



# Conclusion

## Uncapturability, Dynamics, and Power

Ethnography harbors the power of critique—political, social, and theoretical. Ultimately a capacity to destabilize, this orientation also applies when writing an account of the violence inherent to processes of state formation in Mozambique. While such critical potential may be realized in a number of ways, here I have privileged perspectives forged on the margins of the centers of power, supplemented by historical sources. But there is more to it than this: by privileging a decentering of institution-based notions of the state informed by multiple readings of Deleuze, a wholly different picture of what a state is—and might be—emerges. Such a venture has also been inspired by what Biehl and Locke point out in a rethink of the relations between anthropology as a politically critical discipline without being co-opted by distinct domains of philosophy and policy making (Biehl and Locke 2010). Following their argument, the skewed, nontotalizing image and imaginal potential of ethnography is valid, important, and essential. A kindred call for a Deleuzian anthropology has also been framed by Viveiros de Castro through deploying the terminology of ontology as an “anti-epistemological and counter-cultural, philosophical war machine” (2015: 2; see also Bertelsen and Bendixsen 2016).

This whole book has been conceived within a similar frame of thinking anthropology as a discipline that is fundamentally critical, subversive, and unrestrained—a perspective where, therefore, notions of violence, state, power, and sociality have been approached in a spirit of, indeed, experimenting with both theory and ethnography. Put dif-

ferently, informed by long-term fieldwork engagements with people in Honde and Chimoio, my reading of the state in Mozambique aims to provide such a slightly askew (and thereby critical) portrayal of current, dire, and frequently violent circumstances among the predominantly poor in the country.

Through the analysis of both contemporary and historical dimensions to the state form and the whole field of the traditional, it is evident that in Mozambique these assemblages are variously and intimately connected—one articulating the other—as well as juxtaposed in often significant ways. By exploring what I have called the traditional field, I have started from the notions that people themselves employ—*tradição*, *tsika*, and *tchianwo wo atewe*. As is clear for people in the urban-rural continuum studied, these crucially frame ongoing and generative processes wherein new social realities are continuously formed. The traditional field, then, is a domain of potentiality and emergence inherent to sociality that impinges on and molds people's lives in fundamental ways. It is also, however, a domain of potentiality that subsequent state formations often seek to incorporate, capture, defuse, eradicate, or accommodate. Thus, based on the empirical ethnographic and historical material at hand, I have argued that the relationship between this traditional field and subsequent state formations has predominantly been one of tension and antagonism.

I have analyzed the shifting relationships between statist dynamics and the potentialities in the domains of territory, justice, and law; body and spirit; economy; politics; and others—the distinction between the fields reflecting, as all analytical distinctions, categorizations made by the analyst rather than by immediately being empirically evident or articulated by people. However, in all the chapters concerned with historical and contemporary material from the urban-rural continuum of Honde and Chimoio, I have explored particular empirical points of entry into the overall problematique of the traditional field and state formation.

In chapter 1, through following the development of the civil war in Honde and Chimoio, I argue that the traditional field was violently both de- and reterritorialized by different statist dynamics. Further, I argue that, in particular, the potentialities of the traditional field fed and fueled the war machine dynamics that were characteristic especially of Renamo's expansion and attacks on the Frelimo-dominated state order. In using the civil war as a point of entry into presenting the rural-urban continuum of Honde and Chimoio, I also make an argument for the need to approach the traditional field as always in emergence and, thus, becoming.

In chapter 2 I develop a spatio-historical argument revolving around trajectories of subsequent state orders. I follow specifically the rise of the

Nguni tributary state formation of the nineteenth century and its trans-mogrification into the concession company the Companhia—as well as later colonial and postcolonial state formations. Analyzing these, I underline how the capture of people, labor, and also the traditional field was a crucial feature of all such formations, evident especially during crisis and war, although one contested by lines of flight. Further, analyzing the postcolonial state formation, I argue that a societal reordering through processes of de- and reterritorialization is central to state dynamics, and that in the case of Mozambique this also targeted the traditional field in both rural and urban settings.

Chapter 3 develops from this premise of deterritorializing statist dynamics and violent upheavals of war by analyzing entities central to people's understandings of *tradição*, *tsika*, and *tchianhu wo atewe*, particularly in Honde. By literally working from the ground up through examining how the soil is understood to be depleted of its vital growth power (*ndimo*) by these processes, the chapter traces these effects in the form of changes to the socio-spatial organization of labor and the challenge of a range of powerful entities derived from the civil war, especially *pfukwa*, *tchiphoko*, and *tchawiwi*. Further, I follow the historical trajectory and contemporary violent presence of the *mhondoro*—through its civil war relocation by Renamo to Gorongosa and its current mediumless ravages at the behest of sorcerers. An argument is made that the *mhondoro* constitutes a particular powerful dynamic that, internal or external to formal politics, commonly works disarrangingly and, often, against statist dynamics as these are manifested in politics, state formations, or other arborescent or hierarchical formations of the state kind.

In chapter 4 I turn to the rural-urban continuum of Honde and Chi-moio, and privileging largely peri-urban contexts, I analyze the divergent but similar healing capacities of *n'angas* and *profetes* as well as a family ritual addressing ancestral spirits to argue for the considerable force these represent in addressing social and other ills. Moreover, I highlight the rhizomic characteristics of these healing capacities, rituals, and spirits that are dynamically engaged through the *profetes* and the *n'angas* vis-à-vis, ultimately, arborescent orders of the state kind. The chapter further underlines the shortcomings of an economically centered entrepreneurship approach to these capacities and dynamics.

Chapter 5 turns to the ongoing processes wherein the postcolonial state attempts to reorder the dynamic and upsetting capabilities of the traditional field identified in chapter 4 through what I argue is an apparatus of capture, AMETRAMO. The chapter approaches the organization of AMETRAMO through a particular case of *uroi*, exploring it as a considerable destructive and empowering force also integral to popular

imaginaries of the sovereign—the Mozambican president. In doing so, I again emphasize a trajectory of destructive potencies of *uroi* and their integrality to imaginaries of the state and the sovereign in a temporally longer perspective than what is frequently argued.

Chapter 6 returns to the urban-rural continuum in exploring reproductive and productive dimensions of substance through a gendered approach that underscores how current processes of commodification, exchange, and production are understood to be integral to the state-elite's illicit and nefarious accumulation through a vast array of techniques related to *uroi*. I substantiate this argument by departing from the ritual of *kubatidzana* following the death of the father in the Honde household where I lived during fieldwork to explore the gendered dynamics of reproductive and productive capacities and how these are seen to be related to the bodily capacities of the living and the dead. I also argue that some current universalizing models of neoliberal development for statehood and economy—as well as critiques of these—fail to appreciate these crucial dimensions.

In chapter 7 I draw closer to the ongoing dynamics of formation of power in the postcolonial state by following some recent cases of summary justice in Chimoio's *bairros*. Through interpreting these in the context of successive authority structures—some of which were imposed by the postcolonial state—I make an argument in this chapter for the current situation being dominated by the rise of what I term multiple sovereignties—formations of power that compete, overlap, and wax and wane within the overall framework of the postcolonial state apparatus. In making this argument, I explicitly critique the alternative notion of Mozambique constituting a “heterogeneous state,” as argued by Boaventura de Sousa Santos.

In all chapters, I approach the overall focus on the traditional field and state formation from a range of different perspectives rather than make an extended case study or confine the analysis to a singular and specific empirical domain of the social. These alternative analytical approaches are, of course, entirely possible, and an analysis solely of the workings of AMETRAMO and its relations to the healing capacities of *n'angas* and *profetes* could, arguably, have provided a context-sensitive, ethnographically rich, and more sociologically based study than the one I have provided. The choice to pursue the dynamics of the traditional field and state formation in a variety of contexts, instead of confining the scope to, for example, AMETRAMO, is informed by the notion of *events* and their unfolding—as the one that introduced this book wherein Afonso Dhlakama, the leader of Renamo, transmogrified into a partridge.

As I have shown, events constitute particular intense moments in which the potentialities of broader social formation or statist dynamics are actualized, and I have in this book followed such processes of unfolding empirically with regard to processes of state formation and the traditional field. Describing such events from the onslaught of the civil war to the case of *uroi* at AMETRAMO, I have sought in each chapter to capture the broad range of contexts within which the violence of state becoming may be approached in light of its often antagonistic relationship with the potentialities of the traditional field. This becoming underlines how the state order is ongoing, contested, and dynamic and wherein the hierarchical, sovereign, territorial, sedentary, cosmological, and other dimensions of statehood are constantly unsettled by rhizomic forces. Given this, and being a central argument of the book, the historical and perpetual instances of state becomings may also be seen as inherently *violent processes*.

This position has been substantiated in two ways. First, I have argued that the domain of the traditional field as integral to the wider context of the social, may be approached in terms of Deleuze and Guattari's notion of *virtuality*—that which is real without being actual. In the chapters I have demonstrated how this virtuality is actualized in concrete empirical settings and how these often work rhizomically to deterritorialize the arborescent structures of the state order, or, as Deleuze puts it: “in a social field rhizomes spread out everywhere under the arborescent apparatuses” (2006 [1977]: vii). In this book such “arborescent apparatuses” have included formal polities challenged by the forces of *mhon-doro* or *uroi* or gendered social hierarchies confronted by potentialities of healing and spirits.

Second, I have pointed out that the potentialities of the traditional field—often tentatively subject to the state in processes of capture, as in the capacities of past and present rainmakers—frequently relate to dimensions, orders, or components of the state order constituting, thus, *assemblages* wherein elements from the traditional field comprise parts. However, as the case of rainmaking and, in addition, the examples of tentative relocation of *régulos* in Honde by Renamo show, these assemblages are contested, violent, and, thus, often fleeting—proving to be failing and, ultimately, short-term constellations.

I, thus, argue that the traditional field is fundamentally *uncapturable* in terms of processes of the state kind successfully encapsulating, striating, or defusing its potentialities—an argument supported by the field's durability confronted with violent processes of deterritorialization by subsequent state formations and statist dynamics. Such perspectives on the traditional field and state formation may be useful as many con-

temporary approaches—reflected in different chapters—often see the traditional field from an analytical position that is statist in its orientation (i.e. normatively or prescriptively arguing for the traditional field as “integrateable” with the state), is locked within a divisive optic of modernity and nonmodernity, or is concerned with the task of allocating or multiplying modernity onto, for example, African contexts.

Similarly, as shown throughout, the analytical construction of the party-state or the Frelimo state in terms of unity, coherence, and territorial dominance has been predominant among researchers on Mozambique. However, such forms of representation, with their emphasis on formal, institutional, and systemic approaches to the state, often exclude or miss the longer historical trajectories of friction between statist dynamics and what I have termed the traditional field. Rather, the ongoing, dynamic, and perpetual reemergence and regeneration of the traditional field in the face of the deterritorializing ruptures of colonialism, the postliberation societal reordering, the violent appropriation during civil war, and the structural violence of the post-civil war period effecting deeper economic schisms points to a *force* that is considerable in its potentialities. My analysis of such potentialities—what my interlocutors call *tradição*, *tsika*, or *tchianhu wo atewe*—amounts to a form of *counterhistory* writing in the face of state-centered (institutionalist or formalist) approaches, on the one hand, and the modernist approach on the other where the traditional is but an impotent relic or is marginalized by analytical culturalization. This counterhistory writing, however, should not be cast in terms of heroic resistance but rather should be seen as complex and multistranded encompassing practice and notions of the everyday as well as the potentialities privileged here. As a domain of the potential, its *virtuality* is actualized in a range of ways that I have outlined in the above chapters. Crucially, these potentialities are actualized in manners that differ—from the rhizomic fueling of Renamo’s violent expansion to the unsettling yet empowering capacities of the *mhondoro* and *uroi*, from the lines of flight under the onslaught of the Nguni and the Companhia state formations to the explosive potentials of summary justice in postcolonial Mozambique. Further, the rise of what I argue are multiple sovereignties is of particular interest in this respect as they, again, show the force and dynamics of the traditional field in being involved in the merging and transmuting of past state notions of justice, *popular justice*, with current circumstances to develop a range of sovereign forms where borders with the formal apparatus of the postcolonial state are constantly and often violently negotiated. Thus, and in keeping with the book’s argument, the rise of the multiple sovereignties is thereby one of the latest actualizations of the frictions and tensions between

statist dynamics and the rhizomic, creative potentialities inherent to the traditional field.

Puzzlingly, the state order does not, I have argued, succeed in attempts to co-opt (or eradicate) what it deemed *tradição*—despite many subsequent state formations' multiple attempts of doing so. In the Mozambican context, this argument is contrary to the visions of those, for example Florêncio (2005), who see the recent decentralization moves largely as a successful extension of the Frelimo state into the rural settings that, more or less, manages to fully capture these within the state apparatus. Such an argument rests on a vision of the state where it has the capacity to successfully engage nonstate social orders. As I have shown in different chapters, this argument further rests on the state order's decapitation—if you will—of the traditional field's potentiality. In theoretical terms, Florêncio and other approaches similar to his represent, therefore, an overly systemic approach and, perhaps, an overestimation of the state's capacity to striate the social field, thus making it penetrable, controllable, and surveillable for state organs or agents. In empirical and ethnographic terms, such a vision of the state in Mozambique shies away from the multiple ways in which consolidation of state control in political, territorial, national sovereign terms has never been fully accomplished—as the periods of the civil war or the externally controlled Companhia indicate also historically.

Contrarily, my argument of seeing the current and past identifiable state formations through the optic of statist dynamics confronted by the traditional field brings a novel perspective on these processes in studies on Mozambique and African state formation. Further, the insistence of these processes of state formation as always ongoing, perpetually challenged, and predominantly violent—the violent becomings—is at the same time a reflection of seeing the state from its nonelite subjects situated within their social and political circumstances in the rural-urban continuum of Honde and Chimoio, Manica Province, and, moreover, to emphasize the state as emergent and unfolding rather than confined to an institutional vision (see also Hoffman 2011). Such a noninstitutional argument—pertaining both to the traditional field as a domain of potentiality through its virtuality that is actualized at particular moments and to the ongoing, contested, and violent becomings of state—extends an analysis of the traditional field beyond a focus on decentralization policies or the institutions of *régulos*, community authorities, or community police in Mozambique. Further, by arguing for certain dimensions of the traditional field and state dynamics comprising assemblages, I have also underlined the interpenetration of processes of state formation and the potentialities of the traditional field. By seeing statist for-

mations as violent processes of becoming, one can proceed to analyze ruptures, transformations, and similarities in a range of settings wherein the order of the state is antagonistically or problematically related to forces of broader social formations—also to those not pertaining to the traditional field. Through an analysis of the particular case of Mozambique I hope to have contributed to an anthropology that approaches the state order in more tangible terms than the cold monster poised for attack—or levitating above its subjects.

In this book I have sought to understand the state as an incomplete and beleaguered mode of organization—an arborescent structure always in the state of becoming and always being contested, challenged, and evaded by forces, dynamics, and practices of the social in general—and the domain of the traditional in particular. In doing so—and in deliberately invoking some of the standard repertoire employed when analyzing the state, such as territory, body, economy, sovereignty, law, spirit, economy—the aim has been to shift the analysis of how we conceive the state away from state-centric discourses and institutions: by reconceiving conflicts over various forms of state formation—and sometimes the very possibility of state—in such disparate domains as sorcery, informal markets, gendered corporalities, spirit possession, and lynchings, the book has provided entry points into the state. And I hope also to have shown that an anthropological approach deploying a critical use of historical sources—in a sense mimicking how the past impinges on the present for my interlocutors—may have helpfully delineated the trajectory of violence that is the trace of state in Mozambique.