

CMI REPORT

R 2010: 7

“A woman should not be the boss when a man is present” Gender and Poverty in Southern Mozambique

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Gender and Poverty in Southern Mozambique

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A special note of thanks to Rachi Picardo for his important contributions to this project.

Thanks also to our enumerators: Egidio dos Anjos, Maria Raul Muteuie, Alexandre Benjamim Chitlango, Emerenciana Candido, Herbenizario Betencurt Bachita, Nelia Mucavele, Ilidio Chichava, Arlindo Uamusse, Deliciosa Maoze, Mario Moiane.

The Project is funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs / Norad.

Project number

27038

Project title

Gender Policies and Feminisation of Poverty in Mozambique 2008-2010

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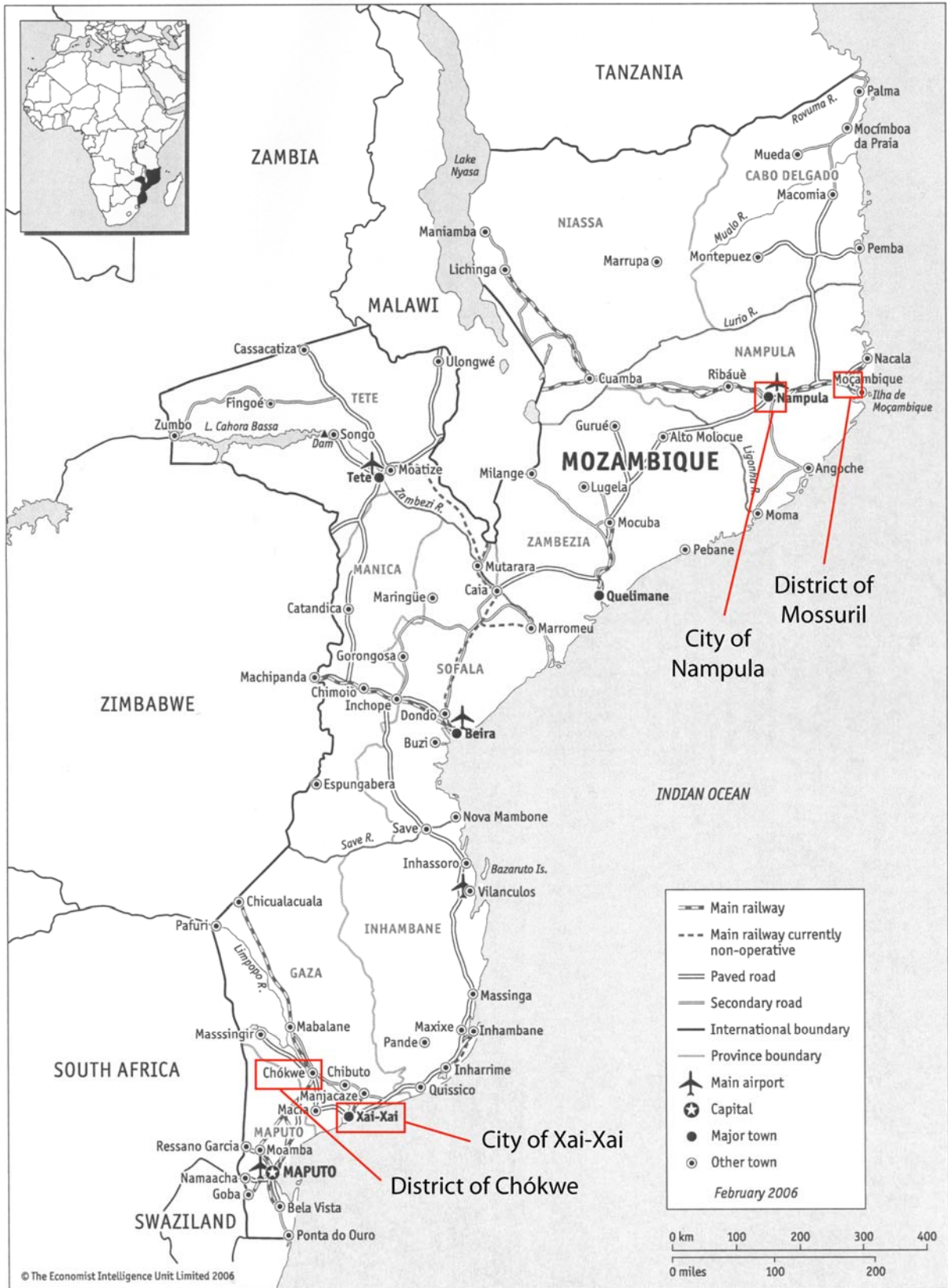
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Map 1: Mozambique and Project Field Sites



1. Introduction

The Government of Mozambique has ‘gender equality and women’s empowerment’ as an explicit goal for its development strategy, arguing that this is a prerequisite for achieving the objectives of poverty reduction set out in its Poverty Reduction Strategy, PARPA II (GdM 2005). This is with good reason: Available quantitative data clearly show that women in Mozambique are systematically disadvantaged in political, economic as well as socio-cultural terms (Table 1). Moreover, recent updates show that the proportion of female-headed households in Mozambique is on the rise and that the poverty-gap between male- and female-headed households is increasing (Table 2). Yet, the data also reveal important differences in women’s situations in the different geographical regions and in rural and urban social formations, in key areas such as agricultural production, employment, income, education, health and levels of domestic violence (MISAU 2005; INE 2009 and 2010).

Table 1. *Key Socio-Economic Data on Men and Women in Mozambique (Percent)*

Item	Men		Women	
	2004	2009	2004	2009
Formal employment	19.0	n.a	3.9	n.a
Employment in agriculture	67.5	n.a	89.3	n.a
Adult literacy rate	67.0	n.a	37.5	n.a
Net primary school attendance	62.7	82.3	56.7	80.2
Life expectancy at birth	44.8	n.a	48.6	n.a
Proportion HIV-AIDS affected	13.0	9.2	17.2	13.1*

Sources: INE 2004; 2009; 2010; World Bank 2007; MISAU 2010. * Reduction likely due to new sampling methods.

Table 2. *Gender of Household Head and Poverty Headcount (Percent)*

Item	Male-Headed Households		Female-Headed Households	
	2004	2009	2004	2009
Overall proportion	73.6	69.1	26.4	30.9
Poverty headcount	51.9	n.a	62.5	n.a

Sources: INE 2004; 2009; 2010.

This is the third report in the series ‘Gender Policies and Feminisation of Poverty in Mozambique’, carried out in close cooperation with the Ministry of Planning and Development. Our first report (Tvedten, Paulo & Montserrat 2008) went through existing quantitative data under headings of employment and income, education, health, social organisation, child marriages, sexual abuse and domestic violence; the second report (Tvedten, Paulo & Tuominen 2009) focused on the social relations and cultural perception of gender in one rural setting (District of Mossuril) and one urban setting (City of Nampula) in the northern province of Nampula; and this report is from similar settings (city of Xai-Xai and District of Chókwe) in the southern province of Gaza – thereby covering the north-south and rural-urban configurations that are often seen as particularly significant for gender relations and inequalities in the country.

In this report we will also include the concept of gendered poverty as a multi-faceted condition encompassing gendered differences in three main circumstances: One is lack of income and assets to attain basic provisions in the form of food, clothing and shelter (minimised through a combination of increased *opportunities* and an increased *capacity* to benefit from available opportunities); the second is a sense of voicelessness and powerlessness in relation to institutions of society and the State (reduced though increased *empowerment*); and the third is vulnerability to adverse shocks, linked to the ability to cope with them through social relationships and legal institutions (minimised though increased *security*). The notion of ‘feminisation of poverty’ will be seen to imply that women are poorer than men, that the incidence of poverty among women is increasing relative to that of men over time, and that the growing poverty among women is linked to the feminisation of household headship (Chant 2007).

As regards the current gender policies in Mozambique from government and donors, we argued in our first report that there is a considerable discrepancy between stated policies and objectives, on the one hand, and concrete interventions on the ground, on the other: The relatively high level of women’s representation in Parliament and Government has not yielded significant results in terms of concrete action for women’s empowerment – characterised by the Law on Domestic Violence that, until very recently, was still pending and had been debated in Parliament for more than two years. And women’s representation at the lower levels of government (provinces and districts), as well as in key State institutions (education, health, the justice sector, etc.), remains weak – as is indicated by the frail position of the Gender Units and Gender Focal Points in such establishments. Among donors, the policy of ‘gender mainstreaming’ – ostensibly affecting all development programmes and projects irrespective of sector – has effectively pulverised responsibilities with few concrete results on the ground for all but a few donors such as CIDA, SIDA, UNFPA and UNIFEM. A relatively strong civil society sector, with *Forum Mulher* and WLSA as key institutions, has not been in a position to ‘make up for’ the limited real government and donor attention to gender equality and the empowerment of women in Mozambique (Tvedten, Paulo & Montserrat 2008).

With reference to the considerable differences in poverty and human development between the north and the south of Mozambique (Tvedten, Paulo & Montserrat 2008), let us, by way of introduction, highlight some of the quantitative expressions of gendered dissimilarities between Nampula and Gaza, which are the focus of this study series.¹ As seen in Table 3, there are significant differences in terms of poverty and inequality, as well as gender-specific elements such as the proportion of female-headed households, employment and income, literacy rates, child mortality rates and HIV/AIDS between the two provinces. In general terms, Nampula and other northern provinces score low compared to Gaza and the southern provinces on indicators of human development (education, health, nutrition, etc.), but relatively better on indicators of income and consumption, as shown by the difference in poverty headcount. In our first report we explained such differences with reference to broad historical and contemporary developments related to socio-cultural systems of kinship and descent (i.e. patrilineality and matrilineality); colonial experiences of agro-industrialisation, migration and forced labour; and post-independence experiences of enhanced levels of urbanisation, ‘modernisation’, and an increasing reliance on money for survival.

¹ Unfortunately, the outcome of the long-awaited National Household Survey (IAF) 2008/2009 was not published at the time of writing – making it necessary to rely on data from different sources, which are not always compatible.

Table 3. Socio-Economic Characteristics of Nampula and Gaza (Percent)

General indicators	Gaza	Nampula
Population (mill.)	1.2	4.1
Formal employment	6.0	7.0
Employment in agriculture	83.7	82.8
Net primary school attendance	77.3	46.6
Under-five mortality rate (of 1000)	156	220
Poverty headcount	59.7	53.6
Gender indicators		
Female-headed households	53.6	20.8
Primary school attendance, boys	77.7	50.2
Primary school attendance, girls	77.0	43.1
Sex before 15 yrs, girls	22.6	43.2
Human Development Index	0.439	0.340
Gender Development Index	0.423	0.327

Sources: INE 2004; MISAU 2005; UNDP 2007; World Bank 2007; INE 2009.

In the second report on Nampula, we confirmed the importance of historical developments and Nampula's political economy for contemporary gender relations, but also underlined the weight of *cultural conditions* such as kinship, marriage and patriarchal traditions for gender inequalities – albeit with important differences between rural Mossuril and urban Nampula. Gaza, which is the focus of this report, has gone through a long history of social change through migration and urbanisation and shows a stronger involvement of women and female-headed households in the economic sphere, but still – as the quote in the title of this report implies – with a strong perception of 'male superiority' pointing towards a continued patriarchal hold on things.

1.1 Analytical Approach

The reports in this series are based on the assumption that quantitative and qualitative data should be combined to give a complete picture of gender relations and the position of women in Mozambique, through what is often called a 'qual-quant' approach (Kanbur and Schaffer 2007). While quantitative data yield important information about the mapping and profile of poverty and gender, a qualitative approach is necessary to understand the cultural perceptions and coping strategies of men and women – or the 'dynamics of poverty'. A 'qual-quant' approach seems particularly important in the area of gender relations, which not only reflect measurable material conditions but are enmeshed in deep historical and socio-cultural constellations.

Our analytical framework is based on the notion that history and contemporary political, economic and cultural structural forces have a powerful effect on human actions and the shape of events (Bourdieu 1990). At one level, gender relations are shaped and reproduced by external processes that are congruent with established patterns of power in society at large (Moore 1996). Simultaneously, however, there is room for human agency and ordinary lives as people relate to structural constraints and opportunities the best they can from their own economic and socio-cultural position (Ortner 2006). Social change occurs through what Johnson-Hanks (2002) has called 'vital conjunctures', or changes in the structural environment. We argue that there are two such 'vital conjunctures' that have been particularly important for gender relations in Mozambique. One is the strong exposure of the southern and central parts of the country to structural forces of labour migration and 'modernity', with a concomitant continued influence of 'tradition' in the northern parts of the country that have been less susceptible to such forces. And

the other is the impact of urbanisation, which seems to have opened up new structural space for men and women alike, in a way that is in the process of making gender relations in cities and towns extremely different from those in rural areas.

While there is extensive literature on gender relations in Southern Africa (Geisler 2004; Ouzgane and Morrell 2005), little, if any, has taken a systematic view of the relationship between gender and poverty *per se*.² We assume in this report that material poverty has consequences of its own in the sense that it channels people's perceptions and actions in specific directions, with implications not only for individual men and women but also for the relationship between them. While manhood and womanhood in Mozambique are enmeshed in socio-cultural rights and obligations, poverty has profound implications on the extent to which these rights and obligations are fulfilled, and gendered power-relations are maintained. In line with this, the position and rights of women in polygamous marriages in rural areas seem to be weakened with lower agricultural production and income. Furthermore, there are emerging signs that unemployment and poverty have implications on the ability of men to maintain their 'manhood' and position as household heads in urban areas.

1.2 Methodologies

The main objective of this report is to capture the local composition of gender relations in Gaza, by focusing on one rural and one urban area in the province. The former is the inland district of Chókwè, which is considered one of the best-off districts in the province, both in terms of material poverty and human development (MAE 2005) – with the important exception being the HIV/AIDS infection rate, which is the highest in the country. The urban areas are two of the most densely populated neighbourhoods, or *bairros*, in the city of Xai-Xai, largely inhabited by migrants from the inland. This puts us in a good position to analyse the implications of urban migration and urbanism for gender relations.

Our analysis is carried out through a combination of interviews with key stakeholders in the district of Chókwè and the City of Xai-Xai; a survey that has been especially designed to capture gendered characteristics and differences; and a set of qualitative methodologies. The stakeholders include political authorities in the district and municipality; heads of particularly relevant public and civil society institutions; traditional leaders (*régulos*, *secretários do bairro*, *hosi*, etc.) as well as individual men and women in the communities.

The survey covers a total of 120 households (60 in Chókwè and 60 in Xai-Xai). The more specific localities (*povoações* in Chókwè and *quarteirões* in Xai-Xai) were selected in cooperation with local authorities, with the aim of finding areas that were as 'representative' as possible. Within each enumeration area, we chose to select an equal number of male-headed and female-headed households, in order to better capture the variables we were seeking.³ While not 'random' in any scientific sense, we avoided ending up with a sample unable to shed sufficient light on our issues of gender and poverty.

² In anthropology in particular, issues of material poverty have been neglected due to the combined effect of the discipline's aversion towards quantitative data and the concomitant overemphasis on 'culture' as systems of meaning (Tvedten 2008).

³ Our starting point for identifying male-headed and female-headed households was the perception of who headed the household held by our local guides (*guias*). In some cases this did not coincide with the perception of the household itself, which made us end up with an overall proportion of 55 percent male-headed and 45 percent female-headed households – reflecting interesting differences between 'public' and 'private' perceptions of household headedness to which we will return below.

The qualitative methodologies used are *force-field analyses* (to capture perceptions of which conditions [political, economic, socio-cultural] may inhibit or accelerate change and development in the community); *wealth-ranking* (to capture the community's own perception of gendered poverty and well-being and categories of the poor and the better-off); and *Venn-diagrams* (to identify social relations and networks used by the different categories of poor and better-off as part of their coping strategies) (see Tvedten et al. 2006 for a more detailed description of the methodologies). In the first exercise we used mixed groups of men and women and in the second and third we formed separate groups of men and women to ascertain possible gendered differences in the perceptions of poverty and well-being.

1.2 Main Conclusions

Available statistical data demonstrate that Gaza scores relatively high on social development (education, health), with smaller differences between men and women than in other parts of the country, as measured by the Gender Equality Index.

Data also show a high consumption-based poverty rate of 59.7 percent. However, our survey does not give evidence to this but rather shows fairly high levels of income and consumption, both among male- and female-headed households – albeit with a small but important segment of very poor households.

One reason for this discrepancy may be our definition of households: Using a *de facto* definition (“eating from the same pot”) rather than a *de jure* definition (“living under the same roof”), households in our survey are significantly larger than those defined by INE, with as many as 82 percent having at least one member living outside the dwelling – usually for work in South Africa.

The proportion of women in public political office in Gaza is relatively high, particularly at the lower levels of rural localities and urban *bairros*, but men still dominate among traditional authorities in the rural areas.

While men dominate labour migration to South Africa, which has the highest potential for income accumulation, women dominate in agriculture and the semi-formal and informal economy in the areas under study.

Although male-headed households are generally better-off than female-headed households, in terms of income and consumption, there are both very poor and relatively wealthy households among the latter category, showing that women can be substantial revenue-earners on their own.

Changes in the composition and organisation of households tend to reflect changes in society at large. In Gaza, traditional marriage and patrilineage has largely been replaced by ‘cohabitation’ and individual household decision-making, even though *lobolo* is still important, particularly in rural Chókwè.

However, the most significant feature of domestic arrangements in Gaza is the high proportion of female-headed households – reflecting a combination of the break-up of traditional forms of marriage (including polygamy) and the increasing economic independence of many women.

Women also make their presence increasingly felt in primary as well as secondary education, and the highest level of educational attainment in female-headed households is generally higher than in male-headed households.

Having said all this, the process towards greater female empowerment in Gaza comes with a price: Women are hardest hit by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, with an alarming 30 percent having the virus in Gaza and up to 40 percent in particularly vulnerable specific areas.

The study can be summed up with the emphatic statement “A woman should not be the boss when a man is present”, reflecting a situation where men insist on their continued ‘superiority’ in a situation where women are increasingly independent – with the exception of the very poorest who tend to be marginalized both as poor and as women.

2. Background

2.1 History

Gaza province is located in the southern part of Mozambique (see Map 1), and has a population of 1.2 million inhabitants (INE 2009). It borders the province of Inhambane and the Indian Ocean to the East, the province of Manica to the North, the province of Maputo to the South and the Republic of South Africa and Zimbabwe to the West. The original settlements in the province date back to the Third Century AD, but the specific ethnic origin of the population remains uncertain. The southern parts of Mozambique were historically dominated by several sub-groups culturally related to the Ngoni and Xhosa, and the groups settling in Gaza have variously been denoted 'Tsonga' and 'Shangaana'. The area was ruled by the Gaza kingdom, and its population was patrilineal, with agriculture (dominated by women) and pastoral production (dominated by men) as the main sources of subsistence and income (Newitt 1995).

While 'discovering' Mozambique at the end of the 15th century, the Portuguese only settled in the southern parts of the colony at the end of the 19th century. They firmly established their presence in the Limpopo river basin, where the Gaza province is located, through forced labour (*chibalo*) and large private estates, or *colonatos*, based on irrigation from the Limpopo River. The agro-industrial activities in the province were continued by the Frelimo government after Independence in 1975. They declared the Limpopo Valley as the "bread basket of the nation" (Hermele 1986), but production received severe blows with the failure of the giant state farm Complexo Agro-Industrial do Limpopo (CAIL); Frelimo's problematic and unproductive 'villagisation' scheme; and the 'liberalisation' of agricultural marketing following World Bank initiatives in the early 1990s (Hanlon 1996).

However, it is the proximity to the city of Lourenço Marques (later Maputo), established in 1876, and labour migration to South Africa (from the 1870s) that have had the most profound influence on developments in the Gaza province. Maputo, located only 210 km from the provincial capital Xai-Xai, attracted primarily male labour to work in the harbour and on the railway line to Johannesburg and effectively incorporated the Gaza province into what became the country's political and economic hub. Also, labour migration companies such as WENELA, primarily recruited men to South Africa, who obtained a new source of income, independence and life-style – even though most labourers in mines and agriculture received relatively low wages.

As regards gender, the patrilineal Tsonga were characterised by the socio-cultural dominance of the male lineage and men (Sheldon 2002). The system of bridewealth (*lobolo*), traditionally paid in cattle, firmly attached a woman to her husband – underlined by the *virilocal* residence pattern and the tradition of 'widow marriage' (*levirate*), where a woman has to marry her deceased husband's brother or other male relative. Polygamy was also common, and the number of wives reflected the husband's wealth and power. Women did practically all the work in agriculture and in the domestic setting, while men primarily worked as cattle-holders, on Portuguese *fazendas* and increasingly as labour migrants. The position of women in society was firmly instituted through elaborate initiation rites, where girls were instructed in sexuality and proper adult conduct by elder women (*nyambutsi*). Although women did have an influence on spiritual matters related to land and productivity, and there were some cases of women in important positions in the local communities, men were in control politically and economically as well as in their relationships with women (Young 1977).

The continued gender history of Gaza is very much one of divergence between a socio-cultural system defining male supremacy, and developments on the ground that have given increasing *de facto* responsibilities to women. The dual process of male labour migration to South Africa and of male urban migration to Maputo, meant that women remaining behind acquired more and more responsibilities and heavier and heavier workloads. In Gaza, as many as three out of four able-bodied men were absent from some communities in the heyday of labour migration in the 1960s.⁴ Chiefs encouraged male migration, since they could lay claim to part of the migrant's income, and going to South Africa became an important 'rite of passage' for young men (Newitt 1995).

Historical sources tell tales of women remaining behind doing practically all agricultural work; increasingly selling agricultural produce and other goods to earn money; and doing customarily male tasks, such as herding and construction work. At the same time, women were effectively prohibited from migrating to cities and to South Africa by Portuguese pass-laws and WENELA's mining recruitment policies (Newitt 1995). In the limited number of cases where single women did migrate to Maputo and to South Africa – formally only being possible with approval from a male relative – they were primarily involved in informal economic activities, such as beer-brewing; they often came to be considered 'loose girls' or prostitutes and were usually single mothers leading very difficult lives (Isaacman and Isaacman 1983; Sheldon 2002).

The splitting of households came to represent a heavy toll on domestic relations for many people. A number of social historians report of strained relationships when husbands returned from months or years of absence, and did not find their dwellings and farms in the condition they expected (Sheldon 2002). On their part, women were unhappy with what they saw as limited economic returns from their husbands. Many men also used their wealth to acquire additional wives (*lobolo* was increasingly paid for in money, goods or gold, rather than cattle) or lovers (*amantes*), which decreased the influence of the first or senior wife in their households.

While the large majority of women in rural Gaza found themselves in very difficult circumstances, some women did escape the hardships in rural Gaza by moving to 'local' urban centres such as *Vila Trigo de Morais* (now Chókwè City) and *Cidade de João Belo* (now Xai-Xai). In both locations, some job opportunities began to open up for women from the 1950s, particularly with the establishment of cashew factories. In the urban centres in Gaza, women also became involved in the informal economy, mostly after the collapse of agricultural industries in the 1980s and the cashew factories in the early 1990s (Urdang 1989; Hanlon 1996).

The last decade has been characterised by further economic and social change. To underscore the drama of Gaza, the province was exceptionally hard hit by the floods in 2000, when the inundation of the Limpopo River left large parts of the province (including the city of Xai-Xai) under water and directly affected large parts of the population (Christie & Hanlon 2001). Labour migration has also come under strain. It is becoming increasingly difficult to gain employment in the mines of South Africa (IOM 2007), and the majority of the men from Gaza currently living in South Africa are illegal migrants, with poorly paid jobs in agriculture in the Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces or in the informal economy in Johannesburg and other cities (Muanamoha 2007).⁵ The constant movement of men is also a major reason for the fact that, in parts of the province, as much as 43 percent of the adult population has HIV-AIDS (see below).

⁴ In the 1960s, Mozambique had an official number of mine labour migrants in RSA of 102,000, as against 78,000 in 1920 and 57,000 in 2000 (IOM 2007).

⁵ Muanamoha (2007) states that in 2007, 75,000 Mozambicans worked legally in South Africa, while more than 145,000 worked illegally in the Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces alone.

At the same time, women continue to have heavy responsibilities in agriculture and to play a central role in the informal economy – where they dominate the local petty trade as well as the more distant trade, which takes them to Maputo and to South Africa. The combined effect of women’s relative economic independence on the one hand, and urbanisation, migration, and HIV/AIDS on the other, are essential for understanding the fact that Gaza has the highest proportion of female-headed households in Mozambique, with 53 percent (INE 2009). The implications of the apparent contradiction between a heavily patriarchal patrilineal socio-cultural system and women’s important socio-economic role will be the central theme in the next pages.

Before concluding this section, we will demonstrate the way historical gender relations and the position of women were summed up by focus groups in rural Chókwè and in urban Xai-Xai, respectively. They provide a very clear idea of the inferior status and role of women, not only in political and economic terms, but also in their day-to-day relationships with men.

Box 1: Historical Gender Relations as Seen by the Communities

Rural Chókwè: Men and women could work together in the fields (*machamba*), but after work, women had to fetch water and cook – After working in the *machamba*, women had to prepare lunch. If they took too long, then they were beaten by their husbands – Women had to take the cattle to the *machamba* while the men limited themselves to overseeing the women’s work – A man could beat his wife if he felt she was not working enough – Before, men used to drink a lot; they used to begin drinking in the morning. They would then go and oversee the women’s work in the *machamba* and continue drinking – At nightfall, the men would check on the cattle in the enclosure. Men would buy their own clothes in South Africa, and would order clothes to be made out of maize bags for their wives – The men did not buy *capulanas*. Women would have to use animal skins instead of *capulanas* to carry their babies – Men decided on everything; they would decide on what to eat and when – There were very few cases of men with only one wife. As a rule they had more than one wife. It was common for all women to live under one roof – It was normally the parents of the girls who offered the girls to men who had a lot of cattle (i.e., marriage) – Women would eat in the kitchen, while men ate at the table.

Urban Xai-Xai: Women were inferior to men – Women were physically and psychologically abused by men – A woman could only have a child if she was married – single mothers were not well looked-upon by the community – Years ago there were no laws to protect women – Women would go and meet their husbands when returning home, and the men would give them their walking sticks and hats to carry – Women had to fetch water from places far from the home and the men did not help them – The women were submissive to their mothers-in-law, since they were the ones who took care of the homes when the husbands (sons) left to work in the mines in South Africa – When the husband returned from the mines, he would first stay at his parents’ house for a week and would leave all his money with his mother. The wife had to go and ask her mother-in-law for money – Women did not talk to their husbands about the problems affecting the household; all problems affecting the household had to be channelled through the parents-in-law, who would then relate them to their son – Men did not contribute to household activities – Women were not allowed to work outside of the home, apart from working in the family’s *machamba*; “it was not proper for both the woman and the man to have money” – Women could not go to school and had to stay home to learn how to cook and perform other household chores before getting married.

2.2 Political and Economic Context

Gaza has a population of 1.2 million, of which 55 percent are women, giving a male index of 80 percent versus a national average of 91 percent (INE 2009). This is the highest female to male ratio in the country. The population density is 16 per km², varying from 1 per km² in the district of Chicualacuala to 396 per km² in the provincial capital, Xai-Xai. The administrative structures of Gaza are organised at the levels of the Province, Municipalities, Districts, Administrative Posts, Localities and Villages (*povoações*). The province has 11 districts (Bilene Macia, Chibuto, Chicualacuala, Chigubo, Chókwè, Guijá, Mabalane, Mandlakazi, Massangena, Massingir and Xai-Xai) and as many as five municipalities (Xai-Xai, Chókwè, Chibuto, Bilene and the Vila of Mandlakazi).

Politically the province has been, and is, heavily dominated by Frelimo. The party won 96 percent of the votes in the 2009 Presidential Election and 97 percent of the votes in the 2009 Parliamentary election. The voter turnout is also exceptional, at 61.4 percent, which is the highest in the country (average 45 percent) (EISA 2010). The close affiliation between the party and the State is fuelled by Gaza being the birth-place of a number of prominent Frelimo leaders, including Eduardo Mondlane, Samora Machel and Joaquim Chissano, and indicated by the open display of government and party emblems in a number of public offices we visited.⁶

Partly because of the Frelimo history and continued dominance in the province, traditional authorities have a less prominent role than in other parts of the country – where they are important channels for control of and communication with the population (see Tvedten, Paulo and Tuominen 2009). This is underscored by the consistent use of formal or ‘politically correct’ terms for such leaders (*secretários, líderes comunitários*, etc.), as opposed to the central and northern parts of the country where traditional titles (*régulo, saguta, cabo*, etc.) are still widely used.

At least partially reflecting the history of increasing responsibilities for women and stated objectives of gender equality by the Frelimo government, the political representation of women is relatively high in Gaza – even though men still tend to hold the highest positions (Table 4). Women do hold some important offices, including that of the president of the Municipality of Xai-Xai and the head of the Chókwè Administrative Post of Macarretane, which form the geographical focus of this report. In terms of the total number of public employees, women represent 31 percent, which is high compared with other provinces. Having said this, there is a total of 454 formally recognised traditional leaders of the 1st and 2nd level (*‘escalão’*) in Gaza. Of these, only seven percent are women, reflecting the highly patriarchal history of traditional authority in the area (Table 5).

⁶ An interesting implication of this was the strong ‘party discipline’ we encountered when setting up meetings. Despite credentials from the Ministry of Planning and Development, no one wanted to meet us before they had authority from superiors at the level of the province, the municipality and the district. Once we had obtained the necessary confirmation, we received all the support and help we could ask for.

Table 4. *Government Office Holders in Gaza Province, by Gender*

Position	Men	Women	Total
Governor	1	0	1
Provincial Permanent Secretary	0	1	1
Provincial Directors	9	6	15
Provincial Ass. Directors	2	2	4
Provincial Delegates	2	1	3
District Directors	35	7	42
District Administrators	9	2	11
Provincial Coordinators	1	0	1
District Permanent Secretaries	8	3	11
District Delegates	3	1	4
Heads of Departments	37	10	47
Heads of Sub-Departments	28	26	54
Heads of Sections	28	19	47
Heads of Adm. Posts	27	8	35
Heads of Office	1	0	1
Municipal Council Presidents	3	2	5
Municipal Assembly Presidents	5	0	5
Total	199	88	287

Source: Provincial Government of Gaza.

Table 5. *Traditional Authorities in Gaza, per Rank and Gender*

Function	Men		Women	
	1 st level	2 nd level	1 st level	2 nd level
Traditional leaders	138	18	6	1
Secretaries	89	113	8	16
'Influentials'	21	44	0	0
Total	248	175	14	17

Source: Provincial Government of Gaza.

Agriculture is the dominant economic activity in the Gaza Province, with maize, cassava, peanuts, beans, sorghum, pearl millet and rice being the most important subsistence products (Table 6). Cashew nuts are an important source of income, particularly along the coast. Cattle and other domestic animals are important both culturally and economically. Fisheries are mainly artisanal, and are concentrated on the beaches of Xai-Xai (*Chongoene*), Bilene and Dingoine, with some production also taking place in rivers and lakes. Tourism is concentrated along the coast, but the recently established wildlife sanctuary, the *Parque Nacional de Limpopo*, may change this. As shown, historically Gaza also had a strong agro-industry mainly producing rice, cotton and wheat, as well as a number of agricultural processing plants. Most of these are currently inoperative, but there are commercial enterprises owned by Mozambican and South African interests leading to what authorities call a 'gradual recuperation' of the commercial agricultural sector (RdM 2009).

Table 6. *Structure of Production in Gaza 2009 (Percent)*

Sector	2004	2006	2008
Agriculture	63.5	51.9	61.8
Livestock	0.3	0.4	0.4
Forestry	0.4	0.1	0.1
Fisheries	0.3	1.4	1.0
Industry	0.4	0.3	0
Electricity and Water	0	0.2	1.8
Commerce	26.1	30.7	20.0
Restaurants and Hotels	0	0.1	0.5
Transport and Communication	9.0	15.0	14.3

Source: RdM (2009).

From a gender perspective, the three most significant aspects of the provincial economy are the dominant role of women in agriculture, which is vital for household welfare; the dominant role of men in labour migration, which has the largest potential for upward social mobility⁷; and the dominant role of women in the informal economy. The central role of women in the semi-formal and informal economy is evident from visits to the main markets in Xai-Xai and Chókwe, where 95 percent of the *comerciantes* are women.⁸ In an official list of ‘business people’ (*empresários*) published by the Provincial Government of Gaza, 120 businesses are listed as owned by women and 20 as owned by men.

2.3 Socio-Economic Indicators

As indicated in the introduction to this report Gaza, as one of the southern provinces, is characterised by comparatively good social indicators in terms of education (such as primary school attendance and adult literacy rates) and health (such as under-five mortality, malnutrition and life expectancy at birth – with the important exception of HIV/AIDS, which currently stands at 24 percent) (Table 7). At the same time, the province has relatively poor indicators in terms of the consumption-based poverty headcount. This implies that people in Gaza have not been able to transform favourable education and health conditions into enhanced income and consumption. Moreover, the most recent data available show that the depth of poverty (the ‘poverty gap’) and the severity of poverty (the ‘squared poverty gap’) are more serious in the three southern provinces (i.e. Maputo, Gaza and Inhambane) than in other parts of the country (World Bank 2007).

Having said this, Gaza (together with Inhambane) is the province with the highest level of gender equality, as measured by accumulated variation in the human and gender development indexes. Both indexes reflect income, educational attainment and longevity. This is particularly striking, as Gaza also has the highest proportion of female-headed households, with 53.2 percent, which are generally seen as being poorer than male-headed households (INE 2009, see also Tvedten, Paulo & Montserrat 2008).

⁷ As noted above, an increasing proportion of migrants to South Africa work as agricultural labourers or in the informal economy where wages/income is low, but for formally employed miners, wages and benefits (such as health insurance and pensions) are high.

⁸ This stands in stark contrast to the situation in Nampula, where 95 percent were men (Tvedten, Paulo & Tuominen 2009).

Table 7. *Basic Social Indicators, Mozambique and Gaza*

Items	Mozambique	Gaza
<i>Geography</i>		
Land area (km ²)	799,380	75,709
Population (mn)	20.5	1.2
Population density (per km ²)	21.6	16.1
Urban population (%)	28.6	24.9
<i>Household characteristics</i>		
Average household size	4.8	4.9
Dependency ratio (%)	99.0	109.3
Female-headed households (%)	30.9	50.2
<i>Economic activities</i>		
Economically active population (%)	83	85.5
Self / family employment (%)	87.7	88.8
Proportion employed in agriculture (%)	80.5	83.7
Per capita monthly income (MT)	325	284
Per capita monthly expenditure (MT)	324	299
<i>Education</i>		
Primary school attendance rate (%)	81	91
Male illiteracy rate (%)	48.7	23.5
Female illiteracy rate (%)	68	48.8
<i>Health</i>		
Child mortality rate (0-5 yrs)	154	165
Total fertility rate (children per woman)	5.5	5.3
HIV/AIDS (15-49 years)	11.5	23.5
<i>Poverty indicators</i>		
Poverty headcount (%)	54.1	59.7
Poverty gap / depth (%)	19.9	19.9
Squared poverty gap /severity (%)	9.9	8.8

Sources: World Bank 2007; INE 2006 and 2009.

In an interview with the Director and three Heads of Department of the Provincial Directorate of Women and Social Affairs, they agreed that the three most important challenges for enhancing the conditions for women in Gaza were i) formal employment (because it “gives more stability and influence”); ii) the fight against domestic violence (because it “violates women and keeps them subordinate to men”); and iii) more knowledge about women’s rights, including the Family Law (because then they can “defend themselves”).

Having presented the general historical, political and socio-economic context of Gaza, we will end this introductory chapter by presenting the two sites chosen for our in-depth study of gender relations in the province. These are the provincial capital Xai-Xai (more specifically the administrative posts of Patrice Lumumba and Marien N'goabi) and the rural district of Chókwe (more specifically the Administrative Post of Macarretane and the village of Punguine). The former is a busy urban centre of 110.000 inhabitants, located adjacent to the large Limpopo River and intersected by the main road (EN 1) towards the central and northern parts of Mozambique. The latter contains contrasting semi-urban centres (such as Macarretane) and isolated rural villages (such as Punguine).

2.4 The City of Xai-Xai

Approaching Xai-Xai from the south, one passes a large flat plain before crossing the bridge over the Limpopo River and entering the ‘downtown’ area (*Zona Baixa*) that contains public offices, shops, banks, transportation companies, markets (including the huge Limpopo Market) and parks – that admittedly have seen better days. However, the bulk of the population lives in the higher regions of the city (*Zona Alta*), for a very good reason: Throughout history, the lower-lying parts of the city, originally established in 1870 under the name of Vila João Belo, have repeatedly been flooded by the Limpopo River, with the floods in 1977 and 2000 being the most serious in recent history (Christie and Hanlon 2001). The most populated parts of Xai-Xai (renamed so after independence in 1975) are beautifully located on rolling hills, with the exception of the Praia de Xai-Xai (‘Xai-Xai Beach’), which is sparsely populated. In both areas, poor maintenance has left much of the infrastructure (roads, water, and electricity) in a poor state of disrepair (McCdX-X 2008).

Table 8. *Administrative Divisions and Population, Xai-Xai*

Administrative Post	Population
P.A. Sede	77398
P.A. Inhamisee	52910
P.A. Patrice Lumumba	28823
P.A. Praia	925
Total	160.056

Source: INE 2009; Municipal Administration, Xai-Xai.

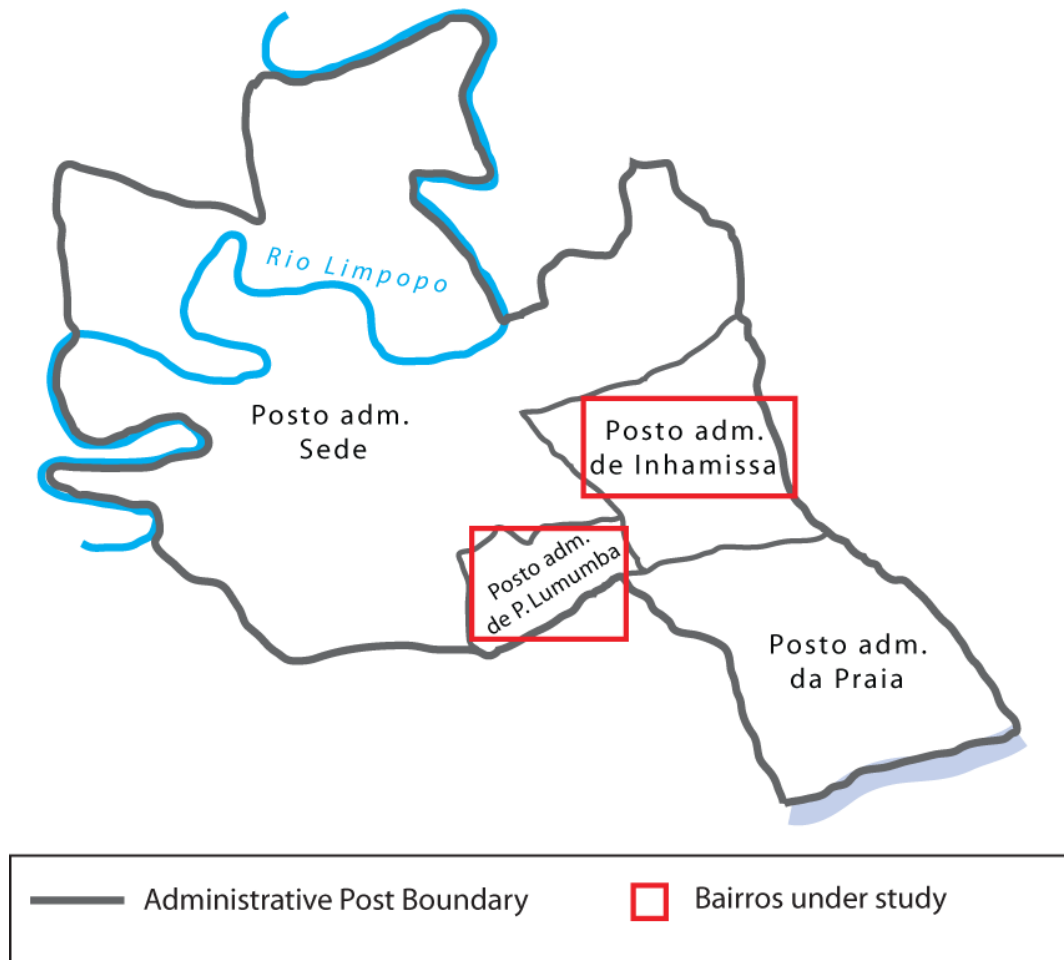
As is shown in Map 2, the city is administratively divided into four administrative posts (Posto Administrativo Sede, Posto de Inhamisse, Posto de Patrice Lumumba and Posto da Praia), with each administrative post being further sub-divided into *bairros*, *unidades*, *quarteirões* and *blocos* (with the last mentioned being the equivalent of *10 casas* in most other Mozambican cities). According to the municipal government, the decision-making and responsibility decentralisation process is still in progress. Our impression is that the administrative structures in Xai-Xai are very well defined, and we had little or no problems relating to the various levels in our fieldwork for this report.⁹

The municipality or *autarquia* of Xai-Xai was established in 1998 as part of the Government’s decentralisation policy, and the current president (Rita Bento Muianga) was the first woman elected to such a position in Mozambique. She won with 96.2 percent of the votes in the last (2008) municipal election. A number of interviewees emphasised how Muianga has actively brought gender issues into the public arena and debates since she took office. Other key municipal bodies are the Municipal Assembly (*Assembleia Municipal*), with 96.4 percent of the votes won by Frelimo and 35 percent of the seats occupied by women), and the executive Municipal Council, where four out of eight department heads (*vereadores*) are women.

⁹ This stands, coincidentally, in sharp contrast to the Municipality of Nampula where we did fieldwork for our second report and where we faced significant problems with our work (see Tvedten, Paulo & Tuominen 2009).

Map 2

CITY OF XAI-XAI



At other administrative levels, the proportion of women increases the lower one gets in hierarchy. Women represent two out of four *Chefes de Posto Administrativo*, approximately 60 percent of the *Chefes de bairros* and approximately 70 percent of the *Chefes de unidades*, and according to a number of sources, ‘practically all’ *Chefes de quarteirões* and *Chefes de blocos* are women. The official explanation was that “the men are absent at work in South Africa”, but the local female leaders themselves said that men did not want to take on ‘unpaid social work’. Interviews with the elected leaders at the lower levels show that they put a lot of work into community and family matters and are regularly consulted by the population.

Despite the strong historical roots for traditional leaders with responsibilities for ‘traditional’ issues like handling inter-household conflicts, accusations of witchcraft and traditional rituals (Sheldon 2002), there is only one recognised traditional leader in the city of Xai-Xai. The ‘*líder comunitário*’ is a woman who had recently inherited the position from her deceased father. The dearth of traditional leaders with traditional roots and responsibilities seems to be the combined result of urbanisation and ‘modernisation’ on the one hand, and political decisions on the other, but many people (including some State officials) argued that more such leaders will be needed to handle many of the social problems in the *bairros*.

In economic terms Xai-Xai is a very ‘rural’ town, with 70 percent of the population being involved in agriculture (INE 2009). Many are also involved in informal economic activities, primarily organised around the main informal market in the city centre (*Mercado Limpopo*), and smaller markets in the individual *bairros*. Xai-Xai also boasts shops for food, clothes and other commodities, banks, hotels, restaurants and light industries, with some employment opportunities, albeit primarily for the better-educated. Most of the larger industries, such as cashew, rice and soft-drink factories and producers of cooking oil and soap have been at least partly paralysed after years of neglect, war and floods. The main formal employer is the State, through the Provincial (Gaza), District (Xai-Xai) and Municipal (Xai-Xai) governments, as well as education and health institutions.

In overall economic terms, however, labour migration to South Africa and Maputo and the informal economy are the most important for the local economy and well-being of the population in Xai-Xai. The former is particularly evident in December, when thousands of migrant workers return home for the Christmas break, with money to spend.¹⁰ In the *bairros*, people can readily point out the homes of miners (*madjonidjoni*), which tend to be large, well-constructed and colourful dwellings. The importance of the informal economy is evident from the share size and levels of activity in the informal markets in the city, that serve not only the city’s local population but also the many cars that pass through the city on their way to the north.

Xai-Xai is relatively well-endowed with education and health facilities (in Gaza, as in other provinces, it is easier to recruit qualified teachers and health workers to the urban centres than to the rural communities). Two salient features stand out from our interviews with people from such institutions: In schools, boys are more likely to drop out than girls, which was explained by the strong hold ‘South Africa’ has on the imagination and future plans of boys and their families. And in health institutions, women dominate waiting lines, hospital beds and the HIV/AIDS statistics – not only because women are most affected, but also because men continue to look for

¹⁰ For miners, WENELA still practices a system where 30 percent of the miner’s wages are deferred and paid out when they go back to Mozambique.

alternative explanations to the HIV/AIDS pandemic and escape responsibility for protection during sexual intercourse.¹¹

2.5 District of Chókwè

Approaching the District of Chókwè and the district centre, the City of Chókwè, its history as the ‘bread-basket’ of Mozambique is clearly evident: Huge stretches of fertile land are split into patches by protracted irrigation canals built out of cement. Although most of the land under the ‘green revolution’ in the Chókwè irrigation scheme seems to lie fallow, there are activities ranging from small irrigated parcels held by individuals (of which 30 percent are women) to large commercial complexes with sophisticated watering systems owned by joint ventures between South African and Mozambican interests (Pellizoli 2010). Approaching Chókwè City, a large agricultural processing plant – the rice processing factory MIA – is visible, with at least some signs of activity. The city itself seems very busy, with people all over the place, informal markets (including *Senta Baixo*, *Hangane* and *Muchope*), and a number of shops, bakeries, motels and banks. The city also bears evidence of past greatness: Streets are broad and impressive, public buildings are well maintained, and a large city park still boasts an open air ‘restaurant’.

Beyond the city, the district stretches on both sides of the main road with a mixture of small formal ‘towns’ and small and distant villages (see Map 3). The District of Chókwè is divided into four Administrative Posts (*Postos Administrativos*) and eight Localities (*Localidades*) (Table 9). The total population of the district is 214.967, of which 102.591, or 56 percent, are women. Among the Administrative Posts, Macarretane is the poorest, and Lionde is the best-off (DdC 2010).

Table 9. *Administrative Divisions and Population, District of Chókwè*

Administrative Post	Localities	Population
P.A. City of Chókwè	City of Chókwè	61.470
P.A. Macarretane	Macarretane, Machinho, Matuba	32.584
P.A. Lionde	Lionde Sede, Conhane, Malau	50.748
P.A. Xilembene	Xilembene Sede, Chiduachine	69.318
Total		214.183

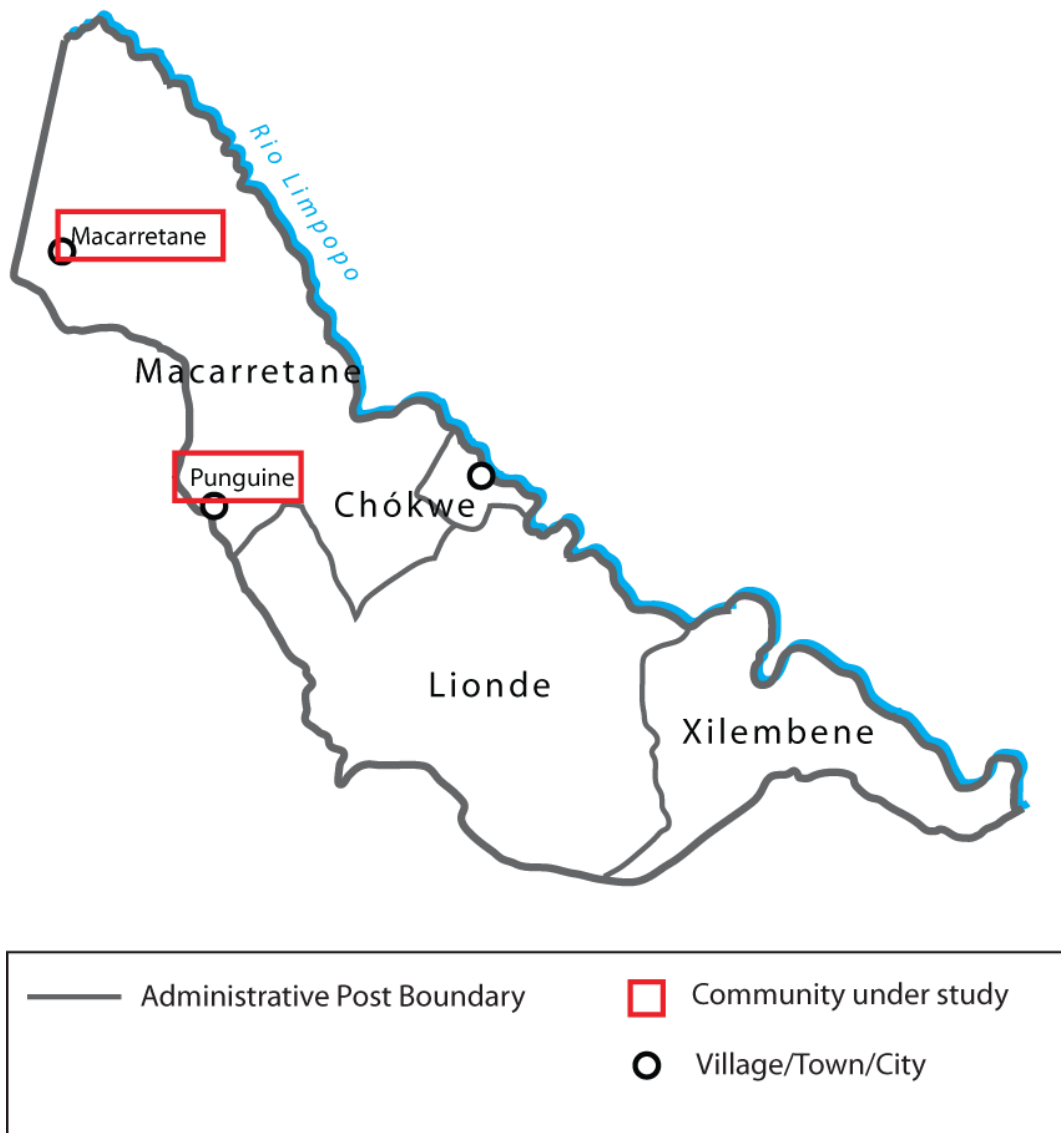
Source: INE 2009; District Administration, Chókwè.

People in Chókwè depend on farming, pastoral production, informal trade, labour migration to South Africa and (for a small minority) formal employment. Fish production is increasing in importance, with a total of 55 fish tanks or dams. According to the District’s Strategic Plan (DdC 2010), the population is composed of a ‘lower class’ (*classe baixa*), consisting mainly of small-holders; a ‘middle class’ (*classe média*) consisting mainly of labour migrants and civil servants; and an ‘upper class’ (*classe alta*) consisting mainly of larger cattle breeders and businessmen or *comerciantes* (the province breeds 25 percent of the country’s cattle population). Still according to the Strategic Plan (DdC 2010), the District is “one of the least poor in the province of Gaza”, with irregular rainfall and HIV/AIDS being the main reasons for poverty and vulnerability.

¹¹ It was difficult to ascertain the quantitative information on the number and types of schools and health facilities in the City of Xai-Xai: Both are the responsibility of the Province of Gaza and/or the District of Xai-Xai, but in their documents the City of Xai-Xai is not singled out as a separate administrative unit (see MAE 2005).

Map 3

DISTRICT OF CHÓKWE



A particular note should be made of the District's Local Investment Fund (OIL), which allocated 8.9 mn MT to total of 156 projects in 2009. Of these, 89 went to projects in agriculture, 33 to pastoral production and 33 to small-scale industries and commerce. As seen from Table 10, the proportion of projects headed by women has steadily increased from the start of the OIL-programme in 2006. This was explained by the District Administration by referring to projects initiated by women as being more "serious", and to women as being "better at reimbursing funds".¹² The decrease in the share of such funds going to associations seems to be general throughout the country (see Tvedten; Paulo and Rosário 2009), which is problematic from a gender perspective, since it is usually easier and more accepted for women to establish collective projects rather than individual ones.

Table 10. Allocation of Local Investment Fund Projects 2006-2009, District of Chókwè

Year	Associations	Men	Women
2006	23	1	-
2007	17	37	7
2008	7	121	50
2009	1	94	61

Source: District Administration, Chókwè.

Chókwè has a total of 87 primary schools (EP1, EP 2, EPC) and seven secondary schools (ESG1, ESG 2). The District Authorities claim that the rate of admission is high, at 93 percent, and that girls represented the majority of students (52 percent in primary school and 54 percent in secondary school) in 2008 (DdC 2010). Moreover, among the 1071 teachers, 51 percent are women. In adult education, 89 percent of the 3117 who took part in such courses at the District's 58 adult education centres in 2008, were women. Even considering the fact that the District has a relatively large majority of women, women's representation in education is high.

Chókwè has a total of 19 health institutions, with one hospital and 18 health centres, of which one is Type I, ten are Type II and seven are Type III. Altogether there are 323 hospital beds, implying 20,330 inhabitants per bed. The most serious health problems in Chókwè are HIV/AIDS, malaria, diarrhoea and tuberculosis. There are also recorded cases of cholera. While the incidence of malaria has shown a sharp decrease from 167.887 in 2006 to 86.312 in 2008, as a result of active spraying of homes and distribution of mosquito nets, the HIV/AIDS infection rate seems to have risen sharply. According to the District authorities themselves, 42 percent of the adult population (15-49 years) are infected with the virus (DdC 2010). The very high incidence was confirmed in an interview held with the head of the Macarretana Health Centre, who said that 53 percent of all adult patients coming to the centre were HIV/AIDS positive. There is no available data on the infection rate among men and women, but health personnel at the hospital stated that 'the large majority' of positive diagnoses are done on women – while at the same time admitting that it is very difficult to get the men to take the test.

The focus of our study in the District of Chókwè is on Macarretane and Punguine, both located in the Macarretane Administrative Post.¹³ Macarretane is the administrative centre, and contains small shops, informal markets, separate buildings for various public institutions (including the

¹² Still, however, the rate of reimbursement is very low: Since 2006, only 1.2 mn MT of a total allocation of 31.7 mn MT have been paid back.

¹³ The sites were chosen in cooperation with the District Administration, and represent rural- and semi-rural areas to contrast with the city of Xai-Xai.

Administrative Post, the Police and the local court, primary and secondary schools and a hospital). The head of the Administrative Post is a woman, who claimed she had met opposition when she arrived, but that “it is better now”. People in Macarretane live in two distinct types of settlements. About half of the inhabitants live in rural-like villages, while the other half lives in small ‘match-box’ houses built after the flood in 2000. The large majority of the population has *machambas* either in the vicinity of Macarretane or in the area they were forced to vacate in 2000; most households have members practising some form of informal economic activity; and a large minority have members working in South Africa. Administratively, Macarretane is divided into ‘aldeias’, ‘bairros’, ‘blocos’ and ‘quarteirões’, with more women in leadership positions the lower down one gets in the hierarchy.

Punguine¹⁴ for its part, is a relatively isolated village nearly one hour’s drive by car from the main road, which becomes nearly unreachable in the rainy season. Most people are farmers or have family members in South Africa, and there is a very limited local basis for informal economic activities except for a few charcoal and bakery outfits that have recently been established with support from a NGO. There is a primary school (EP1) and a small health clinic, but no other public institutions. Another special characteristic is the large number of churches in the village. Punguine is divided into ‘blocos’, with a male ‘*chefe de aldeia*’ but with two out of the three ‘blocos’ being headed by women. In contrast to Macarretane, traditional authorities have a strong position in the village and cooperate with State and party authorities. Two salient features of Punguine, highlighted by the population itself (see below), is an abundance of snakes, and an acute shortage of water.

Summing up, statistical evidence shows that the province of Gaza scores high on human development (i.e., income, education and longevity); low on poverty and well-being (i.e., the proportion of the population below the consumption-based poverty line); and high on gender equality (i.e., the human development index compared with the gender development index) compared to other provinces in Mozambique (INE 2009). Our historical and structural analysis of the City of Xai-Xai and the District of Chókwè shows an apparently contradictory picture of a very strong patriarchal tradition with a patrilineal descent system and male economic supremacy through control of cattle and labour migration, juxtaposed with an increasingly important role by women in political office and in the informal economy. Two dramatic implications of these ‘contradictions’ is a very high proportion of *de facto* female-headed households and a very high incidence of HIV/AIDS, which seems to hit women particularly hard.

¹⁴ The village was, according to local historians, established by ‘the first Ubisse’ who had 14 wives. Currently, half the population seems to have the same last name...

3. Gender and Poverty

Within the broader historical and structural context dealt with in the previous chapter, men and women in Gaza go about their daily lives based on their socio-economic position and through a series of social relationships with family, neighbours, friends, community institutions, the State, etc. As opposed to the situation in Nampula, where we argued in our previous report that ‘tradition’ and religion still have a strong hold on people (Tvedten, Paulo & Tuominen 2009), Gaza is characterised rather by a series of deep social changes or ‘vital conjunctures’ that have challenged tradition – such as labour migration, proximity to Maputo as the country’s urban hub, commodification of agriculture and trade, and HIV/AIDS. In the following pages, we will assess the implications of this for gender relations and the position of women in Xai-Xai and Chókwè – while at the same time considering the extent to which gender relations differ between predominantly urban (Xai-Xai) and predominantly rural (Chókwè) communities.

3.1 Cultural Practises

Starting with cultural practises, ancestral spiritual practises (such as ‘*epapa*’ and ‘*kupatha*’) are carried out by relatively few in Gaza (Table 11). While ‘giving way’ under the pressure from modernisation and urban lifestyles, ancestral spirits/ forefathers still play an important role in the well-being and productivity of one-third of the households. They are more common in rural Chókwè than in urban Xai-Xai, and more common among male-headed than among female-headed households. Ancestral cults are linked to the patrilineage, where members of the male descent line (i.e., the family of the husband/father) have particular responsibilities for the well-being of the household.

The more ‘profane’ importance of the patrilineage is underlined by the still widespread practise of bride-wealth (*lobolo*), which has a very important function in Gaza (focus groups assessed that *lobolo* is practised by ‘seven out of ten’ in Chókwè and ‘five out of ten’ in Xai-Xai). The *lobolo* implies that the family of the husband/father ‘compensates’ the family of the wife/mother for her labour and the ‘ownership’ of future children. A woman for whom bride-wealth has been paid is, in principle, tied to the family of her husband unless the *lobolo* is paid back by the woman’s family – which for many poor families is impossible.

In fact, we will argue in this report that the continued importance of the patrilineal descent system for defining the rights and obligations of men and women, as husbands and wives and fathers and mothers, is the main reason for persistent gender disparities in Gaza, despite their political positions and the relative economic independence of many women in Gaza (see below).

Table 11. *Practises of Ancestral Cults (Epapa, Mukutho, Swadaka, Kupatha) (Percent)*

Practising Cult	Chókwè		Xai-Xai		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
Yes	57	23	27	23	33
No	43	77	73	77	68
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Looking at the socialisation of children into gender roles, traditional initiation rites have all but disappeared both in Chókwè and in Xai-Xai (Table 12). Most of the few households who do practise them live in Xai-Xai, which may be interpreted as a need to maintain tradition in an otherwise ‘chaotic’ urban environment. Such rites were originally a way to instil in girls and boys knowledge and practices about gender roles and sexuality (Sheldon 2002). Without such rites, issues of gender and sexuality have become less of a deep cultural responsibility in the hands of elders, and more instilled in children through their upbringing/socialisation in their own household, extended family and community.

While girls in Chókwè and Xai-Xai tend to spend much of their time within the realms and under the influence of the family in the homestead, where they have domestic responsibilities, boys are much more likely to spend their time with friends and other peers from a young age, hence being more easily influenced by popular masculine perceptions about what it means ‘to be a man’ (Loforte 2009). In both Chókwè and Xai-Xai, community meeting points – from the soccer field to local bars – are full of boys and young men with few, if any, girls present. People we interviewed saw the reduced family ‘control’ of boys and young men, and the subsequent macho-milieus they meet in the mines and on the farms of South Africa, as the main reason for what they see as the ‘breakdown’ of traditional family values and men’s sexual behaviour that has led to the proliferation of HIV/AIDS.

Table 12. Traditional Initiation Rites Among HH Members Under 16 Years of Age (Percent)

Practising Initiation rites	Chókwè		Xai-Xai		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
Yes	1	0	8	5	3
No	99	100	92	95	97
Total	100	100	100	100	100

One may look at the importance of religion in Gaza as partly ‘compensating for’ the loss of culture as ‘tradition’. Only seven percent of the households in our sample state that they do not belong to a church or other congregation (Table 13). People frequent a large number of different churches, with the charismatic Assembleia de Deus, the Zion church and the Catholic church having the largest number of followers.¹⁵ All these churches have a common denominator: Their leaders and priests are practically all men, while the large majority of people coming to the church services and being active in the congregations are women. Male church leaders interviewed explained this with reference to ordinances in the Bible, but acknowledged that “without women, there would be no church”, as one put it. This way, the church is another ‘cultural arena’ that functions to maintain patriarchal control. One possible explanation for the large number of women still attending church is women’s need for spiritual comfort, but the women interviewed also emphasised church as one of the few ‘public’ social arenas where women can meet as women (see Schuetze 2010).

¹⁵ The category ‘Other’ includes the churches Velhos Apóstolos, 12 Apóstolos, Nazareno, Testemunha de Jeová, Presbeteriana, Sabata, Missão Suíça, Metodista and Fiel de Deus.

Table 13. *Most Common Religion Practised by Household (Percent)*

Religion	Chókwè		Xai-Xai		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
Catholic	27	13	13	13	17
Assembleia de Deus	17	37	17	20	23
Zion	20	17	13	20	18
Other	20	30	53	43	37
None	17	3	3	3	7
Total	100	100	100	100	100

As regards ‘culture’, in its broader sense of knowledge regarding the world in which people live, family and friends are a particularly important source of information for people in rural Chókwè, even though many also have the radio as their main source of information (Table 14). Information from family and friends tends to focus on ‘local’ matters, while the radio is important for informing people about larger national issues – including gender-related issues such as the Family Law and the activities of elected representatives in Parliament, the District Council and the Municipal Assembly. Urban households in Xai-Xai generally have better access to ‘global’ information with the majority having TV and radio as their most important source, and a much smaller proportion citing ‘family and friends’ as their main source. While this indicates higher income and better access to global media in Xai-Xai, it may also reflect a higher degree of social isolation from family and friends. It is worthwhile to note that there are no significant differences between male- and female-headed households, in terms of sources of information, in either of the sites.

Table 14. *Most Important Source of Information for Households (Percent)*

Main Source	Chókwè		Xai-Xai		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
Radio	45	31	30	29	34
TV	9	6	53	47	29
Newspapers	0	0	8	3	3
Family/friends	45	53	10	21	32
Other	0	9	0	0	2
Total	100	100	100	100	100

3.2 Household Organisation

As was emphasised in the two previous reports in this series, lineage and the extended family have been losing ground to the household and individuals as key units for socialisation and decision-making in Mozambique. This is related primarily to changes in the political economy, where land, cattle and other durable goods of power and prestige have been overtaken by individual accumulation of income and an ensuing ‘commodification’ of social relationships. With this, the socio-cultural bases for gender relations and the position of men and women through marriage and household organisation have also changed.

In the Shangaana/Tsonga tradition and in Gaza, marriage is celebrated through the payment of bride price (*lobolo*), which used to be paid in cattle. Following the patrilineal tradition, the ritual

of marriage transferred the woman from her father's authority to her husband's and his extended family's control. One dimension of this family-wide ownership was the common practice of widow inheritance, which implied that in the event of death of the husband, the wife was remarried to one of the brothers of the deceased husband (e.g., Gaspar 2009). Thus, the woman and her children remained part of the husband's family even after his death.

One sign of change in marriage and household organisation is that currently some female widows manage to keep their children, as well as the house and other property belonging to their deceased husbands. The fact that a woman can inherit from her husband implies greater economic stability, and through economic stability she can also gain greater social space. In Xai-Xai City there were several female widows of deceased miners who had remarried outside the first husband's family. Their inherited wealth makes them an attractive marriage option for many men. Thus, economic interests are altering the socially desired attributes of a bride; material possessions rate higher than the sexual purity of the wife.

At the same time, women without economic means are often powerless in their relations with their husband and his family. We met one woman whose husband had gone to South Africa ten years earlier and left his wife and three children on their own. The husband had never since contacted the family, and the wife had initially received shelter at the house of her sister-in-law, in Xai-Xai. However, after some years went by she became pregnant by another man and was thrown out from her sister-in-law's house. The children from her first husband were now living with an agnatic uncle, whereas the mother herself lived with the children of the new man in a shabby dependency of a private house. The father of the youngest children was unemployed and did not want to marry her, nor did he want to assume any responsibility for the children. In order to sustain herself and her children, the mother cultivated cassava (*mandioca*) in a small field. Since she had grown up in Beira, she had no family members to help her out in Gaza. Occasionally, during harvest periods, some friendly people used to offer her an opportunity for occasional work (*ganho-ganho*) in their fields, but she had no regular source of income and lived in utter poverty.

The patrilineal tradition in Gaza is thus increasingly affected by 'modernism' and individual accumulation of wealth. This has had a number of important implications for the composition, status and role of households. First of all, as many as 54 percent of all households in Gaza are headed by women (Table 15), which seems to be primarily related to the custom of labour migration, but also reflects a general permeability of household units. While migrating husbands traditionally have continued to be the head of household, unless they died or divorced their wife, an increasing proportion of women now consider themselves *de facto* household heads since their men do not support them, and/or as a result of their increased economic independence. In line with this, the proportion of female-headed households is higher in urban Xai-Xai than in rural Chókwè, where we shall see that the options for own income are more limited.

Table 15. *Proportion of Male-Headed and Female-headed Households (Percent)*

Household Headship	Gaza Province	Chókwè	Xai-Xai
Male-headed households	46	48	44
Female-headed households	54	52	56

Source: INE 2009; Provincial Government of Gaza (estimates).

According to our survey, the vast majority of male household heads are married (traditionally, formally or informally), while most of the female household heads are widows (Table 16). This is

in line with other parts of Mozambique, and the large proportion of widows is related to the early death of men and HIV/AIDS. However, as many as 13 percent define themselves as single – often single mothers – which is more unusual (Tvedten, Paulo & Montserrat 2008). The proportion is particularly high in urban Xai-Xai, with 30 percent of all female household heads being single mothers. In other parts of Mozambique, single mothers tend to be ‘hidden’ as parts of extended families, either because they are effectively parts of such households or because of the stigma attached to being a single mother (Tvedten, Paulo & Rosário 2009). This indicates that the social stigma of single motherhood is less prevalent in contexts where the weight of ‘tradition’ is less pronounced – as in Gaza.

Looking at the table in more detail, in Chókwè only seven percent of the interviewed male household heads are divorced, while 23 percent of women find themselves in this situation. This suggests that after a divorce, men tend to remarry fast, whereas women may remain alone as heads of households. Particularly for poor women with children, remarriage is still difficult. Although as many as 20 percent of the female household heads in Xai-Xai are listed as married, it is likely that this high figure includes wealthy female widows who have remarried and thus regained the status of being married while having maintained their position as heads of households due to their economic power and ownership of the dwelling. The high proportion of married women as heads of household tells us of the deep rupture in the patrilineal tradition.

Table 16. Marital Status of Household Head (Percent)

Marital Status	Chókwè		Xai-Xai		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
Single	3	7	13	30	13
Married	87	7	77	20	48
Separated/divorced	7	23	3	3	9
Widowed	3	63	7	47	30
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Average Age of HHH	57	57	46	50	52

The changing social bases for marriage and the establishment of households in Gaza are further underlined by types of marital union (Table 17). As many as 46 percent of households live together or ‘cohabit’, with no formal marriage arrangements (usually also without *lobolo*). This implies that the household is less stable and may break up more easily, since there is little vested interest in it from the extended families involved. The large proportion of ‘traditional marriages’ in Chókwè reflects the continued importance of bride-wealth (*lobolo*) particularly in rural areas. As noted above, *lobolo* is usually regarded as negative for women, in that it ties them to a husband and his family. Some poor households are also forced to marry their daughters at a young age because they need the money. However, we also met both men and women who argued that paying *lobolo* is positive, since it proves that the man and his family can take proper care of the future wife and that they value her.

Table 17. *Type of Marital Union of Household Head (Percent)*

Type of Marriage	Chókwè		Xai-Xai		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
Living together	39	100	52	33	46
Civil union	12	0	22	17	16
Religious marriage	0	0	9	0	4
Traditional marriage	50	0	17	50	35

The ‘resilience’ of tradition in the midst of economic and socio-cultural change is underlined by the continued practise of polygamy – particularly in rural Chókwè (Table 18). The existence of polygamy is often explained with reference to agricultural tradition and the need for agricultural labour. In addition, polygamy strengthens the husband’s social status; it is a sign of both virility and wealth (Gaspar 2009). In our survey, approximately one fifth of the interviewees were living in a polygamous relationship, with polygamy being three times more common in the Chókwè area than in Xai-Xai.

Table 18. *Polygamous Household Units (Percent)*

Number of Spouses	Chókwè	Xai-Xai	Total
One spouse only	71	90	79
More than one spouse	29	10	21

While polygamous wives traditionally have had a certain security in their access to land and their role as agricultural producers, we have found that many men’s inability to support more than one wife implies that many women become *de facto* female household heads – sometimes becoming even more vulnerable because of their inability to repay the *lobolo* and thereby gain their total independence. This seems to be particularly prevalent among women who are formally married to miners who do not visit them and who do not send money. It appears to be a relatively common practice for men to leave for South Africa to look for work without saying goodbye to their wives and families. This way, men leave open the option of returning one day, in the event they are unable to establish a better life elsewhere.

However, polygamous relationships *may* also be seen as advantageous by the women themselves: In Xai-Xai City, we met two wives of a miner who spent most of the year in South Africa, with his two wives taking care of the children and the household back home. Both wives lived in the same house – a big and nicely painted brick house with both electricity and water. Only the first wife had been officially married, whereas the second one had only been *lobolada*, i.e., the husband had paid a bride-price to her family. The two women told us that the first wife selected the second one after the husband had announced his plan to take another wife. The interviewed women expressed neither shame nor loss of status as a result of their marital arrangement. Polygamy was clearly not the most desired option, but for these two women the economic conditions that the miner husband could offer were the most important determinants when deciding about marriage.

A practice with significant implications – but not widely discussed in literature – is that of extra-marital affairs or having lovers (*amantes*). Also in this case, there are traditional as well as contemporary explanations. In many parts of Mozambique, the traditional code requires a woman to abstain from sexual relations after childbirth. According to local tradition in some areas of

Gaza, the period of abstinence can last anything between 3-12 months. It appears to be a generally accepted practice for men to seek other women during this period (Gaspar, 2009). Men's extra-marital relations with other women may end in marriage, but usually affairs of this nature seem to continue with the acceptance (quiet or not) of the wife, particularly among poor women who are not in a position to manage on their own. Women entering affairs of this nature can easily see their rights with regard to children and property being taken away from them. We came across several women who had been abandoned at home with no knowledge of their husband's whereabouts. While some of these women stayed faithfully at home waiting for their husband's possible return, others became involved with other men and found themselves in a position of unclear rights over their children.

The data above demonstrate the permeability and flexibility of households as basic units of social organisations. They are established, and go through processes of fission and fusion, in response to particular incidents that 'trigger' change. Table 19 shows that the average household in Chókwè and Xai-Xai has as many as seven members, which is much higher than INE's figure of 4.9 (INE 2009).¹⁶ In Chókwè, 67 percent of male-headed households have more than seven members, with the equivalent figure for Xai-Xai being 53 percent. Female-headed households are smaller (with the equivalent figures being 43 and 37 percent, respectively), but not significantly so. At the same time, there are very few small household units of 1-2 persons. They are more common among female-headed households than among male-headed ones – but still rare compared to other parts of the country (Tvedten, Paulo & Montserrat 2008).

Table 19. Size of Households (Percent)

Household Members	Chókwè		Xai-Xai		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
1-2	3	10	3	13	8
3-4	17	17	10	17	15
5-6	13	30	33	33	28
7+	67	43	53	37	50
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Average Size of HH	8,3	6,6	6,8	5,8	6,9

One main reason for the large size of households, and their concomitant potential for flexibility, is the common practise of 'splitting' households, with a core group staying in the rural homestead (Chókwè) or urban dwelling (Xai-Xai) and some members working in other locations. As seen in Table 20, only nine percent of the households in our sample do *not* have a member living outside the dwelling and as many as 82 percent have members living in other countries – usually implying South Africa.

Our group discussions and case studies reveal that the latter group is heterogeneous, where some members have permanent employment in the mines, prospects for a good pension and contribute significantly to the household; some have occasional work on farms or in the informal economy, with much poorer options in terms of income generation and support; while an increasing number (as employment is more difficult to find and xenophobia in South Africa is making itself felt) find

¹⁶ As noted in other reports, the difference lies primarily in differences in the definition of households: While INE uses a *de jure* definition, stating that a household consists of members who live under the same roof and eat from the same pot, we use a *de facto* definition of households consisting of people who consider themselves to be members of the same household and contribute to/eat from the same pot.

themselves in South Africa looking for work and leading very difficult lives with few, if any, opportunities to contribute positively to the joint ‘pot’ at home in Chókwè or in Xai-Xai. Among female-headed households, the household members in South Africa tend to be sons (or, more rarely, daughters) who leave at a young age. There may also be partners who contribute occasionally, but who are not considered heads of household, either due to their infrequent presence or because their contributions are too small to be considered *de facto* heads.

Table 20. *Household Members Living Outside the Dwelling (Percent)*

Area of residence	Chókwè		Xai-Xai		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
No members outside	10	10	11	5	9
In the community	0	5	5	13	4
In the district	0	5	9	0	4
In the province	0	0	0	0	9
Other province	4	5	23	0	0
Other country	96	84	64	88	82

Taken as a whole, households in Chókwè and in Xai-Xai contain a variety of nuclear, extended and non-family members (Table 21). Partly reflecting the patrilineal descent system, male-headed households contain a larger proportion of parents, brothers and sisters and nephews of the household head. At the same time, female-headed households contain a larger proportion of grandchildren and ‘non-family’ members, which indicates their social responsibilities.

Table 21. *Household Member Categories (Relationship to HHH) (Percent)*

Type of Member	Chókwè		Xai-Xai		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
HHH	12	15	15	17	14
Husband/Wife	14	2	12	4	8
Father/Mother	1	0	2	1	1
Father/Mother-in-law	0	1	0	0	0
Brother/Sister	6	3	8	3	5
Brother/Sister-in-law	2	2	2	0	2
Son/Daughter	46	38	45	46	44
Step son/Step daughter	0	1	1	0	0
Brother's son/daughter	2	1	3	3	2
Sister's son/daughter	0	6	3	2	3
Son's son/daughter	3	8	2	8	5
Daughter's son/daughter	9	15	4	6	9
Other/not related	4	9	4	10	7

Looking finally at intra-household gender relations, women in Gaza are relatively independent and have relatively more decision-making power – even though both men and women will insist that “[a] woman cannot be the boss, when a man is present”. One critical issue is the decision regarding the way the household income is spent. Several people told us that in the old days, when returning home the (male) migrant workers would first stop over at their parents’ house,

where they would leave all their earnings with their mothers. When the wife needed money for household expenses, she had to go and ask her mother-in-law for it. Today, the situation is said to be different; the mother-in-law no longer receives the money, with the husband bringing all of it directly home. Besides, 20 percent of the income earners are presently women (see below). In general, both male and female income earners share their earnings with the rest of the household (Table 22), with only Chókwè, showing approximately 12 percent of male household members and 6 percent of female household members keeping their income for themselves.

Table 22. *Sharing Income With Other Household Members (Percent)*

Sharing Income	Chókwè		Xai-Xai		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
Yes	89	94	100	100	96
No	12	6	0	0	5
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Women's increasing participation in decision-making is also seen in other household matters. As is shown in Table 23, women are freer to make decisions related to their children's health or education – even though in Chókwè nearly one-third of the women living in male-headed households first need to consult their husbands. This is, in general, a very positive finding since women tend to invest more in health and education than men when they have decision-making power (INE 2009; Tvedten, Paulo & Montserrat 2008).

Table 23. *Need for Women to Ask Permission from Men to do Key Household tasks (Percent)*

Type of Task	Chókwè		Xai-Xai		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
Not applicable	3	0	0	0	1
Take children to the doctor	30	3	13	7	13
Register children in school	30	7	20	10	17
Sell products in the market	27	7	33	10	19
Find a job	50	10	40	10	28
Visit family	60	10	30	7	27
Help family	57	10	43	13	31

Having said this, both in Chókwè and in Xai-Xai male authorization is vital in situations where a woman needs to leave the domestic space, for example, to support and visit her family and seek employment. Thus, women's increased decision-making power applies mainly to the domestic sphere, while the husband still decides on matters involving people outside the household. While the tendency is similar in both of the studied locations, women's decision-making power is somewhat greater in Xai-Xai than in Chókwè and – logically – in female-headed households.

In sum, there are indications that the patriarchal hold on the socio-economic organisation of the household is being reduced and that the social status and role of women is becoming stronger, both in urban Xai-Xai and in rural Chókwè – with the control of income and material wealth increasingly determining women's social position. If a woman is wealthy, she is easily able to get married, even for the second time. And because of her wealth, she may be able to keep the status

of head of household, even when remarrying. The destiny of a poor woman is less predictable. She might get married for the first time, but if abandoned or widowed, she is less likely to remarry.

In male-headed households, women are increasingly taking part in decision-making. It seems to be more common for women to decide on household level expenses and on children's health- and education-related matters, and less common for them to make independent decisions when this involves external relations. While women in female-headed households have the strongest decision-making power, they also have the most limited financial capacities to execute any decisions (see below).

3.3 Employment, Income and Expenditure

With a 'commoditised' socio-economic context as in Gaza (see Chapter 2), all households depend on some kind of income in cash or in kind to go about their daily lives as well for times of special needs. Table 24 reveals the heavy dependence of female-headed households on agriculture, both in rural Chókwè and in urban Xai-Xai. Many women who consider themselves 'unemployed' will often also have some kind of link to the agricultural sector. Non-agricultural male-headed households primarily rely on formal employment in the private sector, which we shall see mainly entails work in the mines and on farms in South Africa. More male- than female-headed households rely on the informal economy as their main source of income, which in an otherwise female dominated sector, usually entails work in the more lucrative male niches like transportation, carpentry and construction.

While the informal economy is the 'main occupation' for only seven percent of the sample, our survey shows that a much larger proportion is involved in the informal economy as an important secondary activity. Our case studies further reveal that the informal economy is absolutely vital for many of the poorest households. In Chókwè, some of the most destitute male-headed households survived by occasionally cutting wood and making charcoal, which they sold to *comerciantes*. And in Xai-Xai, some of the poorest women survived by selling small quantities of agricultural products on the outskirts of the formal municipal markets, such as the Limpopo market, where they did not have to pay for space and *baracas*.

Table 24. *Main Occupation of Household Head (Percent)*

Main Occupation	Chókwè		Xai-Xai		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
Farmer	43	70	17	63	48
Formal employment, public	10	0	7	7	6
Formal employment, private	23	3	30	3	15
Informal employment	10	7	10	0	7
Occasional employment	3	0	0	0	1
Pensioner	7	0	7	0	3
Unemployed	0	17	3	23	11
Other	3	3	27	3	9
Total	100	100	100	100	100

The importance of agriculture in both rural and urban settings is a special characteristic of Mozambique (INE 2004, forthcoming 2010), where as many as 82 percent of the 120 households

in our sample have access to at least one agricultural field (*machamba*), with the lowest proportion (73 percent) found among female-headed households in Xai-Xai (Table 25). This is primarily the outcome of more difficult access for the poorest women who do not have the necessary social relations to acquire land (usually done through the male lineage); do not have the necessary means to secure an agricultural field; or do not have the required labour to actually clear and till the soil and produce. Not considering the large commercial fields in Chókwè (see Chapter 2), agriculture is usually done for subsistence with relatively small fields, and with maize, peanuts and cassava being the most common crops. Women do practically all the work involved, and hired labour (including *ganho-ganho*) does not seem to be very common. In fact, when men do work in their own fields or the *machambas* of others, it is usually a sign of being in a family situation where there are no women or one of extreme poverty.

Table 25. Agricultural Fields (*Machamba*) Ownership (Percent)

<i>Machamba</i> Ownership	Chókwè		Xai-Xai		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
Yes	80	87	87	73	82
No	20	13	13	27	18
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Even though arable agriculture is vital to food security, animal ownership, particularly cattle, has deep cultural roots as well as economic connotations (Table 26). Cattle are a sign of wealth and prestige, and an important means of savings given the high value of bulls, cows and heifers on the market. As many as 70 percent of male-headed households, and as many as 45 percent of female-headed households in Chókwè who have domestic animals, own cattle. The latter is, according to some local people we interviewed, a new development in a cultural context where cattle are strongly associated with men, masculinity and *lobolo*.

Table 26. Animal Ownership (Percent)

Animal	Chókwè		Xai-Xai		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
No animal	10	27	77	53	42
Cattle	70	45	43	7	47
Goats	67	73	43	14	56
Pigs	4	0	29	14	7
Chickens	59	55	86	64	61
Ducks	26	18	14	0	17
Other	11	0	0	7	6

Access to cattle in rural areas like Chókwè is not only secured through purchases, but also through an elaborate system of access through herding. Young boys working as herders are often paid in the form of a calf, through a system that in other places in Southern Africa is known as *mafisa*. In urban areas like Xai-Xai cattle ownership is more 'commercial' and requires more capital both for acquisition, herding and slaughter, but even so, as many as 43 percent of male-headed households own livestock. Only seven percent of female-headed households in Xai-Xai own cattle – underlining the need for one to have money in urban contexts. Goats and chickens are more common domestic animals, particularly among female-headed households, but do not have the cultural connotations and economic value that cattle have.

Based on income from the various forms of employment and agro-pastoral production outlined above, people have weekly expenditures that seem relatively high in both Chókwe and Xai-Xai (Table 27). Only 16 percent of the households claim incomes of less than 250 MT per week, with the highest proportion (23 percent) being by female-headed households in Chókwe. As many as 30 percent of the households earn more than 1.500 MT per month, with the highest proportion (43 percent) being male-headed households in Xai-Xai. One important reason for this is remittances from South Africa: As we have seen, as many as 82 percent of the households in our survey have at least one household member working in the mines or on commercial farms in South Africa. While our data show that the proportion of this income actually sent back for household consumption varies (see below), the mining recruitment company WENELA does hold back 30 percent of the miners' earnings until they go home on leave.

Table 27. Weekly Household Expenditure (Percent)

Expenditure In MT	Chókwe		Xai-Xai		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
< 250	10	23	13	17	16
251 – 500	10	23	20	13	17
501 – 750	3	7	7	27	11
751 – 1000	20	10	7	17	13
1001 – 1500	17	17	10	10	13
1501 – 2500	23	17	23	13	19
2501<	17	3	20	3	11
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Average weekly expenditures among the households in Chókwe and in Xai-Xai are highest for food (680 MT), followed by kitchen items (231 MT), electricity (177 MT) and transport (143 MT) (Table 28). School materials (61 MT), clothes (43 MT) and medical consultations/medicines (32 MT) were among the lowest expenditures. While female-headed households had lower expenditures than male-headed households for most items in Chókwe, the opposite is the case in Xai-Xai: There, female-headed households on average spend more than male-headed households on food, other kitchen items, illumination (except electricity), cleaning products as well as transport. Since male-headed households generally earn more, this reflects a situation where miners spend part of their income in South Africa and some invest heavily in their dwellings in Gaza as a form of 'conspicuous consumption'.

Table 28. Average Weekly Expenditure on Product Types (MT)

Expenditure In MT	Chókwe		Xai-Xai		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
Food	962	567	493	700	680
Kitchen items	140	54	326	404	231
Illumination items	104	26	29	348	127
Electricity	50	23	521	112	177
Cleaning products	34	41	34	373	120
Clothes	28	41	75	26	43
Medicine or Doctors	50	20	36	19	32
School materials	28	47	93	78	61
Transport	40	23	155	354	143
Water	11	8	128	96	60
Other	2	6	7	5	5

The relatively high household income level is also reflected in the assets households possess (Table 29). Asset ownership is generally high, and the most coveted (a cell-phone) and the most prestigious (TV) are owned by as many as 78 and 51 percent, respectively. Ownership of these 'luxury' items is higher in Xai-Xai than in Chókwè, and higher among male- than among female-headed households. The bicycle, defined by Hanlon as an important indicator of poverty and well-being (Hanlon 2008), is owned by fewer households in Xai-Xai than in Chókwè. This has more to do with the topography, distances covered and needs than with income and economic means, per se. Moreover, in Gaza bicycles are also primarily a 'male thing.' The high proportion of chairs (a total of 89 percent of the households have at least one) is probably a better indicator of relative wealth, since being able to pull out a chair when receiving visitors is seen as an important sign of prosperity and hospitality.

Table 29. Asset Ownership (Percent)

Type of Asset	Chókwè		Xai-Xai		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
Radio	60	33	73	50	54
TV	40	27	87	50	51
Car	13	3	17	17	13
Bicycle	67	20	17	13	29
Cell-phone	80	67	93	70	78
Motorcycle	10	0	10	7	7
Boat	3	3	3	7	4
Chairs	90	83	93	90	89
Sofa	23	13	57	33	32
Beds	87	80	90	83	85
Ploughs	93	97	87	87	91
Machete	87	80	63	47	69
Axe	67	60	57	50	58

In Gaza, as in other parts of Mozambique, the dwelling in which people live is probably the most important commodity a family owns. A good house represents a sense of belonging, prestige, savings and security, and it may be an economic asset, if the dwelling is used for economic activities. The vast majority (87 percent) of households in both Chókwè and in Xai-Xai own their own dwelling, and 55 percent constructed their dwellings themselves. There are no major differences between male- and female-headed households in terms of dwelling ownership (Table 30). The relative affluence and high standard of dwellings is indicated by the fact that as many as 88 percent have zinc-roofs – again with no significant differences between male- and female-headed households.

Table 30. Dwelling Ownership(Percent)

Dwelling Owner	Chókwè		Xai-Xai		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
Head of Household	93	93	76	86	87
Spouse of HHH	0	7	0	7	3
Parents of HHH	4	0	7	3	3
Other person	4	0	17	3	6
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Even though most households in Chókwè and in Xai-Xai do seem to earn enough to get by on a daily basis, many are vulnerable to sudden changes in their household composition, such as the loss of their main income earner or unexpected expenditures for education and health. The proportion of households that received some kind of external support (i.e., from non-household members) the month prior to the survey is relatively low, at 22 percent (Table 31). Most of those who did receive support (40 percent in Chókwè and 23 percent in Xai-Xai) were female-headed households, and they primarily received support in kind. This may indicate that female-headed households are poorer and more in need of help, but also that their social networks are better developed. However, our qualitative case studies also show that women who are divorced or widows often find themselves completely isolated from their husband's – as well as from their own – extended families.

Table 31. *Proportion of Households Receiving External Support the Past Month (Percent)*

Type of Support	Chókwè		Xai-Xai		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
No support received	87	60	87	77	78
In cash	3	13	3	3	6
In kind	7	20	10	10	12
In cash and in kind	3	7	0	10	5
Total	100	100	100	100	100

3.4 Education

Education has been given a prominent role in Mozambique's efforts to reduce poverty (GdM 2005), on the assumption that a better educated population will be better able to get employment and earn a living and be in a better position to provide education and health for the upcoming generation. The number of schools and pupils in the country has increased considerably since the mid-1990s, even though studies also show that the quality of teaching and the rate of completion have not followed suit (World bank 2007; INE 2009). In Gaza, we have seen that primary and secondary school coverage is relatively good (Chapter 2), and a number of tertiary educational institutions have also been established.¹⁷

The increased emphasis on education is reflected in Table 32 and Table 33. As many as 29 percent of the 'old generation' of household heads in Chókwè and in Xai-Xai have never attended school, and 28 percent have only reached lower primary (EP1). Only three percent have secondary education, and none have university education. At the same time, a much larger proportion of household heads in Chókwè than in Xai-Xai has never attended school, and a much larger proportion of female household heads than male household heads has never attended school.

¹⁷ These include the public Universidade Pedagógica de Gaza (UP), Instituto Superior e Politécnico de Chókwè (ISPG) and Escola Superior de Negócios e Empreendedorismo de Chibuto (ESNEC), and the private Universidade São Tomás de Moçambique (USTM) in Xai-Xai and Escola Superior de Economia e Gestão (ESEG) in Chókwè. Together, they had more than 2.500 students in 2009.

Table 32. *Level of Education of Household Head (Percent)*

Level of Education Of Household Head	Chókwè		Xai-Xai		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
Never attended school	33	50	7	37	29
Literate	13	10	3	3	8
Lower primary school (EP1)	37	23	30	23	28
Upper primary school (EP2)	7	17	33	27	21
Secondary education	10	0	20	3	8
Technical school	0	0	0	0	0
High school	0	0	7	7	3
University education	0	0	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100

The *improvement* in education opportunities is indicated by the fact that currently as many as 90 percent of children of school-going age actually attend school, with the figure being somewhat lower in rural Chókwè, at 88 percent, compared to urban Xai-Xai, which stands at 92 percent. Figures from our survey also show that children have the highest level of education in 44 percent of the households, with the figure being highest (53 percent) in female-headed households in Xai-Xai. As seen from Table 33, as many as 41 percent of the households have at least one member who is either enrolled in, or has concluded, the secondary education level. The proportion is lower in rural Chókwè than in urban Xai-Xai, but it should also be noted that it is nearly as high among female- as among male-headed households in Xai-Xai.

Table 33. *Highest Level of Education in Household (Percent)*

Highest Level of Education in Household	Chókwè		Xai-Xai		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
Never attended school	3	10	0	0	3
Literate	0	0	0	3	1
Lower primary school (EP1)	30	30	13	10	21
Upper primary school (EP2)	27	30	13	23	23
Secondary education	40	20	57	47	41
Technical school	0	0	0	0	0
High school	0	10	17	17	11
University education	0	0	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100

While this is a very important development and achievement, it also highlights the importance of finding a balance between structural, political and economic conditions and the competence and capacity of individuals (see Chapter 1). A large number of the educated youth in Gaza cannot find relevant employment, and find themselves working as unskilled labourers in agriculture, the informal economy or in South Africa. The drama of this situation was underlined to us in an interview we had with a group of secondary school students in Xai-Xai. When questioned about their plans for the future, they all wanted to become doctors, nurses, lawyers, accountants, but as the conversation went along it was clear that they were all mentally prepared to take on less prestigious and well paid work ‘at least for a period’, as one student put it.

Looking more explicitly at gender and education, Table 34 and Table 35 below demonstrate that households are more likely to send their daughters to school than their sons, in both Chókwè and Xai-Xai. The tendency is particularly strong among female-headed households. The favouring of girls contradicts most official data (see e.g. INE 2009), as well as common assumptions that in the future boys are more likely to be employed and have an income and hence be in a position to support their parents. There are two main reasons for what may seem like a contrasting trend in Gaza: One is that parents often foresee boys/men as herders and miners, which does not require formal education. This was largely confirmed to us in an interview with the director of a primary school in Chókwè, who stated that not only are there more girls than boys in his school, but that boys also tend to be taken out more frequently when they have other tasks. In many cases, boys only show up for school when they are not busy herding cattle or other animals. Girls help out with domestic chores and in agriculture, but seem to integrate this better with education. Girls are also – still according to the school director – better at concentrating and generally get better marks.

Table 34. Boys and Girls (5-16) Studying – Chókwè (Percent)

Do children attend school ?	Chókwè				Total
	MHH		FHH		
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
Yes	87	90	83	92	88
No	13	10	17	8	12
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Table 35. Boys and Girls (5-16 yrs) Studying – Xai-Xai (Percent)

Do children attend school ?	Xai-Xai				Total
	MHH		FHH		
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
Yes	94	97	84	90	92
No	6	3	16	10	8
Total	100	100	100	100	100

The second reason for the higher school attendance among girls than boys seems to be related to a realisation of changing socio-cultural parameters, with the extended family system being under pressure from ‘modernity’ and/or poverty and men who may not be able or willing to support their families with the deteriorating options for employment in South Africa. A realisation that girls may be the best option to secure one’s old age is reflected in the larger number of girls than boys in secondary schools in Gaza. In Xai-Xai’s Secondary School, 65 percent of the students are girls and a director of studies confirmed that there is a clear trend not only of more girls attending secondary school, but also that girls tend to work more seriously and get better marks than boys.

While there is a higher proportion of boys and girls going to school, and girls seem to have caught up with former gender imbalances in terms of literacy and educational attainment, girls are, as we have seen, still discriminated against in the labour market both in the public and private sectors. One of the most interesting and important future scenarios to follow from a gender perspective will be the extent to which the ‘feminisation’ of education and formal skills, or patriarchal traditional and political power, will get ‘the upper hand’ in terms of employment opportunities.

3.4 Health

While education has shown improvements in terms of the number of schools and pupils in Mozambique, national and provincial data show a more limited expansion for the health system, albeit reportedly with improvements in the quality of the health care provided (UNICEF 2006; INE 2009). In the case of Gaza, there has been a certain increase in the number of health units, and many existing ones have seen their status reclassified from 'Health Post' to 'Health Centre' (see Chapter 2). This usually means better educated personnel, as well as the inclusion of special wards such as for maternity care. In our field sites, Xai-Xai revealed the most developed health system while Macarretana has a Health Centre – albeit still without a permanent medical doctor (the closest is in the hospital in the City of Chókwè).

The proportion of households with sick household members the month prior to our survey is relatively low (Table 36), primarily reflecting the relative wealth, but also the relatively good access to health facilities and extensive use of these¹⁸. This is higher in rural Chókwè than in urban Xai-Xai and higher among female-headed than among male-headed households, but not significantly so. For those who were ill, malaria was given as the most common illness (Table 37). The category 'Other' includes people who are 'permanently sick' – which often implies HIV/AIDS.

Table 36. *Proportion of Households with Sick Household Members in Past Month (Percent)*

Sick Household Members	Chókwè		Xai-Xai		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
Yes	13	15	9	14	13
No	87	85	91	86	87
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Table 37. *Types of Illness among Sick Household Members (Percent)*

Type of Illness	Chókwè		Xai-Xai		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
No sick members	87	85	91	86	87
Malaria	42	30	52	55	43
Diarrhoea	3	15	9	0	7
Cough	10	15	4	15	11
Sores/wounds	16	12	13	10	13
Other	29	27	22	20	25
Total	100	100	100	100	100

However, despite the apparently favourable health conditions, as many as 70 percent of the households have seen at least one child die before the age of five (Table 38, see also MISAU 2005 for comparative data). There are no significant differences between the two study-sites or between male- and female-headed households. There are three possible explanations for the high child mortality rate: One is that most of these are 'historical deaths', from the time before the

¹⁸ Our survey shows that 93 percent of the households use only formal health facilities, 2 percent use traditional healers (*curandeiros*) and 5 percent use both.

development of the relatively good health care system enjoyed in Gaza. A second is that there are continued problems in the way parents feed and relate to infants and small children, causing them to be vulnerable in their first years. And the third is that it is related to the exceptionally high HIV/AIDS infection rate in the study areas.

Table 38. Households Having Experienced Child Mortality (0-5 yrs) (Percent)

No. of children who died	Chókwè		Xai-Xai		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
None	37	25	25	29	29
1	26	25	42	29	29
2	21	29	25	29	26
3	16	4	8	0	8
4	0	7	0	14	5
5	0	4	0	0	2
7	0	4	0	0	2
10	0	4	0	0	2
Total	100	100	100	100	100

This brings us to HIV/AIDS, as the dominant health issue in Gaza. Recent studies from Southern Africa reveal a set of general trends in the ‘gendered’ pattern of infection, with women being more likely to be affected than men, and with young women (15-29 years of age) being by far in the most risk-prone cohort (Kalipini et al. 2009). This is usually related to patterns of men’s sexual behaviour of having a large number of different partners, coupled with cultural issues which make it difficult for girls and women to refuse sex or to insist on the use of condoms.

In Gaza, knowledge on the disease (84.9 percent) and ways of preventing it (47.2 percent) are higher than the national average for Mozambique. There are also smaller differences with regard to knowledge on these topics between men and women compared to other parts of the country, where women are usually much less informed than men (INE 2009). Still, statistics show that Gaza is the most seriously affected province in the country, with an official infection rate of 24 percent as against a national average of 12 percent. Equally significant is the fact that the infection rate in Gaza is much higher among women, at 30 percent, than among men, at 17 percent (MISAU 2010). We have also shown that the District of Chókwè operates with a local infection rate of 43 percent. The internal variation in the province is unusually high, and the case of Chókwè may reflect its status as one of the most important origins for migrants going to South Africa and a corridor for traffic to and from that country.

Our study does not provide a basis for relating to the socio-cultural processes behind this exceptionally HIV/AIDS prevalence rate,¹⁹ but recent studies do offer some indications (IOM 2008; Loforte 2009). Men in South Africa often live difficult and isolated lives, either in the mines or as agricultural labourers. They may also be away from Mozambique and their family for months at a time. At the same time, studies show that many men try to establish themselves in South Africa with new families and many migrant communities are full of women who try to make a living by selling sex. Both these factors easily lead to high levels of sexual activity.

¹⁹ A thorough understanding of the economic and socio-cultural basis for HIV/AIDS requires a much longer-term study than we were in a position to perform, in order to establish the necessary confidence to delve into an issue like this one.

When returning to Mozambique, either on vacation or semi-permanently (studies also show that most men who have been in South Africa keep trying to go back, even after they have been deported), these men are faced with considerable changes in the stability of extended family and household units and women who have often become accustomed to relying solely on themselves. As far as one theory goes, in such a situation, spending money and having an active sex life are two of the few remaining ways that young men can prove their masculinity to their own friends and peers.

Having said this, studies also show that attaching themselves to men in general – and men with money in particular – remains an important way for many poorer women, who do not have an education and prospects for economic independence, to get by and to support themselves and their children. The use of condoms in such situations is often considered a sign of promiscuity, which many women believe will reduce their options for receiving payment or presents and ultimately getting married.²⁰

The real challenge in handling the HIV/AIDS pandemic at the scale found in many communities in Gaza is that the disease has ‘by necessity’ become normalised and under-communicated. It is simply (consciously or unconsciously) considered impossible by public authorities as well as within communities to relate to the fact that perhaps 40 percent of everybody one meets has a disease that will most likely kill them within a period of 5-10 years. Even small and general questions on the disease were met with silence or a shrug – clearly signalling that this is not an issue to be discussed in public.

3.5 Community Relations

We have argued above that the clan, the lineage and traditional institutions have lost much of their impact in Gaza in the face of the deep socio-economic change that has taken place with democratisation, labour migration, urbanisation and ‘modernity’ – albeit without significantly altering the position of men who still dominate political and economic life. While ‘patriarchal tradition’ still has a stronger hold on people in rural Chókwè than in urban Xai-Xai, women are in the process of creating a stronger impact at community level. This may be a main avenue for a stronger impact on more formal political and economic life over time.

In the previous chapter we saw that women were in majority among elected community leaders, particularly in Xai-Xai, with women arguing that men did not ‘want to contribute to social work’. They also dominate in other types of community associations, such as farmers- and cattle-holders’ associations and different savings groups. As seen from Table 39, female-headed households and women also participate more actively than male-headed households and men in community level meetings and discussions. The trend is clear in both Chókwè and Xai-Xai, but in urban Xai-Xai the difference between women and men is even more accentuated. Our survey shows that these community meetings deal with a broad range of socio-economic issues, such as health, agriculture, education and HIV/AIDS. Issues of particular relevance to women, such as the Family Law and domestic violence, are also addressed in community meetings, but less frequently (see Table 40).

²⁰ One aspect of sexual relationships that is still little explored in Mozambique is the relationship - or fine line - between prostitution and what is considered legitimate payment for sexual favours.

Table 39. Participation in Community Meetings (Percent)

Participation in Meetings	Chókwè		Xai-Xai		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
Yes	83	97	67	90	84
No	17	3	33	10	16

Table 40. Most Common Topics Treated in Community Meetings (Percent)

Community Meeting Topic	Chókwè		Xai-Xai		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
Agriculture	16	20	17	18	17
Elections	8	6	10	8	8
HIV/AIDS	15	8	13	15	13
Domestic Violence	5	1	5	8	5
Family Law	1	5	2	8	4
Crime	8	9	13	13	11
Health	24	26	13	14	19
Education	13	16	20	14	16
Other	9	9	7	4	7
Total	100	100	100	100	100

The poorest men and women in Chókwè and Xai-Xai “just live without knowing what to eat”; have “no place to live” and “nobody to support them” as some informants put it. For them, relations within the community may be vital for survival. According to people we interviewed, poor male-headed households tend to be better-off than poor female-headed ones: “When a woman is heading a household, she doesn’t have anybody to support her”, explained people in the village of Punguine, in Chókwè. According to one of the focus groups held in Xai-Xai, households headed by single women lack community respect – particularly if they are not able to take care of their children (households headed by widowed elders and economically strong women are exceptions). Households headed by poor single women are also more likely to be marginalized from community life, and may also be excluded from cooperation-based economic activities with other women, since they are not in a position to contribute with their share.

As regards main concerns in the communities, there is a striking difference between Chókwè and Xai-Xai (Table 41). In Xai-Xai, the main reason for concern both among male- and female-headed households is lack of employment. This partly reflects the need to earn money in an urban environment, but the large number of female-headed households also reflects a wish by women to seek employment. Many interviewees also highlighted the social implications of unemployment in the form of violence, substance abuse, and young people losing faith in their future. The relatively low proportion of both male- and female-headed households who see theft as the main community problem in Xai-Xai underlines people’s assessment that Xai-Xai is a ‘rural’ city – in contrast to Maputo, which people told us is ‘dangerous’.

In Chókwè, the main concern is lack of water and energy. In the village of Punji, lack of water is a serious problem, and the quality of the water from distant rivers is so poor that it makes many people sick (the local administration told us that boreholes cannot be opened due to the poor quality of the groundwater). Lack of electricity was primarily highlighted by people living in semi-urban Macarretane, arguing that it made the community less safe and made it difficult for children to study at night (here the main problem seems to be people’s inability to pay for

electricity). People in Chókwè are also concerned about unemployment and its implications, but the relatively low score probably reflects the fact that most people are farmers, while the low proportion among female-headed households reflects the fact that women are not expected to work outside agriculture. The larger proportion of female-headed households who see robberies and theft as the main reason for concern in Chókwè implies that they are more susceptible to crime than male-headed households.

Table 41. *Perceived Main Problems in the Community (Percent)*

Main Problems	Chókwè		Xai-Xai		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
Robberies/Theft	7	23	13	10	14
Unemployment	37	27	83	87	59
Violence	3	0	0	0	1
Lack of water/energy	43	43	0	0	22
Other	7	3	3	3	4
No problems	3	3	0	0	2

As evident from our earlier studies in this series, people are more willing to talk about 'community problems' than problems within their own household: as seen from Table 42, as many as 64 percent of the households in our survey state that they 'have no problem'. Three of the most common domestic problems mentioned were i) economic and social misfortunes (poverty, domestic violence, inability to take part in ceremonies, etc.); ii) disagreements among neighbours; and iii) robberies and theft of personal property. For such problems, the most preferred mediator is still the local leader (Table 42). In Chókwè this usually implies traditional leaders, and in Xai-Xai the (often party-affiliated) heads of *bairros*, *quarteirões* or *blocos* (see Chapter 2). The women we interviewed argued that in cases involving men and women, such as domestic or sexual violence, the traditional or local leaders often side with the men. The recent Family Law and the Law Against Domestic Violence are not yet anchored in traditional institutions.

Table 42. *Most Common Sources of Domestic Conflict Mediation (Percent)*

Source of Mediation	Chókwè		Xai-Xai		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
No problem	66	59	64	66	64
Local leader	12	21	11	13	14
An uncle	4	8	7	9	7
Police	1	1	3	2	2
Priest/Pastor/Imam	5	4	4	2	4
Traditional Healer	1	1	0	0	1
Neighbours/Friends	3	3	5	2	3
Nobody to speak to	1	1	0	0	1
Other	7	1	5	5	4
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Finally, regarding the level of satisfaction with developments in their community over the past five years, the vast majority of both male- and female-headed households state that conditions

have improved (Table 43). The perception of improvement is most evident in Xai-Xai, where more female- than male-headed households argued that things have become better. In addition to the general socio-economic conditions, this is also likely to reflect the gradual recovery of communities following the devastating floods in 2000, even though several communities still lack basic infrastructure. Women highlighted their stronger role in community affairs, and better conditions for informal economic activities, both in the community as such and in the larger markets in the centre of the city.

Table 43. *Perceived Changes in the Community the Past Five Years (Percent)*

Direction of Change	Chókwè		Xai-Xai		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
Improved	80	70	90	93	83
Remained the same	20	27	3	7	14
Deteriorated	0	3	7	0	3
Total	100	100	100	100	100

The recovery after the floods in the Chókwè area is important for explaining the high degree of satisfaction with developments over the past five years, particularly among survey households in Macarretane who had to flee their original areas and have settled in a well-organised resettlement community – albeit still without improvements in their household economy. The smaller number of female-headed households in Chókwè who think conditions have improved may be due to difficulties in establishing new contacts and pursuing agricultural activities, since their fields are often located far away from the resettlement area.

Having said all this, the general perception of improvements (and the fact that as many as 85 percent believe that conditions will improve further the next five years) are in line with our own perception of communities that have seen positive changes in general well-being as well as in gender-relations – without, however, denying that there still are many challenges ahead. In particular, there is an apparent growing gap between women (married and single) who have their own sources of income and hence relative independence, and those who do not. The very poorest women are either susceptible to continued male dominance and marginalisation within the hegemonic patrilineal system, or become poor and marginalised single mothers in their own communities.

We end this chapter by presenting how contemporary gender relations were outlined by our focus groups in Chókwè and in Xai-Xai. While clearly giving an impression of change and more equal relations, particularly in terms of participation in the economy (see Box 1 for comparisons), men still have a dominant position in intra-household affairs – as indicated by the phrase “Now everything has changed. It is only the *lobolo* that remains the same”.

Box 2. Contemporary Gender Relations as Seen by the Communities

Rural Chókwè: Now, both wives and children can sit at table with the husband. This change took place after independence – Now men and women work in the same way; they work together in the fields – Work which is currently carried out solely by men: Construction of houses, cutting branches to fence-off agricultural fields – Now, women can also “get hold of money”, i.e., they can do business and manage the use of money earned. Typically, women sell maize, tomato, beans, peanuts, etc.. – Women go and sell their products in the city or sometimes other purchases come to buy from them at their homes or in the village – The woman then gives the money to her husband and they decide together what the money will be spent on – When livestock are sold, the men no longer decide alone, but speak to their wives first. The money earned from the sale is used for the entire family – Currently, men send money and food from South Africa home to the family. They buy and bring back clothes for their wife and children – Now everything is changed, only the lobolo remains the same – In most cases, men decide alone on taking a second wife. If the husband takes on more than one wife, then he pays *lobolo* for each of the women – When there is more than one woman, the women all do business together and pool together their earnings – In a family with several wives, it sometimes happens that one wife is sent away because of disagreements. In this case, everything that belongs to that woman is returned to her and she is sent away, and she leaves with her children – Sometimes her parents are able to help – Before, boys used to herd cattle and girls used to learn housework. Now all children attend school.

Urban Xai-Xai: Women are free to work outside the home, in other people’s fields, in the public sector or in the private sector – There are laws that protect women’s rights – Women can now attend school and develop their skills – There are many schools in the neighbourhood – The men have become more self-sufficient and perform many activities by themselves, without relying on women – There is no longer the custom of men beating their wives; this only happens when there “is no understanding” or when “there is betrayal” – Women participate in the management of their husband’s money; when the husband returns from South Africa, he gives his wages to his wife and together they decide what to do with the money – Women have developed savings mechanisms that guarantee an increase in capital and greater financial security (they use *xitique*) – The lack of employment leads many people to do business. Both men and women can sell their goods at the market.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

We started this series of reports by arguing that there is a curious incongruity between the often broad and sweeping statements about gender inequality on the one hand, and the great variation and complexity in the lives of real men and women on the other. We demonstrated this in our first report (Tvedten, Paulo & Montserrat 2008), by going through historical developments and analysing existing statistical evidence. This revealed important spatial variations between the northern, the central and the southern parts of the country, as well as between rural and urban social formations in important areas such as political and economic participation, social organisation, education, health and domestic violence.

In our second report (Tvedten, Paulo & Tuominen 2009), we took existing quantitative data to the northern province of Nampula and contextualised it through qualitative and participatory research in the rural district of Mossuril and two *bairros* in the City of Nampula. The study revealed deep historical and cultural/religious roots for gender inequality, with women's limited involvement in the economy and the relatively low number of female-headed households being particularly pertinent. We did observe changes in gender relations in urban Nampula, including a higher involvement in the informal economy and a more complex basis for the establishment of female-headed households – but our overall conclusion was one of severe gender disparities in key areas of socio-cultural organisation and economic independence, largely sustained by the influence of tradition and religion.

4.1 Conclusions

This study from Gaza has clearly substantiated the variations and complexity of gender relations in Mozambique. Gaza has seen profound processes of socio-economic change, including an extensive male labour migration, a commodification and 'feminisation' of agriculture, a cultural impact of 'modernity' from Mozambique's urban hub, Maputo, and a very high HIV/AIDS infection rate. Women have found themselves with increasing responsibilities for the upkeep of themselves and their children, and have also increasingly taken on political roles, albeit still primarily at the lower levels of village communities and *bairros*. Important implications of these developments are the very large proportion of female-headed households in the province; a high level of participation, primarily in agriculture and the informal economy; and near gender equality in education enrolment. While there still are differences between urban and rural areas, these are not as pronounced as we found in Nampula.

In fact, the main gender disparities in Gaza seem to be primarily class related, with poor women with no economic independence being susceptible to continued control under the patrilineal system and patriarchal ideology. The continued importance of *lobolo* and an extensive pattern of sexual relationships – contributing to the spread of HIV/AIDS in Gaza – can be seen as ways to maintain control, by men who see their power threatened by the reduced income earning opportunities in South Africa, the increasing presence of women in local politics and in the local economy, and the increasing number of women who establish their own households. More specifically, we have seen that:

- Available statistical data show that Gaza scores relatively high on social development (education, health), with smaller differences between men and women than in other parts of the country, as measured by the Gender Equality Index.

- Data also show a high consumption-based poverty rate at 59.7 percent (INE 2004). Our survey does not give evidence to this. Rather, it shows fairly high levels of income and consumption among both male- and female-headed households – albeit with a small, but important segment, of very poor households.
- One reason for this may be our definition of households: Using a *de facto* definition (“eating from the same pot”) rather than a *de jure* definition (“living under the same roof”), households in our survey are significantly larger than those defined by INE, with as many as 82 percent having at least one member staying outside the dwelling – usually for work in South Africa.
- The proportion of women in political office is relatively high in Gaza at the lower levels of village communities and *bairros*, but men still dominate in higher public offices and among traditional authorities in the rural areas.
- While men still make up the bulk of people going on labour migration to South Africa, which has the highest potential for capital accumulation, women are actively involved in agriculture and the semi-formal and informal economy in the areas under study.
- Male-headed households are generally better off than female-headed households in terms of income and consumption, but there are both very poor and relatively wealthy households among the latter category, showing that women can earn substantial revenue on their own.
- Changes in the composition and internal organisation of households tend to reflect changes in society at large. In Gaza, traditional marriage has largely been replaced by an individualisation of domestic responsibilities and ‘cohabitation’ even though *lobolo* is still widely practised and a sign of patrilineal control.
- The most salient feature of domestic arrangements in Gaza is the high proportion of female-headed households – reflecting a combination of the break-up of traditional forms of marriage (including polygamy) and the increasing economic independence of many women. There are also signs of increasing decision-making power of women within male-headed households.
- Women also make their presence increasingly felt in primary as well as secondary education, and the highest level of educational attainment in female-headed households is generally higher than in male-headed households.
- Having said all this, the process towards greater female empowerment in Gaza comes with a price: Women are hardest hit by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, with an alarming 24 percent having the virus in Gaza as a whole, and over 40 percent in particularly vulnerable areas.
- The study can be summed up with the emphatic statement “A woman should not be the boss when a man is present”, reflecting a situation where men are insisting on their continued ‘superiority’ in a situation where women are increasingly independent – with the exception of the very poorest who tend to be marginalized both as poor and as women.

4.2 Recommendations

- Although women are relatively well represented in local political offices in Gaza, more effort should be made to (s)elect women in/to leading positions. Moreover, women’s important role as community leaders should be better recognised and supported.
- Migration to South Africa remains a central component of economic life and social organisation in Gaza, but too little is known about the socio-economic implications of the increasing importance of informal (and illegal) employment in RSA for men as well as for women.

- Women still have a central role in small-scale agriculture, but are still excluded from being involved in larger agricultural entities (including irrigated farming) primarily due to the land distribution system. This should be looked into.
- There are few 'cultural' constraints on the involvement of women in the informal economy in Gaza, but more effort should be made to promote their involvement in the formal economy, which usually gives higher and more predictable returns.
- School enrolment and educational achievements by girls and women show positive developments, and girls have largely caught up with boys. Particular care should now be taken to keep boys in school, who often leave for an uncertain future as migrants to South Africa.
- The overarching health problem in Gaza is HIV/AIDS, despite widespread knowledge about the causes of and remedies against the disease. Renewed efforts should be made to better understand the feminisation of the pandemic in order to come up with new and more gender-sensitive anti-AIDS policies.
- In a context where 'traditional culture' is losing much of its impact on the socialisation of boys and girls, people should be encouraged to discuss gender relations and sexuality more openly in families, through various types of awareness campaigns – preferably with the involvement of religious leaders.
- The church is becoming a central institution for spiritual comfort and social guidance, but men dominate despite the fact that the large majority of active church-goers are women. Churches should be encouraged to give more leading positions to women.
- While there is a clear generational gap in perceptions about the merits of bride-price or *lobolo*, there are reasons to argue that a stronger emphasis on formal marriages than is currently the case could limit to some extent the extensive change of partners and HIV/AIDS. There are also needs to demystify female sexuality and pregnancy in order to rationalize the period of abstinence.
- Domestic violence remains a serious problem as the traditional relations between men and women change, and interventions should focus on men and their reasons for being violent. The church and traditional leaders should be given particular responsibility for this.
- While important advances have been made as regards women's empowerment in Gaza, particularly the poorest women continue to suffer from the double coercion of patriarchy and poverty. The dissemination of information on the Family Law and the Law Against Domestic Violence should be particularly directed at this group.

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This is the third and final report in the series “Gender Policies and Feminisation of Poverty in Mozambique”, revealing a curious incongruity between often broad and sweeping statements about gender inequality and the great variation and complexity in the lives of real men and women. The province of Gaza, which is the focus of this report, has seen profound socio-economic change, including an extensive male labour migration, a commodification and ‘feminisation’ of agriculture; and a very high HIV/AIDS infection rate. Important implications of these developments have been a very large proportion of female headed households; a high level of female participation in agriculture and the informal economy; and near gender equality in education enrolment. In fact, the main gender disparities in Gaza primarily seem to be related class, with poor women without economic independence being susceptible to continued control under the patrilineal system and patriarchal ideology.