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Place or Property? Meanings of Land in Madjadjane, Mozambique

Abstract:

This paper focuses on the significance of social and cultural values assigned to land by rural smallholders in the Mozambican community of Madjadjane. In Madjadjane migration for work has been and continues to be a significant feature of people's lives and for their livelihoods. Land and access to land is considered to be very important not mainly because of its economic value, but because of the meaning land holds in terms of people's sense of identity, their feeling of belonging, for tradition and as part of social memory. Such social and cultural values of land are not in line with the general comprehension of the value of land that dominates within public institutions and the dominating discourses on property rights. Within such discourses the economic value of land is the main focus, as well as the need to formalize rights to land in order to reduce conflicts and realize inherent economic potential. The non-economic values of land are often ignored. The case of Madjadjane illustrates how villagers value access to land as important not mainly as a mean of securing their livelihoods, but just as much as a part of a larger cultural and moral framework important for living a meaningful life. The understanding of a meaningful life is not in terms with capitalist rationality dominating the property rights discourses, and this difference in understanding may contribute towards an explanation of why registration of community land rights in Madjadjane has not given the expected outcomes of reduced conflicts over land.

Introduction

Land holds multiple meanings and values. It is important for production, for building, dwelling and recreation. It has historical, spiritual, economical and emotional values.

Still, when new policies and laws are to be developed it is the economical and productive value of land that often receives the most attention. This is clearly reflected in the dominant discourses on land and property rights. Most of us have some sort of mythical or emotional relationship with a tract of land or a landscape (Abramson and Theodossopoulos 2000). The non-economic values of land may be meaningful for who we are, how we define ourselves, how we remember, our culture and society. In other words, our relationship with land forms part of larger frameworks of culture, history and tradition. In most real-life situations, land relations are built up out of a combination of jural and mythical factors (ibid). The latter is the focus of this paper. Through the presentation of a case study from the community of Madjadjane, Mozambique; I discuss the emotional, moral and affectual values that land holds for many of the villagers in Madjadjane. In Madjadjane, a high degree of mobility is an important characteristic of people's daily life. Villagers' have been on the move between different localities as part of labor migration for more than a hundred years. However, land in Madjadjane constitutes more than just a geographically defined area; it constitutes a place that is important basis of a local system of values, beliefs and moral, as well as in the construction of social memory and identity for the villagers.

In the following a brief outline of the case of Madjadjane is provided, illustrating how the community has been confronted with a more modernistic understanding of the value of land through a land registration process. In order to illustrate and analyze the local values and meanings assigned to land, the concept of place is discussed. The ancestors are an important part of community life and the value of land. Thus, a description of an annual ceremony directed towards the ancestors is described and discussed in order to highlight the different moral and emotional values of land.

Delimitating the land in Madjadjane: the process and the local responses

The starting point of my research project in Mozambiqueⁱ was an interest in land rights and conflicts over land. Located next to an elephant reserveⁱⁱ, the villagers of Madjadjane had through the course of nearly 70 years seen their area diminished in favor of the establishment and continuous growth of the reserve. The community had

a history of land conflicts and had recently had been helped through a process of titling, which made it an interesting area for my study.

Visiting Madjadjane for the first time in 2001,ⁱⁱⁱ I was eager to know more about the villager's views upon the conflicts they had experienced, the delimitation of land that had been conducted and how they would use the land themselves. I soon became aware that most people seemed to value land in a different manner than that of policy makers and what was usually emphasized in dominant discourse on property rights. The main concern of policy makers had been to secure local people^{iv} their customary established rights to land, and to enable them to be participants in new projects and economic development. What I found was that land is often talked of in Madjadjane with reference to non-economic values such as feeling of attachment to the area, to the history, traditions and ritual practices. Whilst policy makers and lawyers often make a strict division between the owners and the owned, this division between villagers and the land is not as apparent in Madjadjane. The relationship to land is an essential part of local cosmology and life-worlds in Madjadjane. Rather than being valued merely as an economic commodity, land is connected with people's feeling of belonging to a place, their identity, and the construction of a common social memory.

Many of the people living in Madjadjane are not content with the outcome of the titling process. There is a common perception that large tracts of land belonging to Madjadjane were lost during the delimitation process. In particular older people claim that land was stolen during the process. Still, land is not scarce. A high mobility is a characteristic of the area. Younger men and some younger women continue to cross the border into South Africa in search of employment opportunities. However, the frustration with outcome of the land titling process prevails, which makes one ask why; what is the cause of this situation of continued conflict and discontent? My claim is that the answer might be found in the emotional and affective value that villagers assign to land in their area. Through "living" their land, the people in Madjadjane experience their place as more than a mere geographical situated area, as more than a commodity. Land is not only a mean to secure one's livelihood, but is part of a larger moral and cultural framework that is important for living meaningful lives. Strong emotional ties to land exist and are important in terms of feelings of belonging

and attachment, of social memory, traditions and identity. Land holds meaning as a result of past events, history, tradition and human and extra-human relations. During the delimitation process the non-economic aspects of land were ignored, thus affecting the community's perception of the process and its outcome.

Before going further into discussions about the local values of land, I will contextualize the community of Madjadjane historically and geographically. A comment on the production value of land is also pertinent before proceeding. Like in most other rural communities in developing countries, the production value of land cannot be ignored. Most villagers in Madjadjane have their "machambas" (small agricultural plots) where they grow various agricultural products. Interesting in the case of Madjadjane is the high level of mobility among the villagers, meaning that there are other income-generating sources than agricultural production. This is an important aspect to consider when discussing the value of land.

Located in the district of Matatuine, Maputo Province, Madjadjane lies between the capital of Maputo and the district of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa. Migration for work has been a way of life for people living in this district for more than a century, and the movement of people has been going between Matatuine and South Africa. Mozambican male labor became semi-proletarianised as suppliers of labor in the South African mines during colonial times (Bowen 2000). A combination of the Mozambican independence in 1975 and South African economic recession in 1976 reduced the number of men going to work in the mines, but in the district of Matatuine the flux of people going back and forwards between their home areas and South Africa has continued. In the 1980s, the outbreaks of civil war between the government party of Frelimo (Frente de Libertação de Moçambique) and the rebellion group of Renamo (Resistência Nacional Moçambicana) made millions of Mozambicans flee their homes for safer areas. In Madjadjane, the larger proportion of the villagers fled for the district of Manguzi in South Africa, only a few elder people stayed on. Whilst men previously had been the ones going away, leaving women in charge of the land, the war caused whole families to leave.

With the end of the civil war in 1992, people from Madjadjane started to return, but postwar Mozambique also attracted other types of groups, such as foreign investors

and land speculators. During the war, a Texan billionaire had provided economic support to Renamo in exchange for a tourism concession in the district of Matatuine (Koch 1997, Sayaguyes 1999). The concession covered 15 000 ha of land, including Maputo Special Reserve. The concession and the plans for development created a lot of criticism in Maputo, as it was seen as an invasion of Mozambique's sovereignty. Locally, the concession was welcomed at first the investor promised employment and benefits to the local people. Yet local attitudes changed when land was taken for the construction of new roads and fencing suddenly appeared preventing the villagers' access to areas that they had previously been using.

At this state, the Swiss non-governmental organization Helvetas entered the scene. Together with the American investor the NGO had hosted a series of workshop in order to explain the communities about the tourism project. As the conflicts over land increased, Helvetas decided to help the community of Madjadjane delimitate their borders, so that they could enter into a working relationship on equal terms with the tourism investor. The land law of 1997 had opened for communities to delimit their areas, and delimitation was seen as a tool in situations where conflicts over land were present or likely to occur (Tanner 2002). In 2000, delimitation of community land was conducted in Madjadjane. However, previous to the delimitation, the Blanchard concession was revoked (Sayaguyes, 1999). This is where the situation stands today. No new investors have arrived and the reserve is currently funded by the Ministry of Agriculture, but seems to have entered a vacuum where no further progress in order to attract tourists or control the animals are made. The villagers' have a difficult relationship to the reserve as they claim that their land has been taken away from them, reducing the size of Madjadjane and offering no compensation to the loss.

The meaning of place:

In trying to understand people's emotional relationship to land in Madjadjane, I find the concept of place is useful. The conventional approach to land is often restricted to discussing it as a geographical or discursive space, ignoring the different values and meanings locally embedded in the land. Although the concept of place have been defined differently within the social sciences (Agnew 1989) a common focus is on the human values assigned to land. Place is linked to human experience and intention and

cannot exist without human knowing and meaning (Kaltenborn 1997). Thus, a phenomenological approach (Primožic 2001) to place reveals. Place is manifested in the day-to-day experiences and consciousness of people living within particular life-worlds (Tilley 1994). As such, place is an inseparable part of existence (Manzo 2003) and the meaning of a place is grounded in the lived consciousness of it.

Places are constructed in people's movement, in their memories, encounters and associations. One may say that people are living their place – or their places, as many different places can hold importance in people's lives. As places are lived, they “belong to lived bodies and depend on them” (Casey 1996) For instance, places are constituted by events and knowledge about events. Events are both spatial and temporal, meaning that they take place at a particular time and in a particular locality. According to Casey, a given place thus “takes on the qualities of its occupants, reflecting the qualities in its own constitution and description, and expressing them in its occurrence as an event; places thus not only are - they happen” (Casey 1996, Kahn 1996). People may have witnessed the events for themselves or they may have been told as part of histories, forming part of a culture or tradition. As such, places have the ability to gather and keep things in their midst, such as experiences, histories, memories and thoughts (ibid). A place is therefore a complex construction of social history, of personal and interpersonal experience and selective memory (Kahn 1996). In Madjadjane this is for instance seen in the villagers' narratives of the rainmaking ceremonies. Madjadjane has been –and continues to be- the central meeting point for customary leaders coming from South Africa and Swaziland, as Madjadjane hosts a particular locality where the rainmaking ceremony is held. This annual event is important in the constitution of place, and a central point in the narratives of the history of Madjadjane.

Places are both internal and external to the human subject, and of importance to people's personal and cultural identity (Tilley, 1994). But places will be as differentiated as the significances that are assigned to them. Or in other words, a place will be different to different people, involving different meanings, existing with different boundaries and having different connotations. Places are thus social constructions, and a place can hold multiple meanings in the sense that it shapes and expresses different meanings of place for different users (Rodman 1992). However,

places are also linked to physical environment with particular characteristics and properties (Kaltenborn and Bjerke 2002, Kaltenborn 2002). As humans embed places with meanings and values that are changing over time, places are porous structures. A strong attachment to place can make it difficult to accept actions that imply a change in character. Places consist of past and present activities, incorporate political action and are much about identity and roots, and as such they have a temporal and spatial character (Bender 1993). Different values associated with place can be a source of disagreement and even conflicts between user groups. The relationship to place not an unconscious one, according to Kahn talking about a place can be a way of communicating important messages, such as reminders of social obligations that have gone unfulfilled or of moral responsibilities (1996). In Madjadjane, the relationship with the ancestors is an illustration of such a social obligation, and this relationship is also one of the reasons why the place of Madjadjane holds much significance to the villagers.

Before proceeding with an illustration of the values and meanings assigned to Madjadjane as a place, an important aspect of being in a place should be commented upon. Places are culturally constructed, thus determinate borders such as legal units or geographical perimeters are not limiting. This is quite clear in the case of Madjadjane.

As illustrated above, places are constructed and reconstructed through assigning meaning and values to geographical space – or to tracts of land. People often identify with a place through living it. In the case of Madjadjane, the aspect of lived space is particularly interesting. I found during the course of my work that *who* inhabits and lives the land constitutes an important part of the meanings and values assigned to land and thus to the construction of place. This further relates to how people feel a strong attachment to Madjadjane as a place, the importance of customary practices, the construction of a collective social memory and feeling of identity. It has also implications for the general idea about how land is a transferable asset. To illustrate these points I will describe the opening of the amarulla beer ceremony in Madjadjane, an annual event influencing the success and welfare of community life. Referring to this important event I will try to illustrate moral and emotional values of land in the area.

The inauguration of the amarulla ('canhu') beer season:

Before describing the amarulla opening ceremony, a word or two is called for concerning the role of the ancestors in Madjadjane life. As several studies illustrate, ancestral spirits play an important part in social life in many societies (Lan 1985, Moore and Sanders 2001), and Madjadjane is no exception. “Os antepassados”, the ancestors, is present in every-day life and the relationship with them needs to be nurtured and cultivated if one is to have success with agricultural production, in family life, for health, in the relationship with other people.

There are different types of ancestors, reflecting the level of influence seen in community life in general. In Madjadjane, the descendants of the former customary leaders, traditional doctors and diviners, and religious leaders are considered as important in the community. Among the ancestors a similar type of hierarchy is seen; there are the ancestors that bear significance to the individual, such as someone's late father or husband, as then there are the ancestors playing a part in community life as a whole, such as the late customary leaders and their relatives. The local word “swikwembu” is used for both groups, meaning ancestral spirit, but whilst ancestors of the first group each have their individual burial site that is accessible to everyone, the latter ones have sacred sites where only a few are allowed to enter, and this group is also the more influential. It is the traditional leaders in the community that are in charge of maintaining the relationship between the living and the dead (Cuelha, 1996). The opening of the amarulla beer season is an event nurturing this relationship.

The “canhu” ceremony normally takes place at the end of January or the beginning of February. Before the ceremony is announced, one will see fruits lying on the ground almost everywhere, as there are a lot of 'canhu' trees in the area. However, by custom no one is allowed to start making the beer before the customary leaders give their acceptance. Thus, the fruits are not gathered before the leaders have had a meeting deciding on the day of the ceremony. For those who do not obey these rules, diarrhea and severe stomach pains are common consequences, inflicted by the ancestors as a punishment for not waiting. Thus, the ancestors are the ones that are really deciding the opening of the season. Through the consultation of a diviner^v, contact is established with the ancestors and their messages and demands are transmitted to the living. The ancestors do not only set the date of the opening, they also have certain

requirements concerning what kind of animals that should be slaughtered, the type of cloth to be used, the amount of drink to be brought.

By custom it is the “regulo” - the customary leader^{vi}- who is to organize the “canhu” ceremony. In Madjadjane, the community has spent many years without having a customary leader. The former leader died, and his successor went to South Africa during the war and has not yet returned. His absence is considered to be a problem in Madjadjane as many of the villagers feel that they need the leader to come back and help sort out the many problems that one is currently experiencing. However, in his absence it is his relatives that are responsible for conducting the ceremony.

The “canhu” opening is a whole-day event, but is split into two parts. The ceremony arranged in the morning for the ancestors of the former customary leaders of Madjadjane, is considered to be very significant. As previously commented upon, a good relationship with the ancestors is important for community life. The relations between the living and the dead affect the rain, the agricultural production, the relationship with wild animals, the relationships between people in the community and the relationships with actors coming from the outside of the community. In order to keep the ancestors happy, offerings are made and the dead are asked to help the community solve their current problems with land, with the animals entering from the reserve and with reinstating the absent regulo. The success of the ceremony is evaluated through looking at how difficult situations evolve. If problems are solved and rain falls, the ancestors were pleased by the ceremony. People thus have a social and moral obligation to invest in the relationship with the “antepasados”, as it will affect their own well-being, and the well-being of the community.

The ceremony directed towards the ancestral spirits of the former leaders is conducted in a particular locality, a sacred garden where former leaders have been buried. Only the relatives of the leaders and their invited guests can enter into this area, but its location is known of by most of the villagers. Madjadjane has other localities of importance, such as the area where the central rainmaking ceremonies are conducted. These areas are localities embedded with meaning to all villagers, although not everyone may be able to enter them. The ancestral spirits are thus participating in making the place of Madjadjane along with the villagers.

Once the ancestors have been approached and the offerings made, the villagers gather in what they call the central zone of Madjadjane, which is the house of the former regulo. Everybody bring amarulla beer, and the villagers will sing, drink and dance throughout the rest of the day. As people are living dispatched, the event is a chance of meeting with people living in other parts of Madjadjane. Through the social interaction, the borders of the place are also confirmed.

Discussion:

The “canhu” ceremony is an example of an event that is important in the construction of a place, of how a place “happen” (Casey 1996). The event provides a particular geographic space with meaning. It is a seasonal ritual in the community, a constant in a world that is continuously changing. The ceremony is also an illustration of the complex relationship existing between the villagers of Madjadjane and their land. Through the ceremony it is clear that Madjadjane is not only lived by the living but also by the ancestors of Madjadjane. The ancestral spirits continue to inhabit the land; a factor that is influencing the daily life of the villagers. They cannot be ignored in discussions and decision-making about the land and land use. It is not only the ancestors of the former leaders that inhabit the land. Most families have their own sacred gardens where their ancestors are buried. In these sites the relationship to the family spirits are maintained and nurtured, and they are embedded with value and meaning.

Caring for the spirits of the dead is important for living a meaningful life in the sense that it is part of a social obligation and a moral responsibility. Death does not mean that a social relation will end, rather it enters into a new setting. The living is expected to continue to invest in this relationship, and as part of this mutual relationship the ancestors ought to work for the well being of the living. The belief in extra-human agencies is strong; if the ancestors are ignored, it may affect the crops, the health situation of family members, their success in life. The ancestors continue to have a strong grip on the villager’s lives, which also affects the relationship with the land. The relationship between the villagers’ and their land is a moral and emotional one, where it becomes difficult to separate the villagers’ and the land, the owners and what is to be owned. In effect, the villagers belong to the land just as much as the land

belongs to them. The fact that ancestors are rooted in the land in Madjadjane has implications for the feeling of attachment and belonging to the place, as well as for the villagers' identity.

The strong feeling of attachment and belonging is clearly illustrated among the older men in Madjadjane, who, as previously described, have spent years of their lives living in other places, most of them in South Africa. An important trait of mobility is that it spans a variety of settings and different places, of which many can be centrally important. A cultural perception of mobility implies a closer reading of people's own understanding of the places in which they move and the experiences that these movements entail (Bruijn 2001). For the older men I have spoken to, Madjadjane as a place has held particular importance to them, although they have not been "living it" for many years of their lives. It seems as the years of absence has not affected the attachment and feeling of identity related to place. Many of the older men refer to how they have always lived in Madjadjane, despite having worked for more than 30 years in South Africa. The explanation to this strong feeling of attachment and belonging can be found in the land – not mainly because of its productive value, but just as important in the moral and emotional values. For the male migrants, returning to ones homeland or place has been, and continues to be meaningful. As the description of the "canhu" ceremony illustrates, the relationship between the living and the dead is strong. Many of the ones that have been living away therefore seem to feel the need to return to their homelands in order to nurture or reestablish relationships not only with family and friends, but also with the ancestral spirits. For the older generation having returned to ones home also holds importance with regards to the aspect of ones own death. Being buried among ones own is vital for the after-life.

The spiritual meaning attributed to land and the attachment to a particular place is found in other parts of Mozambique, for instance in the province of Tete (Misfjord 2002). When a miner's amnesty was offered migrant workers in South Africa in 1995, the vast majority of the Mozambicans rejected this opportunity to become South African citizens and staying on once the work was finished. The rejection was much based on a strong attachment to home, in the sense of "machambas" – the small agricultural plots. However, as de Vletter puts it: "this rural piece of ground

represents something more than a source of food (...) Access to land (...) brings some psychological sense of equality, nationhood or ethnic communality” (de Vletter 1998).

The “canhu” ceremony is an expression of a sense of communality; it is an event where the villagers meet and interact. The borders of the place of Madjadjane are constructed and reconstructed through their social interaction and through the narratives of place told before and during such an event. The use of narratives has been a significant part of constructing and maintaining the place of Madjadjane for the labor migrants that have spent years “out of place”. The stories told have been linked to particular events and localities in Madjadjane and have been central elements in the making of a common social memory and of an identity attached to land among the migrants. Madjadjane as a place has as such served as something of a memory circuit card for the migrants, where events, people and traditions are embedded. They have experienced the present world in a context that is connected to past events and objects (Connerton 1989). The “canhu” ceremony is an example of such an event linking the past to the present, and is also an important element in the narratives of place told among the villagers that are “in place”- and the villagers that spend time “out of place”. People in Madjadjane assign meaning to particular localities through this event, but ceremony also serves as an important meeting point where the understanding of Madjadjane as a place is established, confirmed or worked upon among the villagers.

Concluding remarks:

In Madjadjane, land is not only an object with a use-value, but holds a range of moral and affectual meanings. These non-economic meanings have an impact on the outcome of the delimitation process. The process was initiated in order to solve an ongoing land conflict between the reserve and the community and took place in a time where property rights were a leading topic among policy makers, donor agencies and NGOs. Discontent prevails among the population despite the process. One of the main arguments heard among the villagers is that the outcome does not reflect what the villagers see as the place of Madjadjane. The local construction of the place of Madjadjane includes more land than what is reflected in the delimitation process. As illustrated, land is valued not only for economic reasons, but just as much for its

emotional, moral and affectual values. The land in Madjadjane presents the past as well as the present, as it hosts the ancestors as well as the people of the present. One may therefore say that there is a unity between persons, land and ancestors. Land is important for people's identity and feeling of belonging, and is an important element in local traditions.

The non-economical values are part of a larger cultural and moral framework important for what is considered as living a meaningful life among the people in Madjadjane. Through ceremonies such as the "canhu" ceremony, the meanings assigned to land are established, negotiated or confirmed. The ceremonies and the social interaction among villagers within community borders serve to construct and reconstruct the place of Madjadjane, local events and narratives play an important part in legitimizing and recognizing local rights to land. Madjadjane is not unique in this sense. In his case study from the Greek island of Zakynthos, Theodossopoulos refers to how jural definitions of land ownership have less influence in legitimizing and reproducing rights than the local narratives (Theodossopoulos 2000).

Land relations may involve power struggles over large territories and struggles over interpretations of historical events (Andersson 2001). In a context where conflicts over land have been present for some time, one may therefore ask the question whether a "place-based" focus among the villagers is a deliberate strategy, a way of illustrating discontent with the outcome of the registration process. According to Manzo, our relationship to places is not an individual phenomenon; rather it is shaped by the socio-political context in which we find ourselves. He therefore calls for a greater link between concepts such as a sense of place, politics of place and ideology (2003). Just as tradition or custom can be accused of being recreated and needed to reinforce or support a particular economical or political context, similar accusations can be made with regards to the social construction of place. Assigning particular meaning to different localities can be interpreted as strategic behavior to influence the outcome of a process (Cheng 2003) or as local resistance (Scott 1985) against the outcomes of the titling process. Feelings about places can be conscious. Such consciousness is particularly the case in situations where changes occur (Manzo 2003). Places housing change will then be brought to the forefront of consciousness. However, the findings from Madjadjane illustrate that the consciousness of place is

not necessarily the mere result of resistance. Strong moral and emotional bonds exist between the villagers and their land.

Mythical and emotional relations to land are not something typical to the “others”, as something particular of rural people in developing countries or first nations. Most of us have a mythical relation to a tract of land or a landscape, thus making it into a place for ourselves. The degree of importance that we may assign to these mythical relations may vary, as well as the role it might play in legitimizing and reproducing land rights or boundaries (Abramson 2000). Thus, the discourse on property rights should not ignore the beliefs and values going beyond the economic and technical interaction with land, but rather try to bring into the foreground. Land or place does not hold one common universal meaning. Cultures differences exist and people live and constitute their land differently. Such differences must not be underestimated. Understanding land struggles thus involves more encompassing sociological perspectives (Andersson, 2001), since conflict situations over land do not only occur as a result of competing uses or lack of clarified user-rights, but also over the meanings assigned to land, the constitution of place and over expectations of what is considered to be appropriate behavior or use.

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¹ After the end of the civil war in 1992 and with the first multiparty elections in 1994, the land question was raised in Mozambique. All land is owned by the state, but also managed by customary law. During the 1990s, a growing number of foreign investors expressed interest in investing in Mozambique, particularly in the coastal areas. The existence of parallel tenure structures caused confusion and conflicts over land between investors and local communities.

ⁱⁱ Maputo Special Reserve was established as early as in 1932. Very little tourist activities have taken place in the area, and local people continued to live inside the reserve until the 1980s. In the 1980s whole communities were forced to move out of the reserve. The reasons for this forced migration was two-folded; the Frelimo government had a policy of forced settlement in communal villages (aldeias) and the management of the reserve wanted to keep the area strictly for animals.

ⁱⁱⁱ The arguments in this paper originate in several periods of fieldwork conducted in the district of Matatuine, Mozambique. The first visit to the area was made in April 2001. Three longer periods of fieldwork has been carried out in the community of Madjadjane since, the last one in January and February 2004. The work has a phenomenological approach, participatory observation is the main methodology used, supplemented by life history interviews and semi-structured interviews.

^{iv} In the discussions about a reform of the Mozambican land law, particular attention was directed at rural smallholders, in order for them not to lose access to their land due to new projects and foreign investment.

^v The Portuguese word “curandeiro” is translated into English as a healer/medicine man (Collins Portuguese – English dictionary). A “curandeiro” is also the medium into the world of the ancestors, which is why I have chosen to use the word “diviner”.

^{vi} The use of customary leaders was abolished at independence, but has been recognized as part of a decentralization strategy at the end of the 1990s. The discussion concerning the role of the customary authorities is also part of a political discourse between the two main political parties; Frelimo and Renamo.