

OTHER MOTIVES, OTHER STRUGGLES: GENDER POLITICS AND THE SHAPING OF WARTIME MIGRATION IN MOZAMBIQUE

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Analysis of displaced populations usually begins "after the fact" of movement itself, implicitly viewing political violence as the force organizing movement. This article challenges the assumption that refugee flight is directed by a minimal "survival utility" that suspends all other social projects. It demonstrates how Mozambican wartime migration decision-making, organization, and demographic outcomes were shaped by social struggles other than those at a macro-political level, in particular culturally-specific struggles over the configuration of gender relations. It argues for more attention to the historically formulated social roles that migration plays as a strategy utilized in multiple arenas of struggle.

This study demonstrates how the social and demographic organization of "forced migration" was shaped not only by the political dynamics of the war in Mozambique, but also by social struggles at other levels, namely within households, communities, and families. I investigate how socially-specific meanings and experiences, which had already characterized migration as a strategy in these multiple struggles before the war, influenced possibilities, patterns, and the meanings of Machazian wartime migration. This study thus critiques approaches that neglect refugees' agency by assuming that larger political-economic forces of warfare determine migratory choices.

Approaches that fail to investigate the agency of those organizing migratory (or other) reactions to crisis conditions implicitly reduce the interest of all "forced migrants" to a singular universally generalizable "survival-utility." The implicit assumption is that in the face of sheer terror, violence somehow renders all "normal" concerns for engagement in ongoing, culturally defined, social life-strategies virtually insignificant in shaping behavior. The only, or singularly overriding, concern of those threatened by violence is avoidance.

Anthropologists have argued increasingly for the importance of investigating "agency" and its socio-cultural bases in the shaping of forced migration processes (Hansen 1982, 1992; Harrell-Bond 1986; Wilson 1994; Moussa and McSpadden 1996; Daley 1991; Indra 1999). Incidents of unassisted "spontaneous return" or conversely of reluctance to return despite strong, even coercive, pressures to do so demonstrate that refugees are actors motivated and directed by their own interests and understandings rather than simply the "acted-upon products" of larger forces.¹ Similarly, scholars have commented on the phenomenon of refugee self-settlement outside of official refugee camps, despite extensive efforts and the implementation of policies aimed at preventing refugees from doing so.²

However, the emphasis on agency in these critiques tends to focus on the ways in which it is manifest in the way migrants understand their displacement and cope with its impact.³ Most recently a number of anthropologists have emphasized the need to investigate forced migration's socially differentiated forms with respect to gender.⁴ Rarely, however, is there an emphasis on how agency is exercised in the actual organization of movement. In fact, most forced migration analyses start with movement as a *fait accompli*. Most analysts define a field of study in terms of migratory behavior lacking agency: "a key dimension of forced migration—whether politically, economically, environmentally or developmentally driven—is just that: it is *forced*" (Indra 1999:18). Seemingly, to argue for the importance of agency with respect to a population that has been defined *a-priori* by its inability to exercise decision-making initiative is somewhat contradictory.

A failure to investigate the deployment of agency in the organization of movement produces explanations that privilege macro-political factors. This paradigm assumes that people move in response to pressure by larger military/political forces. Thus, flight is politicized as a response indicating support for, or fear of violence from, a particular military force (for example see Wilson and Nunes 1994). However, little investigation is made of the possible influence on movement's organization of ongoing "normal" life-strategies or of power struggles which operate at other levels of social interaction—such as gendered or generational struggles for power within families or communities.

In contrast, this article uses agency as a starting point from which to understand migration decision-making as a reaction to crisis. Movement must be investigated empirically rather than assumed *a-priori*

in a socially undifferentiated form. In order to understand the ways that wartime (and other crisis) migration decisions are made analysis must attempt to “situate” migration (Greenhalgh 1995). “Situating” migration involves establishing several factors: the array of social struggles in which migration has been historically implicated within a particular social group; the cultural terms within which these social struggles are carried out; the interests of different social categories of people engaged in these struggles; and the uses of migration in these struggles.

Historical perspective is critical to understand the influence of pre-conflict forms of social struggle on shaping the socially differentiated meanings of, and possibilities for, using migration strategies. This approach contrasts with frameworks that delimit the temporal parameters of analysis in terms of a “refugee cycle” of flight, various stages of resettlement, and finally adaptation (Stein 1981). As examined here, throughout the twentieth century, Machazians developed migration as a multivalent technique deployed in myriad forms of simultaneous social struggle. Many of these struggles involved the renegotiations of rights and obligations defining social relationships and their constitutive roles (particularly with respect to gender and intergenerational difference) in culturally specific terms within households, extended kinship networks, and the local community.

Moreover, these struggles continued to develop during the war, and this continued transformation both affected and was affected by wartime migration. This study focuses most specifically on how the process of “engenderation”—the term I use for the ongoing struggle over the reconfiguration of relationships and power between and among men and women in Machaze—during more than a decade of war influenced the organization of wartime and post-conflict movement. Rather than assuming that war was the primary force causing and shaping migration, I sought to empirically establish the social struggles that affected migration decision-making. I started by investigating the conflict’s role in re-distributing power and opportunities in the social struggles in which migration had already been implicated as a strategy of engagement prior to the war.

Research methods

This study is based on two years of research conducted between 1996 and 1998 with migrants from the Machaze district in south-central

Mozambique. Throughout the twentieth century, labor migration to South Africa played a central role in the organization of Machazian social and economic life (Lubkemann 2000). Shortly after independence from Portuguese colonial rule, Mozambique experienced a civil war, instigated by aggression of the hostile neighboring Rhodesian and South African apartheid regimes. By late 1979, the Machaze area was fully embroiled in the war between the Rhodesian (and later South African) supported anti-government faction (RENAMO) and the government forces (FRELIMO). During the conflict that lasted until 1992, estimates suggest that 40 to 70 percent of the population left the district for South Africa, Zimbabwe, or other destinations within Mozambique (GTZ 1993, 1995, 1996; CARE 1994).

I conducted fieldwork with Machazians in three locations: a peri-urban township near Johannesburg, South Africa; the provincial capital of Chimoio, Mozambique; and Machaze district. In Machaze district, I interviewed those who remained in the district during the war and those who returned after the conflict. Research methods included informal interviews, participant observation, extensive oral life history interviews (97 taped life histories of three to ten hours each), life-history matrix and other surveys, and document review of district-level reports dating back to 1898.⁵ In South Africa, I conducted over 200, and in Machaze and Chimoio over 300, life-history matrix surveys organized around migratory events. The questions addressed social relations, household composition, and household and individual-level economic activity.

Engendered patterns of migration and wartime population distribution

Most of the population in Machaze district migrated between 1979 and 1982 as the armed conflict intensified. These movements were patterned in highly gender-specific ways. Women were far more likely than men to remain in the district (in either the communal villages or in the “bush” areas under RENAMO control) or to move to adjacent areas within Mozambique or Zimbabwe. A very small percentage of women went to South Africa.

Unless they were very young or old, Machazian men generally left Mozambique. Most men, particularly those who had already engaged in labor migration, fled to South Africa. Other men⁶ migrated to

Zimbabwe, but were more likely than Machazian women to opt for illegal self-settlement rather than residence in official refugee camps.⁷

The different ways in which women and men were targeted by the military forces involved in the conflict contributed to the gender imbalance among out-of-district migrant populations. From the war's outset, violence was gender selective in ways that motivated men to migrate more than women. Both RENAMO and FRELIMO troops forced women and children to relocate to areas under their respective control. However, men were usually forced into military service or simply killed. These practices had a strong gendering effect on Machazian migration.

However, at the same time, this pattern also reflected Machazians' attempts to engage in long-established social and economic strategies in a new crisis environment. Pre-war Machazian subsistence involved a social division of labor between female agricultural labor in Machaze and migratory male cash-earning labor. Male migration was virtually universal and served as an informal male rite of passage. Male participation in economic life was embodied first and foremost in the form of wage-labor migration, and only secondarily in subsistence agriculture. The vast majority of men spent life-long migratory careers primarily in South Africa (Lubkemann 2000).

In Machaze, only rarely did women migrate, and their economic activity was limited to subsistence agriculture. For women, migration was a male rather than a female experience. Women's lived experience, both before and during the war, focused on subsistence agriculture. Consequently, Machazian women tended to migrate initially within the district and later to other nearby district areas where wartime conditions still allowed them to engage in subsistence agriculture. Thus, Machazian migratory and non-migratory reactions early in the war can be seen as attempts to reproduce ongoing strategies of social and economic reproduction to avert a sense of "displacement" in a novel environment rather than as attempts to radically alter those life-strategies themselves.

Engendered struggles and wartime migration

Wartime migratory patterns and population distribution were also affected by the continued development of struggles over the meaning of social relationships and the configuration of social interaction. These struggles characterized Machazian social processes prior to the war. The civil war did not suspend or eclipse these processes.

These power struggles and interests unrelated to the contest for macro-political power shaped Machazian wartime migration.

By 1984, when the war was spreading aggressively into other areas of the country, it had been raging in Machaze for half a decade. The interrelated problems of safety, successive displacement, and drought in Mozambique increasingly made subsistence strategies less tenable for growing numbers of Mozambicans. As the war continued, people were unable to treat the new problems and opportunities they faced as temporary interruptions to the "normal" course of events.

Early in the war, many Machazian men in neighboring countries attempted to provide assistance in the form of remittances to family members who were left behind in Mozambique. With the intensification of the war, the polarization of population concentrations, and the collapse of regular access to the district, the transfer of remittances became increasingly problematic. As the situation worsened, some Machazian men in South Africa sent instructions or returned to move family members into safer areas within Mozambique or across the border into Zimbabwe.

Beginning in 1984, one of men's key strategies was to place their spouses and other "dependent" family members in UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) organized refugee camps in Zimbabwe and then return to South Africa. While these men often supported and maintained communication with their families in these "surrogate home bases," they systematically prevented family members, especially spouses, from joining them in South Africa.

Wives as economic burdens?

By keeping dependents, particularly wives, in the UNHCR camps, Machazian men could continue pursuing long established life-course strategies that would have been far more difficult should their Mozambican wives join them in South Africa. The humanitarian aid provided in these camps reduced the costs of maintaining families much as subsistence production had done in Machaze. Subsistence cultivation in the South African townships, however, was impossible. The Vaal townships consisted of small houses and shacks, with tiny yards, generally less than ten square meters in area. Even small garden plots or animals were seldom seen. Many men argued that having a Machazian

wife move to South Africa would drain their earnings because she would become a dependent.

What could she [my Machazian wife] do here except 'eat my money'? There is nowhere to plant a *maachamba* [garden plot]. She could not sell fruit because she does not know the language or the Rand [currency] and these South African women are very clever and would deceive her so she would lose everything. Even to cook here you must have money to buy charcoal. It is not like Machaze where she can go and find firewood snap snap...she would not want to eat *sadza* [grain porridge] only anymore because the South African women also want to eat [corn]flakes and cakes and this would eat my money because she would stay at home all day, sitting.

The claim that Machazian women would become an economic burden to their husbands in South Africa is questionable. Several studies show South African migrant women in peri-urban townships areas to be quite successful participants in the flourishing informal economy (Bozzoli 1991; Preston-Whyte 1991). My preliminary findings indicate that Machazian women's experience may not differ significantly from that of South African women in this respect. In addition to the research methods described earlier, this study included an additional small survey in 1997 of male migrants from Machaze who had Machazian wives living with them. The sample of 31 South African township households showed that on average these women earned at least 44 percent of the total reported monthly household budget income.⁸

Thus, the effect that a wife's services had on preventing other dependent family members from coming to South Africa was more economically important to Machazian men. Children and aged parents likely would have been economically unproductive in South Africa and drained income. Consequently, preventing wives from coming to South Africa precluded other dependents from following.

Social control and the reproduction of gendered power and privilege

Machazian men's efforts to prevent their spouses from joining them in South Africa stemmed primarily from other non-economic

reasons. Machazian men's ability to pursue life-strategies described earlier has depended on control of their wives' labor and on women's willingness to accept a particular gendered division of labor, power, and authority that define social roles within marriage and the family. In Machaze, poor land quality and acute water scarcity made domestic and agricultural tasks highly labor intensive. Women performed most of these labor-intensive tasks. For example, the average woman walked over eight kilometers per day to get water. Men were only expected to participate in the initial clearing of fields—a labor intensive, but fairly short effort every two to five years.

Wives also contributed substantial labor to their husband's parents, particularly to their husband's mother.⁹ Mothers played a key role in overseeing the affairs of a son and of his wives, particularly in safeguarding his interests during his absence. The importance of this relationship for sons was clearly reflected in local ideologies surrounding witchcraft: pleasing senior kin, and mothers in particular, was considered important in order to avoid troubles with ancestral spirits. Some men recounted returning to Mozambique with the sole purpose of procuring a wife to assist their mother to avoid problems with ancestral spirits.

During this period, Machazian men's life-strategies remained fully dependent on these culturally prescribed asymmetries in gender relations allowing them to exploit women's labor for their own benefit. Keeping women in Machaze and preventing their out-migration has served as a mechanism for preserving this asymmetry. Until shortly before independence in 1975, labor migration remained the sole source of cash earnings, and hence it fostered female dependence. Restrictions on female out-migration thus served several purposes, including not only those of colonial governance and capitalist accumulation, but also those of Machazian men by assuring the forms of social control over women that guaranteed a comfortable retirement in Machaze.

Machazian men's recognition of the importance of controlling female migration in order to reproduce this social order played a significant role in shaping wartime migration and ultimately in the demographic distribution of Machazian refugee populations. Most men were quite explicit about the importance of keeping Machazian women unaware of ways of life that might prompt women to question their engagement in labor necessary to ensure a way of life in Machaze to which men had grown accustomed. As one man put it:

In Machaze there must always be suffering to live. Women must always suffer. If the women from Machaze come to South Africa they will become corrupt like the South African women are. They will always spend money. Once you feed a dog from a plate it will never again eat off the floor.

Interestingly, those few women from Machaze who had experienced life in South Africa expressed changed ideas about gender relations and acceptable divisions of labor. One Machazian woman in South Africa stated:

These men are afraid of [South African] immigration [officials]? Bah! What they should be is afraid of me because of what I have to say if I go back to Machaze! I know of their other women here, and I know that they treat these women here better than their own wives in Machaze, and that these men buy things for them when they ask. Men even do work in the house for these women! When I say these things to other women [in Machaze] that is when these men should be afraid. They should be afraid of me!!

Such statements lend credence to Machazian men's generalized fear of the detrimental effects of a spouse's sojourn in South Africa on their own domestic authority and relative power. The reproduction of social expectations and the culturally defined household power configurations that men favored remained highly dependent, in their view, on preventing Machazian women from migrating to South Africa.

Most Machazian men felt that a sojourn in Zimbabwe did not have the same effect on Machazian women as one in South Africa. These men felt that similarities between Machazean and Zimbabwean customs contrasted sharply with the differences in South African townships. One man remarked:

In Tongogara [the largest UNHCR camp in Zimbabwe] it was different from Machaze but not so much as here [in South Africa]. If they [the women] worked outside the camps it was still in the *maachambas*...The others in

the camp were also mostly from Machaze and knew the right way to behave.

The pursuit of new social opportunities in South Africa

Men's efforts to prevent Machazian women from joining them in South Africa protected long-established, male life-strategies while also allowing these men to take advantage of new social opportunities. Prior to the Mozambican civil war, important regulatory, labor market, social, and demographic changes in South Africa created new possibilities and motives for migrant Machazian men to establish more permanent residential arrangements, and new forms of social ties in South Africa.

The most important of these changes, beginning in the 1950s, involved the shift from legal, regulated labor participation in the mining industry to illegal, secondary or tertiary-sector labor participation. Working in the mining industry was based on a system of deferred payment and obligatory return to Mozambique for six-months leave after 18 months of work. Since non-mine employment paid better and involved no mandatory furloughs or deferred pay schemes, Machazian men increasingly sought non-mine employment (Lubkemann 2000).

Another important change was the widespread emergence of township-based housing for migrant men in the 1960s and 1970s. Previously, workers in mining and other industries lived in closed, single-sex compounds that restricted their interaction with those living outside of the compounds. The growth of township hostels created possibilities for Mozambican men to interact more frequently, and eventually establish conjugal relationships, with South African women.

Starting in the 1970s the townships experienced a massive explosion of illegal squatter settlement that overwhelmed official attempts to curtail it (Schlemmer 1985). During the decade prior to the Mozambican civil war, Machazian men increasingly established residence in the township areas, often obtaining official documentation that allowed them to "pass" as South Africans. The rapid growth of migration by South African women to these peri-urban areas between 1960 and 1980 vastly improved the "conjugal market" for men in these urban areas (Smit 1985:116-117).

Additional factors encouraged men to seek, or at least consider, more permanent residential and social options in South Africa throughout the 1970s. The economic downturn and resulting

employment crisis in South Africa during the late 1970s gave employers considerably more power over employees. Prior to the 1970s, Machazian men took advantage of a favorable labor market in which jobs were plentiful by overstaying leaves and frequently switching employment. Under these conditions they were able to remain in Mozambique for months or even years at a time between trips to South Africa. As unemployment rose, Machazian men began to comply with strict two-week leave requirements that they had previously ignored, in order to maintain their jobs, making it harder to return as often, or for as long, to Machaze (Lubkemann 2000).

Consequently, just prior to the war Machazian men had begun to establish more permanent forms of co-residence and conjugal unions with South African women, without necessarily dissolving their conjugal unions in Mozambique. The onset of war in 1979 intensified male out-migration to South Africa and made these new South African options more attractive.

As the war continued and intensified, many men began to realize that they might never be able to reclaim their lives in Mozambique. For some the war had disrupted their contact with family members in Mozambique. Even among those who had maintained contact, there was growing recognition that these life-strategies were less secure. Conjugal relationships with South African women became an increasingly attractive option for many men.

Marriage with South African women was dependent on secrecy. Machazian men emphasized that South African women often were not receptive to polygyny in general and were adamantly opposed in particular to the presence of a Mozambican wife in their homes. Men also feared that the presence of a Machazian wife in South Africa could expose the Mozambican identity of these men, subjecting them to deportation. Many sought to hide their Mozambican identity from their South African partners, often claiming to be Shangaanas from the Giyani area in South Africa. Such identity management was much harder if Machazian women came to reside with them in South Africa. Men also feared that Machazian women would become discontent at the discovery of South African counterparts. This displeasure, when coupled with the physical presence of the discontent party, was felt by men to increase the likelihood of *uloi* (witchcraft) within the household.¹⁰

Machazian men used a variety of passive and active tactics to prevent spouses who wanted to join them in South Africa from doing so.

Sometimes men pretended they never received the letters. Other times they gave dubious and misleading reasons as to why spouses should not come to South Africa, or else promised what eventually became indefinitely delayed assistance. Sometimes men provided incorrect return addresses to make locating them more difficult. Nonetheless, some women made their way to South Africa on their own initiative and found their spouses, despite lacking or misleading information. In some cases the women were actually sent back by their husbands to Zimbabwean camps or even the war zone in Mozambique!

The emergence of transnational polygyny

The growth and intensification of conjugal relations with South African women and the desire to prevent Machazian women from joining them in South Africa did not, however, mean that Machazian men renounced relationships and rights with Machazian wives in Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Some men sent support to Machazian wives, and a small number visited occasionally. However, even those who had no knowledge of their wives' whereabouts or fate did not provide active support, or even visit, still considered their rights in these marriages to be intact despite their failure to fulfill their obligations.

Machazian men were particularly assertive concerning their rights in cases where the culturally-prescribed obligation of *lobola* (brideprice) had been paid at least in part. Often the payment of even a part of *lobola* protected these men's rights in marriage. These rights could only be negated through the negotiated repayment of *lobola*—a process which implicated not only the interests of the wife but also the interests of her family members who had received (and often subsequently used) this payment. Consequently, it was quite difficult for many of these women to divorce.

Maintaining a social option outside of South Africa clearly served Machazian men's interests. The cash dependence and high cost-of-living in the South African townships made it worthwhile to preserve the option of reestablishment in Mozambique in the eventuality of a resolution of the war. Furthermore, the existence of new "total social life" options in South Africa did not nullify many of the legally structured vulnerabilities that Machazian migrants faced. As illegal immigrants, Machazian men were particularly vulnerable to crime, as

they were unlikely to report it to authorities, and to extortion by corrupt officials.

Prior to the war, polygynous marriage was common in Machaze but had a very different structure and meaning than it came to assume during and after the war. Previously, polygynous marriages were limited to multiple wives living in Machaze. During the war, polygyny was "transnationalized," as men engaged in conjugal unions with multiple women in different countries. Whereas pre-war polygyny addressed a series of Machaze-specific problems for men, (such as old age security, agricultural and domestic labor, and the struggle with other local men for social status), transnational polygyny constituted an attempt by men to diversify the risks that state-level political and economic instability presented to their life-strategies.

Consequently, Machazian men's interest in transnational polygyny grew after the end of the Mozambican civil war in 1992. The wartime devastation of Mozambique and the uncertainties of the political situation in Mozambique and South Africa have reinforced the attractiveness of this option. In a 1998 survey of two-hundred Machazian men employed in non-mine employment in South Africa, 23 percent had conjugal partners only in Mozambique; 26 percent only in South Africa; and 37 percent in both South Africa and Mozambique (Lubkemann 2000).

The consequences of transnational polygyny for Machazian women

The growth of Machazian men's involvement in South African conjugal unions during the war had a variety of consequences for Machazian women who remained in Zimbabwe and Mozambique. The transnationalization of polygyny during the war allowed men to guard, and even enhance, their options for old age in culturally sanctioned terms. Despite their absence, men maintained legal claims on women and their fertility in Mozambique. Participation in progeny-producing unions with South African wives allowed them to diversify old-age options.

In contrast, the duration of a husband's absence threatened women's own life-course strategies by limiting their fertility options. Machazian women, who relied on their sons and sons' wives for support in old age, were concerned with having enough children. While a child's father and his family have primary claims on children, a wife's ability to

exercise her own claims on these children was dependent on her fulfillment of marital rights and obligations including marital fidelity. Women bearing children through extra-marital liaisons faced the likelihood of divorce and the loss of their rights to their children.

During the war, many Machazian wives faced contradictions among their culturally prescribed life goals. Wives could have sex with men other than their long absent husbands, allowing them to have children—an element of future security. However, this option involved violating cultural prescriptions that made divorce more likely, and thus placed the validity of these women's claims on their children at risk.

Alternatively, women could remain faithful to absent husbands with the long-term consequence of having few or no children. This contradiction could be resolved only by fulfilling one prescription at the expense of the other. Machazian men's participation in South African marriages shielded them from these contradictions and their undesirable effects on the realization of their life-strategies.

This dilemma became more acute for women as the war dragged on and came to span a large part or even all of these women's fertile years. It affected women of different ages and in different circumstances in different ways. Both Maria and Luka, for instance, who had fled to UNHCR camps in Zimbabwe during the war, were childless. Maria's three children had died, while Luka had been married but never had children. Both of these women ultimately engaged in illicit unions with men in the camps in an attempt to have children. Luka's and Maria's life-strategies were threatened much earlier in the war than those of other women who had not lost children, or who had a longer span of their biological fertility ahead of them. Maria's younger sister, Nhamunissa, for example, had three living children that survived the war and did not face the same crisis that confronted her sister.

However, as the war was prolonged larger numbers of women, encompassing a wider sample in terms of age and fertility history, faced challenging situations where their life-strategies were placed at risk. Most Machazian women expressed a desire for six or more children and were particularly concerned with having sons. The higher levels of mortality during the war robbed many women of all or at least some of their children. One of the most tragic interviews I conducted was in the city of Chimoio with a young woman whose husband and two children had died during the war, after which she had contracted a disease that made her sterile. She lived with her older brother, his wife, and their

children. When asked about how she would cope when she was older, she responded in a straightforward and heart-wrenching manner:

I will die. No one will be able to take care of me when this one [her brother] is gone. I will die of hunger, because I will have no strength to work and no one to feed me.

Women's choices shaping wartime and post-conflict

Faced with difficult choices, most Machazian women explicitly expressed their overriding concern with having enough children survive. One woman interviewed in Chimoio put it quite clearly:

What matters is not the man. What matters is the children. One or two are not enough because what if one dies or is not well-behaved? Yes I would want a man because he could help. But we can live without a man—aren't we doing that now right here? But without children we die in misery.

During the war, Machazian women of child-bearing age with fewer than their desired number of children were more likely to move away from both their husband's and their father's kin if their husbands were absent for long periods. By moving away, these women could escape the social vigilance, pressure, and disapproval that might hinder their attempts to engage in child-producing unions and relationships.

The predominant strategy among women who stayed in the communal villages in Machaze district was to establish conjugal relationships with FRELIMO soldiers. Women in these relationships were less likely to be subjected to punishment or action on the part of either their own parents or their husband's kin since these relatives feared the military. In a few cases, women reported that their own paternal kin supported these unions, in all cases the husband's kin opposed these union. The women involved in these relationships often benefited from having children but also from privileged access to rations and spoils that these soldiers obtained.

After the war and the demobilization of troops on both sides, many of women faced another dilemma as their rights to these children

were questioned by returning husbands or his relatives. Contingencies such as prolonged absence were often considered by “traditional authorities” who arbitrate most such disputes. In cases where rights to multiple children were at stake, a frequent resolution was that the children be divided between the family of the husband and the wife. However, even this type of resolution generally required that the wife be able to draw on the support of her own, generally senior, male relatives. Similarly, at least some portion of the *lobola* was usually required to be repaid. A woman’s male relatives often proved reluctant to incur such costs, particularly if they felt that the woman engaged in liaisons or migrated against their own expressed wishes during the conflict.

A number of women, who had stayed in the communal villages in Machaze during the war and had borne children as a result of liaisons with FRELIMO soldiers, went to Chimoio after the war to avoid the return of their husband or affines and the anticipated claims on children. One woman who had an extra-marital relationship throughout the war with a soldier described her experience as follows:

I thought that he [her husband] was dead because I heard nothing from him during the war. Even his relatives did not think he was alive. I stayed in Chitobe [a communal village] after the other one [her soldier consort] left. When my husband came back he said these children were his. I had no one to speak for me there. I came here to Chimoio with these children to find him [the soldier] so he could pay *lobola*. I cannot find him. I would like to go back to Machaze because here my *maachamba* is too small. It is very far away. I sometimes walk there and stay two days because if I go by *machibombo* [public transport] I must pay 1,000 *meticaïs* there and 1,000 *meticaïs* to return. I cannot go back to Machaze. If I go back to Machaze then the *regulo* [headman] will say that these children are his [her husband’s]—he has paid *lobola*.

Many women who fled to Chimoio during the war chose not to return to Machaze because of the same fear. Yet others chose to return from the camps in Zimbabwe to Chimoio rather than to Machaze for the same reason. Machazian women who remained in, or fled after the war

to, Chimoio faced the dilemma of being exposed to social and moral sanctions if they attempted to return to Machaze, or sometimes even maintain connections with Machazians. One woman who left Machaze during the war and had chosen to remain in Chimoio after it ended remarked:

My husband's family has already called me back to Machaze, but I do not want to go. Now he wants my [two] children to come back because they are his brother's [referring to the claim the children were the result of her union with a soldier and the brother had actually already died]. If I return he will take the children and I will be left with nothing. This is why I stay here even though I have nothing. Even this roof is falling down.

Chimoio provided an alternative to returning to Machaze. However, this alternative was not an easy one. The cost of living in Chimoio, like many urban areas, was high. Access to fields and shelter was commodified, and cash was in constant demand. As a result, some of these women live on the verge of extreme poverty

The possibility of excising themselves from the Machazian moral order was far more difficult for women who had engaged in extra-marital liaisons but who remained in Machaze during and after the war. Unlike women who left the district during the war, those who stayed gained no experience with migration or with alternative subsistence strategies in urban areas. These women had to resort to other strategies to protect their interests.

In contrast to most of the Machazian population, many of these women remained in the communal village areas established by the military during the war, refusing to return to the areas in which their affines or even their own kin lived prior to the war. Women had easier access to water in the communal village areas, and often were able to continue subsistence farming on land that was already cleared (thus requiring less assistance from men). These women often produced a variety of fermented and brewed drinks that they sold locally. In some cases they engaged in petty trade associated with the small-scale drinking establishments that mushroomed in the old centers of the former communal villages.

The lower labor requirements of subsistence in these village areas (despite the low level of field productivity) and the cash-generating opportunities in the former communal village centers allowed some of these women to survive on their own in defiance of the demands and wishes of their husbands, affines, and even their own kin. One group of such women made the point that their brewing businesses afforded them far more money than migrant husbands did. Whereas these women controlled all the money they earned, few wives of migrants had much say over what their husband bought them or how he distributed cash.

However, unlike women in Chimoio, the women who pursued these new strategies of independence in Machaze were more immediately embedded in the local social and political system embodying the moral ideology their behavior contradicted. Within this system, their behavior was morally stigmatized. Church leaders and traditional authorities expressed concern over the moral impact of the development of the drinking establishments, specifically emphasizing the immorality of the women involved. The marginality of these women translated into greater vulnerability to accusations of witchcraft and the delegitimization of their claims in the negotiation of settlements regarding children.

When faced with claims against rights to their children, a number of women appealed to government officials to intervene against the ruling of traditional authorities in these matters. One woman described how after the local *regulo* had ruled against her claim to her two children, she had approached the district administrator and sought redress. The administrator reversed the *regulo's* decision given the husband's long absence. These women were attempting to exploit a long-standing opposition between these two arenas of power as a way to counteract their own power and moral marginalization. The local representatives of the centralized government maintained an interest in curtailing the influence of traditional authority in the district. Consequently government officials exploited these types of cases as an opportunity to pursue that particular agenda by contravening the child custody decisions made by traditional authorities. Women in the aforementioned circumstances recognized and exploited that agenda to their advantage. Other women attempted to earn enough money to pay back their own *lobola* after their own fathers, brothers, or other male kin refused.

Beyond concerns with rights to children, Machazian women sometimes opted to stay in Chimoio after the war because new experiences had changed their expectations about gender relations within the household, strategies of economic subsistence, and social pressure and authority. Machaze offered few of the cash-generating activities that Chimoio did. The income produced through these activities varied, but in some cases provided a significant degree of economic independence. Displacement brought new opportunities for women to enhance their own position and power relative to spouses and men in general. Several older women with grown children expressed a desire to stay in Chimoio rather than return to Machaze. These women acted as the sole managers of their sons' households during their long-term sojourns as migrant laborers. In two cases older women lived with other female relatives while a number of their grown children lived nearby. These older women were supported by their children rather than by their husbands or husbands' kin. Like most women I interviewed, they were particularly appreciative of the ready availability of water in Chimoio compared to Machaze. They did not seem as concerned as younger women about either the cost of living or the difficulties related to subsistence agriculture in Chimoio. Their ability to rely on support from grown children and control over their sons' wives guaranteed an additional layer of security unavailable to many women with younger children.

These older women were committed to remaining permanently in Chimoio where they maintained a greater degree of power in household affairs than they would in Machaze. These women saw little advantage in diluting their influence over the management of their sons' households by returning to a place where they would be subjected to forms of authority absent in Chimoio.

Many older widows were also reluctant to return to Machaze because of fear of forced marriage to one of their husband's brothers. Older women in particular saw many disadvantages to such marriages. Remarriage, particularly on the part of an older wife with children, would produce disputes over which wife had seniority. A less senior status would be particularly difficult to accept for a woman who had already established herself at a more independent stage of her life-cycle and perhaps been a senior wife herself. As new and threatening "outsiders," and given their age and likelihood of being implicated in intra-household conflict, these women were also aware of the risk of

being accused of witchcraft. One older woman living in Chimoio with her two daughters-in-law commented:

It is too difficult for me to be there [as a wife in her deceased husband's brother's household in Machaze] because I have grown children. He has a wife with grown children as well. Then when there is sickness they will say that it is because I am living there. It is different for a young woman.

If these widows successfully resisted remarriage claims pressed by their affines but remained in Machaze it seemed likely that these relatives' resentment and the tenuousness of their own social position would result in witchcraft accusations. Chimoio provided distance from such relatives, and the lack of kinship ties to neighbors and other city-dwellers buffered them from such suspicions and accusations.

Conclusion

Gender politics clearly played a significant role in shaping the organization of Machazian wartime and post-conflict migration. Machazian migration during and after the Mozambican civil war responded to the macro-political dynamics of the war as well as to "other struggles" within households, communities, and families that had been developing in Machaze throughout the twentieth century. The long, ongoing processes of negotiating the reconfiguration of gendered power within households was neither suspended nor eclipsed by the civil war.

The war also introduced new possibilities and re-distributed power in socially differentiated ways enhancing Machazian men's ability to redefine the meaning of social relationships, such as marriage, to their advantage through the transnationalization of polygyny. Machazian women responded to these challenges through their own migration-based strategies to combat the erosion of their status and to exploit new opportunities emerging as a result of wartime movement. Ultimately, the organization of movement during and after the war was influenced critically by the process of contestation and negotiation within Machazian households. It is by examining first how migration was "situated" as an option implicated simultaneously in many different forms of social struggles before the war, and secondly the course of these

struggles' transformations during the war, wartime migration decision-making, and migration's socially-differentiated outcomes can be understood.

NOTES

1. See the following for a discussion on spontaneous return: Kibreab 1985; 1991; Wilson 1994; Cuny and Stein 1990; Hansen 1992; Kuhlman 1994. See the following for discussions of reluctance to return: Turton 1996; Bascom 1996, 1998; Allen and Turton 1996; Hansen 1993; Malkki 1995. See the following for examples of self-settlement cases: Kibreab 1985; 1991; Wilson 1994; Cuny and Stein 1990; Hansen 1992; Kuhlman 1994.

2. Mazur 1989; Malkki 1992, 1995; Bascom 1998; Harrell-Bond 1986; Hansen 1982, 1992.

3. According to Anthony Giddens: "agency refers not to the intentions people have in doing things but to their capability of doing those things in the first place (which is why agency implies 'power')"(1984:96): He argues that "agency refers to 'doing'" whether with intended or unintended consequences (1984:97), arguing that agency thus encompasses what an actor does in the sense of the fact that "what happened would not have happened if that individual had not intervened" (1984:96). Frankly this definition does not seem to separate "agency" from "action" itself, or even from "outcomes." A notion of "agency" that distinguishes it from "action" is better served by two of the meanings which Sciulli (1986) has identified as characterizing Parson's notion of "voluntaristic action," namely: "the capacity to make choices despite constraints; and a capacity for self-initiated action whether or not this capacity is realized."

4. See Indra 1999; Colson 1999; Daley 1991; Krulfeld 1994; Matlou 1999.

5. A survey with a life-history matrix format asks a series of questions that are asked repeatedly of the same person but at different stages or times in their life. These surveys may be structured in terms of regular time periods (per year or some other time unit), or more informally in terms of life-stages or transitions noted by the interview subject (also see Kertzer and Karweit 1986).

6. Men who migrated to Zimbabwe rather than South Africa were usually either younger men who had not yet engaged in a first trip to South Africa, or older men who had already retired from their migratory careers (Lubkemann 2000). It is also important to note that many men were forcibly conscripted by both sides—those men who did remain in Machaze during the war were almost all in this conscript category.

7. The exact gender distribution of the wartime population is difficult to determine because of the challenges of reconstructing a population dispersed and decimated by over a decade of war. However, several independent lines of evidence indicate that women comprised a significantly higher proportion of the population that remained in Machaze and resided in the official refugee camps

in Zimbabwe during the war. The 1980 census that took place in Machaze as the war was underway (and was actually interrupted by it) verified a female to male ratio in the district of 1.6:1 (GTZ 1995). A 1993 survey of the population in several communal villages counted only 2,087 men in the 16-64 age group while almost twice as many women (3,839) (GTZ 1993). In sample of 123 households from two official UNHCR return convoys from Tongogara refugee camp to Machaze in early 1996 a total of 46 households were classified as female-headed along with 6 solo females - together comprising 42 percent of the total returnee households in these convoys. Two other studies, one conducted in Tongogara camp (of which Machazians were only a part of the total camp population) (Tandai 1992) and one in Machaze itself (CARE 1994) both verified high levels of female-headed households (Tandai-20 percent; CARE-30 percent).

8. It is important to point out that this survey highlights the situation in 1997 and not necessarily throughout the 1980s when the war was in full swing.

9. The Machazian social structure involves patrilineal descent and patrilocal co-residence. Men (or their father's kin) pay brideprice (*lobola*). Polygyny (multiple wives) is extensively practiced. A wife, particularly if she is a first wife, will usually reside with her husband in the vicinity of her father and mother-in-law's residence until she has at least one and often more children, and/or her husband takes a second wife, or one of his younger brother's takes a wife. The most junior wife usually provides the most assistance to her mother-in-law.

10. The physical proximity of those with whom one is in contention is viewed by Machazians as an enabling factor in the causation and intensity of witchcraft. Consequently one strategy for avoiding witchcraft is often to simply avoid physical proximity with those regarded as likely to cause it. A more detailed discussion of Machazian ideology and beliefs about witchcraft is provided in the larger dissertation (Lubkemann 2000).

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