

A photograph of a woman walking away from the camera on a dirt path. She is carrying a large, wrapped bundle on her head and holding a long wooden staff in her right hand. She is wearing a patterned short-sleeved shirt and a long, dark skirt with a red stripe. The background shows a rural setting with trees, utility poles, and a fence. The overall tone is sepia or aged.

Spirits, words of power, sound of rattles

**How do traditional healers in Maputo, Mozambique,
manifest their authority in public and in private space?**

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04 August 2014

submitted to the Board of Examiners in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
degree of Master of Arts in Conflict Studies & Human Rights

Name of Supervisor: Dr. Jolle Demmers

Date of Submission: 04 August 2014

Program trajectory followed: Research & Thesis Writing only (30 ECTS)

Word Count: 23,488 words.

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Abstract

This thesis examines the ways in which traditional healers manifest their authority in public and in private space in Maputo, Mozambique. A distinction is made between local and foreign healers since they demonstrate different forms of behavior in public space. It is suggested that there is a connection between the (absence of) manifestation of authority in public space and (il)legitimacy and that claims to authority are mainly made in private space. Moreover, drawing from theory as well as from evidence gathered in the field, it is argued that there is a strong correlation between discourse, power and the creation or maintenance of hierarchies. This thesis points out that the co-existence of various authorities in different spaces does not necessarily constitute a potential for conflict. On the contrary, the example of traditional healers in Mozambique shows that alternative (informal) authorities can contribute to the reconciliation and stabilization of troubled societies.

Key words: Mozambique, Maputo, traditional, healers, curandeiros, manifestation of authority, legitimacy, state authorities , traditional authorities, public space, private space, boundary drawing, claiming space, virtual borders.

Acknowledgements

This thesis could not have been written without the help of some people.

First of all, I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Jolle Demmers for her input, feedback and advice which guided me through the process of writing this thesis.

Secondly, I would like to express my gratitude to Donaldo Salvador who supported me in so many ways during my stay in Maputo.

Special thanks also go to Vlad Sokhin who shared not only his time and experience with me but also his beautiful photos which I analyzed in the third chapter.

Moreover, I am very grateful for the generosity of my interviewees. They welcomed me in their healing rooms, which are the most private and intimate places for traditional healers, and provided me with precious insights into their working as well as private lives.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my wonderful family and Nicola for their never-ending support, encouragement and motivation.

Map of Mozambique



Introduction

1. Current academic debate, knowledge gaps, research question

The current academic debate about the role traditional authorities play in contemporary Mozambique revolves around three main points of contention.

The first one is concerned with the relationship between state and tradition. Scholars such as Bertelsen, Buur and Kyed look at the historical background of tensions between traditional authorities and the state in order to explain the recent trend towards a policy of recognition in Mozambique. The focus here lies rather on the state than on the traditional authorities. The unit of analysis is politics [of recognition] and processes (how the relationship between state and tradition has been changing). Research in this category aims at providing a broader picture and mostly deals with very general terms such as ‘the state’ and ‘traditional authorities’. No special attention is given to traditional healers which can be a subcategory of traditional authorities. In these rather state-focused approaches, traditional authorities often seem to be taken as passive counterparts of the active state. They were conceded certain rights by the state in its effort to co-opt them. (Even though Bertelsen acknowledges that the state’s attempted co-optation was not successful and that the Mozambican state must be seen as consisting of multiple logics, presences and sovereign practices (2008), no attention is paid to the traditional authorities’ agency. Questions such as ‘What have they been doing in order to stand up to state authorities?’ and ‘How are they sustaining and manifesting their claims to authority nowadays?’ are not raised.)

The second main topic dealt with in the existing literature is closely related to the first one and concerns hybrid structures in Mozambique. Attention has been paid to co-existing social, political and legal systems and institutions and some authors have focused on the impact these systems and institutions can have on reconciliation processes (Honwana, Igreja, de Sousa Santos). The argument goes that social reconstruction and community building can only be successful if one takes into account the needs and worldviews of the rural population, which are embedded in traditional institutions and represented by traditional authorities. Moreover, traditional institutions, as for instance chiefs, diviners or traditional healers, are experienced in dealing with social reconstruction and reconciliation on a small scale level. Therefore they have a lot of expertise (Honwana, 1997, p.294). Research conducted in the Gorongosa district, Central Mozambique, leads Igreja to the conclusion that traditional healers and local mechanisms of conflict resolution developed as “an alternative to deal with the legacies of modern warfare” (2009, p. 436). He points to the problem that the official silence, prescribed by the unconditional amnesty law, did not take into consideration the normative world or ethics of reciprocity of rural communities which in some areas demand accountability over serious past crimes in order to make reconciliation possible. In the case of Gorongosa, traditional healers, not the state, met the people’s need to actively engage with the horrors of the past in order to come to terms with the war and re-establish social stability.

Last but not least the debate also concentrates on the role of traditional authorities in contemporary Mozambique. Scholars agree that traditional authorities are still of great

importance, above all in rural regions. This is mostly explained in terms of geography, history or philosophy. After the civil war, there were simply no resources for the deployment of a country-wide political-administrative network. Thus, remote regions continued to depend on their own hybrid structures. Secondly, as the work of Honwana (1997) implies, there are historic reasons for the persistent power of traditional authorities. Since they have always played a crucial role in community life they are still accepted as authorities nowadays. Being familiar with as well as being part of “the philosophy that underlines the practices of these [traditional] institutions” it is easier for traditional authorities to gain people’s trust and their advices or decisions are more likely to be accepted. Some authors have investigated the relationship between traditional authorities and the people, pointing out that authority is derived from “the loyalty and confidence of those who recognize them [traditional authorities] as the inheritors of wisdom and power to solve problem” (Meneses, 2005, p.26). Once again, in the process of gaining trust traditional authorities are considered as being rather passive. Trust is placed in them *by the population*, simultaneously pressure is exerted on them *by the population*, in sum: authority is given to them *by the population*. The possibility that traditional authorities actively make claims to authority is not mentioned. Nor has any research been done on the ways traditional healers manifest their authority.

In order to make a useful contribution to already existing knowledge this thesis concentrates on the following research question: How do traditional healers make claims to authority in public and in private space in Maputo, Mozambique? This research question allows for the abandonment of the broad and imprecise term ‘traditional authorities’ which encompasses a wide range of diverse groups of people. Instead, the focus is shifted to solely traditional healers in Maputo. Moreover, making traditional healers the unit of analysis brings about a change of perspective. Instead of concentrating on the relationship between traditional healers and the local population or on the process through which traditional healers get formally recognized by the state or accepted by the people, I propose to focus on the traditional healers’ agency, that is, on their capacity to act and bring about change. The emphasis shall therefore lie on how and why they (do not) make claims to authority and on the ways in which the latter is manifested.

2. Aim and relevance of the research question

Mozambique has a long history of colliding claims to authority and violent conflict. In present day the country has turned into an “increasingly complex social field in which state and non-state, local and transnational relations interact, merge, and confront each other in dynamic and even volatile combinations” (de Sousa Santos, 2006, p.44). Yet, the co-existence of state authorities and traditional authorities, among them traditional healers, is not a new phenomenon but has existed for a long time. Past experiences have shown that traditional authorities cannot be abolished easily because they enjoy strong support among the population. At the present day, their influence is still wide which implies that the co-existence of them and state authorities will continue to exist in the future.

This thesis aims at gaining a more nuanced understanding of the healers' (lack of) authority in Maputo, Mozambique. To achieve this, I proceed in two steps. Firstly, I investigate the role of traditional healers in contemporary Mozambique in order to find out where the so called *curandeiros*¹ derive their authority and legitimacy from nowadays. Secondly, I focus on different forms of manifestation or display of authority in Maputo. Hereby, I make two distinctions. The first one concerns public and private space. The central questions are: How are claims to authority maintained in public space and how is authority reinforced in private space? The second distinction is made between two different groups of *curandeiros*, namely foreign *curandeiros* (from neighboring countries but also from further away) and local *curandeiros* (with 'local' I mean from Mozambique, not necessarily from Maputo). The former were disregarded by all of my Mozambican interviewees as 'witchdoctors' or 'charlatans', while the latter were mostly accepted as legitimate authorities. While conducting fieldwork I noticed that the two groups of *curandeiros* behave differently in public space. Mozambican, officially recognized, *curandeiros* maintain a low profile. They do not try to attract attention by making a public appearance. On the contrary, foreign *curandeiros* are eager to establish themselves in public space. They make claims to authority by distributing flyers and by hanging up posters.

Making an in-depth analysis of the various forms of manifestation of authority is relevant for several reasons. First of all, it offers a better understanding of the traditional healers' role in Mozambican (post-war) society, their responsibilities and self-perception. Since traditional healers are very influential in a variety of contexts throughout the African continent (health care, battle against HIV/AIDS, reconciliation, etc.), findings from a study in Mozambique might be transferrable to other countries or inspire similar research. Secondly, it gives insights into the dynamics between various claim-making groups (state authorities, Mozambican *curandeiros*, foreign *curandeiros*). This is particularly important. Large cities, as for instance Maputo, can be seen as hubs where various people, systems, institutions and claims to authority collide. On the one hand, this collision can pose a potential for conflict. On the other hand, it can provide grounds for rapprochement, for reconciling differences, or simply peaceful coexistence. After having gone through a period of open hostility and violent clashes, Mozambique has often been seen as an example of peaceful coexistence. Findings from this research in Maputo can be useful for two different reasons. Firstly, a comparison of the ways in which authority is claimed and manifested in Maputo and in the central regions of Mozambique might provide a new perspective on the recent outbreaks of violence there². Secondly, findings might also be valuable for other countries and contexts since they can be

¹ *Curandeiro* Portuguese for healer

² The recent relapse of conflict between Frelimo and Renamo in the central region of Sofala is not about a clash of state authorities and traditional authorities. However, what remains central in both (and other) conflicts is the process of claiming and manifesting authority. The peaceful co-existence of Mozambican state authorities and Mozambican traditional authorities in Maputo is characterized by the fact that there the latter do not spatially manifest their authority in public space. Consequently, there are no contested places which could give reasons for open conflict. Investigating the ways in which the two opposing groups claim, manifest, and/or spatialize their authority in central Mozambique can give interesting insights into the nature of the conflict and its dynamics. A comparison to the case study of Maputo can reveal the differences in approaching claims and manifestations of authority and the consequent risks of conflict as well as the opportunities for peaceful co-existence.

used for identifying potential risks for- as well as giving insights into peaceful living side-by-side.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research method and data collection

This research aims at creating what Ragin called “a dialogue between ideas and evidence”. This means an interplay in which the researcher makes use of existing ideas in order to explain evidence, and, at the same time, uses evidence in order to check or revise ideas (1994, p.55). The second chapter focuses on theoretical ideas while the third chapter shifts the attention more to the evidence. The research method designed for this project is based on triangulation. In order to check the integrity of the argumentation made and of the conclusions drawn from the data, different methods and sources are used. At the outset, I tried to contextualize my research question by consulting academic literature. In order to make the literature research as comprehensive as possible, I drew from journal and newspaper articles as well as from books written by African and Western scholars. As soon as I was in field, I also started to collect documents such as brochures, flyers, posters to deepen my understanding of traditional healers in Mozambique. The third part of my data collection was based on observations. As Flick points out, ethnographic research features several dimensions of observation:

- Space: the physical place.
- Objects: physical things in the environment
- Actors: the people involved
- Acts: actions or behavior
- Events: activities, often engaged in by several actors.
- Goals: things actors are trying to accomplish and/or towards which acts are directed.
- Emotions: as expressed by actors (Flick, 2006, p.22 in: Curtis & Curtis, 2011, p.87).

Using this list as a guideline, I visited places in and around Maputo which were meaningful for curandeiros, for instance the markets of Xipamanine and Zimpeto, where traditional medicine is sold or the Institute of Traditional Medicine. Moreover, I observed objects such as healing instruments, medicine and other accessories which were sold on the markets and which I saw in many of the healing rooms I visited. Of course, also the traditional healers themselves became subjects of observation. I paid attention to their appearance and their way of presenting themselves, their gestures and choice of words (many of these observations are processed in Chapter 3). Moreover, I studied their acts and events, how they did what they did, and the emotions they expressed while doing so.

The fourth component of my research was participant observation. Joining a spirit ceremony and a traditional medicine lesson, I had the chance to get directly involved in the traditional healers’ work and everyday life. These experiences ‘from within’ were a great supplement to my observations ‘from an outside perspective’ and the literature research.

Last but not least, I conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews and made many informal conversations. Initially, I prepared a general topic guide, which covered all aspects I wanted to investigate. This guide served as a guideline throughout my field work. Before each interview, I checked it again and made, if necessary, little adjustments. I opted against the use of a questionnaire because I wanted to keep the interview ‘open’, leaving room for new topics to emerge and to see which aspects my interviewees would elaborate on and which aspects they cut short.

During a great part of my research I was accompanied by a Mozambican friend. He became a key contact person for me and facilitated my research in many ways. He helped to find the places of the curandeiros I wanted to interview, which were often situated in some side streets or backyards and thus difficult to find. Moreover, he supported me language-wise. Since I did not want to be dependent on an interpreter, I studied Portuguese. I managed to reach a level which allowed me to have conversations with people and to prepare my interviews in Portuguese. However I did not grow fluent in the language. Therefore, I was very thankful for my friend’s help. He rephrased questions and asked for elaborations until he was satisfied with the given answers.

I encountered a lot of difficulties when trying to make appointments with Mozambicans. Often my interviewees cancelled last minute or simply did not show up. Therefore informal conversations constituted a valuable alternative option to get access to more information. Another advantage was that the spontaneous character and the random setting of these conversations created a relaxed atmosphere. The people I talked to (civilians, a student of traditional medicine, vendors of traditional medicine) were mostly very communicative and many offered me to contact them again if I had more questions.

3.2 Ethics

All interviews were conducted with the explicit consent of the interviewees. The interviewees were provided with information about the research project. In order to protect their privacy I chose to refer to them by only using their first name or the name they used as practitioners. Recordings were only made with the interviewees’ permission.

Conducting research as a European in an African context inevitably raises ethical issues concerning ethnocentrism and post-colonialism. Authors such as Fanon and Nandy rightly point out that colonialism has not only produced historical, political and economic interrelations but it also has shaped people’s mindsets (Fanon 1967, Nandy 1983). Nandy argues that “we are concerned with a colonialism which survives the demise of empires” (1983, p.11). People’s way of looking at things and making sense of them is still influenced by the colonial experience (either as colonizers or as colonized).

At first sight, conducting fieldwork in a context which is not one’s own seems to be a hopeless endeavor. Coming from a specific cultural/historical/political/ethical/etc. context each researcher has a biased way of looking at and interpreting phenomena and is therefore prone to reproduce certain views instead of others. However, I think, there are ways to (partly) overcome these difficulties. Firstly, it is important to acknowledge the limits that are set to one’s work. Secondly, the influence of one’s own bias can be minimized by means of

triangulation. Drawing on literature and secondary literature (written by authors of different contexts), as well as on interviews and (participant) observations lowers the risk of reproducing colonialist views. While conducting research in Maputo, I also tried to ‘objectify’ my work by discussing findings with my Mozambican friend and, thus, by questioning my own ‘Western’ or ‘post-colonialist’ perception.

3.3 Epistemological and ontological stance

Epistemologically, the focus of this thesis lies on *understanding* rather than *explaining*. I do not look for the causes of behavior I am solely trying to make sense of the latter. Meaning is based on a set of shared ideas and generally accepted behaviors and attitudes. These are neither ‘natural’ nor universal but socially constructed and therefore vary with time and with the cultural context. Researchers who aim at understanding how people make sense of their lives, have to face the ‘double hermeneutic’: in order to gain knowledge they make an interpretation of the interpretation people make about their social world. Again, this bears the risk of making an interpretation which is based on one’s *own* world view instead of on the world view held in the area of research. However, this risk can be reduced through awareness and triangulation as described above.

Ontologically, this research can be located within structurationism. It recognizes the dialectical relationship between structure and agency and sees them as two mutually constitutive- instead of opposing entities. One shapes the other; people can influence structures, structures on the other hand have an impact on individuals’ decisions.

3.4 Limitations

It is important to note that the coverage and depth of the understanding of the topic was influenced by the limited period of time available for fieldwork, which could not do justice to the complexity and sensitivity of the research theme. Since *curandeirismo*, the techniques of healing practiced by the traditional healer (or *curandeiro* in Portuguese), has often been associated with witchcraft and causing harm, many people are reluctant to talk about it. It takes a long time to gain their trust and to establish contact with local curandeiros. Interviews were exclusively conducted in Maputo, thus the findings do not necessarily represent the realities in other regions. Moreover, one should keep in mind the limitations caused by language. The interviews with foreign curandeiros were conducted in English, which was not the healers’ mother tongue. Therefore, some nuances might have gotten lost and contents might have been oversimplified. Moreover, there is a problem in terms of vocabulary since English lacks the richness of words concerning spirits, demons, ancestors and traditional healers which exists in local languages. Consequently, my interviewees were forced to simplify certain contents. The rest of the interviews I conducted in Portuguese, with the help of a Mozambican friend. In these cases, I was the one feeling limited in expressing myself and being dependent on my friend’s help. Last but not least, some limitations were due to the cultural background. In the beginning of my research I was told: “You have to be careful,

because you have three disadvantages: You're young, you're white, you're a woman." Indeed, age, gender and race can create boundaries. Being a young, foreign, female researcher doing fieldwork on a rather delicate topic I sometimes experienced reluctance, skepticism and distrust on the part of the people I approached. However, thanks to a Mozambican friend, I managed to partly overcome these difficulties. Being a little older than me, black and male, he was perceived as trustworthy. In many situations, his company was like a door opener because it turned me into a harmless visitor and people were willing to give me information. On the other hand, being an 'outsider' can also have advantages because people put more effort into explaining contents they would otherwise not consider worth mentioning. For instance, the decision of one of my interviewees to invite me to a spirit ceremony was certainly influenced by the fact that I was a foreigner.

This research is a case study which means that it "draws in multiple perspectives", namely the perspectives of local healers, foreign healers, civilians and state officials, and that it "is rooted in a specific context which is seen as critical to understanding the researched phenomena" (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003, p.76). Three main concepts guide the reader through this thesis, namely authority, spatialization and boundary drawing.

The first chapter starts off with introducing the specific context. It provides the historical as well as cultural background of traditional healers in Mozambique, which is crucial if one wants to understand the latter's current role and status in the country. Moreover, it gives an overview of Max Weber's three types of legitimate rule, which helps to grasp the curandeiros' authority. The second chapter moves on to the manifestation of authority in public space. Authors such as Lund, Newman, Paasi, Gupta and Ferguson provide for the theoretical frame of spatialization and boundary drawing. On this basis, the link between (virtual) demarcation lines and identity formation is analyzed and the different approaches of local and foreign curandeiros to manifesting authority in Maputo are investigated. The third and last chapter concentrates on the healers' manifestation of authority in private space. In contrast to the rather theoretical second chapter, this chapter is mainly based on evidence. Making links to previously discussed ideas it investigates the curandeiros' manifestation of authority through words, outer appearance and the performance of ceremonies and daily rituals. A conclusion in the end summarizes the findings and makes suggestions for further research.

Chapter I: Authority and legitimacy of curandeiros in contemporary Mozambique

This chapter serves as an introductory chapter. It offers historical as well as cultural background information which are necessary in order to understand the status of traditional healers in contemporary Mozambique. Using Max Weber's concept of the three types of legitimate rule, it proceeds with analyzing and defining the curandeiros' authority and legitimacy. Last but not least, it gives insight into their spheres of influence. A short conclusion in the end sums up the most important findings.

1. Historical background

The great importance and the relatively high influence traditional authorities enjoy in contemporary Mozambique can be understood by looking at the historical background. Towards the end of the 19th century there was no single political authority governing the diverse tribes and peoples that inhabited the country. Instead, several separate entities co-existed with their own forms of political and social organization (Meneses, 2006). Only with the implementation of colonial rule in the 20th century some radical changes occurred: A variety of economic and political schemes implemented by the colonial state brought about modifications in the organization of power. The restructuring of the Mozambican society and political landscape also had an impact on the status and situation of traditional healers. Being condemned by the Portuguese as practitioners of superstitious activities and magic, many healers were committed to prison or banned in the 1920s and 1930s (Meneses, 2004). Traditional healing methods and traditional medicine were considered obscure (“práticas ditas obscurantistas”) and *curandeiros* (traditional healers whose job it is to cure) were often mistaken for *feticeiros* (witchdoctors who use their powers to do harm). However, due to the shortage of doctors in the country and due to the fact that the colonial state was not capable of providing an alternative health care system, the Portuguese soon changed their stance on traditional healers and the latter became accepted (Meneses, 2004). Yet, colonizers themselves consulted traditional healers for health related problems as well as for problems said to be caused by spirits such as failed negotiations or sudden deaths (brochure of the institute of traditional medicine in Maputo). In 1975 Mozambique reached independence. Only one year later, in 1976, a civil war broke out between the Frelimo government, pursuing a policy in line with a Marxist ideology of nationalization and collectivization, and the national resistance movement Renamo which was supported by the capitalist oriented governments of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and later South Africa. Striving for societal transformations and modernization, the Frelimo displayed open hostility to what they considered part of traditional structures and institutions. In the 1980s a societal cleansing took place which included, among other things, attacks on traditional healers, the abolishment of traditional ceremonies and institutions, assassinations of chiefs and the replacement of traditional structures by local state administration (Bertelsen, 2008). Renamo on the other hand, destroyed state infrastructure (hospitals, schools, bridges, etc.) and went after those who were perceived as affiliated to the state such as nurses, teachers and party secretaries. At the

same time Renamo fighters presented themselves as defenders of tradition and even claimed to fight a ‘War of Spirits’ against the Frelimo (Bertelsen, 2008). Therefore the Renamo enjoyed strong support in rural areas where tradition played a particularly important role and where people suffered most from Frelimo’s attacks on local customs and beliefs.

After the civil war and a narrowly won general election, the Frelimo-led government changed its strategy. It had to acknowledge that the abolition of traditional authorities raised not only issues of (not) being backed up by the population but also more practical problems. First of all, the available resources were insufficient to install new political-administrative structures all over the country. Secondly, one could not expect the rural populations to accept these new structures even if they were deployed. Thus, traditional authorities sustained their influence and continued to rule which prompted the government to pursue a policy of recognition. “Granting them some kind of subordinate recognition and participation in local administration” was seen as a possibility to co-opt and control traditional authorities (Meneses, 2005, p.20). However, as Bertelsen points out, the attempt of co-optation remained ineffective (2008). Despite some changes in the legislation and ambitious efforts to keep them down, traditional authorities succeeded in upholding their power in the post-war era. Above all during the reconciliation processes which followed the signing of a General Peace Agreement between the two belligerent forces Frelimo and Renamo in 1992, the traditional healers’ continuous influence became obvious. In the absence of truth commissions, official investigations, international or local prosecutions, traditional healers took on the task of promoting local mechanisms of conflict resolution and appeasement. By symbolizing a rupture with the past, cleansing body and soul and re-strengthening interpersonal bonds, cleansing rituals performed by curandeiros became an integral part of the Mozambican reconciliation process. Besides, the curandeiros themselves reaffirmed their role as key persons in local communities and demonstrated their status as legitimate authorities, recognized and backed up by the population.

At the beginning of the 1990s AMETRAMO- the association of Mozambican traditional doctors- was founded. Officially, this was a form of “recognition and appreciation of their [the traditional healers’] competence and efficiency in the struggle against disease” by the state (brochure of IMT³). AMETRAMO provides traditional healers with a platform to organize themselves in order to promote the use of traditional medicine and it grants them official legitimization. The board members of AMETRAMO award certificates and membership cards in order to distinguish *curandeiros veros* (real traditional healers) from charlatans which increases their credibility and acknowledgment. However, institutionalization also has to be seen as a form of cooptation. Therefore authors such as Meneses point out that the official recognition of traditional healers in Mozambique was “an attempt at control by the state” (2004, p.16).

The government’s new approach towards recognizing traditional authorities was given particularly strong expression in the Decree 15/2000⁴, “the first piece of post-colonial legislation to officially recognize *traditional authority* in Mozambique” (Kyed, 2009, p. 181, emphasis added in original). The Decree 15/2000 put an end to the 25 years long lasting

³ Insituto de Medicina Tradicional, is part of the Ministry of Health

⁴ The Decree 15/2000 was implemented in 2002, for more detailed information see: Buur & Kyed, 2005.

abolishment of formal power of traditional authorities and made for the latter's re-inclusion in local governance. From 2002 onwards, traditional authorities, defined by Article 1 as "traditional chiefs, the neighbourhood or village secretaries and the other legitimate leaders recognized as such by their respective communities", were officially accepted as 'community authorities' by the state. In several articles they were bound to cooperate with the local state police in state-administrative and security issues such as policing, population registration, land allocation and rural development. Moreover, they were expected to perform several tasks in the civic-education sector, for instance, informing about the law, contributing to a patriotic spirit, preventing crime, the spreading of HIV/AIDS and premature pregnancies (Kyed, 2009, p. 182). In sum, the community authorities' allocated role can be described as twofold: On the one hand, they are supposed to represent their communities. On the other hand they have to act as state assistants. However, their impact is limited. Article 2 states that "in carrying out their administrative functions, local organs of the state will interact with the community authorities, by listening to opinions on the best way to mobilize and organize participation from the local authorities, in the design and implementation of economic, social and cultural plans and programs, designed to benefit local development". Thus, the consulting position which is ascribed to the traditional authorities does not have any decisive power. "Interacting" and "being listened to" grants them little more than a formal say since the process of decision making is left to state authorities. Moreover, since community authorities are not considered part of the state, they are not eligible for salaries paid by the latter (Meneses, 2006, p.21, footnotes). Therefore, the Decree 15/2000 should not be misinterpreted as "a benign recognition of already existing chiefly practices" but has to be understood as "a means to regulate chiefs and bolster state authority" (Kyed, 2009, p.179). In sum, the new policy of recognition and co-optation did not fundamentally alter the status of traditional healers in Mozambique. They continue to be recognized as legitimate authorities throughout the country- above all in rural areas.

2. Defining the authority of traditional healers in contemporary Mozambique: Max Weber's three types of legitimate rule

Before having a closer look at the authority of traditional healers in contemporary Mozambique, we will turn to the concept of authority itself. According to Max Weber, authority can be defined as "the probability that certain specific commands (or all commands) will be obeyed by a given group of persons" (1978, p.212). In his view, rule is legitimate when people conform to it willingly because they regard it as rightful. There are three ideal types of legitimate rule: charismatic authority, traditional authority and rational legal authority. However, these ideal types are hardly found in their pure form.

Rational legal authority derives its power from a belief in law and rationality. It is rather the office than the office holder which wields authority. Rational legal authority can thus be seen as a "legally established impersonal order" (Weber, 1978, p.216). In Weber's view the best form of legal-rational authority is bureaucracy. Charismatic authority emerges from the personal characteristics and charm of an individual. Charismatic leaders are often considered

as incorporating exceptional powers and qualities. Not being backed up by tradition or law, they are only legitimized as leaders as long as people believe in them, follow and support them. In Weber's words: a charismatic leader is "obeyed by virtue of personal trust in his revelation, his heroism or his exemplary qualities so far as they fall within the scope of the individual's belief in his charisma" (1978, p.216). Traditional authority is legitimized by the believed sanctity of custom and tradition. The right to rule is passed on from generation to generation. Just as in the case of charismatic authority obedience is owed to the *person* of the leader, not to the legally established rules, as it is the case in rational legal authority. The duty to obey traditional authorities "is a matter of personal loyalty within the area of accustomed obligations" (1978, p.216). In a system of traditional authority, structures are very unlikely to change or evolve.

Curandeiros veros, that is traditional healers who are recognized as legitimate authorities, can be identified as incorporating elements of both charismatic and traditional leaders. On the one hand, they can have charismatic personalities and are considered to have supernatural powers which are not accessible to the average person. These exceptional powers are renowned as "of divine origin or exemplary" and owing to them a person is looked upon as a leader (Weber, 1978, p.241). Traditional healers derive their authority and legitimacy from the recognition which is given to them by the people who consult them and believe in their powers- a decisive characteristic of charismatic authority. As mentioned before, this recognition is given voluntarily "and guaranteed by what is held to be a proof, originally always a miracle, and consists in devotion to the corresponding revelation, hero worship, or absolute trust in the leader" (Weber, 1978, p.242). In the case of curandeiros, proofs of the healers' extraordinary capacities can be successful treatments of diseases, dispute settlement and reconciliation, or the resolving of psychological as well as spiritual problems. However, in the absence of proof and success, the leader seems abandoned by his magical or heroic powers and is likely to lose his charismatic authority (Weber, 1978, p.242). This holds also true for curandeiros. Without success stories spread by their patients, traditional healers are unlikely to be recommended, their fame will decrease as well as their (good) reputation. In sum, charismatic leadership is based on a reciprocal interplay of leader and followers. Only as long as the latter recognize the former, consult him/her and believe in his/her powers, charismatic leaders maintain their authority.

On the other hand, curandeiros also feature characteristics of traditional authorities. Their status is rooted in tradition, customs and routine. Many of them rule because of inherited qualities. For instance, spirits can be inherited and knowledge about traditional medicine is mostly passed on within the family. Thus, the traditional healers' authority "is bound to the precedents handed down from the past and to this extent is also oriented to rules" (1978, p.244). The basis of traditional leadership are accustomed forms of social behavior, in the case of curandeiros, these are mainly cultural practices such as ceremonies and rituals which are embedded in a certain philosophy of life and form part of the predominant world view. Again, belief is the decisive factor for determining what rightful ruling is. Without the people's belief in the "sanctity of immemorial traditions and the legitimacy of those exercising authority under rule" traditional authorities are not recognized as such (Weber, 1978, p.215).

As Weber points out, pure charismatic leaderships as well as pure traditional leaderships have

been rare. In some cases, the latter did exist in the past. However, they “have seldom been without a head who had a personally charismatic status by heredity” (1978, p.263). The curandeiros’ authority is based on a combination of both traditional and charismatic leadership which is more stable than pure traditional rule or pure charismatic rule. On an individual level, traditional healers are recognized because of their personal skills and qualities. Their individual success in healing diseases, resolving quarrels, etc. is decisive for their reputation and recognition. Also their personality plays a crucial role. Only if patients feel comfortable with them and build trust, they open up and share their problems, concerns and worries with the traditional healers and consent to a treatment. On a societal level, they are accepted for the role they perform. As curandeiros they owe a certain status. This has been established by tradition and is hardly questioned. Moreover, the healers are not least considered potent because their powers reach back to earlier times since they have been passed on from generation to generation.

3. Cultural background

The important role traditional healers still play in contemporary Mozambique bears upon the cultural context. This becomes particularly evident in Maputo. Even though citizens do have access to service provision by the state, many choose to go to a traditional healer instead of to the hospital. According to Senhora Olga, president of AMETRAMO in Maputo, there are 7000 officially recognized curandeiros in the capital (not counting in the numerous foreign curandeiros who practice there as well)⁵. This enormous number of traditional healers implies that there is a great demand for them. For many patients (and many curandeiros) traditional healing practices and orthodox medicine are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, most curandeiros and medical practitioners perceive each other as colleagues rather than competitors⁶. Similarly, patients do not *either* believe in traditional medicine *or* in orthodox medicine. Their choice of doctor and treatment depends on their affliction, not on the availability of public service provision.

In my view, there are three main cultural aspects which contribute to an explanation of the healers’ social status and their influence, namely ancestors and spirits, sense of community and local affinity. The last two are closely related. In the following paragraphs we will elaborate on each aspect.

Just as in other African countries, ancestors and spirits are an important part of the people’s culture. Deceased relatives are believed to still have an impact on people’s lives, their spirits are present in and part of everyday life. Chicuecue explains that a good relationship with the spirits is crucial in traditional Mozambican culture because the dead, the living and the natural world are seen as interlinked (2010, p.485). Likewise, death is not seen as the end of somebody’s existence, it rather constitutes the passage from one dimension of life to another. Therefore, “people relate directly to the ancestral spirits with whom they share a combined

⁵ Interview with Senhora Olga, president of AMETRAMO in Maputo, 26.04.2014. She stated that AMETRAMO had 70,000 members spread over the country, 7,000 of them in Maputo.

⁶ This will be elaborated on later on in this Chapter and in Chapter 3.1.

existence and interact in everyday life” (Honwana, 1997, p.296). Ancestral spirits are believed to have a direct influence on people’s lives: “They protect communities from misfortune, promote fertility among women and the land, ensure good hunting, and promote good relations in the community” (Honwana, 1997, p.296). Thus, living at peace with them is essential in many ways. Not only the fact that propitiatory spirits sow harmony between community members and guarantee protection is important. Being on good terms with the spirits also prevents oneself and one’s family from being the victim of a possible revenge. This was of great importance after the civil war. In Mozambique, just as in other parts of Africa, people believe that the violent death of a person needs to be compensated for in some way. If the acknowledgment of an evil deed (for example murder) stays out, the spirit of the victim is believed to revert to the world of the living in order to demand justice (Igreja & Dias-Lambranca, 2008, p.68). For instance in Gorongosa, Central Mozambique, people were confronted with *magamba* spirits after the end of the civil war. Magamba (gamba in the singular) are the spirits of dead male soldiers who lost their lives during the war and whose bodies were not properly buried. It is said that some people living in areas of heavy fighting used the corpses of dead soldiers for making medicine which should protect them against the cruelties of the war (Igreja, 2009, p.428). Due to these happenings, magamba spirits are unable to find their peace. Therefore they return and take vengeance on (mostly female) relatives of those who were involved in their killing or who defiled their bodies in order to make medicine. Igreja explains that gamba becomes apparent through spirit possession of the chosen victim’s body and can cause great sufferings to him or her, which can include the blockage of reproductive functions (2009, p.429). To free the host from his or her gamba possession, magamba healers are necessary. They organize magamba ceremonies which serve not only the purpose of healing an individual person afflicted by a spirit but also aim at restoring justice and at fostering reconciliation between people and between people and spirits. This example reveals the traditional healers’ role as intermediaries between the world of the living and the world of the spirits. In contrast to ordinary persons, they have the power to connect with ancestors and spirits. They can talk to them or appease them, if necessary (for instance, in the case of magamba spirits). Moreover, curandeiros are capable of sending good spirits for protection of people and property. At the same time, they can chase bad spirits away and cure those who are affected by a spell.

However, the traditional healers’ authority lies not only in their strong connection with the spirits but also in the concept of community. The sense of a shared identity and the communal spirit is still very strong in Mozambique, above all in rural areas. As opposed to European cultures, the collective (family, clan, community, etc.) and not the individual takes center stage in Mozambique. This is for instance reflected in the concept of health and illness. As Meneses points out, “the well-being of an individual, is a reflex of the well-being of the group, of the network of friends and relatives”, illness on the other hand “alters the relationship of the individual with others” (2004, p. 12). Thus, treating diseases involves not only the administering of medicine but also the re-establishment of social balance. In general, disease is divided into two components: the physical component and the social component. The former comprises the symptoms of a disease and can be described as the bodily manifestation of being sick. The latter is more complex, it refers to the ‘real’ causes of the

disease, which are seen as relating to societal disparities or spiritual problems. One of my informants told me about a traditional healer she had met:

“He prognosticated his patient with Malaria and said: ‘Look, you have Malaria. If you just want to treat the symptoms, you can go to the hospital. They have good medicine, they are fast. But if you want to treat the disease, you have to come back here for a purification ritual.’”⁷

This statement hints at the double role traditional healers perform, which is curative and divinatory at the same time. Thus, a traditional healer does not only have to be familiar with the “power of medicine” but he/she also has to know “how to heal with the help of ancestral spirits” (Meneses, 2004, p.9). Again, the focus lies on the collective. Not only disease in its broadest sense (that is a state of imbalance), is seen as a community rather than an individual problem, also the process of healing is collective. Just as imbalance cannot be caused by only one person, balance cannot be re-established by a single individual. This is one of the reasons why curandeiros call their spirits and why ceremonies and rituals are often performed in the presence of the patient’s relatives, friends or other community members.

The sense of collectivity is closely related with the last point of discussion, namely the healers’ affinity with the local community, which also has a major impact on the latter’s social status and influence. Unlike far away state officials, traditional healers are very familiar with and part of the worldview of the rural population. They know the needs of the people and their “shared system of meanings that regulate social life” (Honwana, 1997, p.294). Therefore, their advices are taken, their healing methods accepted and they themselves are recognized as legitimate authorities.

4. Authority over what? The traditional healers’ circle of influence

The authority traditional healers exert in Mozambique ranges over different spheres of life. Firstly, they claim authority over the supernatural. As discussed before, ancestors and spirits play an important role in Mozambican culture. Unlike ordinary people, curandeiros can establish a connection to the spirits and ancestors. This power confers special status on them, because it enables them not only to build a bridge between the family and their deceased relatives but also, on a higher level, a bridge between the ‘world of the living’ and the ‘world of the spirits’. Making contact with the spirits can be crucial because resentful spirits are said to bring bad luck and cause misery. Generally speaking, traditional healers are appreciated and treated with respect because of their extraordinary powers. However, these same powers are also perceived as frightening since ‘bad curandeiros’ can abuse them to do harm.

Secondly, traditional healers have authority over physical health. This holds true, above all, for rural areas, where traditions, the belief in spirits and the sense of collectivity are very strong. However, the supremacy of healers also has practical reasons: When hospitals are far

⁷ Informal conversation with Linda, researcher, 14.05.2014, Maputo

away and difficult to reach because of poorly maintained streets and a lack of public transportation, they are the only contact persons in the event of illness or other grievances. In Maputo, the situation is different: If they are sick, most people choose to go to the hospital first. When they cannot be cured there, they consult a traditional healer next. Yet, conventional medicine and traditional medicine are not strictly separated. On the contrary, there is cooperation between medical doctors and traditional healers. Not only the *Instituto de Medicina Tradicional* works towards the integration of traditional medicine into the national health care system. Also traditional healers themselves sometimes work together with medical practitioners. Some of my interviewees said that they sent complicated cases to the hospital or cooperated with medical practitioners for the purpose of healing their patients, others told me they went to the hospital themselves when they were sick. In general, conventional medicine was not perceived as opposition or rivalry, rather, as a complement. As Dr. Mark⁸ said, some problems cannot be healed in the hospital but only by traditional healers and the other way around.

Another sphere of influence is mental health. Problems related to mental health comprise spirit possessions, family issues, relationship problems and infertility (which is mostly seen as caused by bad spirits or stress). In most of these cases the traditional healers act as psychologists or therapists. They research into problems, smooth down differences and try to re-establish a state of balance.

Lastly, traditional healers have authority over the supernatural or the sphere of hopes and wishes. They are the contact persons for seemingly vain wishes, last hopes and burning desires. People consult them for instance in order to win back a lost love, to find a job, to get rich or to punish enemies.

5. Legitimacy: Sum it up

As demonstrated above, the legitimacy of traditional healers rests upon various components. First of all, there are historic reasons for the persistent power of curandeiros. Since they have always played a crucial role in community life, they are still accepted as authorities nowadays and their role as healers, advisors and relievers continues to the present day.

In the view of neoliberal globalization, African traditional authorities constitute what cannot be globalized on the continent. Thus, they are often stigmatized as an “obstacle to the opening up of African societies to the virtues of the market economy and liberal democracy” (de Sousa Santos, 2006, p.60). On the other hand, it is the exact same introversive attitude which is appreciated by subaltern groups because it is seen as a form of resistance against an exclusive (Western) modernity. By consulting traditional healers people indirectly made a stand against the Frelimo’s Socialism and later against the neoliberal project. In a peaceful way, they demonstrated support for traditional structures and offered their opposition to an imposed modernity.

Frelimo’s attempt in the 1970s and 1980s to abolish traditional structures and authorities backfired, as discussed before. Despite Article 4 in the first Constitution of Mozambique

⁸ Interview with Dr. Mark, curandeiro from Lesotho, working in Maputo, 04.04.2014.

(approved in 1975) which ordered the “elimination of colonial and traditional structures of oppression and exploitation and the accompanying mentality”, traditional structures and institutions continued to exist. Traditional authorities, among them the curandeiros, even came out of this struggle against the government stronger. The clampdown of the Frelimo eventually affected its own legitimacy and increased the support for traditional authorities. The fact that traditional authorities succeeded in defying the period of colonization as well as the government’s striving for modernization reads as proof of their power. Moreover, in the recent past, traditional healers reaffirmed their status as legitimate authorities and strengthened their support in society by making a great contribution to the post-war reconciliation processes.

Another determinant factor for the legitimization of curandeiros is culture. As discussed before, particularly the belief in spirits, the sense of collectivity and the healers’ affinity to the local community are decisive. Numerous traditions such as birth rites, initiation rites or cleansing rituals, which are performed by traditional healers, preserve these cultural values and beliefs and underline the healers’ authority. In contrast to state authorities, traditional authorities can benefit from the fact that they are familiar with the local language, beliefs, and the people themselves. Being embedded in the same system of values as the people around them, traditional healers are not seen as intimidating foreign bodies but as trustworthy, reliable and legitimate experts.

Nowadays, curandeiros also have the possibility to get officially recognized and legitimized as traditional healers by becoming member of AMETRAMO, the state-sponsored association of traditional healers. However, ‘real’ recognition and legitimization cannot be provided by any organization, institution, or the state. Instead, it is the number of people who go to the curandeiros, their belief in the treatment they receive there and the actual healing successes (the competences) of the healers which provide them with legitimacy. Among curandeiros themselves, the “belonging to and sharing [of] an ancestral knowledge, which is retrieved during the ‘visitations’ of the spirits” are the factors which reinforce legitimacy (Meneses, 2004, p.13).

Chapter II: Manifestation of authority in public space

This chapter seeks to explore the ways traditional healers manifest their authority in public space, that is in a domain which is open and accessible to all as opposed to private space which can be seen as “closed or exclusive” (Habermas, 1989, p.1). It starts off with introducing the reader to the concepts of spatialization and boundary drawing and has a closer look at the link between (virtual) demarcation processes and identity formation. Last but not least, it moves back to the case study of Maputo and analyzes the different approaches of local and foreign curandeiros to manifesting authority in the city and highlights how these influence their identities.

1. Theoretical frame: Spatialization

1.1 Claiming space

Claiming space can be a powerful means to manifest one’s authority. As Lund points out, public authority can be legitimated in various ways but the “territorialisation by delimitation and assertion of control over a geographic area offers a particularly potent language” (2006, p.695). This holds true for states as well as for individuals.

In their article *Spatializing states: toward an ethnography of neoliberal governmentality* Ferguson and Gupta make an interesting distinction between ‘verticality’ and ‘encompassment’. The former refers to the image of the state as an institution standing above society, in the latter “state (conceptually fused with the nation) is located within an ever widening series of circles that begins with family and local community and ends with the system of nation-states” (2002, p. 981). The authors remind their readers that states (just as nations) are “constructed entities” which are empowered or “made socially effective” by means of specific symbols and practices (2002, p.981). However, it is beneficial if people ‘forget’ that they (the states) are just ‘imagined’. Therefore, their own image is important to states and they put a lot of effort in developing procedures and practices which depict them in certain (concrete, spatial) ways. The use of such practices and metaphors gives the impression that states are not just abstract ideas but concrete entities with spatial characteristics. In the best case, they succeed in being imagined as ‘above society’ and ‘encompassing it’ at the same time. This impression of states contributes to fastening both their legitimacy and authority, and ultimately to the image of the state as being “superior to, and encompassing of, other institutions and centers of power” (2002, p.981/982). This process is referred to as “the spatialization of the state”.

In the following, we will see in how far the concept of spatialization is also applicable to traditional healers in Maputo. In the first place, one might think: “One cannot put traditional healers, *concrete* individuals, on a level with *imagined* states!” – a reasonable but a bit inaccurate concern. The purpose behind this application is not to compare (imagined) states and (‘real’) traditional healers, but to focus on the methods which are used to reinforce

legitimacy and authority. Ferguson and Gupta show that spatialization has proven to be an effective means to strengthen state power by visualizing the latter's authority in public space—we will see whether spatialization is also used by individuals. As mentioned before, states are constructed entities. The entities themselves cannot bring about spatialization, they depend on the people 'behind the scenes' (or 'behind the state') to create the image of the state as "a concrete, overarching, spatially encompassing reality" by making use of certain metaphors and practices (2002, p. 981). If people successfully spatialize in order to strengthen *a state's* authority and legitimacy, they might also do the same in order to reinforce *their own* authority and legitimacy. A state can be seen as being composed of different groups of people. If the concept of spatialization is applicable to all of the groups taken together, it should also be applicable to each component separately, in this case to the group of traditional healers.

Three main questions can be derived from Ferguson's and Gupta's work, which shall serve as guideline to analyze the healers' ways of manifesting authority: How do curandeiros (re-)present themselves in order to maintain their authority? What images do they try to create of themselves, of the structures they are part of, and of their work in order to secure their legitimacy? Last, but not least, what are their spatial properties?

Interestingly, these questions do not play a major role when investigating public space, because most curandeiros (above all the local ones) avoid publicity and spatialization. In private space though, they are crucial. Hence they will be re-addressed in the following chapter when having a closer look at the manifestation of authority in private space. According to Ferguson and Gupta, metaphors of verticality and encompassment derive their power from their accommodation in everyday routines of state institutions as well as from the creation of spatial and scalar hierarchies by the very same everyday routines in the very same state institutions (2002, p. 984). Once again, one can try to transfer this idea to the traditional healers in Maputo by investigating their everyday routines and their spatial dimension. Questions to ask are: What are their everyday routines? Where are they performed (public spaces/ private spaces, outside/ inside, etc.)? How do they and the location where they take place ('the institution') produce or reproduce hierarchies? This will be elaborated on in Chapter III.

The importance of space in the process of establishing or maintaining authority is also recognized by Lund (2006). While he sees claims of common identity as a means to mobilize people who belong to twilight institution, space serves the purpose of expressing the group's everyday activities. In his view, "territorial delimitation" is crucial for the group members' self-image because it draws an actual line between them and the state (2006, p.694). Demarcation lines are often made visible by the use of flags, fences, walls, banners, masks and marches, etc. (2006, p.695). In the case of traditional healers in Maputo, one could expect curandeiros to make use of territorial delimitation in order to distance themselves from other traditional authorities, medical practitioners or the state, and to undermine the latter's attempts to co-opt them. However, the opposite holds true. As mentioned above, there is very little spatial presence of traditional healers in Maputo and neither local nor foreign curandeiros draw visible demarcation lines in public space. Even though spatialization in general, including the drawing of boundaries, serves the purpose of manifesting and visualizing authority, it is hardly used by curandeiros. There is no creation of meaningful places, points of reference and/or boundaries in public space, despite the fact that they

contribute to the legitimization of authority and, ultimately, can be a symbol of power. Subject literature suggests that space is of great importance and overlapping territories or territorial claims can become problematic and even cause violent conflict. It seems that, as long as some kind of spatialization can be sustained, claims to authority are unlikely to wither away. On the other hand, a loss of 'space' or territory poses a threat to one's authority. Interestingly, traditional healers in Maputo seem to assume indifference. No clear and visible demarcation lines exist to assert control over a certain geographic area, instead most healers prefer to remain 'invisible'. Yet, this does not mean that manifestation of authority and delimitation are entirely absent in public space. As we will see in the following, the drawing of virtual borders in public space, especially by local curandeiros, serves the purpose of demonstrating authority as well as the dissociation of foreign curandeiros.

1.2 Virtual borders and identity formation

Virtual borders can be understood as "symbolic systems of categorization" (Meier, 2013, p. 353). Even though they are not physical, they share the same function as territorial demarcation lines, namely the separation of the self from the other. As Newman points out, borders are "as much perceived in our mental maps and images as they are visible manifestations of concrete walls and barbed-wire fences" (2006, p.146). Being constructed, borders can either serve the purpose of displaying or affirming existing difference or they can create new feelings of 'otherness' by including some and excluding others. The process of othering is closely linked to identity formation because separate identities depend on the distinction of their own group's characteristics from another group's characteristics. These characteristics can be ethnic, social, religious, cultural, political or economic. However, according to scholars such as Newman and Paasi, not the border *per se* but the process of bordering should be the focus of attention, since the latter is more than "the drawing of a line on a map or the construction of a fence in the physical landscape"(Newman, 2006, p.148): Demarcation establishes the criteria for inclusion and exclusion. Consequently, the argument goes that collective identity does not exist naturally but has to be invented by the social construction of boundaries. As Paasi notes, the importance of boundaries is reinforced by the fact that they produce identities. Therefore, boundaries "become part of collective identities, shared memories and the sense of continuity between generations" (1998, p. 81). Borders and boundaries do not only have an impact on people's self-perception, their feeling of belonging and identity, and daily life practices. At a higher level, they also "constitute institutions that enable legitimation, signification and domination, creating a system of order through which control can be exercised" (Newman, 2006, p.148). Border guards deny access to their institutions to those who are identified as being 'outsiders' because they lack for instance visas, or because they do not belong to the right religion or ethnicity, do not have the right income level or educational qualifications. These examples of entry criteria make obvious the great variety and diversity of borders and boundaries. What all borders and boundaries have in common though, is the fact that they are constructions and thus changing entities. Borders can be opened or closed, boundaries can be abolished or reinforced. Hence, identities are alterable as well. Modifications of borders and boundaries also bring about changes in the group

membership. People who were formerly considered as ‘others’ might be included, old members on the other hand can be expelled.

As mentioned before, no physical borders are constructed by traditional healers in Maputo. However, clear (virtual) boundaries are drawn. As Meier summarizes, boundaries can be created through “linguistic hierarchies, social classes, cultural recognition” (2013, p.356). In Maputo, the means for separation curandeiros resort to are mainly self-representation of the group and language. Self-representation is of great importance for a group’s identity. Incorporating certain characteristics instead of others, sharing a common worldview, culture, tradition, history etc. is not always sufficient for creating group affiliation. The group’s core values have to be demonstrated to the outside world in order to distinguish the group from other groups and in order to single it out as special. This also has a positive impact on the cohesion and solidarity among group members (Brubaker, 2004; Fearon & Laitin, 2000; Brewer, 2001).

Local curandeira Catarina⁹, herself member of AMETRAMO, clearly distanced herself from foreign traditional healers. According to her, they could “cause problems” by treating people in the wrong way so that the latter would file a complaint which could cast a poor light on AMETRAMO and traditional healers in general. She said she did not have any contact with foreign healers, but had meetings with fellow members of AMETRAMO on a regular basis. In case of personal spiritual problems she would only go to a “licensed” curandeiro. Even though she did not say it explicitly, it became obvious during the interview that she thereby referred to other local healers, not to foreigners. Moreover, she ruled out the possibility of cooperation between local and foreign curandeiros stating that she would never ask the latter for help or advise, she would only contact other AMETRAMO-members. Similarly, Senhora Olga¹⁰, the president of AMETRAMO in Maputo, noted that there was no contact between local and foreign curandeiros because the latter did not approach her association. From that she concluded that they could not be ‘real’ curandeiros, but only charlatans or feticeiros who possess bad spirits and do harm. She explained:

“If they were good curandeiros, if they heard about AMETRAMO, they would come and introduce themselves, in order to work together with us. We know that they come from country X, that they have medicine X. So they could help us, and, collaborating, we could help them, too. If they don’t present themselves to AMETRAMO, it means that they are no curandeiros.”

Also Eugenio¹¹, who works for the *Instituto de Medicina Tradicional* in Maputo, attributed a ‘negative aspect’ to foreign curandeiros and thereby dissociated them from local curandeiros. He said foreign curandeiros were “false” because they “don’t say the truth” and because they made wrong promises. He claimed that they received patients for high consultation fees and sold medication which they claimed can cure incurable diseases such as HIV/AIDS. Later in the interview though, he admitted that some of these *curandeiros falsos* were also Mozambican but came from other regions of the country. Also civilians made a difference between the two groups of traditional healers. During my fieldwork I was warned several

⁹Interview Senhora Caterina, Mozambican curandeira, member of AMETRAMO, 29.04.2014

¹⁰ Interview Senhora Olga, Mozambican curandeira, president of AMETRAMO in Maputo, 26.04.2014

¹¹ Interview Senhor Eugenio, employee of the IMT, 08.05.2014

times not to talk to foreign curandeiros because ‘they are bad’. Interestingly, foreign curandeiros seem to be very aware of their rather bad reputation and of the boundaries that are created between ‘them’ and the ‘others’. In order to counter their isolation, many of the foreign curandeiros applied for membership in AMETRAMO. Dr. Mark¹² explained that being member of the association entailed some advantages. Firstly, “you might encounter problems where you need their help.” However, assistance is only granted to members. Towards non-members the association demonstrates a wary attitude. Problems might arise when non-members distribute flyers or hang up posters.

“They harass you, they start investigating and asking questions. Maybe they don’t harass you. But they ask a lot of questions, you know.”

In sum, the representation of local curandeiros as competent and licensed traditional healers in contrast to the incompetent or ‘malicious’ foreign curandeiros who ‘cause problems’, ‘don’t tell the truth’ and possess ‘bad spirits’, creates an invisible but clear boundary. Foreign curandeiros try to ‘change sides’ by becoming member of the AMETRAMO.

The existing boundary is reinforced, albeit unintentionally, through language. None of the foreign curandeiros I met spoke Portuguese. Instead, they have helpers, mostly teenage boys, who translate for them. They pick up the phone, arrange appointments, pick up the clients at the meeting point and assist the consultations. The lack of a common language does not only create a boundary between the traditional healers and their clients since they cannot interact and communicate directly but depend on the interpreter. It also contributes to further alienate the foreign curandeiros from their Mozambican colleagues. Without a means to communicate taking part in the community of local healers is difficult. For instance, Papa David¹³ from Uganda, who is member of AMETRAMO, only meets up with other foreign healers, but does not participate in AMETRAMO-meetings which are held in Portuguese.

2. The (absence of) manifestation of authority in public space in relation to legitimacy

There is a strong link between the (absence of) manifestation of authority in public space and (il)legitimacy. As already discussed in the previous chapter, traditional healers are widely accepted as authorities. However, a difference is made between foreign traditional healers who practice in Maputo and local traditional healers who are mostly members of AMETRAMO. While the former are often disregarded as “false curandeiros”¹⁴, “charlatans”¹⁵ or “trouble makers”¹⁶, the latter are recognized as important reference persons and leaders. Interestingly, local traditional healers do not seek spatial manifestation of their authority in public. They move within their strong networks, are legitimized and recognized by the ones

¹² Interview Dr. Mark, curandeiro from Lesotho, working in Maputo, 12.04.2014

¹³ Interview Papa David, curandeiro from Uganda, working in Maputo, 13.04.2014

¹⁴ Interview Senhor Eugenio, employee of the IMT, 08.05.2014

¹⁵ Interview Senhora Olga, Mozambican curandeira, president of AMETRAMO in Maputo, 26.04.2014

¹⁶ Informal conversation with Tina, student of traditional medicine, 10.05.2014

who seek their help (and by the state) and seem to be very aware of the importance they have for many people. The self-confidence they derive from this recognition and legitimization is so strong that they do not feel they need to make publicity for themselves. They are already known in certain circles and advertisement is made for them by others, they do not need to do it themselves. Places do reinforce their authority, but these places are rather private or only known to people who move in the circle of traditional healing and are thus important in recognizing and legitimizing the curandeiros. The absence of public space-claiming seems to highlight the local curandeiros' preeminence. They are so assured of their authority that they do not need to publicly demonstrate it. Foreign curandeiros and the advertisement they make do not seem to be perceived as threats to their supremacy. Indeed, making publicity is disapproved by the AMETRAMO. Their president Olga stated that a collaboration with the municipal council had been established to remove the pamphlets in the streets. Moreover, fines can be distributed. Olga explained her aversion to those making advertising in the following:

“If he [a traditional healer] does a good job (...) it gets around in a short time. That's why he can't spread pamphlets to say that he is a traditional healer. He has to wait for people to say that he is a traditional healer because he does a good job.”

This quote reveals that Senhora Olga sees 'good' curandeiros as being 'inconspicuous' in the sense that they do not seek publicity, they just “wait” for being recognized and recommended as good by their patients. Distributing flyers on the other hand seems to be equated with 'bad' curandeiros. A certain anger and even contempt of healing advertisements came to light during the interview with Senhora Olga. However, she did not feel threatened by them. She complained that foreign healers only came to Maputo in order to make money, not in order to heal, but she did not say that foreign healers constituted real rivals. Olga stated that most foreign healers who were caught distributing flyers or hanging up posters explained their advertizing efforts by saying they were new in the city, even though most of them were not. Olga seemed to take this as a proof for the foreign healers' lack of healing capacities: Even after a longer time in Maputo, they seemingly have not succeeded in creating a good reputation for themselves but still depend on advertizing. Thus, they are no strong competitors.

Senhora Catarina attributed the absence of publicity of local curandeiros to Mozambican culture:

“It's Mozambican tradition to not make things public. We don't like to reveal our secrets.”¹⁷

Thereby, Catarina draws another invisible line between local and foreign curandeiros. While she locates the former on 'the side' of discretion and confidentiality, she sees the latter as not being able to keep secrets. Virtual boundaries are also drawn by foreign curandeiros. For instance Papa David¹⁸, a foreign curandeiro practicing in Maputo, distanced himself from traditional healers who “hide” traditional knowledge. He considers himself as being different

¹⁷ Translated from Portuguese by the author

¹⁸ Interview with Papa David, curandeiro from Uganda working in Maputo, 13.04.2014

and more open than other curandeiros. In contrast to Caterina and Olga, he is in favor of publicity:

“But someone like me, I know. Even if they put me in newspapers or they put me where, they’re just making me to be and be known, understand. But most of them they like to hide too much. Tradition...”

This quote shows that Papa David draws and recognizes the same virtual lines as Senhora Caterina. Both distinguish between curandeiros who avoid publicity and curandeiros who seek publicity. However, their interpretations of the two types of curandeiros vary. According to Papa David sees the local curandeiros’ “hiding” is an expression of mistrust rather than confidentiality. He says: “...they don’t like when people know about this [traditional healing methods]” because they are afraid that people “go maybe and steal their knowledge”. Looking for publicity on the other hand is a symbol of openness for him, not a symbol of one’s inability to keep secrets.

In Senhora Caterina’s view public advertizing is not necessary in order to become known as a good healer. Moreover, she argues that people who are in search of a traditional healer do not depend on the contact details given on flyers and posters. If they knew where to look for a curandeiro and how to recognize subtle signs, they could find his/her house without further indications. Even though she mentioned small marks¹⁹, which were sometimes attached to the houses of curandeiros and thus could be interpreted as spatialization, her description rather highlights the absence of the latter in public space. Instead of trying to enhance their visibility in public space and increase their own prominence, local traditional healers built upon their already existing networks of patients, colleagues, family and friends to sustain themselves. They do not want to be in the open and thus easily locatable for anybody. They prefer “keeping their secrets”- one these secrets are their private working places. For their own network though local curandeiros are visible. Small marks which are neither noticed nor recognized by ‘outsiders’ Only once the patient has entered the healing room, capulanas²⁰ and healing instruments point out that he/she is at the right place.²¹ Otherwise, Caterina recommends asking around in order to find a good traditional healer, but she advises against calling the phone numbers given on flyers and posters.

By highlighting the foreign curandeiros’ lack of authority, by creating a contrast between ‘them’ and ‘us’, local traditional healers indirectly emphasize their own authority. In contrast to the illegitimate ‘charlatans’ they, the *curandeiros veros*, are legitimate authorities. Interestingly, there was no boundary drawing between different members within one group. For instance, Senhora Catherina admitted that there was rivalry between AMETRAMO members but she did not try to distance herself from other local curandeiros.

In general, foreign curandeiros are not perceived as serious rivals. The fact that they do seek publicity and try to attract attention seems to show their lack of authority and their lack of recognition. They depend on distributing flyers and hanging up posters. They try to claim space in public because it is not granted to them by others. However, their trial to establish

¹⁹ Senhora Caterina did not (want to?) elaborate on these marks but directly moved on to the characteristic interior of a healer’s place.

²⁰ Capulana: a type of a sarong worn primarily in Mozambique

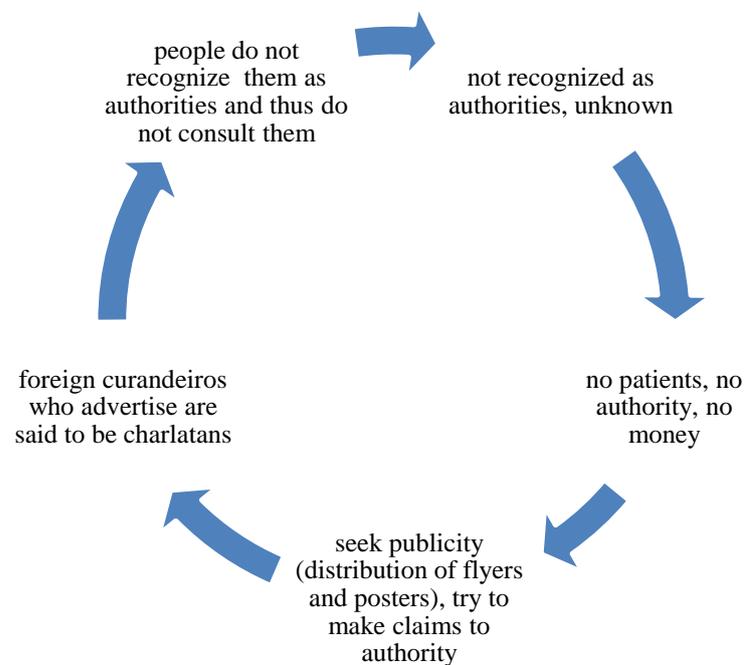
²¹ However, it is not evident from the healing room whether a local or a foreign healer works there.

themselves in public life backfires. On a short term basis, it might help them to find some clients. Obama-Bama, a young man from Maputo, explained to me that some people in desperate situations clutched at every straw, even if that meant consulting a foreign curandeiro.

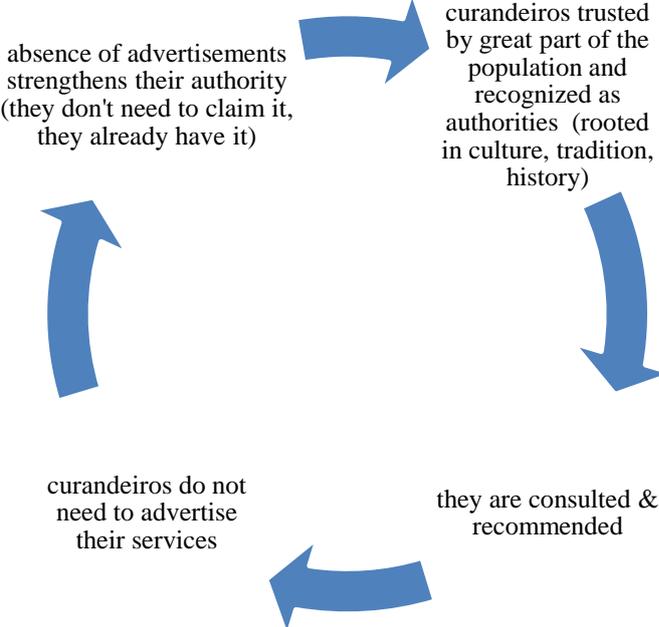
Yet, trying to catch attention suggests a current lack of attention which can be ascribed by people to charlatanry. Being associated with charlatanry deprives one of any authority which, on the other hand, reinforces the need to actively make claims to authority if one wants to make a living as a traditional healer.

This seems to result in a “vicious circle”:

Dilemma of non-recognized (foreign) curandeiros in Maputo:



Reinforcement of authority of recognized (local) curadeiros:



Chapter III: Manifestation of authority in private space

Having had a look at the (lack of) manifestation of authority in public space, we are now moving to the manifestation of authority in private space. We will step back to the three questions derived from Gupta's and Fergusson's concept of spatialization, namely: How do curandeiros (re-)present themselves in order to maintain their authority? What images do they try to create of themselves, of the structures they are part of, and of their work in order to secure their legitimacy? Last, but not least, what are their spatial properties? This chapter is rather descriptive. Referring back to Ragin's "dialogue between ideas and evidence"(1994, p.55), chapter III mainly concentrates on the evidence. Of course, the "ideas" are never completely pushed aside. Links are made to the previously discussed literature and to other relevant existing concepts. What the authors referred to in this chapter have in common is that they work from a poststructuralist -discursive position. They conceive the world as being discursive, and thus, see the construction of meaning as influenced by circumstances and meaning itself as always remaining convertible. In different ways they show how a certain discourse can prescribe roles, reproduce hierarchies and reinforce authority. In the first part of the chapter attention is drawn to the manifestation of authority through *words*. Interview analyses will give insight into how word choices contribute to the legitimization of traditional healers and how they reinforce their authority. The second part has a closer look at the healers' outer appearance, their working environments and the instruments they use for healing. Thus, it investigates the *visible* form of manifestation of authority. The last sub-chapter concentrates on a more subtle way of displaying authority, namely on *daily routines and rituals*.

3.1 Manifesting authority through words (the healers' self-representation)

The idea of words as a powerful means which can cause as well as ease tensions is at the core of discourse analysis. Advocates of these approaches claim that "social texts do not merely reflect or mirror objects, events and categories pre-existing in the social and natural world. Rather, they actively construct a version of those things. They do not just describe things, they do things. And being active, they have social and political implications." (Potter & Whetherell, 1987, p.6 quoted in Jabri, 1996, p.95). These implications can be of different kinds. In the first place, language can be used to create boundaries, to construct meaning and identity as authors such as Jabri (1996) and Brass (1996) point out. Moreover, words can serve the purpose of displaying authority and legitimizing violence. In the introduction of *Anthropology of Violence and Conflict* Schröder and Schmidt argue that "violence needs to be imagined in order to be carried out" (2001, p.9). This dichotomy or correlation of practice and imaginary shall be investigated in more detail in the following. As we will see, language can not only have an impact on *what* we perceive as legitimate manners (under certain circumstances violence) but also on *who* we perceive as legitimate authorities (for instance traditional healers). Lastly, words determine policy-making and conflict management as has been shown for instance by Dexter (2007).

This first section investigates what words 'do' in the context of traditional healers in Maputo. More specifically, it aims at giving insight into the opportunities words provide for

curandeiros to only draw invisible boundaries, as discussed in Chapter II, but also to manifest their authority. Thus, in the following we will analyze the interviews which were conducted in the course of the research period. We will have a look at the words, expressions and comparisons curandeiros use to describe themselves, their work and their importance. Each argument will be illustrated by two or three significant examples/quotes.

3.1.1 Self-representation

Local as well as foreign curandeiros display self-confidence when it comes to describing themselves. Many of the curandeiros seem to see themselves as all-rounders and highlight their various skills. For instance, Papa David²² claimed that he could solve “social problems”, offer protection for houses and people and free people from bad spirits. He proudly showed me the medicine he cooked and recommended it as remedy for Malaria, impotence and high blood pressure alike. Similarly, Senhora Olga considered herself specialized in several fields: “I take away bad spirits, colics, asthma.”²³ Dr. Mark²⁴ explained that traditional healers were often called “general practitioners” because they fulfilled several roles at the same time and were used to take care of different kinds of problems. However, the self-assurance in their own powers and capacities does not translate into the repudiation of other medical authorities. All of my interviewees recognized orthodox medicine as important, some of them had already worked in cooperation with orthodox medical practitioner, most of them go to the hospital when they are sick themselves. By acknowledging other forms of healing, the curandeiros also represented themselves as open and tolerant. Dr. Hamza²⁵, who already worked together with a neurosurgeon, stated with a shrug: “Sometimes you need those machines.” And Papa David said:

“I support hospitals to be there ‘cause they’re contributing too much to people’s lives, understand. (...) I support it because even me myself, there are some sickness I cannot cure.”

Admitting that there are limits to one’s healing capacities as Hamza and David do, has positive consequences. On a personal level, it makes them appear sympathetic and down-to-earth. On a professional level, they seem to be doctors with a high capacity of self-evaluation. On the one hand, they do not hesitate to praise their skills and are confident about their work. On the other hand, they admit that there are limits to what they can do and they are open to cooperation with other traditional healers or orthodox medical practitioners. Dr. Saad²⁶ explained that the priority was always the wellbeing of the patient. Thus, curandeiros represent themselves as dedicated, trustworthy and competent healers. By admitting the limits of their own work, traditional healers show a very human side. They acknowledge that they are neither all-knowing nor almighty and therefore present themselves to their patients as equals, at least for a moment. In Gupta and Ferguson’s words, they create not only the image

²² Interview with Papa David, curandeiro from Uganda working in Maputo, 13.04.2014

²³ Interview with Senhora Olga, president of the AMETRAMO in Maputo, 26.04.2013, translated from Portuguese by the author

²⁴ Interview with Dr. Mark, curandeiro from Lesotho, shares an ‘office’ with Papa David in Maputo, 04.04.2014 and 12.04.2014

²⁵ Interview with Dr. Hamza, curandeiro from Uganda working in Maputo, 02.04.2014

²⁶ Interview with Dr. Saad, curandeiro from Uganda working in Maputo, 09.05.2014

of themselves as standing “above” their visitors (because they have special skills and power) but also as “encompassing” them (because they share the same characteristic of being human and, thus, of being fallible).

At the same time, they tend to highlight their special status. Considering themselves as being ‘chosen’ or ‘meant’ to be healers, some of my interviewees gave their work and their own being a religious or fatalistic touch. When I asked Papa David who taught him how to heal, he answered: “I had the gift already. I was born with it.” Even though he added a bit later: “My grandmother has taught me, has passed the sticks, you understand, the sticks of healing” it became obvious that he considered himself as being guided by the supernatural. According to him, it was neither a coincidence nor a choice that he became a healer but pre-determined. He said: “I was born to help and I need to do it.” Also Dr. Mark emphasized that becoming a traditional healer is not always a choice. About his own case he said that he used to work as an English teacher and lawyer before his ancestors started to talk to him in his dreams and told him to become a curandeiro. Even though he did not want to, he had to obey his ancestors:

“I could not say no. Otherwise I would have lost my life.” Later on he explained: “It’s like when your mama asks you for a favor and you don’t do it. She will say: ‘Okay, he is tired.’ Then she will ask you again the next day and the day after. But then she will get angry.”

Refusing to do a favor results in punishment and becoming a healer sometimes means making sacrifices. Even though Dr. Mark is waiting for his ancestors to talk to him in his dreams again, to tell him that he has fulfilled his task and that he is free to move on with his life, he is proud to have been chosen because it constitutes a great honor. According to him, his ancestors picked him for two reasons. Firstly, he is the last one from his mother’s family. Secondly, he has good character traits: he is “quiet and obedient, respectful and appreciated by others”. He never learnt to heal. He said his ancestors blessed his hands so he could put them on sore body parts and heal the pain. His way of representing himself bolsters his authority. He emphasizing the strong bonds with the ancestors (they talk to him in his dreams, guide his doings). Dr. Mark claims: “You cannot go to school to learn how to heal, you need to get the power from your ancestors.” Thereby he implies that he *did get* his ancestors’ power. Thus, the patients who consult him also consult his ancestors and, consequently, the treatment they receive has a supernatural notion. Dr. Mark reinforces this notion of the supernatural by establishing a connection between his work and God. He says: “We [traditional healers] believe in God. Through God we heal.”

Last but not least, traditional healers represent themselves as inheritors of traditional wisdoms and culture. It is to them that the knowledge about traditional healing methods, healing plants and the power to get in touch with spirits, have been passed on. Dr. Hamza even went a step further and stated that:

“people come because they don’t know much about where they come from, they don’t know their roots, they speak Portuguese, they even don’t speak their native language. Clients ask about their roots.”

Thus, he sees himself as a kind of intermediary who helps his clients to re-find their origins (in terms of culture, traditions, ancestors).

To sum it up, traditional healers manifest their authority by orally representing themselves in certain ways. They display themselves as competent allrounders and experts in various fields situating themselves as professionals drawing on a medical discourse. Yet, they also highlight their modesty and open-mindedness by admitting the limits of their healing powers and by acknowledging the achievements and importance of orthodox medicine. Curandeiros think of themselves as fulfilling a special task because they are (mostly) chosen²⁷ by ancestors or spirits to perform this job. These ancestors and spirits guide and support the curandeiros in their healing, give them wisdom and power. Receiving special powers from spirits and ancestors sets them apart from other people and emphasizes their high rank in the social hierarchy. As with violence, there is also a dichotomy or correlation of practice and imaginary in the case of healers claiming authority. By describing themselves in a certain way, they influence our imagination and perception of them. *Imagining* them as authorities a priori we are biased in our ways of looking at them. Because we expect them to be influential we are also more likely to let us be influenced by them (by paying them respect and accepting their advice and guidance), and at the same time, to interpret their workings as being influential.

3.1.2 Representation of their role in society

The curandeiros I talked to represented their role in society as consisting of two main tasks. On the one hand, they emphasized their medical importance and highlighted the uniqueness of traditional healing methods and medicine. In their view, traditional remedies have the advantage of being “not dangerous, not poisoned, natural”²⁸ (in contrast to orthodox medicine). This emphasis on naturalness is also seen as a source of trust for people who are wary about orthodox medicine. Papa David stated that many were scared of going to the hospital because

“they don’t believe in medicine, they believe in traditional medicine. (...)They think that maybe they inject them poison. There are some people who say: ‘We don’t use medical inject. That’s poison.’ There’s AIDS these days. They think that when they inject them, they inject with those viruses of AIDS”.

This fear of and distrust in ‘modern’ medicine is related to tradition. Senhora Caterina said that most people came to see curandeiros “because it’s tradition. It’s Mozambican tradition”. Nowadays the role of traditional healers also seems to be to represent tradition and to keep customs and traditional knowledge alive. Tina²⁹, who is studying to become a curandeira, described traditional medicine as “the beauty of going back to nature”. For her, the role of curandeiros is to rediscover “principles which were lost during colonization” and to “go back

²⁷ There are several ways becoming a traditional healer. Some people are called by their ancestors, who talk to them in their dreams or send them special signs. Some get possessed by a spirit. Others go to school and learn traditional healing methods there.

²⁸ Interview with Dr. Mark, 04.04.2014.

²⁹ Interview with Tina, a Mozambican woman who is member of the *Grupo Espiritual e Tradicional de Mocambique*, 10.05.2014. Tina goes to school several times a week, where she is trained as a curandeira.

to nature” which means to “feed your body with what it needs”. Moreover, Tina emphasized the importance of healers in treating “problems that we don’t know”. In her view, curandeiros fill in the gap that is left by orthodox medicine and sciences in general. There are phenomena that are not measurable or inexplicable. However, the fact that they can neither be measured nor explained does not mean that they do not exist or that they cannot be handled. It is the curandeiros task to approach them.

The view that certain diseases cannot be cured in a hospital because they are caused by spirits is widely held (not only among curandeiros but also among civilians). Senhora Caterina explained that many people went to a curandeiro before consulting an orthodox medical practitioner in order to find out whether their suffering was caused by *feitiçaria* (witchcraft). If so, only a curandeiro could treat them. Dr. Hamza stated that many people went to hospitals in the first place and only consulted traditional healers if they could not be cured there. Although the course of action is opposite in these two statements, the essence is the same: There are problems which cannot be explained scientifically and can only be solved by curandeiros.

The second main task traditional healers mentioned repeatedly concerns social cohesion. Caterina said: “[people] come when they are sick and when they have domestic problems”³⁰. Similarly, Dr. Hamza stated: “My job is like a psychologist. I can put families together.” Papa David even thought of his work as having repercussions far beyond the individual and the family circle. When asked what he considered his role in society he replied:

“It’s to help people. To help the nation ‘cause when you help people, it means you help the nation, you understand. ‘Cause these are the people which makes up the nation and the world.”

These quotes suggest that traditional healers see themselves as performing a double role. On the one hand, they are the contact persons for individuals, they give personal advice to their patients and treat their diseases. On the other hand, they are important for interpersonal relations, and thus, on a higher level, for social cohesion and solidarity. This double role, performed on two different levels, mirrors Ferguson’s and Gupta’s notions of verticality and encompassment. By being approachable and having direct contact with the people, traditional healers encompass the latter. At the same time, by influencing or even regulating³¹ social interaction, they stand above them. Using a metaphor to further illustrate this role, we can think of society as a network and of traditional healers as hubs in it. On the one hand, they provide the space where single lines meet and (re-)connect. On the other hand, they function as a kind of stabilizers which bind the entire network together.

To sum it up, traditional healers see themselves as an integral part of society. In a very straightforward way, Senhora Caterina resumed the healers’ role as: “to help and to consult”³². Helping and consulting can take on two different forms. Firstly, curandeiros provide medical advice and treatment for physical, mental and spiritual problems. Secondly, they offer help on a ‘community-basis’, this means in cases where several people or even

³⁰ Translated from Portuguese by the author

³¹ The degree of influence depends on the region. In smaller communities and more rural areas curandeiros are more powerful and influential than in bigger cities such as Maputo.

³² Translated from Portuguese by the author

groups are involved. This can range from clearing up misconceptions between friends, reconciling differences between clans to “putting families back together” as Papa David said.

Again, the way curandeiros represent their role in society has an impact on how we perceive them. The fact that they appear indispensable for solving problems and for healing diseases believed to be caused by evil spirits confers a special status to them and gives them authority. Traditional healers distinguish themselves from the majority of the population, which would be ordinary lines or smaller nodes in our network-metaphor. The way they represent themselves makes them seem to stick out from the rest. The role they fulfill in society appears irreplaceable, which is why, in a network metaphor, one would consider them hubs.

3.2 Manifesting authority through visualizations (outer appearance of the curandeiros themselves, of their working environment, the accessories they use)

In his work *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* Bourdieu states that

“objectively and subjectively aesthetic stances adopted in matters like cosmetics, clothing or home decoration are opportunities to experience or assert one’s position in social space, as a rank to be upheld or a distance to be kept” (1984, p. 70).

Bourdieu sees dress and furniture as a part of cultural capital which are used by elites to establish and reinforce positions of power and to draw boundaries between themselves and lower classes. In his view, a person’s or group’s life-style and consequently status can be “read off (...) in furnishing or clothing” because the acquired properties give insight into the economic as well as the cultural needs which influenced their selection (1984, p.50). In other words, properties do not only reveal people’s necessities but also what they can afford, which again mirrors their social class and the associated status in society. Bourdieu argues that “social relations [are] objectified in familiar objects” (1984, p.70). People are influenced by wearing, using or simply by being surrounded by these objects. They adapt to what these objects represent (for instance luxury or poverty) and behave accordingly. Thereby dynamics of dominance and subordination are maintained and reproduced.

This section focuses on the cultural capital traditional healers can draw from in order to manifest and strengthen their authority. Firstly, we will have a closer look at the curandeiros themselves, at the clothes and accessories they choose to wear in order to reflect or highlight their status. Secondly, we will turn to their healing rooms and analyze what the way of furnishing reveals about them and why their working environment provides opportunities for the manifestation of authority. This sub-chapter is based on Vlad Sokhin’s photo series *The Spirits of Mozambique* as well as on the author’s own observations.

3.2.1 Outer appearance and accessories

The Spirits of Mozambique is a photo series of the Russian-Portuguese photographer Vlad Sokhin. Between 2010 and 2011 Sokhin travelled through Central and Southern Mozambique

in order to document religious life and spiritual traditions. He portrayed three different groups: traditional healers, the secret society of Nyau and the Zion apostolic church of Mozambique. The pictures were taken in Tete province and in Maputo city. In an interview Sokhin³³ explained his interest in traditional healers:

“I was curious how did they work, how did they approach people, why do people come to them. I wanted to show them in their environment, how they live with their families and also when spirit comes into them.”

Therefore he took two types of portraits: one showing the healers in their private life, at home and one showing them at work, in their healing rooms. However, all 35 pictures displayed on his website were taken in the healers’ working environment.

In a first step, we will have look at the series as a whole and then turn to the portrait of Nifagrese Antonia. An in-depth analysis of her outer appearance and her ‘casa dos espiritos’ shall illustrate how curandeiros use clothing, accessories and room decoration to manifest their authority in private space.

The series as a whole/ General observations

Sokhin chose horizontal formats for his pictures. Consequently, the focus lies not solely on the curandeiros (no close-ups) but also on the environment they work in. He mostly used a front camera angle, only a few curandeiros are portrayed from the side with their heads turned towards the photographer (3/4 portraits). The majority of the healers gazes directly at the viewer, a few have their eyes closed. The short focal length hints at the fact that Sokhins photographs at very close range. He is no outside observer but succeeds in capturing moments ‘from within’. Attending healing ceremonies and spirit possessions he is granted access to the healers’ most intimate instants of work as well as to their most private places.

All portrayed curandeiros are either dressed in traditional robe or decorated with headgears or other accessories such as chains, bracelets, earrings or scarves which distinguish them from ordinary citizens dressed in everyday clothes. Most of the curandeiros also hold ‘healing instruments’ or other significant objects which identify them as healers in their hands (for instance items which symbolize their spirits, musical instruments such as maracas, instruments to call ancestors, etc.)

Their facial expressions are either concentrated or, when captured during a spirit possession, distorted. Overall, the pictures seem candid and the curandeiros convey an impression of naturalness since they are photographed while practicing or with a neutral-concentrated countenance. In the absence of smiles and grimaces, the viewer finds himself confronted with the displayed seriousness and sobriety of the healers. The latter’s direct gaze into the camera and their relaxed postures convey serenity and self-confidence. Even though Sokhin affirmed that the pictures were not staged, the curandeiros seem to be very aware of how they present themselves. They position themselves in a way that they are clearly visible, turn their heads to the visitor, some hold the healing accessories in their hands out to the camera. Their body language demonstrates nonchalance.

³³ Interview with Vlad Sokhin, documentary photographer, 15.04.2014.

Referring back to Ferguson and Gupta, one can find both metaphors ‘above’ and ‘encompassing’ in the pictures. On the one hand, the curandeiros seem to stand above their visitors. Their superiority is visualized through clothing and accessories. In some cases also through spirits who take possession of the healers (captured in some of the photos). Due to the small size of the rooms, one cannot hide from the healers. They seem ‘above’ oneself and nothing escapes their attention. On the other hand, curandeiros also seem to ‘encompass’ their patients. They are in direct contact with them and sit eye to eye with them on the floor of their healing rooms. This creates a feeling of intimacy, the healers are tangible, close and therefore inspire confidence.

In depth analysis of portrait number 21



Portrait number 21 shows Nifagrese Antonia, a curandeira from Dembala village in the Mutarara district in Tete province. She works with Mpampanula, the spirit of her grandfather, and mainly treats injuries caused by crocodile attacks.

Nifagrese Antonia is sitting on the floor of her healing room. Bare walls made of clay surround her. The room is characterized by its simplicity and scantiness. No woven mats or capulana sheets cover the mud floor and no furniture adds comfort to the empty space. Only two windows, one in the backside of the room and one on Nifagrese Antonia’s left side, break the monotony of the gray-brown walls. One single light blue plastic bag hangs down from the ceiling. It seems to function as a storage bag for traditional medicine since it is stuffed with roots. On the floor one can recognize some bottles filled with powders of various colors and a straw hat. For the rest the room is empty and bare. Therefore, wearing an orange-white striped t-shirt and a blue-orange capulana which is wrapped around her waist like a skirt, the

curandeira stands out against the rather austere background. Being the only splash of color she immediately attracts the viewer's attention. The contrast with the gloomy background is enhanced by the headgear which adorns her head. Chains of colorful beads and seashells cover her forehead and eyes, so that the viewer cannot see what she is looking at. Together with the four different necklaces, two around her neck and two across the chest, the headgear gives her a solemn appearance. It is obvious that she is not dressed in everyday clothes. The concentrated and serious look on her face reinforces the impression that she is captured in an extraordinary moment. She seems withdrawn into herself and very focused, yet not tense. She has a comfortable seating position, her arms rest on her knees, her back is straight. In her right hand she holds a special instrument made of horsehair which is used to cure bad spirits. This instrument can be seen as a working tool and as a symbol of power at the same time. It identifies her as a curandeira since "only curandeiros can work with it"³⁴ and it also represents her extraordinary capacities as a traditional healer. Even though the 70-years old woman is of rather delicate build, her presence seems to fill the entire room. On the one hand, she physically clearly dominates the setting. Of course this is partly attributable to the limited space of the room. The walls which were closely built together create an almost oppressive narrowness. Moreover, due to the absence of any kind of furniture, she is the only one who can fill in the space around her. The blankness of the room prevents one's attention to drift away from the curandeira which increases the sensation of her occupying the entire room. On the other hand, her presence in the room cannot be reduced to the fact that she is "physically sitting there". It also has to do with the authority she radiates. The way Nifagrese Antonia dresses, the adornments she wears, the healing instrument in her hand and the medicine on the floor behind her, confer a special status to her. Stepping back to Bourdieu, one can state that the curandeira seems to make deliberate choices concerning dress and room decoration in order to assert her position in social space. The clothes are clean and neat which hints at the fact that she takes her job as a traditional healer seriously and suggests that she works properly. By putting on capulana, the traditional fabric worn in Mozambique, she also presents herself as incorporating traditions and ancestral knowledge. As mentioned before, these characteristics are crucial for curandeiros to be recognized as legitimate authority. The bright colors of Nifagrese Antonia's clothing stand in sharp contrast with the austere background and attract attention. Thus, one can argue that the scantiness of the room is not just due to the poor living conditions but also a conscious decision. The small size makes the curandeira appear larger, the emptiness attaches importance to the few objects around her, the dark background highlights the bright colors of her dress and make her the uncontested center of the room. Entering her place one can't but recognize her authority, escaping her presence is impossible. A comparison with the picture showing Nifagrese Antonia in everyday life makes obvious how much clothing, accessories and setting can contribute to a person's charisma. Being taken out of her working environment and deprived of her special robe and instruments, it is difficult to recognize her. The bright clothing is replaced by a colorless stained t-shirt and a nondescript skirt in leopard print. Her head is uncovered. Just one single discreet necklace is visible under the collar of her shirt. No visible signs of authority and power remain. The open space lets her appear smaller and more fragile. No walls are there to give her security and protection. She seems left alone. Also her posture has

³⁴ Informal conversation with a vendor of traditional medicine at the Xipamanine market in Maputo, 25.03.2014.

changed. Having lost her body tension she seems older, more vulnerable, certainly less powerful. Her back is slightly bent and her shoulders are pulled to the front. Without holding any healing instruments, the right hand suddenly seems feeble. Lying heavily in her lap, it reveals the curandeira's old age. Nifagrese Antonia has lost her timelessness.



As discussed in the first chapter, traditional healers derive legitimacy from the people who trust and consult them. Coming for treatment implies believing in the traditional healers' competences and recognizing them as authorities. Thus, traditional healers do not have to *make claims* to authority in their private healing rooms. The patients who consult them recognize their authority a priori. However, curandeiros still seek ways to *manifest* or *highlight* their authority. To a certain extent they even have to do so in order to satisfy their clients' expectations. When visiting Nifagrese Antonia in her healing room, patients are confronted with what they expect to confront: a curandeira with an impressive appearance who radiates authority. This (expected) powerful appearance shapes the relationship between healer and patient. The latter submits to the former. The idea that discourses do not only involve words but also (inter)actions and forms of behavior is also reflected in Foucault's *The Birth of the Clinic*. He states that discourses constitute "burdens of language, by which two living individuals are 'trapped' in a common, but non-reciprocal situation" (2012, p.xvi). Using the example of the clinic he shows how discourses can determine individuals' behavior within the very same discourse. He argues that from the moment when the doctor asks his patient 'Where does it hurt?' both "recognize the operation of the clinic and the principle of its entire discourse" (2012, p. xxi). Thus, they submit to their prescribed roles as "signifiers" and "signified" and thereby also accept a certain hierarchy (2012, p.xxi).

As illustrated on the basis of the photo analysis, curandeiros can obtain an impressive

appearance and authority through clothing, setting, adornments, symbols of power (such as the spirit-instrument in Nifagrese Antonia's right hand) and other objects which are characteristic for their work (such as the bottles of medicine in the back of the room). Referring back to Bourdieu, this visualization or objectification of authority can be seen as influencing the social relations between curandeiros and patients and as contributing to the maintenance of structures of dominance and subordination. In other words: By contrasting their own powerful position with the position of their patients who seek help, traditional healers reproduce dynamics of power and dependency and bolster their own supremacy and authority.

3.2.2 The importance of places

In Chapter II we have seen that spatialization does not play a major role for curandeiros in *public space*. Even though the drawing of boundaries, the creation of meaningful places or points of reference can be a powerful means in the manifestation and visualization of authority, it is hardly used by Mozambican healers. They maintain a low profile and are difficult to locate in *public space*. In *private space*, where healers mainly operate, things are different. There are no hospitals for traditional medicine in Mozambique. Thus it is common practice for curandeiros to receive their patients at home in special healing rooms (in Portuguese these are called *casa dos éspiritos*, house of the spirits. Dr. Mark referred to his office as "sanctuary"³⁵). Hence, it is hardly surprising that all interviewees identified their personal healing rooms as the most meaningful places. They are important in three respects: Firstly, healing rooms constitute the curandeiro's place of work. They are a necessity, a location needed to receive patients, to make treatments and to prepare medicine. Secondly, they have a spiritual importance since they are used to perform ceremonies, to call spirits or to chase them away, and to hold consultations with one's ancestors. Healing rooms are not the only places of spiritual importance, but the most significant ones. For instance, Papa David claimed that he could talk to his spirits in different locations. However, he considered his personal healing room as most important place because of the frequent presence of these spirits: "This is their place now, because this is where they sleep (...)"³⁶. Last but not least, healing rooms have a symbolic value for traditional healers since they provide a platform for them to represent themselves and serve the visualization and reinforcement of their authority. All healing rooms I visited were arranged and equipped in a similar way. They were all small-sized and mostly without windows, in some healing rooms the walls were further covered with dark blankets or capulana to guarantee dim light and to create a mystical atmosphere. In some cases, curandeiros practiced in the curtained off corner of a room. The hot and stuffy air, the created narrowness, the absence of a window made it impossible to elude the healers, also in a physical sense. Being seated in close vicinity to them, their presence seemed overwhelming. The dim light, the sticky air and the heat in combination with the smell of joss sticks can make one's head reel and can evoke a feeling of timelessness. The room size is of crucial importance for the successful creation of a special atmosphere and for the self-representation of the curandeiro/the curandeira. The smaller the room the easier it is for him/her to dominate it. Characteristic was also the simplicity of all places. A small stool

³⁵ Interview with Dr. Mark, 04.04.2014.

³⁶ Interview with Papa David, 13.04.2014

standing in the middle of the room between healer and patient was most of the time the only piece of furniture. On it the healers displayed different accessories such as shells, a candle (or in one case a neon light), joss sticks, feathers, and money (the consultation fees). On the floor they kept a variety of containers and jars filled with different kinds of traditional medicine (various powders). Some healers had pots to cook medicine in their healing rooms, others kept rattles and other instruments used during ceremonies there. These accessories gave hints at the curandeiros' work, highlighted their various capacities (preparing medicine, calling spirits, etc.) and thus provided opportunities for the healers to uphold their ranks and to keep distances (Bourdieu, 1984).

As mentioned before, private healing rooms are the most significant places for curandeiros, but they are not the only places importance is attached to. Other places that were referred to as meaningful during the interviews were the ocean, hills and forests- all of them places full of symbolism. Even though these places are in the open, they are categorized in this thesis as private spaces. Rituals and ceremonies, instants that visualize and maintain the significance of these places, are not public but only performed in an inner circle. Thus, despite the fact that the ocean, hills and forests are public space in the sense that everybody has access to them, they guarantee privacy and thus fit into the category of private space. In the following section we will investigate in how far symbolic places reinforce the curandeiros' authority.

In *A Dictionary of Symbols* Cirlot identified the two most essential aspects of the ocean as being the ceaseless movement and the formlessness of the water (p.241). Moreover, the ocean is considered as having ambivalent characteristics. On the one hand, it "stands for the sum of all the possibilities of one plane of existence" (p.241). On the other hand, it has been seen as the "abysmal abode" for evil (p.241) and represents destructive forces which are beyond human control. Choosing the seaside for the performance of rituals is not coincidental and certainly outreaches the aim of "cleansing people".³⁷ Performing ceremonies at the ocean, curandeiros establish a direct link between themselves, their work and their surrounding whereby the latter's symbolism carries over to the ceremony and the curandeiro performing it. Choosing the ocean as the right place for ceremonies, traditional healers confirm its existing symbolic value. The fact that they consider it a place where people can be cleansed (physically and symbolically) shows that they attribute some special powers to it. By highlighting the ocean's forces, curandeiros also indirectly highlight their own forces since they are the ones who can "use" the ocean for their own purposes (cleansing people). During the ritual the ocean's and the curandeiro's powers seem to merge and the latter takes over some of the ambivalent character of the former. His/her healing capacities seem to go hand in hand with the "sum of all the possibilities of one plane of existence", his/her spirits can be corrosive and beyond human control just as the ocean.

Throughout history and cultures hills and mountains have been a symbol for stability, permanence and calmness. Moreover, they are "associated with the idea of meditation, spiritual elevation and the communion of the blessed" (Cirlot, 1971, p.221). Curandeiros benefit from these associations because doing something at a meaningful place automatically attaches meaningfulness to the act done and importance to the person who does it. A

³⁷ Both Dr. Mark and Dr. Hamza stated that they went to the beach in order to perform cleansing rituals.

curandeiro/a on a mountain top stands above other people and all things, he/her has an overview of what happens beneath him/her, the setting renders his/her rituals more spiritual and impressive and thereby provides room for the manifestation and reinforcement of authority.

Also the forest has long been a place full of symbolism. Zimmer points out that the forest stands in sharp contrast with the city, the house and the garden which stand for safe areas. Entering the forest means exposing oneself to the unknown and to possible dangers, enemies and diseases (Zimmer in Cirlot, 1971, p.112). When going to the forest, traditional healers demonstrate their willingness and fearlessness to confront dangers, their dedication to their work as well as their strong and mysterious character (being in a mystical place the healers get a mystical touch themselves). Moreover, the curandeiros' familiarity with the unknown³⁸ opposed to their patients' unfamiliarity with it maintains and strengthens the dynamics of domination and subordination, of power and dependency. Thus, just as in the case of the ocean and hills/mountains, the symbolism of the forest provides possibilities for manifesting and strengthening the curandeiros' authority.

3.3 Manifesting authority through daily practices and rituals

In contrast to the "loud" and "clearly visible" forms of manifestation of authority discussed in 3.1 and 3.2 the way of displaying authority investigated in this sub-chapter is more subtle and more private. We will step back to Ferguson's and Gupta's idea that states secure their authority and legitimacy by accommodating metaphors of verticality and encompassment in every day routines. Analyzing a spirit ceremony and a traditional medicine class we will see how established routines and practices contribute to the reproduction of hierarchies during such events and thus to the reinforcement of the healers' authority.

Spirit ceremony

After having asked permission of his spirits, Papa David invited me to attend a spirit ceremony³⁹. I could witness how he called his spirits and was allowed to ask them questions. The ceremony took place in Papa David's private healing room. Besides demonstrating the importance of the healing room, this ceremony also gave insights into routines and practices used by curandeiros to reinforce their authority. These shall be elaborated on in the upcoming paragraphs when having a closer look at the different phases of the ceremony.

³⁸ "Familiarity with the unknown" does not only refer to the forest as a whole/as a place, but also to the parts the forest is made of: Curandeiros claim knowledge about the spirits there as well as about the plants and their medicinal properties.

³⁹ Attendance of spirit ceremony, 17.04.2014, Maputo. There are different ways of being in touch with spirits. Several healers told me their spirits came to them during the night and talked to them in their dreams. Dr. Saad and Dr. Hamza said they "prayed" to their spirits. Sometimes sacrifices are made to the spirits in meaningful places such as in the healer's backyard, at the ocean or on a mountain or hill. Spirit ceremonies, in which the spirits are actively called and often take possession of the traditional healer, are a more complicated and intense way of getting in touch with them. Therefore they are not part of daily routines.

Phase 1: The preparation of the ritual takes some time and is at least as important as the ritual itself. By closing the door, sliding a stone in front of it, drawing the curtain and collecting the mobile phones, Papa David succeeds in drawing clear boundaries between himself, the participants of the ceremony and “outsiders”. Above all, bolting the room is a powerful gesture. On the one hand, it evokes a feeling of privateness. Once the door is sealed, no one can enter the place from outside. At the same time, no one can escape from inside. Consequently, privateness comes at the price of being at the healer’s mercy. On the other hand, closing the door is of symbolic importance because it makes obvious that Papa David is in charge of the situation. He decides when the ceremony begins, when it ends and what happens in between. The incontestability of his superiority is highlighted by the determination he shows when sealing off the room- he does not simply close the door, he slides a stone in front of it and draws the curtain. Furthermore, by collecting mobile phones, he demands the visitors’ undivided attention, no distraction is tolerated. The hierarchy Papa David sets up through this practice is clear: He is in the dominant position, he makes up the rules.

Phase 2: All participants of the ceremony sit on the floor. The walls are draped with black tissue and guarantee absolute darkness in the healing room. It is hot. Papa David lights one single candle which casts some dim light. The small size of the room and the consequent close vicinity to the healer increase the feeling of being at his custody. Again, he demonstrates his authority in a very subtle but unambiguous way, namely by first creating darkness and then by giving light- two gestures full of (archaic) symbolism. Simultaneously, by creating a mysterious atmosphere in his healing room, he attaches importance to the place.

Phase 3: Papa David gives a short introduction and some words of encouragement, thereby he provokes suspense and uncertainty. (What is going to happen that he considers it necessary to comfort his visitors beforehand?) Then he hands out a little seashell for protection. Once more, the curandeiro displays his superiority by presenting himself as offering protection. At the same time, by taking the seashell, patients recognize his powers to protect, accept him as an authority and, simultaneously, put themselves into a subordinate position.

Phase 4: The actual ceremony begins when Papa David blows out the candle, a symbolic moment in which the patients place themselves in a position of dependency. Being unable to see and uncertain about what is going to happen, they have to put their trust in the healer to lead them through the ceremony. Papa David tells his visitors to clap their hands and starts himself to rattle and to mumble in his native language to call his spirits. The clear hierarchy is maintained: *They* provide the underlying rhythm for *his* recitative.

Phase 5: The end of the ceremony is akin to the beginning, all happens in reverse order. First, Papa David orders to clap again while he re-starts rattling and mumbling. Secondly, he lights the candle. Then he collects the seashells that he had handed out for protection. Before putting them back into their bowl, he spits on each of them- which gives the act more significance. Lastly, he gives back the phones, draws the curtains, pushes the stone to side and re-opens the door: His “guests” are free to leave.

This example of a spirit ceremony illustrates how routines and practices can be used by curandeiros to manifest their authority. As we have seen, the fixed order of the ceremony and

the repetition of certain acts (clapping and mumbling, spitting on each seashell, etc.) attach importance to the ceremony itself but also to the curandeiro who performs it. Moreover, several (symbolic) gestures and acts, such as the locking of the door or the lighting of the candle, provide room for the healer to manifest his/her authority and to (re-)produce hierarchies.

Even though celebrated on a regular basis, spirit ceremonies are not a daily routine. The next example shall show how hierarchies are also reproduced in day-to-day interactions and how authority is manifested on a daily basis.

Traditional medicine class

One day, I accompanied Tina, one of my interviewees, to her traditional medicine class⁴⁰ at the *Grupo Espiritual e Tradicional de Moçambique* where she is trained to become a curandeira. I could join the students who were sitting in a circle around Ângelo, the “master”, “teacher”, “guru” as Tina called him, and attend the lesson. Besides by the lesson itself, in which Ângelo explained the characteristics and impact of diverse plants and roots, I was also fascinated by the relationship between teacher and students. Through several small gestures, which have become daily routines, the students demonstrated respect for their teacher and thereby reinforced Ângelo’s authority. These routinized gestures are at the core of the following section.

The traditional medicine classes take place in Ângelo’s ‘teaching hut’ in a courtyard surrounded by a few smaller houses. Before entering his hut, every student has to take off his/her shoes (just as one has to take off the shoes before entering a healing room). Moreover, the students take a shower before attending the class. Tina explained that the shower with one’s “medicine”, that is the powder of certain sticks or roots, is an important cleansing ritual. The students free themselves from all spirits before entering the classroom, the only spirits they bring with them are the “spirit of fighting”/“spirit of masculinity” and the “spirit of peace”/“spirit of femininity” in a harmonious balance. These two spirits are also represented by the red and white capulana which all women wear wrapped around their waists. The red stands for the spirit of masculinity and the white stands for the spirit of femininity. Coming to class clean and in balance can easily be identified as a sign of respect. On the one hand, the students demonstrate their recognition of Ângelo’s hut as a significant place. On the other hand, they pay respect to their teacher and to each other by appearing cleansed and neat, and express that coming to class is important to them. Moreover, the red-white capulana visualizes the students’ acknowledgment of Ângelo’s teachings. They show that they do not just listen passively to what Ângelo says but that they seize his ideas and teachings. Once in the hut, the students sit down in a semicircle on the floor, their heads turned towards Ângelo who sits in front of them on a stool. His elevated position mirrors the hierarchy in the class room: Ângelo is the uncontested “teacher”/“master”/“guru”⁴¹. His students look up to him (in a literal as well as in a figurative sense).

Next to the door is a kind of flower bed, raked earth surrounded by bricks, where powder residues, old roots, herbs, etc. are disposed. This ‘flower bed’ or ‘miniature compost’ reflects

⁴⁰ Attendance of spirit ceremony, 10.05.2014, Maputo.

⁴¹ Informal conversation with Tina, traditional medicine student of Ângelo, 10.05.2014, Maputo.

the philosophy of going back to nature which the *Grupo Éspiritual e Tradicional de Moçambique* is built upon. Every time students or Ângelo put something in there, they symbolically confirm this theory.

Maybe the routines and gestures observed during the traditional medicine class are not as striking as the ones during the spirit ceremony. However, due to their repetitiveness (during every lesson, every day) they are a powerful means to reinforce and naturalize authority. For instance, for the students it becomes normal to show their teacher respect by taking off their shoes and by cleaning themselves before entering Ângelo's hut. Ângelo on the other hand, starts to take these expressions of respect for granted. As a consequence, both parties identify more and more with their roles as teacher or students. The curandeiro's authority is manifested and clear hierarchies are reinforced.

4. Summary

This chapter examined various forms of manifestation of authority in private space. It drew not only from evidence gathered in the field but also from a variety of scholars who, in one way or another, illustrated the correlation between discourse, power and the creation or maintenance of hierarchies.

In *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* Bourdieu showed how discourse can determine one's lifestyle and how lifestyle becomes a means to visualize one's status and to reinforce social hierarchies. As discussed in this chapter, "lifestyle", in the sense of home decoration, clothing and the use of certain accessories and instruments, is also recognized by curandeiros in Mozambique as a powerful means to visualize and manifest authority, and thus to reproduce hierarchies. Similarly, Foucault analyzed medical discourses and the impact they have on the relationship between doctor and patient. The (re-)production of hierarchies and the role ascription which affects people's behavior within discourses are central elements in his work. The fact that discourses are not only about words but also about the modes of conduct within these discourses has been illustrated through analyzing and comparing the portraits of the curandeira Nifagrese Antonia. Moreover, Ferguson and Gupta gave insights into how the institutionalization and routinization of metaphors within a certain context contributes to the strengthening of authority and legitimacy. Their ideas of verticality and encompassment are a recurring theme throughout the entire chapter. Special attention has been paid to the question of how the images of being 'above' and 'encompassing' at the same time are accommodated in the healers' daily practices and how they strengthen the latter's authority. Only the symbolist Cirlot forms an exception. His work about symbols does neither focus on discourse nor on power relations. However, applied to the context of traditional healers in Mozambique, it contributes to a better understanding of how the conscious use of symbols or symbolic places can strengthen authority and reproduce hierarchies- which links him to the other scholars of this chapter.

Conclusion

This thesis revolved around the question of how traditional healers make claims to authority in public and in private space in Maputo, Mozambique. In order to find answers, I structured this thesis in three main chapters. The first one offered historical and cultural background information which give insight into the curandeiros' role and status in contemporary Mozambique. Moreover, it introduced Max Weber's three types of legitimate rule in order to get a better idea of the concept of authority in general and of the authority of traditional healers in Mozambique in particular.

Both historical tradition (not least the healers' role in reconciliation processes in recent past) and the cultural context can be seen as determinant factors in the legitimization of traditional healers. Being familiar with the local language, beliefs and the people living around them, traditional authorities are perceived as an integral part of their communities. As distinguished from state authorities, they are thus recognized as trustable and legitimate contact persons rather than outside intruders. Since the establishment of the association of traditional healers in Mozambique (AMETRAMO) in 1992, curandeiros can be officially recognized as traditional healers by acquiring membership. However, as discussed repeatedly, 'real' recognition does not come in form of institutional, that is impersonal, recognition. Instead it is granted on a societal, more personal, level and comes directly from the people who consult them, from their trust in traditional healing methods and from the actual capacities of the healers, that is, successful cures. This is in line with Weber's view that rule is legitimate when people conform to it willingly because they regard it as rightful. Referring to his three forms of legitimate rule, one can categorize the curandeiros' authority as resting upon a combination of both charismatic and traditional leadership. The former refers to personal skills and qualities, the latter bears on long established customs and traditions. In other words: The curandeiros' rootedness in culture and tradition as well as their personal achievements and character traits grant them authority and also influence their relations to the state. Since traditional healers are backed up and legitimized by the population, they are independent from the state and state institutions as providers of legitimacy. Moreover, the numerous changes in history and the still fresh memories of oppression and persecution have left their marks. Having gone through various times of hostility and oppression, acknowledgment, renewed hostility and renewed acknowledgment, Mozambican curandeiros now maintain a low profile. In the words of Rogério⁴²: "In this society the rules kept changing. What was right then becomes wrong. And what was wrong- then you don't know what is wrong, what is right." Nowadays curandeiros do not strive for competition or confrontations with state authorities, even though they could, judging from the strong support they enjoy in society. Mozambican traditional healers rather opt for peaceful co-existence and collaboration. 'Live and let live' seems to be their philosophy. They prefer discretion over attention and therefore do not seek publicity, they rather practice in seclusion. The absence of traditional healers in public space and the consequent lack of manifestation of authority in public space were at the core of the second chapter.

⁴² Interview with Rogério, artist, 26.03.2014, Maputo.

Chapter II started off with giving an introduction to the concepts of spatialization and boundary drawing. Scholars such as Lund, Newman, Gupta and Ferguson highlight space claiming and boundary drawing as powerful means to strengthen and to manifest authority. The basic argument is that the creation of meaningful places, points of reference and/or boundaries in public space serves not only the visualization of authority but also the legitimation of it and, ultimately, can be a symbol of power. At the same time, the lack of spatialization is likely to be indicative of one's loss of authority. At first sight, the evidence gathered in Maputo seems to stand in contrast with the existing ideas. Local curandeiros do not seek spatialization in public space but rather seem to avoid it. There are no public meeting points, ceremonies or visible demarcation lines. Interestingly, foreign curandeiros have a different approach to public space. In contrast to the local healers who do not try to attract attention by making a public appearance, they are eager to establish themselves in public space. They make claims to authority by distributing flyers and by hanging up posters. There is a strong link between (not) making claims to authority in public space and (il)legitimacy. In Maputo, healers who are present in public space and try to catch attention are perceived as untrustworthy. Most people do not consult them and thereby undermine their authority because, as we have seen, authority is not a unilateral 'declaration' but rather a bilateral 'agreement'. Thus, curandeiros cannot force people to accept them as authorities. Without "trust in the leader" and without the belief in the "sanctity of immemorial traditions and the legitimacy of those exercising authority under rule" traditional healers are not recognized as such (Weber, 1978, p.242, p.215). The foreign healers' attempt to counter the absence of trust (and therefore lack of patients) with a strong public presence backfires. Claiming authority in public space does not increase people's trust in foreign curandeiros it only highlights the current lack of trust and thereby further diminishes their authority. For local curandeiros, the opposite holds true. By being invisible they create visibility, by being absent in public space (not advertising themselves) they attract attention. Therefore not advertizing is already a good advertisement for a traditional healer. Local curandeiros are not only aware of the negative image foreign curandeiros have, they also perpetuate it. By means of virtual boundaries, Mozambican healers distance themselves from foreign curandeiros. In interviews they represented the latter as incompetent, untrustworthy and sometimes dangerous, while, at the same time, they stressed their own reputation of being competent, honest and 'good'. In sum, there are neither visible boundaries drawn by local curandeiros nor are there spatial manifestation of their authority in public space. Only invisible, virtual borders serve the purpose of dissociating them from foreign curandeiros who suffer from a bad name. Isolating themselves from 'bad' foreign healers, the local curandeiros reaffirm their own 'goodness' and *indirectly* strengthen their authority. On the other hand, the lack of clear demarcation lines gives the local healers power because they are not tangible and they do not provide (for instance the state) with a target. To a certain extent they succeed in defying control because they have built up their own structures in which they move. Being 'invisible' they cannot be located easily by outsiders and it is difficult to get access to them if one does not have a direct link to them (a recommendation, a phone number, a personal contact, etc.). The fact that they are not easy to access and that not everybody is admitted also stresses the (local) traditional healers' special status in society. They do not seek publicity consequently people have to put effort into finding them.

The third chapter dealt with more explicit manifestations of authority which are only found in private space. In three sub-chapters it addressed questions derived from Gupta's and Fergusson's concept of spatialization, namely: How do curandeiros (re-)present themselves in order to maintain their authority? What images do they try to create of themselves, of the structures they are part of, and of their work in order to secure their legitimacy? Last, but not least, what are their spatial properties? Unlike in public space, the behavior of local and foreign traditional healers does not vary in private space. Both groups of curandeiros use the same ways to display and reinforce their authority, namely language (the oral representation of themselves and their role(s) in society), outer appearance (through clothing, accessories, furniture) and routinization/incorporation (by performing ceremonies and through daily routines). In combination, these various forms of manifesting authority are particularly powerful because they work on different levels and appeal to several senses. Through the use of words curandeiros make sure that their authority is *heard*, by means of outer appearance they make sure it is *seen*, and by routinizing every day activities and performing special ceremonies they guarantee that their patients *feel* their authority.

The first sub-chapter focused on the manifestation of authority through *words*. Based on interview analyses it showed that traditional healers put effort into representing themselves in certain ways in order to reinforce their authority. The most common narratives are the ones of traditional healers as competent allrounders, specialized in solving various problems related to physical health, mental health or caused by spirits. At the same time, curandeiros also display modesty and thereby create a strong connection with their patients. They speak openly about the limitations of their own work and recognize the importance of orthodox medicine and the reliefs it can bring. By admitting 'weaknesses' and by acknowledging orthodox medicine, curandeiros come down off their pedestal, they show that they are being human and therefore neither all-knowing nor almighty. Consequently, at least for a moment, they meet their patients on an equal footing and thereby create a pleasant atmosphere which encourages their patients to open up to them, which is believed to be crucial for successful treatment. Using Gupta and Ferguson's vocabulary, healers succeed in not only representing themselves as standing "above" their patients (because they have extraordinary competences) but also as "encompassing" them (because they are still humans and, thus, fallible). Moreover, showing a positive attitude towards orthodox medicine displays the healers as open-minded, tolerant and progressive persons. In general, curandeiros see themselves as fulfilling significant tasks in society and as being important points of reference for the people. The way they describe themselves has an impact on our imagination and perception of them. Considering curandeiros as authorities a priori, we automatically change our perspective on them and adapt our behavior towards them. Ascribing special powers to them from the start, we are likely to interpret their appearance and their work as powerful, which makes us more prone to adopt their recommendation and to believe in their healing methods. Thus, the healers' *oral self-representation* leads to an a priori *imagination* of curandeiros as authorities which, in turn, contributes to the actual *acceptance and recognition* of curandeiros as authorities.

The second sub-chapter was dedicated to the manifestation of authority through outer appearance. Based on a photo analysis it investigated how outer appearance can both visualize authority and reinforce relations of dominance and submission. By means of clothing, setting, adornments, symbols of power (such as the spirit-instrument the portrayed Nifagrese Antonia

holds in her right hand) and other objects which are characteristic for their work (such as bottles of medicine), curandeiros can obtain an impressive appearance. Contrasting the healers' powerful appearance, reinforced through the meaningful setting in which encounters take place, with the patients' 'averageness' reproduces structures of power and dependency. The eye-catching guise of the curandeiro makes the patient appear nondescript which contributes to the submission of the latter to the former. This dynamic mirrors Foucault's thoughts on medical discourses which do not only involve words but also create a "non-reciprocal" relationship between doctor and patient. As we have seen, the structures of dominance and subordination are further stressed by the healer's working environment, which is either a personal healing room or a symbolic place in the nature, such as the seaside, a mountain, or a forest. While the personal healing room with its furniture and accessories gives hints at the curandeiro's various capacities and thereby strengthens his/her authority, the natural places benefit the healer with their symbolism. Performing rituals at meaningful places automatically attaches some meaningfulness to the ritual itself and to the curandeiro performing it. Places can therefore be seen as serving a double purpose: On the one hand, they visualize the powers of the healer himself/herself and thus draw attention to them as persons. On the other hand, they attach importance to his/her extraordinary work and thereby (indirectly) to their function in society.

The third and last sub-chapter investigated how ceremonies and daily routines can offer possibilities for curandeiros to manifest their authority. Again Gupta and Ferguson served as a point of reference. Their claim that the accommodation of metaphors (in their case metaphors of 'above' and 'encompassing') in daily practices is a powerful way of creating or strengthening a certain image, also holds true for curandeiros in Maputo. As the examples of a spirit ceremony and a traditional medicine class showed, fixed orders, the repetition of certain acts, and routinized (token) gestures ensure that a clear hierarchy is internalized and that the healers' authority is naturalized. In case of the traditional medicine class we could see that taking off one's shoes and washing oneself before entering the class room, has become a normal way of expressing respect to the teacher. This gesture is not questioned, but simply accepted as part of the routine of coming to school.

As stated in the introduction, one of my main aims in this thesis was to focus on the healers' agency. In contrast to already existing literature on traditional healers in which the latter are often portrayed as the *passive* counterpart of the *active* state, I wanted to grant them more space. Instead of conforming to the widely held view that curandeiros are simply given authority by the people and the state, I decided to focus on how and why they *actively* make claims to authority (or not) and on the ways in which the latter is manifested. Gupta's and Ferguson's concept of the spatialization of states served as the theoretical backbone for this work. Questions derived from their ideas were taken out of their initial context (namely states) and applied to a new context (namely individuals). Interestingly, curandeiros in Mozambique use the similar methods as states in order to manifest and reinforce their authority. However, unlike states, the manifestation of authority takes place in private, rather than in public space. Making claims to authority in public space is counterproductive for curandeiros because it is associated with a lack of authority. Only he/she who does not hold authority, tries to claim it. An accepted leader on the other hand, does not need to claim authority since he/she already has it. This finding suggests that 'real' authority is not necessarily clearly visible but

sometimes characterized by its discreetness and ‘invisibility’. Moreover, this thesis implies that where and how people (don’t) make claims to authority is not contingent but based on conscious decisions. (Local curandeiros deliberately avoid public space because they do not want to be confused with foreign curandeiros.) Thus, the attitudes towards claiming authority can give insights into the relations between several claim-making groups and their statuses. This should be investigated in more detail. Further research could also be done on the interplay of public and private space, that is, on how manifestations of authority in private space succeed in entering public space and on how authority manifested in private space can challenge authority claimed in public space and thereby cause rivalry or conflict.

The recent examples of Syria, Libya and South Sudan (to name but a few) demonstrate the devastating consequences the break-up of power, authority, hierarchies, institutions, traditions, etc. can have. If the sudden collapse of societal structures is not followed by the establishment of new structures, a vacuum emerges which bears the risk of conflict and violent power struggles until order is restored and new structures are implemented. After the civil war in Mozambique, traditional healers played an important role in the stabilization of society. As discussed in chapter I, they paved the way for rapprochement and reconciliation of victims and perpetrators, families, village communities. Thereby, they also contributed to the maintenance of (traditional) structures and of alternative forms of dispute resolution. Maintaining some sort of structures is crucial for the prevention of anarchy. In post-war Mozambican society, curandeiros still hold a lot of authority, as individuals as well as a group. They have survived the war, helped with the reconstruction of society and still foster stability and trust today. Given the current situation in central Mozambique, they are likely to find themselves with the task to provide continuity in a context of upheaval, and to grant informal order where formal order disintegrates. This case study shows not only that several authorities can co-exist in various spaces, it also suggests that the co-existence of formal and informal authorities can be complementary and beneficial. In case of break-up of formal authorities, informal authorities can take over. Traditional (informal) structures can fill the vacuum caused by the disintegration of the previous (formal) structures and thus might prevent the outbreak of violent power struggles. This is not only relevant for Mozambique in view of the worrying situation in the province of Sofala, but also for other (African) countries which face similar inner tensions or are characterized by weak state structures.

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⁴³ So far, little has been written about traditional healers in Mozambique. Thus, finding reliable and relevant sources is a challenging task. Looking at the reference list one might miss a great variety of newspaper articles and internet sources. This is due to the limited research that has been done on Mozambican curandeiros and should not be interpreted as bias of the author.

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Appendix I: List of interviews

26 March 2014	Rogério	Local resident of Maputo
02 April 2014	Dr. Hamza	Traditional healer from Uganda
04 April 2014	Dr. Mark	Traditional healer from Lesotho
12 April 2014	Dr. Mark	Traditional healer from Lesotho
13 April 2014	Papa David	Traditional healer from Uganda
26 April 2014	Senhora Olga	President of Ametramo in Maputo
29 April 2014	Senhora Catherina	Local traditional healer
08 May 2014	Eugenio	Employee of the <i>Instituto de Medicina Tradicional</i>
08 May 2014	Papa Kassim	Traditional healer from Tanzania
09 May 2014	Dr. Saad	Traditional healer from Uganda
10 May 2014	Tina	Student of traditional medicine
15 May 2014	Vlad Sokhin	Photographer of <i>The Spirits of Mozambique</i>

Appendix II: Places and events

31 March 2014	Visit at Ametramo
17 April 2014	Attendance of spirit ceremony
25 April 2014	Visit at <i>Mercado Zimpeto</i> where traditional medicine is sold
28 April 2014	Observation of cleansing ritual at the sea side
10 May 2014	Attendance of traditional medicine class
March-June	Visits at the <i>Mercado Xipamanine</i> , observations, informal conversations with vendors of traditional medicine
April-June	Visits of the <i>Instituto de Medicina Tradicional</i> Introduction