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.

CHAPTER 15 – CONCLUSION

In this thesis I have studied aspects of collective decision making in which the population is not entirely at the receiving end of that decision making but can have some influence, however partial or limited, on that decision making, with an emphasis on Barue. In this final chapter I shall summarize the findings, answering the three questions formulated in the introduction with seven specific conclusions.

For precolonial times it has been difficult to say much about this in a concrete way, as the sources are very limited. What can be concluded is that the idea and practice of influence of subordinates on their own leaders was not absent. Also the idea of political competition could be identified (or isolated, cf. ch. 2). In precolonial Barue political competition was often connected with the question whether the Portuguese should have much influence in the country. Many of those who were considered favourite by the Portuguese apparently had no or limited success within Barue society, as with Mutuconha in ± 1768 (died, but appears not to have accessed the throne, contrary to Gunguro), Chibudu (defeated by Chipapata), Samakande (unpopular and defeated by Hanga), and Cassiche (deposed by his own subordinates). At the end of his life Chipapata had to accept some influence of M.A. de Sousa (the India-born lord of the former *prazo* Gorongosa), but this situation seems not to have been of his own volition. The case of Cassiche (the Makombe who had willingly accepted Portuguese rule in Barue territory) shows that people in precolonial Barue could critically monitor their own leader's actions and were willing to act on such evaluations. From information from Ranger, Isaacman and my interlocutor *Dona* Suzana Calhancambo it appears that the Barue revolt of 1917-1918 was a popular movement which gathered around the leadership of Nongwe-Nongwe and the spirit medium Mbuya. I have also argued that the independence of Barue from Mutapa in 1608 can be interpreted as the result of a cooperative effort between Barue's leaders and its general population. Consequently, over the centuries there appears to have been some connection between the internal political fate of the leadership and the international fate of Barue as an independent country. The surviving present-day historical memory in Barue is an appreciation of those times when the Portuguese were still safely outside and life was good under the protection under Makombe. This living memory in Bare District today in the form of a yearly ceremony, frequent references to Makombe (and related to it the Barue Revolt of 1917-1918), and the historical legitimacy of at least some of the chiefdoms, testifies to the importance Makombe has for Baruese as embodying independence and the good life.

If the present-day events concerning selection and deposition of leaders have any retrospective value concerning the interpretation of "traditional authority" in the past, it is significant that in several cases hereditary leaders' positions were dependent on popular debate. In this sense, we are reminded of Beach's (1994a: 158) comment on precolonial Shona societies that "[i]f there was no actual voting, everybody knew the respective strength of each faction in a given case, and the end result could be quite democratic". In fact, during the field work some instances of voting (concerning hereditary leaders) were recorded in addition to selections in which there was no voting. With the extant data it is difficult to say whether such voting events for hereditary leaders are an entirely new phenomenon or not. In any case, it is safe to agree with Beach that precolonial Shona (and Baruese) would not have much relied on the exact counting of votes for taking decisions (even if the possibility that it *never* happened cannot be ruled out with the information we have). In this thesis I have interpreted this to be possible because these precolonial populations would not have relied on choice set procedures for collective decision making. There is no structural *a priori* reason why this would have been so. For instance, election procedures could have relied on exact counting of raised hands, or on collecting iron or wooden chips in certain shapes or colours. The ancient Greeks and Indians knew such procedures of formal voting (Held 1987: 16-22; Muhlberger and Paine 1993: 36-37).

As far as I am aware a systematic analysis *contrasting* variants of the choice set method (where decisions are made on the basis of a one-off application of a procedure to individual preference orderings) with a consensus approach (which allows for more social reflection) has never before been done concerning the situation of selecting a hereditary leader in Mozambique. I have proposed the interpretation that a consensus approach tolerant of non-exactness is intelligible when it is considered that a collective method of decision making that minimizes political friction across a population may be preferred within that population above a method that assigns deciding authority to a proposal *solely* on the basis that such a proposal prevails in a one-off formal procedure applied to submitted preference orderings. Starting with Rousseau's idea of using voting so as to discover the "general will", the subsequent theoretical development of voting, leading to the concept of the "choice set" as interpreted as the choice which "society would actually make" (Arrow 1963: 26) may be considered as culturally specific in world history. On the other hand, other aspects that may be associated with "democracy", such as competition for leadership, gaining popular support, or the possibility for subordinates to depose an unwanted leader and install another can be discerned in Barue. Therefore such aspects are not specifically attached to Euro-American

286

political theory, although one may discern affinities with the writings of such European authors as Habermas (1996) on "deliberative politics". It deviates, however, from Rawls's (1971: 13) conception of "justice" where parties are being "conceived as not taking an interest in one another's interests", because people may assign weights greater than nil to at least some of those who do not concur with their own top preference, in order to reach a collective decision (Lehrer and Wagner 1981). Also, considerations about the community *taken as a whole* may be included in the inputs for debate.

The recent ethnographic claim that Mozambique "had a tradition of consensus *rather than* competition" (Van den Bergh 2009: 10, emphasis added) thus incorrectly ignores that Mozambique has known competitive politics before the formal arrival of the multiparty system in the 1990s. The claim treats consensus and competition as opposites, implying that consensus knows no competition and that a competitive multiparty system cannot be consensual. As a first conclusion, it may be stated that if the current political system in Mozambique can hardly be considered consensual this is not a result of an opposition between consensus and competition, but of applying a choice set procedure to party politics. It does not inherently follow from the party system itself.

Colonialism largely destroyed the old political systems in Mozambique, specifically kingdoms such as Barue. The revitalized chiefdoms of today may sometimes represent a continuation of precolonial entities (we have seen some instances), but do not and cannot wholly embody the mentioned ancient political systems. To formulate a second conclusion, I have shown in this thesis that the functioning of chiefdoms and other hereditary polities in Barue is overwhelmed by party institutions, or state institutions dependent on party considerations.

It is quite obvious that colonialism did not bring "democracy" in any of the definitions listed in chapter 3 to Mozambique. Rather, it carried out programmes of exploitation and control, the principled conception of which can be traced back as early as the 17th century. Colonialism neither brought, nor aimed to bring, a functioning multiparty system in Mozambique. It did, however, evoke the emergence of (anticolonial) movements that were necessarily entirely new phenomena (indeed, one can consider them as having been established as rather late, around the time that other African countries were already getting independent). Being *against* colonialism they were movements that were not functioning within colonialism; but they were also not products of the dominant political systems of precolonial times (the kingdoms), because the latter no longer existed. Such movements, and/or their personnel, evolved into proto-political parties at the time after the coup in

Portugal of 25 April 1974. The Lusaka Agreement of 7 September 1974 was characteristic in that it was largely an agreement between two army movements; the Portuguese state was represented with an MFA-dominated delegation. In the case of Frelimo, there did not yet exist a state at all, which by definition had to be created. Frelimo was ontologically prior to Mozambique as a state, and this was to heavily influence the subsequent events in independent Mozambique, as the state came to be moulded according to the (proto-)party's actions rather than that the party adapted itself to events within the state (see also Cahen 1993; though I have stressed Machel's personal rôle more). This alone makes it problematic to take the state by default as the primary unit of analysis in studying politics. Rather, to reach a third conclusion, apart from the state *political parties* should be given a greater weight in studying aspects of national party systems, be they one-party or multiparty systems. Instead of asking first whether "Mozambique has become a democracy" in 1994, one might perhaps better ask first whether "Frelimo has become a party amongst other parties" and whether "Renamo has become a party amongst other parties". Although this aspect has indeed been addressed concerning Renamo, with respect to Frelimo it has been less of a concern (see Scholten's foreword in Van den Bergh 2009). Thus to understand the political situation in Mozambique, it is necessary to study the evolution of political parties, in particular, of course, Frelimo.

As a fourth conclusion, Frelimo's historical development as an organization can be described as a sequence of no less than five characterizations. It started, first, as a rather loose *umbrella organization* of two movements, UDENAMO and MANU. This situation lasted only a few months at most. Then on 25 June 1962 Frelimo became, second, a *movement* on its own – being an association of people who wanted independence but had divergent ideas and activities. In this period Frelimo laid much stress on educational activities and the army was subsumed under a secretariat amongst other secretariats. From October 1966 on, this situation changed gradually until the Third Session of the Central Committee in April 1969, when Frelimo's internal organization was redefined. At that time it is best characterized, third, as having become an *army* where the military was *supervising* most civilian tasks rather than being a division separate from other (civilian) organizational components. From early 1970 on Frelimo evolved, fourth, into a *vanguard political party* within a one-party political system (intended and for a while real), a situation which was formalized at the Third Congress of February 1977. Fifth and finally, in 1990 Frelimo became a *political party* within a formal multiparty system. Thus at least five phases with four transformations can be distinguished in Frelimo's history.

It is revealing to see how not all the four transformations went smoothly for those

involved. Gwambe was reluctant to have UDENAMO merged with MANU and was unable to adjust himself to the new situation after 25 June 1962 when the merger had become an irrevocable reality. Mondlane was reluctant to see Frelimo transformed into an organization that was predominantly an army, stuck to focusing on education and kept believing in diplomatic means to achieve independence (at least up to 1965, but quite probably until his death). The second transformation was achieved by army commander Machel, who promoted his cause from October 1966 onwards but could not realize it fully as long as Mondlane and Simango remained in top positions. However, Frelimo's Second Congress was an intermediate but crucial step towards such a realization through the re-election of Mondlane rather than Simango as president; I have argued that the presidential vote knew a large degree of arbitrariness. Machel himself was in charge of Frelimo's third transformation from army to vanguard political party. As for Frelimo's fourth transformation, that from a vanguard party within a one-party system to a party within a multiparty system, there is the question of whether or not the Frelimo leadership has been reluctant to carry it out just as was the case with Gwambe and Mondlane in the first two transformations.

While the fourth transformation seems to have been carried out enthusiastically at the time, it was done when most were reasoning on the supposition that Frelimo would easily win from Renamo (or other parties) in elections. When it turned out that that supposition was false, Frelimo had to resort to other means to secure its dominant political position. One is the manipulation of election results. I have argued (with an elaborate analysis in Appendix G) that manipulation very likely happened in the presidential elections of 1999 to an extent that it is uncertain that the official result represents the majority of the intended votes of that election. More recently, the fraudulent character of an election result has been unambiguously confirmed by the Constitutional Council (concerning the municipality of Gúruè in 2013). A second way for Frelimo to secure, or even expand, its dominant political position has been the use vis-à-vis citizens of formalities defined outside state law with the aid of a party network penetrating deeply into rural areas, as shown extensively with empirical data in this thesis. While there were a few exceptions, most Frelimo secretaries in the field study were only selected by Frelimo members and possibly sympathizers, as the Frelimo statutes imply. Yet Frelimo secretaries do have great impact on the lives of Mozambican citizens who are not Frelimo adherents. Consequently, in Mozambique there has been created a political hierarchy *amongst the citizens themselves*, in violation of definitions of "democracy" that include a notion of equality between people.

Analytically this shows, to state a fifth conclusion, that the heterogeneity of the state

(Santos 2006) has not succeeded in aiding to expand and consolidate the state's paramount administrative effectiveness as an overarching neutral institution serving all Mozambicans equitably in a variety of cultural and political environments, as was an explicit goal when ideas about recognition of "traditional authorities" were contemplated. As for the "traditional authorities", at least in Barue they appear to have rather limited rôles in political life. As for party secretaries, evidently the goal of serving all Mozambicans equitably was not put forward with the same force as with the "traditional authorities" when they became "recognized", nor could such goal have been put in that way in their case. Heterogeneity is not, in the first place, a wholly deliberately created situation. It depends on earlier existing phenomena (the contemporary situation in Mozambique is a *palimpsest*, an overwritten document in which older writings may still transpire, in the metaphor of Santos 2006; cf. Araújo 2010). Where the state could "recognize" *and* subsume pre-existing chiefdoms, it could not do so with the Frelimo party. The state now "recognizes" secretaries (with or without ceremony), but they remain under the party's control. Since the state accepts, by virtue of its "recognition" of secretaries, the latter's deliberations concerning citizens, the state is subsumed under the party rather than the other way around. What that means for citizens I have indicated in this thesis. More can be said, however, about Weber's conception of the state.

Machel has demonstrated in practice where the theory of Weber fails concerning the legitimate *monopoly of violence*. Weber sees this principle as a central feature of the *state*, but Machel showed that it could just as well be applied to an *organization* like Frelimo which is not a state. The idea of "protracted struggle" was the expression of an ideology (and practice) in which education was equivalent to experience in armed struggle and where the desire for quick independence could be associated with "erroneous conceptions". Where people or organizations like Mondlane, Simango and Gumane's UDENAMO saw Mozambique as becoming, sooner or later, independent as a state, to be endowed with a one-party system, Machel put the internal functioning of Frelimo first and assumed independence would come as a by-product of the "protracted struggle". Ideology was *not* the main point in the "crisis within Frelimo", despite all the rhetoric about it. This is obvious when the comments of the Frelimo fighters whom I interviewed are considered. They were not at all recruited for ideological reasons, and acted on the supposition that they were fighting "the Portuguese". The main point was that Machel got the insight that the state need not be the prime locus for exercising control, even when there is, or might be, a state. Through his position as army commander, Machel brought about the transformation of Frelimo as such a locus. When

Mondlane and Simango each in his own way realized this, they were too late to exercise much influence on this process.

The creation of independent Mozambique was a feature in *addition* to Frelimo's earlier existence in contrast with the emergence of political parties in pre-existing states that Weber seems to have had in mind. Naturally, Frelimo's modes of operation could change with the creation of the new state, but the old tendencies of monopolistic politics nurtured within an army have remained to a large degree. A consequence of this observation is that not only Weber's conceptualization of "state" needs qualification, but also, reaching a sixth conclusion, that there is no uniformity in the way organizations can manifest themselves as "political parties". Analyses like the one of Doorenspleet (2005) ignore this and simply score the existence of electoral party-pluralism in a country to conclude that, say, "Mozambique had a transition to democracy in 1994". But such analyses say nothing about the actual *functioning* of political parties and other political movements. Doorenspleet's approach as applied to Mozambique completely ignores that there has been a devastating war between Frelimo and Renamo for about 16 years in the country and does not probe into the possible connection of the war with the country's becoming independent under Frelimo only. We cannot *a priori* assume that a party like the Conservative Party in the UK of today, evolved in a process across centuries within an already existing state, functions similarly to a party of which the roots lie in a situation in the 1960s when there was no independent state and political parties had never existed before.

As for Renamo, in its first years of existence the organization cannot be classified as a political party. Apart from serving external interests, it had a Mozambique-internal sectional interest (at least to fight Frelimo, for those voluntarily adhering), but no durable organization (strong dependency on different external suppliers), and Renamo apparently did not initially aim at participation in the executive and/or the legislative. By 1984 this latter point had changed to the extent that Renamo wanted to form a government of national unity with Frelimo. Still dependent on South African support, it had no self-supporting organizational structure yet. Also, as an army it subordinated civilians and civilian institutions rather than that it was controlled by civilians. It was with the peace process that Renamo was finally transformed into a political party. As the events in 2013 have shown, also this transformation from army to party cannot be considered to have wholly succeeded.

The peace process transformed the duopoly of violence ("legitimate" or not) into a monopoly. In a Weberian sense the Mozambican state was resurrected after an absence of about 16 years. However, such an analysis is unsatisfactory because during the war

Mozambique as a state still existed in people's heads as an idea, and also government by Frelimo continued, even if in a reduced way. Indeed, Renamo would not have continued fighting if the Frelimo government had stopped occupying the government of the Mozambican state before 1992. In this sense, when applied to Mozambique the Weberian approach is logically problematic. But still it can be said that in 1992 a monopoly of violence was achieved with the GPA.

It is more difficult to affirm that the GPA, or rather its execution, has succeeded in establishing a well-working multiparty system. In a technical sense it has, since there are elections and a multiparty parliament, which is why Doorenspleet (2005) could evaluate the year 1994 as one in which a "democratic transition" took place. But when more details are considered, this success is not that clear. I have discussed how Frelimo asserts itself onto citizens in a way that is not open to other parties. I have also pointed out that the GPA was not, in fact, carried out in full concerning the point of having elections at all levels of the state. This specific aspect is a not a fault of the GPA but rather of its execution (although a weakness was that it did not define dates for all these elections). The result is a heavily disproportional influence of Frelimo in Mozambique's politics and indeed society, because the national government, as dominated by Frelimo, is deciding concerning the appointments of provincial governors, district administrators and lower level government officials, irrespective of the distribution of party-political affiliations in those sub-national government levels across the population. Policies concerning decentralization and juridical pluralism exist in Mozambique, but they apply mostly to the state rather than the party in power. Indeed the party in power has been able to extend its monopoly due to its position within the state's pluralism. In this sense state pluralism has not been conducive to party-political equality.

When the question is considered why Frelimo occupies the national government alone, the answer, as a seventh conclusion, is that the electoral selection mechanism for president, the head of government, allows for such a situation to arise. This selection mechanism is based on the position that a certain mathematical procedure can by itself decide who should be appointed to office. In this thesis I have considered J.-J. Rousseau and K. Arrow as important representatives of this way of thinking. In its technically most advanced formulation, this implies that "society would actually make" (Arrow 1963: 26) a choice for a particular option out of a pool of options where a certain abstract selection device identifies that option as a specifically privileged one, namely as being the sole element of a "choice set", irrespective of the social aspects of the distribution of preferences across a pool of options and historical considerations. This is problematic because such collective items like "culture"

and "society", as discussed in chapter 2, are not necessarily smooth anthropological objects. Arrow (1963: 18, 26) posits a straightforward association between the choice of "society" and the "choice set" that may simply have no basis in empirical societies containing social differentiations, contradictions and paradoxes. Arrow's theory, even if it would encompass consistent "conditions", has not brought us one step further from Rousseau's idea of the "general will" to be discovered by voting.

Another problem concerns the possibility of election fraud. Even if Arrow's theory does not presuppose that fraud with ballots and polling station overviews may occur, as I have argued happened in the 1999 presidential elections, in practice it may stimulate such behaviour because it focuses on winning over one's opponents, not on reaching an understanding with them. By stressing exactness, there is in the theory, in its concrete manifestations as majority rule, a clear reward for contestants in having a numerical overweight, even if miniscule, in the ballot counts. In this sense, election fraud is an expectable if unintended concomitant of the specific theory behind elections that is used. A consensus approach to "democracy" seeks the optimalization of a balance between options and is less subject to the phenomenon of small numerical differences producing great consequences. It has been predominantly Euro-American thinking that promoted the theory that this approach is the one which societies should apply when making collective choices. Though widely influential in thinking about "democracy", also in Mozambique and within Frelimo specifically, it is not the only approach to "democracy" conceivable, nor is it, as I have argued, an obvious one considering theorizing about collective choice in world history.

As for practical historical influence of Western powers on Mozambique,[238] it can be concluded that most of it was not satisfying the benchmark of "democracy" I defined in chapter 3. Obviously in colonial times Mozambicans were at the receiving end of policy-making. Concerning decolonization the picture is equivocal, but not more than that. While some governments remained against or at least not in favour of decolonization, some aided Frelimo against colonialism. Promoting a multiparty system in Mozambique was not generally an issue for western states or non-state organizations until the peace process finally took off. Here the contribution of AWEPAA and others can be mentioned. AWEPAA's contribution was, however, more concerned with *supporting* than *directing* constitutional change in Mozambique. Thus it remains difficult to say that the West imposed a multiparty system on Mozambique, the introduction of which remained firmly under the control of

---

[238] « Western » understood cf. note 1 above. Certainly Marxism-Leninism may be interpreted as a European influence on postcolonial Mozambique, but this falls outside the scope of said note.

Frelimo, which finally recognized that there may exist other political parties than itself. Since political parties represent sectional interests, it is not surprising that around the time of independence (1974-1975) there were people who wanted to organize themselves around other sectional interests than those of Frelimo. Combined with the racialist minority interests and the weapons of the power holders in Rhodesia and South Africa the result was, however, Renamo in the form of an army, not a party (clandestine or not). The war was facilitated by external parties, but the result of the peace process has been the manifestation of the settling of sectional interests in political parties and is essentially a Mozambique-internal, not an externally imposed phenomenon. The emergence of the MDM party, which does not have the connection with the Rhodesian and South African racist minority regimes, unambiguously shows that non-Frelimo sectional interests are indigenous to Mozambique.

A contrast between "Western" versus "African" cultural interpretations of "democracy" is not immediately explanatory. Western countries do not all have identical approaches in their systems of voting, and not all Western countries necessarily apply a choice set procedure for selecting leaders. In order to evaluate the effects that the application of the choice set method has on Mozambican politics, it is necessary to go beyond cultural contrasts alone and analyse the specific *operational* aspects of selecting leaders that we may encounter within indigenous Mozambican political culture, in line with the critical realist approach I have invoked in chapter 2. On the other hand we have encountered ethnographic descriptions of indigenous Mozambican political culture that were imprecise, if not incorrect (concerning rotation and the alleged absence of competition; Salomons in Hansma and Roskam [eds.] 1993: 37-38; resp. Van den Bergh 2009: 10). Especially the item of rotation is significant when viewed from Mozambique's electoral system because that system does not allow bringing in "rotation" as an independently apposite argument in deliberations about selecting a leader. Political competition might be solved also in ways not compatible with choice set procedures, using considerations about observed distributions of preferences across society. Arrow's social welfare functions (taken as electoral mechanisms) are essentially first-order operations, operating solely on submitted preference orderings, while the indicated rotation and distributional considerations are higher-order deliberations operating *about* aggregations of submitted preference orderings (Bateson's hierarchy of levels, cf. ch. 2, comes to mind). Requirements concerning "democracy" formulated on a higher level may not necessarily be congruent with requirements on the level at which Arrow's social welfare functions (and Mozambique's electoral law) operate. In the present author's view, this tension between operational levels is not sufficiently appreciated in the literature, and consideration of it might

well influence the way electoral laws are thought about. (Arrow 1963: 90-91 discusses orders of decision processes, but he does not analyse the possibility that contradictions between them may entirely discredit the approach he has defended as "reasonable" earlier in his book.) Practically, the indeterminacy concerning what "democracy" could mean is evident in the General Peace Agreement between Frelimo and Renamo, which did not define "democracy" but referred to "the internationally recognised principles of democracy". However, it is not clear what these "principles" consist of in an unambiguous, concrete and operational sense.

It is true, the concept of the "choice set" as a recommendable political decision method cannot be seen as having been imposed onto Mozambique's leadership. However, it is not a method that can easily be interpreted as something that would have arisen out of Mozambicans' own historical and contemporary local ideas of collective decision making and falls predominantly within specifically Western theoretical traditions of the last few centuries. It has no firm basis, if any basis at all, in precolonial conceptions of collective decision making, nor in the need to address the grave postcolonial political problems, nor in any insights and methods of contemporary local conceptualizations of ideas about "democracy" in Mozambique's indigenous political culture.

In fact, the idea of the choice set must be held at least partly responsible for theoretically sanctioning the gross political inequality amongst Mozambicans which currently exists. I have argued that granting Dhlakama the presidency in 1999, even if he would not have got the numerical majority of votes in that specific election, would have been conducive in reducing the proportion of voters who are not served by the national political system, without (in this hypothetical case) giving disproportional weight to candidates with a small following (should this be undesirable). But the choice set approach is not capable of incorporating such considerations. Should one insist on having majority elections, another solution would have been to organize local and/or regional elections simultaneously across the country together with the first national elections in 1994. The argument that such would not have been constitutional is not decisive because, as I have shown, the current situation is not constitutional either. In this scenario majority decisions on local or regional level would have been instrumental to the higher-order requirement that power should be divided when evaluated on a national scale. This nationwide power division through a universal system of local and/or regional elections for executives is currently impossible as long as Frelimo uses its parliamentary majority to block universalization of local governance.

The result is that one party has continued to be in power even in times when its electoral results have shown slim margins in situations with many rejected ballots. Wiredu's (2001a:

169) remark that if some majority of 51% "stoutly insists on the implementation of [its] decisions all the time, who would fault the minority if they should develop a deep sense of frustration with the system?" is highly relevant for Mozambique. As shown in this thesis, we cannot even be sure that Chissano really had more than 50% of the intended votes in the presidential elections of 1999. The frustration concerning Frelimo existing amongst non-Frelimo people (and also some Frelimo-people) was clearly discernable during my fieldwork (e.g. concerning intimidation, extortion of money, and problems with pension payments). If it is considered that it was already in 1974 a problem for some that Frelimo would govern alone after independence, and that besides foreign interests dissatisfaction with Frelimo played a rôle in the development of the war, a war with such high costs in human life, then the conclusion must be that the peace process has done very little to remedy this problem. An analytical problem associated with this is to treat the Mozambican "multiparty system" like any other, suitable for being subsumed under a "wave of democratization". This ignores the specific historical characteristics of the main political antagonists in Mozambique, which as said may not have experienced fully the transformations that would make them the equivalents of parties in certain other countries, especially urbanized Euro-American countries. In combination with the choice set approach to "democracy" the current national political system in Mozambique is one which fulfils abstractions but is unable to deal with the realities of the turbulent past and its contemporary effects.

Should a more consensual political situation be desired in Mozambique, it would be useful to appreciate the visions and practices concerning collective decision making, empirically detectable in the political culture of Barue, to challenge the current dominance of "choice set" theorizing. When applied to a country like Mozambique, this theorizing asks from a population to accept an operationalization of "democracy" that is by definition incapable of addressing historical issues. For Mozambique, whose history still has enduring effects, one can wonder whether such an application really was the most "reasonable" thing to do.