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"If men and women were equal, we would all simply be people"

Gender and Poverty in Northern Mozambique

Inge Tvedten
Margarida Paulo
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R 2009: 14

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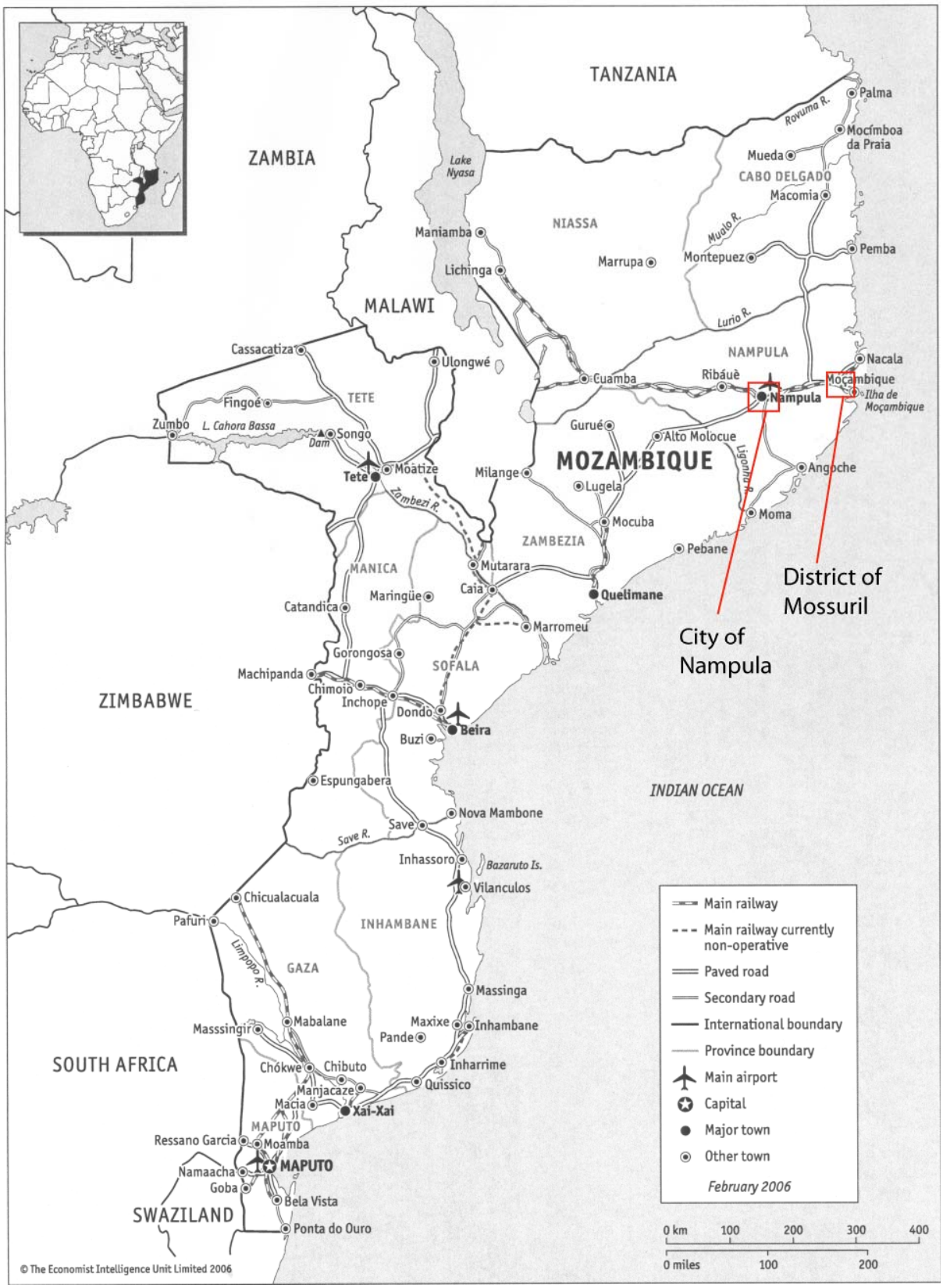


Map 1. *Mozambique and Project Field Sites*

1. Introduction

The Government of Mozambique has 'gender equality and women empowerment' as an explicit goal for its development strategy, arguing that this is a prerequisite for reaching the objectives of poverty reduction set in its Poverty Reduction Strategy, PARPA (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 sociocultural terms. Yet, the data also reveal important differences in women's situations between different geographical regions and rural and urban social formations in key areas such as agricultural production, employment, income, education, health and the proportion of female-headed households. Moreover, the data give a poor basis for assessing people's own (*emic*) perceptions of gender relations and their implications for poverty and well-being.

This is the second report in the series 'Gender Policies and Feminisation of Poverty in Mozambique', carried out in close cooperation with the Ministry of Planning and Development. While 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, this report will focus on the social relations and cultural perception of gender in one rural setting (the district of Mossuril) and one urban setting (the city of Nampula) in the northern province of Nampula. It will be followed up by a third report in similar settings 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.

Our point of departure is a notion 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 necessities in the form of food, clothing and shelter (alleviated through a combination of increased *opportunities* and an increased *capacity* to capitalise on available opportunities); the second is a sense of voicelessness and powerlessness in relation to institutions of society and the state (alleviated 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 (alleviated though increased *security*). The notion of a '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 growing poverty among women is linked to the feminisation of household headship (Chant 2007).

With regard to the current government and donor gender policies in Mozambique, we argued in our first report that there is a considerable discrepancy between stated policies and objectives on the one hand and actual interventions on the ground on the other: The relatively high level of women's representation in Parliament and Government (Table 1) has not yielded significant results in terms of concrete action for the empowerment of women – epitomised by the (until very recently still pending) Law on Domestic Violence.[1] Women's representation at lower levels of government (provinces and districts) as well as key state institutions (in education, health, the legal sector, etc.) remains weak – as 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,

[1] After many years of discussion and resistance from male as well as female members of Parliament (Tvedten, Paulo & Montserrat 2008), the law was finally passed in mid-2009.

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.

Table 1. *Women in Public Office in Mozambique*

Institution	**Men**	**Women**
Parliament	161	89
Government ministers	20	6
National directors	141	33
Provincial governors	9	2
Provincial directors	130	33
District administrators	113	26
Heads adm. posts	288	10

Sources: MAE 2005; updated by MMCAS.

Still with reference to our first report, available national data verify that there is an ongoing feminisation of poverty in the country. The main findings are, rather crudely, summarised in Table 2 below. Gendered inequalities are particularly pertinent in the areas of agricultural production, employment and income, education and health, and women are highly susceptible to domestic violence and sexual abuse – together contributing to a considerably higher poverty headcount among female- than male-headed households.

Table 2. *Key Socio-Economic Data on the Position of Women in Mozambique (Percent)*

Item	**Men**	**Women**
Formal employment	19.0	3.9
Employment in agriculture	67.5	89.3
Adult literacy rate	67.0	37.5
Net primary school attendance	62.7	56.7
Life expectancy at birth	44.8	48.6
Proportion HIV-AIDS affected *	42.0	58.0
Item	**MHH**	**FHH**
Overall proportion	73.6	26.4
Poverty headcount	51.9	62.5

Sources: INE 2004; MISAU 2005; World Bank 2007; INE 2009 * Total HIV-AIDS rate 16.1 percent.

Let us, finally, by way of introduction, highlight some of the quantitative expressions of gendered dissimilarities between Nampula and Gaza – the geographical focuses of the current and the subsequent report. As seen from Table 3, there are significant differences in terms of poverty and inequality as well as gender-specific attributes in the proportion of female headed households, employment and income, literacy rates, child mortality rates and HIV/AIDS between the two provinces. In general terms, consumption poverty is highest in the south (incl. Gaza), while human poverty is highest in the north (including Nampula). In our first report we explained such differences with reference to broad historical and contemporary developments related to sociocultural systems of kinship and descent (i.e. patrilineality and matrilineality); colonial experiences of agro-industrialisation, migration and forced labour; post-independence experiences of enhanced levels of urbanisation; and present-day differences in levels of poverty and inequality.

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

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

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

In this report, we will give particular attention to the relevance and importance of *sociocultural organisation* for gender relations and inequalities. In line with international literature (Chant 2003; Cornwall 2007) we will postulate that changes in systems of kinship, marriage and sexuality are particularly important for explaining changes in 'manhood', 'womanhood' and gender relations. This is not to disregard the importance of economic positions (employment and income) of men and women, but reflects a situation in the north where 'culture' – including religion – still seems to inhibit the active involvement of women in the economic sphere (Tvedten, Paulo & Montserrat 2008).[2] Perhaps the clearest expression of this is the virtual absence of women in the informal economy in Nampula except for a few 'niches' related to food. In Gaza, on the other hand, we expect to find a much larger proportion of women in the informal economy and gendered livelihood strategies will be a main focus in that report.

1.2 Analytical Approach

The second and third report are based on the assumption that quantitative and qualitative data should be combined to give a full picture of gender in the country through what is often called a 'qual-quant' approach (Kanbur & 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. A 'qual-quant' approach seems particularly important in the area of gender, in that it not only reflects measurable material conditions, but also the way in which gender relations are enmeshed in deep historical and sociocultural configurations.

Our analytical framework is based on the notion that history and contemporary political, economic and cultural structural forces have a powerful effect upon human action and the shape of events (Bourdieu 1990). At one level, then, gender relations are shaped and reproduced by external processes that are congruent with established patterns of power in society at large (Moore 1994). At the same time, however, there is room for human agency and ordinary lives, as people relate to

[2] This was largely verified in a large World Relief project on micro-finance, where 80-90 percent of the clients in Gaza were women while only 15 percent of the clients in Nampula were women – despite particular effort in the latter to involve women (Pontara 2001).

structural constraints and opportunities as best they can from the economic and sociocultural position they are in (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 'modernity' and labour migration, and the concomitant continued influence of 'tradition' in the northern parts of the country that have been less susceptible to such forces. 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 profoundly different to 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 relation between gender and poverty, *per se*.[3] We will postulate 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 relations between them. While manhood and womanhood in Mozambique are enmeshed in sociocultural 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. There are emerging signs that unemployment and poverty have implications for the ability of men to maintain their 'manhood' and position as household heads, particularly in urban areas.

1.2 Methodologies

The main objective of this report is to capture the local configurations of gender relations in Nampula, by focussing on one rural and one urban area in the province. The former is the coastal and rural district of Mossuril, which is considered one of the most deprived districts in the province, both in terms of material poverty and human development (MAE 2005). The urban areas are Muatala and Namutequeliua, which are two of the most populous *bairros* in the city of Nampula and largely inhabited by migrants from the coast and hence share historical and sociocultural roots with Mossuril. This puts us in a good position to analyse the implications of urban migration and urbanism for 'traditional' gender relations.

We will carry out our analysis through a combination of interviews with key stakeholders in the district of Mossuril and city of Nampula; a survey that has been especially designed to capture gendered characteristics and differences; and a set of qualitative methodologies. The stakeholders include officials in the district and municipality; heads of particularly relevant public and civil-society institutions; traditional authorities (*régulos, secretários do bairro, chingores*, etc.) as well as individual men and women in the communities.

The survey covers a total of 120 households, with 60 in Mossuril and 60 in Nampula City. The more specific localities (*povoações* in Mossuril and *quarteirões* in Nampula) were selected in cooperation with local and traditional authorities with the goal of finding areas that were as 'representative' as possible. Within each enumeration area, we chose to select an equal number of

[3] 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).

male-headed and female-headed households in order to better capture the variables we were after.[4] The selection was not 'random' in any scientific sense, and we thereby avoided ending up with a sample that could not shed sufficient light on our issues of gender and poverty.

The qualitative methodologies used are *force-field analysis* (to capture perceptions of what conditions [political, economic, sociocultural] that 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, Paulo & Montserrat 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 we gathered separate groups of men and women to ascertain possible gendered differences in perceptions of poverty and well-being. The Venn-diagram was done with individual households.

1.3 Main Findings

Cultural perceptions of manhood and womanhood and social relations of gender in Nampula are the combined outcome of a strong matrilineal tradition among the Macua as the dominant socio-linguistic group, the patriarchal impact of Islam (in the coastal region) and Christianity (in the interior), and more recent developments including a devastating war and increasing urbanisation.

Our study in the coastal district of Mossuril and city of Nampula verifies that there is an ongoing process of feminisation of poverty – albeit with important differences between the two types of settings.

As defined by INE, there is a relatively high (and increasing) proportion of female-headed households in the two areas, and female-headed households are generally poorer and more deprived in terms of employment, income, housing and other material assets than male-headed household.

There is also a pronounced difference between male- and female-headed households in terms of health, including child mortality and illness frequency. The main reasons for this do not seem to be differences in priorities between male and female heads, but rather an effect of differences in levels of income and education of men and women.

The difference between male-headed and female-headed households is less pronounced in education. While male heads have higher education than female heads, the general levels of education within the households is more equal – which implies that female-headed households give priority to the education of their children despite their economic difficulties.

In terms of social organisation, the age of female heads is generally higher than male heads, reflecting the prevalence of widows and divorcees among the former. Female-headed households are smaller and have higher dependency rates than male-headed households. Female-headed households are more likely to be involved in social networks and associations than male-headed households.

[4] 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 led us to 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.

At the same time, there are important differences between rural Mossuril and Nampula City. In Mossuril, a combination of economic deprivation and tradition maintain systematic differences between men and women, while the urban context of Nampula has created new space for men and women alike.

Female-headed households in Nampula generally have higher income and higher levels of consumption than in Mossuril, and they are generally better educated and have fewer health problems.

There is a larger proportion of female-headed households in the city of Nampula than in Mossuril. The main factor behind this is that men more easily 'abandon' women in urban areas and often also leave them alone with the responsibility for their joint children.

However, there are also emerging signs of women increasingly leaving their husbands or cohabitants, particularly in Nampula. Some women seek men with more means, and some see this as necessary to pursue own careers in a context where women are supposed to be subservient household members.

In both settings manhood and masculinity is challenged by poverty. With men's position as household heads resting on a combination of tradition, religion and providers of food, clothes, shelter and other basic necessities, poverty is making it increasingly difficult for the poorest men to maintain their positions.

In rural Mossuril, this is partly compensated for by continued emphasis on cultural practices such as initiation rights, emphasising the obligations of girls/women towards men; the strong hold Islam continues to have and its advocacy of the supremacy of men; and the dearth of employment and income options for women.

In Nampula City, tradition and religion seem to have less of a hold on people while urbanism has conflicting implications for men. For those in a position to exploit urban economic opportunities, the city has created alternative ways of upholding their position as husbands and fathers. For those who do not, the basis for upholding their position as household heads and men is evaporating.

Some male- as well as female-headed households in Nampula manage to maintain relations in both the rural and urban setting in the form of rural-urban relationships and access to a *machamba*. Such a 'double-rootedness' is perceived as the best strategy to be able to combine employment and income with the social security of agricultural production.

In Mossuril the economy seems too depressed for households to be able to do this. Neither male- nor female-headed households have the resources and relations to maintain more permanent links with the city.

Men still dominate the public sphere in both rural Mossuril and urban Nampula. They are over-represented in the district and municipal government and administration, and they represent the bulk of (formally acknowledged) community and traditional leaders – even though the proportion of women in such positions is higher in Nampula than in Mossuril.

Women's access to public services and resources is also inferior to that of men, indicated by the low proportion of women who have applied for and/or received funding for projects through the 'Seven Million MT' scheme in Mossuril.

Women are more present in civil- or community-based organisations. In Mossuril these tend to be centred on cultural issues (such as 'Song and Dance' groups) that reinforce rather than challenge the existing sociocultural order. In Nampula, female-headed households and women are more inclined to be members of associations and other interest-groups that promote their interests.

In both settings, however, we have been struck by the degree of awareness of 'gender relations' and antagonisms – epitomised by a statement given [by a man] in Mossuril that has given the title to this study: "If men and women were equal, we would all be simply people". Both men and women are clearly conscious of the systematic differences existing in terms of authority, responsibilities and workload. The majority of both men and women seem to see this as part of the sociocultural order (implied by the frequent response that things are as they are because "it has always been like this"). However, there are also women, particularly in Nampula, who perceive the existing gender relations as being negative for their own lives and the future prospects for themselves and their families.

1.4 Report Outline

Following this Introduction, *Chapter 2* will give an historical and contemporary background to the province of Nampula, the district of Mossuril and the city of Nampula as social formations. With this contextual background, *Chapter 3* will look into social relations of gender and poverty in Mossuril and Nampula city from a comparative perspective. The study will end with conclusions and recommendations in *Chapter 4.*

2. Background

2.1 History

Nampula, located in northern Mozambique, is the country's most populous province with a population of 4.1 million (INE 2009), and is usually divided into a coastal, a central and an interior region with reference to climatic and environmental conditions. Historically the province has been shaped by the dominant Macua ethno-linguistic group who originally occupied the area in 300 AD (and currently make up 93 percent of the population); the arrival of Arab and Swahili traders with their Muslim faith from 400 AD; and the arrival of Portuguese colonisers from 1500 AD – who quickly established their main stronghold on the Mozambique Island off the coast of Nampula (Newitt 1995).

Each movement brought with it its own sociocultural configurations that came to shape the current-day perceptions of men and women and the relations between them. Among the Macua, clans (*n'loko*) and lineages (*nihimo*) were headed by men – even though there was a system of lineage 'queens' (*apwiyamwene nihimo*) with an important role in solving community problems and guarding tradition. The Macua were matrilineal, with a strong influence of the mother's lineage through its male members (mother's father or oldest brother). The residence pattern was originally uxorilocal, meaning that men moved to the village of their wife. One important implication of this system was that women and their children remained the 'property' of their own natal family, and could return to this if the marriage did not work. Economically the Macua were primarily agriculturalists and traders, with agriculture being most important in the interior of the province where soils were better and both men and women took part in production (Sheldon 2002).

On the coast, the Muslim influence partly counteracted the Macua matrilineal tradition with its emphasis on the position of men and the male line in economic, family as well as religious matters. Initially there was a close link between Islam and traditional authority, but with the emergence of the new esoteric Sufi orders, religious authority took precedence – correcting practices that were deemed to be prohibited (*haraam*) under Islamic law including a stricter separation between men and women (Bonate n.d.). The Muslims also reinforced the tradition of polygamy, with the number of wives being an expression of worldly as well as pious value. The first wife had a special position in terms of rights and obligations towards her husband, even though the Koran underlines the importance of "treating all wives with respect". The main means of income and subsistence on the coast were trade (in slaves and products such as seeds, rubber, gum copal and rice) and fisheries, which were all dominated by men. Women were marginal as income earners, as a combined result of religious convictions and the poor and sandy agricultural soils along the coast.

The Portuguese had a more direct impact on the position of men, women and gender relations, not so much because of their own patriarchal culture (even though this was very strong) as because of the implications of their colonial policies. With the system of forced male labour (*chibalo*), women came to do primarily subsistence farming, produce cash crops to meet increasing colonial demands for taxes and run the household – while men worked for Portuguese farmers, fishing-boat owners and subsequently industries in urban areas against pay in cash or kind. This way, the economic base for their sociocultural position as men was reinforced. As opposed to the southern and central parts of the country, however, families and households were not split for long periods of time through labour migration – which allowed the traditional role of men in households to be maintained, and inhibited the type of social and economic self-reliance and independence found among many women in other parts of the country (Newitt 1995).

The central position of men in the sociocultural and economic fabrics of Nampula effectively came to be challenged by the Frelimo government after Independence in 1975. Trying to abolish private companies, reduce the role of the family sector and substitute these with state farms and collective production, the result was that most households suffered economic downturns as both cash-crop production and subsistence farming deteriorated. The downturn continued with the subsequent structural adjustment policies, which led to the closure of many factories (Hanlon 2008). While weakening the economic base for male household headship, however, Frelimo never encouraged the empowerment of women at the level of families and households and tradition and religion continued to have a strong hold on gender relations (Urdang 1998).

The war from 1983 to 1992 effectively contributed to the cementing of traditional gender relations, except for women who lost their husbands and found themselves alone. As with most wars, the Mozambican civil war was basically carried out by men but with women and children being its foremost victims (Nordstrom 2002). In addition to the large number of civilian casualties, women remained in their homesteads largely unable to carry out economic activities due to the war itself and the frequent absence of their fathers, brothers or husbands as male household members. The war (which hit Nampula probably harder than any other province)[5] took a toll on the internal fabrics of many households, but not in the sense of changing gender relations significantly.

The increasing urbanisation from the early 1990s (following from the combined effect of the war and difficult conditions in rural areas) initially involved primarily men in search of employment. Some men migrated on an oscillatory basis and remained heads of rural households; some effectively maintained both an urban and a rural household unit; and some subsequently brought their families to the city. This way, household organisation and relations became more complex. Moreover, many women also started to move to the city to join their husbands or other family members and to try to establish their own income base as the informal economy took on an increasing importance. Those remaining in rural areas were primarily households with a relatively solid rural economic base (primarily found in the interior of the province where agricultural conditions were better), or poor households with too few resources to create an alternative basis for income generation and move with all or parts of their households (Araújo 2005).

In fact, urbanisation is probably the current development with the most important impact on gender and gender relations in Nampula – driven by a combination of the increasing need for cash income and contrasting notions of 'rurality and tradition' and 'urbanism and modernity'. Not only has urbanisation created new public and private spaces and changing gender relations for those living there, but urban areas are also an important point of reference for young boys and girls in rural areas. As we shall see, however, many people moving to the city end up in poverty-stricken informal settlement areas where perceptions of manhood and womanhood may change, but not necessarily in the direction of gender equality and women empowerment.

2.2 Political and Economic Context

73 percent of the 4.1 million inhabitants in the province of Nampula live in rural areas and 27 percent in urban areas, including the provincial capital Nampula City with 478.000 people (INE 2009). Agriculture is the dominant economic activity in the province, with a mixture of small scale, mainly subsistence agriculture and larger units producing cash-crops such as cotton, cashew and tobacco (Hanlon 2008). At the coast, where agricultural soils are poor and sandy, fishing and

[5] The only areas in Nampula that were considered safe were Nampula City, which was heavily protected by Frelimo soldiers, and Mozambique Island which could only be reached by a 400-meter-long bridge-structure that was easy to protect for the local population.

coconut farming are additional sources of subsistence and income. Industry and trade are dominated by informal activities, and there are few formal industries beyond agricultural processing plants (cashew and peanuts) except for the 'obligatory' soft-drink and beer factories. In addition to the road network which is generally poor outside the main national roads, the port of Nacala and the railway from Nacala to Malawi are important means of communication in the province.

Politically, the opposition party Renamo traditionally has had a strong standing in Nampula, but Frelimo won 27 out of the province's 50 seats in the 2004 Parliamentary election and Armando Gebuza won 50 percent against the opposition candidate Afonso Dhlakama's 44 percent in the 2004 Presidential election.[6] 20 percent of Nampula's seats in Parliament are held by women. Nampula province consists of 21 Districts and 6 Municipalities (Nampula City, Nacala-Porto, Angoche, Ilha de Moçambique, Monape and Ribáue). In gender terms, the political and administrative structures in the province are dominated by men – even though there has been a slight increase in the proportion of women between 2007 and 2008 (Table 4). As argued in our first report (Tvedten, Paulo & Montserrat 2008), however, there is no *automatic* relation between female representation in public offices and more gender sensitive policies. As we will show later, the most direct effect is probably at the lower levels of representation where a patriarchal bureaucratic culture is less prominent and the office-holders are in more direct contact with the population they are to serve.

Table 4. *Distribution of Public Positions between Men and Women in Nampula 2007-2008*

Function	2007		2008	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Provincial Directors	11	3	12	3
Heads of Prov. Depart.	49	13	49	15
District Administrators	18	3	16	5
Permanent Secretaries	16	4	16	4
Heads of Secretariats	23	10	23	11
Heads of Adm. Posts	36	7	36	7

Source: Government of the Province of Nampula, Provincial Directorate for Women and Social Action

As in the rest of Mozambique, the formal political structures of the province, districts and administrative posts work more closely with traditional authorities the lower down in the hierarchy one gets. At the lower levels, the state effectively depends on traditional authorities such as chiefs (*régulos*), secretaries (*secretários*) and headmen (*sagutes* or *chingore*) for popular mobilisation and tax collection. All are, in principle, selected on the basis of tradition or popularly elected, but there is a *de facto* interdependence between the formal and informal political structures through the system of government remuneration for traditional authorities (West 2009). Also among traditional authorities, men by far outnumber women (Table 5).

Table 5. *Distribution of Traditional Authority Positions between Men and Women 2008*

Function	Men	Women
Régulos / Secretários (1º Esq) *	2176	23
Headmen / Aut. Comunitários (2ºEsq)	2007	33

Source: Provincial Government of Nampula – Department of Territorial and Municipal Administration
* Among these 427 are *régulos* and 1747 are *secretários.*

[6] Preliminary results from the 2009 election indicate a further strengthening of Frelimo's position with 32 seats in Parliament and 68 percent of the votes for Frelimo's presidential candidate – albeit with an unusually low turn-out of 38.2 percent and an unusually high number of invalid votes (15.7 percent).

2.3 Socio-Economic Indicators

Moving on to the general and gendered socio-economic characteristics of poverty and well-being in Nampula, the province exhibits a consumption-based poverty headcount of 52.6 percent, which is close to the national average of 54.1 percent (Table 6). Measures of the depth of poverty ('poverty gap') and the severity of poverty ('squared poverty gap') are also close to the national averages. At the same time, Nampula scores exceptionally low on a number of more specific social indicators as these are expressed in human- and gender development index terms. In education, the province has one of the lowest primary net enrolment rates of 36.7 percent, as against the national average of 61 percent, and it has the second highest illiteracy rate, with 65.1 percent as against a national average of 53.6 percent. In health, Nampula has one of the highest total fertility rates in the country at 6.2, and the second highest under five mortality rate at 220/1000 (INE 2004). Only the HIV/AIDS infection rate of 8.4 percent is less severe than the national average of 16.1 percent, probably stemming from a combination of the continued importance of tradition in terms of household and family organisation; the distance from major population movement corridors; and the prevalence of Islam preaching fidelity and with male circumcision and limited use of alcohol as other contributing factors (Arndt 2002; MISAU 2005).

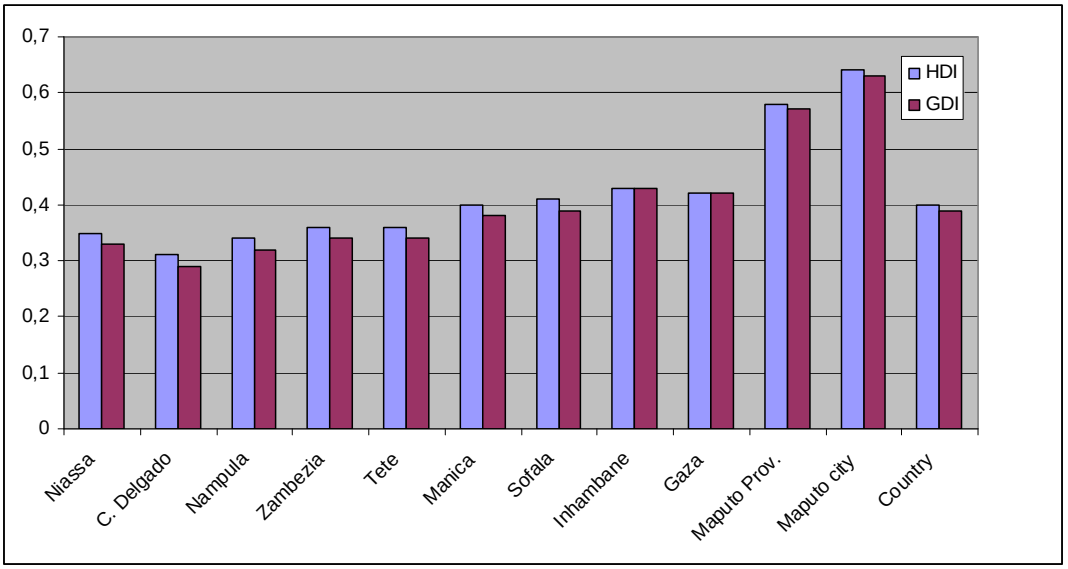
Table 6. *Basic Social Indicators, Mozambique and Nampula*

Items	Mozambique	Nampula
Geography		
Land area (km^2)	799,380	81,606
Population (mn)	20.5	4.1
Population density (per km^2)	21.6	40.0
Rural/urban population (%)	68.8 / 31.2	70.2 / 29.8
Household characteristics		
Average household size	4.8	4.4
Dependency ratio (%)	99.0	102.1
Female-headed households (%)	26.4	20.8
Economic activities		
Economically active population (%)	83	87.6
Self/family employment (%)	87.7	89.2
Proportion employed in agriculture (%)	80.5	82.8
Per capita monthly income (MT)	325	229
Per capita monthly expenditure (MT)	324	238
Education		
Primary net enrolment rate (%)	61	46.3
Male illiteracy rate (%)	48.7	36.7
Female illiteracy rate (%)	68	81.4
Health		
Child mortality rate (0-5 yrs)	178	220
Total fertility rate (children per woman)	5.5	6.2
HIV/AIDS (15-49 years)	13.6	8.1
Poverty indicators		
Poverty headcount (%)	54.1	52.6
Poverty gap/depth (%)	19.9	18.7
Squared poverty gap/severity (%)	9.9	8.6

Sources*:* World Bank 2006; Fox et al. 2005; INE 1999, 2004a, 2009.

Comparing the human development index (measuring income, education and longevity) with the gender development index (where these indicators have been adjusted for men and women, respectively), Nampula reveals a considerable discrepancy that not only indicates that human development is low but also that the situation for women in the areas of income, health and education is more difficult than for men (Figure 1).

Figure 1: *Accumulated Variation of the HDI and GDI by Province, 2001-2006*



Source: Adapted from UNDP (2007a).

Having presented the general historical, political and socio-economic context of Nampula, 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 i) the district of Mossuril, which is located along the coast and generally considered one of the poorest and most deprived districts in the province; and ii) the two *bairros* or 'urban units' Muatala and Namutequeliua in Nampula City, which are among the most populous *bairros* and situated close to the city centre. While Muatala primarily is populated by people coming from the central and interior parts of the province, Namutequeliua is primarily populated by people from the coast, which adds common historical roots to the comparison between gender relations in rural and urban Nampula.

2.4 Mossuril

The District of Mossuril is located about 120 km or two hours' drive from Nampula City towards the coast – with an additional hour or so for the last 10 km when road conditions are bad. The Mossuril Vila is centred around one main street, juxtaposed by old and weary Portuguese buildings and ending on a beach housing the ruins of an old Portuguese slave fort. The central public institutions in the Vila are various district offices of directorates and delegations, a hospital, an old convent housing a primary school, a recently-built secondary school, and the District Administration located at the end of the main road. The gender issue is immediately visible when arriving Mossuril by two apparently contrasting images: In the two crowded open informal markets, practically all vendors are men, pointing towards the marginal role of women in the household economy in Mossuril, and in the school yard of the secondary school, close to half of students are

girls, pointing towards aspirations of some families to educate their daughters in the hope of improving their lives.

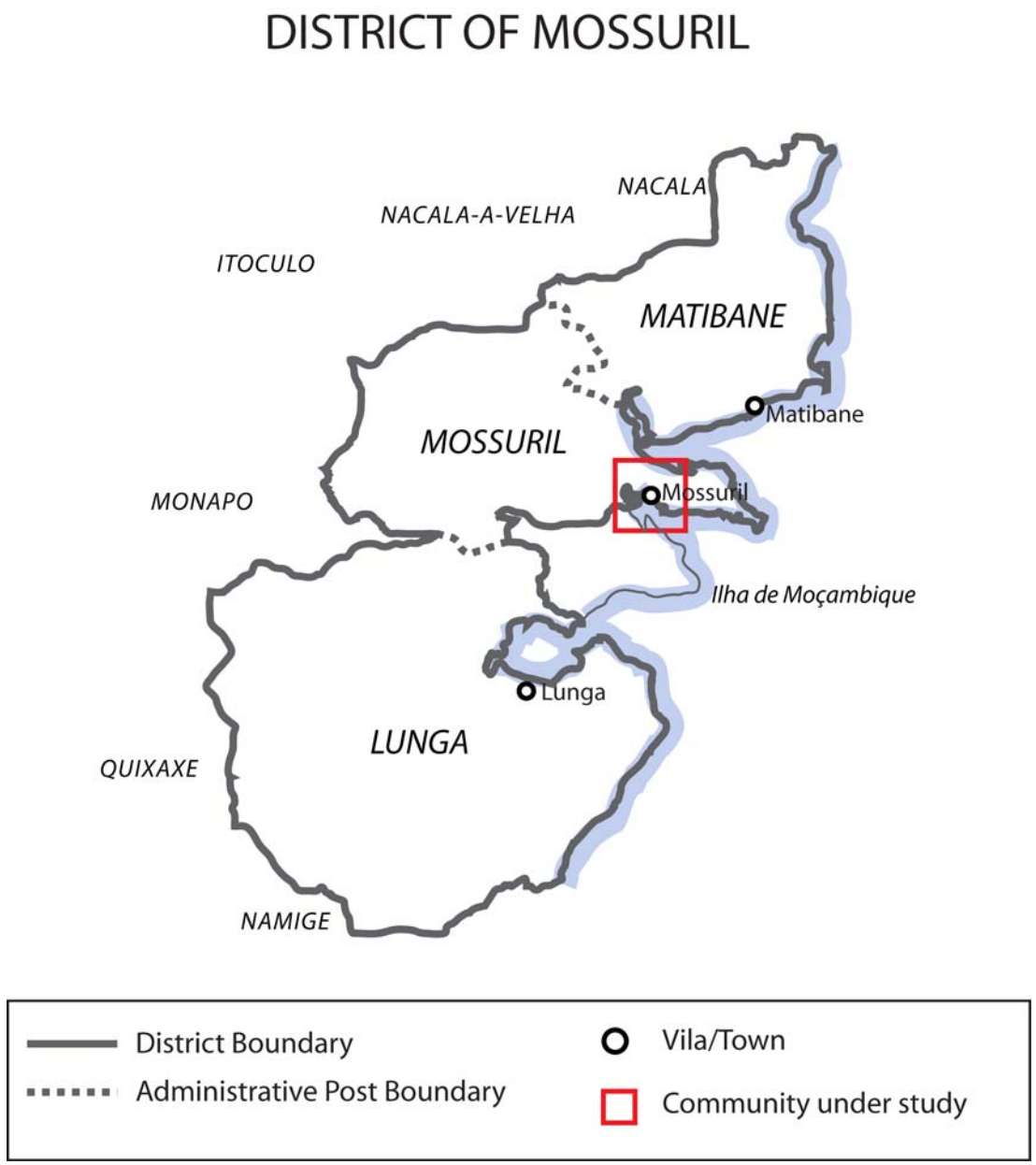
The district as a whole has 117.000 inhabitants (INE 2009), giving a population density of only 31.2 per km^2. The District Administration has a total staff of 32, of whom six are women (an increase of four since 2005).[7] Interviews with the all-men district management show that they are aware of gender issues, but they also argue that it is 'difficult' as the population in Mossuril is vested in a set of traditional values (Macua and Islam) where men are considered authorities both in the household and in the communities. The district is divided into three Administrative Posts (Mossuril Sede, Lunga and Matibane, see Map 2) and three Localities, with the lowest levels being villages (*grupos de povoações*) and communities (*povoações*). The state structures reach down to the level of 93 *régulos/ secretários*, who primarily deal with community problems and spiritual issues (in the case of *régulos*). Only two *secretários* are women. Traditional headmen or *chingore* at the level of individual communities (of whom five out of 92 are women) still have influence and primarily relate to problems in individual households. However, religious authorities in the form of *imams* and *mwalimo* (heads of local Muslim schools or *madrassas*, who are always men) are also important at this level.

The local economy in Mossuril is influenced by three main factors: One is the relative isolation of the district (exacerbated by very poor roads), which inhibits external investments from, and trade with, the closest population centres Mozambique Island, Nacala and Nampula City. The second is the relatively poor productivity of agriculture (due to poor sandy soils) and fisheries (due to an industrial fleet fishing too close to shore) as the two main sources of subsistence and income. The third factor (following from the two former) is the low purchasing power of the local population, which inhibits local trade and small-scale businesses.[8] Except for employment in the state administration and public institutions for education and health, the only formal employment opportunities available are in approximately 15 salt works (*salinas*) and in tourist resorts, located mainly in the district's second population centre Chocas Mar. Salinas only employ men (for wages as low as 250 MT per month), while some women are employed as maids in the tourist resorts.[9] To earn an income beyond subsistence, then, most households depend on establishing some form of relationship with one of the three urban centres mentioned above.

[7] In accordance with the current political system, management positions in the district administration are held by Frelimo despite the fact that 58 percent of the population in Mossuril voted Renamo and only 30 percent Frelimo in the 2004 election (www.iese.co.mz) .

[8] This has not always been so: In the end of the colonial era the district had 105 shops, of which all except around 10 are currently inoperative (MAE 2005).

[9] An additional (and slightly surreal) source of employment and income in heavily Muslim Mossuril is the liquor-factory "Belmoz", established and run by a European couple and employing approximately 20 men and women.


DISTRICT OF MOSSURIL
NACALA
NACALA-A-VELHA
ITOCULO
MATIBANE
Matibane
MOSSURIL
Mossuril
MONAPO
Ilha de Moçambique
Lunga
LUNGA
QUIXAXE
NAMIGE
District Boundary
Administrative Post Boundary
Vila/Town
Community under study

According to the District Directorate of Agriculture and Rural Development, agricultural production is not only hampered by poor and sandy soils but also by a 'lack of tradition' in agriculture. Households generally have very small fields, use rudimentary agricultural tools, and produce for subsistence and not sale. Production is also hampered by the frequent absence of men who see themselves primarily as fishermen and traders, leaving women to do many tasks "they are not equipped to do". Fishing is traditionally a predominantly male activity, with strong cultural imperatives[10] keeping women away from the ocean. The heavy male bias in the sector is also underlined by the fact that fish trade, which in most parts of Africa and some parts of Mozambique is a female activity, is dominated by men in Mossuril. Women *do* take part in the beach-based fishing for small shrimp (*camarão fino*) and collection of clams (*amêijoa*), but this is mainly for subsistence and gives very low returns. Finally, small scale informal trade is also heavily dominated by – particularly young – men. In the public markets men seem to sell everything (food, fish, wood, clothes, artefacts, small commodities, etc.), with the only thing apparently reserved for women being '*bolinhas*' (small 'fat cakes' or rolls). As the quote below shows, there is little doubt that this heavy male bias in economic activities has an important cultural/religious basis, but we shall also see that some women are in the process of breaking out of this, mainly because poverty forces them and their husbands to break cultural rules.

> "There are many men here who become embarrassed if people see that their wives and daughters have to work" (Male Resident, Mossuril).

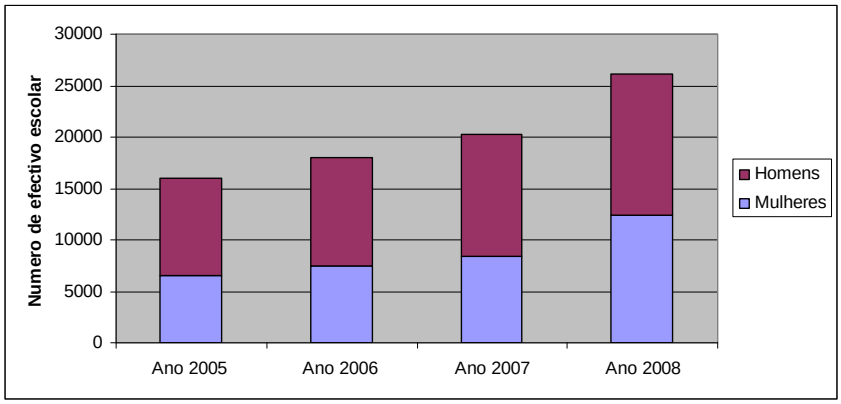
There seems to be limited effort on the part of the District Administration and other public institutions to enhance the role of women in economic life. The most important tool that is available in this regard is the 'Seven Million MT scheme' (RdM 2005; see also MPD 2009), through which people in the districts can apply for public funding for projects that will enhance employment and income. The application process goes through a three-level consultative process (i.e. so-called Consultative Councils), but the ultimate decision is made by the District Government and its technical team. From an initial start of 150 projects awarded funding in 2006 in Mossuril, the number increased to 296 for a total value of 8.4 mn MT in 2008 (GDM 2008). 82 percent of the projects were formally headed by men, and 18 percent by women. There are no provisions in relevant policy documents for favouring women in the allocations for this important programme (RdM 2005).

The most vocal institution for women's economic empowerment in Mossuril is OMM, currently with a dynamic and active leadership. However, with OMM's strong affiliation with the Frelimo party in a predominantly Renamo area, and with the limited funding allocated by the mother-organisation, their options for substantive initiatives are restricted. There are also a number of NGOs active in the district, including CARE (rural water supply), ADRA (distribution of seeds) and MSF-Belgium (health), as well as several local organisations. As we shall see, their activities are mainly related to song and dance and other cultural expressions – which tend to cement rather than change gender relations (see below).

[10] As with most cultural imperatives, they have a particular logic: According to the extension officer mentioned above, fishing has always been a dangerous occupation and households could not risk losing the mother of the children in the family.

In education, the District of Mossuril exhibits one of the lowest adult literacy and school attendance rates in the country. Figures from 2005 show that 88 percent of the population was illiterate, and that only 20 percent had previously attended or attended school. The illiteracy rate for women was as high as 95.3 percent, as against 80.1 percent for men (MAE 2005). Having said this, there seems to have been a concerted effort over the past few years to improve the level of education in the district on the part of the Provincial Government, as well as from the District Directorate of Education. As seen in Figure 2, enrolment shows a sharp increase in the period 2005-2008 for boys as well as girls. According to the District Director, the two most important initiatives have been the physical upgrading of school structures, and a large number of community meetings arguing for the importance of sending children – including girls – to school.

Figure 2: *Primary School Enrolment Boys and Girls 2005-2008*



Source: Mossuril District Directorate of Education.

Equally important is the establishment of the Mossuril Secondary School, which was inaugurated in 2007 and takes students up to Grade 11 (full secondary school will be offered from 2010). While still having a limited number of students and many who come from other districts, this has opened up opportunities for families from Mossuril who aren't in a position to send their children to boarding school. 40 percent of the students are girls. According to the acting School Director, they tend to have a somewhat weaker academic background than the boys, but "compensate for this by working harder [than the boys]". Three female students interviewed for this study emphasised how important support from their parents had been, and all had ambitions of getting formal employment and of moving to Nampula or Maputo "as there are no employment opportunities here".

Despite these positive developments, the District Director of Education states that there are still a lot of obstacles and there is reluctance among parents to send their children to school. Part of the problem has to do with a perception that education for girls, in particular, is a waste of time and resources, as their main goal should be to marry and have children. Girls in secondary school expressed concern that their education would be discontinued if their parents identified a good husband for them. Some also emphasised the lack of employment opportunities in Mossuril, and that it is better for girls to learn to work 'properly' (usually implying domestic work and agriculture), the sooner the better. In heavily Muslim communities, moreover, many parents prefer to send their children to one of the many Muslim schools (*madrassas*),[11] where they do religious training and instil in the students Islam's position on the roles of men and women (see Chapter 3). Some of them do also teach basic literacy and other public school disciplines.

[11] People pay a small fee for sending their children to these schools, but their main source of funding comes from Mosques and individuals outside the district.

In health, figures from 2005 show that there is one health unit (health centres and posts) for every 19.000 inhabitants, one hospital bed for every 2.400 inhabitants, and one professional health worker for every 5.400 inhabitants. The most frequently recorded illnesses are malaria, diarrhoea, pneumonia, bronchopneumonia, DTS and HIV-AIDS (with an estimated rate of 8 percent) (MAE 2005). The Director of the main health unit (the *Centro de Saúde I* in the Vila) told us that coverage is insufficient, and that it is difficult to recruit (and keep) qualified health workers in a district like Mossuril. There are also serious problems with transportation, as people live spread throughout the district and many communities along the coast are effectively isolated at times of floods and cyclones (the last major cyclone, 'Jokwe', was in 2008). In his opinion, traditional doctors (*curandeiros*) are not particularly common in the district, but many women still often postpone going to health centres because they haven't received the necessary permission from their husbands to do so.

In sum, Mossuril is a 'traditional' district with considerable influence from Macua culture and Islam. It is also a poor district with limited options for employment and income beyond agriculture, fisheries and small-scale informal trade. It has traditionally had a high rate of illiteracy and poor levels of health, but in education there are important ongoing initiatives. Even though the district administration is aware of the political discourse attached to gender equality and the empowerment of women, there are no concerted public efforts to deal with gender inequalities.

Our focus group discussions with men and women in Mossuril revealed a broad agreement on the main challenges for Mossuril, albeit with men emphasising problems related to employment and income and women being more concerned about the welfare of their families and children (Table 7).

Table 7. *Main Perceived Problems in Mossuril*

Male Focal Group	**Women Focal Group**
There is much suffering.	There is hunger.
There is no employment for locals.	There is no employment.
People steal from houses and *machambas*.	Young children look old [due to poverty].
Wages are too low.	Children don't go to school.
There is no access to credit.	Many people are sick.
There are no shops.	There is no respect between people.

2.5 Nampula City

Nampula City is Mozambique's third largest city (smaller than Maputo and Matola, but larger than Beira) (INE 2009). The city traces its history from the first arrival of the Portuguese in 1896; the establishment of a military camp on land owned by *Régulo Uampula* (Nampula) in 1907; and the arrival of the railway line from the coast to the site in 1930, which led to the establishment of a *Vila* and, from 1956, the city of Nampula. The population of Nampula City has increased faster than any other city in Mozambique, from 146.000 in 1980, to 303.000 in 1997, to 478.000 in 2007. The proportion of women has increased steadily, and currently stands at approximately 49 percent (Araújo 2005; INE 2009, World Bank 2009).

As with all Mozambican cities, it is organised into a 'formal' commercial city centre, adjacent to old 'Portuguese' residential areas, and surrounded by large and sprawling informal settlements – even though the boundaries between them have become increasingly blurred as people have settled spontaneously all over the city. Institutions of the State, the Province and the Municipality are

located in the city centre. Nampula boasts a number of banks, stores, shops, car-dealers, hotels, restaurants and other formal enterprises, most of which still seem to be owned by Indians. But the dominant part of economic life takes place in large and busy open markets (including the 'wholesale' market, Naresta, the food market, Matadour, and the commodity market, Cavalaria), on street corners and from '*ambulantes*'. Also in this case, however, the borders between the formal and informal economy are difficult to establish with certainty (see Map 3).[12]

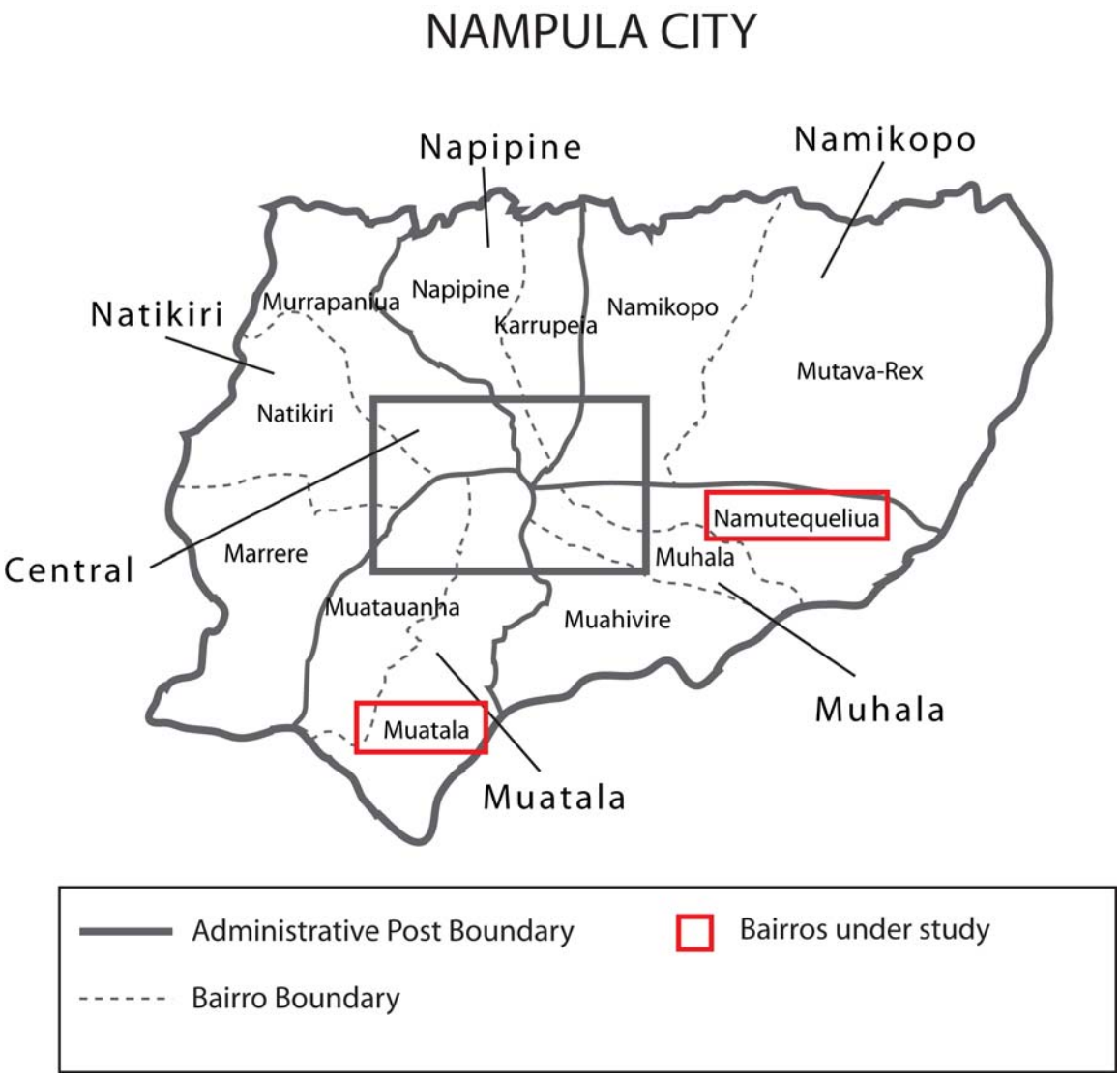
At first sight, public space in the city of Nampula seems to be dominated by men to a much larger extent than is the case in cities in the central and southern parts of Mozambique (Paulo et al. 2007, World Bank 2009). There are women employed in public offices such as the Municipality, where 25 percent of the employees are female (Município de Nampula), but in the main open markets mentioned above, men seem to sell not only manufactured goods (furniture, pots and pans, stoves, charcoal, etc.) and imported commodities (plastic utensils, cigarettes, batteries, CDs, etc.) like in other Mozambican cities, but also trade in fresh food (grain, vegetables, nuts, fish, etc.) and processed food, including grilled meat, cooked vegetables and fish. In the largest markets, the only items consistently sold by women are bread-products like *bolinhas* and home-made sweets, often made of coconut and ground-nuts. Women also seem to be less present than men as shoppers, which probably reflects the fact that it is usually men who are employed as domestic servants in Nampula and hence do the shopping for their employers.

However, the picture becomes more varied as one moves around in the city. In the central city ('*cidade de cimento*'), change is most apparent in the chaotic scenes around the railway-station and bus-terminal where women and men fight to sell the same types of goods to customers who are on the move and where sociocultural gender divisions are more difficult to apply. Moreover, as one moves into the individual *bairros* and their narrow alleyways, the gender divisions in economic activities seem even more permeable or difficult to detect. In Namutequeliua, for example, we met women running carpentry-shops and selling practically every type of goods from imported commodities to fruits and vegetables – as well as men baking and selling *bolinhas*.

Also in the case of Nampula City, we will argue, public scenes like these reveal a lot about gender relations to which we will return in more detail below. While 'public' relations between men and women are still heavily male-dominated, there are processes of change at the more community-based and private levels as a combined result of men's increasing inability to maintain the economic basis for their household headship with unemployment on the one hand – and new spaces created for women in the urban environment on the other.

> "It is the women who work in our *bairro*. The men are just waiting for work they know will not come." (Female Resident, Namutequeliua)

[12] Street-gossip and discussions with key informants such as middle-men and taxi-drivers indicate that 'Nigerians' (often used as a collective phrase for young men from West-Africa) are increasingly central in this 'intermediate' economy, linking the two.


NAMPULA CITY
Napipine
Namikopo
Natikiri
Murrapaniua
Napipine
Karrupeia
Namikopo
Mutava-Rex
Natikiri
Namutequeliua
Central
Marrere
Muhala
Muatauanha
Muahivire
Muhala
Muatala
Muatala
Administrative Post Boundary
Bairro Boundary
Bairros under study

The City of Nampula is currently governed by Frelimo (who received 70 percent of the votes in the most recent municipal election), and has the common Mozambican municipal political and administrative structure (World bank 2009): A Municipal Assembly (44 men and 19 women); a Municipal President (a man); and nine councillors or *vereadores* (3 of whom are women) heading various sectorial departments. The city is administratively divided into six Municipal Administrative Posts and 18 *bairros,* with each *bairro* divided into urban quarters or *quarteirões* (Table 8).

Men dominate positions on all these levels, but increasingly less so the further down the structure one looks. In Namutequeliua, for example, 4 out of 10 *chefes de quarteirões* (heads of urban quarters who are nominated by the population) are women. The public institutions working most actively to enhance women empowerment in the City is the Department of Women under the Provincial Directorate of Women and Social Action. The Municipality does not have a special Gender Unit, no expressed gender policy, and does not seem to be particularly interested in the issue.

Table 8. *Population and Administrative Divisions*

Adm. Post	**Men**	**Women**	***Bairros***
Central	9.433	8.170	Central *
Muatala	55.164	53.841	Muatala, Mutauhanha
Muhala	77.056	75.823	Muhala, Namutequeliua, Muahivire
Namicopo	30.768	29.937	Namicopo, Mutava-Rex
Napipine	44.094	42.207	Napipine, Carrupeia
Natikiri	26.634	25.644	Natikire, Marrupaniua, Marrere

Source: INE 2009. * '*Bairros*': Bombeiros; 25 de Setembro; 1 de Maio; Limoeiros; Liberdade; Militar.

There is little information available on the financial and economic situation of Nampula city.[13] While in the process of becoming the 'financial capital of the north' with recent establishments of a number of banks reflecting the city's central position in international and regional trade (World Bank 2009), access to formal employment is very limited outside the few private enterprises (that often demand bribes or contacts) and public institutions that demand qualifications most people in the *bairros* do not have. Still, according to the World Bank (2009), the formal employment rate is 38 percent – with the majority depending on the informal economy or 'urban agriculture' carried out in the vicinity of the city.

The *bairros* generally give a rather 'chaotic' impression, following a long period of unregulated construction and severe problems with erosion. Perhaps the most striking aspect of life in Nampula's *bairros* is the crowdedness and constant movement of people. Dwellings are located very close to each other, often making 'private space' more 'public' than 'private'. Each quarter has an intricate system of social meeting places (bars, clubs, kindergartens, associations, etc.) and a number of commercial outlets that sell most if not all the goods a family will need during a week.[14] The *bairros* in the central parts of the city consist of high-rise buildings and formal private houses, but these also tend to be overcrowded, in poor state of repair and with inadequate physical

[13] As opposed to the District of Mossuril where we were given interviews and received all the information we asked for, this turned out to be much more problematic in Nampula. The concerted efforts to enhance the competence and capacity in districts through the Local Government Act (RdM 2005) does not seem to have been matched by similar efforts at the municipal level.

[14] The neighborhood traders either buy directly from the large wholesale markets or from intermediaries who transport goods to the *bairros.*

infrastructure in terms of water, electricity, roads and waste-management.[15] The two most populous *bairros* are Namutequeliua and Muahivire, located within the boundaries of the Muhala Administrative Post.

In terms of education and health, Nampula has three universities, 14 secondary schools and 70 primary schools (EP1 and EP2) (World Bank 2009). Hence, it is well endowed with educational facilities, but with the large population influx there is still pressure, particularly on the primary educational facilities. As we shall see, moreover, many parents do not send their children to school in a new urban environment they feel is basically insecure. Data on literacy and school attendance are relatively favourable in Nampula compared with Mossuril and show more equal presence of boys and girls (Table 9). However, there are considerable variations within the city – with a female literacy rate varying from 43 percent in the Central Urban District to 32 percent in Natikire and a female school attendance rate varying from 44 percent in the Central Urban District to 16 percent in Namikopo (World Bank 2009).

Table 9. *Literacy Rate and School Attendance, Nampula City (Percent)*

	Men	**Women**
Literacy rate	64	36
Attending School	26	23
Have attended school	48	32
Never attended school	27	45

Source: World Bank (2009).

Nampula also has three Provincial Hospitals, three Health Centres and a number of Health Posts located in the different *bairros*. Again, access to health facilities is relatively good, but hampered by inadequate access to qualified personnel and consultation fees that inhibit many from using the facilities. There is one health unit per 33.200 inhabitants; one health unit bed per 699 inhabitants; and one health worker per 772 city residents (World Bank 2009). The health authorities have also registered 75 traditional '*parteiras*' but no *curandeiros* – which as we shall see does not reflect the reality in the *bairros* where *curandeiros* are used particularly for more spiritual/psychological conditions.

In sum, Nampula has been attracting a large number of people in search of employment and a better life than they have in the rural areas. However, the large majority of those migrating end up in urban shantytowns, which have their own problems – first and foremost related to employment and income in a context where money is necessary to cope and an intricate part of most social relationships. Our focus group discussions with men and women in Nampula revealed broad consensus about the main challenges in the city. Many of these have their base in urban unemployment, poverty and urban crowded living. Also in this case, however, the male focus group focussed primarily on issues related to the community at large, while the female focus group primarily focussed on household and family matters (Table 10).

[15] There are, of course, exceptions to this general picture. The most glaring one is the new Hotel Milénio, constructed out of concrete and glass.

Table 10. *Main Perceived Problems in Nampula City*

Male Focal Group	**Women Focal Group**
Unemployment [for those who cannot pay]*	Hunger
No support for elders	No work
Crime	No support from government
Witchcraft	No money to send children to school
Unknown neighbours	No *machamba* [for those without money]
No support for those without family	Trade (*negócio*) does not yield money
Divorces [due to unemployment]	Thieves steal from our houses
People who talk too much about others	There are many orphans

* This refers to the widespread practice in Mozambique (see e.g. Tvedten et al. 2007; Rosário et al. 2008) of people having to pay middlemen to get work.

The rural district of Mossuril and the city of Nampula thus stand out as very different historical and contemporary contexts for social relations of poverty and gender. In Chapter 3, we will take a closer look at these relationships.

3. Gender and Poverty

While the historical, political and economic context explored in the preceding chapter defines a set of structural constraints for people in Mossuril and Nampula City, they are also engaged in social relationships at the more immediate level of the household, extended family and local community. As postulated in the beginning of this study (Chapter 1), people's room for manoeuvre or alternative coping strategies within the existing structural order will vary with levels of material poverty as well as with hegemonic sociocultural perceptions of manhood and womanhood. In this chapter we will take a closer look at the cultural perceptions and social relations of gender in Mossuril and Nampula City, coming back to how structure and agency interact and influence key processes of poverty and gender in the concluding chapter.

3.1 Cultural Practices

The cultural constructions of male and female in Nampula are initially instilled in people through traditional Macua cultural practices (such as initiation rites and ancestral cults) and religion (the *sharia* laws in the case of Muslims and the Bible and its interpretations in the case of Christianity).[16] People in Nampula are fundamentally religious in the sense that hardly anyone questions the basic tenets of their religion, and a large proportion of the population practise their faith by regularly going to mosques or churches.[17] In fact, references to religion were often made when discussing issues of gender relations with people in Mossuril and Nampula City.

In Mossuril, all households interviewed in our survey were Muslims (Table 11). While *shaykhs* and religious teachers (*mwalimo*) emphasised the superiority of men in the social fabric of society and households, they also underlined men's responsibilities under *sharia* laws of supporting their wives and children and treating them with respect. Knowledge of the faith is instilled in children from a very early age through readings of the Koran (or *Kitabu* in Macua), with the majority attending one of the many Muslim schools (*madrassas*) in the communities. The Muslim initiation rites for girls upon reaching puberty transmit to them gendered roles and notions of sexuality – emphasising their obligations towards men. With regard to adults, practically everybody[18] follows the prescriptions in the *sharia* for praying regularly; following Muslim festivities related to birth, marriage and death; and (in the case of men) attending the Mosque on Fridays. Only older women consistently use veils (*hijab*) as prescribed under *sharia*. The limited number of younger women and girls who cover themselves is an indication of the less dogmatic faith in the Sufi tradition on the coast discussed in Chapter 2.

In Nampula City, references to religion were less frequent in discussions about gender and the relations between men and women.[19] Over 70 percent of the households in our survey were Muslims and the rest considered themselves Catholics. In discussions with focus groups, people agreed that "eight out of ten" Muslim households (i.e. their men) regularly go to Mosque, while

[16] The Koran is interpreted through various traditions of the prophet (such as *shia* and *sunni*), which again is expressed in various *sharia* legal frameworks for leading good Muslim lives.

[17] Preliminary data from the 2007 Census show that 39 percent of the population in Nampula are Catholic, 38 percent are Muslims, and 8 percent are Evangelical.

[18] On a number of topics in this study, focus groups were asked questions like "out of ten, how many people/households go regularly to the mosque/church " etc. – using fingers or drawings in the sand to visualise the distribution. The groups tended to spend a long time reaching a common conclusion In this case, the groups insisted that 'ten out of ten' go to the Mosque. While not 'scientific' in any strict sense, the exercise yielded a number of interesting results that indicate trends and contrasts.

[19] At the same time, the more recent and dogmatic Islamist tradition (*whahabi*) advocating a further 'purification' of local Islam (Bonate n.d.) has a stronger standing in Nampula City particularly among the Indian population.

only "three out of ten" Catholic households (i.e. both men and women) regularly go to church. As argued, the Catholic missions brought with them a combination of their religious faith and a strongly patriarchal Latin culture, which generally seems to have led to a male bias in their religious discourses and practices (Sheldon 2002). The new evangelical and charismatic churches that are becoming increasingly common in other larger cities in Mozambique, and primarily frequented by women, were hardly represented in our sample at all. The Zionist/*Sião* church, for example, only represents 1.5 percent of the population in Nampula but 15.5 percent nationally, according to preliminary data from the 2007 Census.

Table 11. *Most Common Religion Practised by Household (Percent)*

Religion	Mossuril		Nampula		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
Catholic	0	0	49	44	28
Muslim	100	100	49	52	71
Other	0	0	2	4	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100

The importance of religion in the communities we have studied does not mean that traditional spiritual practices have become less important. In line with this, as many as 86 percent of the households in our survey practise ancestral cults ('Epapa', 'Mukutho', 'Swadaka' and 'Kupatha') on a regular basis (Table 12). The proportion of households practising ancestral cults is highest in rural Mossuril, but the large majority of people who have moved to and settled in the city also continue to practise them. In Nampula, the proportion is higher among female- than male-headed households. Their essence is to relate to ancestors and their spirits to secure a good life and solve family and community problems, on the basis of a perception of close interlinkages between the past and the present. The complexity of male-female relations is well exemplified by the continued importance of women (*apyamwene n'loko*/*apyamwne nihimo*) in such cults.

Table 12. *Practices of Ancestral Cults (Percent)*

Practising Cult	Mossuril		Nampula		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
Yes	93	87	80	84	86
No	7	13	20	16	14
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Traditionally, the type of cultural practice with the most direct relation to gender and the cultural perception of men and women has been initiation rites. In the Macua historical tradition, women were taught wifely behaviour as part of their initiation ceremonies. These took place when girls were about ten years old, under the tutelage of older women who taught them about hygiene, sexual comportment, and what their duties would be towards their future husbands. For boys, initiation rites were geared towards teaching them bravery and responsibility (Sheldon 2002).

Initiation rites are still practised, but as seen from Table 13, they have become less common among people in urban Nampula and particularly so among female-headed households. This is partly the outcome of such practices being discouraged by religious leaders (see above), but *may* also be interpreted as an increasing scepticism among female-headed households regarding the implications

of such rites:[20] Perhaps their most important aspect is the link to sexuality and marriage: Having gone through the initiation rites implies that boys and girls are considered ready to engage in sexual relationships, and girls' obligation not to refuse sex is emphasised. This partly explains the very low average age of marriage in Nampula (16 years), and the very high proportion of young girls under 15 (37 percent) in the province who have been engaged in sexual relationships (MISAU 2005; INE 2009).[21] At the same time, however, the importance attached to fertility and the ability to have children is still very deeply rooted in Macua culture, and the low age of sexual relationships is also partly linked to the importance for women to prove their fertility.

Table 13. *Traditional Initiation Rites among HH Members under 12 Years of Age (Percent)*

Practicing Initiation rites	Mossuril		Nampula		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
Yes	40	18	33	9	23
No	60	82	67	91	77
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Another cultural practice with very specific gender implications is that of witchcraft and sorcery – this also being practised in an apparently unproblematic combination with religion. Scholars have argued that witchcraft and sorcery have a primarily social function, in the sense that it usually involves people who in one way or another don't follow the sociocultural rules in local communities (Moore and Sanders 2001). In Mossuril and Nampula the focus-groups largely agreed that women, as opposed to men, are most often involved in such cases. Particularly older widows insisting on their rights within families are frequently accused of witchcraft and suffer social stigmatisation. The continued practice of witchcraft and sorcery affecting women *may* be seen as a way to counteract signs of increased women empowerment on the part of men.

Language as a cultural practice is important not only for being able to communicate and have access to information, but also for a deeper understanding of the changing world in which people live. Common language also strengthens social cohesion of a population group and functions as an important vehicle for cultural values and norms. As seen in Table 14, Macua or another local language is the most common language of communication for all households in Mossuril. However, while 60 percent of the male household heads in Mossuril speak Portuguese, no female household heads in Mossuril do so (Table 15). This clearly alienates women from most of the 'official' cultural activity and important societal information. In urban Nampula, as many as 66 percent of the male-headed households and 52 percent of the female-headed households use Portuguese as their main medium of communication. Moreover, practically all household heads know Portuguese as a first or second language, which, as we shall see, is important for access to employment and income in that context.

[20] As people performing rites of this type increasingly charge money for doing so, it may also partially reflect the fact that female-headed households are poorer than male-headed households (see below).

[21] Studies show that child marriages (and girls' consequent 'loss' of adolescence) has negative psychological as well as practical implications (Otoo-Oyortey and Pobi 2003).

Table 14. *Most Common Language of Communication used in Household (Percent)*

Main language	Mossuril		Nampula		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
Portuguese	0	0	66	52	30
Macua	100	97	34	48	69
Xangana	0	3	0	0	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Table 15. *Knowledge of Language Other than the Main One by HHH (Percent)*

Second language	Mossuril		Nampula		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
Yes	60	0	100	96	64
No	40	100	0	4	36
Total	100	100	100	100	100

The unequal access to "culture" in the wider sense of information and knowledge about contemporary society at large is, finally, indicated by the channels of people's access to information. As seen from Table 16, the sources of information are less varied in rural Mossuril than in urban Nampula. The difference is particularly noteworthy in the case of female-headed households: In Mossuril, 77 percent of the female-headed households have family and friends as their most important sources of information, with the 'local' focus this implies and only 10 percent have access to national media such as radio, newspapers and TV. In Nampula, the equivalent figures are 24 and 76 percent. The limited impact of the radio among women, which is the most accessible media in a context with high illiteracy rates, is particularly noteworthy.

Table 16. *Most Important Source of Information for Households (Percent)*

Main language	Mossuril		Nampula		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
Radio	77	7	60	28	28
TV	0	0	26	48	48
Newspapers	0	3	6	0	0
Family/friends	20	77	8	24	24
Other	3	13	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100

In sum, the cultural expressions of 'gender' discussed above seem to build up under the suppressed position of women in Mossuril in particular, but also in Nampula City. The traditional Macua matrilineal systems of kinship and descent, where women have had a relatively strong and independent position, is changing. Religion, Islam in particular, preaches a value system where men are superior in practically all areas of life – albeit still with an obligation to take care of their family. Cultural practices such as witchcraft and sorcery seem to have the effect of excluding women who move outside of accepted sociocultural norms. Female-headed households seem to be systematically disadvantaged regarding their access to relevant information.

Let us end this chapter with a presentation of a cultural expression that has changed over time, reflecting the changing position of women and that is increasingly popular in Nampula: The Tufo Dance. Tufo used to be a religious dance with male as well as female dance groups (albeit always

separate), praising the prophet Muhammed through song and dance (Arnfred 2004). The rhythm of the four flat drums and tambourines was slow, and people danced while sitting down on their knees. Nowadays men dance only rarely, and primarily linked to religious celebrations. For women in the many dance groups on the coast and increasingly also in the city of Nampula, the dance seems to have taken on different connotations. The rhythm is faster, they tend to stand up, and the subject of the rhymes varies from religious or cultural texts praising tradition to contemporary political themes – although women from both types of groups also emphasise their own social importance(Ibid). According to our informants, the former is still most common at the coast (including Mossuril) and the latter in urban areas (including Nampula). This way, the Tufu dance may be seen to underline the sociocultural position of women in rural Nampula and the changing position of women in urban Nampula – which are topics to which we will return in the following pages.

3.2 Household Organisation

Cultural perceptions of 'manhood' and 'womanhood' are most immediately played out through the institution of marriage and the organisation of households. In matrilineal Nampula, we have seen how marriage, traditionally, was a way to secure alliances between clans and extended families, with the matrilineage maintaining control over a woman and her children. The *uxorilocal* residence pattern, where the husband settled on the land of the wife's family, meant that the matrilineage continued to be present in the life of women after marriage. The weak control of men over their wife or wives and children was underlined by the absence of a brideprice (*lobolo*). While not giving power to women as such, the system did imply that women were in a position to relate to different social groups which gave them an added sense of social and economic security.

The traditional system of kinship and marriage in Nampula has been under pressure from patriarchal Islam, particularly on the coast, and from forces of 'modernity' and urbanisation where the extended family and land ownership have become less important and new forms of property ownership and capital accumulation have emerged. The Koran and *sharia* laws emphasise the relation between a man and his biological children and also involves a form of dowry (*mahr*) – even though this is meant for the marrying woman and not her family. With the accumulation of wealth beyond land, moreover, patrilineages and men tend to reinforce efforts to keep amassed riches. In addition, the change from a primarily agrarian form of subsistence to a situation where employment and income have become vital for survival have made household livelihoods as well as marriage as a form of social organisation more fragile.

All this is reflected in the current situation in the province of Nampula, the district of Mossuril and the city of Nampula. As seen from Table 17, 21 percent of all households in Nampula province are female-headed (preliminary data from the 2007 Census indicate that this has increased to 24.5 percent). The large majority of these (90 percent) are widows or divorcees (MISAU 2005). While lower than the national average of 26 percent, it is a high proportion given the emphasis both in the Macua traditional matrilineal system of incorporating single women into their natal family and the difficulties for women, under *sharia* law, to divorce.[22] Available data from Mossuril (MAE 2005) and Nampula City (World Bank 2009) indicate that the proportion of female-headed households in these two areas is 9 and 14 percent, respectively.[23]

[22] While a man can readily leave his wife through what is called *talaq*, a woman can only do so with the consent of external guiding councils (shura or 'khula') that are made up of men.

[23] As stated in Chapter 1, we have chosen to select a sample of 50 percent male-headed and 50 percent female-headed households in our survey – compelling us to use other sources to ascertain the proportion of the two categories in the two study-sites.

Table 17. *Proportion of Male-Headed and Female Headed Households (Percent)*

Household Headship	Nampula Province	Mossuril	Nampula City
Male-headed households	79	91	86
Female-headed households	21	9	14

Sources: MISAU 2005; MAE 2005; World Bank 2009.

Our study indicates that these figures are probably too low if counting *de facto,* and not *de jure*, female-headedness. In Mossuril, this is primarily related to the number of women from polygamous household units who are not supported by their husbands because "they are too poor" and who effectively depend on their own resources to survive. In one case, a woman with three small children lived only a few hundred metres away from the dwelling of her husband and his first wife under very precarious conditions. "I don't even get support to take the children to the hospital", she claimed. In Nampula, there seems to be a more explicit process of 'abandonment': Women are simply asked to leave the dwelling when the husband finds another wife or lover (*amante*), as there is no 'urban tradition' or room for keeping more than one wife. In both cases, women tend to present themselves as 'married' as long as they are not formally divorced – because being married is the social norm and being a single mother is easily associated with being 'loose' or a 'prostitute'.

Both in Mossuril and Nampula City, moreover, young single mothers are often 'hidden' in their natal households, who see supporting their daughters as an obligation. Individual case-studies show that some become integrated into these households by contributing to the household income and 'eating from the same pot' – without any support from the biological father of the child. With the reduced role of the clan and kinship group, it has become more difficult for the young mother's family to enforce support. In Nampula City we came across cases where community courts (*tribunal comunitário*) had taken over this role, ruled that the biological father should pay compensation and sent the decision to community leaders (*secretários de bairro* or *chefes de quarteirões*) or formal employers. While women in Muatala and Namutequeliua complained that the community leaders did not have the interest or power to enforce this, some women have been successful in having the father's employer withdraw a contribution from his pay-check (Pers.comm. The Mozambican Association of Female Legal Experts, AMMCJ). In the poorest households, however, single mothers usually seem to be made responsible for their own and their children's upkeep, even if they live under the same roof as their natal household – making them *de facto* female-headed households.

Having said this, we also came across cases in Muatala and Namutequeliua where women abandoned men when they found other men who they thought would take better care of them. The inability of some men to take care of their wives (as in Mossuril) and others to keep their wives (as in Nampula City) both point towards an emerging process that in other Southern African contexts has been coined 'the crisis of manhood' (see e.g. Bank 2001; Gregory 2005; Tvedten 2008). Traditionally male household headship has been based on a combination of a 'patriarchal culture' and men's ability to uphold their status and role as household heads by means of their control of agricultural production and income. In situations of extreme poverty, where men have neither land nor income, this becomes difficult.

The emerging permeability of the household as a central social unit in situations of change is indicated by marital status. As seen from Table 18, the large majority of male-headed households in 'traditional' Mossuril are formally married in a mosque (through a ceremony called *sunnah nikahi*). Such ceremonies give a cultural sanction to the marriage, not only between the spouses but also in relation to the community at large. This reinforces marriage as an institution, but also makes it more difficult for women to break out of the domestic arrangement. Under *sharia,* 'legitimate' reasons for seeking divorce are first and foremost related to inability of the husband to feed the family, abject

violence and impotence (Prof. Anne Sofie Roald, pers.comm), but it is still difficult to get acceptance from the *khula* (see above). At the same time, 97 percent of the female heads of household in Mossuril are single (divorced or widows) and only three percent find themselves in a marital union – which implies that men in Mossuril, nearly by definition, are considered household heads when present.

Table 18. *Marital Status (Percent)*

Type of Marriage	Mossuril		Nampula		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
Single	3	97	11	60	41
Cohabitant	10	0	34	24	17
Civil Marriage	0	0	3	0	0
Church/mosque	87	3	46	16	40
Traditional *	0	0	6	0	2
Total	100	100	100	100	100

* Lobolo, pethe, mahari

In Nampula City, about half of the male headed households are formally married in a church or mosque and a large proportion (34 percent) are cohabitants – at the outset breaking traditional *Macua* as well as Muslim and Christian cultural rules. Cohabitation does not involve any acknowledged formal sanctions of the marriage, neither by the extended family nor the local community and hence tends to be more vulnerable (cohabitantship is recognised in the new Family Law of 2003, but we did not meet anybody who was aware of this). The reasons for the increasing prevalence of co-habitantship as a domestic arrangement seem to be partly contradictory: Lavish 'modern' Christian marriage ceremonies have become popular and expected among the better-off in urban areas, but have also become so expensive that many choose to live together or postpone marriage until they can afford it. For the majority of co-habitants, however, living together seems to be a practical arrangement, relating to a combination of love, sex and immediate economic considerations. Housing is a scarcity, and living together is important not only for having a place to stay but also for security.

Furthermore, while 60 percent of female-headed households in Nampula City are headed by single women (mainly divorced or widows), as many as 40 percent live with a male spouse either through marriage or cohabitantship. Household headship in Nampula is thus not automatically vested in the male partner, but an issue of 'negotiation'. The two most important factors defining headship in this context is household provisioning and dwelling ownership: When women are the main income earners they are likely to be considered household heads. And when they own the dwelling in which the household lives they may also be considered household heads. This is particularly the case when the woman has taken in a new man after divorce. This points towards an emerging development in urban contexts like Nampula in the form of a 'masculinisation' of poverty: Unemployed and poor men increasingly 'attach' themselves to women with incomes and dwellings on a semi-permanent basis, effectively becoming 'domestic nomads' (Tvedten 2008) with little or no say in the household units in which they live.

Also, polygamy as a domestic arrangement is under pressure (Table 19). While polygamy was traditionally a way to form alliances, raise agricultural production and wealth and adhere to the Muslim faith, it is increasingly becoming a form of marriage among the poor to prove their manhood (Rosário 2008). However, many poor men find themselves in a situation where they cannot take proper care of their wives (particularly second or third wives) and children, as the

Koran prescribes, then effectively become economically responsible for themselves or move back to their natal family. Official data show that the proportion of polygamous units in the province of Nampula is as high as 34 percent (MISAU 2005). Our survey shows a lower proportion of 14 percent (Mossuril) and 3 percent (Nampula City), which *may* indicate a decrease in prevalence but is more likely the outcome of our *de facto* rather than *de jure* definition.[24] The lower proportion of polygamous household units in Nampula City reflects a perception in the city of polygamy being related to 'rural life' and 'tradition' rather than 'urban life' and 'modernity' – but it does not necessarily imply that urban men do not have several women. Many men seem to have an 'official' and a 'private' wife (*amante*) in town, and others have one family unit in the city and another in their rural area of origin as a form of 'double rootedness'.

Table 19. *Polygamous Household Units (Percent)*

Number of Spouses	Nampula Province*	Mossuril**	Nampula City**
One spouse only	76	86	97
More than one spouse	34	14	3

Sources: * MISAU 2005. ** Our survey.

The flexibility and permeability of household units is further underlined by the differences in the size of households. Despite the fact that the fertility rate is higher in rural (6.3) than in urban (5.4) areas in the Nampula province (MISAU 2005), both male-headed and female-headed household units are larger in Muatala and Namutequeliua than in Mossuril (Table 20). Moreover, while only 13 and 7 percent of male-headed and female-headed households in Mossuril have seven members or more, the equivalent figures for Nampula are 54 and 44 percent. Our survey shows that the households in urban Nampula have a larger proportion of distant family members and non-family members than in rural Mossuril, implying a considerable pressure on urban households to take in and support migrants from rural areas who want to try their luck in the city.[25]

Table 20. *Size of Households (Percent)*

Household Members	Mossuril		Nampula		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
1-2	17	33	9	4	16
3-4	20	23	11	12	17
5-6	50	37	26	40	37
7+	13	7	54	44	30
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Average HH size	**5.5**	**5.0**	**7.5**	**7.1**	**6.6**

The differences in size of female-headed households are particularly noteworthy: 33 percent of the female-headed households in Mossuril have only one to two members, but only four percent of the female-headed households in Nampula city have so few affiliates. This reflects a situation in rural areas with many older widows who find themselves alone or with a few dependants – often

[24] In our survey, women were asked if they were formally part of a polygamous unit and if they maintained social and economic relations with their husbands – with both conditions having to be in place to be part of a polygamous unit.

[25] Preliminary data from the 2007 Census show that the average household size in Nampula Province is 4.0. As we have argued in earlier studies (Tvedten et al., 2006; Paulo et al. 2007; Rosário et al. 2008), this is likely to be the outcome of a formal definition that does not reflect the realities on the ground as they are perceived by people themselves, who see people contributing to and eating from the same pot as the salient characteristic, as we have done in our definition.

grandchildren or nephews who have been left in the rural area by their parents (the average age of female-headed households in Mossuril is 55 years). In our focus groups, some described this as a strategy to make sure that their children learn how to relate to 'tradition' and 'behave'. Others describe it as a way to reduce the burden of having to feed many children in a context of poverty. In one case in Mossuril, the relation between an old lady and her granddaughter was clearly strained: The grandmother complained that the youngster did not help out in the field, never brought money to the house and did not obey her. The girl herself told us she missed her mother, and just wanted to go to Nampula City to stay.

In the city, female household heads are younger, at an average age of 40 years, and continue to live with their children as well as other family- and non-family members. This is not only the outcome of more flexible or permeable domestic arrangements: it also reflects the dearth of living space in cities like Nampula, that makes it difficult for people who have a house not to take in family members and others who are looking for accommodation. In many incidents dependants represent a heavy burden for the household head as the main income earner, but we also encountered cases where people were taken into the female-headed household to make it a more efficient socio-economic unit: In one case two sisters lived together with their respective children and cooperated around income-earning activities and child-care. In another, the household head's mother had moved from the coast to Namutequeliua with the explicit task of baking *bolos* that the daughter would sell in the *bairro* and take care of the children while she was gone.

In sum, we see clear differences in the domestic arrangements in rural Mossuril and urban Nampula: In Mossuril marriage and the establishment of household units are still done with reference to 'traditional' *Macua* and Muslim cultural idiosyncrasies. Marriage is formal, men are household heads, and the proportion of female-headed households is relatively small. In Nampula, households are more often based on informal arrangements or cohabitantship, headship is often defined with reference to socio-economic role rather than 'culture', and the proportion of female-headed households is higher. For women in Mossuril this implies that their 'fate' is closely attached to their male partner, which we shall see is further underlined by women's limited access to employment and income. In Nampula the economic context may have given women a larger degree of 'independence', but also more responsibility for themselves, their children and other family members.

3.3 Employment, Income and Expenditure

We have seen how 'traditional' culture and religion still has a strong impact on the formation of marriages and gender relations in Mossuril, but also how urbanisation has contributed to new forms of domestic arrangements in Nampula City – albeit without completely recasting old practices. In addition to the sociocultural essentials of kinship and marriage, the division of labour and control of economic resources is probably the most important determinant in shaping conceptions of maleness, femaleness and gender relations in Mozambique (Tvedten, Paulo & Montserrat 2008; see also Chant 2007).

Looking first at the main occupations of household heads in rural Mossuril (Table 21), only a very small proportion is formally employed. All are male-headed, and all are in the private sector. Further, among male-headed households there is relatively equal distribution between those whose main occupation is informal employment, farming and fishing. This reflects the economic situation in Mossuril described in Chapter 2, and also points towards a very low level of cash income and expenditure in the district (see below). With low production in agriculture and low and fluctuating catches in fisheries, income is unpredictable, making people vulnerable to adverse shocks and

expenses related to, for example, medical treatment, education and food shortages due to environmental disasters.[26]

Table 21. *Main Occupation of Household Head (Percent)*

Main Occupation	Mossuril		Nampula		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
Formal employment public	0	0	17	24	10
Formal employment private	10	0	11	0	6
Informal employment	20	0	40	16	33
Occasional employment	10	0	0	0	5
Farmer	30	87	3	12	20
Fisher	23	0	0	0	2
Student	0	0	3	0	1
Pensioner	3	0	3	0	2
Unemployed	3	13	23	48	21
Total	100	100	100	100	100

The large majority of the female household heads in Mossuril consider themselves to be primarily farmers. Our survey shows that they usually have few and small fields, which do not produce sufficiently for their own and their dependants' upkeep. Many female household heads we met had to do practically all the work in their fields themselves, complaining about the difficulty of getting extended family members to contribute and the lack of money to hire labour. No female household heads in Mossuril see the informal economy as their main occupation, which not only reflects the limited market but also the strong cultural prohibitions against working women. As noted above, it is still considered an embarrassment by many men in Mossuril to have their wives or female relatives work outside the domestic environment, seeing it as a public sign that they cannot take proper care of them as their religion prescribes. The main alternative source of cash income for women is the collection of small clams (*amêijoas*) on beaches at ebb tide, which is one of the few customary 'female occupations' and which gives very low returns. We also saw some women sell home-made biscuits (*biscoitos caseiros*), sweets made of coconut and ground nuts (*doces de coco caseiros*), and cooked corn-on-the-cob (*maçaroca cozida*), but also these typically yield small and fluctuating returns.

In Nampula City, a much larger proportion of the household heads have formal employment and cash income – but the costs of living in the city are also considerably higher than in rural Mossuril. The advantage with formal employment is not only that the remuneration, usually, is relatively good, but also that income is regular which makes it easier for the household heads to save and plan with a longer time-horizon. Moreover, an often overlooked benefit of formal employment is that of self-esteem. For many, the very essence of moving to a town or city is to get employment, and accomplishing this gives prestige, not only in the local urban community, but also in the rural area of origin. Research from other similar areas (Bank 2002; Tvedten 2008) show that many urban migrants are so ashamed of failing in town that this in itself inhibits them from moving back to their village, even though moving back may be best for themselves and their families.

A relatively high proportion (24 percent) of the female household heads in Nampula City is also formally employed. The level of education among women is higher and the cultural inhibitions around female employment are less pronounced in urban Nampula – if for nothing else because the

[26] A recent example of a natural disaster with severe consequences for people in Mossuril is the cyclone Jokwe that hit the area in 2008.

sociocultural control is weaker in the dense and tense *bairros*, and households need cash income to survive. But the sociocultural constraints have not disappeared: One woman fairly high up in the state bureaucracy told us she had been given the choice by her now ex-husband of stopping work or leaving when she reached a level of employment higher than his. The concentration of formally employed female household heads in the public sector is likely to be a reflection of the fact that employment in the public sector is largely (but not solely) based on merit – even though most women still work in subordinate positions as secretaries or assistants to men. In the private sector, competition is much fiercer and there is a widespread system of 'having to pay one's way' – with the implication that cultural prohibitions make themselves more felt and women tend to lose out.

As is also evident from Table 21, informal economic activities are much more common among the households in Nampula City than in Mossuril. There is a larger population and hence a larger market for goods and services, but it is also the only relevant source of income for many households in a context where formal employment is difficult to get, agricultural land is scarce and the ocean too far away to make fishing relevant. As argued in the preceding chapter, the informal sector *may* yield high returns particularly in production (such as car repairs and carpentry) and services (transport, traditional medicine, water-provision etc.). In Namutequeliua, the most 'famous' and respected informal businessmen have made careers in transport and car-repairs. But the large majority of households in our survey depends on selling goods and commodities like second-hand clothes, soft-drinks, vegetables, eggs, cell phone cards, sweets, wood, charcoal, water, fish, sand, pots, pans, etc., in a highly saturated market with low returns. One of the few women we met in public markets told us she had spent three days trying to sell four small stacks of charcoal she had acquired from another lady producing it and had only managed to sell three with a surplus of what she claimed was 20 MT.

At the same time, however, the proportion of female household heads who are actually involved in the informal economy in Nampula City is much lower than in similar contexts in other parts of the country (Tvedten, Paulo & Montserrat 2008, see also Horne 2000). Our survey shows that this does not only relate to specific types of goods: a large proportion of our interviewees also claim that selling in markets (64 percent), from stalls (38 percent) and in streets (71 percent) should only be done by men. Only sales from 'home' are seen as a predominantly female prerogative, with 31 percent arguing that this should be done by 'women only' and 69 percent by women and men. Beyond 'Macua tradition' and the Muslim prohibition against women working and frequenting public places, it is difficult to see the rationale for this in a context of extreme poverty. In fact, our case-studies in Muatala and Namutequeliua do indicate that many women insist that they are 'unemployed' or 'domestics' to adhere to sociocultural rules – even though they may carry out income-earning activities on a small scale. Without such income, many households headed by women would simply not cope.

In a fast-changing sociocultural context like Nampula City, it is also important to look at the exceptions – or women pursuing new areas of employment and income. In one case, a woman in her mid-30s was cohabiting with a man, three children and her mother in a dwelling owned by herself. She was running a fairly large 'back-yard business' from her house in the shantytown selling grain (cassava and maize), fish, soft-drinks and sweets. Her new 'husband' sold the same items in the public market, essentially on behalf of his wife who was the *de facto* household head on the basis of her economic power and control of the dwelling. And an older divorced woman in Namutequeliua had broken most sociocultural rules by asking her husband to leave ("he brought no money and lots of trouble to the house"), taking over the dwelling and starting a carpentry shop from scratch where she worked with her three sons. She primarily made tables and chairs, and told us that "most of our customers are women".

For poor people in the current commoditised social formation, being able to combine cash income with subsistence production is vital for food security. We saw above that the majority of households in Mossuril see farming as their main occupation, and practically all have access to a *machamba* (Table 22). The main crops produced are cassava roots, maize, rice, ground nuts, beans and coconuts. Land formally belongs to the State but is readily available and allocated on the basis of communal usufruct rights – linked to the idea that land belongs to the clan and kinship group that was the first to settle in the relevant area. Women do not seem to be particularly discriminated against in rights to inheritance and entitlement to land. In fact, it is culturally perceived that the land where a married couple resides is the domain of the wife (Osário 2001). Problems mainly arise for women who become divorced or widows and reside in their husband's village (*virilocality*). These women may return to their original village and claim land, but if they are unwilling or too old to move away they may be denied access to land by their deceased husband's family. However, the main challenges for women in Mossuril in general are a limited tradition of farming, the difficulties for most women in clearing new land or hiring people to do so; and poor sandy soils (see Chapter 2).

Table 22. *Agricultural Fields (Machamba) Ownership (Percent)*

***Machamba* Ownership**	**Mossuril**		**Nampula**		**Total**
	MHH	**FHH**	**MHH**	**FHH**	
Yes	93	97	44	46	65
No	7	3	66	64	35
Total	100	100	100	100	100

In Nampula City very few household heads saw farming as their main occupation, but as many as 45 percent have access to one or more agricultural fields. Many of these are located in people's village of origin, and their possibilities for actually producing crops depend on the type of social relationships they have there and their own options for paying for transport to maintain their *machamba*. In the vicinity of Nampula City, land is becoming scarce, expensive to rent and difficult to get hold of for poor shanty-dwellers. Despite these obstacles, more female- than male-headed households in Nampula see farming as their main activity (Table 21) and have access to *machambas* (Table 22). This is likely to be a combined outcome of their limited alternative economic opportunities, and their emphasis on feeding their family (see below). Still, the optimal solution for an urban household is to have income earning activities in the city *and machambas* as a 'buffer' in times of economic hardships – which few female-headed households seem to accomplish.

Another potentially important source of subsistence and income is animal husbandry. No households in our survey had cattle or pigs (the former probably for economic- and the latter for religious reasons), with chickens being the most common animal in possession. In Mossuril, more male-headed households (77 percent) than female-headed households (60 percent) have domestic animals, but in Nampula City the proportion is higher for female-headed households than for male-headed households with 45 and 28 percent, respectively (Table 23). The higher prevalence of animal ownership among female-headed households in Nampula City is also likely to reflect a combination of lack of alternative sources of income and subsistence and a concern for being able to feed household members. In one case, three female household heads had joined forces and established a small chicken farm (*quinta*) an hour's walk outside the city. They had hired another woman to live there and watch the premises, and took weekly turns to feed the animals and transport them to their shantytown where they were sold. They told us they explicitly did not want to involve men in the small business, as "they only take over and decide everything themselves".

Table 23. *Animal Ownership (Percent)*

Animal	Mossuril		Nampula		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
Goat	23	10	3	4	10
Rabbit	0	0	3	4	2
Chicken	70	57	14	12	38
Duck	27	17	3	12	14
Pigeons	0	0	0	4	1
No animal	23	40	83	72	55

Traditionally an important buffer for the poorest in times of hardships is occasional work for families, neighbours or friends against payment in cash or kind – or so-called *ganho-ganho*. In our sample, however, only 10 percent of the households practise *ganho-ganho* (Table 24). At the same time 77 percent of the interviewees argue that this is an activity only for men, two percent that it is an activity only for women and 21 percent that it may be done by both men and women. This may imply that the practice is becoming less common, particularly in urban areas, but it may also reflect poverty and inability to pay. For women in Nampula City the practice of small-scale credit associations ('*chittik*' or '*sidique*' as it is called in Nampula) seems to partly make up for this, with our survey showing that 20 percent of the female-headed households are involved in credit and saving societies.

Table 24. *Practising of ganho-ganho (Percent)*

Practising 'ganho-ganho'	Mossuril		Nampula		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
Yes	16	13	6	9	10
No	84	87	94	91	90
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Having discussed the main sources of subsistence and income for male-headed and female-headed households respectively, the question remains of who controls the food and income. Our focus group discussions (supported by a similar study done by Bonate n.d.) show that there is a clear distinction between control of food and cash income: In male-headed households, the women tend to make decisions regarding the use of agricultural produce and other foodstuffs for consumption, while they generally have little influence on the use of cash-income. In Mossuril this is partly a reflection of religious ordinances in Islam, where the responsibility of the husband for taking care of his wife or wives is strongly emphasised.[27] One of the main preoccupations of the management at the local hospital, for example, was the number of sick children who came in too late because the mothers had to ask permission from their husbands to take them there. In Nampula City, also, access to food is 'commoditised' in the sense that most households have to buy a large part of it. While men in the male focus group argued that they needed to control expenses in order to make sure that "there is enough for everything we need", women in the female focus group complained that one of the main problems in households was that the men spent money on things that were not important to them and their children.

[27] Interestingly, many versions of *sharia* laws states that while income earned by the husband should be spent to support the whole household, income acquired directly by the wife or wives is to be controlled by herself (Prof. Anne Sofie Roald, pers.comm). We never heard any reference to this in our focus group discussions or in-depth interviews.

In general terms, household expenditure is very low, particularly in Mossuril. 83 percent of both male- and female-headed households in our survey spend less than MT 250 per week, with no household spending more than 500 MT (Table 25). With an average household size of 5.3 (see Table 20), a weekly income of 250 MT implies a total expenditure of 47 MT per person. In Nampula City there is a difference between female- and male-headed households, in that as many as 36 percent of the former earn less than 250 MT a month while only seven percent of the latter do so. The major part of the remaining female-headed households earns less than 500 MT, while male-headed households are more spread throughout the expenditure scale.[28]

Table 25. *Weekly Household Expenditure (Percent)*

Expenditure In MT	**Mossuril**		**Nampula**	
	MHH	**FHH**	**MHH**	**FHH**
< 250	83	83	7	36
251 – 500	13	7	54	44
501 – 750	0	0	9	8
751 – 1000	0	0	9	4
1001 – 1500	0	0	3	0
1501 – 2500	0	0	6	8
2501<	0	0	3	0
Don't know	3	10	20	0
Total	100	100	100	100

At the same time, however, an overview of the assets owned by the households show that many do have commodities that are not vital for their survival – such as radios, TVs and cell phones (Table 26). There are, rightly, clear differences between male- and female-headed households here: in Mossuril, 67 percent of the male-headed households and only three percent of the female-headed households own a radio, with the equivalent figures for Nampula being 71 percent and 36 percent. Twenty-three percent (Mossuril) and 71 percent (Nampula) of the male-headed households own a cell phone, with the equivalent figures for female-headed households being 3 and 56 percent, respectively. The most consistent difference between male- and female-headed households is in terms of bicycle ownership: as Hanlon (2008) has rightly argued, owning a bicycle is an important indicator of material well-being, but in our case the discrepancy is equally related to cultural factors ('women do not bike') as to economic ones.

One way of reading the apparent paradox that people in Nampula in particular spend money on radios, TVs and cell phones is that people give priority to 'modern' utensils even at the expense of food, clothing and other basic necessities. Particularly among younger people, having a cell phone is one of the most important cultural signs of being 'properly urban'. (Having a cell phone does not necessarily mean that one can afford credits and actually make calls.) Radios and cell phones may of course also have practical implications in terms of access to important information, such as prices on goods and services and being able to keep in touch with relatives. From a gender perspective, it is also indicative that the discrepancy between male- and female-headed households in terms of asset ownership is larger in Mossuril than in Nampula – which indicates a reduction of the gender gap in urban contexts in this respect.

[28] The proportion of 20 percent among the male-headed households that do not know how much they earn, often the case when the interviewee was a woman and not the head herself, reflects the control of this information on the part of men.

Table 26. *Asset Ownership (Percent)*

Type of Asset	Mossuril		Nampula		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
Radio	67	3	71	36	46
TV	0	3	54	48	27
Bicycle	40	3	25	0	18
Cell phone	23	3	71	56	39
Motorcycle	3	0	17	12	8
Boat	13	0	0	0	3
Chairs	43	20	89	64	55
Sofa	0	0	29	32	15
Beds	50	73	97	96	79
Ploughs	100	100	86	76	91
Machete	83	43	83	36	63
Axe	57	50	60	40	46

As indicated above, perhaps the most important asset, particularly in urban Nampula, is the dwelling in which people live (Table 27). Both in Mossuril and Nampula City, the dwelling is largely considered the property of the household head. Dwellings are significant not only for having a roof over one's own and one's family's heads, but also for security, as an investment and for income generation. Many economic activities including baking, production of traditional drinks, braiding and sewing take place from the house, and this is particularly important for women, who we have seen are restricted from doing a number of such activities in public spaces. As we have shown, in Nampula City control of the dwelling is so important that it largely determines who is considered the household head in cases of domestic units containing a married couple or cohabitants.

Table 27. *Dwelling Ownership (Percent)*

Dwelling Owner	Mossuril		Nampula		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
Head of household	89	96	91	83	90
Spouse of HHH	0	0	3	0	1
Other relative	0	0	3	9	3
Other person	11	4	3	9	6
Total	100	100	100	100	100

The threshold for acquiring control of a dwelling is higher for women than for men. As seen from Table 28, the majority of male household heads in both Mossuril and Nampula City have constructed their own house – but this is not the case for female household heads. In Mossuril the majority of female heads of household have inherited their dwelling either from their own matrilineal extended family or from a deceased or divorced husband. In Nampula, however, the majority of female household heads have had to buy their dwelling, which is a considerable investment. While land in the shantytowns is formally regulated through leases, most houses are erected illegally on larger plots and are expensive to buy and lack formal security (they may be sanctioned by the *régulos* and *chefes de quarteirões*, but without formal municipal approval). Most

houses are also constructed out of solid material (such as bricks) and have doors and windows for security reasons, which make them expensive to construct.[29]

Table 28. *Source of Dwelling (Percent)*

Dwelling source	Mossuril		Nampula		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
Self-construction	86	29	58	26	51
Purchase	7	4	30	39	20
Inheritance	7	46	3	13	17
Loan	0	0	3	13	4
Gift	0	14	0	4	4
Other	0	7	6	4	4
Total	100	100	100	100	100

For coping as household units in both rural Mossuril and urban Nampula, the nature and content of social relationships become vital. Most households manage to find ways to get by in their daily lives by relating consumption to changes in their access to agricultural products and income, but particularly the poorest will need external support at times of extraordinary expenses linked to health problems, education, loss of property, etc. Nevertheless, Table 29 shows that only a relatively small proportion of the households received any type of external support the month prior to the survey. Social networks of mutual support have cultural as well as religious roots among the Macua in Nampula, and the limited number of households involved in such relations may be an expression of the drama of poverty in increasingly commoditised contexts: Poor people simply do not have much to share, and are forced to think primarily about themselves.

Among the households that were involved in support networks, a larger proportion in Mossuril received external support than in Nampula City, and female-headed households were more likely to receive support than male-headed households. This indicates that social networks are strongest in rural Mossuril, where people in the villages know each other well and many households will have family members nearby. The support is primarily in kind, reflecting the limited access to cash in Mossuril. In Nampula City access to external support is more limited, as many live away from their extended family in their rural area of origin. Among the households that do state that they receive external support, support from the family is most common (57 percent), followed by civil society including churches and mosques with 28 percent and friends with 11 percent. A very small proportion (3 percent) states that 'the government' is their most important source of support.

Table 29. *Proportion of Households Receiving External Support the Past Month (Percent)*

Type of Support	Mossuril		Nampula		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
In cash	1	1	4	6	3
In kind	13	25	5	6	11
In cash and kind	10	18	6	7	9
No support received	76	56	85	81	77
Total	100	100	100	100	100

[29] In Nampula as in many other urban areas we have worked in, there are practically no reed or *caniço* dwellings as one finds in rural areas – despite being cheaper to construct and easier to move if necessary. In fact, there seem to be strong cultural prohibitions against moving the 'rural and traditional' to the 'urban and modern' as this would imply.

Even though the survey data are not very conclusive, they give an indication that female-headed households are more inclined to benefit from these types of support-networks than male-headed households. In Mossuril, 44 percent of female- and 24 percent of male-headed households are involved, and in Nampula City, 19 percent of the female- and 15 percent of the male-headed households had received external support one month prior to the survey interview. This is also in line with arguments forwarded in our focus groups and our own observations: In Mossuril, the support seems primarily to be based on the old age and poverty of the female household heads and the customary obligations of their matrikin and Islamic institutions to support the very poorest (*zakat*). In Nampula, many women forwarded arguments to the effect that women increasingly cooperate and support each other. We encountered a number of cases where female friends and neighbours – many of whom had been abandoned by their husbands or cohabitants – formed small enterprises, cooperated in child-care and supported each other in other ways.

In sum, there are clear differences in economic adaptations and livelihood strategies between rural Mossuril and urban Nampula, as well as between male-headed and female-headed households. Mossuril is primarily a rural district with very limited options for employment and income outside of agriculture and fisheries, while the alternative sources of employment and income are much more varied in Nampula. At the same time, female-headed households and women are systematically in a more difficult situation than their male counterparts, with regard to employment, income and control of economic resources. The reasons for this, we have suggested, are partly 'cultural': there are strong cultural prohibitions against women taking an active role in household provisioning outside of agriculture. In the urban context – where alternative livelihoods are present and traditional cultural rules seem to be in the process of losing at least some of their impact – most women and female-headed households find themselves, at least, with *some* economic means and *some* options for upward social mobility.

People's own perceptions about changes in the conditions for their own households support this notion. Asked if the situation of their own household has improved, remained the same or deteriorated in the past five years, male-headed households represent the largest proportion of households who think their situation has improved both in Mossuril and Nampula (Table 30). The majority of female-headed households in Mossuril (63 percent) think that their situation has deteriorated. This points in the direction of processes of marginalisation and social exclusion in a traditional rural context like Mossuril as poverty takes its toll and access to cash income becomes increasingly important. In Nampula City, 36 percent of the female-headed households believe that their situation has remained the same or deteriorated. As we shall see later, however, people are more positive with regard to developments in their communities – which may be taken to imply that they see positive change that may in time affect their own situation.

Table 30. *Perceived Changes in Household Conditions the Past Five Years (Percent)*

Direction of Change	Mossuril		Nampula		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
Improved	33	13	32	24	26
Remained the same	47	23	29	40	34
Deteriorated	20	63	40	36	40
Total	100	100	100	100	100

This is, in fact, partly verified in Table 31, which reveals people's perception of possible changes in their own situation the next five years. As many as 58 percent of the households believe that their situation will improve, and only 13 percent believe that their situation will deteriorate. However,

female-headed households in Mossuril that had experienced the most negative development over the past five years remain most pessimistic about the future. This seems to verify the very difficult situation for women and female-headed households in rural Mozambique. On the other hand, the largest proportion of households who believe that their situation will improve the coming five years is found among female-headed households in Nampula City. This seems to confirm our point that despite continued oppression and poverty, urban social space is seen to open up new possibilities for women.

Table 31. *Perceived Changes in Household Conditions the Coming Five Years (Percent)*

Direction of Change	Mossuril		Nampula		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
Improved	40	23	49	58	43
Remained the same	53	53	43	28	44
Deteriorated	7	23	9	13	13
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Walking through a small neighbourhood in Namutequeliua in the middle of the day, there is a strange mixture of quiet solitude and hectic activity: Many of the dwellings are closed and empty, with their owners out working, shopping, visiting friends or going to school. But some dwellings still have people in them in the middle of the day, with adults and children staying behind and apparently doing nothing but waiting for 'something'.

One of these is **Flora Barrote**.[30] She lives in a very small and run-down house made of bricks and cardboard and is ill and in poor shape. Flora told us that she has three children with two different men, but is not married to either of them. In the beginning she did get some support to buy clothes and food for the children, but "it soon stopped". Her natal family lives in Ribáuè, and she gets some support from them in the form of food, but she cannot move back because "the house is already full of people". In Nampula, Flora tries to get by selling tomatoes, but complains that she does not have money to buy many and 'therefore the profit is low". When asked who she turns to when she has real problems, she told us that neither her family, neighbours or friends could help because "they are all poor like me". She does get some support from "our community leader" (referring to a female *chefe de quarteirão*), but only "when I am very sick and my children are suffering".

Another family we visited in Namutequeliua one late afternoon consisted of man (**Oraibo**) and his wife (**Albertina**), three children and Albertina's mother. They lived in a brick-house with a tin-roof, and had furniture and beds. Oraibo worked for the Municipality, and his wife took care of the *machamba* the family possessed outside the city and sold dried fish that was sent to her from her uncle in Angoche. Albertina insisted that they pooled their income and decided together how to use it. All their children went to a public school, and the parents wanted them to continue "to the university" and "work for the government' in the future. The family had an active network of extended family, neighbours and friends, and told us that they had just helped a friend "who had problems because her husband left her". Asked if they could afford this, they responded that by helping their friend they now knew they would be helped when they needed support.

Isaque Ismael was one of the few household heads we encountered stating that he had more than one wife – itself a sign of the reduced 'prestige' of polygamy in a situation of poverty and change. Isaque, a fisherman (*patrão*), had married his first wife "many years ago", and had four children with her who all except one (a daughter with a child) had moved out and established their own

[30] All names in case are fictitious.

households in Mossuril. Isaque married a second wife about ten years ago (with whom he had no children), and a third about five years ago who, so far, has given birth to two daughters and a son. They all lived within walking distance from each other, and they all depended on agriculture as their most important source of subsistence and income. Isaque complained that these are difficult times, and that it is hard to support such a large family - admitting that he only rarely had anything to contribute except fish. While his first wife (who was present during the interview) confirmed his statements, one of the others later claimed that she never received anything and that he 'does not even help in the *machamba* and with costs for school".

For **Ossufo Braimo**, supporting his family of six (a wife, three children and a niece) is a constant struggle. He works as crew member (*marinheiro*) on the boat of a local *patrão*, but he is only paid (sometimes in cash, sometimes in kind) when they actually fish and catch something. This depends on the season, the weather and the 'working mood' of the boat owner. When not at sea, Ossufo sells cell phone cards in the Vila, but complains that too many people sell and too few buy. His wife Fátima works in their small *machamba*, but says that production is low because the field is small and "there is no rain". She contributes to the household economy by collecting shells at the beach, but says it is difficult to combine with taking care of the children and working in the field ("the best time [for collecting shells] is early in the morning"). Their oldest daughter is 15 and already pregnant, without any type of support from the father (but apparently with the local imam involved in negotiations to make his family pay compensation). She does help out in the *machamba*, but her mother complained that she "likes best to play around". The oldest daughter stopped studying in third grade, and none of her younger school-age siblings go to school. According to the father, the school is 'too far away', but our impression was that the father really wanted her to work and contribute to the household.

3.4 Education

During the past decade, the Government of Mozambique has introduced several novel initiatives within the primary education system with a view to achieving the Millennium Development Goal 2 of universal primary education. One of the most polemic innovations has been the "automatic progression" from class (*passagem automática*), which was introduced in 2005 and which implies that no primary school pupil can be left to repeat the class no matter what his/her knowledge level is. Obviously, such regulation helps to polish the official school attendance statistics but it will have serious consequences on the skills level of Mozambican primary school graduates.

Another innovation, also introduced in 2005, was the move to a "free" primary education system. Until then, the decision to send children to school represented a financial investment in the family's future. In this context, poor families could not afford to educate all their children. Traditionally in Mozambique, men have the responsibilities of the breadwinner and financially productive tasks and therefore boys' education has, for a long time, been considered the priority. As the traditional division of labour places women at home to take care of reproductive tasks, it was not found necessary, or even meaningful, to pay for a girl's education.

Despite the almost free school system, however, in practice, education today still involves expenses, even at primary school level. Families still need to pay for school uniforms, notebooks, pens and other school materials (except books) that each child needs to bring to school. In some cases in rural areas, where the distances to schools can be significant, families may also need to cover transport and/or lodging costs.

Nevertheless, the recent innovations in the education sector have had positive impact on the school attendance levels. According to the Mozambican Millennium Development Report 2008 (MPD

2008), the average net primary school enrolment index rose from 69.4 percent in 2003 to 95.5 percent in 2007.[31] While the difference between girls and boys is progressively levelling out in terms of enrolment, the gender gap remains wide in terms of 1st level primary school completion rate: The aggregate completion index for boys was 80 percent versus 65.1 percent for girls in 2007.

While there are no recent education statistics available for each province, the latest Demographic and Health Survey (2003) showed that the primary school attendance rate in Nampula stood at 46.7 percent - 50.2 percent for boys and 43.1 percent for girls. At that time, only 0.7 percent of women and girls (6 years and older) and 1.9 percent of men and boys in Nampula had completed primary school (MISAU 2005). In the absence of any more recent statistics, it is not yet possible to define the effect of the regulation on automatic progression. It is nevertheless clear that school attendance is improving amongst the youngest generations.

At the national level in 2003, the school attendance was at its highest level among children between 11-13 years and started to drop significantly among girls after 14 years and among boys after 15 years. Nevertheless, nationally, over half the children of 16 years still went to school (MISAU 2005). Also within our study sample in Nampula, over half the children under 16 years (57 percent) go to school. However, contrary to the national statistics, within our survey in urban Nampula and rural Mossuril, 60 percent of children who go to school are girls. While this may be a sample issue, it does indicate that people are more likely to send girls to school than previously (see MISAU 2005; UNICEF 2006).

As seen in the Table 32, there are no major differences in children's school attendance between female- and male-headed households in Nampula City. In both types of household, there are somewhat more girls than boys attending school; in female-headed households this phenomenon is slightly more accentuated. Yet, it needs to be noted that the proportion of girls in female headed-households is far greater than in male-headed households (65 percent vs. 49 percent of the household composition). Nevertheless, the indication of female household heads emphasising girls' education is very much in line with many international and national studies that affirm that women who are in a position to make decisions tend to invest more in education of their children and young dependants than men.

Table 32. *Boys and Girls Studying – Nampula (Percent)*

Do your children go to school?	**Nampula City**				**Total**
	MHH		**FHH**		
	Boys	**Girls**	**Boys**	**Girls**	
Yes	53	58	53	64	57
No	47	42	47	36	43
Total	100	100	100	100	100

The situation is quite different in Mossuril, as shown in the Table 33. Only 40 percent of all the children under 16 years go to school. Overall, the school attendance rate of children is higher within female-headed households than male-headed households. In Mossuril, boys' education is clearly prioritised in both male- and female-headed households. While only 42 percent of the children who go to school are girls, the gender disparity is however far greater in male-headed households (the difference between boys and girls is 24 percent) than in female-headed households (the difference is 15 percent).

[31] The report does not say anything about the basis for the index, and it has not been possible to have this explained by the Ministry of Education.

Table 33. *Boys and Girls Studying – Mossuril (Percent)*

Do your children go to school?	Mossuril				Total
	MHH		FHH		
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
Yes	43	19	60	45	40
No	57	81	40	55	60
Total	100	100	100	100	100

The strong prioritisation of boys' education in Mossuril speaks of the patriarchal values and traditional social roles of men and women. Here, women are still closely tied to the domestic setting and therefore an investment in their education seems less meaningful. Interestingly however, even in Mossuril women who have decision-making powers and financial resources to put their decisions into practice tend to send their daughters to school more often than their male counterparts. Undoubtedly, these women have come to realise that for girls too the odds for future well-being are far better if they have formal school education.

Children's school attendance appears to correlate somewhat with the religion of the household head. Within Catholic households, 63 percent of children go to school, while in Muslim households this is the case of only 48 percent of children. These figures are likely to overlook the number of Muslim children who attend religious schools (*madrassas*), which, as already noted, are often the preferred option of Muslim families. It is acknowledged that the religious school system also provides children with some scientific knowledge, but at the same time it strongly reinforces the differentiated social roles of men and women.

While exploring the reasons for children not going to school, it was often said that the child had abandoned school him/herself. Both in Mossuril and in Nampula this was the most common response explaining girls' non-attendance. In relation to most boys in Mossuril, it was said that the school was too far or that the parents, for unspecified reasons, had not been able to enrol the child at school.

If we then move to analyse the education level of the household heads, it can be noted that within our sample in Nampula City the education level of male and female household heads is surprisingly well balanced. As shown in Table 34, slightly over half of them (52 percent of female household heads and 51 percent of male household heads) have at least upper primary school education and nearly 30 percent of the female household heads and 40 percent of male household heads have finished secondary school. The relatively good education level among the female household heads can be partly explained by their age; 23 percent of them are under 35 years and 85 percent are under 50 years old (compared to 18 percent and 68 percent among men, respectively). As already stated, the younger generations tend to have better access to school education.

In Mossuril, the overall education level is considerably lower and the gender disparities are striking. Here, 70 percent of the female household heads have never gone to school, whereas the majority of rural male household heads (63 percent) have finished lower primary school (EP1). This is understandable considering that most of the female household heads are rather old; 37 percent of them are 50 years or older whereas only 3 percent of them are under 35 years.[32] Most of the women of the older generation spent their childhood in the fields (*machambas*) instead of schools.

[32] Furthermore, some 43 percent of female household heads in Mossuril did not know their age. This indicates that they i) have never gone to school, and ii) they are rather old. If these respondents are added to the group of female household

Table 34. *Level of Education of Household Head (Percent)*

Level of education	Mossuril		Nampula		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
Never went to school	23	70	9	12	28
Literate (own name)	7	27	3	8	11
Lower primary school (EP1)	63	3	37	28	33
Upper primary school (EP2)	3	0	11	12	7
Secondary education	0	0	17	28	11
Technical school	0	0	3	0	1
High school	3	0	14	12	8
University education	0	0	6	0	2
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Within our sample households, children often have a higher education level than their parents - see Table 35. This is a strongly dominant tendency within female-headed households, whereas within male-headed households in Nampula City the highest education level is often held by the household head as by his son/daughter. In Mossuril, the male household head is typically the one with the highest education level. This indicates that many fathers provide their children with the same level of education as they themselves have. It is also likely that children with higher education levels have left home and moved to bigger cities searching for better opportunities.

Table 35. *Highest Level of Education in Household (Percent)*

Person with highest level of education	Mossuril		Nampula		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
HHH	43	7	37	16	27
Spouse	3	0	11	20	8
Son/daughter	30	47	37	40	38
Other HH member	20	10	14	24	17
No-one	3	37	0	0	10
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Interestingly, in both Nampula and Mossuril, the person who holds the highest education level is most often male in male-headed households, while the situation is the opposite with female-headed households. Here, the person with highest education level is more often female. This can be at least partly explained by the fact that the female-headed households consist mostly of girls and women (65 percent of the household composition compared to 49 percent within male-headed households). On the other hand, as stated before, women clearly give more importance to girls' (and boys') education than men.

Overall, it appears that girls' school attendance is influenced by several different factors which we have identified here: Sex of the household head, living area of the family (rural-urban) and to some extent the religion of the household head. In brief, girls' formal education is most common in urban Nampula among female-headed households who practise Catholicism. In Mossuril, both female and male household heads tend to prioritise boys' education. Yet, the probability of children going to

heads that said they were 50 years or older, the result indicates that some 80 percent of female household heads in Mossuril are in fact older people.

school is higher within female-headed households, and the gap between boys and girls is narrower. In general, our study strongly supports the international hypothesis that women, even materially poor women, invest more in the education of their children - sons and daughters - than men.

Lizete Ussene lives in Nampula City and grew up in a family of nine (comprising her father and mother, two brothers, two sisters and two small cousins, who lived with them since their mother died). Her father was a guard for a local security company, and her mother worked in the *machamba* and at home. Lizete told us she had seen how hard her mother worked and never had any time off, and decided early that she wanted to have education "to be able to earn my own money". Her father only had third grade and her mother no education at all, but Lizete claimed that they had seen the value of education when a neighbour received money from a daughter who had become a nurse. She claimed that she went through primary school 'without repeating', and managed to start and pay for secondary school with the help of her mother's brother and "some money that my father must have saved for me". Lizete is fully aware that she has been fortunate: "Most of my friends have stopped studying, and are now married with children. But I want a different life for myself. I want to become a nurse".

We met **Felisberta Tiquire** in the outskirts of the Mossuril Vila. She was pounding grain and was looking after a small child, which she carried on her back. She told us she was 15 years old, and lived with her mother, father, three younger siblings and her own child who was one year old. Her father was a fisherman, and her mother worked in the field "and sometimes makes *bolinhas*". Felisberta had stopped studying after 3rd grade, she said, because there was no money to study but according to her father (who we met later) it was because it was no use as the teachers were not there and "she didn't learn anything". Felisberta did not live with, and got no support from, the father of her child ("he worked for Mcel and went back to Nampula"). She spent her days working in the *machamba* or looking after her siblings and child. Felisberta did say that it would be nice to study more, but that it was difficult with a child and with all the work she had to do to help out in the family. She claimed she had no friends who had studied longer than primary school, and that all ("*todos"*) were married or had children and worked in the *machambas.*

3.5 Health

It is estimated that approximately 50 percent of the population of Mozambique has access to health services (MISAU 2005). Approximately 36 percent of the population has 'easy access' to a health unit, i.e. it takes them less than 30 minutes to get to a health unit from their residence. The access is significantly better in urban areas than in rural areas (INE 2004). It is worth noting that there is a positive correlation between the use of health services and the level of education and consumption. The frequency of use of health services is most limited among people without a formal education background and among those with the lowest consumption levels (first quintile) (INE 2004).

Infant mortality rate is widely used, not only as a health indicator, but also as one of the core development indicators. The latest available data on infant mortality rates in Mozambique come from the 2003 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), which established the overall infant mortality rate at 124 per 1000 births (MISAU 2005). While infant/child mortality and malnutrition are common problems in Mozambique, there are no significant differences between girls and boys (Tvedten, Paulo & Montserrat 2008).

The infant mortality rate in Mozambique is twice as high among the poorest 20 percent of the population compared to the richest 20 percent - 143 and 71 per 1000 live births, respectively (UNDP 2007). Further, infant mortality rate is highest among children whose mothers have low/no education, e.g. the infant mortality rate is 65/1000 among mothers with secondary education against

142 among those with no formal education. The 2003 Demographic and Health Survey (MISAU 2005) shows that the tendency of mortality of young children and babies diminishes as the women have greater decision-making powers in the household. For example, in households where women have no say whatsoever, the infant mortality rate is 164/1000 compared to 108/1000 in those households where women participate in decision-making in five different situations (MISAU 2005).

Having said this, it should be noted that overall in Mozambique, men make most of the health-related decisions in male-headed households. This phenomenon is even more accentuated in rural areas where 96.2 percent of health-related decisions are made by the male household heads compared to 78.2 percent in urban areas (World Bank 2007). The unbalanced decision-making is often indicated as the main reason for women lacking access to health services, and to reproductive health services in particular.

Our study proves that infant mortality remains high in both Nampula City and in Mossuril. As showed in Table 36, in both places an average of 70 percent of the household heads had lost at least one child during the first 12 months after birth. The occurrence of infant mortality and the number of children lost during their first year of life is at the highest among the rural female household heads, of whom 86 percent had lost at least one child (against 50 percent of rural male household heads) and 32 percent had lost three or more children (vs. six percent of rural male household heads). At a first glance, these results may be surprising, but it should be remembered that 70 percent of these women have not had access to any formal education and 57 percent of them live below the national poverty line (i.e. less than 8.5 MT per day). It is likely, therefore, that they also have insufficient knowledge of good health and hygiene practices and limited awareness of diseases and different treatment options.

As expected, in Nampula City, where the economic and educational background of the household heads is more balanced, the situation is quite the opposite. Here, 83 percent of male household heads have experienced the death of at least one child with less than one year compared to 52 percent of the female household heads. This finding again strongly supports the argument that women with decision-making capacity tend to prioritise the well-being of their children more than men do.

Table 36. *Households Having Experienced Infant Mortality (0-12 months) (Percent)*

No. of children who have died	Mossuril		Nampula		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
None	50	14	17	48	30
1	31	29	50	24	33
2	13	25	28	19	22
3	6	11	6	10	8
4	0	18	0	0	6
5	0	4	0	0	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Turning our attention to the health of the adult population, our study indicates that the probability of falling ill is greater in rural areas than in urban areas. This is likely to be the result of poorer hygiene and paltry preventive health measures (including deficient quality of drinking water, housing, nutrition, etc.) that often prevails in rural areas. Furthermore, the overall health of female household heads appears to be poorer than that of male household heads, as shown in Table 37. In both

Nampula and Mossuril, more than half of the female household heads reported being ill during the month preceding our survey, compared to the average of 39 percent of male household heads.

Table 37. *Proportion of Households with Sick Household Head in Past Month (Percent)*

Sick HHH	Mossuril		Nampula		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
Yes	47	67	31	52	48
No	53	33	69	48	52
Total	100	100	100	100	100

The pattern is rather similar with regard to other household members. The occurrence of illness is more common in Mossuril than in Nampula and in Mossuril 50 percent of the female household heads had had sick household members - other than themselves - in the past month (versus. 32 percent of male household heads). In Nampula, the difference between male- and female-headed households is not that great but, even there, the latter group encountered a slightly higher incidence of illnesses (28 percent versus 21 percent). In Mossuril, the situation can be understood on the basis of the older age of female household heads and the higher level of material poverty that renders their living conditions more precarious and overall status of well-being more prone to illnesses. However, in order to understand the situation of female-headed households in Nampula, one needs to look beyond the quantitative figures presented.

While it may be that women in fact are more often ill than men, one needs to bear in mind two things. First, the concept of sickness (or healthiness) is very subjective, e.g. long term fatigue and powerlessness may be interpreted as illness by one person whereas another one could consider it as part of normal bodily changes. Secondly, women are the primary caretakers of ill household members and therefore their memory of sickness is typically more accurate than that of men who may simply have ignored the sickness of a family member, especially if it did not require special health care or financial investment. Hence, one should explore further the types of illnesses within the households before making any firm conclusions about gender differences here.

Considering the limited coverage of the national health network, it is somewhat surprising that the vast majority of our sample population in Nampula and Mossuril – women and men irrespectively – say that they have sought assistance in a health facility when they, or their household members, were sick - see Table 38. It should be noted however, that there is relatively easy access to health facilities in both Nampula City and in Mossuril.[33]

Table 38. *Primary Place of Treatment for Illnesses (Percent)*

Primary Place of Treatment	Mossuril		Nampula		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
Hospital/health unit	95	94	100	100	97
Traditional healer	7	6	2	5	5
Total	102	100	102	105	102

[33] In Nampula City, there is one central hospital and several small health units. In Mossuril, there is one district hospital that serves the area where the interviews took place.

Only some five percent of all the interviewees say that they went to a traditional healer; there were no significant differences between the geographic areas or between male and female household heads.[34] This is surprising considering that after Zambézia, Nampula has been the province with the highest frequency of consultations with traditional healers; in 2003, 19 percent of the population in Nampula Province consulted traditional healers. (INE 2004). However, it needs to be remembered that traditional healers are mainly consulted for problems that are understood to be of spiritual origin. These problems are not necessarily considered as illnesses at all and therefore the treatment of such problems would not be reflected in the above responses.

It is also not uncommon that people stay at home when sick without any assistance at all. Such a situation was described, for example, by one male household head in Nampula City whose wife and daughter had been sick in the week preceding the interview. He had not taken them anywhere for assistance because he had no money.

In general, there is evidence proving that women's decision-making capacity correlates strongly with the health status of their children and dependants. In Mozambique, women's decision-making capacity is typically reduced by the social norm that emphasises male authority. As proven by our study, women's decision-making capacity, or action-taking capacity, is further reduced by material poverty and low education level. Within our sample, the highest infant mortality rates were found within rural female-headed households. In most cases, the heads of these households have never gone to school and live in absolute poverty. In Nampula City, where the education level of men and women is more balanced, the infant mortality rate is far lower among female-headed households than among male-headed households.

We met **Alima Minzane** waiting in the corridor at the Mossuril Hospital. She had felt sick in her stomach for many days, and had left her village the day before and walked throughout the night to the hospital. Her husband first wanted to take her to the *curandeiro*, but when she got worse he accepted that she should go to the hospital. She was accompanied by her sister. Alima said that there were always people who were sick in her family, and that she had already lost three babies [with two girls and one boy remaining]. When sick, she did not know what to do. The *curandeiro* cost money "and does not always help", she could not afford medicines, and hardly ever had money to buy meat and fish ("*caril*") to go with the *mandioca* (with very low nutritional value) that she ate every day. "I have to pray for my children [so they don't die]".

Muaramadane Bicú was a *curandeiro* we met in Nampula City, who told us he had a wife, four children and "three others that I pay for". Being a *curandeiro* was the only work he did, but his wife was earning some money helping out in a local bakery. Muaramadane claimed that people in the city usually go to the health post or hospital when they are sick with stomach-ache and malaria, but come to him "if that does not help" or for what he called "spiritual" reasons. He charged 250 MT per consultation, but also said that he sometimes helped people "who don't have money to go to the hospital or to me". Having worked in rural areas when he was young, Muaramadane claimed that people were healthier in town "because here we eat bread" as opposed to the rural areas "where there is always hunger". Most of the people coming to him were men, but often in order to help a wife, a child or some other relative.

3.6 Community Relations and Conflicts

From our descriptions of the district of Mossuril and the city of Nampula in Chapter 2, it is evident that they represent very different types of communities. The population in Mossuril share a common

[34] Note that the totals in the Table 38 are over 100 because some people consulted both a health unit and a traditional healer.

history and have largely the same sociocultural and religious roots; they live in sparsely populated village communities where most people know each other; and most people are relatively poor and depend on small-scale trade, farming and fishing. Nampula City and its *bairros* Muatala and Namutequeliua are populated by urban migrants with different historical and cultural trajectories; are densely populated with people who may know very little about each other; and while most people in the *bairros* are poor in material terms there is a high level of inequality within the city at large, constantly reminding people in the *bairros* of their subordinate socio-economic position.

What may seem to represent a higher level of social cohesion or 'social capital' in small, *relatively* egalitarian and close-knit communities like Mossuril is first and foremost challenged by material poverty. We constantly met people who were well aware of others in their communities who were suffering from abject poverty and destitution, but who were left without help simply because other family members, neighbours and friends did not have anything to give.

Many of those who find themselves socially isolated or excluded were older people with responsibilities for grandchildren, nephews or nieces. Others were physically or mentally disabled. And yet others were simply very poor people with no source of livelihood except pleading for help from others. According to the male and female focus groups in Mossuril, people have a tendency to help others who they know may be in a position to return the outstanding claim at some stage when they themselves need help, leaving the very poorest in the hands of the mosque or other social institutions.[35]

If measured through the membership in different social groupings (Table 39), women in Mossuril are socially nearly as active as men. While being less actively involved in religious organisations,[36] fishery associations and community organisations than male-headed households, female-headed households are more active than their male counterparts in cultural and savings associations. The social cohesion is strengthened for all through membership in the Islamic community. Notably, more men and women are members of fishing- than farming associations – despite concerted efforts by the district to develop the latter.

Table 39. *Membership in Churches / Associations (Percent)*

Type of association	Mossuril		Nampula		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
Church/mosque	63	53	40	36	48
Farmer	10	0	3	4	4
Fishermen	20	10	0	0	8
Cultural	6	20	3	0	7
Community	6	3	9	4	6
Saving	0	7	17	20	11
Other	0	3	9	4	4
Total	100	100	100	100	100

In Nampula City, people seem to compensate for the limited community cohesion of the dense, tense and fragmented *bairros* by confining their mental 'community' to the immediate neighbourhood or '*quarteirões*'. There they develop individual relations of mutual trust and

[35] The Mossuril Muslims do collect money for the needy as part of the Friday religious ceremonies, but according to a local *sheikh* the population really dos not have much to spare.
[36] The figure includes people who are *active members* in associations and organisations, and not people who only take part on specific occasions – such as religious services.

support, making close neighbours and friends an important part of their immediate community. Also, their material poverty is the main limitation for actually filling these relations with material content – which in urban settings like Muatala and Namutequeliua usually implies money. While male-headed households are generally most active in organised religious and community activities, women are most active in farming associations and savings societies, which again points in the direction of new economic spaces for women in urban contexts.

According to our focus groups in Namutequeliua, people finding themselves socially isolated or excluded in the *bairro* were not primarily older people (who represent a very small minority) but rather people who were considered harmful to the community or too 'lazy' (called '*wihacha'* in the local Macua vernacular) to work and hence not deserving of support. These were, both the male and female focus groups agreed, usually men. For the very poorest, the church and mosque represent potential sources of support in Nampula City – but people also have better access to government institutions and social funds.[37] During our visit to the Namutequeliua Administrative Post, a long line of local residents – identified as needy by the *chefes de quarteirões* – lined up to receive benefits through the Social Action Fund.

The perceptions of 'community' and the main problems people face are reflected in Table 40 below. The most important source of community problems in Mossuril, as seen by male-headed and female-headed households alike, is unemployment and its accompanying poverty. Extreme poverty as is found in Mossuril depletes the sociocultural capital of the community and forces people to think primarily about themselves. In Nampula City, there is a larger variety of conflicts than in Mossuril. Here, robbery and violence are considered equally important problems as poverty. In addition, several people mentioned poor infrastructure as the main reason for concern.

Table 40. *Main Reasons for Concern in the Community (Percent)*

Area of Conflict	Mossuril		Nampula	
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH
Unemployment, poverty	90	97	29	35
Theft, robbery	3	0	29	23
Violence	0	0	18	8
Poor infrastructure	3	3	15	15
Poor collaboration	3	0	0	8
Illnesses	0	0	0	4
None	0	0	9	8
Total	100	100	100	100

Especially in Mossuril, the threshold seems relatively high for trying to solve conflicts in the household through external institutions. There is widespread sentiment that conflicts should be solved within or between the households or extended families directly involved, both in traditional Macua culture and in Islamic family law. In both cases, particularly women who pursue 'private' matters in 'public' spaces are perceived negatively. For those who do pursue conflicts, people both in Mossuril and Nampula still primarily rely on local community leaders (see Table 41). These are usually *régulos* with their *chingores* in Mossuril and *chefes de quarteirão* and *chefes de dez casas* in Nampula City, or religious leaders and *curandeiros*. The police are mainly approached in cases of theft and, to a lesser extent, in the event of unfaithfulness between spouses. People in Mossuril seem to rely less on the police than in Nampula City. There is also widespread sentiment in Mossuril as

[37] It is our impression, also, from other places we have worked (Tvedten et al. 2007; Rosário et al. 2008) that these funds tend to remain in the Municipal or District centres.

well as in the *bairros* of Nampula that the police and state tribunals do not take local conflicts seriously, and that they are used to a very limited extent.

Table 41. *Main Sources of Conflict Resolution (Percent)*

Source of conflict resolution	Mossuril		Nampula	
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH
Community leader	36	28	22	20
Close relative*	1	2	5	3
Police	2	5	9	5
Religious leader	8	2	4	0
Curandeiro	10	11	9	11
Tribunal	0	0	0	2
Neighbours/friends	1	4	6	8
No one	0	1	1	2
Other **	17	17	17	16
No problem	24	31	27	33
Total	100	100	100	100

* Usually identified as the maternal uncle (*tio*) ** Including 'solved in the household'

The women's focus group in Namutequeliua was particularly concerned about violence, which they argued is becoming more common and serious. While violence is seen as a legitimate reason to leave a marriage, both within traditional Macua and Muslim sociocultural conventions, it is still very difficult to get away from a violent partner who does not want divorce. Local community courts and Islamic boards of elders and learned (*khula*) demand 'proof' from the women that is often difficult to present. Going to the police or public tribunal means jeopardising ones own position in the household as well as in the community. In line with this, institutions like the Mozambican Association of Female Legal Experts (AMMCJ), which was established specifically to follow up cases of violence against women and have their own office in Nampula, complain that the threshold is too high, particularly for people in the *bairros*, to bring their cases to them.

Having said all this, there seems to be a sense of change in the right direction among the population in the Mossuril and Muatala/ Namutequeliua communities: The majority of households (56 percent) think that conditions in their communities have improved in the past five years, 28 percent think they have remained the same and 15 percent think they have deteriorated (Table 42).[38] From a gender perspective, it is again noteworthy that the highest proportion of households who think that the situation in their communities has deteriorated is found among female-headed households in Mossuril. This implies that traditional rural communities experience a process of marginalisation and exclusion of the very poorest. It may also be a sign of the advanced HIV/AIDS epidemic that has narrowed down the prime productive generation and left elderly people to care for their grandchildren alone. As the traditional safety nets are stretched to the maximum, the oldest generation are left without any monetary or material support.

On the other hand, the highest proportion of households who think that the situation in their communities has improved is found among female-headed households in Muatala/ Namutequeliua. This shows that women, despite continued oppression and poverty, do perceive that their social space has expanded in an urban context like the city of Nampula. Moreover, despite the current

[38] We always use this type of data with a word of caution: Our experience is that many people have difficulties relating to the perception of 'improvement' and 'deterioration' in their community, as they primarily tend to think in terms of their own immediate situation. Moreover, people do not like to complain, particularly to external visitors.

hardship, half of the household heads in Mossuril and two thirds in Nampula trust that the future in the community will be better. Female household heads in Nampula are the most optimistic (92 percent believing that the conditions will improve in the future), whereas in Mossuril there are no significant differences between the two groups.

Table 42. *Perceived Changes in Community Past Five Years (Percent)*

Direction of Changes	Mossuril		Nampula		Total
	MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH	
Improved	47	53	54	72	56
Remained the same	37	13	37	24	28
Deteriorated	17	33	6	4	15
Don't know	0	0	3	0	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Local Communities in Mossuril and Nampula City stand out as very different sociocultural settings for women. Visiting communities in Mossuril, women and men usually seem to move around and sit and talk in separate groups. When coming back from the *machamba* or the sea, men gather outside specific dwellings or under trees and talk about 'man-things' like 'the old days', 'the government' and challenges in agriculture and fisheries. On Fridays, men walk in streams to the mosques where they also stay separate from women. Women seem to walk around and talk in small groups mainly around their dwellings, and only rarely sit in large groups, except when called for public meetings. Also there, they tend to stay in the background and rarely talk except when their opinion is specifically called for by men. Men in particular claimed that men and women 'talk well' ('*falam bem*') inside the homestead (*lar*), but some women we interviewed argued that men and women really do live 'separate lives' and that it is very difficult for women to speak up even within the household.

In Nampula City, the community scenario is very different. Men (often drinking, playing dice, watching football or other 'male-things') and women (often selling local products from their house, braiding and plaiting or listening to music) do stay in separate groups, but there are also a number of arenas in which they mingle with apparent ease. During a day in one of the Urban Administrative Posts, for example, women took active part in meetings between *chefes de quarteirões*, in the local community court, and in the organisation around the monthly distribution of social funds to the elderly and handicapped. They were in a clear minority, but among the most vocal in expressing their opinions. In meetings related to possible support for local associations from an NGO, most people showing up were women who said that they represented all-women initiatives in agriculture or commerce. In our male focus group the men complained that women in town 'showed no respect', while women in the female focus group argued that women in the *bairro* had to work hard to support their families "as our men do not bring home anything".[39]

[39] In the female focus group of 12 women who were all active in the community, eight were in fact living without a man. Most claimed they had been "abandoned", but some also admitted they had left their husbands. A study by Sender and Oya (2007) from Nampula verifies that there is a higher rate of separated or divorced women with a relatively high education and formal income than among poor and uneducated, poor and unemployed women.

4. Conclusions

The purpose of this report as been to study how the broad and aggregate data on gender and poverty treated in the first report in this series (Tvedten, Paulo & Montserrat 2008) are reflected in a rural and an urban local setting in northern Mozambique – the District of Mossuril and the two *bairros* Muatala and Namutequeliua in Nampula City. Our point of departure has been the notion that gender relations and the socio-economic position of men and women are the outcome of historical and structural political, economic and cultural conditions, and the articulation between such constraints and the actions ('agency') of households and individuals. We have also postulated that in the 'commoditised' social world in which people find themselves, material poverty has significant implications for the extent to which people are in a position to pursue alternative coping strategies and accomplish upward social mobility within the existing structural framework.

Our study from Mossuril and Nampula City has confirmed that there is a systematic difference in poverty and well-being between male- and female-headed households, as well as between individual men and women. At one level, these differences are closely related to the political, economic and cultural realities in which people find themselves. Historically, men dominated traditional Macua, colonial Portuguese and Muslim social formations – even though both the matrilineal principles and *sharia* laws are 'gender sensitive' in the sense of underlining the responsibilities men have towards women and children.

We have also seen how men dominate the contemporary political structures at the levels of the province, the municipality and the district – albeit with stronger female representation at the lower levels of representation, particularly in urban Nampula. In economic terms, both the formal and informal labour market are male-biased, visible by the limited number of women in formal employment and the 'invisibility' of women in the public informal market. Women in Mossuril and Nampula City are largely 'hidden' in an agricultural sector with low productivity and returns and in small-scale informal enterprises in the *bairros* with similar limited turnover.

However, perhaps the most determinant structural constraint on the coping strategies of men and women in Mossuril and Nampula City are 'customary' and 'cultural'. There are strong traditional as well as religious constraints on the agency of women, which at the outset binds them to men and the domestic scenario. These are instilled in children from an early age through rituals and prescription emphasising women's subordinate position and their responsibility 'not to refuse men'. Many women seem to embody their own inferior position,[40] as very few questioned or opposed the order of gender relations in the female focus groups we organised. In the city, the male-biased cultural idiosyncrasies take on more subtle forms – such as the *de facto* banning of women from public informal markets.

The structural oppression of female-headed households and women in Mossuril and Nampula are reflected in the quantitative and qualitative data we have presented. In general terms, women are seen as subordinate to men in the traditional Macua and Islamic faith; they have more limited access to information about society at large than men; they have more limited access to employment and income than men; they spend less and have fewer assets than men; they have lower levels of education and are more often sick than men; and they are more susceptible to domestic violence and divorce than men.

[40] Such an 'embodiment' of structural constraints is what Bourdieu (1977, 1990) calls *habitus*, defined as 'mental and corporeal schemata of perception and action'.

Having said this, we have also seen that there are significant differences between female-headed households and women in the rural setting of Mossuril and the urban setting of Nampula. In Mossuril, practically all female-headed households found themselves in the same socio-economic position. In Nampula, on the other hand, there was a much larger variation in the situation of female-headed households. While some are unemployed, uneducated, have ill health and struggle with deep poverty, others find themselves in the upper echelons in terms of consumption, education and access to health facilities. We also saw how some women became *de facto* household heads as a result of their importance for household provisioning and/or dwelling ownership.

At the same time, however, poor households in the urban setting also appear more vulnerable than their rural counterparts. A larger proportion of households are based on *ad hoc* or temporary 'cohabitantship', they are more dependent on (formal or informal) employment and cash income, and they are more susceptible to domestic or community violence. Extended family and community relationships found in rural Mossuril are partly substituted by neighbours, friends and civil society institutions – but still urban families that are not in a position to maintain urban-rural relationships seem exceptionally vulnerable to shocks following from sudden loss of income or necessary expenditures.

Our data give some basis for arguing that poor women increasingly try to relate to their poverty and vulnerability by engaging in female focussed social networks. Female-headed households are most likely to be involved in networks of mutual support and credit societies, and we have presented several case studies where women cooperate around small economic enterprises and child-care. At the same time, we have presented cases where destitute men find themselves socially marginalised without women.

Our basic tenet in this report has been that the structural changes and more limited patriarchal control in urban Nampula have opened up opportunities for women that they do not have in rural Mossuril – where they remain generally disadvantaged and with few options for social mobility. At the same time, we have seen that households where women have a dominant position either as *de jure* or *de facto* heads are more likely to invest in the social well-being of the household members through education and health. As we see it, and from the vantage point of Mozambique's efforts to reduce poverty, this should have three main implications:

1. In rural areas, interventions for poverty reduction and gender equality (including social protection measures) should target female-headed households and women who remain the poorest and most vulnerable.
2. In urban areas, efforts should be made to exploit the new spaces created for women by targeting interventions to support women's economic ventures.
3. In both rural and urban areas, efforts should be made to support female focussed networks and associations which will have the best effect on the well-being of all household members, including children.

4.1 Recommendations

More specifically, the results from our study indicate that the following actions will be important to attain greater gender equality and women empowerment in northern Mozambique:

1. While there has been an increase in the proportion of women in public office both in the Municipality and District, there are few, if any, interventions targeted at gender equality and the empowerment of women. This should be done through concrete programmes and projects, rather than 'gender units' that tend to dilute responsibility.

2. The Department of Women (Provincial Directorate for Women and Social Action) has a dedicated and good staff, and should be more directly involved in the development of sound policies and concrete actions for gender equality and women's empowerment in public institutions in Nampula.
3. Traditional and religious institutions have a strong impact on people's cultural perceptions and social action. Public-, aid- and private institutions working on gender issues should relate to and challenge the authorities in these institutions, with the gender-components of their guiding principles as points of departure.
4. In general terms, development interventions should target women much more directly than has been the case up until now, with the argument that support to women has the most positive implications for overall well-being (food security, education, health). The continued discrepancy in level of material poverty between male-headed and female-headed households justifies such a positive discrimination, at least for a transitional period.
5. Based on our study, the most important areas of rural intervention seem to be to secure older female heads of household's minimum living conditions through social action programs (including *Acção Social*). For other women, the most important constraint is the dearth of independent income earning options. This can be encouraged by a combination of seed-funds to pay for agricultural labour and targeted access to credit for informal economic activities.
6. In urban areas, interventions need to relate to the dual constraint of domestic and public violence and the inability of women to carry out their economic activities in public spaces. Community/religious courts should get a stronger mandate and training to relate to issues of violence. Institutions like AMMCJ (see Chapter 3) should get resources to extend their activities and reach further down in local communities.
7. Extension of the catchment area for women's economic activities can best be accomplished through concrete actions/projects where women get support to establish small-scale enterprises in public spaces. With the 'power of example', more women will reach a position to challenge the sociocultural constraints still existing for female economic activities.
8. In order to build sustainability in the long term, both in rural and in urban areas, governmental and non-governmental interventions should seek to maximise girls' access to the formal school system and actively challenge cultural and traditional elements that limit or hinder girls' education.
9. Two more specific areas also warrant more attention: Our study has shown that women increasingly cooperate in social groups or associations, and the latter should be encouraged as a vehicle for change, both for economic and sociocultural development.
10. Moreover, we have seen how women, particularly in rural areas, are isolated from information about contemporary social change and opportunities as a result of their limited access, particularly to the radio as a means of communication. The extension of radio coverage and access to radios for women should be encouraged.
11. Having said all this, awareness should be built around the apparently emerging trend of poor urban men who do not manage to live up to expectations of 'manhood', becoming socially marginalised and isolated. In the longer term, such men may represent a severe threat to local communities as well as individual families.

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SUMMARY

This is the second report in the series 'Gender Policies and Feminisation of Poverty in Mozambique.' While the first report went through existing quantitative data on the national level, this report focuses on the social relations and cultural perception of gender in the rural district of Mossuril and the city of Nampula in the northern province of Nampula. Structural changes and more limited patriarchal control in urban Nampula have opened up opportunities for women that they do not have in rural Mossuril – where they remain generally disadvantaged and with few options for social mobility. Urban women and female headed households are more likely to be economically independent from men and invest in the well-being of their household members.

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