



Sexuality and Gender Politics in Mozambique: Re-Thinking Gender in Africa

Signe Arnfred

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Winner of the 2012 gender research award KRAKA-prisen. This book is about gender politics in Mozambique over three decades from 1975 to 2005. The book is also about different ways of understanding gender and sexuality. Gender policies from Portuguese colonialism, through Frelimo socialism to later neo-liberal economic regimes share certain basic assumptions about men, women and gender relations. But to what extent do such assumptions fit the ways in which rural Mozambican men and women see themselves? A major line of argument in the book is that gender relations should be investigated, not assumed, and that policies not matching people's lives are not likely to succeed. The empirical data, on which the argument is based, are first a unique body of data material collected 1982-1984 by the national women's organization, the OMM (when the author was employed as a sociologist in the organization) and secondly data resulting from more recent fieldwork in northern Mozambique. Importantly inspired by African post-colonial feminist lines of thinking, the book engages in a project of re-mapping and re-interpreting 'culture and tradition'. In this context, the book investigates in particular matriliney (c. 40 per cent of Mozambique's population live under conditions of matriliney) and female initiation. The findings open new avenues for gender politics, and for rethinking sexuality and gender - in Africa and beyond. Signe Arnfred is Associate Professor, Dept of Society & Globalization, and Centre for Gender, Power & Diversity, Roskilde University

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