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GENDER RELATIONS UNDER THE IMPACT OF TRANSPORTATION REVOLUTION IN NORTHERN MOZAMBICAN PROVINCE OF NAMPULA, (1913-1961)

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Researchers agree that colonial economic policies fundamentally changed the context in which African household and kinship relations functioned in Mozambique.[1] However, the question of differential power and resource control between men and women has been barely studied. This essay appears as an attempt to highlight some aspects of the social impact of the expansion of modern land transport in the northern Mozambican province of Nampula. Instead however of trying to capture the whole picture of the social and economic impact of the spread of railroads and road transport I am concentrating my attention on the Makua women whose experience and voices have been overlooked in the emerging Mozambican historiography.

In northern Mozambique as in other parts of Africa, railroads and modern road transport were instruments through which colonial powers were able to impose and consolidate their political ascendancy over the vast hinterland[2]. Acting as pipes for pumping raw materials out of African countries, both railroads and modern road transport also sharpened the exploitative character of colonialism[3]. This has been the case in

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1. See for instance S. Stichter and J. Hay (ed.). African Women South of the Sahara, London, New York: Longman, 1984; Sonia Kruks, Ben Wisner, "The State, The Party and The Female Peasantry in Mozambique" in Journal of Southern African Studies, vol. 11, No. 1, Oct. 1984; Van den Berg, Jelle, "A Peasant Form of Production: Wage-Dependent agriculture in Southern Mozambique", Canadian Journal Of African Studies, 21 (3), 1987: 375-389.

2. Leverett, C., "An Outline Of The History Of Railway in Tanganyika 1890-1956" in Tanganyika Notes and Records, 47, 48 (1957) pp.108-116; Matos, Eduardo Correia de, A Colonizacão de Moçambique Perante o Interesse Social, Sociedade de Estudos da Colónia de Moçambique, 1947; Croxton, Anthony, Railways of Rhodesia, Newton Abbot, 1973; Freund, Bill, "Labor and Labor History in Africa: A Review of the Literature", African Studies Review, 27 (1984),pp.1-42; _____, "Theft and Social Protest Among the Tin miners of Northern Nigeria" in Radical History Review 20, 1982.

3. Mason, Michael, "Working on the Railway: Forced Labor in Northern Nigeria, 1907-1912", in Peter Gutkind, Robin Cohen and Jean Copans, (eds.) African Labor History, (Sage Publications), 1978 pp.56-79;

Nampula province. Apart from these effects, modern transport infrastructures improved communications and transportation into the hinterland and they significantly helped to expand trade into remote rural areas[4].

In this essay, my working hypothesis has been that practical, material economic forces represented by the expansion of modern land transport into the hinterland and the subsequent expansion of the commodity market had a significant impact on the daily lives of both men and women among the hinterland Makua. The period of expansion of cash crops was preceded by a household woman-centered agriculture. However, in the early decades of the colonialism, i.e. before the expansion of modern transport infrastructures and cash opportunities into the hinterland, women's position within the household was gradually being eroded. With far less opportunities of acquiring cash than men, and tied to their role of family food producers, women had still to pay taxes. While men were increasingly being transformed into cash-winners in both regional trade and migrant labor, women were increasingly becoming more dependent upon their male guardians for access to both cash for taxes and imported commodities.

However, as the railway and motor vehicles gradually incorporated more 'backwater' regions into the world commodity market, women found a way of retarding the demise of their previously central role in the household economy. Colonial development schemes in Nampula rested mainly on cash crop production. Since agriculture was traditionally a women's domain it is quite fair to infer that women's position within the household economy became more and more noticeable. From family-minded producers, women became the principal producers of cash crops.

Nzula, A.T. , I.I. Potekhin and A.Z. Zusmanovich. Forced Labour in Colonial Africa. Ed. by R. Cohen. Zed press. 1979. p.33;

4. Santos, Valdez dos , O Desconhecido Niassa. Lisboa, 1964. pp.176-178; Holmstrom. Edwin , Railways and Roads in Pioneer Development Overseas: A Study of Their Comparative Economics (London: P.S. King and Son. 1934); Hopkins, A.G. , Economic History of West Africa. (London. 1973); Lima, Alfredo Pereira de. História dos Caminhos de Ferro de Moçambique. Lço. Marques.1971.

The ease of acquiring cash through the sale of surplus production in nearby rural shops enabled many women to renegotiate power within the household. Prior to the introduction of railroads and roads, evidence shows that women were entirely dependent upon men. Only males were able to migrate for jobs where they could acquire cash for *taxes* and clothing for their mothers, spouses, sisters or daughters. However, the expansion of roads and the subsequent establishment of shops contributed to a certain change in this situation. While their male relatives were engaged in contract labor, women were able to produce cash crops [cotton, cashews, sesame (*sesamum indicum, L.*), peanuts], and sell them directly to shops for cash or other commodities for their daily lives. As we shall later see, this did not mean the end of men's attempt to control all financial means within the household. However, women's position was still substantially altered.

I. The Hinterland Makua Women in the Late Pre-Colonial and Early Colonial Period.

The Makua, like many other peoples of Central Africa[5], have practiced a form of protracted uxorilocal bride-service marriage. Uxorilocal bride service marriage creates matrilocal extended families and gives their society a matrilineal influence[6]. Husbands in Makua society are always outsiders in their wives' villages. As a Makua proverb clearly maintains, *Mulopwana, nakhuwo: khaminela ekholwèle,* (A man is like a corn shrub whose roots, unlike millet «mèle», do not create offspring)[7]. The meaning of this

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[5] See for instance Chet S. Lancaster, The Goba of the Zambezi: Sex Roles, Economics and Change. University of Oklohoma Press: Norman, 1981.

[6] Major A. J. de Mello Machado, Entre os Macuas de Angoche: Historiando Moçambique. Prelo editora, Lisboa, 1968; rancisco Lerma Martinez, O Povo Macua e a sua Cultura, (Ministério da Educação: Instituto de Investigação Cientifica Tropical. Lisboa, 1989), p. 15.

[7] Despite the fact that these proverbs were collected and presented in a written form much later, they are though part of Makua oral tradition dating back to pre-colonial period. Aphorisms, proverbs are important part of culture and moral education among the Makua. For more see, Provérbios Macuas: Cultura

aphorism explains the very foundations of how the Makua society is organized. It is asserted that the man's clan is fruitless and sterile, that it cannot be transmitted to the offspring. On the contrary, a woman's clan is perceived as fertile through which the *nihimo* (the clan) is reproduced. A man in Makua society is merely a biological reproducer. He is therefore compared to a corn plant which fructifies only once before dying, whereas a woman is likened to the admirable millet whose roots renew its productivity for at least three years in row.

Despite the man's secondary role in the social reproduction of the *nihimo*, his role in the household economy was crucial. 'A man is the axe; and a woman the hoe', (*Mulopwana, epasó; muthiyana, ehipá,*)[8] says another Makua proverb. In fact, among the Makua, men 'traditionally' cut the trees and cleared the fields with an ax and machetes, whereas women tilled the land, seeded, and weeded with a hoe. Without an axe, an important tool for clearing the land, a hoe by itself could not do anything. An analogy of this aphorism is then extended to gender roles of men and women in the Makua peasant household. Men and women must not be seen as simple fathers and mothers, but also as important economic agents competing along gender lines for the control of household resources.

In the traditional Makua society, all domestic chores were women's responsibility. They included, bearing and rearing children, preparing food for the family, cultivating food stuffs, making domestic appliances like pots, sieves, and others, fetching water and firewood. On the other hand, it was men's responsibility to build huts, to clear the land, fell trees and to provide all agriculture tools and clothing to his family. In a situation of a famine it was his responsibility to help his family to survive.[9] In the pre-colonial era and

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Moçambicana, coligidos pelo Pe. Alexandre Valente de Matos, da Sociedade Missionária Portuguesa. Instituto de Investigação Científica Tropical, Junta de Investigações Científicas do Ultramar. Lisboa, 1982. p. 68.

[8] Provérbios Macuas: p. 205.

[9]. See Major A. J. de Mello Machado, Entre os Macuas de Angoche: Historiando Moçambique. Prelo editora, Lisboa, 1968. pp.190-191.

early decades of the colonial settlement long-distance trade as a non-domestic sphere was absolutely dominated by men. Given societal norms regarding gender roles, long, dangerous and tedious journeys from the hinterland to the coast could not accommodate women. Women's absence for long periods was considered detrimental to their primary role as food producers for the family. This explains why most of long-distance trade participants were men.

Trade among the hinterland Makua never emerged as an independent economic sector. It was part of the rural economic structure of social reproduction. The active role played by traditional lineage leaders - *Mwene Mutokwene* (a traditional lineage chief later on known as régulo), and *Mwene*'s (the village headman) - in its organization may partially support the argument that trade was an intrinsic component of social reproduction. During the dry season, chiefs and headmen would call the ***Mahunu*** (heads of households) and urge them to collect wax, tap rubber or seize some slaves[10]. After gathering an appreciable amount of wax, rubber and other tradable items the clan leaders set up a date of departure to the coast, where they bartered their produce for clothing, salt, and other commodities[11]. These imported commodities were then divided among married women, children, uncles, mothers and aunts. Only single adult women in most of the cases were excluded. They did not receive any imported cloth. They were then condemned to continue wearing *nakotto* (bark cloth). This was rather a deliberate action,

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10. Smugling in slave trade despite its official ban in 1836/42 continued up to 1902. Nigankwa Sibire asserted that he has heard from his parents that apart from wax and rubber people could be seized and sold in either Chiúre or Lunga. A man was worth five pieces of clothing, whereas a woman was worth six pieces.(Interview with Nikangwa Sibire, Muite, Oct.12, 1993). For more on slave trade in the late 19th century see Arlindo Chilundo, "Závereèná Fáze Vyvoje Obchodu Otroky v Jihovychodní Africe (od druhé poloviny 18. století do konce 19. století)". Brezen 1986, Praha, pp. 162. M.A. Thesis in Czech:"The Last Phase of Slave Trade in Southeastern Africa(from the 2nd half of 18th century to the end of 19th century). Prague, March, 1986.

11. Interview with Nikangwa Sibire, Muite, Oct.12, 1993.

which was aimed at forcing them into marriages. As one peasant put it "if they wanted *ekuwo* (cotton cloth), they had to be married..."[12]

Depending on the distance from the point of departure to the coast, these journeys could last from a week to one month. Mostly only able-bodied, healthy and young men who could march an average of 50km a day with their loads on the shoulders could participate in these trade clusters. It is not therefore surprising that long-distance trade was segregated along both sex and age lines. Women, children and the elderly were literally excluded. However, the elderly and women's role in the preparation for the journey was very critical.

In Mecuburi, for instance, before their departure on these long, uncertain and dangerous journeys, men asked their wives or their female relatives to prepare food, which consisted of meal, dried manioc and peanuts. Food supplies had to suffice for both ways. A successful journey required a thorough and meticulous preparation, which involved a series of rituals. For instance, the *makeya* (gift to the spirit of ancestors) was prepared and offered by women on behalf of their husbands, uncles and sons. Shortly before such a long journey was about to take place, it was quite common to see women pounding millet, taking the meal in a bowl, and going to a certain family holy site along with their husbands, usually where the most respectable elderly family members had been buried or to a tree called *mutolo*. During the act of offering the sacrifice to the spirit of the ancestors , as Mrs. Mukwashe recalled, a woman would recite:

> My husband is about to undertake a very long and dangerous journey. I implore You to protect him throughout the journey. Bless him so that the products he is taking with him will be well sold...[13]

After this plea, the man would take his saddle-bag and leave to join others in the caravan.

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12. Joint interview with Matias Mbara et al., Milana, Oct.12, 1993.

13. Joint interview with Manuessa Mukwashe et al. Mecuburi -sede. October 11, 1993.

While the men were absent from the household, a specified set of rules and taboos were imposed upon his wife. Taboos formerly used by hunters were now adopted, transformed and perfected to play a new role during the period of long-distance trade[14]. In the long period of her husband's absence, a woman was not supposed to quit the household. She was barred from leaving the household beyond a distance of one kilometer. She was only allowed to go to a nearby well or river to fetch water and return home immediately. She was also forbidden to shut the door of her hut throughout the period of her husband's absence[15]. She was also proscribed not only from cooking for a strange male guest but also from traveling and conversing with men while her husband was away[16].

From the above one I would speculate this set of taboos was solely intended to control woman's sexuality. It was believed that limiting her movements, keeping her 'forcibly' home, and maintaining the door always opened, would significantly reduce the chances of adultery. These taboos led women to believe that if they did not respect these prescriptions, the lives of their significant others would be in jeopardy. Any sort of misfortune throughout the journey was blamed on women who did not adhere strictly to these rules. There was indeed a material reward for women's loyalty to their husbands. When their husbands, sons, or uncles returned, they could bring imported clothing, better hoes, salt and eventually some beads if the journey had been successful.

Oral accounts from most of the Makua hinterland indicate that salt and clothing were commodities in high demand in the interior. For example, in Chinga and Iapala, peasants tired of flavoring their food with ashes of certain plant leaves like *éthuru*,

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14. For more on this issue see Edward Alpers, Ivory and Slaves:Changing Pattern of International Trade in East Central Africa to the Later ninegteenth Century, University of California Press, Berkely and Los Angeles, 1975: chap. 4.

15. Joint interview with Manuessa Mukuashe et al., Mecuburi -sede, October 11, 1993.

16. Francisco Lerma Martinez, O Povo Maqua e a sua Cultura, (Ministério da Educação: Instituto de Investigação Cientifica Tropical, Lisbon, 1989), p. 171.

mukisi, m'tuttho, kutuma, m'kohi and *m'koukoré* that were used to substitute for salt[17] organized special trade clusters to purchase salt in the coast. In Namapa, notwithstanding the fact that peasants, especially women, could obtain salt from Lúrio river banks[18], importing salt from the coast was more economical because the entire process of salt extraction was not only demanding but also labor intensive and time-consuming. Most of the women's labor during the dry season was allocated to salt extraction. However, increasing ties with the coastal commercial entrepôt of Memba in the late 19th and early 20th century brought in an influx of cheaper imported salt which consequently ruined local salt production. The collapse of local salt production had far reaching social effects. Women who heretofore had been not only the producers but also the owners of salt, were now becoming increasingly dependent upon men in order to gain access to this product. Since salt was brought in from Memba by men engaged in long-distance trade, the influx of cheaper salt from the littoral also meant women's loss of control over a very important seasoning commodity[19].

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17. AHM, "Relatório do Posto Administrativo de Chinga: Relatório de Usos e Costumes Indígenas (13 de Novembro de 1927)", por Francisco Alexandre Lobo Pimentel, chefe do posto administrativode Chinga, Secção Especial a III p.8, Cx. 187 , pp. 165; Joint interview Nikakoro Phakala and Luisa João, Iapala, June 5, 1993.

18. José Artur Berta Chiquebo in a joint interview with both elderly women and men explained to me the all process of salt extraction in the banks of Rio Lúrio. Women would bring big clay pots into the banks of Lúrio River where they filled them up with sand from sites with high salt concentration. Then they brought this sand home where they moistened it with water. The gravy sand obtained would subsequently be transferred into another earthenware with a tiny hole in the bottom. The water in the sand will then drip drop after drop into another clay pot. Through this process the women would patiently repeat this operation until they accumulated a significant quantity of salted water. The following step consited of filtering this salted water before boiling it. In the meantime they would fetch firewood in the preparation of the boiling of the filtered water. The water would be boiled for so long up to its evaporation. The process leading to the evaporation was not easy. It required so much firewood. After the evaporation in the bottom of the clay pot appeared salt crystals. then with *nakhuku*, a sort of shell found in the river, or with a snail shell they would remove these salt crystals fron the pot into a riddle. Some people would store the salt in a sort of barrel, called locally *nruttu* , which was made with a tree bark called *othako*.[Joint interview with José Artur Berta Chiquebo et al., Namapa, October 5, 1993]

19. Joint interview with José Artur Berta Chiquebo et al., Namapa, October 5, 1993. The influx of cheaper salt from the coast meant also that women's labor which was formely allocated to salt extraction could be diverted for other domestic chores. Here I see salt as a metaphor of gender conflict over the control of scarce resources.

I this section, I attempted to highlight gender roles in the pre-colonial Makua society. Given societal norms regarding gender roles most of domestic chores and food production remained basically women's domain, whereas most of non-domestic activities like long-distance trade were dominated by men. It became obvious that men were more independent than women. However, despite this apparent woman's subordinate position and her domestic workload, a man could hardly turn her into a slave. In this matrilineal society, as Machado pointed out, a woman residing in the community where she was born, she enjoyed protection from her close relatives, great autonomy and relative independence from her husband[20].

II. The Colonial Conquest and its Impact on Women (1885-1930)

Shortly after the Berlin Conference in 1885, in which Africa was sliced among European colonial powers, the so called 'pacification' military campaigns started. However, because of the inefficiency of land transport the process of actual colonization of the Makua hinterland was very slow and gradual. Up to the1930s many hinterland regions still remained only marginally controlled by the Portuguese. Despite their fragile economic presence in the interior of Nampula, the Portuguese were able to impose taxes[21] as a means of raising revenues for the colonial state's administrative costs and the construction of transportation infrastructures. These taxes had to be paid in cash by men and women alike. The tax burden fell heavily on single, divorced and widowed women. Taxation had an overwhelming effect on the peasant household and peasants' social and

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20. See Major A. J. de Mello Machado, Entre os Macuas de Angoche: Historiando Moçambique. Prelo editora, Lisboa, 1968, pp.190.

21. 'Native taxes' were for the first time introduced in 1854. Only few natives were in fact subject to taxes, because the Portuguese influence was very limited. It was only confined to a very narrow strip o land along the coast and Zambezi valley. After the colonial conquest taxes were extended into the hinterland, but always barely regulated. Throughout the Colony there were two types of taxes: the hut tax and poll tax. By 1937, the Portuguese came formally to acknowledge that the hut tax did not exist, because what in practice existed it was the poll tax. For more see Diploma Legislativo n°551, de 9 de Junho de 1937.

economic lives. It affected in many ways both economic and social relations within the household.

During the first two decades of this century, many peasants of both genders failed to pay their taxes for lack of money. The dearth of cash was ascribed to the absence of stores in the hinterland, which made it difficult for peasants to sell their produce for money. For instance, in the entire Comando Militar de Imala of about eleven thousand square kilometers[22], there was only one store in Muecate. In 1916, a Portuguese military commander in Imala observed that natives very often had to resort to commercial entrepôts in Mossuril, Ampuense and Memba, which were as far as nine days' travel by foot from Imala and Muecate in order to be able to pay their hut taxes. And those from Mecuburi would sell their produce in Memba, which was as far as ten to fourteen days round-trip. "It is because of these long distances to the commercial centers", the officer complained, "that it is difficult for the natives to obtain enough cash from what they sell to pay their hut taxes"[23].

During the dry season, shortly after the harvest, clusters of hundreds of male peasants were reported carrying their produce (millet, maize, rice, peanuts, rubber, waxe, coffee, sesame, tobacco) from the hinterland to the coast where they expected to acquire cash for their taxes[24]. As mentioned earlier, these trade clusters were sexually segregated. Women for social reasons could not participate in these long-distance trade activities. Only men could engage in them. Single, divorced and widowed women living on their own were deprived of any reliable source of cash. As late as the early 1930s women's access to cash opportunities was still very marginal.

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22. Anuário Comercial de Portugal, "Colónias-Separatas", Lisboa (1931), pp.420

23. A.H.M. Direcção dos Serviços de Administração Civil, "Relatórios e Diários de Serviço, (1915-1916)". Cx. 6. Capitania-Mor da Macuana, Relatório do Comando Militar de Imala (1915-16), por José Daniel.

24. AHM. "Relatório da Capitania-Mor do Mossuril de 1 de Janeiro de 1902". Governo do Districto de Moçambique, Imprensa Nacional de Moçambique, 1901; AHM. Governo Geral. "Correspondência Recebida, Distrito de Moçambique, 1905 - Relatório da Capitania-Mor da Macuana",Cx.1016.

In the most interior areas such as Malema the situation was still more dramatic. Although local people were reported to be industrious, producing copious quantities of white beans, onions, and a variety of grain, they could hardly pay their taxes. There were no stores where they could sell their surpluses for cash. On this issue a Colonial Native Officer noted,

> [...] in Malema there is no a single commercial establishment. Despite Ribáuè having two stores it is so far away from Malema, and in the entire Cuamba there is not a single sample of a store. How will this population be able to sell their produce for cash?[25]

Wage jobs were still very scarce. Plantations and large scale farming which could have employed some of the peasants for cash were virtually non-existent. Up to late 1930s when the construction of the railway brought in new job opportunities, the only source of cash for taxes were migrant labor and, marginally, long-distance trade.

Many male peasants from Lalaua and Malema were reported migrating for wage labor to tea plantations in Nyasaland, and to sugar plantations in Mopeia. Some of them went as far as Salisbury in Southern Rhodesia, where they worked in the mines. As an officer commented, they spent more than a month in the journey to a workplace. In Nyasaland, "they earn an average of eight shillings a month, but by and large they return loaded with so many goods: shoes, cloths, umbrellas"[26].

Under such circumstances, women became victims of their gender. Unlike men who could easily migrate to the neighboring Nyasaland, to sisal plantation in the littoral, to the construction sites of railroads, women were believed to be incapable of undertaking such long and dangerous journeys. In 'backwater' regions like Malema and Lalaua in the late 1930s, i.e. before these areas were integrated into international commodity market, women lacked the means that could help them to comply with the law. This led a high

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25. AHM, "Relatório de uma Inspecção às Circunscrições do Distrito de Moçambique (1936-1937),Vol. II", pelo Inspector administrativo A.Pinto Corrêa, Inspecção dos Serviços Administrativos e dos Negócios Indígenas, Lourenço Marques, 5 de Abril de 1938, p.113

26. Relatório - Pinto Corrêa:123

colonial officer to observe, in the same period, that the highest percentage of tax defaulters were women. "Given this situation", he wrote, "it is worth arguing in favor of a reduction of the amount of tax that women in the district of Moçambique must pay"[27]. Despite his complaints it was only a decade later that the amount of taxes to be paid by women was reduced from 90 escudos to 50 escudos.[28]

As a result, a high percentage of women were unable to comply with the law. Unlike men who could migrate or engage in long-distance trade for cash women's domain remained confined to the social reproduction of the lineage. The only possible source of cash was agriculture. "But", a colonial officer wondered, "the women? Where are they going to acquire resources that will enable them to pay the 90 escudos of taxes? From tilling the land, as it happens in the littoral?"[29] In fact, the percentage of female tax defaulters along the coast, the railway [where it already existed] and principal roads, where stores had been established, was lower but still very high.

High percentages of female tax-defaulters led a frustrated *chefe de posto* to accuse Makua women of laziness. Dismissing the prevailing assumption and belief among European farmers that women are the principal agricultural producers, he wrote:

> This might be true among the *landins* (people of Southern Mozambique), but among the Makua it is not the case. One of the proofs that Makua women are not good cultivators is the fact that single and widowed women always fail to pay hut taxes, in almost the entire District. An additional evidence is that when men are compelled to go somewhere for forced labor, when they come back they find out that their women failed to work in the *machamba*.... [30]

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27. Relatório - Pinto Corrêa:116. Taxes for both men and women had been increased in 1927 to 90 escudos. According to a Portaria provincial nº 631 of Dec.24 of the same year the increase was considered critical to cover the expenses of railroad building, road maintenance and high administrative costs. See Portaria nº1 883, published in the Boletim Oficial nº5, I Série, Feb.4, 1933.

28. Portaria Nº 4:768, "Regulamento do Imposto Indígena", in Boletim Oficial nº25, June 27, 1942. Taxes to be paid by single, widowed and divorced females was from this year on designated "imposto indígena reduzido".

29. AHM, "Relatório de Uma Inspecção às Circunscrições do Distrito de Moçambique (1936-1937)",Vol. II, pelo Inspector administrativo A.Pinto Corrêa. Inspecção dos Serviços Administrativos e dos Negocios Indígenas. Lourenço Marques, 5 de Abril de 1938.p. 113.

30. Relatório de Chinga:143

Women were neither lazy nor reckless. Within the traditional division of labor women did more than enough to sustain the social reproduction of their families. Apart from all domestic chores, women cultivated *machambas* (small farms) which produced enough foodstuffs for their families. The impact of taxation and of commodity production upon the traditional way of living was overwhelming. Women, who heretofore had cultivated small plots of land with the help of their male guardians, were suddenly compelled to increase the size of their *machambas* without the appropriate help from men, who in the meantime had been coerced to work in public works - road, rails and bridge construction.

Single, divorced and widowed women were not stupid. Between the two choices before them, to provide for their families or to comply with the imposed law at the expense of their children, the former was to them a better option. That is why they were reluctant to produce more crops at any cost for taxes. Challenging the colonial state was at best very risky. Many of these single and widowed women who failed to pay their taxes became vulnerable to all sorts of abuses. As a colonial officer noted in Chinga in the late 1920s:

> The *régulos* very often get angry with single women and widows for failing to cultivate larger *machambas* in order to be able to pay their taxes. These women would furiously retort by telling to the régulos: 'You are not my husband, you do not have any right to command me'. And this it is a fact.[31]

This quotation suggests how fast the relationship between husbands and wives within the Makua marriage had changed. The impact of taxation combined with women's reduced cash opportunities had the effect of reinforcing hidden patriarchal elements that always existed in the Makua uxorilocal marriage. Women who failed to pay taxes faced the prospect of being sent to forced labor. As in the late pre-colonial and early colonial period, when hinterland women from Chinga, Mecubúri, Iapala and other hinterland regions increased their chances of wearing a piece of imported cloth if they were

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31. Relatório - Pinto Corrêa: 143

married[32], from the early 1920s on they similarly felt more protected against forced labor and other abuses if they were married.

Women marrying against their will in the early days of the colonization in the Makua hinterland became more frequent. There is strong evidence that a number of women, in order to escape from being sent to forced labor, had to accept unwanted marriage arrangements as second and third wives. Marriages among the Makua were traditionally monogamous[33]. However, over the time a combination of several factors namely the search for protection, economic reasons, Islamic influence gradually changed the character of marriage. After the imposition of hut taxes, many single and widowed women increasingly sought protection from married men. The latter found a poligamous marriages also economically advantageous. The more women a man had, the more production he could have. He had only to help his wives to clear larger plots, and the economic advantages he obtained went beyond paying taxes. A man with several women had also a secure protection against any forced labor for failing to pay taxes. Each women had her own field in her village. If the production failed in one of his wive's field, he could eventually obtain enough surplus from another which could be sold for cash for taxes. On the other hand, women found it helpful to have a husband who could help them to clear the land and to acquire cash in the far away stores for cash.

Traditionally all marriages among the Makua are by consent of both the man and woman. A man could not marry a second wife without the acquiescence of the first woman (*mwàra ntokwene or muthiyana a khalai*). However, taxation forced some of the *mwàra ntokwene* to accept, for compassion, marriages between their husbands and their female single or widowed relatives who needed protection. Terrified by the prospect of

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32. See joint interview with Matias Mbara et al., Milliana, Oct.12, 1993.

33. Martinez, F. Lima - O Povo Macua e a Sua Cultura, Ministério da Educação: Instituto de Investigação Científica Tropical. Lisboa. 1989.pp.173-175.

being sent to forced labor for failing to pay taxes, certain adult step-daughters married with their mother's husbands. As a colonial *chefe de posto* noted in the late 1920s,

> ...a husband can marry with one of his step-daughters, but her mother seems not minding at all. In some of the cases it is she (the mother or the man's wife) who willingly offers her daughter to her husband, especially when she is too old to help him to raise money for taxes...[34]

Such marriages for convenience were quite distinctive even in the e-Makua linguistic expression. Young women who were forced to marry just for protection or for other reasons were called *othelihiwa* (forced to marry)[35].

The balance of power and respect that were characteristic to the Makua marriages, were gradually being replaced by an increasingly more exploitative relationship. These women were on the one hand literally working for their husbands and indirectly for their mwara *ntokwene*, and on the other hand for the colonial state taxes. Because of the absence of stores in the vicinities of their villages, husbands or male guardians became crucial elements of linkage between dependent women and the market.

Abuses arising from women's increasing dependency upon men became more frequent. A husband in the Makua society as an outsider in her wife's village was traditionally in a very vulnerable position. In a situation of dispute between the wife and the husband, the latter was more likely to recede. As a 'stranger' in his wife's village, he was naturally deterred by the fear that he could be called upon to leave his family and therefore lose access to land. Taxation and women's lack of access to the market were used by some men to turn the situation into their own favor. A depressed man could use the tax to get rid of an annoying wife or mother-in-law, or he could use this opportunity to underscore how important he his for the household. A *chefe de posto* captured the patronizing male attitude in these words:

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[34] Relatório de Chinga:69.

[35] Martinez:158.

> Even during the hut tax collection one can see how cunning the black man is; he takes advantage of the hut tax to prove his wife how much he loves her by withholding and hiding the money awaiting for his wife to be arrested to the Posto. One or two days later he would appear in the Posto with the necessary amount of money for her hut tax and would say to his wife, he had to borrow the money, because he is a 'good friend of her'. Some would even take advantage of the hut tax to free themselves from unwanted wives or even mothers-in-law[36].

Marriages, it appears, did not offer enough protection to women. Many of them ended up in various types of forced labor for failing to pay taxes.

III. Women and Forced Labor (1920s-mid 1940s)

Forced labor was the penalty that tax-defaulters, men and women alike, had to face. Native Labor Codes of 1899, 1911, and 1914 were all unanimous in defending the use of forced labor for those who failed to pay taxes[37]. Even the new Labor Code of 1928, which was drawn up to eliminate abuses criticized by the Society of Nations in 1926[38], such as the use of forced labor especially in private enterprises, did not rule out the use of forced labor for all tax defaulters, who were officially considered vagrants. The district authorities, from the governor down to the *chefes do posto*, had the right to use correctional forced labor if public need required it, at times of natural disasters, or to provide urgently needed public services, such as roads, hospitals or bridges[39].

In harmony with the Native Labor Code many men and women who failed to pay their taxes were sent to forced public works. In Mecubúri, for instance, in the early 1930s

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36. Relatório de Chinga, p. 248.

37. For more on this issue see Silva Cunha, O Trabalho Indígena: Estudo de Direito Colonial, 2ª Edição. Agência Geral do Ultramar. Lisboa 1954. In theory women, elderly men over 60 years old and children below 14 years old were exempt from forced labor. In practice however only elderly people were free.

38. See "Report on Employment of Native Labor in Portuguese Africa", by Edward Alsworth Ross, Professor of Sociology, University of Wisconsin. New York 1925.

39. Vail, L & L. White, Capitalism and Colonialism in Mozambique, [London: Heinemann, 1980] p. 252.

women were massively compelled to build roads by the then administrator José de Castro[40]. As a group of peasants from Mecubúri recalled:

> In those days there was no gender discrimination for road construction. Both men and women had to built roads. Women from Miliana area had to built by themselves and under a supervision of a cypai a bridge called Phatari[41].

The nickname 'Phatari' is from the e-Makua 'phatari okhwá', which means 'I would rather die'. Violence, harsh labor conditions at the construction site, and occasionally sexual abuses were so daunting that some women, as my informants maintained, would prefer death to being sent into the construction of bridges.

Press-ganged women were forced to perform the same kind of tasks as men did. As in the case of Phatari bridge, women teams without a single man, except the cypai, were coerced to cut tree trunks, to carry them onto the construction site, and ultimately to build the bridge. This was considered by the Makua an extreme punishment. Cutting trees with axes and machetes was traditionally considered a man's job. Carrying heavy trunks was equally harsh for the women. As another peasant recalled,

> women after cutting and preparing the trunk, they tied it with ropes. Then in each side of the trunk five women were placed, and subsequently they pulled it into the river, i.e. to the construction site.[42]

While serving their sentence, women slept in makeshift shanties, recounted the peasants I interviewed. Some of these women were subject to sexual abuses by the cypai. It was common, they claimed, to see an overseer or cypai sleeping with one of the women. Despite the circumstances in which these women were forced to engage in unwanted sexual intercourses, those who spent the night with cypai were seemingly the lucky ones. Whenever a new cluster of sentenced women arrived, the cypai would select

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40. Relatório - Pinto Corrêa: 17.

41. Group interview with Matias Mbara et al., Posto Administrativo de Miliana, distrito de Mecubúri, Oct.12, 1993.

42. Group interview with Matias Mbara et al.

one of them. Throughout the period of sentence, which was a week, that woman would sleep with the cypai. "She was the most darling. Instead of working on the construction site, her task was to fetch and boil water, and cook for the cypai."[43]

Mecuburi was not the only circumscription were women were compelled to labor in public works. Well documented cases of violence inflicted to women come also from administrative posts of Corrane and Itoculo. Single, divorced and widowed women who failed to pay their taxes were sent by the local administrators to collective forced cotton cultivation. For instance, in 1934, Deodoro Cruz, a *chefe de posto* in Corrane, gathered 200 single women and forced them to grow cotton under the surveillance of cypais (*polícias auxiliares*)[44]. While sleeping in huge shanties, these women received a daily food ration which barely satiated them. After the harvest, the cotton was sold to *Sociedade Luso-Luxemburguesa*, based at Namialo. The *chefe de posto* used part of this money to pay these women's taxes, and the other part was reportedly used for clothes for the women and their children.

Coercing women to work in public works affected the core of Makua ***modus vivendi***. Since public works fit into the category of non-domestic sphere, compelling men to forced labor was still tolerable. Even local traditional chiefs who collaborated with the colonial administration in the procurement of labor for road and railroad construction, found forcing women to work in public works outrageous and inacceptable. Dissenting chiefs, especially those who refused to collaborate with the administrator in this matter, were sent into exile[45]. The replacement of José de Castro by Mendes Gil in Mecubúri in the mid 1930s provoked a wave of joy among both the traditional chiefs and their subjects. Pinto Corrêa, a high Native Affairs officer, who visited Mecubúri shortly

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43. Group interview with Matias Mbara et al..

44. AHM, "Relatório de Uma Inspecção às Circunscrições do Distrito de Moçambique (1936-1937)",Vol. II, pp.49-50.

45. Relatório - Pinto Corrêa:17.

after the replacement of José de Castro, commented, "All that regime of terror and despotism disappeared with the coming of the new administrator who leaves the women in peace in their huts..."[46].

This was rather a short lived euphoria. As long as all-weather roads did not exist the use of compelled labor would continue. Shortly thereafter an administrator of the Mecuburi's neighboring circumscription of Meconta, would jot in his diary, "Roads and bridges are indeed a constant agony for the natives". During the rainy season when roads and bridges collapse, "crowds of people are sent to fill up holes, to rebuilt earth embankments, to fix pontoons...". However, soon thereafter a torrent of rain water was enough to tremble down all rebuilt pontoons, and to ruin all sandy roads. In such a situation, as the administrator laconically put it, "I had to utilize men, women, and teenage boys in order to make the roads passable"[47]

In the early 1940s complaints multiplied from within the colonial state against the utilization of female labor in road construction[48]. In the attempt to stop the frequent resort to female labor for road and bridge constructions a new ordinance was enacted in 1942. This was the Regulamento da Contribuição Braçal (Manual Contribution Ordinance). Under this enactment all male natives in the ages between 18 and 55 years were "subject to manual contribution redeemable, in public works of collective interest"[49]. Thus, under the supervision of local administration all able-bodied men were expected to work in public works five days a year on roads classified as third category that were not farther than 20 kilometers from their villages. As a colonial officer asserted

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46. Relatório - Pinto Corrêa:17

47. AHM, "Diário de Serviço do administrador da Circunscrição de Meconta, Leite Pinheiro, (26/1/37)", Política Indígena, Pasta 66.

48. A.H.M., Secção Reserva, Inspecção dos Serviços Administrativos e dos Negócios Indígenas "Relatório e Documentos Referentes à Inspecção Ordinária feita na Província do Niassa 1ª parte" Inspector Administrativo, Capitão Carlos Henrique Jones da Silveira, 1943, Cx.95.

49. Portaria nº4963, Boletim Oficial de Moçambique nº51, de 26 de Dezembro de 1942.

in 1943, the number of women coerced to work on road construction for failing to pay taxes had dramatically decreased. However, he acknowledged that in Posto de Lunga, in the circumscription of Mossuril, women were still being coerced by native authorities to work on the roads in the cover of the night, in order to make it harder to find out. In addition, he asserted, "I saw by myself women in Posto de Lumbo cleaning grass around the residence of *chefe de posto* in remission of their *imposto-braçal*."[50].

Mossuril was not the only place were women were still being forced to work on roads. As the expansion of roads and railway progressed into the hinterland, settlers' plantations and cash crop production (this is the case of forced cotton cultivation imposed in 1938) were also extended into the interior. And they required an increasing amount of labor. The bulk of men were either compelled or sought 'voluntarily' jobs for cash. Many migrated from their villages to the plantations, railroad, road construction and other places for a period of three to six months. As a result, the number of men in remote 'backwater' regions shrank. During the rainy season, the *chefes de posto* resorted more frequently to *contribuição braçal* labor for local and feeder roads classified as third category roads[51]. Notwithstanding the *Contribuição Braçal* Ordinance stating clearly that only male labor was to be used, for the dearth of labor especially during the critical rainy season, when many roads (in 1943 third category roads constituted cc. 40 percent of all Nampula's roads)[52] ruined and bridges collapsed, local *chefes de posto* and administrators would harness men and women alike.

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50. A.H.M., Secção Reserva. Inspecção dos Serviços Administrativos e dos Negócios Indígenas "Relatório e Documentos Referentes à Inspecção Ordinária feita na Província do Niassa I° parte" Inspector Administrativo, Capitão Carlos Henrique Jones da Silveira. 1943. Cx.95, p.40.

51. Roads were according to their importance and state classified into three categories. Roads classified as first and second categories were under the responsibilty of the state Board for Roads. And the the third category roads were under the responsibility of local administrations. For the former, in theory all workers had to be paid for their labor, whereas for the latter local administrations relied on peasants. Prior to the Contribuição braçal ordinance, laborers on the so called 3rd category roads were tax-defaulters and other sentenced people.

52. By 1943 in Nampula there were 1.001 kms of first class roads, and 1.915 kms of second class. Both were under the responsibility of the Road Board, which was not supposed to use unpaid labor for both construction and maintenance. Roads classified as being of third category totalized 1. 737 kms. These later were under the responsibility of local administartions, which relied on both sentenced workers and

Oral testimonies from different parts of Nampula province are unanimous in depicting the horror inflicted onto women on road construction. In Murrupula, for example, recollections from local elderly women are plenty of horrifying scenes on the construction of roads. Teniha Paissuana , from Chinga, vividly recalled that roughly in the late 1940s the cypais

> came repeatedly to my village looking for my husband. Because they did not find him, they decided to arrest me. I was then sent to the construction of a bridge over the Nadjiuè river. There I had to carry stones, wood, tree trunks... I was there three months. I saw two women dying for exhaustion[53].

The above testimony suggests that women in the late 1940 were still subject to forced labor for failing to pay taxes. Harsh sentences like the one told by Paissuana might have in fact subsided after the World War II. But five days to a week of forced labor in public works were still very common. As a group of rural workers from Iapala recalled, "there was a time when women were compelled to work on roads. They had to work at least a week, leaving behind their cotton fields."[54]

The impact of the improvement of land transport on the daily lives of women was well underway even before its construction was completed. Both railway and roads had eased the expansion of colonial administration into the hinterland. The subsequent tax obligation as well as the expansion of the settler economy accompanied by the increasing demand for labor all affected the core of the Makua household. The traditional division of labor and balance of power within the Makua family had also been deeply affected.

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contribuição braçal labor. For figures see Anuário de Lourenço Marques. Manual de informações da Cidade e Porto de Lourenço Marques e Restantes Distritos da Colónia de Moçambique. 32ª edição. Tipografia A.W. Bayly & C0. LTD. Lourenço Marques. 1946.pp.792-793.

53. Joint interview with Teniha Paissuana, Saculana Nahassare, Luisa Mwanamulele and Amina Muíta, Murrupula, Bairro de Acomodação da População de Chinga. October 18, 1993.

54. Joint interview Maliheque Musseta, Rojeque Vaheque and Araibo Nikhalava, Régulo Muruna, Iapala. June 6, 1993.

IV. Women and the new opportunities brought in by modern land transport.

We have seen in the previous sections how the expansion of modern land transport helped to consolidate colonial settlement in the hinterland, how the subsequent imposition of taxes affected the core of the Makua household. I highlighted the coercive extraction of labor as one of the most ominous social costs associated with the expansion of these modern means of transportation. As the cornerstone of all colonial economic policies, transportation fundamentally changed the context in which African household and kinship relations functioned. In this section I will therefore concentrate my attention on how the labor recruitment for rail and road construction as well as the subsequent cash crop production affected women and household relationships.

Although women's direct and physical involvement in the building of rails and roads was marginal if compared to men's, it is undeniable that women were instrumental in the whole process. Even women who had not been physically involved in the construction of roads were directly affected by the seizure of their husbands. Women's contribution to the maintenance and reproduction of male labor force was crucial.

Correctional forced laborers and *contribuição braçal* workers did not have the right for food at the workplace. Their relatives, mostly their wives, left behind had the responsibility of sending or personally supplying the men with food. Depending on the distance from their villages to the worksite women would bring food everyday or once a week. In fact, women coped differently with this situation.

Whenever her husband was captured for public works Teniha Paissuana from Iapala, would throughout the day cultivate her land, do some domestic chores, and every evening would take food to her husband at the workplace. However, when the workplace

was far away from her village[55], journeys back and forth became literally a nightmare. In such circumstances,

> ... I took raw food, pots, sieves and many other appliances needed for cooking and I went to the vicinities of my husband's work place. Once there I would randomly ask in the neighborhood any local household whether I could spend there few days cooking for my husband who had been captured for road or bridge work[56].

As long as the provisions lasted, Paissuana continued in that household cooking and feeding her husband. These trips and sojourns at the neighborhood of her husband's workplace had a very devastating effect for the family. Nearly everything left behind stopped. Because most of the conscriptions occurred in the rainy season, during the week while she was attending her husband, the shrubs in the cotton fields grew fast. As a result, she and many women in her position "were harshly beaten by the cotton overseers"[57].

Ms. Mukunakuna, also from Iapala, was one of the two wives of the same man. Unlike the traditional practice among the Makua, according to which co-wives never live in the same village, both wives were sharing the same household[58]. Both worked in the same field, and helped each other in the domestic chores. When their husband was captured for road and bridge construction, the collaboration between the two co-wives became still more critical. Because their husband did not have enough food at the construction site, one of them had to go to the compound where the husband was staying to bring him food.

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55. Even assuming that colonial officers strictly respected the law, peasants working for braçal tax could be sent as far as 20 kilometers away from their villages. Some women had to walk everyday some 40 kilometers just to feed their male relatives.

56. Joint interview with Teniha Paissuana, Saculana Nahassare, Luisa Mwanamulele and Amina Muíta, Murrupula, Bairro de Acomodação da População de Chinga. October 18, 1993.

57. Ibid.

58. Coresidence of co-wives, a strange phenomenom among the Makua, might have occured as one of coping strategies of women while their husband was absent in the migrant labor.

Even in the absence of their husbands, women continued at unabated rate to cultivate the land. At the beginning the absence of their husbands was felt at all levels. They were deprived of a man who could help them with heavy tasks in the field, but later whenever they felt overwhelmed by the work in the fields they brewed *otheka* (local beer made of millet) and invited friends from the village to help them[59]. Despite their hard work in the field where they produced several crops, it was very hard to sell them for cash because of the absence of stores in the vicinity. Only when her husband came back would he go to Ribáuè, where he bartered beans and peanuts for clothing. If he did not bring enough money for taxes, it was also in Ribáuè where he sold crops produced by his wives for cash.

The coming of the railway and the subsequent establishment of *cantinas* (stores) in the Iapala rail station in the early 1940s helped to modify the dynamics of household economics in this region. These rural stores helped to incorporate more and more peasants' communities into the periphery of the world commodity market. They also meant new opportunities for local rural women who previously did not have direct access to cash and commodity market.

Peasant households which were formerly closed into their rural economy cycle, were transformed into either cash-cropping producers or both cash-cropping producers and labor-export units. Mukunakuna family was a typical example of the latter household type. While her husband continued working on roads as a road-mender up to his premature death from an illness, reportedly contracted at the workplace, Ms. Mukunakuna and her co-wife continued producing cash crops. After the establishment of *cantinas* in Iapala, as Mukunakuna recalls, women could on their own, i.e. without

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59. Joint interview with Teniha Paissuana, Saculana Nahassare, Luisa Mwanamulele and Amina Mufa; Joint interview with Mukunakuna and Ethako Virane, Iapala, June 6, 1993; Interview with Mukhalelia Mukoa, from Malema, June 6, 1993; Joint interview Nikakoro Phakala and Luisa João, Iapala, June 5, 1993.

waiting for the return of their husband. go to the *cantina* with either beans or peanuts and barter them for sugar, salt and other commodities.

As the expansion of both railroad and road transport progressed, the hinterland became increasingly taped into world commodity market. Portuguese officials, who had all along believed that the expansion of efficient modes of transport would automatically boost the cotton output, in the early 1930s started regarding force as an inducement to cultivate this staple[60]. As mentioned earlier, in the circumscription of Meconta, specifically in administrative posts of Corrane and Itoculo, scores of single, divorced and widowed women were coerced to cultivate cotton in state owned experimental cotton fields[61]. A family-based system of forced cotton cultivation was introduced in 1938[62].

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60. An experimental forced scheme of cotton cultivation had been initiated in Mogovolas as early as 1923.[See José Torres, "A Agricultura no Distrito de Moçambique", in Boletim da Sociedade de Estudos da Colónia de Moçambique, (1932), p.74.] However, only in the early 1930s the colonial administartion tried to supervise and control experimental cotton plantations.[See AHM, "Relatório de Uma Inspecção às Circunscrições do Distrito de Moçambique (1936-1937)",Vol. II, op.cit.] The system of forced cotton cultivation by individual peasants households became a state policy in 1938.

61. AHM, "Relatório de Uma Inspecção às Circunscrições do Distrito de Moçambique (1936-1937)",Vol. II, pelo Inspector administrativo A.Pinto Corrêa. Inspecção dos Serviços Administrativos e dos Negócios Indígenas. Lourenço Marques, 5 de Abril de 1938.p. 73. The inpector was referring to the Deodoro da Cruz diary. The resort to women instead of men for labor in these experimental cotton plantations might be partially explained by the prevailing notion that women were more docile, and therefore less likely to resist and easier to control. Although there is no evidence suggesting that these women had ever tried to resist to be sent into that forced labor, it does not mean that they were not unhappy with the situation. They had forcibly leaft behind their children, their homes, their own fields in order to produce cotton for the administration. To show their grief and repugnance to the envied cotton, women might have resorted to a silent and subtle way of protest. In 1935, shortly after the cotton harvest in August, more than a ton of cotton stored in a wharehouse near a women's shanty was devoured by fire. A question remains unanswered: 'Wasn't this fire a women's form of silent protest against this ruthless cotton plantation which destroyed the very core of their daily lives?' I am though more prone to speculate that the fire was rather an arson to an accident. Families were torn apart because of these exprimental cotton plantations, and the victims did virtually recieve nothing, but the remission of their taxes.

62. Allen Isaacman has extensively studied the social history of forced cultivation in Mozambique. See Forced Cotton: The Mother of Poverty [forthcoming], see also Isaacman et al. "Cotton as the Motor of Poverty: Peasant Resistance to Forced Cotton Production in Mozambique, 1938-1961." The International Journal of African Historical Studies 13:581-615,1980.;A. Isaacman, "The Mozambican Cotton Cooperative: The Creation of Grassroots Alternative to Forced Commodity Production," African Studies Review 25/2/3: 5-25, 1982;_____, "Chiefs, Rural Differentiation and Peasant Protest: The Mozambican Forced Cotton Regime, 1938-1961." African Economic History 14: 15-57, 1985; _____ "Peasants, Work and the Labor Process: Forced Cotton Cultivation in Colonial Mozambique 1938-1961", 1991. (Unpublished paper); and "Chiefs, Rural Differentiation and Peasant Protest: The Mozambican Forced Cotton Regime", African Economic History, 14 (1985); and Isaacman, Allen and Arlindo Chilundo: "Peasants at Work: Forced Cotton Cultivation in Northern Mozambique 1938-1961", paper presented at

Cotton was a staple that had to be cultivated by both men and women. While a couple had to cultivate a hectare, single women, divorcees, widows, and other than the first wife had to cultivate a half hectare. However violent and disruptive the cotton scheme was, it changed the dynamics of household economics and social relations. The staple enabled certain women to pay taxes.

For instance, in Lalaua prior to the introduction of cotton, local peasants were wrestling with how to pay their taxes. Many, in order to sell their products, had to march all the way up to Meconta, or even up to Memba where they sold certain products for cash. The number of tax-defaulters used to be very high. With cotton the number of delinquents, especially women significantly decreased. As a colonial officer vowed, "Some of them are now coming to pay two to three behindhand taxes"[63].

Because of the improvement of road transport, cotton could be sold in a seasonal market opened for the sole purpose of purchasing this staple. The lack of stores in this case was not a constraint. Unlike peanuts, beans, corn and other products that could only be sold in stores, cotton was salable in the annual seasonal market. Cotton, though a forced crop, 'relieved' peasants, especially women from the perpetual cycle of delinquency for failing to pay taxes.

In the early days of the cotton cultivation, however, the number of default women was still very high. Cases of women with at least five delayed taxes were common[64]. This involuntary delinquency made them vulnerable to frequent social and physical harassment by cypais, cotton overseers and local chiefs. However, as the time wore on women learned many ways of coping with this new situation. Cotton and other cash that

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the workshop "Peasants, Work and Power: Toward a Social History of Cotton" (University of Minnesota, May 21-24, 1992).

63. AHM, "Relatório de Uma Inspecção às Circunscrições do Distrito de Moçambique (1936-1937)",Vol. II, op.cit., p.123.

64. ibid.

could be sold in rural stores established after the opening of roads and the expansion of motor vehicles crops gave women certain financial autonomy.

For example, Ethako Virane, from Iapala was adamant to underscore that because she worked on the cotton fields in the absence of her husband she had the right to keep the money. If she needed anything while her husband was still away, she would ask somebody to go to the *cantina* because,

> I was scared. I could not dare on my own go to the store. However, in most of the cases, I would keep the money waiting for my husband. Then, when he came back from the contract - he was a carpenter - he brought some money with him. We would then count his and my money. Then, I kept all the money safely. After paying taxes, we both went shopping. We would buy some clothing and other things we needed home, like hoes and axes65.

Although Ms. Virane could not go on her own shopping, she gradually learned that her labor could contribute significantly not just to raise children or to feed her family, but also to acquire cash for taxes and clothing. This gradual attainment of the awareness that her work was worth more than feeding her family, significantly helped to change in her favor the balance of power within the household. The absolute dependence upon her husband had somewhat diminished. As Mukhalelia Mukoa, a spouse of a former cypai in Malema, put it, when she started acquiring cash on her own "my husband learned to respect me more"66.

Luísa João, also from Iapala, told her story rather in a different way. When her husband was home, she would never go to *cantina* to sell beans without telling him. When "we needed some salt I would just tell him, that we need to sell some beans for salt". However, when her husband was gone for a three to six-month contract, she would never tolerate any deprivation. As she pointed out,

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65 Joint interview with Mukunakuna and Ethako Virane, Iapala, June 6, 1993.

66 Interview with Mukhalelia Mukoa, Malema, June 6, 1993.

> [In the long absence of her husband] a woman became indignant: 'My husband is not here, and I'm suffering. I produced on my own [crops], but I don't have salt!' The woman then would take part of her beans and would sell it for salt in Iapala.67

It is evident that women over time started gaining the perception of certain autonomy. "Why should a woman who produces crops on her own suffer, when she could go to a store and buy whatever she wanted?" At stake was the control of resources and decision-making within the household.

It has been argued that the coming of modern land transport deepened the exploitation of peasants68. However in the course of time it helped women to lessen certain burdens. They could, though with some constraints, acquire cash for their own taxes or even help their husbands to pay their taxes69. Women's contribution to the household income became more crucial. Women could easily free themselves from unwanted marriages, without the fear of failing on their own to pay taxes or to buy decent *capulana*.

Disputes over household incomes sometimes led to divorces. As Vachaneque Othako pointed out, a man while in the contract labor, in a plantation or in the railroad, he expected his wife to cultivate the land and produce some foodstuffs and other crops. If she failed to work in the *machamba*, the man could ask for divorce. Similarly, women expected some help from their husbands especially in clearing the land or in other heavy domestic tasks. If a man failed to fulfil his obligations, namely pay taxes and buy clothing for his wife and children, his wife would simply divorce him. She could go to a *régulo* and complain about her 'lazy' husband:

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67 Joint interview Nikakoro Phakala and Luísa João, Iapala, June 5, 1993.

68 L. Vail, "Railway Development and Colonial Underdevelopment: The Nyasaland Case", pp.365-395, in R. Palmer and N. Parsons, (eds.) The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1977, pp.365-395; Vickery, Kenneth P., Black and White in Southern Zambia: The Tonga Plateau Economy an British Imperialism, 1890-1939, Greenwood Press (New York, Westport, Connecticut, London), 1986.

69 See interview with Luísa João.

> "My husband does not help me. I understand that he works [in the contract labor], but he should help me, too. So, I prefer a divorce". And the régulo would simply say "You have got the right to divorce him, because he could help you when he returns from the contract."[70]

I have argued earlier that in the early days of the colonial administration, traditional relationships between men and women had been deeply affected, by both forced labor and taxes. As I pointed out earlier, male dominated long-distance trade during the pre-colonial and early colonial periods had a very detrimental effect on women. As a result, even salt, an important seasoning, was controlled by men. However, the expansion of modern means of transport and with them the trade network into the hinterland lessened in many ways men's predominance. The expansion of stores brought to women more opportunities to recover their dignity and pride[71]. The sense of sharing as equals the household space as an economic unit was enhanced by the possibility that women could acquire cash by selling part of their agricultural products.

Despite these new opportunities women were still far from challenging the traditional rooted notion of marriage which stressed men's power over the women. The latter contented themselves with partial and relative autonomy, for most of married women did not dare to attempt to claim the control of cash in the household. Husband's control of his wife's money meant in the eyes of the Makua man caring for her wife. As a male rural railroad worker put it, "If a man refused to control his wife's money, this meant that he was not anymore interested in her"[72]. Despite the evidence that in many cases women were able to acquire more cash than men did in the contract labor, married

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70. Interview with Vachaneque Othako, Iapala, June 4, 1993.

71. Joint interview with Teniha Paissuana, Saculuna Nahassare, Luisa Mwanamulele and Amina Muita; Joint interview with Mukunakuna and Ethako Virane, Iapala, June 6, 1993; Interview with Mukhalelia Mukoa, from Malema, June 6, 1993; Joint interview Nikakoro Phakala and Luisa João, Iapala, June 5, 1993.

72. Interview with Vachaneque Othako, Iapala, June 4, 1993.

women were often socially compelled to 'voluntarily' give up the control and decision-making within the household[73]. Any attempt to challenge the masculine authority within the household could put the marriage in jeopardy. As Luisa João put it

> How could I restrain myself from telling him what I had bought while he was absent and from handing over to him the remainder of the money, when he came back from the contract? *Mutthu kanaithele! Kiwiravo pahi, mwamuteiteimihanavo vate.* (A person cannot marry to himself. We respected each other)[74]

Respect and dignity it is what many women I talked with repeatedly stressed. Most of them were unanimous in making the point that men respected more their wives when women's cash contribution to the household was substantial[75].

The empowerment of rural women through the expansion of cash crops helped also to destroy the myth that matrilineal societies were a hindrance to rural capitalist development. Rita-Ferreira writing on the matrilineal Chewa in central Mozambique has emphatically stressed the stifling effect of the matrilineality upon the expansion of cash crops. A man as a 'stranger' in his wife's village, he argued, was naturally reluctant to invest efforts and money towards the improvement of the land allocated to his family. He was seemingly deterred by the fear that sooner or later he would be called upon to leave the land behind[76]. It was felt, according to Chanock, that matrilineal system "was a part and parcel of backwardness, as a man apparently had no incentive to improve his land, 'over which he had tenuous and transitory tenure and no prospect of handing it on to

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73. Interview with Murinvona Mpemo, from Gilé. Conducted in Nampula, July, 1991; Group interview with Paulo José, Manuel Pacheleque, Lwanyeka Nyole and José Pacheul, Nampula July 10, 1991- Conducted by A. Isaacman.

74. Joint interview Nikakoro Phakala and Luísa João, Iapala, June 5, 1993.

75. Joint interview with Tenha Paissuana, Saculana Nahassare, Luisa Mwananulele and Amina Muíta; Joint interview with Mukunakuna and Ethako Virane, Iapala, June 6, 1993; Interview with Mukhalelia Mukoa, from Malema, June 6, 1993; Joint interview Nikakoro Phakala and Luísa João, Iapala, June 5, 1993.

76. A. Rita-Ferreira, Os Chewas da Macanga, Instituto de Investigação Científica de Moçambique, 1966., p.157.

his son.'"[77] However, the role played by women in agriculture in northern province of Nampula shows that they were the ones who became the main producers of cash crops.

It is true that after the imposition of forced cotton cultivation, in areas like the hinterland of Nampula with less demand for labor by the incipient capitalist enterprises, both men and women were compelled to grow cotton. It is equally undeniable that this policy affected the traditional gendered division of labor. In pre-cotton period, all agricultural tasks but tree-felling and clearing of the fields were considered women's tasks. However, from then on an increasing number of men were coerced to work side by side with their wives. Forcing men and women to produce cotton did not in fact meant that both worked together in all phases of agricultural cycle, as the cotton scheme planners hoped and wished. In many ways, at the household level the recourse to traditional division of labor did not subside. On the contrary, the imposition of forced cotton cultivation in practice deepened women's and children's exploitation by both men and the concessionaire companies. For example, a Governor General observed in the early 1940s that men in their attempt to pay taxes relied more and more on the labor of their wives and children. As he put it ,

> Agriculture is, in the most of the tribes of the Colony, considered a women's task. Only some violent tasks like tree-felling are performed by men... while women work on the fields (machamba), the former took advantage of the latter to pay their own taxes. Thus, men (with their taxes always paid) were not compelled to seek wage labor.[78]

The expansion of transportation infrastructures helped in many ways the spread of concessionary companies, and plantations in the early 1940s. The expansion of these economic activities increased the shortage of male labor within rural households. The absence of much male labor power was to have important consequences on the

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77. Martin Chanock, "Agricultural Change and Continuity in Malawi", in in R. Palmer and N. Parsons, (eds.) The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1977, p. 404.

78. José Tristão de Bettencourt, Relatório do Governador Geral de Moçambique, (20 de Março de 1940 a 31 de Dezembro de 1942), Agência Geral das Colónias, Vol.II (1945), p.78 and 79

agriculture. As Van den Berg, studying the effect of migrant labor on the agriculture in southern Mozambique, pointed out: "more labor intensive crops, which were better adapted to the climate, were replaced by less labor intensive but climatically less well-adapted crops, [such as maize].[79]

Conclusion:

Evidence suggests that overall the coming of railways and improved road transport deepened the exploitation of women. But at the same time it broadened the range of coping opportunities. Women could, though with some difficulties, cope without having to be married. In the pre-colonial and early colonial period marriage was often seen as the most efficient coping strategy. As the opportunities multiplied in the countryside continuing in a marriage became more optional. Women were not anymore forced to engage in unwanted marriages in the search for protection. Economic reasons became less and less a factor that could coerce women into an undesirable relationship. Single, divorced and widowed women could pay their own taxes. They could buy their own cloth.

One of the important effects of the expansion of these new economic opportunities was the strenghtening of the matrilineality. In the pre-colonial and early colonial period, as I argued above, men had attempted to seize all economic opportunities that could help them to control women. Taxation and the lack cash opportunities in the first decades of colonialism had the effect of weakening women's position within the household. However, the expansion of modern land transport and of cash opportunities into remote rural areas contributed greatly to retard the erosion of the matrilineality.

Notwithstanding the changes in economic roles played by women, their

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79. Van den Berg, Jelle, "A Peasant form of Production: Wage-dependent Agriculture in Southern Mozambique", in Canadian Journal Of African Studies, 21 (3), 1987:375

political/domestic roles within villages had not changed significantly in the course of time and as a result of external influence[80]. One should not forget that most of changes among the Makua were a result of colonial policies of social engineering. Forced labor in roads and railroads, forced cotton cultivation are blunt examples of how exogenous economic and social forces affected and to a certain degree changed and shaped the relationships between men and women in the Makua household.

80 Similar accounts come from the Avatime of Ghana.nFor more on this issue see Lynne Brydon, "Women in the Family: Cultural Change in Avatime, Ghana, 1900-80", in Development and Change: Conceptualizing the Household:Issues of Theory and Policy in Africa, Eds Jane I. Guyer and Pauline E. Peters. (Vol.18, No. 2, April 1987), p. 263.