. Full development of horticulture might help Micaúne residents to consider trading food leaves in Quelimane for high returns.

¹³⁵ For the nutritional value of these leaves read FAO (1990; 2013).

Generally speaking, poor households are not able to produce enough to eat and generate income because they have a low proportion of people in productive age but also due to the small size of their plots. This was the case of Mr Manteiga's household in Mucinde which falls into the category of the Very Poor. The household comprises seven people of whom four are small children. Only two members of the household are economically active, namely Mr Manteiga and his wife. They own a small plot, but in 2012, it had been borrowed by the wife's relatives.

This might suggest that they are not originally from the area they are living in now. Given that they cannot generate any income from their plot, they must rely on working for others. The husband generates income by cutting grass for houses and fixing other people's buildings while the wife works for other households in exchange for food. Her work entails preparing the land, weeding, and harvesting.

This type of temporary work is locally known as *ganho-ganho*. According to the survey, local agricultural employment in 2011 provided a third of the annual income for poor and very poor households. The daily rate was only 25 Meticaïs (R 8) in Micaúne (Concern Worldwide 2012, p. 39).

For households headed by elderly women *ganho ganho* is not an option considering that it requires physical strength. Mrs Rosa is an elderly woman living with her three minor grandchildren whose parents died from Aids a few years ago. This household relies on her receipt of a state stipend for the elderly, what the household produces on its home garden, as well as whatever assistance it gets from the neighbours. Home gardens are not specific to Micaúne, but rather a widespread practice in the entire country. According to Shaffer (2008, p. 43),

In Mozambique, many people maintain at their homesteads small home gardens (*hortas*) with medicinal plants, drought-tolerant vegetables, and fruit trees such as lemon, mango and guava, as a strategy to cope with food insecurity.

As Mrs Rosa's case illustrates, the physical capacity of a household is an important

determinant of its wellbeing. Households like those of Mr Manteiga and Mrs Rosa are unable to explore other possibilities out of the home fully because of their unfavourable ratio of people able to work in the fields to dependents.

6.1.1.2. Fishing

Unlike farming, fishing is basically a male activity and can be undertaken by one individual alone or more working together. The intensity of fishing varies according to the geographic location. Fishing was the main activity for people living in the coastal area and on the islands while in the interior the focus was mostly on subsistence farming. In this context, households which undertake fishing are often able to mobilise other household members to do subsistence farming. For instance, the wife and children can work on the fields while the man can fish.

What I consider artisanal fishing is undertaken on the Zambezi River streams and floodplains by local residents using rudimentary equipment such as reed traps (*naça* and *welô* or *werô*), mesh nets and fishing lines and they catch a particular kind locally known as *Mucaji* (Mudskipper). Because many people catch this kind of fish in the same season its price is low and there is little demand for it on the local market.

In a context like Micaúne, where all basic goods come from the big cities, money is critical for people's livelihoods. For this reason, selling is not an exclusive activity of traders but is undertaken by everyone. Whenever it is possible, people sell anything to earn cash with which to purchase goods. Poor households tend to sell a very limited amount of agricultural produce because supply is abundant (everyone is selling the same products) and because they have less to sell as well as having poor access to other markets (Concern Worldwide 2012).

6.1.2 Middle households

Those in the middle category had access to more land than the poorest and a more favourable ratio of economically active to dependent members. But they too were

confined to subsistence activities and were also not in a position to take advantage of development initiatives such as the scheme to grow sesame for the Eastern market.

6.1.2.1. Subsistence farming

Population growth and land scarcity are forcing people to walk long distances to the few islands to get fertile land for food production (mainly rice). Middle households appear to explore this option more since they have more productive assets such as hoes and bicycles to facilitate that the engagement of various household members in farming in different places simultaneously. However, women and children do most of the agricultural work, shifting homes to the islands and taking almost everything, including dogs, chickens and household utensils, with them. This move is necessitated by the activities to be performed on the plots which include sowing and harvesting and protecting their produce from animals such as hippos and birds which abound in the area.

Although in the past food production was women's responsibility and was mostly regarded as a supplement to the income men acquired through trading coconut or working for private companies. Today, however, both men and women are involved in cultivating rice, as it provides food, income opportunities and, for some, labour opportunities (Concern Worldwide 2012). In this setting, men's role is to guard of the main homestead while their wives and children go to the plots on the islands. During harvest time, it is men who mobilise resources to transport the harvest from the field to the homestead and make decisions about selling part of it when there is a need for cash.

This is a significant change in the way households generate income. Mr Hanifo recalls that "in the colonial period, only women practised agriculture, but because of the collapse of the coconut economy, men are increasingly involved in agriculture in support of their

wives”.¹³⁶ Mr Hanifo is also engaged in subsistence farming and actually follows his wife to their field, where they remain for weeks.

Being the head of Ametramo and also a local development council member, he has a regular source of income. For this reason, he moves back and forth between his home and the plot. Mr Hanifo’s farming activities are basically for domestic consumption, although he sometimes sells the surplus. Others are able to combine farming with trade or fishing depending on where they are geographically based. As will be discussed in the next two sections, the division of labour in this category is as follow, men dedicate to trade on the hinterland or fishing on the river streams while their wives and children do farming.

6.2.2.2. Fishing

People who are involved in fishing are located along rivers or streams and in particular on islands such as Deia. Very few middle households own canoes. Most households in this category are forced to pay in cash or kind (a part of the catch) to hire them. The amount fishing income contributes to household earnings depends on the method used to harvest the fish. Households that have access to nets and canoes are not only able to catch greater quantities of fish than those relying solely on hooks and lines, but also have larger quantities for consumption (Concern Worldwide 2012).

Higher fish production coincides with the rainy season when the water level in the rivers rises, increasing the amount of fish. During such times, fishermen establish themselves at the river banks for weeks, sleeping in tents made from reeds while their household members remain behind at the homestead. During this period wives and children are busy with farming cassava, rice and sweet potatoes. The fishermen supplement these foodstuffs by purchasing maize meal, cooking oil, and sugar from traders from the

¹³⁶ Interview with Mr Hanifo in Micaúne – Sede on 17 May 2012.

northern districts of Quelimane who visit the fishing camps along the rivers and on the islands.

Part of the fresh fish catch is sold immediately to these traders at a price of 10 Meticaïs (R 3) for three to four fish. But because there are few means of conserving and transporting fresh fish, the fishermen dry and smoke a large part of the catch they accumulate during the fishing season, even though the price they get for dried fish is less than that for fresh. The traders from Quelimane, on the other hand, make a good profit from selling their trade goods to local fishermen at high prices and buying both fresh and dried fish cheaply. They are also able to sell the fresh fish they buy in Micaúne in the high-price market offered by big restaurants and hotels countrywide.

One informant, a fisherman based in Deia, revealed how stressful and costly it was for him to fish and sell the catch in Quelimane:

First, the trip is on foot for five to 10 kilometres, which take several hours, and then a boat is used to go to Inhassunge district which is on the other side of the Abreus River and from there one must decide if one is going to walk for 40 kilometres and save some money or take public transport at a price of 50 Meticaïs.¹³⁷

I had the first-hand experience about how problematic transportation is from or to Deia in particular, and Micaúne in general. Public transport to Micaúne-Sede takes approximately eight hours at a cost of about 200 Meticaïs (R65). Therefore working with the traders from Quelimane has advantages for local fishermen. Indeed, the entire population uses these intermediaries to access goods from Quelimane such as clothing, sugar, cooking oil, fishing line and nets, maize meal, matches and other provisions not available locally.

The Quelimane traders operating in Micaúne behave in a manner similar to that described

¹³⁷ Interview conducted in Deia with Mr Armando on 8 September 2012.

in other anthropological studies:

Brokers or intermediaries are most likely to be influential in situations where the levels or groups they mediate between are separated or segmented by barriers of culture, language, distance or mistrust (Marsden 1982, p. 202 quoted in Gould 1989, p. 534).

One resident at Deia with six people in the household explained that it was becoming increasingly difficult to make ends meet. Despite combining subsistence farming and fishing, he was unable to ensure the survival of his dependents particularly because goods brought in by the intermediaries were extremely expensive.

6.2.2.3. Petty Trade

Micaúne has a long history of trading going back to the colonial period, as shown in Chapters Three and Four. There have been successive generations of traders but here I focus on the current generation from after the end of the armed conflict in 1992. These people started their businesses in the 1990s as intermediaries between Madal and local producers in the coconut business¹³⁸ but, given that the post-independence government attempted to revitalise the rural shops abandoned by the departing Portuguese there was an opportunity for those local people who had accumulated some money in the coconut business to invest in them.

When CLYD became acute, in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the coconut traders shifted to other activities. Those who had amassed only a small amount of capital began to sell food and other goods they purchased in Quelimane and they built rough stalls in various villages to enable them to do so (Governo do Distrito de Chinde 2011).

In government terminology, petty traders and vendors fall into the “informal sector”. But

¹³⁸ These traders could select good coconuts as required by Madal, which reduced the company’s burden to deal with many sellers.

viewing these people in this way is problematic if one follows Hart's (1973) argument that informal economic activities occur outside official or recognised areas and, therefore, escape both regulation and official record-keeping. This is not the case with Micaúne's petty traders and vendors, all of whom are registered with the local government as traders and pay a daily fee to be allowed to pursue their selling activities.

These petty traders blend into the category of people I call vendors. Vendors sell food they acquire locally in stands at the local marketplace, which is in a public building constructed in the colonial period and rehabilitated a few times since independence. Both men and women act as vendors and they sell vegetables, fruits, dried fish and sometimes rice. Occasionally they sell game meat which is hunted illegally in the Mahimba Game Farm. Unlike the petty traders, they do not keep any stock of products and the money generated from the sales is immediately used to cover their household food and other expenses.

These petty traders are able to maintain small stocks of goods, but their profit margins are low. Like their counterparts based in Quelimane they sell mainly food (like maize meal, rice, sugar, cool drinks and alcohol) they have purchased in the town. Most of them are fairly well educated compared to the majority of the population, despite the fact that they often left school early to help their relatives financially. However, only one of them is a woman. She is the wife of one of the traders and, according to Mr Lucas she is, in reality, a part of her husband's business.

At the time of my fieldwork in 2012, petty traders and vendors complained that their business was being undermined by the low purchasing power of local residents, as well as by debt, which affected their capacity to maintain a merchandise inventory. Most local people in Micaúne lack regular sources of income while employees, in particular, state officials, buy on credit but take a long time to settle their debt. With regard to public officials, their lack of ready cash has been enhanced by a recent government decision to shift their salary payments from cash to bank transfers. Since there is no bank in

Micaúne, government employees have to travel every month end to Quelimane to collect their salaries.

When in Quelimane, these employees spend their salaries buying food for the entire month for their dependents and take only a small amount of money back to Micaúne for daily expenses. Thus, a considerable proportion of the money earned by government employees never reaches Micaúne, and the portion circulated via state development initiatives such as the rehabilitation of roads, small bridges, and wells scarcely makes up for this loss. This is because part of the money is spent back in Quelimane to purchase or hire some equipment and building material.

Some petty traders are privileged partners of the government, however, when it comes to local development initiatives. In government terminology these traders are designated as “artisans”, meaning that although they are not specialised companies, they are small business people who are eligible to tender for contracts. The local entrepreneurs who become involved in public works often lack the skills and financial capacity to sustain their businesses. According to government regulations, to qualify to undertake public works one must have a licence to do so, but none of the local entrepreneurs has that licence.¹³⁹

As a result, the quality of their work is poor. The infrastructure rehabilitated by these entrepreneurs, such as small bridges, does not last and becomes impassable after the first rains. As a result, infrastructure problems are not solved but postponed in a vicious cycle, as the government must regularly allocate additional funds to fix the same problems. Owing to the poor quality of their work, some local entrepreneurs are gradually being replaced by outsiders, some of whom bring their own workforce.

¹³⁹ Telephone interview conducted with Mr Sérgio Vilanculos, then the Chinde district director of public works, 20 June 2013.

This is negatively affecting the prospects for local people to earn an income. One local ‘artisan’ expressed his discontent with the situation by pointing out that “it is sad what is happening in Micaúne. Not only are public works being awarded to external contractors but also they tend to bring workers from outside instead of using us, the local people”.¹⁴⁰

Traditional casual and seasonal work outside Micaúne for companies such as Sena Sugar was disrupted by armed conflict in the late 1980s when the sugar plant based in Luabo was destroyed by Renamo. But production resumed after the end of the war in 1992 and, in 1995, Sena Company was taken over by Mauritian investors. Sena Company started production in the sugar plant based in Marromeu, Sofala Province, which attracts people from different parts of the country, in particular from the district of Chinde.

When income from the coconut business started waning in Micaúne, some people decided to go for six-month contracts in Marromeu. One of the traders interviewed, Mr Zangado Augusto, a resident of Alifane, started his business after a seasonal contract in Luabo. He got this contract through his brother-in-law who was already working in Marromeu. He worked there on a six-month contract for two successive years cutting sugar cane and, with the money he accumulated, went back to Micaúne and invested in retailing alcoholic drinks (*aguardente*) in his neighbourhood.¹⁴¹

Considering the labour history of this region, and because Marromeu is the only operational sugar (plantation) plant in the area, this constitutes one of the options for the people of Micaúne to generate an income. It is likely that new investments in the pipeline by the Sena Company in Luabo might provide employment for people from the lower Zambezi Delta. This might result in migration and change the role of remittances in the

¹⁴⁰ Interview conducted with Mr Bonzo, Micaúne, 2012.

¹⁴¹ Interview conducted in Micaúne-Sede on 26 May 2012.

area, which has been insignificant up to now.

The survey conducted by Concern Worldwide in 2012 showed that very few emigrants provided remittances, and the amounts sent back home were very small. One woman in a household of eight people reported that she got 200 Meticaïs (equivalent to R67) from her husband for the past year (2011) that he had been absent; another woman reported that she received 500 Meticaïs (equivalent to R167) for the same period; while a third woman received 1,800 Meticaïs for three consecutive months.¹⁴² These are just a few isolated examples.

Finally, another important livelihood option and income-generating activity is the production of a traditional brew made out of palm sap locally known as *sura*. This brew is produced by men inside the Mahimba Game Farm, where they spend weeks at a time and return back to the villages with it in jerry cans, exclusively for local sale. However, “this activity is forbidden by Madal and perpetrators are frequently chased out of the reserve sometimes violently” (Concern Worldwide 2012, p. 40-1).

6.1.3. Better-off households

This category includes those households in which the primary source of livelihood was something other than subsistence farming or fishing. They comprised households with members receiving a state wage or salary or members who were more than petty traders or vendors. Their salaries, wages and trading profits could be used to underwrite their entry into the production of cash crops for the market – they could use the money to hire more land and labour and to cushion themselves against a fluctuating market for their produce. They were in a position to take advantage of development initiatives such as the scheme to grow sesame for the Eastern market.

¹⁴² A group interview conducted with women in Madome (Mitange) on 30 of August 2012.

Despite having access to land, people in this category do not consider it to be their main source of livelihood. But the emerging horticulture market as led to an increase in the number of people involved in growing vegetables including the most important local business people. This may be a form of livelihood diversification by these traders rather than the start of a more general transformation from subsistence to commercial farming.

6.1.3.1. Business

In the late 1990s, the Mozambican government decided to revitalise the rural trading network that had collapsed in the first years of independence by selling old nationalised buildings. In Micaúne, it appears that coconut was still a lucrative business at the time as there were a number of people who were able to buy a nationalised shop. These buildings are old cement buildings that belonged to traders in the colonial period and served as houses as well as shops. While the front of the building was for business purposes, the back, including the yard, was residential.

These buildings lacked proper roofs, doors or windows and whoever bought them had to rehabilitate them so that they could be used for different purposes. However, very few people were able to improve the houses satisfactorily. Mr Samajo had long been active in finding business opportunities and invested his money well. He bought an old house in 1998 and transformed it into the only guest house in the area. For some years, this guest house provided accommodation for all visitors until another guest house was established in the late 2000s.

In recent times, a small group of about ten successful businessmen has emerged on the scene. One example is Mr Samo, a young entrepreneur in his early twenties, who owns the only formal shop in Micaúne-Sede and the second guest house referred to above. He inherited the business from his father but, by working hard, he was able to expand and diversify it.

Mr Samo is involved in transport, being one of three local operators, and is also involved

in breeding cattle. He is thought to be the richest person in the area. Another example is Mr Bruno Jr, the son of Mr Bruno, who controls a considerable amount of land. He, too, acquired a large tract of land for livestock. Both Mr Samo and Mr Bruno Jr are among the few local people who have DUATs and, therefore, legal title to substantial areas of land.

The big businessmen enjoy a privileged relationship with the local government, particularly because a number of them provide services to it. For instance, transport of medicines and schoolbooks from the capital of the province to Micaúne is undertaken by one of these local businessmen. Among them are members of the party in government who, on various occasions, are called on to advance or support government initiatives including election campaigns.

This might explain why, despite certain traders being involved in illegal activities such as reselling mangrove stakes, they are not penalised. Despite government prohibitions, this business continues more or less clandestinely and involves considerable income for those involved in it. There is high demand for mangrove stakes in the capital of the province (Quelimane) and other neighbouring towns.

Transport of mangrove stakes is undertaken in private vans at night or early morning along the main road of Micaúne when government officials are off duty. Some of the traders involved in this business own vans and boats which make it easy to carry on the activity at any time. Others have to hire vans and boats for the same purpose. In Quelimane itself, one could see vast loads of stakes ready to be sold and also houses under construction using these stakes. Finally, like some of the more fortunate petty traders, these business people are deployed as “artisans” by the government in local public works, where they earn substantial cash.

6.1.3.2. Cash Crops

In an effort to restore the local economy, private companies and development agencies have been promoting the production of other cash crops than coconut. This has been through distributing seeds and assuring a market for produce. This logic is not new. In

fact, it was at the core of the coconut economy since its inception in the early twentieth century.

In recent years, Madal has promoted the production of peanuts, sesame and sunflower through the distribution of seeds to families and the establishment of demonstration fields to show the people that it is possible to plant alternative crops on the land.¹⁴³ Sesame seed is currently used as a raw material in refining food oils, butter and poultry feed, and for other purposes (Bennett n.d.; Langham 2007).

Sesame, being a drought-tolerant oilseed, can be grown in Micaúne and its oil content is the highest of any seed with strong demand in the international market; it could easily replace coconut as the main cash crop in the area. Indeed, Madal's confidence in the potential of sesame led the company to involve more than 200 households in a project in 2011 and 2012; and the agreement was that, when production had succeeded, the beneficiaries were expected to return twice the amount of seed received to the company, so that other households could also use the seed to start producing sesame.¹⁴⁴

This meant that the company had exclusive rights to buy the yield at a fixed price of 22.50 Meticaïs (R7.50) a kilogramme. However, when harvest time came, the company ignored the price it had offered at the beginning and instead purchased sesame at 21.00 Meticaïs. This is what a local producer, Mr Gomes, was paid for 100 sacks (50kg each) of sesame that he sold to Madal.¹⁴⁵ At the time, I conducted fieldwork he was working at the only local stationers owned by Mr Rodolfo who is a public official. Mr Gomes was also a neighbourhood secretary. He had a salary as an employee of the stationer and a state

¹⁴³ Interview conducted with Mr Mário on 28 May 2012.

¹⁴⁴ Interview conducted with Mr Mário on 28 May 2012.

¹⁴⁵ Interview conducted with Mr Gomes on 5 September 2012.

stipend for being a neighbourhood secretary. As can be seen, Mr Gomes has two regular sources of income which allow him to handle risk such as the drop in the agreed price with Madal. Those who do not have additional sources of income may find it difficult to join this type of production scheme. As a result, they stick to what they can afford.

Recently, Concern Worldwide added its efforts to promote cash crops. In 2013 this NGO started an agricultural project in partnership with Madal; it consisted of demonstration fields showing sesame production undertaken by extension workers hired by Concern Worldwide and based in Micaúne. The aim was the provision of an alternative source of income and nutrition to Micaúne residents. Strong international demand for sesame brought traders from the Far East, mainly Bangladesh, who purchased whatever was available locally at 40 Meticaís per kilogramme (the equivalent of R13).¹⁴⁶

The Bangladeshi presence in Micaúne was not accidental; there is a high demand for this crop in Asia. The world's traded sesame seed recently surpassed one million tonnes a year and was valued at roughly US\$850 million. Japan was the world's largest importer of sesame seeds, followed by China (Manuel 2011). Asian traders and companies, including Bangladeshis, have dominated the purchase of sesame in the neighbouring province of Nampula in recent years.

It was estimated that about thirty-five thousand tonnes of sesame harvested in the 2014 agricultural season in Nampula were sold to Asian and European markets. This brought an income to local producers worth billions of Meticaís. The number of families involved in sesame production in Meconta and Monapo (Nampula Province along the Nacala Corridor) increased from around three hundred to two thousand in just two years.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ Telephone interview with Mr Juca on 10 March 2014.

¹⁴⁷ Wampula Fax, 9 April 2014, p.1

The current high demand for sesame may very well lead to the replacement of coconut production as the main source of Micaúne residents' livelihoods, but it is still too early to say if this outcome will be realised. The land will have to be made available for local residents to produce sesame and engage freely in the market. Moreover, international demand for sesame must remain high.

In any case, the promotion of sesame, like other commercial crops, seems set to deliver benefits to the category of 'best off' households rather than to the poorest. In other words, it is likely to deliver benefits in aggregate, but this tells one little about their distribution. Locals in Micaúne who have become business people used the money they earned outside the local economy to set themselves up. However, even these local business people are not all in a secure position, particularly if the cash injection which allowed them to set themselves up in business was a once-off which has ceased to flow. By becoming dependent on a poor local economy, they are vulnerable to the eventual decline of their businesses. This is why the people who receive a regular salary from the state are in the best position of all – they have continuing injections of cash from outside the local economy with which to fund their local activities. But these people are for the most part outsiders who have simply been posted to the area for a period of time, and the local people can't easily get a look in here.

6.1.3.3. Formal Employment

A few people have salaries or government stipends as their main source of income. Among them are state employees, and employees of Concern Worldwide, Madal and a few mining companies. In total, there are around 500 people with a regular source of income in a population of 34,132 inhabitants.

The state has, in recent times, replaced Madal's hegemony as the major employer in the area. At the time of my fieldwork, there were 208 people (34 were women) employed by the state, of whom fewer than 15 were born or grew up in Micaúne. Education was by far the largest sector of employment, with 138 teachers and 27 literacy educators, and the

smallest sector was the police with only three employees.

In effect, formal employment in the area is also skewed toward men and newcomers (*vientes*). This term does not exist in the Portuguese language, but it is a slang term meaning “those who came” or “newcomers” and it is a way of distinguishing those who just came for work purposes from the locals. Although the former live in the district, they cannot claim to be sons of the soil. This term is used whenever the indigenous people want to claim rights they associate with belonging there.

It might be argued that these biases are reproduced through the state’s centralised labour recruitment regulations. The state hires labour through public tender managed from the capital city of the province, Quelimane. For people based in Micaúne, it is extremely difficult to have a chance of being hired because they lack information on posts, and find it difficult to produce and provide on time all relevant documents and to be available for interviews. This situation, combined with low levels of education, prevents Micaúne residents from getting access to formal employment, particularly in the public services.

For most of my newcomer informants (mainly teachers), coming to Micaúne was their last option to get out of unemployment elsewhere, and it was also a strategy to gain a foothold as a civil servant. Despite the lack of infrastructure and deficient services, Micaúne is increasingly being used to access employment in government. Indeed, most informants saw their presence in the area as provisional, with the expectation of being transferred to better-off places.

Despite earning an isolation stipend¹⁴⁸ which can reach up to 100 percent of their monthly salary, public officials characterised the working environment in Micaúne as

¹⁴⁸ This is an allowance created by the government in 2009 to stimulate government employees serving in the most remote areas of the country.

tedious because they had no access to computers, printers or phones, to mention just a few administrative accessories. This might explain why civil servants, whether male or female, normally move alone to Micaúne, leaving their families behind.

At the time of my fieldwork, there was no electricity and mobile communications were limited to a few spots in the main village under a tree. Access to the network was between 7 am and 10 pm thanks to an antenna installed in Chinde-Sede some 30 kilometres from Micaúne. The number of people with cell phones was also limited and, according to the last population census in 2007, there were only 150 cell phones in Micaúne (INE 2007). But certainly this figure has now been surpassed, given the increased number of newcomers working in the area in recent times, and the installation of an antenna by Movitel,¹⁴⁹ which is the third mobile operator in Mozambique after state-owned Moçambique celular (Mcel) and Vodacom. Unlike the other two mobile phone operators, Movitel has a strong presence in rural districts.

In Micaúne, the mobile phone network, which started in November 2012, is the first new development triggered by improved connectivity. There is some hope that electricity will boost the area by eventually attracting investors and facilitating the establishment of services that depend on electricity. However, the fact that more than 90 percent of people with regular income are newcomers (all save for the local community leaders) may well increase the rift between Micaúne locals and newcomers. Although this situation has not yet led to xenophobic attacks against newcomers, as we have seen in South Africa, this is a potential problem.

¹⁴⁹ This is a consortium between a Frelimo party holding company, SPI- *Gestão e investimentos*, and Viettel, a Vietnamese company with operations in Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Haiti. I will return to this company in Chapter Eight in the context of a land transaction in Micaúne.

6.1.3. 4. State stipends

The state also gives stipends because of recently approved legislation on community leaders, particularly Decree 15/2000.¹⁵⁰ Under this law, community leaders are defined as people who exercise some form of authority over a particular community or social groups, such as traditional leaders, neighbourhood or village secretaries and others legitimised as such.

Given the myriad categories considered in the law, community leaders have been divided into three echelons. The first comprises chiefs (*Régulos*) and secretaries; the second echelon includes *mwenes*, neighbourhood and village secretaries; and the third is known as land chiefs (designated as *cabo terra* in the colonial period).

Between the 1960 and 1970s, there were 14 chieftaincies (Negrão 2001, p. 190) but when the process of recognising traditional authorities started in Micaúne in 2002, only 11 chiefs were legitimised from four chieftaincies (*regulados*), namely, Matotombo, Danda, Matango and Deia (Governo do Distrito de Chinde 2002). Ten years later, four chieftaincies remained, but two of the originals had been replaced by new ones (Mugorre and Alfane) while the number of chiefs had increased to 13. By 2012, there were 228 community leaders in Micaúne. Among them were 14 chiefs and 14 secretaries of the first echelon, 53 of the second echelon and 147 of the third echelon.

It is clear that this increase was undertaken administratively to respond to a particular need, given that many authors including Gonçalves (2005) and Orre (2008) have shown that the government has intervened in order to appoint people sympathetic to the party in government. Recognition of these authorities implies that they work hand in hand with the government, as they are provided with the symbols of the state, uniforms and a monthly stipend.

¹⁵⁰ *Decreto 15/2000 de 20 de Junho* - Decree 15/2000 of 20 June.

The first echelon receives a monthly stipend of 400 Meticaïs from the state; the second, which includes neighbourhood and village secretaries, receives 250 Meticaïs; and the third which includes land chiefs (land cable in colonial times) receives 150 Meticaïs. On top of the monthly subsidy, all categories of chiefs receive a good performance bonus of 25 percent of the total amount of tax they collect, which is set at 15 Meticaïs (R5) per year per adult.¹⁵¹

The community leaders are provided with bicycles to facilitate their movement in the areas under their jurisdiction, and by so doing, they are, in fact, the lowest layer of government. The chiefs' daily schedule includes attendance at government meetings whenever they are called upon, participation in different local councils and, in that capacity, they decide about local projects including government plans and grants.¹⁵² State stipends and local development projects play an important redistributive function in that income generated contributes to higher cash circulation and consequently a certain purchasing power. It has a trickle-down effect to households and communities at large.

This chapter has focused on current livelihood options that Micaúne residents are engaged in and, for the most part, these are not pursued exclusively. In this chapter, I showed that there was a tendency towards livelihood diversification. But the extent of such diversity depends on a number of factors, including the type of economy in place, the size of households and their assets,¹⁵³ the labour supply and the land tenure system.

The analysis showed that none of the options that people are currently pursuing are, in fact, a significant replacement for coconut, but are rather just attempts to make a living. Government and companies' attempts to introduce cash crops and other related

¹⁵¹ Interview conducted with Mr Carlos Pejissanhe in Micaúne-Sede on 10 April 2012.

¹⁵² *Lei 8/2003 de 19 de Maio* – Law 8/2003 of 19 May.

¹⁵³ The five main assets are: human, natural, physical, social and financial. All are discussed in this chapter with regard to the livelihood options of Micaúne residents.

development projects have not led to the improvement of most people's livelihoods because these institutions failed to disaggregate the population under consideration. They deal in aggregates and the assumption has been that if an initiative increases production overall it must be a success. But this says nothing about the distribution of the benefits.

My analysis showed that middle and better-off households have a more diverse range of activities to draw upon, such as fishing, petty trade, capitalised business, and, in a few cases, formal salaried employment. In general, they were able to respond positively to development schemes because they had a certain financial backing from sources outside the local economy besides an entrepreneurial spirit and a dedication to hard work. But for people to be able to make that switch and keep going they need a reliable and continuing source of funding from beyond the local economy. Without it, their situation becomes precarious and cannot be sustained. This means that if they lose their financial backing they will likely descend to the ranks of the poor.

No amount of technical support and education in the virtues of the entrepreneurial spirit can make up for the absence of that backing, which also has the advantage that it is from a source – government employment, trading – that the development establishment does not control itself. This means that the local people concerned have autonomy from their ostensible benefactors (the development establishment) and can make their own decisions based on their knowledge of the local environment and society. The next chapter will discuss how far the state is managing to replace the local economy's dependence on coconut.

CHAPTER SEVEN: LOCAL POLITICS AT THE FRONTIER

This chapter explores the various relationships between the state and the people of the administrative post of Micaúne that were evident during my fieldwork in 2012. The chapter has four sections. In section one, I show how geography and lack of investment have contributed to Micaúne's relative isolation. In section two I use a state event to show how people were disengaged from the state. It shows how people in this administrative post were reluctant to participate in the 2012 celebrations of the Lusaka Agreement - one of the national holidays that central government obliges local government authorities to organise each year.

In section three, I give some indication of why the central state did not evoke much enthusiasm in Micaúne mainly because of the legacy of the armed conflict which resulted in people's antipathy towards the Frelimo government. For its part, the government came to label most local people as Renamo's supporters, which added to the tension. This came on top of the fact that almost all the people who acted as local representatives of the central state were not, in fact, locals.

In section four I discuss some of the steps the central state had taken to address the gap between it and local people - a problem which is by no means unique to Micaúne or Zambézia Province. These steps include the reinstatement of traditional leadership, the development of a form of community leadership which included chiefs and appointed officials - secretaries - working in tandem, and the provision of funds (across the country) for local development under the control of local state authorities. I will show here how the initiatives taken by the central state were playing out in practice in Micaúne in 2012 by focussing on the politics of the District Development Fund allocation and its impact on social exclusion.

7.1 From geography to poor infrastructure

Micaúne's geographic location served the coconut economy well in the past as companies like Madal took advantages of people's difficulties in trading their coconut outside Micaúne. As explained before, Madal invested in the flow of its production from different stations. But the collapse of the coconut economy and the lack of investment in means of transportation has led the area into economic isolation. Despite the geographic proximity between Quelimane and Micaúne, around 80 kilometres, it is very difficult to get into the area and the trip takes eight to ten hours. But this was not the case in the colonial period when an effective transport system was in place.

My informants recalled that there used to be a regular bus connecting Quelimane and Chinde via Micaúne and that the trip was completed on the same day and lasted two to three hours. Just before Mozambique's independence, there were two transport operators based in Micaúne namely, Humberto Nunes, who covered the route Chinde-Sede-Marradane, and Abreu e Paulino Moreira who operated from River Abreus to Inhassunge. Until recently, Madal, too, used its own fleet of boats to transport copra from Micaúne to Quelimane port, and local people were occasionally able to take advantage of this transport.

The privately owned transportation system stopped working during the first years of independence mainly because of the nationalisation of the few companies that provided such transport and the fact that the nationalised companies went bankrupt. For example, the nationalised Humberto Nunes Company did not operate for a long time as a result of financial problems. As a result, for 31 years, transportation of people and goods to and from Micaúne used artisanal canoes, which took several days to reach their destination.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁴http://macua.blogs.com/moambique_para_todos/economia_transportes_obras_publicas/page/73/. Document retrieved on 4 July 2014.

However, transport has improved considerably in the past 10 years due to a few local operators' purchase of cheaper Chinese engines ¹⁵⁵ to power artisanal boats and pick-up taxis. But it remains critically insufficient and unsafe. The boats and taxis are always overloaded, as all available passengers and their loads must fit in the only boat and taxi at work each day. This has resulted in fatal accidents over the years has been reported by the government and media.

According to my own experience, the trip from Quelimane to Micaúne now takes eight to ten hours, in four stages. The first comprises a trip by boat from Quelimane to the district of Inhassunge and takes fifteen to twenty minutes with a fare of seven Meticaïs and fifty cents. The second is undertaken by private pick-up taxi for approximately 40 kilometres to the banks of the River Abreus at a fare of 50 Meticaïs. This trip takes between two and three hours depending on the condition of the road which is very sandy in the dry season but better thereafter. The fare is expensive for most local residents, owing to their lack of sources of income.

A boat is again used for the third section for approximately 24 kilometres at a fare of 100 Meticaïs. The final stage is undertaken by a pick-up taxi at a fare of 50 Meticaïs from Madal "port" to the main village, Micaúne-Sede, on the main road (Figure 7.1.). This road was built in the colonial period and according to Decree 50/2000, it is classified as a tertiary road because it connects the capital of the district to its administrative posts or other districts. Given that since Mozambique's independence it has never been rehabilitated, except for some superficial interventions by Madal to ease its operations, the road has been severely degraded by transport load, rain and lack of maintenance. As a result travelling the 15 kilometres of this road takes about an hour.

¹⁵⁵ The cost of each boat was between 70,000 and 80,000 Meticaïs. Interview conducted in Chinde – Sede with Mr Elias Freitas on 15 August 2011.



Figure 7.1: Road number 320, Micaúne-Sede village.

Source: Concern Worldwide & Universidade Pedagógica (2008, p. 23).

The figure 7.1. shows the centre of Micaúne-Sede. The area comprises old buildings which belonged to copra traders in the colonial period and a few recent buildings such as schools and a handful of private houses. Except for these buildings, and less than 50 others that are made of bricks, most houses in the entire administrative post of Micaúne are built from local materials (sticks, mud, grass and palm leaves). Generally speaking, the majority of Micaúne residents cannot afford to build cement houses because of the high cost of construction materials and transport.

7.2. State events as a site of interaction

Micaúne's economic isolation has implications for the local residents' effective interaction with the outside world. The current situation reflects the post-colonial state's lack of public investment in this area since independence. Up to now the state has not prioritised any kind of investment and has relied on private capital, in particular, Madal, to develop the area. Moreover, high-ranking government officials have visited only sporadically. Central government's senior dignitaries rarely visit Micaúne. In the 39 years since Mozambique's independence, Micaúne was visited by the president of the republic once, in 2010.

According to Bierschenk and Sardan (1997), senior state dignitaries' visits bring a sense of the state to local people. These visits, they argue, are special occasions for local people to expose their daily problems and, at the same time, to expect solutions.

Micaúne provides a contrasting example by suggesting that high state dignitaries' limited visits to the area show their partial interests in the region. The governor of Zambézia visited the area once a year, although in 2011 and 2012 he made no visit. During my fieldwork, two scheduled visits, one by the provincial governor and another by the district administrator, were cancelled on the grounds that these dignitaries were busy with more important things. Some research participants felt that central government officials avoided coming because they were unable to solve the problem of the coconut economy's collapse.

At the local level, the head of the administrative post, who is appointed by the Minister of State Administration after consultation with the province governor, is the highest state dignitary in the area. The heads of localities are subordinate to the head of the administrative post and are appointed by the provincial governor after consultation with the District Administrator.¹⁵⁶ The head of the administrative post is charged with responsibility for promoting and organising the participation of communities in solving local problems.¹⁵⁷ He must also establish a linkage between the state and local communities through regular visits to provide coordination, monitoring and supervision in his area of jurisdiction.¹⁵⁸

Although the head of the administrative post and the heads of localities have been provided with motorbikes to facilitate moving within their territory, they still face the

¹⁵⁶ *Lei 8/2003; Decreto 11/2005, Artigo 60, No 2* – Law 8/2003; Decree 11/2005, Article 60, No. 2.

¹⁵⁷ *Lei 8/2003, Artigo 47, Alinea A* - Law 8/2003, Article 47, Point A.

¹⁵⁸ *Decreto 11/2005* - Decree 11/2005.

challenge of poor roads. It is difficult to visit communities living on the islands and in other areas where there are no roads, as my experience can attest.

During my fieldwork, there was not a single visit by the head of the administrative post to the outlying areas under his jurisdiction, and he spent most of his time in his office. Rarely did he venture out of the village and many complained about his limited contact with the population. His predecessor, by contrast, was easily approached and engaged with about issues affecting the area. This man is remembered with nostalgia, particularly at festive events, because he used to involve not only the traditional leaders but also ordinary people in preparing the festivities.

I followed all major events that occurred in Micaúne, from soccer matches to government rallies, to understand the role local everyday politics plays in people's livelihoods. According to Sardan (2005), understanding local powers and politics must not be restricted to "formal" institutions, but must consider all "public spaces" and positions of eminence.

In a similar vein, and building on a growing ethnographic literature that focuses on state-organised events in Mozambique, Gonçalves (2012) argues that public events produce a "chronopolitics" on which reproduction of the state rests. As a result, the immediate effect of staging and participation in state-organised public events is an inscription of state officials, bureaucrats and members of the public alike in the state's temporalities. In this context, state public events are a platform to observe how different actors produce and reproduce power and the effect this has on society as a whole (Sharma & Gupta 2006; Le Meur 2006; Alexander 1997).

Arguments which hold that national celebrations are occasions on which central states everywhere make their presence felt in far-flung parts of the territories under their control would seem to require modification in the case of Micaúne. I focus here on the annual commemoration of the Lusaka Agreement signed in 1974, which paved the way for Mozambique's independence in 1975. My account of the festivities I observed suggests

that while the central Mozambique state may attempt to make its presence felt in this way, it found it difficult to persuade the people of the district to participate in this exercise. Indeed, as I will show, local government officials did not do a very good job of organising the 2012 festivities, although whether this was the result of their own lack of enthusiasm for the central state or their incompetence is open to debate.

7 September 2012 was a sunny day and just before the scheduled start at 7:30 am, I walked to the venue, the administration's office where the colonial administrator had worked. The walk took approximately 10 minutes, but along the way, there was no sign that a major event was about to begin.

My experience of participating in similar events elsewhere in Mozambique was that people started preparations well before the main event. I was, therefore, surprised to find that I was the first to arrive at the venue only five minutes before the scheduled start. People had been expected to gather much earlier to start with various cultural activities, and I thought I was at the wrong place. By 8:00 am a few government staff had arrived and they too looked worried not to see a crowd. The first thing they did was to go to the house of the head of the administrative post, located approximately 50 metres from the administrative post office, to get instructions.

The office and the house are linked by a straight road which makes it possible to see whatever is happening between the two places. As I was told, the head of the administrative post's instruction to his subordinates was to go from house to house to summon people living near the venue. When there was a reasonable crowd, the head of the post came and took charge of the programme. The event comprised a gathering in front of the government administration, a march to the Heroes' Square, and finally a public rally at the stage that had been built for the visit of the President of the Republic to Micaúne in 2010.

For some reasons, things did not go according to plan. The gathering was delayed, a wreath of flowers had to be improvised, and the stage was not prepared in advance. The

venue for the rally was therefore changed to Heroes' Square, the ceremony was brief and, after an hour, the crowd dispersed. Apart from the four government staff already mentioned, only three community leaders were present in their official uniforms, plus a few adults, mostly teachers, and a group of pupils from different primary schools.

Certainly, something went wrong with the organisation of the event, but the low turnout and the apathy of both traditional leaders and government staff suggest a lack of support for the head of the post. People were unanimous that the head of the administrative post was an arrogant newcomer who was insensitive to their problems. There was also gossip about his private life, fuelled by a desire to discredit him. These attempts to discredit the head of the administrative post and his unpopularity might reflect dissatisfaction with the fact that state apparatus in Micaúne is controlled by newcomers. Indeed, all heads of localities except one were newcomers. Among them, there was a woman who was also the youngest, in her twenties. She is a daughter of a senior government officer in Luabo and her early appointment as head of a locality probably reflected her father's influence. All in all, the control of the state by newcomers and the government's inability to provide adequate services reinforced the distance between local residents and the state.

7.3. The legacy of the armed conflict

The armed conflict in Micaúne left resentment among the people. While local people were not particularly committed to one side or the other, the area was held by Renamo for a number of years. When the conflict ended, Frelimo subjected the locals to retribution for their ostensible co-operation with Renamo. This has led to people's disengagement from government plans and to a tense relation between Renamo and Frelimo, the only political parties represented in Micaúne since the 1994 founding elections.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁹ Despite the perception of certain disengagement with the government, most people in Micaúne have been voting for Frelimo since 1994. In 1994 the result was 43, 6 percent for Frelimo and 27, 8 percent for Renamo; in 1999 49, 1 per cent for Frelimo and 36, 2 percent for Renamo; in 2004 49, 4 percent for

During my fieldwork in 2012, I was able to follow the tension between these two parties. Government officials were implicated in the alleged misallocation of food aid.¹⁶⁰ There were rumours of inappropriate distribution of food aid following a cyclone in the area. Food assistance was provided through registration, but non-registered people were able to get food while some of the registered were not, which raised suspicions. The head of the administrative post of Micaúne was implicated in the matter and several sacks of food were allegedly seen at his house.

These accusations reached the government at district and provincial levels, which sent an investigating team comprising representatives of the Criminal Investigation Police (PIC), State Security Services (SISE) and the district government to examine the allegations. The composition of the team suggests that the mission went far beyond the issue of diverting food and had a political motivation. How otherwise can one understand that the government sent the state security services to investigate a relatively minor offence?

Within government and Frelimo circles in Micaúne, there was a strong belief that Renamo members were behind the accusation that food was being misallocated as a means of manipulating the local community into destabilising the government. Effectively, the accusation resulted in a court case against the head of the administrative post and he had to be away several times for the trial in Chinde-Sede. He was found not guilty by the court. However, the court case highlighted the acrimonious relations between Frelimo and Renamo which date back to the armed conflict.

This was also obvious in an on-going land dispute at the village centre between a teacher and the Renamo party. A few years earlier, Renamo had been granted permission by one

Frelimo and 38, 7 percent for Renamo; in 2004 61, 2 percent for Frelimo and 32, 0 percent for Renamo (<http://www.iese.ac.mz/cartografia-eleitoral/#/election/>). For 2014, Frelimo continued to win although there are no official figures available per district and administrative posts.

¹⁶⁰ A report that was accessed in Micaúne showed that almost every year food does not get to the people in need because it is diverted (Posto Administrativo de Micaúne 2011).

of its members who owned a plot to build the party's headquarters there. The infrastructure was built, but some time later it collapsed during a cyclone and Renamo did not have the money to rebuild it. After some time, the owner of the plot got sick and left for Sofala Province where he later died. An alleged relative of the deceased sold the plot to a newcomer teacher to build a house.

When the teacher started building his house, Renamo members came to claim rights over the plot. This dispute was then mediated by the government at the administrative post level, but soon the issue became politicised as Renamo claimed that the government was trying to curtail its political activities. To date, the government has avoided direct resolution of the case. Although the teacher is already living in the house, Renamo members have not given up and sporadically they come to the main entrance of the house to raise their party flag over the plot of land.

Besides the rift between Frelimo and Renamo, Frelimo's local branch was in considerable turmoil at the time of my fieldwork. Some Frelimo local members were apparently conspiring to bring down the current party secretary, Estevão Jemusse, who had been in the position for the past 15 years. He is also one of the people who own an old shop, where he lives and tries to do business. Mr Jemusse is accused of taking party property to his home village/district to the detriment of local members. In order to go ahead with their plan, they convened a few meetings from which Mr Jemusse was excluded. I heard about those meetings through one of my informants, after which I began to follow the issue.

When Mr Jemusse realised that there was a conspiracy, he started making contact with the district and provincial branches to find out what was happening. On several occasions, his inquiries were blocked, but eventually, he managed to gain control of the situation. This episode revealed that there was a concerted effort to get rid of him on the grounds that he was a newcomer and that it was time for a local to lead the local party branch. Again, this indicates a latent rift between newcomers and locals, using different weapons such as gossiping and conspiracy.

A similar event, but at a different level, happened in 2005 involving Mr Jaime, then a Madal employee for 11 years. He began as a section cashier at Mahimba Cattle with a six-month renewable contract after which he got a full contract. In the context of the 2004 general elections, he accused Madal Company of providing logistical support to Renamo to build its headquarters in Micaúne. The support included materials such as joists and nails, which were authorised by Madal headquarters in Quelimane; but he, being the person responsible for accounting in Micaúne, had no information about it. When he questioned Madal's local manager, Mr Manuel Geraldo Cardoso, about payment for the materials delivered to Renamo, the latter's response was that he was following orders from the managing director.

The managing director of the company was at the time (and still is) Mr Rogério, a Portuguese descendant, born in Chimoio (central Mozambique) and a veterinarian by training. Mr Geraldo Manuel Cardoso is a Portuguese citizen who worked for Madal for some 50 years. He began his career as a foreman before ascending to the position of local manager at the Micaúne plantation. Mr Cardoso had an assistant manager, Mr Alberto Elias, a Mozambican national.

When the case played out, the Micaúne manager reportedly told Mr Jaime that supporting Renamo was a way to prevent Frelimo continuing in power since he considered that party to be corrupt. When the company's strategy met opposition from Mr Jaime, support for Renamo became a problem and he was accused of misappropriation of funds. Madal's management put up Mr António Vasco, then deputy head of security at Madal, as a witness. This gentleman confirmed the allegations of misappropriation of funds by Mr Jaime. A criminal case was brought against him in Micaúne that led to his detention without trial in Quelimane some weeks later. But some time afterwards he was released and transferred to the Macuse plantation in Maganja da Costa, a district located north of Quelimane, where he waited for the trial.

It seems that Madal's management felt that the trial would damage the company's image and decided to withdraw Mr Cardoso from Mozambique and send him to Portugal by

granting him early retirement. This tactic had the objective of obstructing the possibility of a fair trial in the absence of one key witness. When Mr Jaime heard of this, he tried to contact some institutions (the Quelimane Judiciary Court, Mozambican Radio and Mozambican Television) to prevent Mr Cardoso leaving the country, but he did not succeed.

Indeed, when the trial finally took place, Mr Cardoso was absent because he had already left for Portugal, and Mr Jaime was found not guilty of the accusation made by the company. However, he was not given any compensation for a false accusation and also lost his job. Until today, he still claims that Madal must compensate him for damages and, whenever there is an opportunity, he presents his case. One such occasion was during the 2010 presidential rally in Micaúne when Mr Jaime was able to outwit the president's security and said to the president that he was expelled from Madal because he dared to question why the company was supporting Renamo. The president of the republic instructed the government of Zambézia on the spot to follow up this case; but one year later, nothing had been done.

Mr Jaime accused the provincial government, in particular, the Director of Labour, of protecting Madal by supplying it with confidential information in order to undermine his case. At the time I met him in Micaúne during 2012, he had high hopes of using me to approach the national government because I came from Maputo. Madal's leadership seems to have thought that Renamo would win the 2004 elections, mainly because of its good electoral performance in 1999 and the fact that the new Frelimo candidate, Armando Guebuza, was not very well known by most people.

Therefore, supporting Renamo was a strategy to ensure future good relations with a new government. During this period, Madal also increased the availability of credit to local traders for the commercialisation of copra. This episode was recalled by many people to whom I spoke, particularly because it was an attempt to get rid of the local manager who was perceived to be undermining Frelimo's position.

7.4 Community authorities and local development

The move to the recognition of traditional authorities' role in the countries development was initiated in the early 1990s after a ban of 15 years and continues until today (Kyed 2007; West 2008; Florêncio 2008; Obarrio 2010). This was particularly relevant in the context of Mozambique post-war reconstruction where most of the state power had been eroded and traditional authorities were called on to collaborate with local state institutions particularly in contexts where the state's presence appeared marginal. Some think that this was also a strategy to weaken Renamo's support in rural areas (Sumich & Honwana 2007).

In any case, this reform enhanced the role community institutions played in public safety and conflict management, and this was reinforced by the establishment of community courts under Law 4/92 of 6 May 1992. However, these courts can only judge minor household cases while major cases such as voluntary homicides are judged in formal courts (Kyed 2009).

The approval of the Decree 15/2000, on community authorities, and associated laws thereafter was part of the central state's efforts to address the gap between it and local people - a problem which is by no means unique to Micaúne or Zambézia Province. The conceptual shift introduced by Decree 15/2000 from traditional authorities to community authorities was a strategy to dilute the former's position by introducing neighbourhood secretaries who are part of Frelimo party structures. As a result, chiefs and secretaries work side by side under whichever local government jurisdiction they report to. Community leaders, who are supposed to be close to the local people and to understand their priorities, become an arm of the government.

Traditional authorities have been a prominent feature in Micaúne since the colonial period, despite their banning by the socialist government at the country's independence in 1975 (Chapter Three). Some of the leaders who performed their duties in the colonial period continued to do so thereafter. A local government report lists the names of chiefs who have been active since the colonial period distributed throughout the five localities

of Micaúne.

As in the colonial period, these chiefs continued to perform a vital role in the recruitment of employees for Madal since they were in charge of selecting people in their areas of jurisdiction. In fact, as Pitcher (1998, p. 116) points out,

In Mozambique socialism, war and privatisation reshaped rather than replaced local political authority and certain customary patterns, and they have unsettled rather than reconfigured the ways in which rural people make a living.

In Micaúne, current recognition of community authorities is the outcome of a long and controversial process. Although the decree was approved in 2000, only four chiefs were reinstated by 2002.

According to the district administrator of the time, this was due to doubts over the interpretation of the decree and the associated regulations and procedures. For instance, there was some doubt about where power lay between chiefs and secretaries because their respective functions, competencies and areas of action had not been specified; and finally, there were no clear procedures for the recognition of the diverse categories of community leaders (Samajo 2002, p. 23).

With regard to Micaúne,

Chiefs indicated that they were not available to join the process for fear of future consequences such as persecution and death as happened during the armed conflict, but they preferred to wait and see instead of joining in droves (Samajo 2002, p. 26).

Approximately 12 years later, the number of community leaders recognised by the state in Micaúne was 228 (14 chiefs and 14 secretaries of the first echelon, 53 of the second echelon and 147 of the third echelon). In the current dispensation, chiefs are delegated to perform a range of key state-administrative and security duties that *inter alia* include policing, taxation, registration, justice enforcement, land allocation and rural

development (Kyed 2009, p. 4).¹⁶¹

When it comes to criminal cases the roles of community leaders and institutions such as Ametramo are completely disregarded, despite the fact that they could assist the local police to deal with the high crime rate. The killing of elderly women accused of witchcraft is a case at point. Their killing is considered a criminal offence to be dealt with by state law. But the capacity of the state to solve these cases has been limited. Indeed, although the killing of women has been reported every year, none of these crimes has ever been solved.

Talking to my informants, I came to realise that police investigations never led to identification and punishment of the offenders. When I approached the local police commander about the issue, he simply lamented the fact that the people continued to mete out justice on their own. The fact that these crimes continued and people did not report them indicates their lack of trust in the police.

The local police post¹⁶² was understaffed, with only two police officers available to assist in the four dispersed localities.¹⁶³ They were also in charge of managing the only local prison, a building without internal doors or a ceiling, which was all that remained from the colonial period. As a result, the government as a whole and the police, in particular, have failed to manage most local conflicts.

The government decision undertaken in the mid-2000s to make funds available across the country for local development under the control of the local state authorities increased the

¹⁶¹ *Regulamento do decreto 15/2000, article 5* - Regulation of the Decree 15/2000, Article 5.

¹⁶² This is the lowest public safety services structure in Mozambique after commands and police stations. Police posts are located in rural areas while police commands and stations are mostly found in urban areas.

¹⁶³ This can be considered as an improvement considering that, in the post-independence period, even at the height of the armed conflict which ended in 1992, Micaúne did not have a single policeman, but only a few local militias.

importance of community leadership in local development. As in other administrative posts of Mozambique, community leaders in Micaúne are part of the Institutions of Participation and Community Consultation (IPCC) such as Administrative Post Consultative Councils, Local Forums and Local Committees. Through these institutions, local communities have access to different state initiatives and funds for local development.

Community leaders and government officials who are simultaneously Frelimo cadres are part of the local elite which is in control of the IPCC. Despite the existence of local councils, Micaúne lacks active civic groupings which can engage with the government and demand accountability for public resources. Moreover, Micaúne's isolation makes it difficult for local civic groupings to benefit from others' experiences and to explore the opportunities provided by the law and other initiatives.

So far, the few independent civic groups in Micaúne have not been able to take advantage of the *Fundo de Desenvolvimento Distrital* (FDD), the District Development Fund, which is a presidential initiative established in 2005 by President Armando Guebuza to allocate seven million Meticals, the equivalent of R2.3 million, to each of the districts of the country in order to promote employment, produce food and improve the well-being of rural people. This is a rotating fund scheme where people must return the amount they got so that it can be allocated to other beneficiaries.

Current experience with this process shows that there has been an initial problem with understanding the purposes of the programme, as well as it's being hijacked by local government officials and elites. Evaluations undertaken to date regarding the FDD have highlighted a number of problems such as the non-return and misuse of allocated money, corruption, and political and economic exclusion (Ministério de Planificação e Desenvolvimento 2008; 2009; Forquilha 2009).

Repayment of the seven million Meticaïs remains a problem throughout the country.¹⁶⁴

A study undertaken by the Centre for Public Integrity (CIP) in 2012 shows that, on average, 40 percent of the funds went to civil servants, 30 per cent to civil servants' families, 10 percent to associations, including Frelimo, and 20 per cent to individual beneficiaries (CIP 2012b, p. 5). These problems also apply to Micaúne. The first funds under FDD were approved in 2007 for 13 projects and a total amount of 826,350 Meticaïs (the equivalent of R275, 450), of which only two were granted to women. In 2011, 33 new projects were approved and financed for a total amount of 2,577,500 Meticaïs (the equivalent of R859, 167) and only six women benefited.¹⁶⁵

Apart from the bias towards men, there has been some conflict of interest in roles, since some members of the consultative councils are simultaneously beneficiaries of development funds. For instance, the only local stationery shop is run by a newcomer public official who was granted money through the so-called Seven Million Meticaïs' initiative and he was a part of the committee that approved it. This project received the highest amount approved so far under FDD. This stationery shop has been supplying the administration of Micaúne and local schools on credit while waiting for the funds to be transferred from the district government.

Similarly, two of the three local transport operators are Frelimo members and one of them is also a public official. They got money from FDD to purchase cars for public transport. They, too, are members of the awarding councils. The fact that recipients of funds for local initiatives are simultaneously members of the councils in charge of approving grants poses an ethical problem of transparency and integrity. This means that people who are not government officials or members of the ruling party are excluded. This reinforces the

¹⁶⁴ Notícias, 6 de Maio de 2010.

¹⁶⁵ Administrative post of Micaúne Reports; Consultative Council Minute, 30 November 2011.

widespread perception that the state and its machinery are controlled by newcomers and benefit them to the detriment of the locals.

With regard to land, community leaders enjoy a certain power in allocating land in their area of jurisdiction but this must be formalised as a land use right (DUAT). The process of awarding title in DUATs includes the sanction of the respective local leaders and administrative authorities, preceded by consultations with communities for the purpose of confirming that the area is vacant.¹⁶⁶ But determining that an area is vacant can be problematic as Mr Ismael Ossemane, national leader at the Mozambican Farmer's Union (UNAC),¹⁶⁷ put it:

There is no free land; one community goes up to the next and, with a few exceptions, all land falls under the customary occupation of at least one community, and there is no 'free' land between communities (Land Campaign position, 25 November 1999, quoted in Hanlon 2004, p. 607).

At its extreme, this suggests that all land granted to private interests overlaps with local communities' land. This is confirmed by a recent study, which suggests that "the majority of agricultural investments in Mozambique have established their plantations through the titling of land within the customary land domain" (Di Matteo & Schoneveld 2016, p.55).

In fact, Tanner (2002, p. 15), argues that

Normally each household requires access to and control over different types of land and resources over the course of a year. Some resources are communally used (such as forests, grazing land and water sources) while others may be regenerating and apparently unused as part of the lengthy rotation cycles. Therefore, identifying and registering only the

¹⁶⁶ *Lei 19/97, Artigo 13, No 3* - Law 19/97, Article 13, No 3.

¹⁶⁷ It is the biggest movement in the country with more than 86,000 individual members grouped in 2,200 associations and co-operatives which are part of 83 district unions, seven provincial unions and four provincial nuclei (<http://www.unac.org.mz/index.php/unac/nossos-membros>).

individual plots currently under cultivation effectively leaves the vast majority of the local resource base unprotected as apparently ‘free’ land.

This is the reason why any investor interested in land is legally obliged to conduct a public consultation with the local community before the land can be allocated.¹⁶⁸ A private investor, to be accepted by a community, has to fulfil some of its needs, which, generally speaking, are not based on money, but in kind (*good and service* – my highlight), and the decision on how to pay is taken during a local community consultation (Tique 2001, p. 10).

In general, however, community land consultations have been deficient, leading many authors to question their relevance. Lahiff (2003) argues that in certain areas of the country private applicants are granted land by government officials with minimal consultation. Hanlon (2002, p. 14) suggests that

Corruption at all levels remains a major problem and contributes to land grabbing as senior people in government, the military and party obtain land and either bypass the consultation procedures completely, or use the district administrator to force through a token consultation.

“A study of Zambézia indicated that a significant number of applications for titles have been approved without any recorded consultation with the community” (Hanlon 2004, p. 608).

Nhantumbo & Salomão (2010, p. 4) point out that

“To date, the effectiveness of community consultations as a tool to protect community rights remains questionable”. Therefore, it is not enough to grant communities rights to negotiate about land when they have no real power to engage with investors.

This has been a problem in rural areas ever since the approval of the land law of 1997.

¹⁶⁸ *Decreto 66/98 de 8 de Dezembro* – Decree 66/98 of 8 December.

According to Negrão (1999a; b), many community members did not know their rights or the importance of legalising their land rights. Tanner (2002) also noted that people did not know the difference between renting out and selling land. The former is legal but the latter is not. This is the reason why more than 200 hundred civil society organisations established a land campaign in 1996 to disseminate information aimed, in particular, at rural families (Negrão 1999a; b).

In the case of Micaúne, community leaders expressed very limited knowledge about the land laws in general and DUATs in particular. As a result, their participation in such processes is limited to being informed by the provincial directorate of environmental affairs about issuing a DUAT to a certain individual in their area of jurisdiction. However, they do allocate land locally to people outside the formal DUATs.

When an individual needs a piece of land in the area, his request is presented to the neighbourhood secretary who, in coordination with the chief of the area, allocates the land. But this allocation does not reach the provincial directorate for environmental affairs as being occupied because it did not follow the legal process. Sometimes this is because it is very expensive for Micaúne residents to cope with the costs. As was mentioned in Chapter One, travelling to the capital city to apply for DUAT is expensive because one must have money for transport and accommodation. Moreover, the applicant is responsible for bringing technicians from Quelimane to Micaúne to measure and formalise the plots. As a result, very few residents have DUATs despite having occupied the land for years.

This chapter highlighted how the collapse of the coconut economy has pushed the state to become a central actor for Micaúne residents. But the relationship between it and local residents has been ambiguous due to the legacy of the armed conflict and the fact that the state apparatus is controlled by newcomers.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CHANGING MEANINGS ATTRIBUTED TO LAND

This chapter discusses how Micaúne’s coconut crisis led to local people changing the meaning and value they attributed to land. There has been a shift from land conceived merely as the host of coconut trees to three new dimensions: a) land as a commodity; b) land as a source of identity; and c) land as a reserve of wealth. Peters (2013) attributes changes in the meanings given to land elsewhere to the effects of structural adjustment programmes and market liberalisation policies, which led people to look to family and customary land as sources of food and cash.

The three dimensions I identify help to explain why, despite the loss of their main source of livelihood, Micaúne residents have not emigrated *en masse* in search of new or better living conditions elsewhere. This differs from many other places where people in similar situations have decided to leave for better living conditions. Micaúne residents, on the contrary, have adopted a different strategy of wait and see, for they believe they are going to be better off where they are once the promise of the wealth that lies in their subsoil materialises.

8.1. Land as a commodity

Polanyi argued that land and labour are the universal components of all economies and constitute the basis of society itself. Before the rise of the market, land and labour were controlled and managed through persisting social relationships; consequently, material life was “embedded” in society. As the market expanded, land and labour were “disembedded” from their social moorings and turned into commodities to be transferred through purchase and sale. When this occurred in the West, society experienced a “great transformation” (Polanyi 1944).

In recent times, the increasing demand for land for large-scale investment has been transforming land values, leading to its “revalorisation” and the rezoning of household land-use activities (Bury 2005, p. 231). According to Joireman (2008, p. 1324),

The major factor behind these changes is the transformation of land from a factor of production to a source of food and as an asset, from an abundant resource valued for its ability to provide income through coconuts to a scarce commodity that has cash value.

As a result, continued population growth and limited areas for expansion, lack of off-farm sources of income and increasing investor interest are creating pressure on land. The more scarce land becomes, the more its local value increases (Bruce, Fortmann & Riddell 1985; Azeez & Onyema 2013). The factors mentioned above have been responsible for “Africa’s change from a continent of land abundance in the first half of the twentieth century to one of increasing land scarcity by its end” (Berry 2002, p. 639).

Markets in land are active throughout Africa, within customary or formal systems (Toulmin & Quan 2000, p. 28).¹⁶⁹ Chimhowu & Woodhouse (2006, pp. 359–60) argue that “the commoditisation of access to land within the framework of customary tenure has been evident for more than a century and is now both more common and increasing”. In many societies in Africa and Asia, trees have been used as a marker of customary ownership rights.

In English law, which provided the basis for much of the land tenure legislation of the late 1950s and early 1960s in Africa, trees were considered part of the land; the control of things on the land, such as trees, could not be vested in anyone other than the owner.¹⁷⁰ However, this narrow conception could not account for the variety of land and tree tenures in different societies; in some, rights in land and rights in trees are completely separated, while in others they overlap (Bruce, Fortmann & Riddell 1985; Neef &

¹⁶⁹ For an analysis of the land market in Mozambique, read Bowen (1992); Baloi (2001); Assulai (2001); Muchanga (2001); Negrão et al. (2004) and Bruce (2007).

¹⁷⁰ <http://www.fao.org/docrep/u8995e/u8995e06.htm>. Retrieved on 3 October 2014.

Schwarzmeier 2001; Quisumbing et al. 2001; Martial 2011.). In reality, “land and tree tenures are dynamic and change in response to population pressure, economics, and land use among others” (Bruce, Fortmann & Riddell 1985, p. xiv).

Land and tree tenure has been a common practice in some areas of Zambézia province (Soberano 1999). Similarly, the commodification of land in the area of my study is not a novelty. Land (or the trees standing on it) has been commoditised in Micaúne since the 1880s. At the time, the Portuguese government decided to make land concessions to private interests including white farmers. Over time, a number of private farmers have bought land in Micaúne and by 1973, they controlled 92,158 hectares (Negrão 2001, p. 174).

In the 1960s, land concessions in the Zambezi Delta increased considerably due to the 1961 legislative package and its application. From the 244 land titles granted up to 1975, around 100 were issued in the 1960s, occupying 331,174 hectares and belonging to 81 owners. In Micaúne, in the 1960s and early 1970s, there were six families occupying an area of 1,426 hectares used for livestock (Negrão 2001, p. 179).

Owing to the discriminatory nature of the law and the high cost of purchasing land, it was unusual for African families to buy land. However, through transactions involving palm trees, African families were able to expand their holdings. These transactions happened outside state control and according to Negrão (2001, p. 218),

They were based on the evaluation of the number of trees and attached plots. Land without trees could not be sold, but it had a value that was considered at the time of evaluation. Stated differently, for every fruit tree a price was established according to the market value.

In this area, rights over land where palm trees were planted meant that they were considered to be the property of the owner and his children, entitling them to reap the rewards at any time. The sale of land was a complex process and followed certain rules. First, nobody was allowed to dispose of his or her entire area of land; second, the sale

should be made in the presence of local chiefs namely *Mwenes* and *Samassoas*¹⁷¹ as witnesses to sanction a just evaluation and assess the reason for the transaction. Third, there should be a compelling reason and finally, the sale was definitive and led to the loss of all previous rights (Negrão 2001, p. 217-218).

There was also a practice of borrowing land in accordance with rules whose application was overseen by the local chiefs (*Mwenes* and *Samassoas*), who could invite the families involved to reach an agreement on the land without any payment. “The tenants were allowed to eat the fruit of the trees but were totally forbidden to sell the trees” (Negrão 2001, p. 214). There was a certain limitation regarding selling what was considered family land; it was argued that “no child (boy or girl) was allowed to sell inherited land without the consent of other heirs/siblings ... because one could not bury a stranger on the family land. However, for the disposal, the opinion of women was stronger than of the brothers. The inherited land could not be sold if there was a sister who disagreed with the transfer of ownership to a stranger. The reason given was that she had no security of tenure in the household where she got married and she would want to return home when the marriage had finished (Negrão 2001, p. 217).

All these land transactions continued throughout the socialist and liberal phases. Customary land practices were still strong among the older generation of Micaúne residents at the time of my fieldwork. A case in point is Mr Bruno who, after working in Chinde-Sede as a domestic worker, later established himself in Micaúne as an independent tailor at the end of the 1960s. He was able to invest in palm trees, including land, and came to own four big plots which are still in his possession. Excluding private

¹⁷¹ The former was also known as *Mambos*. They were located at the central level and were the subordinates of the Mwenemotapa Emperor while the latter, also known as *Fumos* or *Nkosi*, terms imported from South Africa, were at the provincial *level*. The central level managed the state while the provincial level managed the relationship between the state and the rural families (Negrão 2001, p. 192).

farmers and traders' families, he is one of the few local people controlling large portions of land.

I met Mr Bruno in 2012 at his well-built house, in the company of his wife. They live alone as their four children are grown up and married, with their own households. Three of the children left Micaúne some time ago; only the last remained in Micaúne, dedicated to his own business. In fact, this son is a successful young entrepreneur who owns one of the houses left by the colonial traders, where he established a shop and runs a workshop for motorbikes. He is also one of the largest holders of livestock.

Mr Bruno spends his days at home while his wife tries to grow vegetables on one of his four big plots next to their house. The other plots are scattered around the area and remain idle as most palm trees are dead. Considering Mr Bruno's age, one would have expected that his children would be actively engaged in their father's holdings, but this is not the case. When asked if his plots were still in his possession, Mr Bruno replied: "Yes, but the land has no value because all the palm trees are dead. I can't sell an empty space". Mr Bruno epitomises the old principle of land tenure which attached the value of land to the trees on it. As Negrão pointed out, "the dependence on alliances for the reproduction of the family was much more profitable than the alienation of land or speculation in income" (Negrão 2001, p. 295).

This scenario changed with the widespread death of palm trees as a result of CLYD in the 2000s. It was the absence of palm trees that led to a reconceptualisation of the economic value attributed to land. The lengthy economic association between palm trees and land gave way to a clear separation between them. Land regained a market value and it stands in its own right as a means of production. As mentioned in Chapters Four and Five, the collapse of the coconut economy associated with government and NGOs plans and projects triggered a high demand for land.

Although land sales have been common in the area, they have intensified in recent times. Marcelino, a man in his 40s and a grandson of an important landowner in Micaúne-Sede,

confirms this: “Now that there is no coconut we must find alternatives. I am capitalising the land that I inherited from my father in order to secure a better future for my children”. By ‘capitalising’ he meant different transactions related to the land such as selling, renting and lending. The statement encapsulates an approach commonly held by many Micaúne residents now.

Mr Marcelino inherited his land from his father, a Madal employee who first worked as a *Machileiro* (porters who transported white people in carrying chairs)¹⁷² and later became an independent carpenter. On his father’s death, Marcelino, as the oldest son, inherited the land which comprised eight plots scattered around Micaúne-Sede. Over the years, he was able to acquire, rent and sell land whenever he felt the need. It appears that most people involved in land deals in Micaúne are unaware that these transactions are illegal, as both the constitution and the land law say that land cannot be sold and that only the state has the prerogative to grant land use rights.

Despite being illegal, people do sell land claiming that what they were doing was a matter of survival, as evidenced by Mr Marcelino’s conduct. Moreover, these illegal land dealings might also be an expression of subtle resistance to and subversion of state laws as most people feel entitled to deal in the land they have been occupied for generations.

This suggests that local residents have decided to take a proactive approach to solving their problem, instead of just complaining and waiting for someone else to sort it out. Indeed, local residents believe that it is worth trying rather than just sitting and suffering. Here land becomes crucial because it is the main available asset they can count on in this respect. The fact that Mr Marcelino is a secretary of Mugorre neighbourhood, a position

¹⁷² Machilla is a hammock hung either on one long pole or on two parallel poles, carried by two or four men on their shoulders (Colville 1911).

in which he has been active only since 2008, gives him an advantage in managing his land and the opportunity to know about prospective sellers and buyers. This is because neighbourhood secretaries must endorse for the chiefs all land requests in a certain geographic area.

This was evident in a recent land transaction in which Mr Marcelino was involved. The electrification of Micaúne in 2012 attracted a private mobile operator, Movitel, to the area. The company's staff visited Micaúne to identify a suitable area for the necessary antenna and, after their search, they identified a certain plot. According to the local authorities, this plot belonged to Mr Marcelino and the company was advised to contact him. Movitel's staff was able to meet Mr Marcelino and discuss the transaction on that piece of land. Mr Marcelino accepted the deal and the company drafted a contract under which he receives a monthly payment. Again, people like Mr Marcelino capitalise (to use his own term) their holdings to generate an income. Madal too has been renting out its Mahimba Game Farm to foreign companies and, to date, the management of this Farm has been done by American and, recently, South African companies.

Many people rent out land locally to generate an income. Most of those renting land for agriculture live on the coast where there is not sufficient fertile land for growing food. The plots are borrowed for a limited period, after which the land is returned to the owner. The payment is undertaken in cash or goods depending on the financial situation of the household.

Renting land for building purposes is done mainly by public officials who work in the area. They see their presence as temporary and, therefore, have no need to engage in long-term land use. The houses built can be considered precarious, constructed with sticks, mud and grass ceilings which can be brought down when the officials leave.

As suggested by White (2010, p. 513) with regard to South Africa, "buildings made with mud and thatch may evoke a sense of insecurity and powerlessness, by contrast to cement buildings which have a claim to permanence". These sentiments are also present in

Micaúne as one of my interviewees said, “I cannot spend much money (on other things) because I need to buy sand and cement to finish my house back home”.¹⁷³

Although it is rare, destruction of a house can occur. Normally, the departing tenant’s house is kept and rented out to another person. In the case of a tenant refusing to return the house, however, the matter may lead to conflict. Hengenbach (1998, p. 32) reported a case of

Conflict in Magude, southern Mozambique, among female farmers who refused to give up borrowed land, and disputes over proper location of the boundaries between cultivated fields. Those conflicts led to the emergence of *Xifula* witchcraft as a weapon as those newcomers women who borrowed land in the end refused to return it and instead started to threaten the owners with witchcraft. This had led to local women’s increasingly restrictive definition of who does and does not belong to the ‘cultivating community’.

In this instance, witchcraft was used by newcomers to address issues of access to land in the area. Although witchcraft accusations were a common feature in my area of study, they did not involve conflicts between newcomers and locals over access to resources. Nor were there general cases of conflicts associated with refusal to return borrowed land. However, there is potential for such conflicts to arise and increase in future as a result of the growing demand for land, particularly because the number of newcomers with a regular income has been increasing year after year.

Mr Marcelino’s story contrasts with Mr Bruno’s and exemplifies the changing attitudes to land brought about by commodification. Although this might benefit those who own land, it is likely to lead to alienation of the area’s most valued asset and to fuel land-associated conflicts in the long run. These conflicts are likely to happen in two main areas. They

¹⁷³ Interview conducted with Mr Campeão on 11 September 2012.

may well occur over boundaries, given that the natural landmarks - palm trees - are no more. On the other hand, they are also likely to occur between local residents who are short of land and lack other sources of income and people from the outside who have the considerable advantage of earning regular incomes.

8.2. Land as a source of identity

In the literature, a place is considered an important aspect of people's identity and belonging (Ponte 2004; Haaland 2008). The meanings attributed to places are multiple and depend on people's experience over time (Rodman 1992). Ingold (2000), like other anthropologists, argues that being indigenous is based on the assumption that the 'natives' are the descendants of those who inhabited a specific place when colonists arrived from elsewhere. As a result, inhabiting that land is taken to be a source of indigenous identity, which can be passed on through descent. This is contradictory because it implies that identity is no longer drawn from the land but from one's genealogical ancestors.

Both land and genealogy participate dialectically in the constitution of people's identity, as suggested by Giddens' (1984) structuration theory. According to this, the *locale* or *locality* is defined as the everyday working and living space of actors, where human interactions provide resources and knowledge on which they can base their actions as well as binding them to the resources and knowledge provided (Giddens's 1984, quoted in De Haan & Zoomers 2003, p. 351).

Being first has a salient cultural feature of African frontier organisation (Kopytoff 1989). In recent years, land and belonging have featured in writings that focus on the growing dichotomy between locals and outsiders, leading to the notion that the latter should be excluded from participation in local politics and the local economy (Geschiere & Nyamnjoh 2000; Comaroff and Comaroff 2001; Geschiere 2005; Lentz 2007; Geschiere 2009; Chabal 2009; Shipton 2009).

Comaroff and Comaroff (2001) argue that the intensification of the dichotomy between locals and outsiders is one of the consequences of the state ambiguity in an era dominated by global capitalism. On one hand, the state is expected to allow the free flow of capital, commodities, labour, technology, and on the other, protect its national borders and economies. One of the main outcomes has been the shift

From a stress on citizenship based on ‘deep horizontal fraternity’ to which all other connections are secondary toward one in which each national is a ‘stakeholder’ vertically rooted...from a notion that attachment may be acquired equally by ascription, residence, immigration, and naturalisation toward the primacy of autochthony, making it the most ‘authentic’, the most essential of all modes of connection (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001, p.257).

Thus, “autochthony is implicit in many forms of identity” Comaroff and Comaroff (2001, p.241), which includes, but is not limited to “land, graves, old homes and other landscapes in the construction and negotiation of belonging by communities” (Mujere 2010, p. 497).

My research resonates with this literature in as much as the claim of belonging associated with burial sites is concerned. The dichotomy between locals and outsiders is epitomised and reproduced in every burial event. Local people’s attachment to their ancestors buried in the area is given as one of the main reasons they have not left Micaúne despite the harsh socio-economic conditions brought about by the collapse of the local economy. As Mr Viegas pointed out in conversation with me, “land does not only have an economic value as a means of production and housing; it has a more profound meaning for us because it is the home of our ancestors”.

It is in this genealogical sense that Micaúne residents are now claiming their attachment to the land, suggesting that kinship is crucial for understanding land relations in Micaúne. In fact, according to Carsten & Hugh-Jones (1995, p. 19), “kinship is about sleeping together ... living together, eating together and dying together, not just about the bed but

also about the house, hearth and tomb”.

In this respect, my ethnographic material shows that land holds an important role as an identity marker by establishing a linkage to the ancestors. Mr Hanifo’s mother, who was seriously ill, refused to leave the area, claiming that she wanted to stay closer to her dead father who was buried there, and she ended up dying there in 2000; Mr Hanifo himself had no plans to leave Micaúne despite his complaints about the harsh economic conditions.

The claim of strong attachment to land is also made on behalf of people who are away. It is argued locally that when they come back from wherever they had gone, all children of the soil whether dead or alive must come to the family place to stay and rest. For this reason, all local families maintain a graveyard inside their plots. These graveyards caught my attention because the tombstones contained a number of crosses on top of them marking the number of people buried there, going back to the founder of the family.

Mr Viegas said that “whenever a family member dies away from home, he is symbolically buried in his family’s graveyard. This is done to reduce the high cost of relocating the corpses of those who have died elsewhere back to Micaúne”. While these symbolic burials are practised in other parts of the country, the difference here is that even though each deceased person is entitled to his or her own grave, as a result of land scarcity there is only a single grave to which a cross is added for each deceased person.

Another striking feature was the quality of and investment in the graves. Due to people’s difficult economic situation, one would have expected to see graves built using simple local materials which are not costly. On the contrary, the graves are built with cement and some are painted, in stark contrast to the shacks where many people live. Cementing and painting the graves suggests strongly that Micaúne residents attach great importance to death.

The graveyard is seen as their definitive home as opposed to the shacks in which they live, which are temporary. As Mr Lucas said “we dignify the dead by giving them a

decent burial and a marble grave”. This seems to be a common practice among the people who inhabit the lower Zambézia which includes all the districts south of Quelimane, namely, Quelimane, Inhassunge and Chinde, as I had an opportunity to observe during several trips to these places.

The ancestors are believed to protect their descendants from situations that create unrest in the community (e.g. lack of rain, hunger, epidemiological crisis) through special powers. This is undertaken through the performance of ceremonies/rituals such as *Mukutho* which are aimed at securing protection and success but also take place after the construction of a grave and/or cleaning of a family cemetery.¹⁷⁴ Belief in the power of ancestors was made evident during the electrification of Micaúne in 2012. Before that, it appears that Micaúne lacked a public electricity supply and depended on a group of generators which supplied the village with electricity from 5 pm to 9 pm every day.¹⁷⁵

Although the government had been undertaking a project of rural electrification for the entire country since independence in 1975, electricity from the Cahora Bassa dam reached Micaúne only in 2012, making it the last of the 17 districts of Zambézia to be connected to the national electricity network.¹⁷⁶ The cost of electrification was around US\$4 million¹⁷⁷ and was the biggest investment undertaken in Micaúne since independence.

The electrification project faced problems which delayed its conclusion. Apart from the rains, the technical team was confronted by the challenge of cutting down trees, some of which were located inside family cemeteries. Charting the route of the electricity cables

¹⁷⁴ Interview conducted with Mr Samajo on 16 May 2012.

¹⁷⁵ Interview conducted with Mr Durão on 21 in 2012.

¹⁷⁶ Currently, 120 of the 128 Mozambican districts have electricity (CIP 2015).

¹⁷⁷ Radio Moçambique broadcast, 15 May 2012.

was undertaken by the government in coordination with a company assigned to do the job, but the local families were excluded from the process. The government ordered the company to start cutting trees and digging holes for the electricity posts, but they were able to cut down only a few trees.

The felling of trees took several months and, as I discovered later, the problem was a lack of proper consultation with the ancestors of those who owned the areas affected by the project. There was a rumour that every time the technicians tried to cut down the trees, they saw blood coming out of the trunks. It was believed that the trees had grown in a chief's cemetery and, to overcome this problem, it was necessary to perform a traditional ceremony in order to approach the ancestors and ask permission for the posts to be planted on the land.

Eventually, two months later, the ceremony was performed; this allowed the project to continue without further sightings of flowing blood, and it was completed at the end of 2012. This is an example of how the ancestors' role as the guardians and protectors of their living kin is perceived by local residents. Therefore, any initiative on the land must be undertaken through them in order to ensure success, and failing to do so would compromise it or affect the likelihood of success.¹⁷⁸

During my fieldwork, the sister of one of my friends died from AIDS.¹⁷⁹ When the funeral was announced, I felt the opportunity had come for me to see burial practices for myself. Going to the funeral meant, in particular, that I would be able to see how the boundaries between insiders and outsiders were constructed in the death rituals. During

¹⁷⁸ A similar practice has been documented by Neef & Schwarzmeier (2001, p. 20) in Southeast Asia where "it is strictly forbidden to cut ...tree and the trees surrounding it because they are regarded as residence of the spirits. Cutting down sacred trees would bring sickness and trouble to the village. Any development plans have to spare this small area of forest land".

¹⁷⁹ Information provided by the brother of the deceased.

the ceremony, I was by Mr Lucas's side and he explained the significance of each part of the ritual.

On our way to the cemetery, he told me that the deceased's family were regarded as "local Muslims", a label used to distinguish some Muslims in Micaúne from their "orthodox" counterparts. The main difference is that local Muslims do not make use of the Quran, owing to their lack of literacy in Arabic. At the funeral venue (the deceased's parent's house), we found three groups of people. One was under a big tree where men were sitting around the coffin.

We sat down there with them while the coffin was still being manufactured. Here there was mainly silence, although sporadically people would talk to those close-by. The second group was composed mainly of female (and a few male) relatives wearing white clothes and singing. They were sitting at the main door of the family's house. The last group was composed of women and girls who were mainly neighbours, I was told. This group was in a neighbour's home next to the funeral home.

After prayers, which took between half an hour and an hour, all the groups continued singing and then left, walking (a twenty-minute walk) to the family cemetery which was located in a small area of bush some way from the houses. The way the three groups were located at the funeral may not be conclusive about the status of the deceased but rather indicate the position of women in that context.

Despite not being the first person to be buried there, my friend's sister was buried in a grave of her own and there was, therefore, no cross. The fact that the cemetery was away from the house contrasts with what I had observed and been told about family graveyards. I suspect that, although this family had been living in the area a while, it might not have had land rights to the plot on which it lived. As I was told, a graveyard in the yard is a sign of one's belonging to that specific piece of soil.

Through burial practices, a clear distinction between locals and outsiders is made and symbolised at every point in a funeral. Only the locals (those born there) are entitled to

have family graveyards. Newcomers are not allowed to build graveyards in the area they inhabit because the land does not belong to their ancestors. Sometimes this distinction is evoked in arguments that are followed by ‘natives’ asking newcomers: “Who are you? Do you have a graveyard?” This clearly shows that newcomers do not belong there.

According to Mr Lucas, when the newcomers are unable, mainly for financial reasons, to send the body of their deceased back home; they are allowed to bury them in the state local cemetery. However, when newcomers have developed a good relationship with a local family, whether of friendship or fictive kinship, they are, as an exception, allowed to bury their deceased locally, being considered to be something akin to members of the local family in question.

The newcomer family makes a request to bury their loved one in a particular local family’s cemetery and, when accepted, a payment is required. The payment covers expenses related to the performance of a ceremony for the body to be finally accepted by the local ancestors, as well as for the funeral. But the burial of the newcomer is never made in the best part of the graveyard, which is under a big tree because this is reserved for the owners of the land. Once the body is buried and there is a need for relatives to visit the grave or perform rituals, they must be accompanied by the owners of the cemetery. This suggests that the newcomers are never fully integrated, but that, with time, their attachment might grant them some of the status of locals.

This is the historical process of the incorporation of newcomers into the community. Looking at my case study and considering that there was an intense recruitment of labour in the past by both the colonial government and private companies such as Madal, many people who live in Micaúne came from elsewhere. For most of the newcomers, it has been a gradual process of integration. Even the history of the population inhabiting the area shows that the Mahindo are a product of both *ci-Sena* and *e-Chuabo* ethnic groups:

Through the fiction of the first arrival, the Sena royal lineage in each chieftaincy were successful at attracting and supporting a large following through the use of excess agricultural produce as bridewealth, or *chuma*, trading slaves with neighbouring ethnic

groups, through voluntary enslavement and pawning, and kidnapping (Isaacman & Isaacman 1977, p. 109).

The relative lack of discrimination, the ease and rapidity of integration and the subsequent acquisition of nearly equal status suggest that there was “adopted dependency” instead of “domestic slavery” (Isaacman & Isaacman 1977, p. 113).

In brief, the reified construction of otherness in family cemeteries indicates how local residents subvert and challenge the notion of local community as defined in the 1997 land law and other government instruments. This is probably how land-based identity is sanctioned by excluding newcomers.

8.3. Land as a reserve of wealth

The recent discovery and promise of wealth from minerals has led the Mozambican government to approve specific legislation on mining which has an impact on land use. The government has argued that the extraction of mineral resources is important for social and economic development if evaluated and utilised rationally.¹⁸⁰ As such, land use for mining operations will have priority over other land uses whenever economic and social benefits related to these operations are higher.¹⁸¹

The provisions of the law on tax exemptions have attracted international attention and investment. There are expectations that recent discoveries of large-scale extractable resources present Mozambique with an unprecedented opportunity to establish the foundation for inclusive and sustainable growth and shared prosperity (World Bank 2014).

Mozambique has huge reserves of natural gas and substantial deposits of coal and rare-

¹⁸⁰ *Lei 14/2002 de 26 de Junho* - Law 14 / 2002 of 26 June.

¹⁸¹ *Lei 14/2002, Artigo 43, No 2* - Law 14 / 2002, Article 43, No. 2.

earth minerals. The country is currently producing beryl, ilmenite, tantalum, zircon, aluminium, natural gas, heavy sands, coal, lime, phosphate, diatomite and other minerals. By 2013, Mozambique's share of global tantalum production was some 16 per cent, ilmenite around 6 per cent, zircon about 3 per cent and beryl 1 percent. Mozambique is Africa's second-largest producer of aluminium after South Africa, and the Mozambique Aluminium Company's (Mozal) share of global aluminium production in 2010 was 1 percent (Campbell 2013a).

In this context, "the government predicts independence from aid at current levels within the next ten years and foresees a change in the relationship with current development partners" (Hofmann 2013, p. 112). This government discourse is likely to contribute to land grabbing, given that laws and incentives are attracting many companies to invest in natural resources. But one of the effects of this government discourse is to instil hope in many communities, in particular, those where the minerals are located. For instance, Micaúne residents imagine and expect that similar mining developments might occur there, given that the area is considered to be rich in natural resources.

There is a strong local belief that there is oil in the Micaúne subsoil after oil-prospecting was undertaken by the American company Gulf Oil in the 1960s. Apparently, Gulf left the country around 1970 without extracting oil and since then this issue has been dormant. Because oil was not thought to be relevant for local residents' livelihoods at the time, it attracted less attention. Their reliance on coconut gave them livelihood security and, for the next 45 years, Micaúne residents' did not say much about oil extraction. This changed, however, with the collapse of Micaúne's coconut economy and the national (re)discovery of huge reserves of minerals in the early 2000s.

The boom in mineral resource extraction in Mozambique revived the prospects of the Muguiaia oil project and with it the possibility of an alternative and secure source of livelihood for Micaúne residents. Several attempts have been made to determine the viability of oil extraction in Muguiaia. In 2005, Petrona, an Italian company, commissioned a public consultation to assess the environmental impact and economic

viability of possible oil exploitation in Muguaiia, but the study was not conclusive (Achar 2010). Five years later, in May 2010, during a historic visit by the president of the Republic of Mozambique to Micaúne, the people voiced their belief that there was oil in Muguaiia and that the government had to facilitate its extraction. During a public rally in the same visit, an old Micaúne resident stood up and said

Mr President, as our palm trees are dying, we request the Government to speed up mechanisms for the exploitation of that oil deposit; without palm trees, we have no life, so we are please asking you to look for that oil.

The president's response was:

The amount of oil is too little and there are no companies yet interested in exploiting the existing oil. This is not only with regard to Micaúne, but it includes other parts of the country where there are hydrocarbons.¹⁸²

Despite the president's negative response, rumours about oil in Micaúne have not stopped. The area has attracted the interest of the political elite at national and provincial levels. During the 2010 presidential visit to Micaúne, senior government officials inspected the area. One very high-profile leader, born in Zambézia, has been visiting the area regularly since then. It is clear that these expectations generate hope that sooner or later the Muguaiia project might be successfully implemented.

This issue is always presented whenever people visit the area. This works as a marketing strategy to advertise the potential of the place in the hope of finding suitable investors. When I visited Micaúne, I was told about the oil deposit in Muguaiia and I had an opportunity to visit the area. Like me, many other visitors to Micaúne have had the same privilege. In the meantime, Micaúne residents have not stopped demanding that the government concretise this project. In 2013, in an interview with the largest and most

¹⁸² Notícias, 24 de Maio de 2010 – Notícias newspaper, 24 May 2010.

widely-circulated public newspaper in Mozambique, the provincial director for Environmental Affairs was forced to explain that there was no petrol in Micaúne.¹⁸³

It is clear that this government position is a way of controlling the emotions of Micaúne residents, which are running high due to the precarious situation they are living in at present. Oil is now seen as the natural substitute for coconut production and most people, in particular, the adults and the elderly, consider that granting the right to extract oil in that area to a private company could solve their livelihood problems. Apart from oil, Micaúne is also believed to host other mineral resources which have been attracting national and foreign investors (Figure 8.1 below).

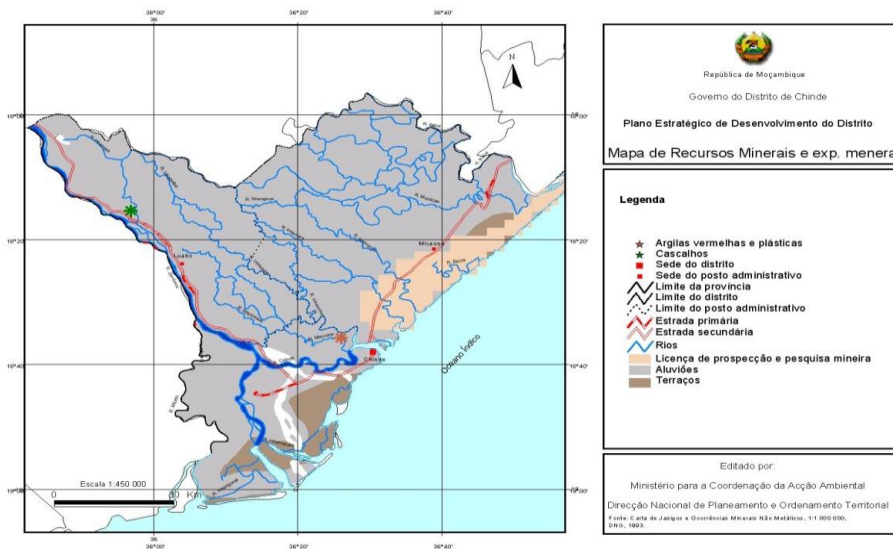


Figure 8.1: Map of mineral resources and concessions in Micaúne.

Source: Provincial Directorate of Environment Affairs, 2012.

¹⁸³ Notícias, 17 de Janeiro de 2013 - Notícias newspaper, 17 January 2013.

The area in pink shows existing licences allowing different holders to prospect for mining. An Italian company, AQUATER, has recently confirmed that Deia and Micaúne-Sede contain concentrations of heavy minerals in beach sands and dunes while Muio is essentially a shallow interdunal deposit (Geotesouro 2010).¹⁸⁴

During my fieldwork in 2012, a helicopter flew over the area for two consecutive days and made a few landings. This transformed the quietness of the place into a noisy environment and people all over were wondering why we had received such a visit. Rumours started circulating and people tried to guess the reason for the helicopter's presence.

At first, people thought that the helicopter was bringing the first lady of the Republic to Micaúne because she had been expected to visit the area during her tour to Zambézia Province; second, they believed that the helicopter was bringing mosquito nets as part of a big initiative to combat malaria which is the number one public health problem in Micaúne due to its geographical location, surrounded by rivers; third, after the helicopter had landed for a few minutes on one of the football pitches, we discovered that its passengers were a mission studying the geography of the area in order to establish the infrastructure for a big company.

This last rumour was later confirmed on national television, TVM, on 19 August 2012, indicating that a major investment was directed at Micaúne involving the construction of railways and a port for the export of coal from Tete. This information was also confirmed by the staff of the Provincial Directorate of Environment Affairs who stated that a team had already been formed to start identifying people to be relocated to make way for the construction of the infrastructure.

¹⁸⁴ An interdunal is a water-filled depression between coastal sand dunes. Available at: <http://www.wordvia.com/dictionary/Interdunal%20wetland>. Retrieved on 9 October 2013.

A 2012 government mining cadastre shows that the coastal area of Micaúne was under an intense concession for mining prospecting, which entails searching and exploration before a mining licence is granted. This was also verbally confirmed by the staff from the Provincial Directorate of Environmental Affairs who indicated that rights to all coastal areas had been granted to investors for mineral prospecting studies.¹⁸⁵ For instance, in 2007, the Mozambique Natural Resources Corporation Lda was granted a prospecting licence for five years in an area of 15,240 hectares. In 2010, a prospecting licence was granted to the Mozambique Heavysand Mining Company Lda for an area of 16,440 hectares and the licence expires in 2016 (CIP 2012a). The Chinese company Hong Ti Minerals Lda was granted a prospecting licence in Micaúne in 2011, which expires in 2016, despite it not complying with the mining law in a previous licence in Nampula Province.¹⁸⁶

In 2012, a prospecting license was granted to another Chinese company, Africa Great Wall Mining Development Company, which announced that it would start to explore for heavy mineral sands over an area of 23,100 hectares in the Chinde (in particular Micaúne), Inhassunge and Nicoadala districts of Zambézia Province, before the end of that year. The project required an initial investment of US\$130 million, and, if successful, would involve building a terminal at the port of Quelimane, work on the improvement of local roads, as well as the execution of social projects (Campbell 2013b).

In 2013 alone, there were three five-year prospecting licences approved for Micaúne, namely prospecting licences for Di Yuan Minerals Lda from China in an area of 9,696.74 hectares; a mining licence for Cronus Minerals Lda (with Mozambican investor) in an

¹⁸⁵ Interview conducted with Mr Edgar in Quelimane on 13 September 2012.

¹⁸⁶ Agência de Informação de Moçambique, 4 de Setembro de 2013 – Mozambique’s News Agency, 4 September 2013.

area of 13,864 hectares; and a second mining licence for Mozambique Heavysand Mining Company Lda (Chinese investor) in an area of 24,360.32 hectares which covers Micaúne, Chinde-Sede.¹⁸⁷

As indicated above, most of these investments are still in the prospecting phase and, if they materialise in the next few years, they will definitely provide a number of jobs for the local people and probably increasing investment in infrastructure. Micaúne is being put back on the map and is gradually becoming an investment destination with regard to mineral resources. This suggests that, in years to come, it might experience private investments such as those in coal in Tete Province and heavy sands in Nampula Province.

Local residents are becoming increasingly aware of mining companies' interest in future mineral prospecting there. It is not surprising, therefore, that they hope their socio-economic conditions are going to change for the better. This hope goes along with the expectation that the potential investor will behave in the same way as or a better way than Madal, providing not only employment but promoting the development of the area.

Different publications, which include Mosca & Selemane (2011); Matavel, Dolores e Cabanelas (2011); Justiça Ambiental (2012), UNAC (2012); ADECRU (2013); Human Rights Watch (2013); and CIP (2013; 2014) have abundantly reported on how large-scale projects in Mozambique have failed to improve the living conditions of the people in areas whose economy remains precarious. Nevertheless, local residents believe that it is worth waiting and seeing.

This is one reason why Micaúne residents have not migrated in search of better living

¹⁸⁷ Mozambique Mining Cadastre Portal. Available at: <http://portals.flexicadastre.com/mozambique/en/>. Retrieved on 28 April 2014.

conditions elsewhere. However, the implications of such a high demand for mineral extraction in the area are still to be seen, as the mines will certainly require the resettlement of local residents. Considering the current scarcity of land in the area, there will be an escalation of land conflicts.

Another concept of land thus emerges as a result of the recent discovery of natural resources in the country in general and in Micaúne in particular. Land is regarded as a collective asset which belongs to, or, at least, should benefit, the local people. This approach expands on the previous concept (land and identity) and differs from the first one (land as a commodity) because of the latter's individual or private focus. Not one of my research participants saw subsoil wealth as belonging to a particular individual, but rather, they saw it as the wealth of Micaúne 'natives'. Somehow local residents feel entitled to the wealth of the soil and have confidence in a renewed phase of economic stability.

The chapter has demonstrated how a combination of policy reforms (land law) and an ecological disaster (coconut disease) has led to changing the way people view land. Despite these concepts of land not being completely new, they evolved over time and became deeply rooted in people's imagination. The commodification of land has become a prominent feature as land has replaced coconut as the main source from which people derive their livelihoods. Likewise, this has also triggered claims of attachment to land which serves to exclude non-natives.

By claiming that the land in this area belongs to their ancestors, Micaúne natives are advancing their entitlement to existing or potential wealth from the land. As a result, they have decided to stay on the land and search for livelihood options while waiting for big investments. However, the benefits that might come with the extraction of mineral resources remain uncertain.

CHAPTER NINE: CONCLUSIONS

This thesis is about changing livelihoods in central Mozambique, in particular in Micaúne, an administrative post of the district of Chinde. It is based on an ethnographic enquiry undertaken over eight months which combined observation, interviews and surveys. When I started the project, I was interested in understanding how political, economic and institutional factors with regard to land have historically shaped the livelihoods of Micaúne residents. This was permeated by an assumption that land-based activities could be enhanced by sustainable policies and programmes contributing to sustainable food security, economic growth and broad-based development.

I have argued that state policies and Madal's initiatives have not led to the materialisation of these assumptions. The coconut economy, which was embodied in the French-owned (with Norwegian ownership at various points) *Société du Madal*, came to an end with the demise of the coconut palms in the 2000s. This meant that the local people who had been involved in its activities for so long were left vulnerable to acute impoverishment when the coconut economy collapsed. It was a classic enclave economy based on the cheap extraction of coconut to produce copra for the international market. Madal made little attempt to diversify its activities beyond coconuts and copra.

The end of the coconut business in Micaúne led people to scan a limited range of livelihood options comprising a) subsistence farming; b) subsistence fishing; c) petty/informal trading; and d) formal employment and state subsidies, as has been discussed in Chapter Six. For most people, current livelihood options can hardly be considered sustainable, but they reflect disparate survival moves, as there is much uncertainty about the present and the future.

Food availability and accessibility are big problems and will continue to be so in the foreseeable future because there is no significant production and commercialisation of any kind. The social implications of such a dramatic change have been a steady decrease in local residents' welfare, multiple deprivations (including malnutrition) and the emergence of various forms of conflict between local residents and private companies (in

particular Madal), and local residents themselves (particularly between generations).

In such a situation, one would expect that people might have considered migrating elsewhere in search of better alternatives and livelihood opportunities, but this has not been the case. Elsewhere, migration has been used as a fundamental alternative or solution in similar crisis situations. The question that arises is why, amidst the suffering as a result of the collapse of the coconut economy, people in Micaúne have decided not to migrate.

As indicated in Chapter Two, the land tenure system that has predominated in Micaúne for the past hundred years helps to explain why people have not migrated. This economy benefited from government legislation, which pushed the Africans into the cash economy as labourers and taxpayers. Despite the exploitative nature of the coconut economy and the negative effects of political and economic changes over the past hundred years, local households and individuals found their way within the system in place. Thanks to the stability and predictability the system offered, local people conformed to it in such a way that they did not look for alternatives elsewhere.

The coconut economy provided a large number of local people with money from wages they could invest in various agricultural activities. They could acquire more land than was available to them through inheritance, they could plant palm trees and other crops, and they could purchase livestock and labour. Wage labour and agricultural activities for both subsistence and sale were interdependent in Micaúne. Agricultural activities depended on inputs of cash derived from wages, low-cost reproduction of the next generation of workers for the company's plantations depended on local people growing some of their food for themselves.

Indeed, people experienced long-term social and economic stability and were able to make predictions and plans for their lives. Local families could adjust to shocks by engaging in activities needed to supplement their incomes from coconut. This continued to be a reality in the socialist and post-socialist period, despite the rhetoric of post-colonial governments that claimed that there had been radical changes from the colonial

and socialist past. Actually, local people understood this interdependence, which is why they look back at the demise of the coconut economy with regret, despite the system's harsh and exploitative features (Chapter Three and Four).

Current development discourse ignores or is unaware of this historical interdependence, and the state and NGOs imagine that they can turn poor people into successful subsistence and market farmers simply by providing technical advice, inputs and economic incentives. There is a belief that through such efforts local people can be stimulated to achieve domestic food security and produce a surplus for the market. But they cannot, and their efforts to do so are in any event vitiated by the post-socialist dispensation¹⁸⁸ in Mozambique which has been accompanied by reform of the land laws to allow large-scale private investment in agriculture, mining and other spheres of the economy (Chapter Five).

But as I showed in Chapter Six, while the attempts to stimulate more production of old and new crops have been of some benefit to the best-off category of local people, they have not had any positive effect on members of the 'middle' and 'poorest' categories of the local population. This is because the introduction of new crops and seeds by the state and the NGOs are insufficient, on its own, to achieve food security and production of surpluses. If local people are to benefit from these initiatives they need, for example, access to more land than they have at present.

It is possible for individuals to get access to more land, by buying or renting or borrowing it from other local people who are not in a position to use whatever land they may have. But acquiring this land requires resources, often in the form of money, and it is only those in the best-off category, who have income derived from trading or a source outside

¹⁸⁸ This refers to the adoption of a multi-party democratic system and market economy, where the individuals (or citizens) are put at the centre of the polity and economy.

Micaúne (an official's salary, for instance), who have this money to hand. The rest of the local population does not have this money available, and indeed, may not even have enough labour within their households to work the small plots of land to which they do have access.

Thus far these initiatives have proved woefully inadequate as they have led to an increasing demand for and conflicts over land, as well as fostering identity politics by reinforcing the distinction between insiders and outsiders. The realisation by poor households that they cannot compete with better off households in terms of purchasing land has made the “genealogical model” (Ingold 2000, p. 12) an important source for claiming ownership or attachment to land and consequently an entitlement to land-based resources (on and below the surface).

This has contributed to making the distinction between ‘native’ and ‘non-native’ important in local sociality. The on-going conflict between Madal and local residents, along with attempts to discredit the government and Frelimo officials, illustrate this point (Chapter Seven). Indeed, continued population growth associated with limited areas for farming expansion, lack of off-farm sources of income, and increasing investor interest will continue to create pressure for land.

The effects are all too evident in Micaúne, where Madal has not only retained the land it had in the past but acquired new land and diversified its activities. As shown in Chapter Eight, there is also a host of new companies involved in oil prospecting and the extraction of heavy metals that have staked claims of various kinds to land hitherto available to the local population for residential and farming purposes.

Commercial farming or mining are currently able to provide employment opportunities for only a small number of people and the majority will continue to be excluded. Local people are not necessarily hostile to the arrival of these companies. On the contrary, many pin their hopes for the future on these companies going beyond the stage of exploration to that of production. They look forward eagerly to the prospect of new jobs and wages for themselves, and to the development of infrastructure that the start of oil

and heavy metal production will bring in its wake. But they are not entirely unrealistic in their expectations. They do not imagine that new jobs and wages will relieve them of the necessity of remaining on and working the land.

What they anticipate is a return to the interdependence of wage labour and agricultural pursuits that characterised the coconut economy, and the associated stability and predictability of their lives and livelihoods. They do not, of course, want the harshness and exploitation of the coconut economy back, rightly believing that these features of the past should have no place in a postcolonial Mozambique which is formally committed to democracy and freedom for its citizens.

Indeed, there cannot be a return to the old coconut economy. For one thing, the oil and heavy metals industries that feature in the local imagination will have no interest in purchasing the principal product of local agricultural activities, as Madal did in the past. If the local people want to go beyond subsistence agriculture and produce a surplus for the market, they will have to find a new market (which could indeed be the Far Eastern market for sesame seed). If they are to have any chance in this regard, however, their remaining land must be safeguarded and they must be given access to more.

In Micaúne, as elsewhere in the country, the land issue continues to be characterised by a dilemma about how to reconcile big land investments and community land access and use. This has been a source of conflict everywhere and the way local communities are now responding to the situation varies according to the context and actors involved. In Micaúne, this situation has been worsened by the upsurge of CLYD, which not only disrupted the local economy but also led to devastating effects for Madal's business and the livelihoods of local people. As a result, the stability and predictability that people had enjoyed for so long have been replaced by precariousness, uncertainty and social instability.

Solving this problem will require both a clarification of the new laws regarding land tenure and new policy initiatives that are genuinely in the interests of the local people. Madal cannot be allowed simply to sit on land that it is not using productively; investors

cannot be given unlimited opportunity to develop new forms of private land use (such as wildlife reserves for hunters and tourists) that create few if any jobs for local people; mining and agricultural companies cannot be allowed to exploit the vague distinction between private and customary tenure in order to deprive local people of more of their land.

The law must also be adapted to recognise the fact that land has become a commodity even in the areas of customary tenure. There is no point in the law overlooking the fact that people have been selling and buying, and leasing and renting, land held under customary tenure for a long time. What the law needs to do in this regard is to exercise some control over these transactions, to ensure that local elites do not monopolise the benefits of development interventions to the exclusion of the majority of the local population.

Suggestions for further research

A topic that deserves further research is how private and public investments could foster the diversification of the economy and local development in a way that brings about economic inclusion. It would be interesting then to explore whether the current rush for land in Micaúne could be made to enhance rather than undermine local economic security, given the context of limited land.

Research on land is still very much influenced by the idea that land's sole use is agriculture production, but throughout this thesis, other land use options have been explored. As suggested by Ferguson (2013), smallholder agriculture is an important part of what people in southern African and elsewhere do with land, but it should not be assumed that all they do is about agriculture. Indeed, there are myriad *other* uses of land that people deploy to turn land into a livelihood. This thesis will hopefully contribute to expanding research countrywide on the multiple uses of land.

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