

19 POLITICS, RELIGION AND HUMAN FLOURISHING IN MOZAMBIQUE

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INTRODUCTION

From the precolonial to the postcolonial period, religion has occupied the centre stage in political, economic and social development in Mozambique and Africa at large. This prominence of religion in the everyday life of Africans has received both negative and positive analysis by Africanist scholars. For some, religion has been intimately connected to the imperial enterprise, for others, it has been driven by a genuine conviction towards pursuing a providential mission of saving human souls. In Mozambique, like in other African countries, religion played an important yet controversial role. In the precolonial period, it has been blamed for serving imperial interests. In the colonial period, it occupied an ambivalent position first of collaborator with the colonial regime and later on of sympathising with Africans in the struggle for freedom. When Mozambique became independent in 1975, the new government of the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (Frelimo) emphasised that the Catholic Church had collaborated with the colonial regime in the dispossession of Africans from their land and other natural resources. It also accused it of having sided with the colonial regime to prevent Africans from obtaining independence. More recently, religion has been criticised for putting more emphasis on mundane benefits at the expense of spreading the gospel of salvation of human souls.

Based on a review of the literature, archival research and participant observation, this chapter takes an historical approach to look at the ways religion has contributed to human flourishing in Mozambique in the context of colonial conquest, colonisation, decolonisation, independence, Marxist policies and liberal democratic dispensation. Without ignoring the contribution of religion to the colonisation of Africa and its effects on African societies, cultures and environments, this chapter brings to light the blind spots in the study of religion in Africa by focusing on positive contribution of religion to human flourishing in Mozambique. It argues that despite their merit, the narratives blaming religious organisations for condoning colonial practices conceal the positive contribution of religious organisations to human flourishing. It contends that despite its turbulent relationship with prevailing political regimes in both colonial and postcolonial periods, by spreading the message of love, peace, fraternity and reconciliation and providing education and health services in the countryside, religion contributed to human flourishing.

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Following this introductory section, the chapter provides an historical background on the way scholars have approached religion in Africa. It shows continuities and ruptures in the political and academic discourse about the role of religion in African history. This section is followed by an analysis of the contribution of religion to human flourishing in Mozambique from the precolonial to the postcolonial period, with particular attention to education, health, economy, political engagement and peace building. The concluding section sums up the discussion of this controversial, yet fruitful, contribution of religion to human flourishing in Mozambique.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

When the missionaries came to Africa they had the Bible and we had the land. They said “Let us pray”. We closed our eyes. When we opened them, we had the Bible and they had the land.²

The above statement describes well the nationalist discourse on the role of religious missionaries in Africa. Very often, missionaries are depicted as agents of imperialism.³ As in other colonial territories in the world, religious missionaries played an important role in the colonial experience of Mozambique. The early colonial expeditions in the sixteen century included missionaries who were actively committed to both the spread of Christianity and to commercial expansion. The baptism of African kings and signing of trade deals marked the early stages of the Portuguese penetration into the interior of modern-day Mozambique and Zimbabwe.⁴ For example, in 1561, Father Gonalo de Silveira baptised the ruling King (Mwene Mutapa) and renamed him Sebastião. Later on, in 1629, Chief Mavura was also baptised and renamed Dom Felipe.⁵ Missionaries were actively involved in campaigns to end slave trade and slavery in the Indian Ocean region, thus advocating colonisation allegedly to save Africans from “barbarie” and pave the way to “civilisation”.⁶

With the defeat of African resistance and the consequent effective occupation of Mozambique in the late nineteenth, early twentieth century, missionaries, particularly Catholics, found a fertile ground to implement their mission of evangelisation, which included, amongst other activities, the provision of education and health services.

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- 2 See Thiong’o NW. 2012. *A Grain of Wheat*. New York: Penguin Books.
 - 3 See Oliver R. 1952. *The Missionary Factor in East Africa*. London: Longmans; Achebe C. 1959. *Things Fall Apart*. New York: Anchor Books; Ajayi JFA. 1965. *Christian Missions in Nigeria, 1841–1891*. London: Longmans; Dachs AJ. 1972. “Missionary Imperialism – The Case of Bechuanaland”, *The Journal of African History* 13(4):647-658.
 - 4 Departamento de Hist3ria. 1982. *Hist3ria de Moambique vol 1: Primeiras Sociedades Sedent3rias e o Impacto dos Mercadores, 200/300-1886* [History of Mozambique Vol 1: First Sedentary Societies and the Impact of Merchants, 200/30-1886]. Maputo: Tempo/UEM, 13.
 - 5 Departamento de Hist3ria, *Hist3ria de Moambique*, 82.
 - 6 Klein MA & Miers S. 1998. *Slavery and colonial rule in Africa*. London: Routledge; Lindsay L. 2008. *Captives as Commodities: The Transatlantic Slave Trade*. New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall, 145.

Often seen as a homogeneous group pursuing the agenda of colonial powers, these missionaries represented diverse countries, various religious denominations and multiple personal characters, which makes it difficult to look at them as a single category of analysis. In Mozambique, Anglicans, Presbyterians, Methodists and Catholics, amongst others, operated in territories where African religions and beliefs prevailed and imperial interests conflicted. Within this complex environment of competition, each denomination used the means at its disposition to attract converts. While the colonial regime was still hesitant to provide education services to Africans, religious denominations were actively engaged in teaching reading skills and translating the Bible into African languages, thus paving the way for the emergency of literacy in the countryside.⁷ This worked for the benefit of Africans, who took the advantage of this competition to attend school and professional training centres, thus contributing to their own well-being.⁸

It was within this fierce competition amongst various religious denominations that the new republican government in Portugal decided to embrace Catholicism in its colonial enterprise by signing the Concordat of 1940 with the Vatican in 1940. Articles 18 and 20 of this agreement, allowed the Catholic Church to appoint military chaplains, and to operate particular schools in both metropole and colonies. Regarding education, the agreement stated clearly that Catholic schools must design curriculums emphasising the history of Portugal and patriotism.⁹ In nationalistic discourse, this agreement is often cited to claim that the Catholic missionaries in Mozambique were agents of colonialism. As the first president of Mozambique, Samora Moisés Machel stated in a public speech,

[T]he Catholic Church was prominent agent of colonial barbaric activities. The priests blessed prostitution and homosexuality. They blessed all methods that dehumanised our people, all forms of immorality. They blessed the struggle against independence, slavery, exploitation, crime, massacres and destruction of people. They blessed military quarters of the colonial regime, they blessed the aircrafts that bombed people with napalm and each new weapon purchased to massacre the people. They were not forced to do so, they did it voluntarily, they did it with conviction. They accepted to be enlisted as chapel man of the colonial army. Colonialism was for the Catholic Church the symbol of peace in Mozambique. For the Catholic Church, poverty, nudity and misery provoked by colonialism was an indication of social and political stability.¹⁰

In this speech, President Machel thus accuses the Catholic Church of serving the interests of the colonial regime.

7 Departamento de História, *História de Moçambique*, 14.

8 Departamento de História, *História de Moçambique*, 14.

9 See De Carvalho RE. 2013. *A Concordata de Salazar* [The Salazar Concordat]. Lisboa: Temas e Debates – Círculos de Leitores.

10 Machel SM. 1975. *Estabelecer o poder popular para servir as massas* [Establishing popular power to serve the masses]. Maputo: Frelimo.

Machel's accusations were based in historical evidence throughout Africa. For example, in Zimbabwe, the Catholic and Anglican Churches provided chaplains to the Pioneer Column, which engineered the colonisation. Every participant of this Pioneer Column was given land by Cecil John Rhodes' company and the Church got huge tracts of land. In modern-day Democratic Republic of Congo, a speech delivered to the first group of missionaries in 1883 by Jules Jenkins, governor of Kinshasa, and published in a Belgian Newspaper in Kinshasa in 1951 stated clearly that missionaries should put the interest of the Belgium state before the gospel.¹¹ Despite this evidence, Machel seems to ignore the circumstances that forced the Portuguese government to re-establish relations with the Vatican, particularly its lack of financial resources to run colonial empire and the perception of losing ground to Protestant denominations, which were often associated with rival colonial powers. He also seems to ignore that during the armed liberation struggle (1974–1975) the colonial government accused bishop Don Sebastião Soares de Resende and other white Catholic priests of favouring relations with Frelimo, and they were expelled from Mozambique in 1971. In the euphoria of independence, the new government of Mozambique treated harshly all of the religious denominations that dissented from the official policy of the Marxist secular state.

It is important to note that in fact, it was not only monotheistic or established religions that suffered under the Marxist regime. As Mozambican anthropologist Alcinda Honwana observes, the new Marxist government rejected creeds and beliefs on ancestors, spirit possession labelling them obscurantist and superstitious. It forbade traditional medicine, rainmaking rituals, exorcism and fortune telling.¹² For example, the Catholic Church's opposition to human rights abuses and nationalisation of its property together with the Jehovah Witnesses refusal to adhere to party slogans and orientations received strong criticism from President Machel. In a public speech, Machel affirmed,

[T]he Catholic Church that collaborated actively with colonial cruelties, in the imprisonment of our people in concentration camps, the church that never protested against torture of the Portuguese Secret Services, the church that never protested publicly against massacres perpetrated by the colonial army, today it says there is no freedom in Mozambique because, we follow the policy of re-education of traitors and criminals. It calls our re-education camps, concentration camps. It asks the world to pray to free Mozambique from "Red Ideas" (communism, my emphasis). The Sect [sic] Jehovah Witnesses which is linked to international reactionary forces was

11 Muzambi P. 2017. "Theology bakes no bread! An analysis of the impact of Theology in the pre and post independent Zimbabwe", *Journal of International Academic Research for Multidisciplinary* 5(9):86-87.

12 Honwana A. 2002. *Espíritos vivos, tradições modernas: Possessão de espíritos e reintegração social pós-guerra no sul de Moçambique* [Living Spirits, modern traditions: Spirit Possession and Social Reintegration in post-war Southern Mozambique]. Maputo: Promedia, 168.

launched against our revolution to challenge our government. It refuses to send sick children to hospitals, it refuses to send children to schools and it teaches them to disrespect our flag.¹³

This speech expresses prejudice against religion and conforms with Afrocentric scholarship, which often blames religion for serving the colonial regime. This accusation, however, fails to recognise the diversity of colonial missionaries and their agendas. It ignores the role of faith and individual agency, as well as the unequal power relations between missionaries and colonial administrators. As historian Catherine Hall has observed in the case of Jamaica, colonial empires were full of contradictions, thus groups that were seen a priori as homogeneous were internally divided and represented contradictory ideas and aspirations.¹⁴ On the contradictions and limitations of imperial powers, historian Andrew Porter rejects the idea that missionaries were agents of imperialism and destroyers of the local culture. He argues that labelling missionaries as agents of imperialism ignores that even in situations where they complied with these stereotypes, they had their own goal, the propagation of gospel and the promotion of the Kingdom of God on earth. He goes on to contend that missions were determined to avoid the interference of empire in their activities through the use of “the universal sweep of their theology, the global extent of their contacts and their consciousness”.¹⁵ For Porter, the collaboration of missionaries with both colonial officers and local people’s demands was a response to limited material resources, but they kept their prime focus. Porter’s argument is complemented by historian Jeffrey Cox’s study of the British missionaries. Cox argues that the relationship between British religion and the British Empire, since 1700 was tense and unpredictable. Under these circumstances, he observes, British missionaries were deeply implicated in imperialism, but one must distinguish between the empire of Christ and the Empire of Britain. The former, he contends, was a multiracial and multinational empire, which transcended the boundaries of the British Empire and of time itself. Cox goes on to state clearly the distinction between the formal British power of the law, the

13 President Samora Machel Speech, Maputo, 1979. For more on Frelimo’s hostility to religion, see Timane R. 1982. “Cruz de cristo servia tortura de homens” [Christ cross served men torture], *Notícias*, 12 May; Machel, *Estabelecer o poder popular*.

14 Hall C. 2002. *Civilizing Subjects: Colony and Metropolis in the English Emancipation, 1830–1867*. For other examples of the internal contradictions of colonial empires, see Burton A. 1994. *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women, and Imperial Culture, 1865–1915*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press; Wildenthal L. 2001. *German Women for Empire, 1884–1945*. Durham: Duke University Press; Cooper F. 2005. *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, and History*. Berkeley: University of California Press; Cox J. 2007. *The British Missionary Enterprise since 1700*. London: Routledge; Daughton JP. 2006. *An Empire Divided: Religion, Republicanism, and the Making of the French Colonialism, 1880–1914*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Stoler AL. 2010. *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

15 Porter A. 2004. *Religion versus Empire? British Protestant Missionaries and Overseas Expansion, 1700–1914*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 330.

military, the police, of slavery and indentured servitude on the one hand, and the informal power of massive social, scholarly and religious inequality on the other.¹⁶ While these views have some merits, they still remain an area of contestation, given the evidence of complicity between missionaries and colonial regimes. Without ignoring the contribution of religion on the colonisation of Africa and its effects on African societies, cultures and environments, the following section brings into light the blind spots of the study of religion in Africa by focusing on the positive contribution of religion to human flourishing in Mozambique.

RELIGION AND HUMAN FLOURISHING IN MOZAMBIQUE

This section looks at the contribution of religion to human flourishing in Mozambique in the precolonial, colonial and postcolonial periods. It shows that long before European penetration in Mozambique, African traditional religions and Islam played an important role in human flourishing. The advent of Portuguese colonisation brought Christianity which, although is often seen as agent of imperial domination, contributed to human flourishing. With independence in 1975 and the subsequent adoption of Marxism-Leninism, religion was combatted by the new regime, but it did not take long for the government to recognise the positive contribution of religion to human flourishing.

As stated earlier in this chapter, the nationalist discourse linking Christian religious missionaries and colonialism conceals the understanding of the positive contribution of religious organisations to human flourishing in Mozambique. It also limits the analysis of religion to Christianity, thus neglecting African traditional religions and Islam. Looking at the history of Mozambique, there is evidence showing that African religions have been playing an active role in shaping social behaviours and identities, and consequently contributing to human flourishing. African religions were and continue to be central to the explanation and mitigation of effects of social and economic ills.¹⁷ The curative orientation of many African religions was saving lives long before the introduction of modern medicine in the continent. The rites of passage for girls and boys not only have shaped cultural behaviour, but they have also played an important role in African societies. The intimate relationship between African religions and natural resources has contributed to the preservation of these resources. In times of ecological disasters, such as droughts, African traditional religious practices have been deployed to perform rainmaking rituals, which have helped people to cope with the negative impacts of natural calamities.¹⁸ Indeed, from precolonial times, African religions were key in ensuring peace and stability by mediating the succession disputes and thus legitimise new leadership.¹⁹

16 Cox J. 2007. *The British Missionary*, 14.

17 See Kohnert D. 1996. "Magic and Witchcraft: Implications for Democratization and Poverty Alleviation Aid in Africa", *World Development* 24(8):1347-1355.

18 Departamento de História, *História de Moçambique*, 76.

19 Departamento de História, *História de Moçambique*, 71; Kohnert D. "Magic and Witchcraft", 10.

Despite evidence showing the presence of Muslim communities in modern-day Mozambique long before the presence of European Christian missions, the contribution of Islam to human flourishing in Mozambique has received little attention. Only few scholars, such as the historians Edward Alpers, Abdulaziz Y. Lodhi and Kathleen Sheldon, acknowledge the contribution of Islamic schools in education. Alpers observes that Muslim communities dominated northern Mozambique, the established schools that threatened Portuguese presence in the region.²⁰ Lodhi emphasises that Muslims played an important role in theological teaching and provision of therapy to individuals and families suffering from psychic problems of various kinds.²¹ Sheldon, highlights the prominent role of Koranic schools in providing education in many areas of northern Mozambique.²²

The Portuguese colonial regime understood that religion was key for the implementation of its policies in Mozambique. During its effective colonisation of Mozambique, 1898–1974, Portugal put religion at the centre of the colonial project. It capitalised on the European missionaries' belief of pursuing a providential mission of spreading "civilisation" amongst the so-called pagans. As it has been noted, for European missionaries, African religions and beliefs were pagan practices to be eradicated from society.²³ Given the historical relationship between Portugal and the Catholic Church and Islam, the later was also ostracised and labelled a sect.²⁴ According to anthropologist Mário Machaqueiro, only after the outbreak of the armed liberation struggle did the Portuguese colonial regime develop a conciliatory relationship with Islam in order to prevent Muslims from aligning with liberation struggle guerrillas.²⁵

In colonial discourse, Christianity was presented as religion of progress. Christian missions enjoyed state support in providing education focused on building a "new man" in the image of a European man. Later on, to respond to the lack of human resources to mobilise people to colonial state projects such as the construction of infrastructure, Islamic leaders were invited to assist the colonial state in the

20 Alpers E. 1999. "Islam in the Service of Colonialism? Portuguese Strategy During the Armed Liberation Struggle in Mozambique", *Lusotopie* (6):167.

21 Lodhi A. 1994. "Muslims in Eastern Africa: Their Past and Present", *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 3(1):88-98.

22 Sheldon K. 1998. "'I Studied with the Nuns, Learning to Make Blouses': Gender Ideology and Colonial Education in Mozambique", *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 31(3):610.

23 Du Plessis J. 1929. *The Evangelisation of Pagan Africa*. Cape Town: Juta; Comaroff JF and Comaroff J. 1997. *Of Revelation and Revolution, Vol 2: The dialectics of modernity on a South African Frontier*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 79; Mendy PK. "Portugal's Civilizing Mission in Colonial Guinea-Bissau: Rhetoric and Reality", *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 36(1):49.

24 Alpers, "Islam in the Service of Colonialism", 165.

25 Machaqueiro M. 2012. "The Islamic Policy of Portuguese Colonial Mozambique, 1960–1973", *The Historical Journal* 55(4):1114.

recruitment of cheap labour.²⁶ Although these activities aimed at serving the interest of the metropolis, if one considers, that the African nationalists who led the liberation struggle in many countries, including Mozambique, were educated in religious missionaries schools, it makes sense to acknowledge that religion contributed for state-building. By training the leadership of the new independent nations, which launched ambitious development projects, including the massive programmes to eradicate illiteracy, religion has been a key player in promoting human flourishing.

Looking at the Mozambican experience, the majority of Frelimo nationalists who launched the armed struggle for the liberation of Mozambique in 1964 were trained in religious missionary schools. The president of Frelimo, Dr Eduardo Mondlane, not only attended the Presbyterian Church, but he also benefitted from a church scholarship, which enabled him to study in South Africa and later on in the United States. The vice president of Frelimo, Uria Simango, together with another prominent liberation struggle leader, Father Mateus Gwenjere, were also active clergymen.²⁷ Ironically, when Mozambique became independent in 1975 and adopted Marxism-Leninism in 1977, it became hostile to the religious organisations which had trained its cadres.

In addition to the aforementioned accusations of condoning colonialism, Frelimo barred religious men from attending its third congress in 1977.²⁸ According to Luciano da Costa Ferreira, Frelimo interference on religion became more evident in June 1978 after the Second National Conference of Ideological Work, which set norms for the functioning of certain church activities.²⁹ It went on to nationalise religious institutions' property, including schools, orphanages and hospitals. In this period, many people who evoked religious beliefs to oppose the regime or resisted unlawful practices were detained and sent to re-education camps in the interior of northern Mozambique.³⁰

26 Cross M. 1987. "The Political Economy of Colonial Education: Mozambique, 1930–1975", *Comparative Education Review* 31(4):555-569.

27 Nkomo BL. 2003. *Urias Simango: Um Homem, Uma Causa* [Urias Simango: One man, one cause]. Maputo: Edições Nova África.

28 Morier-Genoud E. 2012. "Igrejas e Estado em Moçambique após a independência" [Churches and the State in post-independence Mozambique], *Canal de Moçambique*, Maputo, 28 de Agosto, 8.

29 Da Costa Ferreira CM. 1987. *L. Igreja ministerial em Moçambique: caminhos de hoje e de amanhã* [Ministerial Church in Mozambique: Today's and tomorrow's ways]. Lisbon: Silva, 139. For more on Frelimo's hostility to religion, see Machel SM. 1979. "O Partido e as classes trabalhadoras moçambicanas na edificação da democracia popular" [The Party and the Mozambican working classes in the edification of popular democracy], *Relatório do Comité Central ao 3º Congresso*. Maputo: Frelimo, 165; "Samora Machel decidiu destruir a Igreja Moçambicana" [Samora Machel decided to destroy the Church], *FUMO* 2(1979):11-12.

30 "Ministros do Interior e da Justiça na Escola de Reeducação de Inhambane" [Ministry of Interior and Justice at Inhambane Re-education School], *Jornal Notícias*, 2 December 1975, 1.

A combination of factors, such as prolonged drought, the expansion of civil war that had started in 1976, the failure of socialist experience and the consequent collapse of the economy, forced the Frelimo government to review its policy, including its treatment of religion. In 1983, it established the Department of Religious Affairs in the Ministry of Justice. Amongst the attributes of this department were the registration of churches and the creation of conditions for the reconciliation of religious institutions with the government. It was in this context that a group of Muslims created the Islamic Congress in 1983.³¹ In 1992, the government through the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Culture, sponsored the creation of the Mozambican Association of Traditional Doctors,³² paving the way for an open participation of African religions on human flourishing programmes. In the same year, Frelimo lifted the ban on traditional healing.³³ Frelimo regulation of religious activities shows the importance of religion in human flourishing. As Fox has observed, “when governments restrict and regulate the state’s dominant religion, it is often an acknowledgment of the continuing importance of religion in the public sphere”.³⁴ According to the historian Vilanculos, one of the reasons behind Frelimo’s change of attitude towards religion, was its recognition that religious organisations enjoyed credibility amongst the international donor community. Thus, improving the relationship with religious institutions would help the government to mobilise financial and material resources to assist millions of people displaced by both the civil war and the prolonged drought which had provoked famine and deaths. In addition to humanitarian aid, church organisations intervened in housing, water supply, sanitation, credit concession, professional training, agriculture and social assistance.³⁵

Churches responded positively to government appeals and mobilised campaigns of fund raising to provide humanitarian support to millions of people who were desperately in need.³⁶ In their commitment to peace and human flourishing, in 1984, the Mozambican Christian Council established the Commission for Peace and Reconciliation to coordinate church initiatives towards peace and national

31 Bonate LJK. 2006. “Matriliney, Islam and Gender in Northern Mozambique”, *Journal of Religion in Africa* 36(2):146.

32 Honwana A. *Espíritos vivos, tradições modernas*, 176.

33 Bonate LJK. 2007. “Islam and Chiefship in Northern Mozambique”, *ISIM Review* 19:56.

34 Fox J. 2006. “World Separation of Religion and State Into the 21st Century”, *Comparative Political Studies* 39(5):358.

35 Vilanculos CM. 2011. *O papel das Organizações Não-Governamentais cristãs no desenvolvimento de Moçambique: o caso do sul do Save, 1992–2010* [The role of Christian non-Government Organisations in the development of Mozambique], MA Thesis, Universidade Técnica de Lisboa, 4.

36 Pinto MJPRB. 2015. *Estado, poderes linhageiros, poderes religiosos muçulmanos nos Macuas de Nacala – oposições, ambiguidades e convergências* [State, lineage, muslim religious powers amongst the Macua of Nacala – Oppositions, ambiguities and convergences], PhD Diss, ISCTE – Instituto Universitário de Lisboa, 228.

reconciliation.³⁷ It was in this context that the Catholic archbishop of the central city of Beira, Don Jaime Gonçalves, initiated the first contacts with Mozambique National Resistance (Renamo) leadership, paving the way for a prolonged but productive involvement of religious organisations in Mozambican peace process. Thanks to the mediation of the Catholic Church through the community of Saint Egídio in Italy on 4 October 1992, the government of Mozambique and Renamo signed a General Peace Agreement putting an end to sixteen years of brutal civil war, which claimed more than one million lives.³⁸

After the end of war, religion contributed to the maintenance of peace and promotion of national reconciliation of millions of people who had been divided by war. Christians, Muslims and practitioners of African traditional religions and beliefs were called to disseminate the spirit and letter of the peace deal, recommending forgetting and forgiveness of violence perpetrated during the war.³⁹ In rural areas, traditional healers powered by African traditional religious and beliefs administered cleansing rituals which helped war veterans, child soldiers and all those who had experienced bloodshed violence to be reintegrated in society.⁴⁰ Given the shortage of psychologists in Mozambique, the involvement of religion in dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder is another way in which religion has been influential in promoting peace and stability in Mozambique. Considering that one cannot aspire to contribute for human flourishing under the condition of war and instability, by contributing for peace, social reinsertion of the perpetrators and victims of war violence, religion contributed to human flourishing in Mozambique.

One of the lasting consequences of the civil war in Mozambique was the destruction of social and economic infrastructure. As the social scientist Duncan Pedersen observes, “half of the primary health care network was looted and destroyed and landmines were placed in the vicinity of hospital facilities.”⁴¹ Social policy researcher Nazneen Kanji points out that the war destroyed over 40 percent of primary schools, leaving over 300,000 children orphaned.⁴² Facing limited

37 Baloi O. 1995. “Gestão de conflitos e transição democrática” [Conflict management and democracy], in Mazula B (ed). *Eleições, democracia e desenvolvimento* [Elections, democracy and development]. Maputo: A Embaixada, 501-527.

38 Haynes J. 2009. “Conflict, Conflict Resolution and Peace-Building: The Role of Religion in Mozambique, Nigeria and Cambodia”, *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 47(1):62. Mubai ME. 2015. *Making war on village and forest: Southern Mozambique during the sixteen-year conflict, 1976–1992*, PhD Diss, University of Iowa.

39 Mubai ME. 2015. *Making war on village and forest*.

40 Honwana A. 2001. “Children of War: Understanding War and War Cleansing in Mozambique and Angola”, in Chesterman S (ed). 2001. *Civilians in War*. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 124; Honwana A. 1997. “Healing for Peace: Traditional Healers and Post-War Reconstruction in Southern Mozambique”, *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 3(3):293-305.

41 Pedersen D. 2002. “Political violence, ethnic conflict, and contemporary wars: broad implications for health and social well-being”, *Social Science & Medicine* 55:181.

42 Kanji N. 1990. “War and Children in Mozambique: Is International Aid Strengthening or Eroding Community-based Policies?”, *Community Development Journal* 25(2):102-112.

resources to finance the reconstruction of economic and social infrastructures, the government took measures to re-engage religious institutions in the provision of social services. It returned church property, which had been confiscated in the first years of independence, and allowed the churches to resume their prominent role in the provision of education and health services.

In the education sector, churches reopened schools and introduced tertiary education in central and northern Mozambique, regions which had been neglected by both colonial and postcolonial governments. In 1995, the Roman Catholic Church established the Catholic University in the central city of Beira, offering the courses of health sciences and economic management. It introduced the school of law in the northern province of Nampula and agricultural sciences programmes in the geographically remote Niassa Province in northwest Mozambique.⁴³ Throughout the country, other religious denominations including Islamic organisations,⁴⁴ were also actively involved in the provision of primary and secondary education with some content of law and morality.⁴⁵ By allowing religious organisations to participate in the education of Mozambican society, the government recognised the contribution of religion to its developmental project. Because education is heralded as essential for human well-being, it is reasonable to contend that by providing education services, religion has been a contributing factor human flourishing in Mozambique.

Health care is another sector where religious institutions have operated for the advancement of human flourishing in Mozambique. Bearing in mind that access to good health services is a precondition for human flourishing, the participation of religious organisations in healthcare is another indicator of the contribution of religion to human flourishing. Despite the reluctance of Christian churches in addressing sexuality, when HIV/AIDS became one of the major causes of mortality in the 1990s, religious organisations stepped in to assist both the infected and affected. The Dream Project managed by the Community of Saint Egídio was instrumental in assisting pregnant women infected by HIV to prevent the infection of the fetus.⁴⁶ Besides institutional programmes, communities of ordinary believers have assisted people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS through prayers, consolation and fighting stigma and discrimination. Religious organisations have been also active in prevention of malaria. For example, the archbishop of the Anglican Church, Don Dinis Sengulane, managed a project against malaria. On 2 August 2018, *Notícias*

43 Mário M, Fry P, Levey L and Chilundo A. 2003. *Higher Education in Mozambique: A Case Study*. London: James Currey; Decreto No 43/95 de 14 de Setembro.

44 In 1998, the Decreto No 13/98 de 17 de Março authorised the opening of University Musa bin bique, an institution organised by the Centre for Islamic Training.

45 Pinto MJ. 2003. "A actuação das comunidades islâmicas na educação e formação das populações do norte de Moçambique" [The role of Islamic communities in education and training of people in northern Mozambique], *Congresso Internacional Saber Tropical: História, Memória e Ciência*: 1-16.

46 For more on this project, see <http://www.dream.santegidio.org>

newspaper reported the involvement of interreligious movement in the prevention of malaria in 43 districts of Zambézia, Sofala, Inhambane and Gaza.⁴⁷

Many studies have linked economic distress to adherence to religions claiming prophetic and curative powers. Generally, they claim that desperation pushes people to seek spiritual solution for economic and social or “fleshly” problems.⁴⁸ This explanation has merit, but it neglects the importance of these solutions for both ordinary people and ruling elites. Looking at growing unemployment and social inequality in Mozambique, there is need to investigate what distracts people from questioning the government for its failure of service delivery. The proliferation of churches and traditional healers advertising deceitful messages claiming powers to solve diverse medical and social ills,⁴⁹ all advertised under the indifference of government authorities, shows that religion has been used to distract people from demanding accountability.⁵⁰ As one study observed in the case of a Pentecostal Church in the Democratic Republic of Congo, preachers attribute poverty to sin, lack of love and unfaithfulness to tithe.⁵¹ A similar argument is raised by Bosnu and Belk in their study entitled Pentecostalism and material salvation in Ghana. According to these scholars, the new Pentecostalism emphasises that the Bible is the major source of answers to life’s problems.⁵²

Human flourishing depends also on the level of political participation of society. By using political participation to discuss economic and social policies, people contribute to participatory and sustainable governance. In these processes, religious organisations have been serving a key role in helping disadvantaged people to influence political processes. African traditional beliefs, Islam and Christianity occupy the central stage in political, economic and social life, contributing in this way to human flourishing. However, as elsewhere in human history, religious beliefs have been used for political purposes in Mozambique. In postcolonial Mozambique, religion plays key role in official state ceremonies, such as the inauguration of the elected president and the implementation of human development projects. It has become a common practice in state ceremonies to have Christians, Muslims, Hindus and traditional religious leaders delivering prayers on the same stage.

47 *Jornal Notícias*, 24 August 2018, 1.

48 Pfeiffer J. 2002. “Independent Churches in Mozambique: Healing the Afflictions of Inequality”, *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 16(2):176-179; Hasu P. 2006. “World Bank & Heavenly Bank in Poverty and Prosperity: The Case of Tanzanian Faith Gospel”, *Review of African Political Economy* 100:679-692.

49 These include HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, diabetes, physical disabilities, infertility, enhancement of sexual organs, provision of luck at work, bringing back lost love and good luck in examinations, to mention just a few.

50 Ultimately, traditional practitioners advertise their services in public spaces, newspapers, radio and television.

51 Kakwata F. 2014. *The Pentecostal Church in the Congo/30 Communauté: Engaging in Poverty Eradication*, PhD Diss, Stellenbosch University.

52 Bosnu SK & Belk RW. 2010. “Pentecostalism and Material Salvation in Ghana”, *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing* 15:305-323.

African traditional religions play a central role in many development projects. They are responsible for “communicating with the ancestors” and securing blessings on the implementation of new projects in their land, including roads, bridges, schools, hospitals, mining companies, to mention just a few.⁵³ It is noteworthy to observe that current government officials, who in the past accused African religions of being superstitious and having obscure practices, have not only encouraged these practices, but have also engaged with them actively following all the ceremonial procedures.

The introduction of multiparty democracy brought to light the religious syncretism that has characterised Africa since the implantation of monotheistic religions. Religious syncretism in Mozambique goes beyond individuals and has become a common and open practice encouraged by state officials. The religiously syncretic nature of the Mozambican state is more evident in the period of electoral campaigns, when politicians seeking votes become Christians, Muslims and African traditionalists. During election campaigns, political leaders tour churches, mosques and traditional healers’ compounds in search of blessings, votes and magic powers which will allow them to win elections and intimidate opponents.⁵⁴ The role of church in democratic Mozambique is well expressed in president Filipe Nyusi’s statement at the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God after his electoral victory in 2015:

First, I want to thank you from the deep of my heart for the support and encouragement received from the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God which contributed for our election and, today it allows us, together with you, to give our humble contribution in the governing of this country. Our state is secular one with philosophy based on the separation between state and religious organisations. Despite its secular nature, there is a fructuous relationship between the state and religious organisations which have been privileged partners in the implementation of public policies, particularly in social areas.⁵⁵

53 “Maputo: Inaugurado Hospital Provincial”, *Jornal Notícias*, 18 July 2014; “Mortes Constantes obrigam o Hospital Central de Quelimane Realizar Cerimónia Tradicional” [Frequent Deaths force Quelimane Central Hospital to Perform Traditional Ritual], *Jornal Magazine Independente* 14 December 2016; “Nyusi Inaugura Hoje Ponte sobre o Rio Muira em Manica [Nyusi inaugurates bridge over Muira River in Manica today], *Jornal Notícias*, 3 August 2017.

54 See Kohnert, “Magic and Witchcraft”, 1347-1355; Chabal P and Daloz JP. 1999. *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press; On political campaign in churches and African religions shrines, see *Jornal Notícias*, 11 November 2013, 6; *Jornal Domingo*, 21 September 2014, 9. *Jornal Notícias*, 12 September 2014, 4.

55 Moçambique, Presidência da República. 2015. *Paz e desenvolvimento: contribuição da igreja no desenvolvimento humano e social (discurso de Sua Excelência Filipe Jacinto Nyusi, Presidente da República de Moçambique, por ocasião do culto religioso no Cenáculo Maior da Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus)* [Peace and Development: the contribution of church in human and social development (speech of His Excellence Filipe Jacinto Nyusi, President of the Republic of Mozambique on the occasion of religious cult at the Major Cenacle of Universal Church of the Kingdom of God)]. Maputo: n.p.

In this statement, President Nyusi highlights the contribution of church to his election while recognising the secular nature of the Mozambican state. Moreover, he recognises the contribution of religious sin the implementation of public policies. Nyusi's statement brings into light the historical role of churches in the provision of social services. Nyusi's statement demonstrates the contribution of religious organisations to human flourishing in Mozambique. It shows that far from the initial dream of establishing a Marxist-inspired secular and atheist state,⁵⁶ with the advent of multiparty democracy, Mozambique has drawn upon the rich religious heritage of Mozambique in search of a spiritual identity and solutions to the challenges brought about by the failure of socialist experience and subsequent adoption of structural adjustment programmes.

Faith and belief in the power of the occult makes many ordinary people think that unemployment is result of the ancestors' anger or witchcraft; thus, it has nothing to do with the failure of government policies. As one study has argued in the case of Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe, poverty is result of sins and wealth comes from truthful and obedience to the word of God.⁵⁷ From the onset, this might seem to contradict the idea that religion contributes to human flourishing, but if one considers that some African governments have given up their responsibility to provide for their citizens, religion appears to be a solution for human flourishing, because it gives people hope to continue pursuing well-being in dire conditions. Thus, it is not surprising that "the Pentecostal churches are now dominant in impoverished areas, where they have reportedly drawn many away from the Catholic base".⁵⁸ This expansion has been attributed to their capacity to address both spiritual and social problems brought about by economic crisis in African countries. As the political scientist John McCauley has observed, Pentecostalism plays a role of big man rule by filling the gap created by ongoing weakness in state's abilities to provide social welfare. McCauley goes further to attribute the success of Pentecostalism to its role as an alternative informal institution that provides new social networks.⁵⁹ In addition to state incapacity to address economic crisis, the expansion of Pentecost churches in Africa has been also attributed to dissatisfaction with the way established churches have gone about addressing the spiritual and material needs of their followers.⁶⁰

56 On secular state, see Westerland D (ed). 1996. *Questioning the Secular State: The worldwide resurgence of religion in politics*. London: C Hurst & Co; Fox J. 2006. "World Separation of Religion and State Into the 21st Century", *Comparative Political Studies* 39(5):537-569.

57 Vengayi O. "'Zimbabwean Poverty is Man-Made!' Demystifying Poverty by Appealing to the Prophetic Book of Amos", *Scriptura* 107:224.

58 Pfeiffer, "Independent Churches", 183.

59 McCauley JF. 2012. "Pentecostalism and the Patronage in Ghana", *African Affairs* 112(446):1-21.

60 Mbe AR. 2002. "New Pentecostalism in the Wake of Economic Crisis in Cameroon", *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 11(3):359-376.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has looked at the contribution of religion to human flourishing in Mozambique beyond nationalist discourse. It has emphasised the ambivalent nature of the relationship between state politics and religion. It has acknowledged that despite their complicity with imperial, colonial and postcolonial enterprises, religious organisations have their own agenda and agency guided by faith in pursuing the salvation of human souls. Evidence pointing to religion as an instrument of imperial and colonial domination should not conceal the positive contribution of various religious creeds for human flourishing. In fact, despite being often accused of being an agent of imperialism and colonialism, religion has contributed to human flourishing in Mozambique. In the precolonial period, religion glued society together by shaping social behaviour. African religions have been intimately connected to the sustainable use of natural resources, and contributing to human flourishing with that knowledge. In periods of natural disaster, African religions have helped people to cope with scarcity, thus contributing to their resilience. As has been common since precolonial times, Mozambicans, having a deficient healthcare system, continue to rely on curative powers of religion to respond to diseases.

With the establishment of the colonial regime in the late nineteenth century, religion was presented as a modernising force. In the process, it was responsible for laying foundations for human development in both the colonial and postcolonial periods by providing education and health services. After independence, the government ostracised religion, accusing it of having collaborated with colonialism; however, it soon recognised the importance of religious organisations in supporting government social programmes. After failing to provide education and healthcare services and humanitarian assistance to the victims of war and natural disasters, the government invited religious organisations to intervene in areas in which they had operated since the precolonial period. It played an important role in the peace process from the mediation of talks to active participation in the national agenda of reconciliation. Given the extreme poverty that affects the majority of Mozambicans, religion is a key player in helping people to cope with unemployment, lack of health services and social distress.

The introduction of multiparty democracy in 1990 and consequent struggle for votes in the first general election of 1994 opened a new page in the relationship between religion, state and human flourishing. More than serving as partners in the provision of social services, religious organisations began to play an active role in politics, thus opening space for civil society participation in governance. In sum, by providing education, healthcare, morality and other services to its members, religion has been an indispensable contributor to human flourishing in Mozambique.