

# VU Research Portal

## **Politics, history and conceptions of democracy in Barue District, Mozambique**

van Dokkum, A.

2015

### **document version**

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

[Link to publication in VU Research Portal](#)

### **citation for published version (APA)**

van Dokkum, A. (2015). *Politics, history and conceptions of democracy in Barue District, Mozambique*. VU University Amsterdam.

### **General rights**

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal ?

### **Take down policy**

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

### **E-mail address:**

[vuresearchportal.ub@vu.nl](mailto:vuresearchportal.ub@vu.nl)

## CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

Some day between 21 March and 15 June 1831, a group of influential people in the kingdom of Tewe, south of the Pungue River and Barue, had a meeting with Lieutenant-colonel João Julião da Silva of the Portuguese army, directed from Sofala, the Portuguese settlement at the coast of the Indian Ocean. Recently the Portuguese had arranged with the Tewe power holders that they could take possession of the area of Bandire, attractive because of its gold deposits (cf. Bannerman 2005: 1). At the said meeting, Da Silva expressed a complaint about the Tewe people having “forgotten” about the practice of having the Portuguese government of Sofala present at ceremonies regarding the death of Tewe kings or queens, and the inauguration of new ones. Da Silva’s interlocutors promised to respect the practice in the future. Da Silva proposed to hold an election (*eleição*) because the previous king Charinga, who had only acceded to the throne in 1830 (Alpers 1970: 211n31), had died. The Tewe gathering responded

that they had no other election to hold, for Prince Maromo, who was present, already was in charge of the government of the whole kingdom, [...] approved by Queen Namaunga, Tatte, Princes, and by them the Chiefs of the Kingdom, and all Tewe people wanted and respected him [...] [T]his should not be opposed in view of the general will of all.

[...] que não tinham outra eleição a fazer, por quanto o Principe Maromo, que presente estava, já se achava de posse do governo de todo o reino, [...] aprovado pela Rainha Namaunga, Tatte, Principes, e por elles Grandes do Reino, e todos os Quiteves o desejam, e respeitam [...] [E]ste não se ha de oppor visto a vontade geral de todos (Da Silva 1886: 73).

The quoted passage about Maromo’s selection as king contains in a nutshell some of the topics that this thesis will be dealing with: selection of a leader, leaders being subject to approval by others, “general will of all”, general consent. These topics are related to the topic of “democracy”, although the characteristics of such relationships would have to be contemplated. Reversely, it would have to be contemplated whether any ascription of “democracy” could be projected onto political processes in a 19<sup>th</sup>-century kingdom in what is now Mozambique. The question concerning such projection could be extended to present-day political systems in Mozambique that are not incorporated in Mozambique’s multiparty system.

In practice, “democracy” in Mozambique has been associated with the formal introduction of a multiparty system in 1990 and subsequent periodical elections since 1994. Before 1990, the former anti-colonial movement Frelimo had headed the state of Mozambique since the country’s independence from Portugal in 1975. In that period of the

one-party state, Frelimo had an official policy, largely (though not entirely) practically effectuated, of abolishing political systems that comprised so-called “traditional authorities”, who had or were supposed to have historical linkages with colonial and precolonial political theories and practices that Frelimo deemed obsolete. Frelimo reversed this policy after the transition to the multiparty system. Now “traditional authorities” were seen as promoting political ideals such as “democracy” and “decentralization” (Lundin 1995; see discussion by Buur and Kyed 2006). The new policy has been officially implemented from 2000 onwards since the promulgation of *Decree 15/2000* which, amongst other things, incorporated “traditional authorities” into the legal organization of the Mozambican state, giving rise to situations of legal pluralism.

Thus Mozambique has been equipped with at least two different sets of political ideas and practices, those of the formal nation-wide multiparty system and those of the more locally organized “traditional authorities”, both of which are supposed to embody “democracy”. But because the two indicated sets of political ideas and practices are different, it may be expected that the embodiment of supposed “democracy” is also different across the two sets. If the embodiment of “democracy” can be different within one and the same country, it is not *a priori* clear what is meant when it is asserted that the multiparty system enhances “democracy” or that “traditional authorities” do this. However, it might be anthropologically studied how people understand empirically different conceptualizations of “democracy”. Such understandings may then be correlated with the observed distribution of the relative political influence that political actors (e.g. state, political parties, hereditary leaders, spirit mediums, citizens) may have in Mozambique. This leads to the central research question of this thesis:

How have ideas and practices that can be associated with various conceptualizations of “democracy” contributed to the present distribution of political influence in Mozambique?

The contrast between the multiparty politics and politics concerning “traditional authorities” is usually taken to be such that the first has normative and analytical priority in representing what “democracy” is, or should be, and that the latter is something that does not fit in easily with “democracy” (Oomen 2005: 11, 25). Yet in Mozambique the two sorts of politics co-exist. A stance taken in this thesis is that the mentioned contrast can be used not only to judge the “traditional” politics from the viewpoint of the normatively and analytically prior views

associated with multiparty politics, but also the other way around. In this thesis we will study whether the Mozambican multiparty system functions satisfactory or not (according to certain criteria) and if not, why this may be so and what insights can be obtained from “traditional” politics to understand such an unsatisfactory situation.

Frelimo’s mostly negative attitude to “traditional authorities” after independence has been seen as one of the factors leading towards resentment against Frelimo (Geffray 1990), although this point may have been overstated, as will have to be discussed in this thesis. The Rhodesian “white” minority regime also disliked Frelimo, for the latter formed a threat to its power position. Based on the structural principle that the enemy of my enemy is my friend, the Rhodesian regime and Mozambicans who disliked Frelimo joined efforts and established Renamo in 1977 as an armed organization in opposition to Frelimo. It performed terrorist attacks on people, health facilities, schools and means of transport, but gradually it also gained a foothold amongst certain local communities (Geffray 1990). After Zimbabwe’s independence in 1980, military support to Renamo was continued by the South African apartheid regime. Clearly by 1990 Mozambique had *de facto* become a country with two political movements, a situation until then not formally defined in any law. In 1990 Frelimo adopted a new constitution for the country, which paved the way for the peace with Renamo in 1992 and general elections in 1994. Especially in the international donor community there was great optimism concerning these developments (Braathen and Orre 2001: 216; Manning and Malbrough 2010: 3). Mozambique as a country has internationally been viewed as a rather successful example of a “democratic transition” after the end of the Frelimo-Renamo war (1977-1992).

#### Motivation for Barue District as fieldwork site

To assess the implementation of the two mentioned political phenomena (introduction of the multiparty system and the incorporation of “traditional authorities”), the present thesis contains a major empirical component which hails from fieldwork in Barue District, Manica Province in central-west Mozambique. The motivation for the choice for this district to do research on perceptions and practices of “democracy” is manifold. As mentioned in the Preface, Mozambique as a country triggered my interest already when organizing the EMS seminar on the first multiparty elections in 1994. At the end of the war in 1992 and the subsequent general elections in 1994, Mozambique’s central part counted high numbers of Renamo adherents. Within Mozambique’s central zone, the western part near the border with

Zimbabwe is of interest because a relationship with the political influence of *mhondoro* (lion) spirit mediums might be made. From the literature about Zimbabwe, specifically concerning Shona-speaking communities, it became clear to me that such mediums were at least sometimes politically active within Shona chiefdoms and that they were referred to as representing something like “popular opinion”. I wondered how this might work out on the Mozambican side of the international border between the two countries. I also reasoned that it should be possible to investigate *directly* political competition between different individuals within chiefdoms, and that this might relate to popular support amongst the general population. *Mhondoro* mediums, I reasoned, can only articulate “popular support” if such popular support exists. (Such popular support was also presupposed by Decree 15/2000.) When I explained this line of reasoning to an elderly man I met on a rural road south-east of Manica City in 2008, he suggested I should go to Barue District. Victor Igreja also suggested I should go to Barue. And so I did go to start fieldwork there in 2009.

Apart from these considerations on political life, there was a second reason to go to Barue, which concerned history. The Barue District of today used to be part of the larger Barue Kingdom, which was itself initially part of the famed Monomotapa Empire but later most of the time an independent country from 1608 until 1902. It was a major centre of anticolonial resistance against the Portuguese in much of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the early parts of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Ranger 1963; Isaacman 1976). I wondered if connections could be made between the end of the Barue Kingdom and the present-day situation concerning the chiefdoms currently existing in the district. As it turned out, some chiefdoms could indeed trace connections with the old kingdom, and the anticolonial struggle is actively remembered with a yearly ceremony. Also, even though the recognition that Barue had been a kingdom for several centuries seems to have been lost amongst Barue’s population after the 1920s, the fieldwork helped to correct certain inaccuracies in the existing literature dealing with the kingdom’s history. The research goes some way towards a political history of Barue District during roughly the past century.

As to be discussed in this thesis, Barue District at present knows ten chiefdoms, each with their specific historical events. In the mountainous areas in the west, near the border with Zimbabwe, there are indeed politically active spirit mediums to be found, although such mediums seem absent on the plateau in the central and eastern parts of the district. Barue also provides a good example of the present-day consolidation process of Frelimo’s power in rural areas, a phenomenon that seriously problematizes the assumption – as implied in many publications that anticipated or accompanied Decree 15/2000 – that there would exist in

Mozambique steady processes of “democratization” and “decentralization”. From the empirical material to be presented in this thesis it becomes evident that in recent times Frelimo has been developing a network of party officials penetrating the countryside within the “decentralization” framework, a process that serves not so much to represent any “power of the people” but rather control of the people. This consolidation process also qualifies the asserted “revitalization” of “traditional authorities” in Mozambique.

#### More specific research questions

The general research question formulated above was: “How have different ideas and practices that can be associated with different conceptualizations of “democracy” contributed to the present distribution of political influence in Mozambique?” With the focus on Barue District motivated, this research question can be specified with three questions as follows:

- (1) Can different conceptions of “democracy” be ascertained in Mozambique and in Barue District in particular, historically and at present – and if so, how?
- (2) How are such conceptions related to political practice in Mozambique and in Barue District in particular, historically and at present?
- (3) How are the “revitalization” of “traditional authorities” and “legal pluralism” at present related to party politics and “decentralization” in Mozambique and in Barue District in particular, viewed in relation to “democracy”?

#### Euro-American bias in the study of “democracy”

There is a strong tendency in the literature to treat the concept and institutions of “democracy” as primarily Euro-American political phenomena.<sup>1</sup> For example Amartya Sen in his article “Democracy as a universal value” treats “democracy” as something which originated “of course” in ancient Greece (1999b: 4). Later Sen (1999b: 13-16) does give more background on Asian history, but the main thrust remains that “democracy” is something

---

<sup>1</sup> With « Euro-American political phenomena » I denote, for the purposes of this thesis and with the intention to comply with common usage, political historical events and philosophical ideas that were manifest on the European continent since the classical period in Greece, plus developments in North America, mostly the United States, amongst European colonizers or their descendents specifically since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and minus the developments leading to or comprising the existence of one-party communist regimes in Eastern Europe in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In academic or other literature, the word « Western » often has a similar denotation.

recent and Euro-American. He argues (p. 4) that only in the twentieth century “the idea of democracy” has become something also established outside Europe and America, in Asia and Africa. Sen writes that “democracy” is not to be identified with majority rule only (p. 9-10), but that it comprises items like “political participation and freedom in human life” (p. 11). Now Sen is, in effect, making a rather extraordinary claim: if “democracy” is to be associated with the listed items, *and* has only been manifest in ancient Greece, a few rather scattered times and places in Euro-American history, and the twentieth century, we would have to conclude that for instance a conception of “freedom in human life” would have been unknown in most of humanity’s history since the beginning of *Homo sapiens sapiens* about 100,000 years ago (Gamble 1986: 22n1). Publications sensitive to this problem are Graeber (2004: 87-91), Keane (2009), King (2003: 387) and Muhlberger and Paine (1993).

In chapter 3 I will elaborate on definitions of “democracy”, but from Sen’s article it is already clear that defining “democracy” is not a triviality both as a matter of substance and as a matter of world history. Although it is not explicitly stated in his article, Sen’s stress on commonly known 20<sup>th</sup>-century forms of “democracy” within nation-states, limits identification of such forms to *multiparty* political systems on a state level (cf. p. 8), but there exists no *a priori* necessity to do this, as Sen’s own example of ancient Greece indicates. Since multiparty systems have indeed known a prominent upsurge which began in Euro-American history, the impression may exist that “democracy” is both something that “originated” in Europe and is “universal” in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For Mozambique such an approach is unsatisfactory. It was colonized by Europeans in a way that is impossible to interpret as “democratic” by any currently relevant definition. As we shall see, European countries showed some but not much activity concerning the promotion of “democracy” in any interpretation in Portuguese-dominated Mozambique. After the war between Frelimo and Renamo a multiparty system was formally introduced in Mozambique in 1990 and effectuated with multiparty elections first in 1994, but it will have to be investigated in the course of this thesis whether this system aptly deals with historically emerged political configurations in Mozambique. The study of history, both on local levels and that of the state, is required for a good understanding of contemporary Mozambican politics. And history does not show a clear European trend to promote “democracy” in whatever form in Mozambique.

Another item that can be argued to have a Euro-American bias is the idea that a collective “democratic” decision can be legitimately made *solely* by a specific type of formal procedure on the basis of anonymous inputs of individuals’ preference orderings concerning a given number of separate options (or alternatives). (For fixing thoughts, one can think of the

example of ballot sheets on which people may indicate their relative liking of candidates for a presidential voting contest. An often used but not unique possibility is the indication of one's top preference only.) Using a term mentioned by Sen (1970: 10) but essentially comprising an idea of Kenneth Arrow (1963: 15, 26-27), this can be identified as the *choice set* approach to "democracy" as conceived as the aggregation of individual preferences. Details will be given in the theory part of this thesis, but in short the approach entails this: a formal procedure (the working of which to be specified) selects on the basis of inputs of individuals' preference orderings concerning a number of options, a special set of options that are dominating, or are in a tie with, all available options in a collective ordering resulting from the procedure. This special set of dominating or tied options is the *choice set* of the formal procedure at hand as applied in a one-off manner to a certain body of inputs of individuals' preference orderings (Sen 1970: 9-10). Ideally the choice set consists of only one option, dominating all others, which is then the option to be chosen by society, where society is the collectivity of the individuals submitting their preference orderings (Arrow 1963: 15, 26). I do not mean to say that choice set methods did not exist in practice before Arrow published his book, but as Arrow has given an incisive and very influential theoretical formulation of these, I will identify them mostly with him.

Mozambique has applied such an approach in reaching collective decisions concerning the choice of national presidents and municipal mayors since 1994, the year in which the country's first multiparty elections were realized. We can also detect its use by Frelimo before independence. Nevertheless the approach can be considered biased towards Euro-American history because both theorizing about the approach and the development of the normative stance that this is how collective "democratic" decisions *should* be made have overwhelmingly been limited historically to Euro-American political theorists. The empirical validity of this statement I will argue in more detail below. Suffice it to say for the moment that this thesis does not consider "democracy" a Euro-American idea – quite the contrary – but only the *interpretation* of "democracy" as satisfied by a certain approach of which Arrow's formulation has become standard-setting.

### General approach

The set-up of the research is relativistic, but not cultural-relativistic. This means that the research approaches "democracy" as a variable, something to be understood relative to definitions that can differ across points of view, rather than a fixed concept, as elaborated in

more detail below. Such definitions are not necessarily confined to one specific culture only, and neither does one specific culture necessarily contain only one definition of “democracy”. (For this reason the word « democracy » will for the most part be written between quotation marks.) This enables the research to approach “democracy” not as a product, specific to only one culture, which cannot know associations across cultural boundaries, but as a field of ideas that might yield conceptualizations of “democracy” that can (but not necessarily have to) reveal cross-cultural resemblances even if they are not exactly identical. Such cross-cultural resemblances need not be universal. Cultural correlation of conceptualizations and practices concerning “democracy” may be detected after having studied ethnographically such conceptualizations and practices. It may appear that some ideas that concern “democracy” are more culturally specific than others. Thus it will be investigated how the peculiarly Euro-American idea, that “democracy” is largely equivalent to the application of a formal device, works out when used in contemporary Mozambican elections. While this application is problematic, it will be argued that such problematic character is *not* due to any lack of indigenous ideas within Mozambique that can be associated with certain understandings of “democracy”.

The argument in the sequel will be embedded in a realization that there exists circularity between technicalities and history. An objective of this thesis, implied by the research question, is to use history in order to illuminate theoretical points about politics, especially though not only concerning choosing leaders, but because technicalities of making collective decisions are themselves dependent on historical developments, the said circularity becomes apparent. However, the thesis cannot claim to be a full-blown “political history” because much more historical details would still have to be added. The text only goes “some way towards” a political history of Barue District during roughly the past century. For Frelimo history the circularity of technicalities and history is immediately relevant when we consider the crucial presidential vote at Frelimo’s Second Congress in 1968. I will argue below that the result was far more arbitrary than is usually conceded. The present-day political situation in Mozambique will be analysed mostly in the same vein.

I must say something in this introduction about the analysis of hereditary leaders as an institution in Barue District. Since 2000 hereditary leaders are formally “recognized” by the Mozambican state as governed by Frelimo. In this sense hereditary leaders are connected to current discussions about “revitalization of traditional authorities” and “legal pluralism”. In Barue District there is the additional aspect that at least some of the ruling lineages were founded as such in connection with the complex of events associated with the anticolonial

activities of the individual known as Makombe, whom Baruese link with the Barue Rebellion of 1917-1918. There is therefore, at least for some lineages, a clear connection between the precolonial past and the present. Other lineages were founded (as ruling lineages) in colonial times. These historical aspects sometimes play a rôle in present-day disputes concerning chiefdoms, and need for that reason, if not for their intrinsic interest, to be described. As for the hereditary leaders themselves, I will be primarily interested in how they are selected when there is a need for the succession of an earlier leader. So I am less interested in such questions as whether hereditary leaders function better than non-hereditary state officials, or whether the first should have more power than the latter. It might be mentioned here also that as things stand in Barue District today, hereditary leaders do function but are rather limited in their action potentials relative to Frelimo party secretaries. Nonetheless, the methods for the selection of hereditary leaders contain interesting aspects that are worth studying within a framework of understanding what “democracy” could mean.

#### Methodological aspects

Most data were collected with a view to reconstruct procedures that people use to select leaders. Since some leaders are selected against a background of kinship-based control of areas, it was necessary to gather information about Barue history. The party-based control of Mozambique that exists today necessitated researching historical details as well. Rather than focusing on abstractions, I proceeded to ask people about concrete events in order to reconstruct methods of selection of leaders. Known events were cut down in interviews into several steps (“What happened first?” “And what happened then?” “With how many people?” etc.). This I did both with hereditary leaders and party officials. In this way local history could be reconstructed to some extent, revealing quite a variety of selection mechanisms. Once events were clarified it was easier to let people reflect on them in more abstract ways.

As for the fieldwork I conducted in Barue District, the main instrument of data collection was the interview. Some events were experienced and often recorded by way of (participant) observation. Very few individuals refused to be interviewed. Most interviews were recorded, preserving crucial details that would otherwise have escaped me. Some people were interviewed more than one time; some interviews were with more than one person at the same time. With these provisos, the field study about Barue is largely based on 105 catalogued interviews. They were focused on obtaining historical material about the last 100 years or so rather than providing input for large-scale statistical analyses. A difficulty has

sometimes been to find people knowledgeable about certain past events. People move home frequently, meaning that those who may have known about events have emigrated from Barue while those who have immigrated into Barue may not know about the events in a first-hand way. This means I was dependent on referral to informants rather than random selection. A great many interviews were directed at obtaining information about political competition between would-be leaders, both within the realm of “traditional authorities” and the realm of Frelimo party secretaries. A few interviewees were, however, approached in a casual way in order to obtain general reflections about “democracy”.

Four field research assistants were employed to perform translations, help with logistic matters and facilitate making contacts. They were locally recruited and invaluable for the collection and processing of data. In 2012 I transcribed a large volume of interview material with specifically one of them to be able to quote in the original local languages. This assistant also provided additional interview material in 2013 and 2014 collected by himself, communicated to me through email.

I have applied three main methods for strengthening the reliability of field data. First, certainly in more complicated cases I interviewed a variety of people to obtain several versions of stories that contain references to certain chains of events. In this case it was essential to be physically in the district so as to be able to relate stories to locations and people. For example when it is reported that a certain chiefdom is split into three new ones, the fact that the researcher has to travel to different parts of that area to check this supports that very information. A few local meetings were physically attended by the researcher so that the interaction between the local government and the population could be assessed. Second, analysing the internal coherence of packages of information may corroborate the reliability of the information. For example, the way in which party secretaries are elected can be correlated with how many votes they report to have obtained in their elections. Third, information that I obtained may be compared with what others have written earlier. Though of course earlier authors and I contribute different information, many historical developments in Barue District are well recognizable, confirming the possibility for reproducibility in ethnographic research.

One day of archival research was done at the Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique of the Eduardo Mondlane University in Maputo. Though limited in scope this one day was crucial in obtaining 20<sup>th</sup>-century material about Barue political history that yielded valuable additions to and connections with interview material. The African Studies Centre in Leiden gives shelter to several African and European documents from the time of the independence struggle. Internet also helped to consult archival data that have been digitalized, such as the

João Cabrita collection (on early Frelimo history), files of the Portuguese colonial political police (PIDE/DGS), documents and debates on websites such as those of Fernando Gil and Colin Darch, and documents located at the University of Southern California, amongst others.

Some statistical analyses are presented in this thesis, but they concern already existing databases (about countries and Mozambican election results) rather than interview material. In Appendices A and G I have much relied on the Spearman rank correlation coefficient; this can be used in cases where there is no situation of sampling and is a method easy to apply by researchers and to control by readers.

### Predecessors of the researcher in Barue

Earlier information of travellers and researchers who came to Barue has been of great use. António Fernandes probably visited Barue in the early 1510s (Tracey 1968: 18). Manuel Galvão da Silva crossed back and forth what is now the south of Barue District in 1788 (Da Silva 1954). Carl Mauch (1969) crossed the district in the north in 1872 south-eastwards (probably through what is now known as the Samanhanga area). Carl Peters (1902) visited Missongue and passed off Barauro in the Chôa area in 1899. In 1900 Col. Alfred Arnold (1901) came to the area in an attempt to arrange the kingdom's colonial subjugation. H. Wieschhoff visited Barue somewhere around 1929 (cf. Macamo 2006: 76-78), H.Ph. Junod (1936) in 1935, and A. Rita-Ferreira (1999) in 1942. The Portuguese authorities commissioned a research in the 1960s in the framework of "psycho-social action" as an anti-insurgency operation (Portugal [A] 1967). Of more recent times I mention here Jocelyn Alexander (1995, 1995, 1997), who investigated the situation after the Frelimo-Renamo war in 1993 and 1994; Pekka Virtanen (2001, 2005) who in 1999 studied natural resource management as well as aspects of "traditional chiefship" that will be useful to recapitulate later in this thesis; and Victor Igreja (2007) who did investigations in 2004 within the framework of his research about war trauma.

### Basic information about Barue District

In 2010 Mozambique had 128 districts (cf. Jeremias in Mozambique 2005a: v). The District of Barue lies north-west of Chimoio, the capital of the Province of Manica under which Barue is subsumed. The district's area is 5,743 km<sup>2</sup>, while its population was an estimated 103.364 at the beginning of 2005, yielding a population density of 18/km<sup>2</sup> (for more details,

see 2005a: 12-13). The district is divided into three *postos administrativos* (administrative posts): Catandica, Chôa, and Nhampassa (see Map 7). The latter two have their specific buildings and a *chefe do posto* (administrative post chief), the first is governed directly from the district capital.

In the south/mid-east the district comprises the Barue Plateau (*Planalto de Bárue*), in the west there is a mountainous area usually indicated as the Serra Chôa (though there is a specific smaller area so indicated as well as the locality Chôa Sede with the government administrative post) and in the north there is the North Plain (*Planície do Norte*) (Mozambique 2005a: 3). The district capital, Catandica, has an average annual rainfall of about 1,591 mm/year (2005a: 2). Average annual temperature on the plateau varies between 20 and 26 °C and in the mountainous Chôa area between 18 and 24 °C. Several rivers run across the land, many of them providing water year-round. The mountainous area partly contains forests. On the plateau one can encounter rock outcrops (inselbergs) (2005a: 3). One of these is the Ntsuanda Mountain near Sabão, which lodges a site for rain rituals performed by *Régulo* José N. Sabão. A visit to the site is described in Appendix D. Red clayish soils are fertile, but sand and mixed soils also exist (2005a: 3). Barue is known for its precious stones, such as gemstones (2005a: 7).

The economy of Barue is mainly based on agriculture, with cultivation of maize, sorghum (*mapira*), and beans amongst other things (much of it for household consumption) and cotton and tobacco (for marketing). Normally the district is self-sustaining in cereal production, but sometimes droughts occur. Animal husbandry is also well-known, as is hunting and fishing. Other economic activities include carpentry, telecommunication and marketing. Services are provided in the form of a district hospital, health posts, over 50 primary schools and two secondary schools. Catandica provides, apart from the district government institutions, several services such as banks, lodging, restaurants, markets, a gas station, photocopying etc. (2005a: 3, 6-7, 23; Bárue n.y.: 52-53; own observations).

The EN7 asphalt road is running through Barue approximately along its centre north-south axis (Map 7). Side roads of beaten earth, sand, or grit provide access to the west and east parts of the district, although some places can only be reached on foot, specifically in the seemingly close by but nevertheless somewhat desolate Chôa area. Along the EN7 people mostly live in agglomerated settlements, away from this road families live mostly dispersed. At the west Barue borders to Zimbabwe and one may frequently encounter Zimbabwean nationals in the district.

An intriguing aspect of Barue is its *zimbahwes* (precolonial stone architecture). The

district lodges several such *zimhawe* sites, of which I briefly visited two (Photo 1). Apparently quite a large one is that of Niamara (not visited by me), where Chinese porcelain has been found. The site dates probably from around 1700 (Barradas 1963; Macamo 2006: especially ch. 6). I was told about the existence of a fourth such site in the Sanhantamba chiefdom, but I have not been able to follow up on this.

### Languages

In Barue District one has to deal with at least four languages: Barwe, Shona, Portuguese and English. Of these Barwe (Bw: *chiBalke*) is spoken most widely. Unfortunately the language is little known academically. *Ethnologue* (Lewis [ed.] 2009: 158) gives a significant underestimation of the number of speakers, which actually amounts to more than 100,000 (Ngunga and Faquir 2011: 134). Maps give inconsistent information about the geographical extension of it and the languages surrounding it (compare Asher and Moseley [eds.] 2007: 340, 341 and Lewis *ibid.*: 710). I am unaware of any dictionary of the language. Only recently a definitive orthography of Barwe has appeared (Ngunga and Faquir 2011: 134-142) (with conventions that do not always seem to square with those used in Barue itself). Shona (Manyika dialect) is spoken mostly (but not only) in the mountainous areas of the Chôa Administrative Post. Barwe overlaps with Shona in vocabulary and grammar, but it is not a Shona dialect in the way Manyika is a Shona dialect. Barwe has also similarities with Nyungwe, a language spoken in Tete province. With the geographical proximity between Shona and Barwe, it is not surprising that Shona and Barwe are often mixed, making that the difference is sometimes difficult to make in individual quotes. I use the spelling « Barwe » for the language and « Barue » for geographical and ethnographical references.

Portuguese, Mozambique's national language, though not universally understood is spoken by many and those who know it speak it a lot amongst themselves, also when using a local language would suffice. English is spoken by Zimbabwean immigrants but also by Mozambicans who went to school in that country and/or fled Mozambique because of the Frelimo-Renamo war. As for the translations into English in this thesis, all of them are my responsibility, except where indicated otherwise concerning published material. That they are my responsibility does not mean other people have not collaborated in the production of the resulting translations, just that they are not accountable for any errors in them, should they exist.

## Names

People in Barue have a personal name (Pt: *nome*), but names of their (patrilineal) ancestors, usually the father and a more distant ancestor, may be added to it, giving a full name (Pt: *nome completo*). This full name is the one mostly encountered on identity cards (I will often abbreviate full names, using initials without periods, especially when referring to interview material, e.g. « SAC »). If the name of some more distant ancestor is repeatedly inherited, this name may yield the effect of a family name. The usual order is to mention the personal name first and then that of the father and possibly earlier ancestors, but sometimes a reverse order is used, giving the name of the father first and then the personal name. In childhood, an individual may have a specific “child name” which is exchanged for another name when reaching adulthood. Nicknames are also frequently used, as are war names (Pt: *nomes de guerra*) provoked by situations of war and resistance struggles. People may also adopt their father’s name as their own for reference in daily life.

Geographical spots are often named after a person, which means they may change over time, but it also happens that existing geographical names are incorporated into a person’s name. The facts that many names are available for one single person and the same name for different persons make that it is often quite a puzzle to reconstruct historical events when different sources use names in different ways. In the literature such uncertainty has existed with respect to Kabudu Kagoro, the king who ruled Barue from 1853 until 1880 (approximate years). Furthermore, it is evident from historical sources that the royal dynastic title « Makombe » is applicable to more than one person, but in Barue District nowadays it is apparent that « Makombe » is used like a name for only one person (“Makombe, also known as Kabudu Kagoro, the one who fought against the Portuguese”), while I argue below that two different historical persons are conflated into one in local oral tradition. On a technical note, prefixes such as « Mu- », « Nya- » and « Sa- » may or may not be used in a name, so that Satangwena ~ Tangwena. Furthermore, the name of a chief is sometimes identical with the area a chief rules, so « Tangwena » may refer to a family, a member of that family, and the area ruled by (a member of) the family.

## Delineations of topics to be discussed

This thesis will study “democracy” dealing predominantly with the topic of choosing leaders. Many more approaches might have been taken, such as dealing with the distribution of

resources, or the formulation of policies, but as “democracy”, as will be discussed in more detail below, is not one very specific sort of thing but rather a broad field of ideas, focus would rapidly be lost should too many topics be included in the present study. Thus for example a study of Mozambican economic history from the viewpoint of “economic democracy” will not be my primary concern, although I will rehearse some more general information about e.g. institutionalized oppression of Africans during colonial times. Development assistance provided by governments, NGOs and such institutions as the IMF and the World Bank falls outside the scope of the study as well. Power differentials across the genders or the generations within family and public life will not be studied, though some information about women leaders will be discussed.

Another type of delineation concerns the fact that, with some exceptions, most historical analyses in this thesis are based on data already publicly available. I suspect that some archives may have some as yet unexplored material about the Barue Kingdom, but to write “a history of Barue”, although surely interesting, was not the primary goal of the research project and would also have required a wholly different research set-up. Somewhat similar remarks can be made about the history of Frelimo from its beginning to the time around independence. During the last decade or so, the Internet has helped significantly to make important documents accessible to the public that were hitherto difficult to come by. Still it is likely that much material on early Frelimo remains to be discovered, and again I have to stress it was not part of the research set-up to do original archival research.

### Outline of the thesis

Apart from this introduction, the main body of this thesis consists of four parts. In the first part theory concerning thinking about “democracy” is presented, both thematically and historically. The second part deals with political history of Mozambique and Barue up to 1918. The third part focuses entirely on Barue since 1918 and contains the bulk of the fieldwork material. The fourth part contains the general conclusion.

As for the separate chapters, beginning with part I, chapter 2 introduces the epistemological background of the thesis and applies it to culture and political culture. Culture and political culture are conceived of in such a way that variation within humanity concerning political behaviour and thought can be described without resorting to cultural relativism as an epistemological approach. Chapter 3 describes the etymology of the word « democracy » and recapitulates some definitions of “democracy” as known in the literature

and some problems of applying definitions to empirical situations. Chapter 4 provides a historical treatment of certain political ideas and practices that can be associated with certain definitions of “democracy” in ancient India, ancient China, the Muslim world in Central Asia and North Africa, the Iroquois (Haudenosaunee) confederacy and the Somali. The possibility to apply ideas associated with “democracy” cross-culturally is discussed. Some simple technicalities are given with respect to theoretical connections between Rousseau’s idea of the “general will” and Arrow’s conception of the aggregation of individual preferences into a collective preference, via the theories of voting of Condorcet and Borda. It is shown that operational aspects of consensus are different from those of the aggregation of preferences but no less capable of formal analysis. Comments are made concerning the question whether the differences in technicalities correspond to cross-cultural variation. Chapter 5 introduces considerations about the state, political parties and chiefs. Of these three phenomena, political parties generally get less attention within the academic discipline of cultural anthropology (in contrast with political science) than states, chiefs and the interaction between these two. The chapter argues that the phenomenon of political parties is historically unusual but is nevertheless taken for granted in studies about “democracy”, and deserves more analytical attention in order to explain its great success in present-day politics, specifically in Mozambique. Chapter 6 provides discussions on the topic of the “state recognition of traditional authorities” in relation to legal pluralism. These discussions will be useful for understanding the present-day power balance between hereditary leaders and Frelimo secretaries.

Turning to part II, chapter 7 presents historical material, mostly based on written sources, about Barue until the revolt of 1917-1918 against the Portuguese when Barue was definitively subdued by Portugal. Chapter 8 continues with presenting legal and political backgrounds of Portuguese colonial rule, specifically where relevant for local government, with an emphasis on the late-19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Chapter 9 contains reconstructions of the early development of Frelimo and COREMO, the organizations that conducted an armed struggle against the Portuguese colonizer. The chapter provides these reconstructions against the background of ongoing controversies about the development of Frelimo’s claims to be the only genuine representative of the Mozambican people and consequent claimed legitimacy to obtain state power in a monopolistic way at independence. Chapter 10 continues to describe the events after independence with a focus on the consolidation of Frelimo as political monopolist, the challenge that Renamo posed to that monopoly during the Frelimo-Renamo war, the peace process, and the subsequent elections that perpetuated Frelimo’s political

hegemony, diminished relative to 1975 but still considerable.

Part III starts with information on Barue District since 1918 in Chapter 11, where general historical information from part II is specified for Barue with addition of fieldwork material. Chapter 12 contains historical information about hereditary leadership in Barue District during the last century or so, including all chiefdoms and some lower-level political entities. The way individuals ascend to leadership within hereditary political entities is analysed with respect to selections of new leaders out of pools of potential leaders and the influence of other actors on such selections, including the general population. Chapter 13 studies the Frelimo party in Barue as a political institution, demonstrating how it directly exercises control over the population, separately from the state institutions. In addition, here also selection of new leaders is analysed. Chapter 14 provides details on political practice and thinking from non-Frelimo perspectives.

Part IV closes the thesis's argument in Chapter 15. The research questions are recapitulated and statements are proposed concerning the occurrence within Barue of conceptions and practices that can be associated with certain definitions of "democracy" and concerning the current functioning of the multiparty system in Mozambique as viewed relative to such conceptions and practices.

References in the text will usually give only the publication year of the source used; in the bibliography more information is added on original publication or production dates. Archival material is separately listed in section [A] of the bibliography, historical material in [H], legislation in [L], news reports in [N], and some websites in [W].

Nine maps are provided collectively at the end of the thesis to facilitate the reader's visualization of Mozambique's place within Southern Africa (Map 1), Mozambique's present administrative divisions into provinces (2), Mozambique's rivers for geographical anchor points (3), the historical Barue Kingdom (4), Mozambican colonial history (5-6), and Barue District's present-day geography (7-9).