



Pounders of Grain: A History of Women, Work, and Politics in Mozambique

Kathleen Sheldon

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This history of women in Mozambique moves from a description of various mid-19th century rural societies to an examination of the impact of structural adjustment and processes of democratization at the end of the 20th century. A discussion of matrilineal and patrilineal kinship systems introduces the history and includes women's contributions to the social and economic lives of their communities. The experiences of women in Portuguese colonialism are then explored with a focus on changes to the work environment and the advent of mission education. Women's involvement in the struggle for liberation and independence is highlighted by specific policies that improved women's lives. Examinations of the 1980s and 1990s follow, including a look at the devastating war with Renamo, and a consideration of the legacy of structural adjustment programs on women's work and politics.

This book is inclusive of all regions in Mozambique and emphasizes the centrality of women's choices and decisions in the development of Mozambican society. Sheldon demonstrates that without the inclusion of women, the history of Mozambique remains incomplete. This is the only history-to-date of women in Mozambique, and one of the few country-specific histories of women in Africa.

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