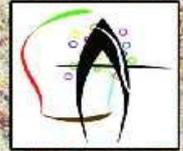




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**South-South Transnational Spaces of Conquest: Brazilian Pentecostalism  
and the Reproductive Domain in Maputo, Mozambique**

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## Introduction

Brazilian Pentecostalism is a new phenomenon in Southern Africa and has gained most prominence in Mozambique and Angola, and to a lesser extent in South Africa (Freston 2005; Corten *et al.* 2003). The increasing political, economic and cultural interaction between Brazil and Africa (Barbosa *et al.* 2009; Visentini & Pereira 2007) has run parallel to the Pentecostal churches travelling across the Atlantic. While discussions take place about the extent to which Brazil as a mestizo country may play a different role in Africa compared to Western countries and China (Fontaine & Seifert 2010; Visentini 2009), Brazilian pastors and African converts have established unique and remarkable South-South connections. The eye-catching white church buildings of the Brazilian Pentecostals in Southern Africa have made their presence very visible. The most visible Brazilian churches are the 'Universal Church of the Kingdom of God' (Universal Church) and 'God is Love'. Especially the Universal Church, founded in Brazil in 1977, has an exceptional impact, which seems to be related to this church's unique combination of hierarchical organization, political strength, financial wealth, colored pastors, media empire (the Universal Church's TV Record is one of Brazil's largest television network and transmits to African countries), adaptability to large cities and different societies, and the (Afro-)Brazilian cultural and spiritual imagery. This church gained the attention of scholars because of its transnational expansion. According to Freston (2005: 33), no Christian denomination founded in the Global South has ever been exported so successfully and rapidly. At the moment of writing, the church claims to be present in 176 countries, thus almost in every country in the world. The growth has mostly occurred since the 1990s. In Southern Africa the Universal Church has about 500-600 congregations (cf. Freston 2005: 33). It is estimated that the God is Love church has about 100 congregations in Southern Africa. To get a clear insight into how and why Brazilian Pentecostalism attracts so many followers in Southern Africa, I propose to center on two key issues that follow from research carried out in Mozambique.<sup>1</sup> I focus on Mozambique because most of the Brazilian evangelical missionaries in Africa went there (Freston 2005: 55) and today Brazilian churches are integrated and prominent in the (semi) urban landscape.

First, I aim to demonstrate the importance of the specific South-South links of Pentecostalism. Various scholars have written about the apparent 'fit' between Pentecostalism and globalization, and its diverse ways of manifestation (Droogers 2001; Meyer 2010; Robbins

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<sup>1</sup> Research in Mozambique took place from August 2005 to August 2007 as part of doctoral research sponsored by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO).

2004). In general, the study of global Pentecostalism tends to focus on the spread of a modern Pentecostal culture that is predominantly Western (Martin 2002; Poewe 1994; cf. Kalu & Low 2008; Robbins 2004: 118). According to this view, Pentecostalism is a paradigm case of a global cultural-religious flow that started in the West and has travelled from country to country introducing a uniform set of practices and ideologies. Scholars have argued that Pentecostalism is attractive because it offers access to modern (Western) processes of cultural, economic and democratic globalization (Berger 2009; Gifford 2004; Martin 2002). Although this line of research has yielded important and generalized insights, it has tended to neglect the transnational ties in global Pentecostalism and their diversity. So far, few studies have considered the increasingly important South-South linkages within the global Pentecostal movement (but see Corten & Marshall-Fratani 2001 and Freston 2001).

Brazilian Pentecostalism in Africa shows that Pentecostalism is not necessarily part of a globalizing Western modernity (cf. Velho 2007). On the contrary, Pentecostal's Southern forms appear to be contributing to and shaping processes of globalization in specific ways (van de Kamp & van Dijk 2010). It could be suggested that what renders global Pentecostalism relevant for its followers is defined by the particular shape its transnational connections take. The Brazilian Pentecostals bridge the distance between both sides of the Atlantic by linking their histories within a particular spiritual framework as it evolved in the transatlantic history. A central entry point into to the activities of Brazilian Pentecostals in Southern Africa is the relevance of Afro-Brazilian spiritual images and concepts about evil (e.g. '*macumba*', see below). The missionaries bring their Brazilian knowledge of and experiences with Afro-Brazilian religions back to Africa. In their perspective, Africa is the original home of 'evil spirits' that still exist there, and came to Brazil via the transatlantic slave trade. Significantly, in the Pentecostal framework Afro-Brazilian and African spirits are understood to be demons operating under the auspices of the Christian devil (Meyer 1999).

Secondly, this South-South and Lusophone transatlantic spiritual history is a suitable starting point for analyzing the transnational mobility of Brazilian Pentecostalism in Southern Africa and its relationship with the local cultural situation, highlighting how the South-South transnational space is enhancing a process of cultural discontinuity and conquest. In Mozambique, Brazilian Pentecostalism challenges converts to transcend what is local, move away from it and pioneer new life spaces in order to effect transformations (van de Kamp 2011). Pentecostal pastors proclaim that faith is capable of moving lives, families and nations (cf. van

Dijk 2006) and that people do not need to accept a low salary, a small house and an unhappy marriage. These stand for stasis and stagnation and show that something is blocking one's well-being and prosperity. The power of the Pentecostal gospel removes blockades and produces enormous success, according to the Pentecostal message. The centrality of movement was very present in the lively church services that I attended where the power of the Holy Spirit was manifest in dancing, pulsating music and shaking bodies. Moreover, borders were constantly crossed by the pastors who travelled all over the globe in their efforts to open new places of worship in different localities. Throughout this chapter I give examples from the lives of Mozambican upwardly mobile women who are finding the transnational Pentecostal field attractive because of their position in the urban national domain. From these women's perspective, the immobile dimensions of the reproductive field in the urban national domain contrast with the mobile forms that the Brazilian Pentecostal space offers through travelling business plans and new marriage ceremonies.

### **South-South Pentecostalism and the Lusophone Atlantic: *Macumba* and *Feitiçaria***

Most of the Brazilian churches in Southern Africa have neo-Pentecostal characteristics (Anderson 2004: 144-165). The neo-Pentecostal view of the world is one of a spiritual battlefield between demonic and heavenly forces. Neo-Pentecostals stress that the world is a place of spiritual warfare between God and Satan, with powerful consequences for everyday life. Against this backdrop, neo-Pentecostals in Africa are concerned with the influence of ancestral spirits, which they consider to be satanic spirits that need to be combated by the Holy Spirit (Meyer 1998; van Dijk 1998). In addition, neo-Pentecostalism concentrates on the so-called Prosperity Theology, underlining how a combative faith brings happiness, health and prosperity in all aspects of life (Coleman 2000; Gifford 2004; Martin 2002).

Brazilian neo-Pentecostal churches have been in Mozambique since the beginning of the 1990s, shortly after the end of the civil war (Cruz e Silva 2003; Freston 2005). The end of the war also marked the end of the socialist era and the start of the democratization and liberalization of the economic and political domains, including a relaxing of regulations concerning religious expression. Mozambicans who attended the first Brazilian Pentecostal services in Maputo in the early 1990s, stressed their amazement at how pastors were openly talking about ancestral spirits and witchcraft, which had previously been unheard of in an urban centre dominated by a Portuguese colonial history and a socialist period of culture policies focused on abandoning

'backward beliefs', such as the involvement with spiritual powers. More than ten years later when I arrived to do my research, Brazilian outspokenness about spirits was no longer newsworthy. Yet converts were still fascinated by how Brazilians had been able to discover the Devil's tricks in Mozambique. Converts told me that there is a lot of *macumba* in Mozambique and that the Brazilian pastors were saving them from *macumba*.

*Macumba*, which is a foreign word in Mozambique, is a pejorative term in Brazilian Pentecostal jargon and used to denounce Afro-Brazilian religions as witchcraft or black magic.<sup>2</sup> Since the religions of the African slaves who were shipped to Brazil form the basis of all kinds of Afro-Brazilian worship, Pentecostal pastors consider the heart of all evil to lie in Africa (Macedo 2000; cf. Birman 2006: 65; Freston 2005: 46, 47). It is this evil that they have come to Africa to fight.<sup>3</sup>

The circulation of cultural and spiritual imagery between Brazilian pastors and Mozambican converts is grounded in the Lusophone Atlantic,<sup>4</sup> which is the particular space of historical, cultural and religious production between Portugal, Brazil and Africa that has been shaped by diverse colonial encounters (Naro *et al.* 2007; cf. Gilroy 1992). The Lusophone Atlantic is a shared cultural space along which people and imagery move. Brazilian-Mozambican Pentecostals have created a specific Christian, or even Pentecostal, transatlantic space of interaction and exchange (cf. Sarró & Blanes 2009).

A clear example of the Pentecostal Lusophone exchange is the understanding of *feitiçaria*, a synonym for *macumba* or witchcraft for Pentecostals. Since the early colonial era, *feitiço* (fetish, literally something made) has become a central, if not obsessive, focus in outsiders' discourses on Africa. The word was a Creole term and the Portuguese used it to refer to amulets and all kinds of devotional objects. When they arrived in West Africa and saw that Africans were using amulets, they called them *feitiços* (Pollak-Eltz 1970: 37-38). Other explorers, such as the Dutch,

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<sup>2</sup> There is no agreement in the literature on the linguistic origins of the term *macumba* and what it exactly denotes. Hayes (2007: 287) explained that: 'Some scholars linked 'macumba' to a Bantu language and a certain type of percussive musical instrument. Given the centrality of percussion in African and African-derived religions, this may account for the use of the term in reference to the ritual practices of Bantu-speaking slaves and their descendents, who were especially prominent in Rio from the late eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century. Others associated the term with communities of runaway slaves' (2007: 286). According to the Brazilian Houaiss dictionary, *macumba* is a designation by laymen of Afro-Brazilian cults in general.

<sup>3</sup> A Mozambican pastor at the Universal Church explained that there are many more demons in Brazil than in Mozambique 'but they came to Brazil because of the slaves, thus their origin is in Africa' (conversation, 12 March 2007).

<sup>4</sup> Strictly speaking, Mozambique is on the Indian Ocean and is geographically not part of the Atlantic, but it is included in this constellation because the Atlantic has influenced local dynamics in the Mozambican region and vice versa (Naro *et al.* 2007: 8).

English and French, misinterpreted the origins of the word *feitiço* and saw it as African, applying the word to everything related to African cults. For them, *fetissos* were not only magic charms but also African gods and their priests were the *fetisseros* (Sansi-Roca 2007: 27). Pentecostals still connect Afro-Brazilian cults to this 'fetishism'. Pentecostal pastors in Brazil preach against *feiticeiros*, the priests of the Afro-Brazilian religions. Likewise, they preach against *feitiçaria* in Mozambique, where they regard the traditional healers, the *curandeiros*, as *feiticeiros* and call their practices *macumba*.

It is striking how on both sides of the Lusophone Atlantic, i.e. in Brazil and in African countries, the revitalization of an 'African identity' is part of the history of perceptions of *feitiçaria*.<sup>5</sup> Van de Port (2007) evocatively analyzes the beautification by the Bahian government of the Afro-Brazilian cult *candomblé* in the northern Brazilian state of Bahia, where most descendants of Africans live. These cultural politics are supported by the tourist industry, elaborated on by the entertainment industry and the media, and receive backup from *candomblé* priests who are searching for respectability. The colour white plays a crucial role in these politics and spotless white has come to dominate the public appearance of *candomblé*. However this white has also come to represent everything that the colour seemed to hide for non-practitioners: the shadows of the occult, the blood of animal sacrifices, death and violence. It is precisely this ambiguous presence of *candomblé* imagery that invites one to look beyond the visible. And it is here that Pentecostals take the opportunity to report on the satanic behaviour in *candomblé* (van de Port 2007: 253), as they do with African religions in Africa. They warn followers to watch out for this *feitiçaria* by revealing the 'real' meaning of *candomblé*'s white.

Comparable processes of public imagination are taking place in Mozambique. Since the 1990s, the Mozambican government has embarked on a capitalist, democratic route and started a process of revaluing traditional Mozambican culture. Mozambicans have to value their culture as a force for developing a prosperous Mozambican nation. Traditional healers receive more support, government officials use authentic Mozambican clothes and traditional rituals take place at official state ceremonies. There is a revival of Mozambican identity and discussions

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<sup>5</sup> Theories on fetishism (Goldman 2009; Latour 1996; Pietz 1985) centre on what it (mis)represents, such as the image that was created of African spirituality and Africans more generally. In Brazil, studies on the presence of African religions (Bastide 1978; Rodrigues (1945) [1906]) have dealt with the 'African purity' of these religions and the extent to which they can be considered sorcery. According to Hayes (2008), Bastide's classification of the various Afro-Brazilian religions has resulted in a contemporary appropriation of *candomblé* as part of Brazilian culture while *macumba* is perceived as destructive, as *feitiçaria*. This may be one reason why Pentecostals prefer using the term *macumba*.

about what it actually is. Various Mozambicans reject this return to Mozambique's past, which for them has so many dark sides that its 'whitening process' (cf. van de Port 2007) is vanishing. The clearest expression of this standpoint is heard in Pentecostal churches where members forcefully reject national cultural politics and promote a global Christian culture with Brazilian accents. Both the Mozambican government (and related civil-society organizations) and the Pentecostal churches are thus engaged in a process of restyling aspects of Mozambican culture, albeit in different and even opposing ways: the Mozambican government is 'civilizing' local healing, while Pentecostals stress its 'uncivilized' features (cf. de Witte 2008; Meyer 1998, 2010; van Dijk 2001).

These cultural policies echo transnational and national history. During the colonial era, Mozambican *assimilados* ('natives' who were considered 'civilized' by the Portuguese colonial authorities) had to break with *feitçaria* and under the subsequent Marxist-Leninist Frelimo regime, *feiticeiros* and traditional healers were persecuted. Today, these healers have become part of the nation-state project but the current revitalization of *curandeiros'* power over good and evil spirits keeps the imagery of *feitçaria* alive. Although members of the upper and middle classes rarely speak openly about their visits to *curandeiros*, they warn each other of the disastrous influences of *feiticeiros* everywhere, fearing that their material well-being will be the subject of *feitçaria* practices. Numerous stories circulate of suspicious medicines put under people's chairs at work, in newly purchased cars or at the doors of luxury houses. Women share their anxieties about the *feitços* used by other women to win over the hearts of their husbands.

Many converts grew up in the environment of Maputo where *feitçaria* was something one was not supposed to talk about because it was only 'the uncivilized other' who dealt with such matters. However, since different forms and interpretations of *feitçaria* are less silenced and more present in the public sphere, *feitçaria* have come to play a new role in people's lives. I met Pentecostal converts who were confused about family members who started by saying that something that happened long ago had consequences for their lives. For the first time, they were hearing that certain incidents with spirits in the family may have been behind their failure to marry, for example. To find out about the influence of the past in the present, they had to participate with their kin in sessions with a local healer. But, often these healing sessions had not helped them and they misunderstood what happened during a ritual they had to carry out. Convert Patricia (a 29-years-old university student) explained how the *curandeiro* started to put something on her feet and that when she asked what it was all about, her family told her she

should not ask questions. *Curandeiros* commented that sometimes they are incapable of helping their urban clients because they are unaware of their past and do not want to cooperate with the spirits.<sup>6</sup> In addition, modern, urban people find the rituals of local healers disgusting because the blood of animals is used and they find the circumstances unhygienic, preferring the clean white spaces of Pentecostal churches. In contrast to their families and local healers, Pentecostal pastors explained openly to converts what the practices in their family mean according to the Pentecostal view in a way that connects with converts' aspirations.

Brazilian pastors have been able to transfer their approach to Afro-Brazilian religions into the Mozambican context despite the many differences between the Mozambican spiritual reality and Afro-Brazilian cults. Mozambicans apparently recognized their experiences in the stories the Brazilian pastors related, while the Brazilian pastors could easily connect with what they learned about Mozambican reality. In his description of the Universal Church in Southern Africa, Freston (2005: 41) points out that:

... in its worldwide expansion, the [Universal, LvdK] church has shown flexibility in small 'glocalising' methodological adaptations, ... but always remaining essentially the same in doctrine, organisation and emphases.

Studying the expansion of the Universal Church in Argentina, Oro & Semán (2001: 187) also demonstrate how its daily ritual battle against Afro-Brazilian religions, as practised in services in Brazil, needed adaptation ('bridges' in the following citation) in the Argentinian context where Afro-Brazilian beliefs are much less influential.

For this reason, the most important bridges articulated by the UCKG [Universal Church, LvdK] have to do with the image of the Devil. These bridges are intentionally or randomly concentrated around the translation of the Brazilian church's proposal for the Argentine public, and facilitate the productivity of its cultural principles.

To reinvent the dormant figure of the Devil in the Argentinian imaginary, pastors made use of several media, for example the film *The Exorcist* and Catholic hagiography. As in the

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<sup>6</sup> Interviews with different *curandeiros/as* held on 15 November 2006, 5 December 2006, and 8, 27 and 28 February 2007.

Argentinian case, the Universal Church has adapted to other cultural settings, with positive and negative results (Corten *et al.* 2003).

However in my encounters with converts and pastors, I learned that the 'glocalising methodological adaptations' (Freston 2005: 41) and ways of 'translating the Devil' (Meyer 1999) imply first and foremost maintaining a certain distance between Brazilians and Mozambicans and their respective knowledge of each other's' spiritual world, experiences and imaginations. The capacity of Brazilian Pentecostalism to create a critical distance to local perceptions of spirits depends on a 'real' distance. While both Brazilians and Mozambicans use the word *macumba*, they do not share much in its content, variety, differences and particularities. The *orixás*, the spiritual entities that figure in Afro-Brazilian religions and originate from religions in West Africa, and the spirits active in Southern Africa are all declared 'demonic' by Brazilian pastors (Macedo 2000: 7-19). As many pastors and converts in Mozambique said: 'the Devil makes people believe that they are dealing with a specific ancestral spirit, but it is a demon'. Brazilian pastors claim that in all these cases and wherever they are, they deal with the same demonic powers. Mozambicans are unfamiliar with the term *macumba* in their own languages but today they will talk about *macumba*, referring to the influence of evil spirits in their lives. In other words, it appears to be sufficient to acknowledge the destructive potential of *macumba* without going into further specificities. It is even considered dangerous to know too much about *macumba*. Mozambicans do not need to know the exact spiritual history of their families or the nature of Afro-Brazilian spirits. And for Brazilians, the basic information about some central spiritual figures in Mozambique can suffice. The less one knows, the more foreign one can be(come) and thus one is able to transcend boundaries. It is the combination of comparable spiritual experiences and the foreign distance of Brazilian pastors that would appear to make Brazilian Pentecostalism particularly suitable to transgressing local attachments and limitations, as I will elaborate on in the following section.



Recording of television programme, TV Maná - Evangelical Church Maná, Moçambique © Rufus de Vries

### **The South-South transnational mobility of Pentecostalism**

Most studies of transnational Pentecostalism focus on South-North links, such as the presence of African or Latin American migrant churches in Europe or the US (Adogame 1998, 2004; Levitt 2007; Mafra 2002; Ter Haar 2008; Wilkinson 2006). These scholars have mainly analyzed the role of Pentecostalism in situations of migration, following the broader field of transnational studies (e.g. Vertovec 2007). Studies on religious transnationalism have addressed the role of religion for migrants in maintaining the link between the home and host society (Vertovec 2004). A central question is how transnational religion plays a role in preserving a sense of cultural continuity or in encouraging cultural change in contact between migrants and the new society in which migrants are subjected to a forceful public agenda that usually emphasizes integration. In this context, it has been argued that transnational Pentecostalism encourages stability in situations of mobility and provides for cultural continuity by offering migrants a 'home away from home' (Adogame 1998, 2004; Ter Haar 1998; cf. Habermas 2002).

In the case of Brazilian Pentecostalism in Mozambique we are not, however, dealing with a migrant community. Mozambican converts continue to live in their own society while participating in a setting where relations are developed and maintained that link Brazilian and Mozambican societies. What exactly is the relevance of transnational religion and related questions on cultural (dis)continuity and (dis)integration in such an environment?

Several scholars have pointed to the emergence of transnational spaces that are not necessarily shaped by international migration but by processes of communication and exchange generated by capital expansion and the Internet or other forms of communication between specific nation-states (Appadurai 1996; Clifford 1992; Hannerz 1996; Meyer & Moors 2006). These studies analyze how citizens can develop identities that are not necessarily national, for example through the development of subjectivities and identities based on ideas, customs, practices and emotions that enter nation-states via travellers, television and the Internet. It is this idea of people becoming transnational by engaging in mobile structures, cultures and ideologies that is relevant in the case of transnational Brazilian Pentecostal churches in Mozambique.

This process takes on special dimensions in transnational Pentecostalism in Mozambique in that converts' cultural nearness to the local society appears critical. Brazilian Pentecostalism in Mozambique demonstrates the locally embedded meaning and development of transnationalism (Glick Schiller & Çağlar 2010). Being part of the local society, unlike in situations of migration, many converts struggle to understand how their Pentecostal morality and spirituality can remain unaffected or even 'uncaptured' by local circumstances, powers or cultural realities. They want to become independent of locally binding forces, i.e. to become more culturally and socio-economically mobile and to cross boundaries. Let me illustrate this with the example of Dona (Madam) Gracelina.

Dona Gracelina (45 years old) was going to open a business with her husband. She had managed to rent a nice building for their company at a central location in the city centre and had bought all the necessary equipment. There were also some possible future customers Dona Gracelina was in contact with and she was all ready to start. However, after having dealt with the right government department in Maputo for several months, government officials would not hand over the required licence. She suspected that the officials were waiting for her to pay them an additional sum of money to proceed, but she refused. In the Brazilian Pentecostal God is Love Church that she frequented, she handed over the project file with the company plans and copies of all the papers she had to arrange for the licence to a Brazilian pastor. He would take it

with him on his travels until he was back in Brazil where the church's founder was going to pray for her. During the service it was revealed that an evil spirit stood behind Dona Gracelina following her wherever she went and the spirit was similar to *macumba* spirits in Brazil who make people lose jobs and money. The pastor expelled the spirit and proposed a programme of prayer, offerings and fasting to defeat the demon.

Dona Gracelina felt paralyzed because of the power the government officials had over her: she was being kept by 'evil powers'. It was through transnational Pentecostalism that she would be able to break out of this situation, something that was made real with the business papers that would leave the country to receive a blessing in Brazil. In this context Dona Gracelina was made aware of the negative impact of national spiritual connections: through her possible links with ancestral or other spirits her project was failing but by engaging in transnational Pentecostalism she could move away from these 'origins'.

As outsiders, Brazilian pastors<sup>7</sup> confront Mozambicans in a variety of ways with what their culture or life looks like. To question the power of local healers, the pastors mimic the behaviour of a *curandeiro/a* when s/he is in a trance. They bring objects into church that local healers work with and show that they can touch them without any negative consequences. In the traditional Mozambican context this is considered offensive and dangerous but the pastors show that one should not be afraid if one is in the sphere of influence of the borderless power of the Holy Spirit. Another example is the 'therapy of love' (van de Kamp forthcoming a). During one therapy session, the pastor imitated the behaviour of Mozambican couples who, according to Brazilians, are shy, do not have the courage to look each other in the eyes or to touch their partner in public spaces. Then the pastor held hands with his wife, embraced her and gave her a kiss to show what love is but also to demonstrate the shortcomings of local customs. By doing all this openly, the pastors want to force open cultural values as a way of bringing about transformation. They urge converts to cross cultural and spiritual boundaries.

Mozambicans do not travel literally to cross boundaries. Brazilian pastors have done so and it is their trajectory that creates a space of mobility. Mariz (2009) describes the dislocation by Brazilian pastors within and outside Brazil who leave their homes and families to preach the gospel. This is valued as an important strategy of spiritual development because, by leaving

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<sup>7</sup> There were also Mozambican pastors and pastors from other Portuguese-speaking African countries, such as Angola. However, the Brazilians offered leadership in the Brazilian churches and most Mozambicans were only assistant pastors who incorporated the transnational cultural distance. Mozambicans have even adopted Brazilian Portuguese.

one's family, it is possible to be fully dedicated to the missionary project. The geographical journey facilitates a radical break with one's former life and allows for the formation of a new person. During services in Mozambique, Brazilian pastors often used their personal journeys as an example of what faith looks like and what it can achieve. To transform, one has to travel and transcend the familiar, including one's family and culture, and suffer hardships to create new possibilities. By participating in Brazilian Pentecostalism one embarks on a journey. Mozambican believers leave elements of local culture behind, begin to experience their lives differently and see things in a new light. Since converting, Dona Gracelina had started to walk through the city with a particular attitude, alert to all the (evil) influences that could affect her. Even though bodies remain in the same location physically, the subjective dislocation and the transnational positioning have the similar effect as embarking on a real journey regarding social and cultural perceptions, values and practices.

While breaking with local socio-cultural structures and practices is an intrinsic aspect of Pentecostalism in Africa (Meyer 1998), this is reinforced by the South-South transnational dimension. In continuity with the tradition of healing practices and missions in south-eastern Africa that spiritual practices involve boundaries that can be transcended (Luedke & West 2006), Brazilian pastors, coming from far away, are perceived as powerful healers. Yet here the mobility religion effectuates primarily results in a person becoming a 'stranger' in the local environment rather than an 'insider' in a strange reality (cf. Werbner 1989). The regional cults that have emerged in a context of labour migration in Southern Africa have had an important function in reorganizing socio-cultural and spiritual lives and providing a home for migrants who were strangers far away from home (van Binsbergen 1981), as has also been argued for African Pentecostalism in Europe (Adogame 1998). Instead, in the South-South transnational movement of Brazilian Pentecostalism, the call for a break with cultural customs shows religion as a producer of a 'foreign' place (van de Kamp & van Dijk 2010). Crossing (cultural) boundaries is thus not experienced as disconcerting or uprooting, and if such feelings arise, the church does not provide a 'home'. The transnational Pentecostal space is about creating transformation by openly transcending national, cultural and spiritual boundaries, for example by annihilating the power of government officials, severing relations of dependence with ancestral kin or incorporating new modes of love by embracing and kissing one's partner in public.



‘Go out evil spirit, go out’, Universal Church, Maputo © Rufus de Vries

### **Pioneering the urban reproductive domain transnationally**

Brazilian pastors’ generation of a transnational power to cross cultural and spiritual boundaries seems to be making Pentecostalism particularly relevant for the reproductive domain. At the same time as Dona Gracelina was setting up her company, she and her husband reaffirmed their marriage vows. Dona Gracelina explained that she and her husband had officially got married 25 years ago but that the ceremony had not taken place under God’s supervision. To mark their new life and for it to go well, she felt that she needed to have a new wedding ceremony, especially as her husband had converted too. After the wedding, she showed me pictures of herself in a white wedding dress accompanied by bridesmaids at her church wedding and photos of her civil wedding celebrations in the *Palácio de Casamentos* (Palace of Marriages).<sup>8</sup>

When it comes to issues of reproduction, i.e. sexuality, marriage, fertility, love and the family, many upwardly mobile women are opting for the ideas and practices they can find in a Brazilian Pentecostal church. The most obvious reason is that in these churches, marriage, love

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<sup>8</sup> Couples quite regularly reaffirm their marriage vows around the time of their 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.

and sexuality are themes that are explicitly talked about, in contrast to local customs. Brazilian *telenovelas* (soaps) broadcast on Mozambican television also deal with the same topics but often more broadly. For youngsters growing up in Mozambique's cities, these *telenovelas* are part and parcel of their initiation process into the world of love and sexuality. As several of my young female informants commented, they observed openness towards love and sexuality amongst Brazilians in the *telenovelas* and in the lives of their Brazilian pastors that they did not recognize in their own society. One young woman said: 'I have never seen my parents kissing each other, but the Brazilians do'.<sup>9</sup> Another had lived with a Brazilian missionary couple for some time and told me how she had learned from them to show affection to your partner and keep a relationship warm and lively.<sup>10</sup> Another important factor is that Brazilian pastors offer an adequate framework for addressing the negative influences of spiritual powers on affective relationships. Their success in combating 'spirit spouses' who frustrates women's sexual and marital relationships (van de Kamp forthcoming), both in Brazil and in Mozambique, testifies to their superior spiritual power in the domain of love and sexuality.

Women's positions as cultural mediators in their reproductive roles connect with the transnational Pentecostal transcendence of boundaries. In constructions and imaginations of the nation, women on the one hand appear as signifiers of the community's honour (Yuval-Davis 1997) while this position also allows them to negotiate new cultural meanings in the contested transitional spaces of a society in transformation (Tripp *et al.* 2009). Under successive national policies, Mozambique's urban socio-economic life has been continuously reshaped and this has affected gender positions and women's possibilities to position themselves in the urban domain (Arnfred 2001; Loforte 2003; Sheldon 2002). In the post-war period, new economic opportunities for women have emerged and it is the women who have benefitted from these new possibilities who are experiencing the gendered aspects of urban society in new ways. Although it is now more or less accepted that they will work, their growing self-awareness and new modes of dress, relating and behaviour are often the subject of heated debate because others consider them inappropriate for an 'African woman', an 'African marriage' and an 'African family'. These women are contesting *Moçambicanidade* (Mozambicanness) especially now that the control over their lives by the state and by kin has diminished and a mixture of influences prevails.

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<sup>9</sup> Interview, 28 June 2006.

<sup>10</sup>This is not the same as saying that her parents did not have a good relationship but views on intimacy and showing intimacy diverge.

Contradictory expectations and orientations are however increasing. These include expectations about women's participation in courtship, marriage and the family, and the ways women dress and move in the urban space. Upwardly mobile women are caught in a difficult situation as they are maintaining or reshaping their reproductive roles in the regeneration of society but equally exploring beyond the cultural boundaries. Here, upwardly mobile women and transnational Pentecostalism are finding and reinforcing each other in their capacities. Women are taking transnational Pentecostal tools, training courses and visions to pioneer the urban domain in new ways and challenge and move boundaries in the national sphere about the Mozambican woman to direct, control and shape new lifestyles. As pioneers, upwardly mobile women are exploring the transformative capacity of Brazilian Pentecostalism.

Women's cross-cultural activities include attempts to reshape the linkages between the intertwined productive and reproductive domains of marriage, sexuality, work and money, which are all bound up in one sphere (Feliciano 1998). All are important and dependent on each other for the smooth running of social life, although their links are currently unbalanced and unclear. Dona Gracelina was busy redefining their combination and how her success in the reproductive domain – a perfect marriage – would affect her business and vice versa. This was a crucial issue as her relative economic success took shape when her husband lost his job. While Dona Gracelina said that this was the result of witchcraft medicines used by his colleagues, she needed to carefully design her career without allowing suspicion to rise against her. Her success could not influence her husband's 'failure'. Women like Dona Gracelina cannot fall back on a cultural routine and a stable social field (cf. Durham 2002). As women with new socio-economic positions, their situation is uncertain and they are not in control of all the social and spiritual forces that impinge on their positions. Their new economic positions open up the chance of increasing control in their lives and the opportunity to conquer the city by setting up businesses, living on their own and driving their own car. But they must strategically maneuver their access to new life spaces and Dona Gracelina developed her strategies by exploring the transnational Pentecostal space. Their attachment to the transnational Holy Spirit should make it possible for Pentecostal women to get better positions in schools, companies, the government and family life. In this sense, converts are changing local urban domains into transnational Pentecostal spaces.

The transformation of the city has appeared in the ways converts walk through its streets. Women regularly summoned me to pray when we were on the street because we needed to be aware of and protect ourselves against *macumba* and to be conscious of any potential

chances. We had to keep our distance from what was happening around us as we first had to judge the intentions of people who approached us, such as the men who asked for our mobile phone numbers. Pastors had made it clear that women should not date every man who turned up with an impressive car and nice presents as his intentions should be investigated. Pentecostals could often tell me the exact moment when someone had approached them on the street or in a building and how afterwards they had lost their job or their partner had disappeared because the person they had met had evil intentions. They tried to anticipate possible harm as far as possible. At the same time, meeting people, be they potential partners or employers, could be the start of a successful project or life path. Pioneering the city in the transnational Holy Spirit was vital when considering these situations and challenging blockades.

### **Conclusion**

Mozambicans who participate in the Brazilian Pentecostal churches become transnationals because they cross national boundaries by criticizing and distancing themselves from (ancestral) kin, government officials and local customs. Brazilian Pentecostalism in Mozambique contributes to a critical cultural awareness and a destabilization of continuity by making people an 'outsider' instead of an 'insider', as is so often the case in migrant settings where people seek integration. In this sense, Pentecostal converts are busy creating mobility through the power of the Holy Spirit to conquer (*conquistar*) new modes of being and doing.

In exploring the transnational Pentecostal space in Mozambique, the historical connections of the Lusophone Atlantic serve as a meeting point for Brazilians and Mozambicans. Brazilians came to combat the origins of *macumba* and although it is a Brazilian concept, it has been incorporated by Mozambicans. The presence of *macumba* imagery from Brazil via Pentecostal pastors and the focus on *fetiçaria* are paired with an opening up of the silencing of talk about spirits in urban Mozambique. Brazilian pastors have brought the spirits that travelled to Brazil so long ago with the slaves back to what is supposed to be their home, to remind Mozambicans of their roots. In the Pentecostal context, these roots are considered dangerous and evil, and the cause of problems in people's lives. The exchange between Brazilians and Mozambicans has resulted in a specific transnational Pentecostal *macumba* embedded in Mozambique's urban space.

The South-South transnational Pentecostal space has become especially relevant to upwardly mobile women who are seeking to direct and control their new social positions in a shifting and uncertain but challenging urban environment. Uncertainties about new ways of living demand a critical cultural reflection, especially in the reproductive domain, such as relationships with (spiritual) kin and men. By navigating transnational Pentecostalism, they are exploring possibilities and anticipating a life trajectory to find and create options. The explicit openness of Brazilian pastors towards issues of love, marriage and sexuality in addition to their spiritual and cross-cultural strength, which allows them to cross sensitive cultural boundaries, makes them attractive healers and counsellors when it comes to reforming the regeneration of life. In this respect, women's historical position as cultural mediators connects with the transnational Pentecostal transcendence of boundaries. They find and reinforce each other in their capacities to challenge and move frontiers in the national sphere around reproductive issues. However, traversing boundaries and the powerful atmosphere of conquest that South-South Pentecostalism creates have to be carefully manoeuvred by women to not let their accusations of witchcraft and demons rise against themselves.

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