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Für meine Familie

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On terminology

The reader will stumble upon several terms originating from languages other than English: Swahili, Shambaa, Bena, and German. Working across different languages brings with it the necessity to simplify. I dropped all prefixes which are commonly used in Bantu languages, so that I wrote of Swahili people (instead of *Waswahili*) or the Swahili language (instead of *Kiswahili*). The only prefix I retained is the Swahili *U-* for widely accepted terms describing localities; i.e., *Ubena*, the region where the Bena dwell.

I strove to find a balance between terms particular for the perspectives that I wanted to represent and a more abstract and universal terminology. As this thesis is mainly interested in questions of meaning, it was indispensable to include a good deal of local terms, all of which are written in italics. The most important of them are explained in the glossary which precedes the bibliography.



ESTRAGON: All the dead voices.
VLADIMIR: They make a noise like wings.

ESTRAGON: Like leaves.

VLADIMIR: Like sand.

ESTRAGON: Like leaves.

Silence.

VLADIMIR: They all speak at once.

ESTRAGON: Each one to itself.

Silence.

VLADIMIR: Rather they whisper.

ESTRAGON: They rustle.

VLADIMIR: They murmur.

ESTRAGON: They rustle.

Silence.

VLADIMIR: What do they say?

ESTRAGON: They talk about their lives.

VLADIMIR: To have lived is not enough for them.

ESTRAGON: They have to talk about it.

VLADIMIR: To be dead is not enough for them.

ESTRAGON: It is not sufficient.

Silence.

Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*

1. INTRODUCTION: APPROACHING DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS IN GERMAN EAST AFRICA

“Maybe,” I remember a fellow student saying in the class on political thought for development, “Africans are just not made for democracy and development will never take place here in Tanzania.” Her scepticism was shared by some classmates, while others saw the main problem not in Africa itself, but in persisting neo-colonial relations to the Western states. The discussions that I witnessed, and occasionally took part in, took place at the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in late 2011 and early 2012 when I had the chance to study one semester as an exchange student at this East African institution which also goes by the name of *nyumbani kwa wasomi*, that is, “home of intellectuals.” Development, it seemed to be the opinion of most, needed to be brought from modern institutions and (academic) intellectuals to the vast and poverty-stricken rural areas of Tanzania. Connecting my experiences with a scholarly account, I might say that I perceived a “deep-seated scepticism held by many Tanzanians about the ability of their rural societies to endure change and achieve progress” (Giblin / Maddox 1996:2), a scepticism in which national institutions figure as vehicles of development while rural societies and villages are seen as obstacles to progress.

What particularly struck me in the class on political thought for development was the Eurocentric selection of relevant thinkers. The class dealt with Aristotle, Locke, Plato, Marx, Mao, Socrates, Lenin, Augustine, Hobbes, Mill, and even Martin Luther, Sophists and Stoicists were treated and thus held to have brought forward concepts that were relevant to a discussion of development in 21st century Tanzania. African intellectuals discussed included Léopold Senghor, Kwame Nkrumah, Sékou Touré and, of course, *Mwalimu* (teacher) Julius Nyerere; all of whom were in one person thinkers and the first presidents of the newly independent states Senegal, Ghana, Guinea and Tanganyika, respectively. Their experiences of colonialism and Western education inevitably shaped their concepts. “What about earlier African concepts of development?” I asked myself.

At the same time, I took a course on oral histories of Tanzania and got to know some patterns of social change and political organization Tanzanian societies had experienced and brought forward. Investigating my question of development concepts by looking into oral traditions might, I thought, yield some answers. Though I have since ceased in my naïve enthusiasm for the use of oral sources as a panacea to “fill gaps” (cf. Clifford 1993), the connection of development, African history and (my third area of interest) German colonialism seemed possible enough in this set-up.

This work, then, is an attempt to get hold of concepts of development prevailing in Tanzania before (ca. 1870-1884) and during the period of German colonialism (1884-1918), when European thoughts on development moulded colonial policies and gained influence but also stood in interrelation with many diverse concepts from Tanzanian societies. It is an attempt to look at both how specific societies and people in German East Africa made sense of power relations and social change from their perspectives (cf. Boahen 1987) and how concepts of development were transformed. The cases that I will look into include the political ideology of the Shambaa society in the Usambara Mountains in Northern Tanzania (chapter two), historiographical poems by Swahili poets from the coast (chapter three), the organisational patterns of competitive dance societies called *beni ngoma* (chapter four) and how peasants from Ubena, a region in the Southern Highlands, conceptualized labour migration (chapter five).

Getting at the agency and consciousness of agents not directly linked to the centres of colonial knowledge production, namely the colonial state and Christian missions, is a demanding task, as all scholars whom I contacted concerning my research interest were to confirm and even warn me about. There are profound methodological questions to be asked on how histories of the (pre-) colonial period can be researched, which sources can yield which kind of information and what terms of analysis are appropriate. Thus, I dedicate the first chapter to a brief discussion on these issues because it was only after careful consideration of methodology, methods in dealing with sources and of what theoretical frame to use that I could embark on my project of finding development concepts in German East Africa, development concepts not only from Europeans, but also from Africans – while of course it is futile to consider the attributes of being African or European as markers of authenticity and pureness. Assuming, however, that the idea of development and the creation of modern political institutions was but an unilateral import of colonialism “leaves many Tanzanians doubtful that their own cultures can sustain material and political development” (Giblin / Maddox 1996:3). That colonialism had to adapt to local circumstances is widely recognized and a well-established fact in Tanzanian history (e.g., Wright 1968). What I feel to be missing are insights into African perspectives, their transformations and internal contradictions and how these also shaped colonialism in Tanzania. This work aims to address these issues through a focus on development concepts.

1.1 Histories of German East Africa: Methodological problems

Without wanting to give a full account of historiography on German East Africa, it is clear that there are several relevant approaches – from accounts that were centred on the colonial state (as well as struggles and rebellions against the state) to works focussing on the cultural dimension of imperialism and finally accounts which have a narrow regional and/or thematic focus. It is easiest to distinguish the accounts according to the unit of enquiry that stands in the centre of the attention – the colonial state, the imperial metropole or particular African societies¹. The resulting differentiation between *statist*, *metropolist* and *localist* accounts is useful for me to grasp different approaches, though it should not be expected to do justice to the vast and growing body of works on German imperialism in general and German East Africa in particular, nor to histories of African societies. As will be shown below, selecting a particular gaze on state, metropole or a smaller-scale society usually entails the selection of particular type of sources – colonial records (*statist*), texts of popular culture (*metropolist*) or oral information (*localist*) would be the data most typically used as the point of departure for analysis and new insights. After discussing historiographical approaches and selection and interpretation of sources, I proceed to explain my understanding of development concepts and discuss the crucial aspect of time concepts.

1.1.1 Statist historiography

I group those narratives focussing on the colonial state, borrowing a term from the Indian historian Ranajit Guha (cf. Giblin / Monson 2010:12), as *statist historiography*. The fundamental premise of *statist historiography* is not that state authority is legitimate, but that “social change must involve the use of state resources and transformation of state power” (Giblin / Monson 2010:12). Divergent political perspectives, thwarting criticism and opposition towards the state are part of *statist historiography*, but by “substituting complex and sometimes contradictory history for one that is simplistic, they [...] tend to erase the stories and aspirations of common people, marginal ethnic and social groups, and women” (Sunseri 2000:568; cf. Wright 1968:629).

Classic state-oriented studies of German Colonialism such as those by Gilbert Gwassa (1969), John Iliffe (1969, 1979) and more recently Juhani Koponen's *Development for Exploitation* (1994) are accounts of a modernising Tanzanian state which focus on the imposition of colonial rule, state-building and African reactions to these efforts (for a more detailed list, cf. Zimmerman 2006:425-26). Contrary to other countries in Southern and Eastern Africa such as Malawi, Zimbabwe, Kenya

¹ I use the term society in the sense of “empirically verifiable clusters of interconnections among people” (Wolf 1997:18). A society in this sense is not automatically perceived as closed or having clear-cut boundaries to other societies, nor is it automatically assumed to be internally homogenous.

or Uganda, whose history is centred on few societies, the history of German East Africa theoretically has to take into account the responses of numerous small-scale societies which were exposed to different degrees of colonial pressure (cf. Gwassa 1969). This necessity of specific considerations leads to a dilemma: “The historian is therefore obliged either to restrict his study to a single society or group, or to fall back on broad generalisations, which can be illustrated only by local examples and which are rarely true of all parts of the country at any one time” (Iliffe 1969:142). Judging by his own dichotomy, Iliffe decided to fall back on broad generalisations, as did Juhani Koponen who found himself caught in a similar dilemma some 25 years later, writing about German colonial policies in mainland Tanzania. While Koponen was convinced that colonial activity was influenced by Africans “in dozens of more or less subtle ways” (Koponen 1994:37), he could hardly substantiate this claim and was criticized in a review for “overgeneraliz[ing] the impact of development on African societies and their transformation from collectivist to individualistic norms” (Spear 1996:1594). His perspective, it was established by the reviewers, is the perspective of German policy makers – which made him fail to acknowledge the variety of political arrangements that could be found in pre-colonial Tanganyika as well as the internal social dynamics that persisted in the colonial period (cf. Spear 1996)².

If local circumstances were paid attention to in state-centred histories, they served primarily as the background against which the narrative of European conquest and African resistance unfolded. As an example, Gilbert Gwassa (1969:121) concludes his highly diversified portrayal of resistance against colonialism by stating that instances of resistance in German East Africa can be presented as “diversified but continuous”, conjunct in their common denominators that they were “aimed at retaining independence from external domination” and that “they took place between and among different peoples of Tanzania.” The *Maji Maji*³ rebellion 1905-1907, as one of the most outstanding examples of inter-ethnic resistance against the colonial state in all of Africa, has been the most popular topic among historians of anti-colonial resistance in Tanzania. The interpretations of *Maji Maji* in the 1960s were, however, particularly “influenced by a broader interest in the transformation of the colonial regime into a sovereign state” (Giblin / Monson 2010:14). *Maji Maji* in state-oriented narratives thus appeared as a proto-nationalist movement, as a precursor to organized movements of the late 1940s and 1950s. In sum, state-oriented accounts revolve around the duality of state-imposed modernization and the affirmation of African anti-colonial struggles for the control of the state.

² To be fair, one needs to add that Koponen also published a book on precolonial forms of production in Tanzania (Koponen 1988), in which he paid much more attention to local perspectives.

³ Terms used which stem from other languages than English (Swahili, German, Bena, and Shambaa) are written in italics and in the most instances explained in the glossary.

Many historians' works after 1990 have challenged this version of German East Africa's history which has been informed through modernization theory (cf. Zimmerman 2006:425)⁴. The new approaches can be basically categorized in metropolist and localist approaches. What unifies them is that they lay increased emphasis on the cultural realm and most of them heavily draw on postcolonialist critiques of earlier historical writing. The analytical focus on political economy or rule and resistance in statist historiography has been replaced by a focus on issues such as identity, ideology, racism, memory and gender. Within the new approaches, however, there is a stark division concerning the methodologies that are employed.

1.1.2 Metropolist accounts

Colonies such as German East Africa have not been isolated islands of political autonomy. Part of their essence is that they are connected to a metropole and their very coming-into-existence is strongly related to interests in the metropole. The colonial metropole – a “term used to describe the geographic and symbolic seat of an empire’s power” (Harrison / Hughes 2010:235) – first and foremost relevant to my case studies is the German Empire. German East Africa's policies cannot meaningfully be researched without taking into account the rationale of the German Empire. With regards to the political economy, historians of German East Africa such as the already mentioned John Iliffe and Juhani Koponen have dealt with metropole interests sufficiently, as regards political and economic interests. The aspect that found less attention was the cultural dimension of imperialism – that is, for example, the way imperialism was represented in newspapers and advertisements or imperial discourses shaped the identity of citizens in the German nation-state. With the cultural turn in the social sciences, issues of representation and imagination became a prime interest for some researchers of imperialism and colonialism, and the analytical dichotomy of tradition and modernity built around the state was replaced by a focus on meaning with all its contradictions and ambivalences (Wirz 2003:19). Works focussing on the cultural dimension have been published especially in the 1990s and the first decade of this century (e.g. Becker 2004; Kundrus 2003; Naranch 2000; van Laack 2005⁵).

These meaning-centred accounts, written in the spirit of Edward Said's influential work *Orientalism* (Said 1978; cf. Naranch 2000:305), do not deny the reality of colonialism but put emphasis on the construction of the colonies as ideas in the minds of the colonisers in the same way that Said postulated the Orient as the construction of the West. In this view, the phenomenon of German

⁴ Zimmerman 2006 (pp. 425-426) provides a long list of accounts belonging to this body of works. A more detailed examination of accounts on German colonialism in Tanzania, written before 1994, can be found in Koponen 1994 (pp. 11-21). I restrain myself to few examples which are considered highly important in the historiography.

⁵ For a more comprehensive list, see Naranch 2000:333.

colonialism came into being through imaginations of the civilized Self and the inferior Other. Colonies, in these accounts, figure less as effect of power-capital formations but rather as “children of sentiment and imagination”⁶ (Kundrus 2004:7). The great attention paid to the dialectic relationship of Self and Other results also in a higher recognition of the mutual impacts between metropole and colony because German or European identity can only be constructed in relation to the Other – a role that was assigned to the colonised. Moreover, debates about colonial policies “were part of larger processes at work in Wilhelminian society directed at creating a modern German identity suitable to the nation's status as a world power and no longer a purely continental empire” (Naranch 2000:332; cf. Pfeifer 2012).

The construction of anthropological inferiority and cultural difference is meanwhile recognized as an essential element of colonial rule and its legitimization (Osterhammel 1995). In the formulation and discussion of (development) policies, the metropolist discourses play a central role and cannot be ignored.

As obvious as the benefits are the limitations of this approach concentrating on the metropole. While the metropolist perspective proves crucial to understand the cultural dimension of imperialism and “rationale” of colonialism in general, agency of the colonised can only take a marginal space in the analysis since the focus is on the *imagined* Other and not on actual agents, at least as far as the side of the colonised is concerned. It is for that reason that meaning-centred metropolist approaches often have little to say about particular colonies, not to speak of African societies or individuals⁷. The colonised remain projections and objects of imagination. In a way, this is not surprising – as the unit of enquiry is the metropole. The colonial myth of European agency and African passivity might get exposed, but remains unchallenged. For this end, one needs to turn to other works. The myth of African passivity has been challenged in statist narratives of resistance, as we have already seen. It is also challenged in works focussing on specific societies, people and regions within the colonies.

1.1.3 Localist historiography

Works belonging to the second strain of the new approaches employ a localist or regionalist perspective (the difference between local and regional being one of scale). For convenience, I shall simply talk of localist accounts here. A smaller-scale focus is not altogether new to the

⁶ The original quote reads “Kinder des Gefühls und der Phantasie”.

⁷ One of the very few examples in which the gaze is turned vice versa and Europeans are dealt with through Tanzanians' constructions is William Mjema's 1996 conference paper *Encounter Images in the Meeting Between Europe and Africa: the Tanzanian Experience: In the Genesis of a Political Culture*, which I could, unfortunately, not get hold of.

historiography of Tanzania and German East Africa; it has already been applied in earlier ethnohistories of the numerous Tanzanian societies. Ethnohistories of African societies have already been written by interested individuals throughout the first half of the twentieth century (Henige 1982:18). A prominent example is Mathias Mnyampala's *The Gogo. History, Customs and Traditions* which was originally published in 1954 (Mnyampala 1995[1954]). The Gogo are a semi-pastoral society in central Tanzania. Mnyampala emphasized in his ethnohistory of the Gogo the unity of this tribe, affirmed *maendeleo* (progress) that had been brought by British colonialism and stressed the need for further advancements of all peoples of Tanganyika. His work, as most other early ethnohistories written by Tanganyikans, was very much connected to the British policy of indirect rule which sought to reverse the harm German administration had supposedly done to precolonial “tribal cohesion” (cf. Maddox 1995).

In 1963, two years after Tanganyika had gained independence and one year before it united with Zanzibar to form Tanzania, the Department of History was installed at the newly founded University of Dar es Salaam where “historians had to work fast to produce a national history” (Kimambo 1996:244; cf. Saavedra Casco 2007:3). Little surprisingly, their emphasis was thus on precolonial history and the coincidental nation-building process in newly independent Tanzania. Historiography focussing on African agency during and resistance against colonialism was, in my terms, rather dealt with in statist than in localist terms.

Contrary to earlier academic ethnohistories of societies geographically situated in what is now Tanzania (Katoke 1970; Kimambo 1969), newer accounts take more note of interconnections with other societies (cf. Wolf 1997) and show eagerness not to reproduce elitist biases within the groups they study, largely due to the influence of Subaltern Studies. They can rightly be perceived as contributions to the on-going project of “provincializing Europe”, formulated by the Indian historian Dipesh Chakrabarty. Chakrabarty argued that a *construction* of Europe was implicitly part of all historical knowledge production. Even in the historical thinking of third-world countries, the idea of catching up with the West – the “transition narrative” – had a most powerful impact (Chakrabarty 2008:86-87). Historians are urged to de-centre the state and its modernization ventures to take back in those who were excluded in nationalist historiographies. In the case of Tanzania, it has been argued that nationalist historiography has neglected women, urban workers, rural populations and Muslims (cf. Giblin 2005:6).

US-American historian James Giblin took part in the project of “provincializing Europe” and came to write *A History of the Excluded* about the colonial generation of Njombe Region in Southern Tanzania. Here, he takes up Chakrabarty's suggestion to balance “analytic” (state-centred) and

“affective” (people-centred) narratives. A tension between the two is necessary, because analytical narratives “center on the critique of capitalism and its tendency towards universal dominance”, while affective narratives “explore the diversity of thought, belief and social relations and practices in the societies that have been incorporated into capitalism” (Giblin 2005:6). In his concern to balance affective, localized narratives with analytic, statist narratives of the past he reformulates John Iliffe's dilemma that the historian is obliged to choose between broad generalisations or the study of a single group. As already mentioned, the emphasis in the newer localist accounts is on the study of particular social groups or even individual's experiences. The period of German colonialism mostly figures but as fraction of the narrative. German colonialism may have been perceived and remembered only in the wider context of on-going warfare and suffering from the 1860s until 1918, as in the accounts of residents of Njombe in Southern Tanzania (Giblin 2005:28; cf. Laurien 1995). The advent of colonialism as well as the gaining of independence thus cannot be assumed as ground-breaking events if the focus lay on specific regions and people.

Consequently, periodisation – a main task for the historian – must take note of specific events and perceptions in the region and society under scrutiny if it is not to turn into a “means of silencing” (Depelchin 2005:15; cf. Giblin / Maddox 1996:6). The convenient and popularly used division of African history into precolonial, colonial and postcolonial periods conceals continuities and ruptures that may have been much more decisive, or have been perceived as more crucial in particular circumstances (cf. Cooper 2002). Although the advent of German colonialism seems to be a major watershed of Tanzania's history, the unevenness of colonial conquest and rule meant that the coming of Europeans might have been an event of no consequence, or no event at all (Henige 1982:35) – some interior regions “belonging” to the territory of German East Africa felt almost no impact until 1904, two decades after German conquest had begun on the East African coast. It was criticized as a “major weakness of Tanzanian resistance historiography [...] that it takes the German invasion as a base point, without perceiving that the European conquest was often only the last of a series of disrupting military incursion” (Larson cited in Monson 1998:99). James Giblin, arguing that “[f]rom the perspective of the villagers [of Njombe in Southern Tanzania], warfare after 1890 must have appeared little different from earlier conflicts, even though it now involved Europeans” (Giblin 2005:28), periodised his work about the people from Njombe in Southern Tanzania into an era of warfare and insecurity (1860-1930s), an era of personal accomplishment (1930s-1950s) and the transitory period towards the postcolonial government (1950s-1960s).

But not only chronology was a bone of contention; spatial boundaries and units of enquiry, too, shifted. In a volume on the relationship of ecology and culture in Tanzania, focussing on “the

initiatives taken by rural societies to transform themselves” (Giblin / Maddox 1996:1), questions of social change in precolonial, colonial and postcolonial are treated not as national, but as local affairs. Another historian, Terence Ranger, remembers how his research on competitive dance societies on the East African coast (Ranger 1975) was perceived as dealing with a subject that “seemed very odd to most of my colleagues” (Ranger 2000:1) at the University of Dar es Salaam in the first half of the 1970s. Odd it was because of the focus on a cultural element of social life when everybody in Dar es Salaam was writing about political and economic themes (Kimambo 1996:247), but also because of the geographical focus. His treatment of the dance societies crossed the boundaries drawn by colonial powers, dealing with events in German East Africa cum Tanganyika, British East Africa, Nyasaland, and the Rhodesias. He thus subverted the self-evidence of national, postcolonial boundaries. Ranger's methodology was very much against the mainstream then (cf. Ranger 2000:1), but the questioning of national boundaries and periodisation anchored in colonialism has become very prominent within the more recent localist works. Some accounts have also called into question the dichotomy of coloniser vs. colonised (cf. Cooper 1994) and sought to overcome this analytical dead end. The unit of enquiry is at times a collective, a social group; at times it may also be individuals. Examples in which aspects of identity are thoroughly explored from non-German perspectives have mainly dealt with people whose social location is fluent and in-between established collective protagonists, e.g. African soldiers recruited in the German armies, also called *askaris* (Moyd 2010), or the mission-educated intellectual Martin Ganyisha (Becher 2003).

1.1.4 A multitude of voices

A couple of conclusions can be drawn from this simplified overview of the historiography that is relevant to my work. The history of German East Africa is not one narrative, but many. The classic statist as well as the more recent metropolist, meaning-centred accounts deal with (and expose) German colonial perspectives. Many are suitable to get insights into the rationale of colonial actors and an overview of macro-factors that have been decisive in triggering uprisings and rebellions, especially if they were as widespread the *Maji Maji* rebellion 1905-1907. Concerning the agency and motives of non-colonial actors, statist works must, however, remain speculative and generalising. The same is true for the metropolist accounts whose value is the analysis of the cultural hegemony of imperialism and racist patterns of meaning in the discourses (cf. Faschingeder 2003:12-16; 25-26). Localist approaches, on the other hand, are valuable exactly in recovering silenced motives and the agency of Africans, especially of the disadvantaged ones – e.g., women, migrant workers or slaves. Aware of the particularity of localist accounts, some authors articulate

their results with those of statist narratives. Related to the articulation of statist and localist is that *intermediaries* are increasingly recognized as decisive agents in colonial rule. These intermediaries like clerks (Eckert 2003), mission-educated messengers (Giblin / Monson 2010) or African soldiers in the German military troops (Moyd 2010) do not fit neatly into the coloniser-colonised dichotomy. They are “cultural brokers” (Wirz 2003:18) in the interstices and overlappings of cultural realms. In my undertaking – looking for development concepts in German East Africa – I choose a thematic specification which is not bound to a certain region or group. Since the statist and metropolist perspectives of development have been thoroughly researched, I will utilize a multi-local perspective, looking for development concepts of intermediaries and individuals or groups in African societies. Following Chakrabarty, the “affective” approach needs to be balanced with state-centred narratives – lest we forget that we deal with a period of imposed rule and colonial violence. How to get to excluded and side-lined voices and agency is the question that I will turn to in the following chapter. It is a question that concerns the selection and interpretation of sources.

1.2 Sources: Colonial archives, oral history and poems

This section consists of “what Westerns historians would consider 'footnote material'” (Price 1983:10), meaning a discussion of sources. As I will deal with a variety of different sources, all with their own benefits and limitations, a detailed examination of their respective character is of paramount importance. The distinction that I have drawn between statist, metropolist and localist historiographies on grounds of their methodology is reflected in the selection and utilization of sources. Statist historians such as John Iliffe and Juhani Koponen have dug deeply into colonial archives both in Tanzania and Germany and are surely the most eminent experts on colonial sources. Official and semi-official publications, ordinances, letters exchanged between colonial administrators, legal texts and court records constitute the bulk of the material which serves as the fundament of statist historiography. They are further supplemented by missionary records, retrospective colonial literature and memoirs as well as *Reichstag* (German Parliament) debates (cf. Koponen 1994:33).

Metropolist accounts establish their main data base in colonial and metropole records too, but pay specific attention to novels, newspapers, advertisements, memoirs, travel accounts, scientific pamphlets – basically all kinds of written texts and printed images that constituted the discourse at the respective time. Meaning-centred accounts deal with German perspectives largely because they have relied on the vast materials available that exhibit the cultural dimension of imperialism and colonial rule. These works (e.g. Kundrus 2004, Becker 2004) analyse and interpret discourses *about*

the colonised, and while some authors stress the importance of local factors in the colonies to which colonial discourses had to be adapted, particular circumstances and the colonised's perspectives play but a minor and insignificant role.

Early, non-academic “literate ethnohistories” (van Binsbergen cited in Maddox 1995:4) are to a large extent based on oral traditions and ethnographies (Maddox 1995:4). The same is valid for later, scientifically sanctioned ethnohistories and localist accounts, though these additionally make wider use of European travel accounts, ethnographies and missionary records. Particularly relevant to me is the question of what this means for getting at development concepts from non-state perspectives.

1.2.1 Colonial records and missionary records

John Iliffe's perception of a dichotomy between broadly generalising historiography versus localized narratives was also justified by a lack of sources to do justice for the latter. Juhani Koponen found in the sources he used an

obvious structural problem: they are composed by Europeans and see events from a European standpoint. They do indeed tell of Africans and their activities, but indirectly and not too reliably. Very little material composed by Africans themselves and bearing on the issues central to this study has survived. Letters and other material by African leaders do not appear in the records until the period between the wars. [...] In the second place, when the sources deal with African activity, either their compilers were outsiders in relation to the societies they described and easily made mistakes in their ignorance and misunderstanding of local realities [...] or oral information is transmitted through several intermediaries.

(Koponen 1994:34-35)

I will return to the issue of oral information at length below. Of interest here is how “European” sources might still be used to get information on perceptions and activities of people who did not themselves create these accounts. For the level of actions, even colonial and missionary accounts can yield rich information.

Subaltern agency in colonial records

Owing to the colonial state's constant fear of rebellion and subverting elements, especially after the experience of the *Maji Maji* rebellion, German and British colonial officials were keen to keep an eye on people's movements. Moreover, when the British took over the German East Africa after World War I, they were especially conspicuous of individuals or groups who seemed to retain loyalty to the Germans. Concerning the spread of dance associations, it was reported in 1919:

Wherever trading and administrative centres were populous enough a branch of the Marine [dance association] generally started. Frequently the Arnoti [another dance association] followed the lead of the Marine [...] Branches of both these bands are found in all the large centres from Bukoba to Lindi.

(British colonial record from 1919, cited in Ranger 1975:42)

It has to be noted that these dance associations had not been directly attached to German institutions, but rather arose from a precolonial coastal tradition and made use of more recent symbolisms and practices, some of which had come with the Europeans (uniforms, military drill, rank titles such as “Kaiser” and “Bismarck”). The account shows the widespread and the competitive nature of the dance competitions. In connection with other accounts, and oral information, *beni*’s historian Terence Ranger could safely state that the diffusion into the interior had taken place during the German colonial period. The subversive nature of the organisation was obvious in another account from the Political Officer of the coastal town Lindi who “alleged that African soldiers and policemen in Lindi paid improper respect to civilian members of Beni, saluting them and even accepting punishment at their orders” (Ranger 1975:61-62). The record exposes the colonial interest in understanding the dance association only in order to stabilize rule. While outward appearance and spread of the dance societies, as well as their threatening nature towards colonial power structures can be derived from colonial accounts, the actual benefits and meanings the members drew from the *beni ngoma* had to be established through gathering oral accounts and interpretations of *beni* songs whose lyrics were recorded by Europeans.

Subaltern voices in colonial records

Some documents in colonial records actually were composed by people who are not European. In December 1913, the Swahili overseer of a German plantation wrote – while the German plantation director was absent – to the district branch pleading for permission to advance food rations to the workers:

Please Herr Councillor, I'm writing to inform you of the people of Herr Ingalls who are very hungry, they don't have food, they don't have the energy to work.... Herr Ingalls will be mad when he doesn't see any good work done.

(Abu Omar, as cited and translated in Sunseri 1993:504)

Four different actors are visible Abu Omar's letter to the district branch. First, the councillor whom Abu Omar addresses to be granted permission he would usually get from the director of the plantation. Second, “the people of Herr Ingalls”, meaning the plantation workers. As the

formulation implies they are perceived as belonging to Herr Ingalls, pointing to a relation of ownership or at least dependency, since the workers have no food at their own disposal. Third, the Swahili overseer Abu Omar himself can safely be qualified as capable of writing, thus being in a privileged position towards the workers. Taking into account various strategies of plantation workers' resistance and means at their disposal to claim their right (cf. Sunseri 1993; Palmer 1986), writing the letter was probably Abu Omar's response to the workers' demands he could not fulfil himself or feared taking the responsibility for it. The language in which he couches his request is adapted to the logic of the district officer and Director Ingall. Abu Omar does not recur on a needs-based approach, asserting that people need food to survive. Rather, he thinks it is more successful to justify their need for food by mentioning their incapability to work if they are hungry. Herr Ingalls, the fourth actor in the constellation, emerges as a hot-tempered planter mainly concerned with "good work done" and disinterested in his workers' well-being. Mentioning the doldrums that Ingall will have when he returns without finding good work done also gives a clue that Ingall might have been regarded as influential in administrative circles.

I have deliberately chosen an example for a source which is rich and invites many a conclusion, but is ambivalent enough to invite conclusions that cannot be more than fairly reasonable speculations – which can be substantiated by cross-checking with other relevant accounts. In this case, one finds hints at complex power relations. The workers made their overseer write to the district councillor, and the planter is an influential element in administrative circles. In going through historical accounts of German East Africa, I had the impression that speculating – with good reasons, of course, such as theoretical innovation – was often used. Concerning the quote above, Thaddeus Sunseri has used it not in a way similar to any of the interpretations I indicated; though reading colonial sources "against the grain" is one of his trademarks (Giblin 2002). Instead, he utilized the letter merely as an argument supporting his statement that "[l]iving conditions could be harsh on German plantations" (Sunseri 1993:503). In another article, the same author is more daring to speculate – but here, he bases his claim on an oral tradition.

1.2.2 Oral information

The line "She is mad, she wants to disperse the homestead" (Shorter 1972 cited in Sunseri 1998:559), stemming from a men's song of the Kimbu linguistic group, is interpreted by Thaddeus Sunseri as a "suggestion of gender opposition between men's concentrated villages and women's dispersed villages" (Sunseri 1998:559). While he finds other evidence to substantiate the claim that centralised villages broke up, the gendered dimension of the dispersement is backed up by "anecdotal evidence" (Sunseri 1998:571). Most important is that the new aspect of a gender

division in village and labour patterns comes from the oral tradition and the new aspect is then used to interpret other sources accordingly. We will encounter a similar pattern of village dispersement in the German colonial period in chapter five.

But oral accounts have received much more attention than just as points of departure for hypotheses. Recognition of oral accounts in the historical discipline was spurred by Jan Vansina's seminal work *Oral Tradition as History*, first published in 1961 (cf. Saavedra Casco 2007:3). Vansina's main argument was that, given the proper methodological treatment and possibilities of cross-checking, oral sources are just as valid and truthful as written sources and, despite their shortcomings, fit for historical reconstruction⁸ (Vansina 1985:199). He discriminated between oral traditions as submitted from earlier generations and oral history, which is concerned with contemporary issues. Since the 1960s, many scholars have refined and criticized Vansina's methods. Three aspects are relevant to me here: first, the “impurity” of oral information; second, biases in the collection of oral information and oral traditions themselves; and third, the necessity of historical and political contextualization. In short, I would like to illustrate that oral information is neither purely “African” nor uninfluenced from writings; that there have been highly influential biases involved in the collection of oral information and that the context of when the information was recorded must be paid attention to.

Mutual influences of written and oral information

Oral testimonies cannot be cherished as a pure sources untouched by outward and written traditions. As oral historian David Henige states in round terms, “[u]ncontaminated oral tradition simply does not exist any more” (Henige 1982:85). Cases in which oral sources have evolved independently constitute but a rare exception to the rule. Using the case of oral testimony on the *Maji Maji* rebellion of 1905-07, it has been shown that African circuits of oral testimony and information gathering were subject to German influence just as German documentation heavily relied on messages received from African informants (Giblin / Monson 2010:21-22). Rumours circulated readily already during the rebellion and turned into standard stories. The initial division of African and European perspectives does not hold here – neither are the oral accounts purely African nor have German records evolved without Africans' influence.

⁸ A report from a conference on oral history in 1968 at the University of Dar es Salaam stresses that Vansina's methodology was not appropriate for research in Tanzania: “It was felt – by those members familiar with the work [of Jan Vansina] – that in Tanzania at least traditions were neither rich enough nor formal enough to offer much scope for the highly sophisticated analysis of traditions and their variants proposed by Vansina.” (Roberts 1968:9)

Historian Jamie Monson uses the idea of collective memory⁹, a memory which exists in orality but has been influenced through the advent of writing. She maintains in a discussion of German recordings of collective pasts in Tanzania since the 1890s that “[o]ral and written traditions have interacted with one another in a context that privileges the written” (Monson 2000:350). The task of the historian, according to her, is to establish how African societies related to their memories in different contexts. These memories also refer to patterns of social change, as will be shown in chapter five.

Much of the methodological debate on oral sources has thus, as Luise White critically remarks, less dealt with issues of interpretation and “rather tried to establish the authority of the speakers” (White 2001:283). Letting Africans speak for themselves has seemed to be the main agenda of oral historiography and it is no coincidence that most of the books published in the series “African Sources for African History” (e.g., Bender 2003) have relied on oral accounts. White elaborates her criticism by arguing that oral information in general may not be fit to give us a picture of “what really happened.” Using oral history for historiographical purposes may, she says, “be making greater demands on source material than source material can bear” (White 2001:299) since it can hardly be labelled true or false – contradicting Vansina's core argument that oral sources are (potentially) as good as written sources. Other scholars similarly reject the usefulness of oral testimonies, saying that they are not recordings but representations of the past (Glassman 2011:xi). In the scope of this work it is impossible to further engage in this methodological discussion, but I feel that neither the “contamination” of oral accounts nor their shortcomings for the end of creating histories of “what actually happened” pose great obstacles. As Henige (1982:87) aptly put it, “inaccurate recollections of the past can be more interesting than simple facts in that they help to penetrate to the collective mentality of a society.” If other sources confirm that the collective mentality was present during colonial times as well, oral information is very valuable. A desirable side-effect of using oral information is that non-academic representations of history also get a hearing. All that needs to be done is to continuously discriminate between representation and fact and indicate where interpretations might have entered the accounts of past events.

Biases in collecting oral information

In general, all historians “add” to sources – they select, interpret and contextualize sources. But contrary to historians digging through archives and archaeologists digging through the soil, oral historians “are among the greatest of adders since virtually none of the data they use are accessible

⁹ The concept of collective memory was originally brought forward by B. Jewsiewicki and V.Y. Mudimbe.

before their research” (Henige 1982:1). The material does not yet exist. Together with their informants, oral historians are responsible for *producing* the source in a particular context – the term “collecting information” conceals this active, productive aspect of research in oral history.

If colonial records expose but the white male colonial official's view, a similar criticism of particularity may be levied against much of the oral accounts collected. The Tanzanian historian Israel Katoke (1975) wrote a history of the Abanyambo in North Western Tanzania which was mainly based on oral traditions. The informants he had consulted were members of the royal Bakama lineage, court officials or their descendants as well as respected clan elders – all of whom held privileged positions in their society. The history that Katoke wrote was, little surprisingly, elitist history with narratives of kings (and queens) including stark idealizations of royal rule.

Terence Ranger (1975:167-170) added to his ground-breaking work *Dance and Society in Eastern Africa*, a central source for my chapter concerned with dance associations, an appendix in which he reflected on the gender bias of his research. Just when he had finished the collection (and production) of oral materials he realized that he had not interviewed a single woman. Later, going through the interviews his students had conducted in other regions, he found that they too had not consulted women as informants either. His initial conclusion “that we had all been directed to male informants because Beni was a male affair” (Ranger 1975:167) proved wrong when he stumbled upon the research work of a colleague, Margaret Strobel, who had investigated the same topic of competitive dance societies, but unlike himself had deliberately chosen to interview only women. She found a particular female perspective on the dance societies, which Ranger had failed to see because of his male bias. Thus, the colonial bias to see only men as rulers, experts and agents of change was further sustained by practices of oral historians (cf. Shetler 2002:421, Shetler 2003:5).

The same is true of Steven Feierman, on whose works the chapter on the political discourse of the Shambaa peasants is based (chapter two). For his history of the Shambaa kingdom, Feierman went around the villages to record oral narratives which were traditionally passed down from men to their sons and grandsons. He made a survey of landholdings questioning 135 men and not a single woman, and enquired into the aspirations of men, but not of women (Feierman 1974:11, 27, 31). While the male anthropologist was doing his fieldwork, his wife Elizabeth – as Steven Feierman recalls in the preface – “carried countless gourds of water and built innumerable cooking fires” at their native-style homestead in a Shambaa village (Feierman 1974:X). Of Elizabeth Feierman's interactions with women, the reader gets to know nothing.

Biases of the researchers are further aggravated through a tendency in oral traditions (less so in testimonies and eyewitness accounts) to transmit only consensus, not the voices of intellectual

rebellion (Hountondji 1996:x). I have to admit from the outset that I was unable to “correct” the male bias, for this task would have required either an extensive focus on the issue of gender relations or the production of new data. My efforts here are confined to the transparent display of shortcomings in the sources wherever I felt it was worth mentioning and the exposure of male biases in the discourses. Naturally, this course of action evokes more questions than it can give answers.

Historicizing and politicizing oral information

The investigation into the German colonial period by means of using oral sources is no less mediated than through written sources, and certainly no less politically charged since (perceived) expertise of history was tapped by German and especial British colonial agents as a matter of solving local disputes and installing indirect rule. Colonialism valued eloquent informants on history and it is this aspect of colonial interest which added another dimension to the politicization of historical knowledge, as the “*appearance of expertise*” (Henige 1982:78; emphasis added) would highly contribute to the individual's position of power.

The contextualization of oral information – when it was acquired, by whom, in what interview setting, in which cultural and linguistic form – forms part and parcel of source criticism. As Vansina emphasized, oral information is always a statement of the past *and* the present; with the relevance of the present always above the “historical aim” (Vansina 1985:xii, 92). Embedding the source in historical change and power relations remains equally relevant for oral information acquired after Tanzania's independence.

Two brief examples should suffice to illustrate how politics and oral history influenced each other.

Let us take a look at testimonies about the *Maji Maji* war, the famous large-scale, interethnic uprising against German colonial rule which lasted from 1905-1907. In some regions of Southern Tanzania, warfare definitely did not arrive and a good share of the diverse populations deliberately chose not to take part in the rebellion. Continued insecurity and warfare in the region since the 1850s helps to understand this cautious behaviour. Still, decades later and with more distance to the event, informants asked about their parents' or grandparents' experience during the war may have claimed their ancestors' participation in *Maji Maji*. This claim arose mainly due to the fact that *Maji Maji* had meanwhile become a major component of nation-building narratives and was portrayed as the first nationalist rising; *Maji Maji* was thus an integral part of the nation's self-image and informants were at pains to stress their forebears' involvement in the rebellion (Giblin / Monson 2010:23; cf. Laurien 1995:353).

In a second example, we see the downside of imperatives of heroism in history. Oral historians Jamie Monson was told by Ndamba elders in 1999 “that their people had no history because they were not warriors and did not conquer any other people” (Monson 2000:351). Both reactions – a strive to incorporate own histories into nationalist narratives and the feeling of exclusion if the own narratives do not correspond to tales of conquest and resistance – are two sides of the same coin.

1.2.3 Poems as historical sources

A kind of source which I will pay particular attention to are poems. Poems have been an essential element of Swahili literary traditions both oral and written for centuries (cf. Saavedra Casco 2007:19-97), long before Carl Peters and his companions paved the way for German rule in East Africa. Still, questions of authenticity and mediation are no less virulent with Swahili poems than they are with colonial records and oral accounts. John Iliffe simply dismissed Swahili poems concerned with German rule as “generally worthless eulogies” of people under German patronage (Iliffe 1979:234). The dismissal in its most radical version went as far as to denote the Swahili poets during the German colonial period as “bootlickers” (Kezilahabi 1973 cited in Mieke et al. 2002:87), as individuals belonging to the ruling class and betraying the feelings of the Swahili people. More recently, the poems have received more careful scrutiny by scholars who perceive them as “a unique body of historical evidence, portraying key events in a manner as seen from the perspective of the Swahili people [...] offering a distinctive, indigenous representation of the past” (Saavedra Casco 2007:1; cf. Mieke et al. 2002:87-97). Just as the new historicism school of literary criticism proposes, the texts are examined in relation to the sociocultural context of their production. New historicism also means to recognize the ambiguous character of “the textuality of history and the historicity of texts” (Montrose cited in Burtscher-Bechter 2004:271, cf. Henige 1988:230). The fixed boundary of fictional and historical narratives, which has been debated concerning oral history, similarly dissolves if we perceive history as preserved in carefully composed texts, no matter if written or oral. What is lost is once more the struggle to reconstruct history in the sense of events as they have taken place; what is won in such a perspective is that the poems can doubtlessly be considered rich *representations* of the past with their own substantial meanings including norms and values (Saavedra Casco 2007:5, 11). In this sense, they are valid sources not only for scholars of literature but also for social sciences and the humanities.

The hybrid nature of Swahili poetry

If oral sources and written sources cannot be seen to have evolved without influencing each other, the constructed difference of orality and literacy is particularly futile when dealing with Swahili

poems. In their content, they changed from Islamic contents to also include secular themes – as in the historiographical poems about German colonial wars and rule. Originally preserved by oral transmission, a few of them were written down in manuscripts from the 1850s onwards (Saavedra Casco 2007:9-10). Both traditions, oral and written, continued to coexist and to have impacts on each other. When interested European scholars began showing interest in the poems, they not only collected them from oral sources, but also specifically requested poets to submit or even write poems (Miehe et al. 2002:95). Carl Velten, German scholar and professor for Swahili at the Seminar of Oriental Languages in Berlin, was probably the most eager collector of Swahili poetry during the period of German colonial rule and published several teaching materials and dictionaries. He mentions the difficulties he had in obtaining the accounts he desired, since the coastal people distrusted all Germans and did initially not want to freely share their knowledge with the German outsiders and conquerors (Velten 1898:IX-X). Notably, a large coastal uprising against German rule some years earlier (1888-1889) had been violently suppressed, being the major cause of distrust and resentment. Still, as time passed and local elites had carved out a privileged position within the colonial administration system, some poets readily began submitting their works. German rule and conquest, as we will see, figure very prominently in some of these historiographical poems and are object to both praise and criticism. From these indigenous representations of the past it is also possible to abstract development concepts.

Methodological considerations

Jose Arturo Saavedra Casco (2007:105-108) has proposed five principles that should be observed when dealing with Swahili poems as historical sources. First, the poems should be taken as whole documents. Isolating bits and pieces distorts the narrative, especially when the author has decided to portray different perspectives – as in the case of Abdul Karim bin Jamaldini's poetical account of the *Maji Maji* war which was often misinterpreted to be anti-colonial. In fact, the sections seen as anti-colonial depict the perspective of the rebels, but clearly not the author's position. Arguably, I will isolate bits and pieces of the narrative instead of dealing with each poem individually and at length, yet I strove to carefully choose these bits and pieces so as not to obscure the intention of the author. Second, the poems are to be considered as representations of the past. Their merit is not the description of actual events but the cosmology and values used to depict the past and make the events (which were known to everybody in the colony) comprehensible. Third, the life and social background of the poets has to be considered. This will lead to a better understanding of the motivation to write the poem. Fourth, the historical context of the period should be examined. The events and names mentioned in the poem need to be known to the researcher. This step is very

similar to the general literature survey one has to do in any historical work. Fifth, Saavedra Casco urges scholars to re-examine the originals in Arabic script (but Swahili language) and investigate the process of compiling, editing and publishing the poem. With the exception of the last step, being too time-intensive for the scale of this work, I strove to follow his recommendations.

1.2.4 Where to find development concepts?

A good deal of my analysis will not be based on primary sources, but on secondary sources. This, I believe, makes it even more necessary to be aware of the limitations of each kind of source and the contexts they were produced in. Wimmer (2004:97-98) maintains that orally transmitted proverbs and dance figures might also embody forms of philosophical knowledge, though the translation of the latter into the academically recognized form of a written text would be a difficult procedure. In the chapter on *beni ngoma* dance societies, dance movements are interpreted as embodying modernity. In the chapter concerned with peasants from Ubona going to the coast for migrant labour, I will use praise-names to get to know something of the people's perspective on change through labour migration and which moral imperatives served to ensure that labour migration be successful.

Where I deal with primary sources, the methodological considerations brought forward by Jose Arturo Saavedra Casco concerning Swahili historiographical poetry can be generalized for written sources and (written versions of) oral information too. They are to be studied in their full extent, since I am interested in development concepts. The complexity of representations of social change can hardly be abstracted from one isolated sentence. I am also not primarily looking for “facts”, that is, how things actually were, but how they were perceived and represented. The sources are valuable to me as representations of teleologies (if there are any), of the past, of the present, of the future and how these levels are related to each other. To properly understand the representations, I also need to consider the social context as well as the personal background of the authors and informants. Awareness of the biases (especially the male and elitist biases) should help me not to reproduce exclusionary effects, though I have to admit once again that I failed to achieve gender balance in this work due to my inability to find enough sources commenting on women's perceptions. Lastly, it has become obvious in the above that all types of sources complement each other and an articulation of whatever I can get hold of serves to give a fuller, more complex picture of the past. Having dealt at length with *where* I want to find development concepts, I proceed to explain *what* I understand under the term of development concept.

1.3 Development concepts and indigenous systems of thought

The following section shall the conceptual framework of the research. This is, first, a generic definition of the central term “development concept” in a threefold form which should allow to include non-Western and non-academic cognitive patterns of social change and differences between groups (1.3.1). The subsequent section seeks to show how this framework can be applied (1.3.2). My approach, with its focus on discourses and meanings, needs to be embedded in a particular historical context lest we forget the power relations in colonial settings and the violence they entailed (1.3.3). I will make use of a characterisation of colonial violence by Achille Mbembe. My approach is furthermore subject to problems of intercultural interpretation and simplification of complex realities (1.3.4). The debate about African concepts of time, highly relevant for my topic, further exemplifies the problems I see to my analytical framework and methods to counter these problems (1.3.5). After discussing the challenges to my approach, I proceed to explain to whom the title – mentioning peasants, poets and dancers – refers (1.3.6). Finally, in section 1.4, I will situate my work in relation to current academic publications in the field and state my specific objectives.

1.3.1 Development concepts

The term development and its myriad of definitions have been subject to continued debates and a vast amount of criticism. As it is the central term in this work and very much guides what I see in the sources, it is important to clarify my understanding and use of the term *development concept*. As in my rough delineation of historiographical approaches and source categories which are relevant to my topic, the following examination of the term development should not be mistaken for an exhaustive account of how the term evolved and which functions it has come to serve. Rather, the focus is once more restricted to relevant aspects to which I will return to in the course of this work.

In lieu of calls demanding the term (and project) development be abandoned (Sachs 1995, Esteva 1995, Escobar 1995:19), it continues to enjoy wide popularity and is most frequently used in the academia, including development studies, as well as in public debates. One way to make it fertile for this work is to seek a generic definition of it (cf. Himmelstrand 1997).

Development implies a favourable change from worse to better, or advancement towards a desirable goal (Esteva 1995:10). It is better, in this general definition, not to give any further details of what “desirable” might mean, for this normative aspect is historically contingent and socially constructed. What needs to be added is that the advancement (or regress) must relate to a social unit like a society, a community, or a certain group

Concepts of development then try to make sense of how this advancement was possible, how the

advancement can be recognized and how it can be pursued in future (cf. Fischer / Hödl / Sievers 2008:12). I propose that development concepts can be seen threefold as describing a *process*, a *difference* and a *strategy*. Each of these meanings carries a major function. Development as a process is mainly *descriptive*, development as difference is above all *normative* and development as strategy is first and foremost *prescriptive*. Taking examples from four main schools of development theories (modernisation theory, dependency theory, neoliberal theory, post-development) and colonial concepts of development, I intend to illustrate that the analytical distinction between these different meanings and functions of development concepts is a way to find them not only in colonial records, but also in Africans' oral accounts or Swahili poems from the German colonial period. The approach here is explicitly non-comparative, for it would be futile to compare explicit theoretical thought from highly specialized academics with non-scientific folk systems of thought (cf. Wiredu 1980:37-50).

Development as process

As a *process*, the term development originally – in the 18th century – designated biological processes of natural growth (Esteva 1995:8). Later it came to be used for social and historical processes as well, following the influential teachings of Charles Darwin, Herbert Spencer and Karl Marx. In modernisation theory, e.g. Walt Rostow's *The Stages of Economic Growth*, development denoted the process of progressing from the initial stage of a traditional society over an economic “take-off” to the last stage of mass consumption (Rostow 2008[1960]). In any way, the meaning of development if used as a process is predominantly *descriptive*, describing social change from the past to the present. On the basis of this description, there is also a predictive element which may lead to further political implications (see 1.3.3.3, *Development as strategy*). Karl Marx saw the antagonism of classes ultimately leading to communism, Rostow held development of any society to result in mass consumption. The descriptive term can further be operationalised to differentiate between societies at different stages of development – developed countries and developing countries, for instance (cf. 1.3.3.2, *Development as difference*). Moreover, stating that a development concept is descriptive does by no means preclude strong normative components. Rostow made the political aspects of his descriptive theory clearly visible in the subtitle: The scientific work was to serve as *A Non-communist Manifesto* in the USA's struggle for global hegemony against the Soviet Union.

Scholars with a Marxist background challenged the assumption that being on different stages merely reflected differing degrees of success in climbing the development ladder. The underdevelopment of much of Africa, Latin America and Asia was, they claimed, a *result* of the

development of Western capitalism which expanded all over the globe, incorporating other countries only as periphery with no chance to ever catch up with the powerful centre if they were to remain within this system of international relations (e.g. Frank 2008[1966]; Amin 1975). Amartya Sen tried to save the development concept from being confined in terms of politics and economy and defined it very broadly as “the *process to extend* human freedom” (Sen 2008[1999]:281, emphasis added). In this work, the closest we come to an explicit descriptive concept of development are political conceptions of the Shambaa (Chapter 2) in which the state of the land corresponds to a configuration of kinship and power relations. In a configuration of power struggles within the ruling group, there is warfare and famine, while in another specified situation of clear dominance of the king, there is peace and abundance. The state of the land is determined by the ruler's political sovereignty. The different stages of harmed land and healed land are supposed to follow each other in a cycle. This view coexists with linear conceptions of time.

In chapter five, the common framework for narratives of conflict, migration and settlement is also interpreted as a descriptive scheme for development, a change of the state of social well-being.

Development as difference

As *difference*, development or underdevelopment describes the current situation of a social entity in regard to another group. The state of affairs is the process as frozen image, abstracted from its dynamic temporal aspect, visible for instance in Rostow's different stages. Hakan Gürses (2003:8-11) has pointed out that the term *culture* in our language(s) carries the function to indicate difference. Culture inevitably signifies difference between individuals, social groups, countries or continents. Development has a similar function. Like culture, the term development evokes a grid that can be put on the world map and makes visible areas of differing degrees of development, in the most simple “optic” this would be the juxtaposition of First World and Third World, developed and developing countries. The difference in development is hierarchised (cf. Escobar 1995), most visibly in development rankings from the World Bank or the Human Development Index. Owing to the predominant aspect of judging on the basis of certain criteria, I consider the main function in the meaning of development as state of affairs as *normative*.

Concepts of superior culture and civilization are always centrist, setting the own ideals as standard and judging others on own terms. Examples from ancient Greece or China or the writings of Ibn Kaldun, all of which describe the savage Other in contrast to the civilized Self, illustrate that the idea of a superior civilization is not confined to the modern West, though arguably European practices of colonialism since the 15th century gave normative concepts of development a special,

elevated role. Wimmer's differentiation of *separative*, *expansive* and *integrative* centrisms is useful in this regard. A separative centrism avoids any claims to universality. Integrative centrism similarly. Only the expansive centrism actively promotes its values and norms. The civilizing mission of European nations is conceivable only through the expansive character of the cultural centrism in the imperialist age. (Wimmer 2006:4)

During the era of German colonialism, a fundamental divide was made between peoples having or not having *Kultur* (culture). Those peoples lacking culture were called *Naturvölker* (nature peoples), in opposition to the civilized peoples, *Kulturvölker* (Zimmerman 2006:433; cf. Naranch 2000). At times, being assigned to nature meant to be excluded from humanity: “For the proper understanding of the savage African, one must not look on him as a human being, but as a rather superior kind of animal” (Stigand 1913 cited in Mazrui / Shariff 1994:30).

What distinguishes developmental difference from cultural or “racial”¹⁰ difference is the aspect of non-fatality. While cultural and “racial” differences are seen as static and unchanging, the recognition of a developmental difference implies that the backwardness and lack of certain qualities can theoretically be overcome – the path from *Naturvolk* to *Kulturvolk*, from barbarity to civilization was deemed possible under the guidance of the colonisers¹¹. Indeed, this aspect constituted a central contradiction of twentieth century colonial rule (cf. Cooper 2002:73-75; Pesek 2005:28) and the collapse of the ideology significantly contributed to decolonisation pressures and processes. The colonised, in this rationale, were to be civilized following the example of the coloniser without putting in jeopardy the self-evidence of white rule. It were then the “new men”, educated elites and “men of improvement” (Iliffe 1969) who most clearly felt and challenged colonial colour bars in their political and economic aspirations. The difference was seen as one to be overcome, and the obstacle was not cultural or “racial” difference but oppressive rule.

My distinction here is not meant to say that perceived differences in development should be seen as isolated from racialist and culturalist discourses. Quite the opposite, I hold that there are profound parallels and mutual justifications between these ideologems. As Kothari (2006:11) states, Enlightenment accounts would ground distinctions and social inequalities between people (including developmental difference, I might add) in biological, read racial, characteristics. By the 1940s, colonial vocabularies had substituted discussions of racial superiority for cultural differences as the main reason why some people were more “developed” and had more power than others. In

¹⁰ The scare quotes are used since I hold to the term “race” for problematic as it suggests the objective existence of different kinds of people based on criteria of origin.

¹¹ This is of course a simplification. Indeed, there were endless debates on *if* Africans could become civilised, and if so, how (cf. Naranch 2000).

my analysis, I will thus look for representations of differences that might be culturalist and racist in nature, but can be overcome. I will also look for differences which are of importance in the development concepts, even when they figure as absolute and insurmountable. A problematic component of modern Western thought is that people were often assigned to a place. Identity was rooted geographically, that is to say: “tribes” belong into their villages, Germans are from the territory of the German nationstate and every culture has its place. Backward Africans lived on a backward continent, advanced Europeans came from progressive areas. Such a territorialization of differences, and identities, cannot be assumed in this paper (Gupta / Ferguson 1997:47-50). We will see, however, that Shambaa and Swahili identities (chapters two and three) were strongly connected to place – to be a Shambaa meant to be adapted to a montane environment, while to be civilized in Swahili terms necessarily meant to be a town-dweller.

Development as strategy

As a *strategy*, development is the metaphor of the biological process converted into a programme (cf. Esteva 1997:9). Using a term by Clifford Geertz, development concepts as strategies are models *for* reality; while development as process and development as state of affairs would constitute models *of* reality (Geertz 2002:63). The view is not directed at how the present was reached through a process which started sometime in the distant past, but directed towards the near future: How can we get from a present state of society to a better future state of society? How can the deficient reality be manipulated? Hence, this meaning is first and foremost *prescriptive*. The present state of affairs is seen as deficient, lacking a certain quality which can be brought about through intervention.

The Marxist theory of development with its core element of class antagonism and perpetual class struggle until communism would be reached was turned into a political strategy by socialist organisations, resulting in socialist revolutions and the adoption of socialist policies by numerous states in the twentieth century (and some few in the twenty-first century). Modernisation and dependency theories argue for a strong state investing in the economy, though with differing orientations concerning the world market. Neoliberal theory, globally the most politically influential school since the 1980s, demands just the opposite: state activities should be confined to those activities which ensure that the market can bring about socioeconomic development. Post-development theorists ironically share the neoliberals' critical stance towards the state, but their goal differs in that they strongly promote social grassroots movements and a rejection of language of development, which, as they have shown, has been instrumentalized as an instrument of power in

the hands of state and multilateral institutions (Kothari / Minogue 2002; Fischer / Hödl / Sievers 2008; Escobar 1995).

Strikingly, all theorists have been inspired in their practical recommendations by examples that could already be observed in reality. Walt Rostow simplified and universalized the trajectory of the industrializing nations, above all the USA, as a blueprint for the development of all societies. Raúl Prebisch (2008[1964]) theorized the economic policy of import-substituting industrialization which had been used already in Latin America since the 1930s (cf. Fischer / Hödl / Sievers 2008:13) and Gustavo Esteva (1997) strongly promoted grassroots movements like the Zapatistas he had observed in Mexico. This means that practices of development have already existed before the formulation of the theory and that certain principles and concepts can be abstracted from the practice – a central insight for my analysis.

In the colonial era, this post-hoc rationalization of practices has its most prominent example in Lord Lugard's *The Dual Mandate in Africa* (1922) in which he outlined the basic characteristics of indirect rule, a concept that he abstracted from his experiences in colonial India and Nigeria. Lugard's theory would also find strong proponents in British-Tanganyika, most notably governor Donald Cameron. Indirect rule policies then had a significant politicizing influence on collective memories of the past in local and regional contexts (cf. Shetler 2002).

Typically for colonial discourses in the late 19th and early 20th century, development problems were formulated in the areas of rule, labour, education and infrastructure (Faschingeder 2001:34-41; Zimmermann 2006:433). The highly imaginary character of imperialism (cf. chapter 1.1.2) instilled an attitude to value colonies as “countries of the future”, to be judged “not by what they yield today, but by what they *will* yield” (Baumann 1968[1894]:240, emphasis added)¹². To make colonial exploitation profitable – to “open up” the colonies – European powers saw themselves confronted with a “development imperative” (Koponen 1994:570). Koponen put this relation between metropolitan self-interest and colonial advancement succinctly into the title of his book as the formula “development *for* exploitation”¹³ (my emphasis), meaning that strategies for development were ultimately a means for higher economic profitability.

¹²The translation is mine. The anthropologist Oscar Baumann wrote this in a travel account. His journey was sponsored by the German East African Railway Company and had the aim to identify profitable extensions for the railway. The original quote reads: “Die Gebiete des tropischen Afrika, welche erst vor wenigen Jahren aus ihrem Dunkel hervorgetreten sind und begonnen haben, für die europäischen Nationen eine praktische Bedeutung zu gewinnen, diese ungeheuren Striche sind ihrem ganzen Wesen nach Zukunftsländer, also solche deren Werth nicht nach dem bemessen werden kann, was sie heute liefern, sondern nach dem, was sie einmal liefern werden” (Baumann 1968[1894]:240).

¹³In the title of his work, Koponen referred to an earlier magisterial work on German colonialism in Tanzania which was titled “Colonial development *and* exploitation”, *Koloniale Entwicklung und Ausbeutung* (Tetzlaff 1970).

Prescriptions for development also figure in the case studies. In Swahili poems (chapter three), they are either inspired by Islamic religious principles and idealisations of the precolonial past, or they are vague and veiled in a transmission of norms for beneficial rule (like justice) to the German administrators. In *beni* dance associations, it seems that militarisation, drill and bureaucratisation were used as means to a more successful, more prestigious group.

1.3.2 Development concepts as present in ethnic thought, poems and social practices

Development concepts, as has become obvious in the above, have played a major role not only in development theories after World War II, but also in colonial practice, including German East Africa. I have already given some examples from the case studies but want to go back again and make transparent how I went about to discern development concepts. Let us first take a look at how other authors went about to research non-Western concepts of development.

A volume with the promising title *African Perspectives on Development* (Himmelstrand et al. 1997) deals exclusively with late colonial and postcolonial concepts of African thinkers, politicians and academics. This approach does not fit to my endeavour, for the development concepts I seek are non-academic.

Some more fitting approaches can be found in post-development accounts (e.g. the volume Rahnema / Bawtree 1997); yet most of them are problematic in that they tend to idealize non-Western concepts of development and portray Western and non-Western concepts as radically different, sometimes up to the point of dichotomization. Romanticisations of “traditional” knowledge have been rightly criticized, especially for the danger of instrumentalisation and neglect of internal power relations (cf. Nanda 1999). A supposed radical difference to Western thought is also problematic, assuming first that a view for the “exotic” and non-Western obscures similarities and second that by the late 19th century Europeans, Arabs, Asians and Americans all were represented in East Africa and ideas from the most diverse origins have impacted each other. This includes, to name but two examples, Arab discourses of modernisation championed in Egypt reaching Zanzibar and the East African coast as well as regional discourses of social healing in societies of precolonial Tanzania influencing each other. The premise that there is no “pure” ethnic thought further leads to necessary caution in regard to a colonial impact in the area of indigenous development concepts.

The social historian Jonathon Glassman (2004, 2011) has convincingly argued that racial thought in late colonial Zanzibar has not been an outcome exclusively of imported and obtruded colonial rationalities. Quite the contrary, he argued that concepts of racial division originated from multiple

sources, thereby emphasizing the role played by African intellectuals. The idea of multiple sources will strongly inform my analysis of the *beni ngoma* dance societies with their militaristic styles and also the Swahili poets' conceptions of discipline.

Turning the perspective upside down and looking at how colonial policies came into being, Marcia Wright (1968) has shown in an influential essay that colonial practices in German East Africa which are frequently seen to be derived from universal principles actually originated in contact zones within the territory and developed locally. The use of the Swahili language as language of the administration instead of German is one example, another being that Germans initially accepted claims of the coastal Muslim elite, “supposing that itinerant members of coastal society were accorded special respect throughout the country as persons of superior civilization” (Wright 1968:624). As a result, the German administration tried to turn the pre-existing commercial relationships from the caravan trade into relationships of political domination and administration and made wide use of coastal intermediaries to administer inland territories. Concepts of the coastal civilization's superiority are thoroughly laid out in the chapter concerned with Swahili poets. What is important in applying an idea of multiple sources of thoughts is to embed the non-material discourses in the context of power and material relations.

1.3.3 Development concepts in their historical context – Colonial presence and violence

The postcolonialist writer Achille Mbembe (2001:25-31) postulated that three forms of violence were the foundation of colonial sovereignty. His typology can be applied to German conquest and rule in East Africa as well.

There was, first, the open *founding violence of conquest*. German East Africa came into being only through a series of wars and we are going to see how the execution of King Mputa of the Shambaa was locally remembered as the decisive moment of the power transfer to the Germans (chapter two) or the shelling of coastal towns and public executions were described with bitterness in contemporary Swahili poems (chapter three).

The second form is *violence of the law*, with the colonial sovereign being the one and only judicial authority. The executions just mentioned would already embody the first appropriation of law. The colonised had no rights against the state. Swahili poets often referred to discipline in the colony as brought about by the Germans' exercise of legal power, and some expressed utter despair knowing that the power to judge was with the colonial authorities yet the norms by which judgement took place were opaque and incomprehensible – with the exception of the one overarching principle that law was whatever the Germans said it was (cf. chapter three).

The *everyday violence of spreading and maintaining authority* is the third kind of colonial violence mentioned by Mbembe. In this realm, authority was present in daily lives and on the local level through *askaris* (African soldiers in the colonial troops), cooperative chiefs, European plantation owners and to some extent missionaries.

Despite the intruding and violent nature of colonialism and dominance by European and local elites, “[t]here were vast areas in the life and consciousness of the people which were never integrated into their hegemony” (Guha 1988:42-43). The colonial state was not a monolithic presence covering over the whole territory. This is especially true for German East Africa, where the colonial presence was patchy and initially confined to the coastal fringe – some isolated “islands of dominance”, as the German historian Michael Pesek (2005:190) put it. After the *Maji Maji* war (1905-1907) colonial agents had penetrated all areas under consideration in this work. Still, two domains coexisted, which were however not hermetically sealed off from each other. Despite the power difference, the influence was two-way. Numerous activities of the colonised were attempts to appropriate new possibilities of improvement. We find – for instance – that people from Ubena forged their own ways of organising labour migration to evade control through colonial agents and chiefs (chapter five) or that *beni ngoma* dance societies constituted elaborate systems of hierarchies, prestige and mutual aid which were definitely influenced by, but largely independent from colonial rationalities (chapter four).

1.3.4 A critique of traditional thought and practices

In the course of this work, I will use formulations such as “Swahili concepts of civilization” or “Shambaa political theory,” thus referring to discourses widely shared among members of certain groups defined by a common language and ethnic conception of themselves. As Horton (1967a, 1967b) laid out in his widely read and controversially debated two-part essay *African Traditional Thought and Western Science*, abstract and simplified explanations of complex phenomena are no monopoly of scientific thought. Horton found that in African religious thought, too, rational explanations of natural events or social processes are brought forward. So much for the similarities between what Horton calls traditional and scientific thought. In the second part of his essay, he characterises traditional thought as closed and static, in contrast to scientific thought which is changing and open for critique. “Ethnic thought;” or folk thought (no matter if African or Western), has been problematised to be non-discursive, unsupported by arguments, unchanging over time and thus not fit for a comparison perspective with scientific thought (Wiredu 1996b:47). My purpose in this work is *not* to compare scientific theories of development with Shambaa folk political theories and Swahili poets' concepts of civilization. However, comparison being a major mode of thinking I

still need to be aware of the premises under which I look at development concepts in precolonial and early colonial Tanzania.

The Austrian philosopher Christian Neugebauer drew attention to another problematic aspect of enquiring into folk thought (Ochieng'-Odhiambo 2010:70-71). Notions like “Swahili concepts of civilizations” or “Bena moral imperatives” embody, to him, vehicles of ethno-nationalism. The resulting national chauvinism would lead, in turn, to racism. I believe that my treatment of the concepts exposes sufficient shortcomings and exclusionary effects, even within the respective societies. I also tried to highlight transformations of the concepts and their relation to the political economy.

One might add that looking at folk thought seems to be possible only through a structuralist approach in which the thought of individuals appears but as instance of a common predisposition, lacking all agency and spontaneity. Both charges, referring to the unchanging nature of folk thought and the neglect of individual agency, are problems less of widely shared perceptions, but more of the theoretical and methodological framework. I do not agree with neither Wiredu nor Horton that traditional, non-scientific thought is necessarily closed to critique. In this work, it will become visible both that folk thought proved very durable, but must not be seen as unchanging or non-adaptive, nor uncritical. Resourceful individuals and groups often found ways to challenge dominant ideologies. The US-American anthropologist Price (1981:28) describes methods of source criticism similar to Western historiography in the oral practices of a maroon society in contemporary Suriname, while the Kenyan philosopher Odera Oruka is among the strongest proponents of the view that critically reflective practices towards own traditions can be found in African traditional societies as well (Ochieng'-Odhiambo 2010:115-150).

With a focus on traditions, understood as practices handed down from one generation to another, Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger have shown that invented (or imagined) traditions are “responses to novel situations which take the form of reference to old situations” (Hobsbawm 2010:2; cf. Ranger 2010, Spear 2003). Africans experienced how their own flexible customs were fixed to rigid, formally codified traditions through colonialism, though some could also use the European's drive to formalization for their own benefit, for instance by gaining political power as literally invented chiefs (Ranger 2010[1983]:212, 244). But not only African rulers were able to profit from invented traditions. Clerks, mission-educated intellectuals and marginalized people, too, took advantage of colonialism's traditionalist tendencies (Ranger 2010[1983]:237-262) and appropriated German symbolisms, for instance in the competitive dance associations which were heirs of a long-standing coastal tradition yet took a very different form during colonial rule (cf.

chapter four). Owing to this multilateral dimension of the process of manipulating traditions, Ranger later changed his stance to speak of *imagined* rather than invented traditions due to the fact that invention “implies to one-sided a happening” (Ranger 1994:22; cf. Koponen 1994:133). In addition, the social construction of reality and the importance of language should not let reality disappear behind words – as, according to Ranger (1994:5) seemed to happen in some accounts using Hobsbawm’s term of “invented traditions.”

In the case of Shambaa rituals for rain and fertility, we will see how people turned away from chiefs (who failed to deliver protection) to missionaries, using the traditional language of healing the land. Though this is not exactly a shining example for an invented tradition, it shows the adaptability of ritualistic practices and language. Moreover, instances of speaking should also be seen as practices. In such a perspective Swahili poets were interacting with the Germans by means of poems, transmitting their ideals of rule to the colonial administration.

I think the main criticism that could be levied against my approach in general is that the term development is inappropriate. Choosing the term to grasp non-Western concepts might be dismissed because development is a term inevitably bound to western values and its universalistic claim hides the particularity of the Western cultural tradition it stems from. Thus, a critic could assert, using the term development is Eurocentric and will no doubt fail to grasp the actual meaning of the idea brought forward in another language, in another cultural tradition and setting – my venture to “discover” development concepts in the past of Tanzania would more likely be a project of invention (cf. Wimmer 2004:61). One remedy in dealing with African concepts when using Western words is “to study African *discourses* more carefully” (Hallen 1997:6). Discourse here refers to conversations, talk and language usage in general. In all chapters voices of Africans – contemporary and retrospective – form major sources for interpretation. Doubtless, many errors will have remained in my understanding and my interpretation of the sources. I hope that to the reader, it will be clear in all instances what is my interpretation and what is not. For this purpose, I use substantial amounts of quotes in the case studies to allow for other interpretations than my own as well.

1.3.5 Development and African concepts of time

My analytical approach to see development concepts as describing processes, differences and strategies does not yet solve the problem that my three-fold definition of development concepts still carries with it the danger of distortion. The aspect of time shall illustrate the danger of using the concept of development, with all its cultural baggage, in grasping African meanings. The notion of time is crucial to inform development concepts of Western origin since, in the terms of my work,

development as a process would imply a linear progression from past to present. Development as strategy necessarily evokes future. Yet, as anthropologist Elizabeth Tonkin cautions, across languages “the structures of temporal references in which we think and express ourselves [...] cease to seem transparent and are shown to be conventions” (Tonkin 1995:66). Vansina (1985:127-129) differentiates between timeless eternity, cyclical time and linear time, though, he adds, in most cultures all three are used.

A discussion which is relevant to the valid objection of “inventing” what I am looking for is the discussion about *African* concepts of time (this section is based on Ochieng'-Odhiambo 2010:53-62). It was triggered by Joseph Mbiti, a Kenyan philosopher and theologian. He postulated that the African concept of time (in the singular) is in fact two-dimensional, encompassing an indefinitely long past and a present. The future extends to not more than two years and is thus not worthy of much consideration. His conclusions derived from the analyses of two languages spoken in East Africa. This view logically has important implications relevant for my topic.

In traditional African thought, there is no concept of history moving 'forward' towards a future climax, or towards the end of the world. Since the future does not exist beyond a few months, the future cannot be expected to usher in a golden age. [...] So African people have no 'belief in progress' ...

(Mbiti 1990 cited in Wiredu 1996a:128)

The teleology of Africans is thus, according to Mbiti, directed backwards, with the final purpose being in the past rather than the future (Booth 1975:82). Only through external impacts – missionary activities, Western education, modern technology – have African people “discovered” the future dimension of time.

Ghanaian philosopher Kwasi Wiredu (1996a:128-129), among many others, emphatically refuted that Africans do not have own conceptions of future. After all, even Mbiti himself had acknowledged that Africans *expect* agricultural seasons to continue *forever* which to Wiredu already is evidence for a clear sense of a future extending to more than two years. What is more, even if a certain cultural traditions has or does not have a concept for future, this shall not lead us to conclude that there is practical care or no practical care for the future.

Opening the view to popular systems of thought gives a variety of possibilities to discern concepts of time. Most of the criticism directed at Mbiti tried to falsify his statement empirically, showing grammatical or semantic evidence that in African languages abstract concepts of time and, more particularly, future, do exist. Another approach which has been followed by the Ghanaian scholar

Joshua Kudadjie is to analyse proverbs in a certain language. He does, however, acknowledge that this approach cannot lead to an exhaustive or even complete picture of time concepts (Kudadjie 1996:146). Wim van Binsbergen (1996:106) interpreted board-games and divination practices in Sub-Saharan Africa as “encoded forms of philosophising about time and space”.

Concepts of development, it is often assumed, need to have a *telos*, a final objective (cf. Himmelstrand 1997). We know that along the East African coast, Islamic conceptions of time have had a significant impact. Swahili poems, especially, can thus be expected to contain teleological and eschatological traits¹⁴ which should not lead to any preliminary conclusions of a Western influence. *Utenzi*, the poetic form for (historiographical) narratives about Muhammad and martyrs, was also used to describe events of the colonial period. The Swahili term *zamani*, which is originally Arabic, has received some prominence in discussions of time concepts (e.g. Booth 1975:88, Tonkin 1992:79) as a prime example for a designation of past events which shape the present.

Two types of development concepts (descriptive and prescriptive) which I have described above must contain images of “moving through time,” or a framework allowing for chronologies of before and after, now and then. Even the normative concept of development, in which differences between groups and societies are discerned, would ideally endorse such a dimension, though I hold this to be less necessary¹⁵.

1.3.6 Actors and innovators of systems of thought – Peasants, poets and dancers

Who, then, are the carriers and innovators of African concepts of development? In the title of this work, three groups are mentioned: Peasants, poets, and dancers.

The term peasant shall in this work refer to people who live basically on subsistence farming, while also producing some surplus goods for the purpose of trade and exchange. This is true for the Shambaa, who traded with tobacco and sugar-cane already in pre-colonial times and produced a large surplus of food in the German colonial period. As with the other groups in the focus of this work, to call somebody a peasant does not mean that somebody was a peasant only, nor that he or she has been a peasant throughout his or her lifetime. In chapter five, we will see that most (male) peasants of Ubeni have become labour migrants during the German colonial period. Since they continued to conceive of themselves as belonging to a rural society, labour migrants are not mentioned as an additional group in the title of this work.

¹⁴ Teleological means directed towards an objective, mostly a final objective. Eschatological also means directed towards an end, but the term has stronger religious connotations. In non-religious contexts, eschatological may also refer to an end of a cycle. (Lüddeckens 1996, Prechtel 1996)

¹⁵ Subsuming all mankind under one and the same teleology does not allow for, e.g., conceptions of multiple paths of development.

The poets, with whose work I am concerned in chapter three, do all belong to the educated strata of Swahili society. In contrast to peasants and members of *beni ngoma* associations, our having their original texts allows to recognize individuals. Individual particularities are paid attention to, but the roughly similar background of the poets in culture and education is also an excellent possibility to discern abstract ideals of the grandeur of a town or of good rule. Additionally, a detailed study of the individual poets and their works has recently been published which also takes into consideration their sociocultural background (Saavedra Casco 2007). For my work, it seemed more interesting to look at the *similarities* in the historiographical poems rather than individual aberrations from widely shared ideals.

Dancers are the main actors in chapter four. With the term, I refer to members of *beni ngoma* dance associations. As will become clearer in chapter four, these associations had many more functions than just the organization and implementation of festive events involving dance. Members had the most diverse backgrounds, being clerks in the colonial administration, wage labourers, policemen and soldiers (*askari*), men and women, young and old, slaves and free-born, coasters and inlanders, rich and poor. What unified them was their membership in one of the rivalling organisations and their self-perception as modern.

1.4 The debate and the argument – indigenous development concepts in German East Africa

The uneasy relationship between statist and localist accounts on colonial rule and societies in German East Africa is most visible in the questions of how German colonialism influenced African societies and how, on the other hand, African societies influenced German colonialism. Koponen's statist account included, on the one hand, the idea that German activities were influenced by Africans (Koponen 1994:37) which made the outcome to be "an amalgamation and articulation of a wide variety of colonial intentions and local realities" (ibid.). On the other hand, he is also convinced that German efforts to develop the colony (for their end of exploitation) "came to generate the momentum for a new type of societal development, originally induced by colonial impetus" (Koponen 1994:605). For both hypothetical statements he had, as he himself regretfully admitted and reviewers criticized, not had the proper research approach nor had he made use of the right sources (Koponen 1994:558, Spear 1996). Still, Koponen succeeded to give a deeper historical dimension to the largely present-oriented discipline of development studies. While several scholars agree that continuities between colonial and development discourses and practices exist, analysis is usually confined to the years of "welfare colonialism", that is, from the 1940s onwards (cf. Kothari

2006). A quite radical version of the unilateral import of development, to which “the traditional African society” contributed absolutely nothing, is the following quote:

Traditional society had minimised the value of individual achievement in Tanzania and stressed its ambiguity and the likelihood of personal advancement disrupting the community. Africans know that when a man rises, he may leave his own people in need. Colonialism, however, had brought ideas of progress, development and modernisation which put a high premium on self-improvement.

(Brown / Brown 1995:15)

Other historians of East Africa were more successful in articulating African agency and German endeavours of developing the colony. Thaddeus Sunseri has made several contributions concerning African influences on German policies, arguing that African peasants resisted and shaped German colonial labour policies (Sunseri 1996, 1998). Current research of the *Maji Maji* war has emphasized the role of intermediaries in the communication between African and German circuits of information (Giblin / Monson 2010). In my pursuit of looking for development concepts before and during the German colonial period, I want to follow these accounts and tackle the issue from a non-state perspective, paying particular attention to cultural forms and their political implications. Looking into concepts of development among Swahili poets or Shambaa peasants reveals colonial influences to indigenous systems of thought and gives hints at how social and political change was perceived and embedded. “What will be required of us in the future is,” as Eric Wolf programmatically formulated, “to understand more precisely how cultural forms work to mediate social relationships among particular populations” (Wolf 1995:19). Cultural forms interpreted in this light in the following chapters are dance societies and poetry, but also wide-held conceptions which might be called folk thought and which came to life in social practices of day-to-day activities and rituals.

The aim of my research goes into a very similar direction. The central questions are: Which indigenous development concepts existed in German East Africa? Within these concepts, can we discern causalities, a progression of different stages, and criteria for differences between groups or societies or individuals? How were they applied in the new historical situation and how were these concepts transformed in the context of colonial conquest and rule? The case studies all deliver different answers to these enquiries. A question which goes beyond the space available to be treated thoroughly here, but nevertheless is hinted upon in some instances, is how these development concepts also influenced colonial practices and how they lived on after World War I.

A comparative proceeding in regard to later periods has in some cases proved useful to better

understand the results concerning the German colonial period. Inevitable was a close examination of the state of the concepts and processes of social change prior to European conquest (cf. Pesek 2005:43), which is why every chapter goes back some two or three decades before German rule and examines the locally specific historical context of the concept in question. The time-frame is thus ca. 1870 to 1918, when the British had militarily secured and taken over administration of the territory. The geographical demarcation to German East Africa is more or less one of convenience, for German East Africa comprised Tanganyika, which is today the mainland part of Tanzania, and additionally Burundi and Rwanda. The four case studies are geographically situated in the Northeast (Shambaa peasants), at the coast (Swahili poets, *beni* dance societies), and in the Southern Highlands (labour migrants from Ubeni). In the cases of *beni* and labour migrants, however, mobility plays an important role and it is imperative to “follow the people” in their movements across the territory and even beyond its borders when necessary (cf. Marcus 1995). Contact zones played an important role to merge or transform ideas and to negotiate power relations.

A dichotomous, exclusive view of coloniser and colonised or of societies within Tanzania is not productive in this endeavour (cf. Cooper 1994). It is better to “challeng[e] the ruptured landscape of independent nations and autonomous cultures [and] raise the question of understanding social change and cultural transformation as situated within interconnected spaces” (Gupta / Ferguson 1997:35). One of the major findings of this work is thus, resembling an argument made by Jonathon Glassman (2004), that there were multiple sources of development concepts.

Already in a advanced stage of writing this thesis, I came upon several comparable enquiries into collective thought in a historical perspective¹⁶. Two of them dealt with Tanzania as well, the first more from the perspective of how colonial power came about, the second asking for concepts of moral economies.

The German historian Michael Pesek (2005) has shown in a fascinating account how symbolic and moral imperatives of the caravan trade influenced German expeditions and assertion of colonial rule. Germans were unable to force their ideas unto Africans, meaning they had to appropriate local notions of civilization and barbarity to suit their own ends (cf. chapter three). Pesek has used a variety of sources and, through subtle reading, revealed the colonial history of German East Africa in a different light. While his interest was first and foremost to find out how rule could be

¹⁶ Very similar is Atieno-Odhiambo (2000) with his inquiry into Luo perspectives on knowledge and development, holding that “fully formed perspectives on [...] development” (Atieno-Odhiambo 2000:244) were already in place among the Luo when British missionaries and administrators arrived in the late nineteenth century. Other comparable quests were often made in the realm of intercultural philosophy and African philosophy. See, among many others, Kwasi Wiredu's treatment of an Akan Perspective on Human Rights (Wiredu 1996b:157-171), and the introduction to debates about and in African philosophy by Ochieng'-Odhiambo (2010).

established in local contexts and with local knowledge, I ask for local discourses first and an impact of colonial rule second. For example, in the West Usambara mountains, the moment of power transfer was staged by the German officer Storch using local terminology (chapter two). I embed this transfer of power in local discourses of rule, while Pesek – had he chosen to include this example – would probably have used it to illustrate the performative and locally based character of German rule.

The Japanese scholar Tadasu Tsuruta (2006) looked for Tanzanian moral-economic concepts. He found them in the four broad terms of *utani* (joking relationships), *chama* (dance organisations), *ujamaa* (African socialism) and *ujanja* (craftiness). The second one, *chama*, will be dealt with here as well in the chapter about *beni ngoma* dance societies. Tsuruta defended these broad concepts – which are, at the first glance, anything but economic – as relevant for his research on economic ideas because “they certainly have elements of economic arrangement or transaction as well as a social function” (Tsuruta 2006). The value of the research in general is given since

[t]hese phenomena cannot easily be put into pre-arranged Western categories nor should they be disregarded from a modernist perspective, because these concepts and practices reflect a rich tradition of self-help solutions in Africa, thereby serving as a *source of imagination for alternative visions of economic development*.

(Tsuruta 2006, emphasis added)

Similarly the concepts presented below continued to play a role in thought in action in British colonial and in some instances even in postcolonial times.

From the theoretical concepts and methodological debates introduced in this introduction it will have become clear that interdisciplinary research was indispensable to find, describe and interpret materials relevant to my purpose. I have used theoretical perspectives and empirical research from the fields of (African) history, anthropology and development studies, to smaller extents also literature studies, intercultural philosophy and ethnomusicology. My approach to history and development is obviously hermeneutic, focussing on aspects of meaning and intention rather than “grand events” or structural conditions and causes of change. Typically for a hermeneutic approach, and especially for this work in which four different cases are presented, there are few general statements that can be made. The concepts I have found – and it is well possible that the reader might disagree to recognise all of them as concepts of development – are quite different from each other, so that any preliminary summary of the findings would result in distorted simplification. I thus tried to give a summary of results in each respective chapter's introduction, and again in a reformulated way in the conclusion of each chapter. A cautious approach to synthesise and compare

the results is nevertheless undertaken in the conclusion, which also contains a brief discussion of the limits of my methodology and points of entry for further research.

Before turning to the first case study of the Shambaa discourse of healing and harming the land, it is necessary to locate myself and this work in an academic field marked by unequal power relations. Ethnophilosophy's most vocal opponent, philosopher Paulin Hountondji from Benin, reminds us that the "white scholar's discourse is based [...] on the black man's silence", leading to "oversimplification and a reductionist view of the societies under study" (Hountondji 1996:xviii). Although in the quote he refers to ethnophilosophy and a time more than five decades ago, the argument still rings true for so many current works dealing with Africa (and its history) produced in the academic centres of the West. Many publications arise from interests largely defined in these academic institutions. Despite significant inspirations from many people, I can hardly claim that my project arose out of any other interest than my own. However, in the course of discussing my ideas with scholars, students and other people in Dar es Salaam, as well as some Tanzanians in Vienna, I was happy to hear that what I was trying to do seemed interesting to them and that they would be glad to take a look at the final results. I also got the impression that language problems continue to hamper the research of the German colonial period for Tanzanian scholars and employees in the archives, which is not the fault of individuals but goes back to global structures of inequality, including the unequal production of knowledge¹⁷. It is mainly for these two reasons in which the German language figures as an obstacle that I decided to write in English and make my findings accessible to more people, Tanzanians especially, despite my imperfect command of the English language. The discussion of the shared history of colonialism should not be left to Europeans and Americans alone and East African voices which find consideration in these discussions ought to be not only of the distant past, but of the present.

¹⁷ One striking example for the structural inequality and how it is visible in the academic system is the exchange between the University of Vienna and the University of Dar es Salaam, in which I took part. The exchange involved (and involves) only one direction, students coming from Vienna to Dar es Salaam, but not from Tanzania to Austria.

2. SHAMBAA CONCEPTS OF HEALING AND HARMING THE LAND

In precolonial times, there was one single occasion when the king's subjects had the permission to openly state the conditions of the social contract between them and their ruler. The commoners shouted to their new sovereign:

Give us rain. Give us bananas. Give us sugar cane. Give us plantains. Give us meat. Give us food. You are our king, but if you do not feed us properly we will get rid of you. The country is yours; the people must have their stomachs filled. Give us rain. Give us food...

(cited in Feierman 1990:46)

Shambaa peasants had an elaborate discourse which contained criteria for a peaceful, stable and just rule which benefitted them. It was a folk model which could explain why there was plenty of food or famine, why there was peace or war and why one king's rule "healed the land" while another king's reign was "harming the land" (*kubana shi* and *kuzifya shi*). It also explained why the land underwent change from one condition into the other, including the reigns of past rulers. The reign of Kimweri ye Nyumbai, lasting from 1815-1862, was portrayed as a golden era. This relates to development concepts in its descriptive aspect, explaining the change from a past to the present.

Shambaa identity was bound to living in the mountains and cultivation practices. Differences were thus recognized to people who lived in the plains and survived by means of hunting or pastoralism. Within Shambaa society, accumulation of wealth played an important role both for individuals and their families as well as the king and his court. The pursuance of wealth as a means to increase one's following and decision-making power occurred as inherently male activities, with women and sons of powerful fathers in clearly subordinated positions. This relates partially to normative concepts of development in which groups of people are differentiated and agents of change identified.

Although the discourse of healing and harming the land exhibits a clear elite bias, commoners challenged the premise of the common interest between rulers and subjects when the chiefs failed to fulfil the protective function that was demanded of them. The combined effects of social disruptions resulting from the caravan trade, colonial penetration and natural disasters made the 1890s a traumatic period for Shambaa people. The chief's duties of bringing life and providing refuge were projected by some upon missionaries who had started working in the area and were seen as powerful actors. We will also look at alternative sources of political language and other social practices aiming at collective well-being to avoid the picture of a monolithic and static discourse. Prescriptive concepts of development, being strategies to achieve a better society and a better life,

can be found in both the discourse of healing and harming the land as well as alternative discourses. Alternative discourses always implied a questioning of royal legitimacy to rule.

2.1 Sources

This chapter is based on the scholarship of Steven Feierman, who has been researching Shambaa history and political concepts for over three decades starting with his first stay among the Shambaa in 1966-1968. The three works of him which are used here are, first, his unpublished dissertation in social anthropology entitled *Concepts of sovereignty among the Shambaa and their relation to political action* (1972); second, a history of the Shambaa kingdom in precolonial times (1974) focussing on political leaders and their conflicts; and third, the extensive account *Peasant Intellectuals* (1990) which deals with the colonial and postcolonial period and emphasizes the alternative discourses and innovations of peasants in crucial historical moments to organize political movements. His theoretical and methodological assumptions underwent major modifications between these publications (cf. Feierman 1990:13-17), but the source base remained basically the same. Feierman collected oral testimonies and oral traditions during his visits to the West Usambara Mountains and cross-checked them with archival research. His conclusion concerning the concepts of healed and harmed land, which allows me to use his work also for this paper dealing with the German colonial period, was “that the configuration of conceptions, images, and figures of speech had been in active use a hundred years earlier” – and remained remarkably stable from the mid-nineteenth century to the last third of the twentieth century (Feierman 1990:7; cf. Feierman 1972:384; Feierman 1990:9). I drew additional information from Hemedi bin Abdallah 'IAjjemy's *Habari za Wakilindi*¹⁸, the travel accounts of an Austrian anthropologist (Baumann 1890, 1891) as well as other secondary literature from historians (most of whom often referred to Feierman and Baumann, which makes their accounts unfortunately somewhat less helpful for cross-checking evidence and interpretations).

2.2 The sociocultural and historical context: Shambaa identity and history

As in other African societies, it is misleading to assume that the term Shambaa¹⁹ would refer to a fixed tribe with a unified culture, history and language (though the latter is largely correct in this case). Rather, identity formation or insider-outsider ascriptions often reflected adaptation to specific environments (Koponen 1988:189). The name Shambaa, or Shambaai, literally means “where bananas thrive”, while the neighbouring Bondei were called by a name which denotes “people of the valley” (Iliffe 1979:9). The bananas of the Shambaa thrived in the West Usambara mountains,

¹⁸ For more information on this important historical account, see Bromber / Becher 2003.

¹⁹ Other, mostly older sources also use the term Shambala or Sambaa instead of Shambaa.

not very far from the coast, in what is today northeastern Tanzania. To leave the mountains would have meant, in the 19th century, to cease being Shambaa (Iliffe 1979:10).

The Shambaa were ruled not by people of their own kin. The rulers were, since the eighteenth century, the Kilindi. According to the founding myth, the Kilindi descended from a hunter called Mbegha. He is said to have been chosen by several Shambaa chiefdoms as their unifying first king. In the first half of the nineteenth century, a descendent of Mbegha called Kimweri ye Nyumbai secured his authority in the Shambaa chiefdoms, expanded his influence to lowland areas and received tribute even from some societies near the coast. Kimweri ye Nyumbai's reign was remembered afterwards as a golden age of the Shambaa kingdom, a time of healed land.

The period we are looking at in this chapter was one of harmed land. Trade in slaves and arms supplanted control over rain medicines as the primary base of power. Warfare and slave tore the kingdom apart because, in the local rationality, the king had failed to install his sons as chiefs. Rivalling chiefs were raiding each other's territories. Local practices of cultivation were transformed significantly during the advent of colonial rule. German interests in the Usambara mountains were to turn the area into a cash crop-producing zone, fostering the territory's economic growth with plantation cultivation. Colonial politics of the German period relied, as in many other parts of the colony, on Muslim agents from the higher religious and commercial strata of coastal society who were installed above the Kilindi chiefs. Collaboration with Kilindi chiefs first proved instrumental to preclude rebellion, confiscate land and recruit labour (Feierman 1990:122-123; Huijzendveld 2008:386; Koponen 1994:205; Glassman 1995:47).

Under these conditions it is not surprising that the concept of harmed and healed land itself entered a crisis. The sources available tell us relatively little about its fate. The focus of this chapter is thus on the precolonial and early colonial period (in Mbembe's term, conquest violence). The discourse about chiefs and rainmakers triumphantly resurfaced only under British policies of indirect rule, when "tribal" cohesion was championed and Kilindi chiefs were re-installed.

2.3 Descriptive development concepts: Healing and harming the land

Central to Shambaa political thought in the 19th and 20th century were the concepts of *kubana shi* and *kuzifya shi*, that is, "to heal the land" and "to harm the land" (Feierman 1972:19). The verb *kubana* means "to damage," "to destroy," "to make something dirty." In connection with the noun *shi*, "the country," it meant "to harm the land." This harming of the land was not a result of direct physical damage, but a consequence of conflict and improper social behaviour. This is also visible in the reciprocative form of the verb (*kubanana*) which means "to quarrel with one another." The quintessential state of harmed land was drought and famine. These were caused by social factors

and political relations (see below). The contrasting verb *kuzifya* corresponds to meanings like “to heal,” “to repair,” “to make better.” Though it is tempting in the context of this work to translate *kuzifya shi* as “to develop the country” or “to improve the country”, I will keep with the Feierman's translation of *kuzifya shi* as “to heal the land” in the sense of bringing fertility and restoring proper social relations after a conflict²⁰. This conflict, however, always relates to conflicts among members of the royal Kilindi lineage. So did the restoration of sovereign power, which meant that one persons held the power of the rains. Commoners had little impact on the state of the land. No matter how hard Shambaa peasants worked their fields and how much they advanced their irrigation networks, they could not yield without the contribution of rain (Feierman 1990:68, 77).

2.3.1 Power struggle and social well-being

In the dualistic concept of healing and harming the land, the well-being of the land and social peace are related to the political situation. If the king is strong and his reign unchallenged, he brings life – he repairs the land and increases its fertility. This state of “covering over the land” (*-funika shi*) also means that the king is the prime rainmaker and brings about rainfall. If the king's power is challenged, the land is harmed, resulting in famine. Power is described with the term *nguvu*. Power struggle is called *nguvu kwa nguvu*, or “power against power.” In the case of power against power, there is no peace as well since different Kilindi chiefs, or important rainmakers, are fighting with each other for predominance. Fights between commoners could not harm the land because they did not have ritual any power (Feierman 1990:78-80).

The driving force behind socially improper behaviour was “the struggle for dominance within the Kilindi lineage” (Feierman 1990:85). The central variable to tip the scales between healing or harming the land was the relation between the king and his sub-chiefs. If the king managed to install his sons to rule in the chiefdoms, there was no competition. This was additionally described with the term “to prevent harm in the land” or “to suppress conflict in the land” (*kuzuiya shi*). A king was most powerful when he did not have to show his power and could abstain from using force²¹. The first king Mbegha, who had been invited to rule by the Shambaa, idealised this notion (Feierman 1990:11; cf. Abdallah bin Hemedi 1962:Sura 12-14). For the control of people further away from the royal capital, the king had to rely on chiefs who in the ideal case were his own sons. Like the king, the chiefs were considered “owners of the land” and had the right to receive tribute or even

²⁰ It seems that the terminology implies a natural state of the land in which it is fertile. This thought seems to be an invalid over-intellectualisation since people never speculated that way themselves (Feierman 1990:79).

²¹ Feierman (1972:370) likens this to a Parsonian understanding of power: “According to Parsons, there is always a presumption that negative sanctions will be used in the enforcement of binding decisions, but the more those sanctions are actually used, the less effective power is at securing compliance with a wide range of obligations. The King was most effective at securing compliance when the land ‘was covered over,’ and ‘did not initiate action,’ for then he did not need to use sanctions.”

seize property (Feierman 1990:50). Much in the same way the king had to ensure his predominance in regard to the chiefs, the chiefs – some of whom were women – had to secure authority as rainmakers in their respective territories (Feierman 1990:85-86).

Commoners were thought to enjoy justice when the king's power was unchallenged, because in this case ordinary men could appeal unsatisfactory verdicts from chiefs' courts at the royal court in Vugha (Feierman 1972:380; Feierman 197:107). The people could also complain at the royal court about their chief's abuse of power. In severe cases of violation, the king took the chief's land and transferred him or her to another area. More severe offenders – alleged to have committed a crime against the community as a whole – were typically witches and rebels against the king's authority. They could easily be sold as slaves, executed or, in the case of witches, be sent to the capital where they could do no harm. On the contrary, they were enlisted to produce war charms for the king's military troops and thus furthered the interest of the kingdom (Feierman 1990:55-56; Feierman 1972:371). The concentration of powerful charms at the capital allowed the kingdom to be successful in warfare against external enemies. One man explained Vugha's "decriminalizing" function as follows:

It was a place where poor unfortunates (*wakiwa*) were saved. The reason I say Vugha was not an evil place is that once a person who had done evil went to Vugha he stopped... If you come to Vugha and do evil, you will be killed because of your own evil. The *Simba Mwene* [title of the king] resembled a rock. He was invulnerable to sorcery.

(cited in Feierman 1990:81)

With a strong king, the level of tribute would be low and all of it flow to the capital of Vugha, without burdening a particular locality with exceptionally high levels of tax collection. Thus, with tribute from the entire kingdom concentrated at the capital, the ruler had plenty of resources to purchase charms to make rain and war – which in turn reinforced the centralization of power and the land's fertility (Feierman 1972:380-381). The more chiefdoms were loyal to the king, the more tribute reached Vugha and the more wealth trickled down again to the subject population²². In times of need, royal reserves were to feed the people and the chief provided refuge to individuals and groups. For instance, during famine, poor families sent their children to the court where they lived as the chief's dependents (Feierman 1990:53, 127).

An interesting question concerns ownership of the land. For healed land, it is necessary that the king owns the land. All the wealth of the land – in the sense of territory, not people – belongs to him. This idea derives, however, not from a perspective of state sovereignty but is “one of a series of

²² The trickle-down effect was uneven: commoners from all chiefdoms contributed, but the commoners at the centre benefited the most (Feierman 1974:100). This inequality was balanced by the fact that the more remote chiefdoms could send their troublemakers to the royal capital and be more secure.

particular expression of the more general Shambaa idea that a medicine man must 'own' the territory for which he makes rites, and that he must be able to defend himself and his territory against those envious of his possession" (Feierman 1972:385)²³. The meaning of land ownership as portrayed by Feierman has been questioned in recent scholarship. Frank Huijzendveld (2008:387) maintains that royal ownership of all cultivated land and wasteland was meant in a mystical way, and that all worked land actually was thought of as to belonging to the lineage, not the chief or king. Huijzendveld does, however, agree that whoever wanted to cultivate a certain strip of land could do so only with the consent of the ruler or the local chief.

2.3.2 Shambaa history in the framework of "healing the land" and "harming the land"

The above statements are still quite abstract and ahistorical in nature, and I have used the present tense to indicate that the concepts were a basic model which could be used to explain both current problems in social life and the history of the kingdom, short- and long-term developments, day-to-day affairs and the past. In the following, I am going to give an account of history as seen through the concepts of healing and harming the land and articulate this perspective with an academic view of Shambaa history. That the concept of healing and harming the land was used as an explanation of history, supplying a causal and temporal framework for remembered, observed or experienced change is what allows for its interpretation as descriptive a development concept. It by far surpasses unidimensional ideas of benevolent rule which would simply state that under a good ruler the people thrived. The framework was used among common people in ordinary, informal conversations; though the abstracted form is Feierman's work.

In Shambaa historical thought – as is common in most societies – different concepts of time coexisted. First, there was rhythmic time moving in cycles:

"The history of political competition within the Kilindi lineage shows that it did in fact go through a long-term developmental cycle, one which can be viewed as the unfolding of stages within a closed system."

(Feierman 1990:86)

One stage was total centralization. The king had successfully installed his sons in the chiefdoms and his authority was unquestioned. The land was healed and the subjects enjoyed bountiful crops, moderate taxes, justice and security. When the king died, the transformation to the other stage occurred. The successor of the king would be one of his sons, who would now have to face his half-brothers as political opponents. Struggle for power, the primal impetus which kept this cycle moving, would mean that some chiefs in their functions as rainmakers held back rain in the territory

²³ Another example for this idea of ownership allowing for influence is that in rites involving ancestral spirits (*fika ya chekecheke*), the house must be "owned" by the medicine man (Feierman 1972:385).

of another chief. The land would be harmed, and the Shambaa had to suffer from famine, war, high demands of tribute, injustice and insecurity (Feierman 1990:86-87). Some chiefs would win their rebellious struggle against the new king and become politically autonomous. The circle would be restarted with a king capable of marrying into different descent groups of the territories and install his sons (whose mothers belong to the different descent groups) as chiefs. Political rituals were very much intended to invoke the inevitability of cycles.

Second, next to cyclical time, a concept of linear time did also exist. Genealogies of chiefs structure the histories of all clans in the region. These genealogies permit a historical view of long durations, extending back several generations. On a smaller scale, there was a linear view as well which did not conform to agricultural seasons. During the reign of one king, it was assumed “that it is in the ruler's interest to increase the number of his subjects” (Feierman 1974:183), to bring fertility and peace over a long-term period to acquire a loyal following. Expansion of the king's rule over other chiefdoms also led to an increase of tribute, which would in turn support the followers at Vugha's court. As Shambaa settlements were permanent, they could also continuously grow in size. The centre of each chiefdom was a certain town, ideally with a large banana grove of the chief. Within a radius of approximately five miles around the settlement there were fixed and precise borders demarcating the influential sphere of the chief. Naturally, as the greatest of all rulers, the “king made it a point of pride to have as great a town as possible” (Feierman 1974:30). Through intensive agriculture, a “relatively high density of population” could be sustained (Feierman 1970 cited in Kjekshus 1996:33).

I will proceed to illustrate the descriptive development concept of the Shambaa with one example of healed land and one example of harmed land in precolonial and early colonial times, followed by examples of the practical relevance of the same framework during the German period. It should be noted that the historical view displayed below tries to give an impression of how the precolonial periods were most likely perceived during the German colonial era.

The rule of Kimweri ye Nyumbai (1815-1862)

In precolonial times, land was considered to be harmed through power struggles among political competitors (Feierman 1990:78). The memory of Kimweri ye Nyumbai's rule through the conceptual framework of harming and healing the land was thus downright positive, because he was able to dominate unchallenged (based on Feierman 1990:8). Kimweri ye Nyumbai, profiting from the difficulties his father Kinyashi had faced (Feierman 1990:91), “covered over” all the land by installing his sons as leaders in the chiefdoms. For the subjects, this centralized constellation in which all power was concentrated in the royal capital yielded reliable farming seasons, justice and

security. There was no rival who was able to significantly attack the king in his role as most important rain magician. In an oral tradition, Kimweri ye Nyumbai's era of almost four decades is displayed as a golden age:

Kimweri ye Nyumbai placed sons in the chiefdoms, and he was respected. ... Ah, in those days there was nothing but peace and good will in the land. .. Such peace is not seen in the days of every king. It was seen in the days of Kimweri, because if a person had no wealth, if his wife's lineage was about to take her from him, he could say, "Oh king, my wife is being taken." Kimweri would say, "Go to the following place. There is a cow of mine which you may take." He didn't like to be told, "This is the son of so and so." He liked to say, "They are all my children." And when he sent a son to rule, he would say, "You are to build a village, and live nicely with your companions, so that there is no conflict. In judging cases, show an evil man his own evil. But if there is a man with no evil, don't introduce evil into his life.

(Feierman 1990:89)

There was thus justice and well-being because the ruler was unchallenged. Kimweri ye Nyumbai's rule lasted from approximately 1815 until 1862. Although his reign was idealised in the oral traditions, academic historians largely agree with the oral traditions and earlier European travellers like the missionary Ludwig Krapf and Richard F. Burton similarly observed great wealth, security and peace in the kingdom during their visits which they made at the time of Kimweri ye Nyumbai's reign (Baumann 1891:187).²⁴ The positive evaluation of the period among the Shambaa themselves was elaborated already during German colonial times. Feierman (1990:8) maintains that "the facts of nineteenth-century history appeared to confirm the validity of indigenous political theory." What followed the "golden age" (Feierman 1972:381) of Kilindi rule was disastrous for the Shambaa: warfare, slave trading and German rule, leading to a complete turnover of the people's economic and political practices. Let us look at these developments from the perspective of folk theory.

The 1870s and 1880s – A land harmed

Kimweri did not install one of his sons as his successor, but his grandson Shekulwavu. Shekulwavu proved unable to remove the old chiefs, his paternal uncles, and only placed one close relative in a neighbouring chiefdom (Feierman 1990:90). Severe famine hit the land around the capital (Hemedi bin Abdallah 1962:Sura 69). According to oral traditions, Shekulwavu's rival (and uncle) Semboja cast a black spell over Shekulwavu's gun. When Shekulwavu tried to fire the gun, it exploded in his

²⁴ Cf. Iiffe 1973:67: "Kimweri ye Nyumbai, King of Usambara in the mid-nineteenth century, was the most powerful man of his time in Tanganyika. He extended and consolidated his power by taking wives from neighbouring conquered peoples and sending their sons to rule these new provinces in his name". Similarly, Feierman confirms that "Shambaa chiefdoms did not make war against one another in Kimweri's time, and subjects could appeal their chief's judgements at the court of Vugha" (Feierman 1990:89). Wars with external opponents did, however, take place. Kimweri ye Nyumbai also took slaves at times (ibid.).

hands (Feierman 1974:160). Shekulwavu's death came after a short and weak period of rule in which he had managed to place only one relative in a chiefdom. This was the reasons for a land harmed. Shekulwavu's death aggravated a conflict of succession between Semboja and another lineage (the sons of Mnkande, while Semboja was the first-born of Kimweri ye Nyumbai). Semboja desperately wanted to be king but could not win the other Kilindi's support. The compromise was the instalment of Semboja's son Kimweri Maguvu, but in fact, due to imperatives of father-son relations, it was Semboja who reigned. Already when his father, the late Kimweri ye Nyumbai, had died, Semboja openly violated taboos that were to be observed after the king's death and thus indicated his willingness to break from Kilindi traditions (Feierman 1972:392; Feierman 1990:116; Abdallah bin Hemedi 1963:Sura 73).

The political situation became even more fragmented. In the cycle of Kilindi descent and the causal terms established in the political discourse, the division of the kingdom was the logical outcome of Kimweri ye Nyumbai's death. The kingdom disintegrated into semi-autonomous factions since almost all the sub-chiefdoms declared their independence from Kinyashi (Cory 1951:3). The social contract which promised marginalized people to find refuge at the chief's court turned into a system of extreme exploitation by the 1870s and 1880s. Chiefs increasingly sold refugees and captives from wars as slaves. Peasants started to question the validity of the chief's court as a place of refuge and protection. They held the view that the slave traders came because of conflicts among the Kilindi, that is, because of internal reasons. A former court official told Feierman:

The Arabs traded with Semboja. Their merchandise was people. That is why the Arabs found a way of entering the affairs of the Shambaa. The Arabs were not involved in our affairs in the days of Kimweri ye Nyumbai. Their merchandise was people. In the days of Kimweri ye Nyumbai there were no enemies.

(Feierman 1990:115)

The famines of the 1880s were similarly thought to be caused by conflicts among Kilindi. Both slave trade and famine were contingent elements in the repetitive cycle of healed and harmed land, of conflict and unchallenged sovereignty among the Kilindi. (Feierman 1990:54, 94, 115-116).

Semboja's rule was interpreted in the traditions, most often, as a consequence of a land harmed or, more rarely, as being the reign of a ruler “who broke with the ritual prohibitions (*mjiko*) of the Kilindi [...] when he sold people and made war” (oral information cited in Feierman 1990:116). The second interpretation means that Semboja had totally abandoned the social contract which assumed common interests of chiefs and subjects. As an informant of Feierman acknowledged, Semboja's rationale was ultimately self-destructive: “Once you have finished killing all the people of the country, who will your subjects be?” (cited in Feierman 1972:392).

With the chiefdoms torn by slave trade and internally weakened, some villages became totally empty of people (Baumann 1890:195). The Germans took over *nguvu*, sovereign power, in the 1890s and assumed the central right of governing the subjects – the monopoly to decide over who should live and who should die (Feierman 1990:120).

Power struggle and social healing in the German colonial period

Whenever a king died, according to indigenous political thought, there was supposed to be “a structured disorder” (Feierman 1990:72) until the new king ascended to remind all commoners that without the sovereign there was no orderly growth, nor fertility, nor order, nor communication, nor unity and indeed no society. King Kimweri Maguvu died in November 1893. By this time, European settlers had already occupied much land in the Usambara mountains. Semboja had entered an agreement with a German expedition in 1890. German presence disallowed the “usual” acts of violence after the king's death, but still peasants interpreted events through the language of their political discourse. When locusts infested the crops in Mlalo north of the royal capital Vugha in 1894/1895, they were said to be sent by the king's father, mourning for his son. Others saw the locusts as a strategy of chiefs to end German power. In any way, locusts were seen, as in precolonial times, as political.²⁵ In April 1895, Kimweri Maguvu's brother and successor Mputa was hanged by the Germans. People panicked, hiding and sleeping in the bush – not for fear of the Germans but because of the events that were known to follow the death of a king. When an earthquake struck the area in May 1895, people in Mtae told a missionary that the earthquake was a consequence of the king's death. (Feierman 1990:72, 79, 100, 124; Feierman 1974:152).

The people of the West Usambara mountains, both Shambaa and Kilindi, wondered whether the Germans would now assume the responsibilities of chiefs²⁶. According to indigenous political theory, they had taken the power and thus also the position of primary rainmakers – “since Germans had the power, they must also control the crops” (Feierman 1990:129). Missionaries were approached as powerful and dangerous men and seen as rainmakers (Feierman 1990:128) even before the traumatic execution of King Mputa in April 1895. In 1886, for instance, German missionaries in the area were asked by the chief Kinyashi to pray for rain (which they did).

The transfer of power from the Kilindi to the Germans appears in the oral testimonies and traditions as this particular event of King Mputa's execution²⁷. It was still vividly remembered in the 1960s by

²⁵ The connection ran like this: „Peasants saw locust plagues as serving the interests of chiefs by increasing the number of their dependents or by helping them to bring the suffering needed as mourning for the dead“ (Feierman 1990:100).

²⁶ Other societies, namely the Bondei and the Mbugu, had also relied on Kilindi for rainmaking during this period, yet without the Kilindi being political leaders (Feierman 1990:128; cf. chapter 2.5).

²⁷ Already in 1890, Semboja had to recognize the power of the Germans when they had violently suppressed the coastal rebellion. He thus settled an agreement with an expedition (Baumann 1890:194). From a contemporary German

elders who had been alive during the staged drama in 1895 when Lieutenant Storch came to the royal capital of Vugha, traditionally a forbidden place to foreigners²⁸ (Baumann 1891:169), and arrested King Mputa. Storch called the other Kilindi chiefs and executed the king by hanging in front of their eyes. In the elders' oral accounts, Storch is quoted to have said to one Kilindi: "If you have any *nguvu* [sovereign power], let me see it now" (cited in Feierman 1990:125). Since no one showed *nguvu*, power passed to the Germans. It is unclear if Storch himself realised that by executing a "rival" he assumed a central aspect of Kilindi sovereign power, namely, the decision over life and death. Apparently, he thought that he had destroyed one faction of the Kilindi (the "Semboja party") and preserved the authority of other Kilindi (Feierman 1990:125).

The indigenous political discourse interested the Germans so they could instrumentalise it for their purpose of colonial rule. Very likely, Lieutenant Storch was influenced by the writings of the anthropologist Oscar Baumann, who had traveled the Usambara mountains in 1889 (and was taken captive by Semboja). Baumann, in his book written after the expedition, had proposed to sack Semboja's son and install the "legitimate" king Kinyashi to re-centralize the kingdom (Baumann 1891:196). The Germans thus instrumentalised and manipulated the local discourse without fully understanding it. The legitimacy of centralised power and one sovereign ruler must have appeared to them, as subjects of Kaiser Wilhelm, as self-evident.

After the public execution, Storch first installed Kibanga, a brother of Shekulwavu (who had shortly ruled in the 1860s before Semboja's attack). When Kibanga, just like the two kings before him, refused to sell land as the Germans pleased, Storch sacked him and went for Kinyashi (the heir proposed by Baumann) who then willingly gave vast areas to missions and settlers. Kinyashi's ascendance to kingship was first celebrated by the Shambaa, but the king misused his subjects by recruiting them as labourers for the Germans. Neglected, the people's own fields declined and discontent increased (Feierman 1990:126).

One year after the execution, in July 1896, a missionary heard a woman singing at the capital *Kigono cha shimba, chagona nguluwe*, "Where once a lion slept, there is now a pig" (Feierman 1990:126). The song probably referred to Kinyashi. The lion-king, who was supposed to eat meat (tribute) from all of his chiefdoms and cover over the whole land, who was supposed to bring fertility and life, was no lion – he was a pig. This image is particularly telling, since pigs were widely detested for rooting up crops and destroying whole harvests (cf. Sunseri 2003:434-435; Iliffe 1979:163; Giblin 1996:127). Indeed, Kinyashi stopped performing rites for fertility at about this

perspective, the staging of a power transfer would have been the hoisting of the German flag in Vugha in the same year (ibid.).

²⁸ The first foreigners who entered Vugha were missionaries in the early 1890s. With the help of the German station chief, the Evangelical Mission received the permission to even settle in Vugha in 1895 (Feierman 1990:125).

time and Vugha was taken by depopulation, a great fire and decay, while cattle-plague, locusts²⁹ and droughts led to severe famine killing thousands of people in the wider area between 1897 and 1899. An epidemic of smallpox as well as the first jiggers³⁰ ever to arrive in the West Usambara mountains completed the series of disasters. In total, an estimated quarter of the population died of hunger and disease. The Germans gave up trying to “unite” the Shambaa under a hereditary Kilindi ruler and installed Muslims from the coast, the so-called *akida*, to oversee the headmen. (Feierman 1972:394; Feierman 1990:126-127; Iliffe 1979:164; Cory 1951:3; Huijzendveld 2008:395).

Under these circumstances, the social contract between chief and subjects, or king and subjects, disintegrated entirely. The local authorities could not provide protection and even relations among commoners lacked the usual reciprocity. The famine was called *saa ya mnyime afe*, “the hunger that made one let one's neighbours die (Huijzendveld 2008:395). During this period of crisis, missionaries who were seen as powerful were expected by the Shambaa to “take over” some functions usually associated with chiefs. So, missionaries fed the hungry, negotiated work responsibilities and provided refuge. Many common men and women joined the missions, although the missionaries were not able to protect their followers from the settlers' demand for labour which was guaranteed to be fulfilled through government regulations, which is why some people again left the Christian community³¹ (Feierman 1990:130-131).

Regulations like these, demanding chiefs to supply labour, further discredited Kilindi rule, so that Kinyashi eventually “abdicated rather than face the unpopularity and possible witchcraft which he incurred by implementing German demands for tax and labour” (Iliffe 1979:120). The colonial *akida*, Muslims from the coast, took on an ever wider range of tasks in administration when Kilindi authority crumbled away under pressure from above (the colonial state) and below (peasants). One incident is recorded which German power was openly challenged in the language of ritual power. In 1908, a German officer reported that some chiefs from Bumbuli were making medicines to break his power, or, as he wrote in the report, to break his *nguvu* (Feierman 1990:79).

Feierman (1990:128) states that Shambaa oral traditions of the 1960s treated the crises during the German period, which must have also been a severe crisis of the political concept, as if they had never occurred. For the above reconstructions, he thus had to rely mostly on missionary and colonial accounts. This shows the local concept was later seen as unfitting to describe and explain

²⁹ A locust magician who came to the area just at the beginning of the famine claimed that he had been called by the Germans (Feierman 1972:395).

³⁰ Jiggers were completely unknown in the area, which is why the Shambaa had no means to deal with them. The missionaries, however, knew how to treat the infestation. As they successfully treated thousands of cases, the general trust in medicine men decreased (Feierman 1972:395).

³¹ Until 1904, each settler was allocated Shambaa villages as guaranteed source of labour. The headmen of the villages had to provide fixed numbers of workers (Iliffe 1979:152).

events during the German colonial period. It was an aberration of unprecedented quality, a quality that was unknown in folk thought. The central premise of the discourse, Kilindi rule, had been undermined. We are now going to proceed to see if the discourse of “healing the land” and “harming the land” incorporated normative concepts of development– focussing on differences between groups of people.

2.4 Normative concepts of development: Differences between social groups

Three different differences struck me as important in the political concepts as well as the founding myth of the Shambaa. First, there is a distinction made between agriculturalists and hunters which is characteristically represented in the relation of the founding hero Mbegha to his subjects. Differences here are, as far as I can see, grounded in cultivation / hunting and other social practices in relation to the environment. The differences can also be grasped in the terms of position in the economy, means of production, etc. Second, the concepts of healing and harming the land suggest a division between Kilindi and commoners. Kilindi were distinguished by their descent and had the knowledge for rainmaking, but most important seem to have been economic differences. The third distinction of significance is based on sex and position in kinship relations. Within the patriarchal framework, women do not figure as decision-makers and sons are subordinated to their fathers and uncles. Only the first difference – between people of various ecological zones and economic practices – may possibly fit my definition of a developmental difference. Internal differences within the society are included nevertheless for they are important to understand more deeply aspirations and actions in relation to an improvement of social relations and political authority.

2.4.1 Mountain-dwellers and inhabitants of the plains

Shambaa identity in the late 19th century was closely interwoven with the environment they dwelt in. Land was the central category to express well-being or suffering, and, as Iliffe (1979:10) states for precolonial Tanganyika in general, “a people's adaptation to its environment was its civilization”. Cultivation, in the case of the Shambaa, meant civilization, and vice versa. To live in the mountains and to have knowledge of fruitful agricultural methods in this particular habitat was a mark of insiders, while outsiders were “those with strange economic practices as well as strange mores” (Feierman 1974:19). A Shambaa song describes the strange and cumbersome life of the plains:

I hunt
in the waterless *nyika* [plains],
and cook game
in juice wrung from wild sisal leaves.

(cited in Feierman 1974:20)

The Shambaa also knew that the mosquitoes in the plains caused a dangerous fever³². The plains were a place of discomfort, disease and death and anybody living there, like the Bondei (which means “people of the plains”), was also associated with these qualities. The ideal of Shambaa society was thus to live in the mountains, and for every Shambaa to live in the mountains³³ (Feierman 1974:22, 28; cf. Huijzendveld 2008:386).

A possible hint to a temporal dimension in the concept of different adaptations might be found in the founding myth of the Shambaa kingdom. Mbegha, the central character in the myth and founder of the Shambaa kingdom and first king to initiate Kilindi rule among the Shambaa, was said to be a hunter who had escaped from his original area of origin (Ngulu, a montane area south of the Usambara mountains) and continued to survive by hunting and eating meat in the wilderness of the plains³⁴. Later, he started hunting pigs near the settlement of Vugha – pigs were a serious pest for agriculturalists – and was made king by the Shambaa after he had killed a lion. This was also due to his ability to settle conflicts satisfyingly for all parties involved. In a detailed, structuralist³⁵ analysis of the myth, Feierman (1974:40-69) detects two inherent sets of oppositions within the myth. The first one concerns the relationship between the Shambaa and Mbegha:

<i>Mbegha</i>	<i>Shambaa</i>
provider of meat	providers of staple food
stranger	natives
man	women ³⁶
powerful	weak
protector of territory	performers of repetitive work
king	subjects
owner of the country	inhabitants of the country
possessor of women	providers of women
judge	litigants

Figure 2. The relationship between the Shambaa and Mbegha

³² Both the disease (malaria) and the insect passing on the disease (mosquito) go by the same name, *mbu*

³³ At the same time, interrelations with the plains have always been of high significance both socially and economically. Still, the strong attachment of the Shambaa to the montane area made them migrate to the hot, malaria-infested plains only under severe pressures of land shortage in the colonial period (Huijzendveld 2008:408-409).

³⁴ More detailed accounts of the myth can be found in Feierman 1974:43-44 and Abdallah bin Hemedi 'IAjjemy 1962.

³⁵ “Structuralist” here means that Feierman abstracted the relations and dualities which were present in most of the versions of the myth which were told to him. These relations were then considered the unchanging core of the myth, while other (contingent) elements showed individual preferences, specifics of clan histories and the like. Feierman's analysis is based on 26 versions of the myth from 25 different people, told to him in the years 1966-1968.

³⁶ The ruler makes all subjects into women – for more explanations on this aspect, cf. chapter 2.4.3.

The second set of oppositions concerns the transformation of Mbegha himself from the times as solitary outcast in the plains of Zigua to his occupation in the West Usambara mountains:

<i>Mbegha in Zigua</i>	<i>Mbegha in Shambaai</i>
hunter in the wilderness	hunter near homesteads
dangerous being	bringer of order
dispossessed person	owner of the country
eater of meat	eater of meat and staples
lone eater	one who lives by exchange
famine	plenty
witch	bringer of social solidarity
hunter of meat	protector of territoriality
steals wives	given wives
hated	liked
outcast	king
bringer of death	bringer of fertility and life
<i>kigego</i> (ritually dangerous person)	rain magician

Figure 3. Comparison of Mbegha's character traits in Zigua and Shambaai

As Feierman points out, the central function of the myth is to convey an ideal normative picture of kingship. Yet, looking at the pairs of opposites it seems to me that the myth also conveys pictures of preferable as well as undesirable social orders and life-styles. Fixed territoriality and social solidarity are striking ideals running through the myth.

The fact that Mbegha undergoes a transformation from a dangerous, half-beastly form of human existence to become a benevolent king suggests that Shambaa would look at hunting people residing in the wilderness as not yet complete human beings, but capable of becoming fully human. Indeed, the motif of becoming human, or humanization (Feierman 1974:45), also runs through other myths like the myth of Sheuta, which was still told during the German colonial period but was practically unknown when Feierman conducted his research in the the 1960s (Feierman 1974:69). Both Mbegha and Sheuta come from the wilderness and become “tamed.” Both exhibited powers and qualities which were dangerous and life-threatening in the context of their “wild” existence, but once they became “humanized” these powers could be used for the benefit of the people and were life-giving. Mbegha himself had been cast out by his own Ngulu community, but his outstanding capabilities helped him to acquire an excellent reputation and a position of unprecedented power in other societies (Bromber / Becher 2003:55, 69)³⁷ These capabilities contributed to the society's survival and lifted the living standard (ibid.) As in the founding myths of other East and Central African societies, Mbegha was “an exogenous conqueror [hero] who had introduced the

³⁷ This interpretation of the founding myth, as given in Abdallah bin Hemedi 'lAjjemy's *Habari za Wakilindi*, was brought forward by relating the biography of the author to the image of the ruler. Becher and Bromber read the myth as reflecting Abdallah bin Hemedi's own experience of being considered an outsider.

technologies or forms of social organization by which civilized life was defined” (Glassman 2004:735). In our case, this concerned mainly social organisation. Cultivation had been practiced before Mbegha's arrival, but his hunting activities were crucial for meat supply.

The form of social organization introduced through Mbegha was kingship. In the myth, Mbegha did not forcefully ascend to the throne, but was invited by the Shambaa to do so. He was valued for he protected the crops, and knew how to arbitrate cases to the satisfaction of all parties (Feierman 1974:44)

In this context we also need to remember that what we describe as myths here were, in local perspective, narratives perceived as credible historical accounts with important implications and lessons for everyday life. Additionally, both Feierman and Baumann consider the existence of Mbegha as a historical fact and take much of the oral traditions at face value, while Huijzendveld seems to consider Mbegha more as the character of a myth with little historical substance (Feierman 1974:63; Huijzendveld 2008:390; Baumann 1891:186-187).

The problem of the interpretation of the myth is that it does not juxtapose Shambaa agriculturalists with another social group, but only the Shambaa as a group with Mbegha as an individual. It is thus questionable in how far the humanization of Mbegha exemplified thoughts concerning transformations of whole groups of people. We can take for granted that the Shambaa looked down upon the troublesome economic practices of people living in the less fertile plains or the drier areas of the Usambara mountains, like Mbugu pastoralists³⁸. But assuming that this entailed a conception of cultivation in the mountains coming temporally after practices of hunting and pastoralism would be stretching the interpretation too far.

2.4.2 Royal Kilindi, Shambaa commoners and the quest for wealth

Germans, influenced by theories of race which were currency among Europeans during this period, maintained that Kilindi and Shambaa could be clearly distinguished in appearance and behaviour since the former were thought to be more “Arabic” (Baumann 1890:65, 1891:187). A Swahili scholar who was also active in German colonial service must have known these perceptions and unmistakably wrote that “people say that they are Arabs but that is only what people say. They are not Arabs.” (Hemedi bin Abdallah 1952:73)³⁹ Germans were also led into this perspective through

³⁸ Baumann (1890:172) noted that Shambaa people despised the Mbugu living in lowland areas, who were direct neighbours. Feierman (1968:56) writes in his unpublished field notes about the Mbugu perception of taming the mountains: “Mbugu say we were here first and got lots of game by driving it into the valley. There was lots of game then and we didn't need to kill our cows for meat.” His interpretation is that this is probably less a historical fact but more serves to underline the Mbugu claim to independence from the Kilindi, even in the provision of meat (Kilindi were responsible to provide meat to followers).

³⁹ Feierman (1972:82-83) also collected traditions from three people in which Mbegha was described as an Arab. He traces this link between Shambaa / Kilindi and Arabs as a fictional generational link created in the second half of the

the orientation of some chiefs' towards Islam and coastal culture⁴⁰. Semboja, the factual ruler of much of the area under consideration in the 1870s and 1880s, “built his capital at Mazinde in coastal manner, wore Arab dress, and had his wives taught to cook *à la Mrima*” (Iliffe 1979:78; cf. Baumann 1890:170, New cited in Feierman 1974:198) These mostly superficial adaptations which served as a means to intensify trade with coastal Muslims gave rise to religious and cultural differences between Shambaa and Kilindi – yet again, these differences were not explicitly part of the peasant's discourse. It seems that the difference between Kilindi and commoners was also not seen as one of rulers and ruled. Kilindi could also become commoners themselves, though Shambaa could not become rulers (Feierman 1974:153). The most obvious explanation, seeing the difference as defined by descent, is unsatisfying for it fails to explain what it was that distinguished the descendants of Mbegha from members of other descent-groups.

Evidence suggests that the difference was seen as something of a class distinction. A missionary asking for example sentences for his Shambaa dictionary was told “We all are *wakiwa* [poor persons], and they are *Wakilindi*” (LangHeinrich cited in Feierman 1990:52). Peasants had chances to accumulate wealth, for instance by turning to ivory hunting, healing or services at the royal court, or as porters and suppliers of caravans. A small amount of wealth in the form of livestock was part of every household in precolonial times (Kjekshus 1996:33). The increase of wealth was, in times of peace and for some even in times of war,⁴¹ an important impetus and even more so for accumulation was no end in itself, but “served another central aim, namely to earn social respect from and authority over (the labor of) as many people as possible” (Huijzendveld 2008:389). Property in forms of livestock or (since the late 19th century) cloth was highly valued. When Baumann (1890:168) passed through the mountains in 1888/89, before the introduction of colonial taxes, he found that there were many Shambaa willing to earn money through selling foodstuffs, livestock and offering services of portage.

Already in precolonial times, Shambaa farmers grew tobacco for trade⁴². Accumulation did, however, require the chief's consent. As soon as a peasant's riches became too visible, he faced the

nineteenth century to bring advantages in the dealings with coastal traders. Two of the three informants also exhibited dressing styles and behaviour typical for Swahili culture in which to be “Arab” was a marker of highest civilisation (cf. chapter 3.5).

⁴⁰ Additionally, Semboja was keen to possess, as he told the surprised Hungarian trader Samuel Teleki, “money, lots of money, hunting weapons, and medicine and not all that rubbish” (Höhnelt cited in Glassman 1995:50-51). By rubbish he meant the gifts which Teleki had offered him before – cloths, a pocket watch, gin and other assorted items. Semboja, however, opted for the most modern instruments of power like money, weapons and medical drugs, which, as he had already observed, put Europeans “at the apex of the newly emerging political economy” (Glassman 1995:51).

⁴¹ Oral traditions suggest that during the period of warfare in the late 19th century, some men migrated with their families to be “nearer to the war” – probably because the household heads made their living as soldiers (Feierman 1974:178-179).

⁴² So widespread and important was the trade of tobacco that preceding monetarisation, tobacco-cakes were the smallest

risk of the chief seizing all his cows (Feierman 1990:52-53). The chief could do so because s/he owned all the land. The power of chiefs and the king was dangerous and only beneficial when “the powerful person is given the land as his own” (Feierman 1990:48). Theoretically, the chief (or king) could take everything at all times, though in practice there were limits – the right to seize wealth was to be exercised moderately⁴³. These rights were ultimately taken from chiefs by the German administration, thus facilitating the independent production of large amounts of food surpluses (Kjekshus 1996:33).

Kilindi were respected for their superior knowledge of rain-charms and thus seen as responsible for the well-being of society⁴⁴. These assumptions were, however, continually contested by peasant rainmakers. In precolonial times, according to oral traditions, the encounter between Kilindi rainmakers and a peasant expert of rain medicines would usually end with the Kilindi buying the rain charms and killing the peasant, so that the Kilindi could remain with a monopoly of knowledge on rains (Karasek 1923 cited in Feierman 1990:99). A German settler exceptionally interested in local culture recorded the account of a peasant who was accused to challenge a Kilindi by holding back the rain:

The maize was drying up. Several men came to me and said, “You have been called to [the royal court of] Vugha.” Once there, I was held for several days. Then they opened the discussions with the question, “Why are you so dirty? Why is your hair so long? Are you, perhaps, holding back the rain?” [Long hair was in those days associated with ritual power.] I answered, “No!” The chief called out, “Grab hold of him. Shave his hair. If you shave him and it doesn't rain, he is innocent. If the hair falls and it rains, he is... holding back the rain.” They cut my long hair with a dull knife, without wetting it. As they did this a few drops of rain actually fell. I was required to pay a goat as a fine, and then allowed to go free.

(from Karasek 1923, cited in Feierman 1990:99-100)

This incident, if it had actually happened in that way, was a rare exception and the peasant could conceive of himself as a lucky devil to not have been killed. Possibly the incident also took place already in German times when killings were persecuted by colonial authorities. Alternatives and challenges to Kilindi hegemony will receive more scrutiny below (2.5). What should have been illustrated here first and foremost is that the difference between Kilindi and Shambaa was probably

unit in a regional system of exchange rates, with larger units being goats and cattle (Feierman 1974:132). Another crop of importance in trade was sugarcane (Huijzendveld 2008:391).

⁴³ The elder Mdoe Loti expressed deep scepticism about the concept of the chief / the king owning all the land in an interview in 1967: “The chief does not possess the land. He is deceived. It is not his land at all. It belongs to the people themselves. In this the king is like the healer” (cited in Feierman 1990:48-49). Feierman mentions that this sceptical view may stem from popular discussions about democracy in the 1950s, but supposes it does not.

⁴⁴ Though there were also “rainless lines,” such as Semboja's line. These chiefs still had to care for rain and send for other Kilindi to perform the ritual for them (Feierman 1990:150).

seen as an economic one, but even in this sphere – as in the spheres of descent and ritual power – Shambaa individuals often sought ways to override the difference. There is no evidence that they wanted to “become Kilindi,” but there is evidence that Shambaa peasants strove for wealth and occasionally also for ritual power.

2.4.3 Gender and age : Assigned roles in the political framework

The difference between male and female does not fit the definition of developmental difference supplied in the introductory chapter. In the discourse we are looking at, women are not considered more or less developed than men, or vice versa. The reason to include the male-female difference here anyway is that the political ideology excluded women from most of the activities that were decisive for the healing of the land, though we also have to remind ourselves that Feierman neglected women's perspectives (which might have differed from male versions of the discourse).

When the king was powerful and “covered over the land,” peasants experienced a “feminine farming season” (*kiima cha fyee*), meaning that harvest was abundant. If the king was challenged, there would be a “masculine farming season” (*kiimo cha ngoshi*), that is, famine (Feierman 1990:81). When Feierman suggested to his informants that the king thus had a feminine element, this suggestion was

invariably met with shocked disbelief with the Shambaa with whom I discussed kingship. A feminine farming season, they explained, came about when the King made all the other rain magicians into women. Male connotes powerful, superior, as opposed to female, which is weak, inferior. [...] A feminine farming season came about when, in Shambaa words, ‘there was only one man in the land.’

(Feierman 1972:376)

The relationship of the ruler towards his subjects was thus likened to the household relationship of a man towards his wife, or wives⁴⁵. The king of the land, like the man in the household, controlled all wealth. The archetypical man, the founding hero Mbegha, was said to have “made all Shambaa into women” (Feierman 1990:84).

Female activities were deemed to be regular, daily, repeated and predictable, carried out in the domestic sphere. The quintessentially female activity was cooking. Male activities were associated with unpredictability and decision-making, for instance mitigating cases in court, engaging in warfare or – the quintessentially male activity – hunting in the wilderness (Feierman 1990:82-83). In socioeconomic relations within Shambaa society men were able “to generate a cycle of

⁴⁵ Polygyny was common among the Shambaa and the Kilindi. Especially Kilindi rulers had many wives to build alliances and beget sons to rule the chiefdoms – Kimweri ye Nyumbai was said to have 300 wives (Feierman 1990:55, Baumann 1890:169).

accumulation, distribution and authority during their lifetime that gave them their specific dominant position” in the world of the living and beyond (Huijzendveld 2008:389).

The symbolic relations thus legitimized male domination in Shambaa society, where women were dependents of either their husbands or fathers (Feierman 1990:54). Even when a woman decided to leave her husband, she went to the (mostly male) chief for refuge (ibid.). Before proceeding, it needs to be noted that the unambiguous assignment of male and female to certain characteristics is an oversimplification. First, because symbols changed their meanings in different contexts of speech and ritual. Second, because some practices diverged from what I have just described. Kilindi women, by descent belonging to the strata of rulers and hence considered masculine to some extent, attended male initiation rites, were treated as men in some regards. In contrast to Shambaa women who were *taken* by men, Kilindi women *chose* their husbands themselves. In some villages during the precolonial period, numerous enough to be considered as more than rare exceptions, the chiefs were women (Feierman 1990:84, 86; Feierman 1974:113, 118). The presence of women chiefs stands in sharp contrast to the patriarchal political discourse as described by Feierman and I would suspect that this is not only due to ever-present deviances between ideals and reality, but also due to the methodological shortcoming to include women's views in his research⁴⁶. Moreover, male hegemony was reinforced and stabilized during the colonial period so that possible alternative discourses were sidelined and women ousted from all offices of public importance (cf. Shetler 2002, 2003).

Besides gender differences between men and women, the generational position within the family also greatly influenced if and how power could be played out. The strongly patriarchal system, evident in household leadership and rules of inheritance, also affected the king's ability to exercise authority in the chiefdoms. We have already seen how the kinship constellation of the royal family was seen to be a major determinant for a peaceful and fertile land or a land ridden by famine. Sons greatly feared acts to commit any acts of rebellion against fathers and uncles (who were also to be addressed as *ishe*, or “father”; Feierman 1974:32-33). To take account of the strong authority of the older generation is a precondition to understand the rationality of the cyclical framework of healed and harmed land, of conflict and unchallenged authority.

⁴⁶ A problem already indicated in the introductory chapter (1.2.2.2). Even for his later work *Peasant Intellectuals*, published in 1990, only a tiny fraction of the interviews was conducted with women. In total, 506 interviews conducted between 1966 and 1968 as well as 1979-1980 are quoted (Feierman 1990:301-309). My estimate is that not more than 10% of the interviews included women (that some informants were female is visible through first names and the indication daughter of / mother of). In the chapter entitled “Gender, Slavery, and Chiefship” (Feierman 1990:204-222), dealing with the postcolonial period, Feierman argues that the place of women in society was redefined only in debates of the 1950s, when women suddenly appeared as “full public citizens” and “autonomous public actors” (Feierman 1990:219). The chapter is almost exclusively built on external and archival sources.

2.5 Prescriptive concepts of development: Strategies to achieve a state of land healed

The prescriptions for a thriving, stable kingdom were crystal-clear. The king would have to “cover over the land”, regain total authority over all competitors. The most effective way to do so was installing his own sons in the chiefdoms. The political concept also implicated power-stabilizing options for the king's subjects to follow, though they were few. All the peasants could do to support healing the land is to express their loyalty with tribute, presents and labour for their Kilindi chief. The sovereign embodied the “unity of the entire territory [and] is expected to co-ordinate the responses of his subjects to change” (Feierman 1972:8).

We are facing here the problem of an elite bias in oral traditions. Historical reminiscence was part of the work of court officials, while local clan histories were suppressed (Roberts 1968:4). The discourse that I have depicted is first and foremost the world as the Kilindi liked to see it, because it was exclusively their actions which carried significance for the country's well-being (Feierman 1990:95). Huijzendveld (2008:389) draws attention to the advantage of a rigid order which precludes drastic change. In an agrarian economy, he says, changes are *per se* dangerous and in situations of crisis, when social cohesion was of preeminent importance, the stability of the political order better be legitimized.

2.5.1 Calling upon the chief's responsibility

Rituals of healing and rainmaking had existed before Kilindi rule, and the success of the Kilindi was that they secured their position as rainmakers, ousting local healers or heads of Shambaa descent-groups. The language of healing and harming the land had originally been the language of the peasantry and was put into use by Kilindi royals who had no political language of their own (Feierman 1990:80, 96-97). Thus, peasants theoretically always could appeal to the responsibilities of the ruler to protect and bring about fertility.

One alternative in the early colonial period was to apply the terms of the local discourse to the Germans who were seen as influential. In 1897, when cattle disease broke out near Vugha, a local leader made a proposal to the German missionary stationed at Vugha:

“Our livestock are dying [...] If we are under your protection, we will keep our livestock. I would like to give you a ewe, for you to care for, and so that one day you will have a herd of your own. Then if my animals die, so will yours; if I drink milk, so will you.”

(a Shambaa quoted in the diary of the Bethel mission, cited in Feierman 1990:48)

Giving a ewe was necessary as the missionary could only have an impact when he owned the wealth of the land, in this case represented in the ewe. In turn, the missionary was expected to increase the fertility of the land, provide food security and protect the population whose wealth he

owned (Feierman 1990:48-49). The strategy, though more for relief than for substantial change, was successful. The missionaries “brought in 100 loads of food a month. Mission stations swelled with those in need” (Feierman 1990:130).

The shared language between peasants and rulers also ensured that the meaning of terms could be contested at any time. Especially in (precolonial) times of discontent, peasants fostered and brought forward alternative thoughts and practices contributing to social well-being and improvements for (parts of) the population.

2.5.2 Alternative ways to heal the land

Peasants were not solely dependent on the king, or chief, or missionaries as alternative chiefs. Larger associations of fraternal groups and smaller groups centred around *kifu*, “a patrimonial fund for the well-being of all the dead man's sons and their progeny” (Feierman 1990:60). *Kifu* groups were life-giving institutions on the principles of collectivity, reciprocity and mutual aid providing funds for rituals and food in times of famine (Feierman 1990:59-64). In the hostile atmosphere of the 1870s and 1880s, when chiefs failed to guarantee security, *kifu* groups even took on the function of armed escorts to protect their members from slave raids (Feierman 1990:62, 68).

For food security, peasants also set up and maintained complex irrigation systems⁴⁷ entirely on their own, though it needs to be noted that king or chiefs were involved in mitigating conflicts arising over their use and some oral traditions ascribe this important innovation to the second Kilindi king, Mbegha's son Buge (Huijzendveld 2008:390). While *kifu* groups were more of a protective institution established in response to insecurity, irrigation systems resulted from concerted collective actions aimed at increased production. I would consider both as strategies for development, particularly the irrigation systems which were built and maintained by peasants. Both forms of organization survived into the colonial period, though the importance of *kifu* groups decreased due to the decreasing danger to be enslaved after the 1890s (one of the central functions of *kifu* groups had been to protect its members from enslavement).

A radically alternative path to social health was the rejection of Kilindi rule and a return to the rule of descent-groups and village elders. With their revolution in 1868, rebels from the neglected (or even exploited) eastern part of the kingdom in Bondei had in fact just done that – by rejecting the ideological proposition that the Kilindi were the prime factor for peasants' well-being⁴⁸. The

⁴⁷ German agricultural experts like Holst, Buchwald or Warburg admired the engineering skills of the Shambaa which encompassed several techniques and the utilisation of a variety of different materials. In 1900, irrigation systems with channels of several miles length were present in most of the Usambara mountains' agricultural areas (Kjekshus 1996:33; Huijzendveld 2008:390-391).

⁴⁸ Abdallah bin Hemedi 'IAjjemy (1962:Sura 169), who was in the area during the events, quotes the Bondei as complaining about the Kilindi in relation to the aspects which directly concerned the social contract. The complaints

Bondei, abolishing the institutions of kingships and chiefship, deliberately chose decentralization and small-scale polities. They made true the people's exclamation during the coronation ceremony which said that "You are our king, but if you do not feed us properly we will get rid of you" (cited in the introduction to this chapter).

Feierman saw the Bondei's return to elder rule as evidence that African societies may not only advance by integration and state-building processes: "they also may *progress*, under other circumstances, from kingship to statelessness, or from centralization to decentralization" (Feierman 1974:167, emphasis added). The term "progress" is surely anachronistic and I believe without a local equivalent, yet the idea of a better society and a better life through the change of a political system is not. Nor is it the last example of an alternative to chiefly rule and kingship which was brought forward in the region (see below). Obviously, the same thoughts must have existed during the German colonial period as well, only that the circumstances were clearly not favourable.

The decisive step of the people of Bondei in the 1870s had been to disassociate the concept of political power from the concept of ritual power for bringing the rains. While people of Bondei turned down Kilindi political rule, they did not stop making payments for Kilindi as rain-makers (Feierman 1990:95, 117, 138). But challenge in the realm of rituals was recorded elsewhere. Every now and then, individual healers tried to undermine the Kilindi monopoly on ritual power on the basis of personal charisma or knowledge acquired abroad. This encompassed not only rainmaking, but also rituals concerned with locusts, irrigation, treatment of epidemics, special relationships with spirits etc. (Feierman 1990:99). In 1911, 16 years after the "transfer" of *nguvu* (sovereign power) to the Germans, an incident took place in which a non-chiefly healer was able to make claims on a minor chief's followers and even the minor chief himself. The incident mirrored the alternative, heterodox view that rain medicines were to be respected wherever they were found – not necessarily in the hands of the Kilindi (Feierman 1990:101). Anybody could bring about change for the better.

A second alternative conception of the relation between health and society was that rainmaking altogether was questioned to be the primary source of social well-being. Instead, this radical position ran, it was first and foremost important "whether chiefly practices of enslavement and tribute collection were just, or whether they exploited peasants" (Feierman 1990:101). The same criticism was probably levied on the Germans in the form of an allegoric folk tale⁴⁹ in which an

were basically the following: The chief did not give refuge to the people, he judged arbitrarily, the chief's men seized food against the will of the peasants and robbed people on the road. Cf. Feierman 1990:118.

⁴⁹ The folk story was told to missionary Johanssen by a peasant in 1899, after one year of severe famine. It went like this: „Once upon a time there lived an enormous monster named Hunju who made all men his subjects. When he entered a town and made his demands, whether for cattle or people, he was given whatever he wanted. No one dared

immensely powerful monster which had “made all men his subjects” went too far with the exploitation of its weak subjects until it in the end destroyed itself (Feierman 1990:130; cf. the evaluation of Semboja's rule in section 2.3.2.2.). If the tale was indeed intended as a kind of warning, it shows a remarkable orientation towards the future; much against Mbiti's heavily criticized notion that “the African concept” of time would not encompass a noteworthy future dimension.

2.5.3 Healing the land in contrast to later development terminology

That colonial and postcolonial concepts of state-driven development were not congruent with the discourse of healing the land seems a trivial insight, but it is interesting to have a short look at the terms used. The difference becomes clear when we take look at the nationalist discourses of the 1950s and 1960s. When representatives of the nationalist movement TANU were talking of *maendeleo* – the word commonly used in Swahili for development, also meaning progress – the term used for development among the Shambaa was not “healing the land” (*kuzifya shi*). It was *kuzenga shi* (Feierman 1968:27), which means “to build”, like in building a house.

Apparently, the language of healing the land was avoided because it would have implied the acceptance of Kilindi rule and ethnic identification which stood against nationalist aims. Yet, the modernisers were strictly against the royals whom they considered backward. Already in the 1940s educated Shambaa had challenged re-installed Kilindi rule and couched their demands for education and material progress in the language of *maendeleo*, “progress,” instead of the patrimonial language of healing the land (Feierman 1990:143-145). Nevertheless, land (*shi*) was the very same unit for intervention in both discourses.

2.6 Conclusion : The inadequacies and transformations of Shambaa concepts of development

This case study focussed on the precolonial period and the early colonial years, the period of conquest violence. Forced labour and land alienation had a drastic impact on social relations in the

come near to him, and no town even made the attempt to drive him away, or to kill him with an arrow shot from afar. His size was indescribable, for when he went through the ocean he did not need so swim [...]. He used a giant tree as his toothbrushing-stick. One day when he was going through the land he entered a town and demanded a herd of cattle to eat. The terrified people pleaded that he have mercy on them: they could not give him the cattle, for they had none. Hunju became furious and accused them of hiding their cattle. He left in anger and resolved to make an example of the people, so no town would ever have the courage to hide something from him. He climbed a mountain and lifted a stone slab large enough to cover the whole town. He put it on his head and went down the mountain to flatten the town. God saw him going there and was displeased by the arrogance with which Hunju held himself to be God-like. God therefore made a hole at the spot where the slab rested on Hunju's head, so that it broke through with a terrible jolt and left the remainder resting on Hunju's shoulders. He tried in vain to lift the stone and pull his head through, to get rid of the load. It would not budge. As far as his eyes could see there was only stone slab; his hands could not bring food to his mouth. He spent three months without eating for he was enormously strong. When he then tried to rise to his feet he died. The load had killed him.”

Usambara mountains. The German administrative system entirely abolished local systems of patronage, jurisdiction and ritual power which had been severely disrupted already since the 1870s. (Huijzendveld 2008:396-400)

During the more liberal period of colonial policies, Shambaa peasants were able to regain some autonomy and produce food for immigrating plantations workers. It is unclear how ritual authority in rainmaking was played out in these years after 1905.

What we know for certain is that the concept of healing and harming the land has proved remarkably resilient through time, surviving from at least the mid-18th until the late 20th century in a variety of forms. What the concepts could not account for were external shocks and changes which had severe impacts on people living in the West Usambara Mountains. The caravan trade and German conquest serve as the two most outstanding examples. While the Kilindi were doubtlessly powerful in the West Usambara mountains, they were peripheral in relation to the coastal economy which they supplied with slaves and even more peripheral in the global process of unleashed forces of capitalism (Feierman 1990:106). For Shambaa peasants, plantation economy remained beyond the periphery of their world until German settlers occupied the West Usambara Mountains and demanded labour from the Shambaa.

The power struggle within decreased in importance in exchange for relations with traders and external allies. The more slaves and ivory one could secure, the more guns and gunpowder could be accumulated for success in warfare. In fact, the base of authority wandered “from the capacity to feed peasants to the capacity to trade” (Feierman 1990:114). Semboja, who was in the local discourse seen as a deviant ruler for breaching with the social contract of common interest of chief and subjects was the first Kilindi to take advantage of trade relations. From a Western perspective, he is seen as an “innovator” (Feierman 1974:144), moving down from the mountains to the plains in order to create a trading post at Mazinde. This enabled him to attract traders and secure his authority through slave raids and the purchase of guns. Until the end of the 19th century, most of the chiefs in the region had followed this destructive innovation in social organization, shifting the power base from cultivating followers to trade relations with outsiders, so that when the Germans arrived “the community of interest between chiefs and subjects within Shambaa was destroyed” (Feierman 1974:171). Despite these radical changes, the concepts of healing and harming the land with their focus on internal power conflicts continued to inform explanations of the situation so that the disorder was still interpreted as caused by tensions among the Kilindi.

However, the terms of healing the land and harming the land were “not used as descriptions of unvarying patterns of political action”, which means that they would have precluded any possibility of political action, “but as categories of explanation and legitimation” (Feierman 1972:387).

Peasants reacted on the changes they perceived, such as famine, injustice and insecurity so that during German colonial rule the interpretations of what (had) happened were deeply contested. At the same time, there were also internal innovations.

The concepts of healing the land and harming the land continued to serve as explanations of rain and drought and informed political action even after independence, when chiefship had already been abolished (Feierman 1972:398-402). Other concepts, however, always existed and came to the fore under certain circumstances, in transformed and adapted versions. Peasants did not only appeal to their ruler for their well-being, but also created complex irrigation systems, established groups for mutual support and turned to missionaries during famine. Sometimes, peasants claimed ritual power or, as in the case of the Bondei, returned to elder rule as a polity.

Though I hope to have shown the content, practical use and some transformations of Shambaa development concepts, some questions – especially those on developmental differences between different groups – could not be fully answered with the sources which were available to me.

The next chapter will have much more to say on constructions of difference. Swahili poets were very productive in the German colonial period and presented their views of colonial conquest and rule, judging the events by their own ideals of civilization, urban development and political rule. Their poems are rich in perceived differences between coasters and inlanders, between Swahili society and the German invaders.

3. CIVILIZED URBAN LIFE: DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS OF SWAHILI POETS

<i>kwa hivino nandikavo</i>	This is what I am writing,
<i>kuja ona kamba sivo</i>	you might see it to be wrong,
<i>navandika nionavo</i>	[but] I simply write what I see
<i>katika wako ulua.</i>	in the time of your rule.

Unknown author (7.O/100)⁵⁰

Swahili poems of German rule have been largely neglected in historiography and hardly used for the reconstruction of contemporary ideas and discourses. To us, the poems are valuable because they constitute sources of a nature which the “document-starved historian” (Glassman 1995:22) of German colonialism and Tanzanian societies does rarely find. They are indigenous representations of the events until 1914, written by contemporary observers or at times even dedicated participants of events in German East Africa. From the representations of the past in these poems, we will be able to abstract development concepts because, as an anthropologist put it, “representing how things were, we draw a social portrait, a model which is a reference list of what to follow and what to avoid” (Tonkin 1995:1).

Swahili poets evaluated the German invasion and colonial rule according to their own religious, social and political ideals. The ideals – development concepts, one may say – most frequently concern the beauty and security of urban space, justice and rule of law, military power and discipline. All of these ideals had already existed before the coast was forcefully subjected to European rule and were now applied to the Germans as well (Bromber 2003b:73). The conceptions were then used to praise and criticize German rule, to give “a reference list of what to follow and what to avoid” (Tonkin 1995:1). Some technological novelties were reason for astonishment and admiration.

In the face of imposed alien rule, poets also had to re-negotiate their self-image as civilized and superior town-dwellers following Islam. The negative image of the barbarian, savage Other – the pagan *washenzi* from upcountry regions – remained quite stable. These dichotomous categories of Swahili poets fit well with European conceptions of civilization and rural backwardness. This and a shared appreciation of discipline and education facilitated the cooperation between learned Swahili scholars and German colonial administrators. Yet, some poets also cast a critical eye on German

⁵⁰ The shorthand references like A.1/5, B.2/14 etc. refer to the poem guide in the bibliography. The number behind the slash indicates the stanza in which the quote is found. The reference system follows Mieke et al. 2002. The English translations of all poems referred to with these numbers are taken from the same volume.

practices of rule and knowledge collection, regretted the devalued prestige of the Swahili noble society and prayed for divine intervention.

3.1 The development of historiographical poetry on the Swahili coast: *tenzi* and *mashairi*

Utenzi (pl. *tenzi*, narrative poetry) and *shairi* (pl. *mashairi*, poems following a certain form⁵¹) are the two genres of Swahili poetry in which we find information on historical events and development concepts. The *utenzi* form is usually didactic in content and serves to transmit knowledge about religion, moral behaviour and history. Poems in *shairi* form are more diverse in content, but mostly contain praises of religious heroes, rulers or friends. Compared to *tenzi*, they are usually much shorter. The origins of both date back at least to the seventeenth century when religious subjects and epic narratives were localised (Saavedra Casco 2007:56). Localisation here refers to the aspects of language and content. Concerning language, the increased utilisation of Swahili permitted popularisation since Arabic was only known by members of the *ulama*, the learned sector of Swahili Muslim communities. In content, there was a marked shift from religious topics to the depiction of secular events. Going back to Muslim historiographic traditions of epic poems about Muhammad and chronicles (*habari*), we should note that any instance of *utenzi* poetry – no matter if religious or secular – claims to narrate “a true story, don't think it's a joke” (2.A/6; Saavedra Casco 2007:36-37).

Europeans who arrived in East Africa in the second half of the nineteenth century found in East Africa

“a strong, flourishing, multidimensional oral tradition, combining prose and poetry, and a written tradition that was heavily biased towards homiletic verse. This literature coincided directly with a distinct ethnicity [...] and concentrat[ed] on themes that were directly or indirectly tied to their socio-cultural milieu.”

(Mazrui / Shariff 1994:93)

The colonial encounter did not suppress Swahili poetry. Rather, it “served as an impetus for a fresh organic progression of the literature of the Swahili people” (Mazrui / Shariff 1994:94). Notably, the administrators of German East Africa were unable (and most of the time unwilling) to make German the colony's official language⁵². Quite on the contrary, they relied on Swahili which added

⁵¹ Notably, each stanza contains four verses, with each verse being divided in the middle by a caesure (*kituo*). If written “correctly”, each line contains two rhymes and sixteen syllables. The whole stanza thus contains eight rhymes and sixty-four syllables (Saavedra Casco 2007:21-22). For more details on the form of *mashairi*, see also Mieke et al. 2002:34.

⁵² Pike (1986) argues that East Africans responded to and resisted German language imperialism. This seems exaggerated as German policies always contained “pragmatic” pro-Swahili elements and in the colony itself language

to the language's prestige and was conducive to Swahili poetry. That a large corpus of poems from the German colonial period has survived can be attributed to the expansion of Muslim education supported by Zanzibar sultans, higher levels of literacy and the resulting increased production of poems' manuscripts, as well as the interest of Western scholars in Swahili language and culture (Saavedra Casco 2007:78). Between 1889 and 1907 (the period in which the poems were composed and the period the poems mostly deal with), the poets seem to have approximated European concepts of writing. This is exemplified in the secularised form of the poems, evident in fewer references to Islam (in comparison to precolonial poems), as well as eulogistic expressions praising German rule. Both aspects are probably mainly caused in the relation between the poets and the Germans, and the role that the creation of poems was to play between them. As some Western scholars also encouraged rather mediocre poets to compose for them, the two genres of *utenzi* and *shairi* sometimes got mixed up (Miehe et al. 2002:31). For this reason and to spare the reader further confusion, I will henceforth simplify and only speak of poems.

On the time context, we need to emphasize that the poems we are looking at were written between 1889, when the coast was strongly resisting German invasion, and 1907. The period until 1907 was marked by wars of conquest first on the coast and later increasingly in the inland. Some 84 armed conflicts have been counted between 1888 and 1905 (Schicho 2004:313). Colonial rule during these years can be thus be termed “military despotism” (Wirz 2003:12), only afterwards shifting towards civil administration⁵³.

3.2 The poets

Although all the poems should be read as works of individuals, there are some commonalities in the poets' backgrounds. We do not have information on all authors, and some manuscripts were unsigned. Nevertheless, it is safe to state that the composers whose poetry is discussed in this chapter were followers of Islam⁵⁴, represented some of the most educated people of their time⁵⁵ and

imperialism could hardly be felt as such. As Pike himself writes: “By using the “Arab” coast as their base of power, and the coastal language [Swahili] as lingua franca, they made the spread of their own language and culture virtually impossible” (Pike 1986:224). A German contemporary observer is quoted saying that even in 1914, “[n]one of the Africans which one meets is able to answer any questions posed in German” (Follmer cited in Pike 1986:201). A response or even resistance is thus unlikely and motives for the utilisation of Swahili need be sought, in addition to the *favourable* German policy, primarily in internal dynamics.

⁵³ Cf. Koponen 1994:114-116. Until 1905, only the coastal districts and Langenburg (near Lake Nyasa) were run by civilians. All other district administrations were military posts.

⁵⁴ The first major Christian Swahili poet in Tanzania was Mathias Mnyampala (Mulokozi / Sengo 1995:47). He was born in 1919, when Tanganyika had already ceased to be a German protectorate.

⁵⁵ Being among the most educated does not imply imperial wealth: “I'm Hemedi, the poet, bin Abdallah elBuhriy. / I'm a poor man / not well off in the world.”(1.E/626) A genuinely favourable position of the poets is doubtful (Miehe et al.

with one exception⁵⁶ they all maintained relations to German colonial officials like Carl Velten (Miehe et al. 2002:89-95). Carl Velten, who was a Swahili scholar, is mentioned in several poems – e.g. as a translator during the hearing of leaders of the coastal rebellion which led to their execution (3.A/21), or as a friend who has promised the poet a fine watch in exchange for the composition of the poem (2.D/17, 24-27; Velten 1907:442). Mwenyi Shomari bin Mwenyi Kambi, Mwalimu Mbaraka bin Shomari and others were directly employed by the Germans as administrative subordinates or teachers. Mtoro bin Mwinyi Bakari al Shirazi taught at the Colonial Institute in Hamburg and the Seminar of Oriental Languages in Berlin (Velten 1903:V). Hence it is not surprising to find many favourable portrayals of German rule and individuals – though these could also contain irony and criticism (Miehe et al. 2002:44; Saavedra Casco 2007:87).

Furthermore, relations between poets and Germans were fluid and many-faceted and cannot be meaningfully described in terms as crude as resistance and “bootlicking.” Some poets⁵⁷ are known to have actively engaged in resistance against German invasion or movements opposing colonial rule. This does not exclude that the same individuals also entertained relations to German scholars or administrators. Of Abdel Karim bin Jamalidini, two poems are known – which have been controversially interpreted as belonging to both “resistance” or “eulogistic” poetry (Miehe et al. 2002:91). He was teacher in a Koranic school, as other poets; and belonged to a strata of militant revivalist Muslims who opposed both German rule and orthodox Islam (cf. Bromber 2003:75; Saavedra Casco 2007:268-271). Abdel Karim bin Jamalidini was denounced by his brother, a defender of orthodox Islam and a high official in the town of Lindi. He was then put into prison (where he probably composed his most famous poem) in 1910 and eventually died waiting for the trial. We need to bear in mind that German presence on the East African coast, in contrast to remoter areas, was too potent as to be ignored: Whoever objects, a poet remarked, “will have a rope around his neck” (7.D/6). As elsewhere in Africa, subjection and alliance-building was also seen as an option to ensure survival and freedom for oneself or the social group one belonged to (cf. Boahen 1987:41-57; and more specifically for the case of the poets, Saavedra Casco 2007:253).

Carl Velten and other scholars were eager collectors of Swahili tales and poems. In circulars or personal letters he asked for contributions, or simply went himself to places where stories and poems were told (Velten 1903:V). Anonymous senders criticised German nosiness and the

2002:87; cf. 7.L/30).

⁵⁶ This exception is Hemedi bin Abdallah el-Buhry. Of course, we don't know anything about the background of the anonymous authors save the information disclosed in their submitted poems.

⁵⁷ This is documented for Abdel Karim bin Jamalidini, Hemedi bin Abdallah el-Buhry and Mkanda bin Mwenyi Mkuu (Miehe et al. 2002:89-94).

consummation of the coast's "valuable knowledge" (6.C/2; Mische et al. 2002:95). When Velten asked in a Swahili circular letter for riddles, proverbs, narratives and poems, one response read: *Mazungumzo mwataka, na riai kupitikia*, "You want entertainment, at the expense of your subjects" (cited in Pike 1986:216; cf. Velten 1903:V). Considering that the editing of this period's poems was done exclusively by Europeans, more critical poems might have also existed, but remained unpublished⁵⁸. Many more were most likely recited orally in private circles and were never heard by the Germans.

All of the authors considered here were male. Although women were very active in the composition and recitation of poems in general, and are until today considered the "custodians and makers of the best Swahili poetry" (Saavedra Casco 2007:58), they are renowned mostly for exclusively female genres like wedding songs and chants for spirit cult dances (ibid.). There is, so far, no evidence of a contemporary woman's poem on events during the German colonial period and due to the gendered nature of the Swahili poetic genres it is unlikely that *mashairi* or *tenzi* were composed by females.

3.3 Towns, benevolent rule and justice: Descriptive development concepts of Swahili poets

The geographical and sociocultural setting has to be mentioned once more. A social historian has managed to put the essential features in a few sentences:

The Swahili coast is a string of towns and their dependent villages stretching from southern Somalia to just south of the Tanzania-Mozambique border, including the offshore islands of Zanzibar, Pemba and Mafia. For the best part of a millenium these communities have been linked by a common language and culture, well-developed commercial networks, and spordic political alliances and rivalries. The shared culture is literate and Muslim, its most distinctive attributes reflecting the maritime and mercantile life of the towns' leading citizens.

(Glassman 1995:29)

Poetry was a vital part of Swahili identity, a source of prestige and status and even political power (Saavedra Casco 2007:31, 43-44). Swahili poetry had since the 18th century included openly political works "inciting people to rebel against the Arab overlords [...] or to defend their particular cities against attacks" (Mulokozi / Sengo 1995:76; my emphasis). The historiographical poems written in the German colonial period similarly are concerned with the overthrow or stabilisation of rule, defence of cities and improvements of urban space. The well-being of a town was associated with the ruler, and vice versa. What we also find are many statements about justice and equality,

⁵⁸ An indication for this speculation is that Velten waited with the publication of some poems he had collected before 1907 until German East Africa was taken by the English and the Belgians. The tremendous collections of Swahili literature gathered by Carl Velten and J.W.T. Allen probably have been destroyed during World War II during attacks on Berlin and the island of Jersey, respectively (Saavedra Casco 2007:94; Allen 1959:224).

qualities that were crucial to Swahili poets. Most of them saw discipline and submission as a result of physical violence. Corporate punishment was feared, but in some cases seen as useful means to secure peace and correct misbehaviour. Again, this evaluation was based on perceptions that had existed prior to German rule. What was radically new was that severe punishments in public also befell on persons of high social standing, a change that complied with ideals of justice but at the same time deeply irritated some poets.

3.3.1 The ruler's towns

Any development in the Swahili poets' eyes during the German colonial period had to be urban development. If there was progress or deterioration, if there were meaningful events to be told about, the setting was a town or the coast, whereas the coast was imagined as multitude of towns⁵⁹ (e.g., 5.A:4). The distinctly urban character of Swahili culture had developed also as a result of long-distance trade over centuries, and those Tanganyikan inland societies which joined in the caravan trade in the 19th century also increasingly became exposed to Islam, literacy, sophisticated technology and the Swahili language (Iliffe 1979:77). The ideal of coastal towns was shared for example by the Yao chief Mataka who rejoiced after having rebuilt his capital: "Now I have changed Yao so that it resembles the coast" (cited in Iliffe 1979:78). Mkwawa of Uhehe divided his capital in quarters named after coastal towns, while Kilindi chiefs of Usambara succeeded in learning to write Swahili in Arabic characters and constructed a quarter near their capital in coastal style to accommodate outsiders (ibid.; Feierman 1990:114, 116).

Swahili poets did not take note of these rather superficial imitations of coastal townscapes upcountry. But they were concerned with the prestige of their own towns, as we will see first at the example of two poems. The first one was written in 1888 during the coastal rebellion against the German invasion, at a time when it was all but clear that the East African coast would be subjected. In 1888, German presence in East Africa was pushed back to some isolated fringes of the coast. In fact, the author himself was involved as a magician on the side of Abushiri, the Germans' fiercest opponent in 1888/1889 (Iliffe 1979:93-96). The poem was, contrary to most of the others we will deal with here, *not* written for or submitted to the Germans. After German conquest, it apparently circulated only among Hemedi bin Abdallah's close relatives and friends "to avoid any possible reprisals against him and his family", possibly it was also known among different members of the educated elite (Saavedra Casco 2007:159). Thus, as was standard in his and others' poems of the *utenzi* genre (cf. ibid.), he included 44 stanzas concerned with God, Muhammad as well as Muslim

⁵⁹ A significant exception to this rule are narratives of German conquest and subjection of inland societies.

heroes. The eulogistic part concerning Sultan Khalifa under consideration here is but a small fraction of this epic poem which narrates the events of the coastal rebellion.

The German interest in conquest of the East African coast is staged by Hemedi bin Abdallah as follows: The German ruler receives notice from his nervous advisors (“scholars and monks”, 1.E/47) that Europe would soon be torn by a devastating war. The advisors counsel the Sultan to conquer the Swahili coast so as to gain a safe place to live. The ruler calls upon experienced merchants and travellers to tell him about the ruler of the Swahili coast and the awe-inspiring town of Zanzibar. All the praise of the Zanzibari town thus has to be imagined coming out of the mouths of experienced German seafaring men⁶⁰.

The second poem is an anonymously composed eulogy of German rule, the Kaiser and his capital Berlin. It was written some 6 years after Hemedi bin Abdallah's account of the coastal rebellion. The eulogistic poem from 1894 imagined the Kaiser's town by Swahili standards. Despite the different intentions of the poems and the different towns portrayed, the imagery of urban magnificence is strikingly similar. An astonishing number of symbolisms and ideals referring to the improvement of urban space can almost identically be identified in those sections of Hemedi bin Abdallah's earlier narrative poem in which Sultan Khalifa's Zanzibar is praised through the words of a German traveller.

Ideal	1.D <i>Utungo wa Habari ya Mrima</i> Unknown author (1894)	1.E <i>Utenzi wa Vita vya Wadachi Kutalamaki Mrima 1307 A.H.</i> Hemedi bin Abdallah (ca. 1889)⁶¹
<i>Greatness of the city</i> 1.D/3 1.E/138	And his capital city is Berlin, this is where this king resides, and this city is in fact full of rich people.	Bwana, let me inform you, about the town of Zanzibar, whenever I think of it, it surpasses all other towns.
<i>Beauty of the buildings</i> 1.D/8 1.E/130	And the town of that King is really well built, with building of various kinds they have covered all the town.	His town is graced with the beauty of its buildings. [...]
<i>Fortification</i> 1.D/12 1.E/126	How he surrounded it with a wall, with cannons place on its towers [...]	And the city is built [with a wall] on which cannons are mounted [...]

⁶⁰ Reported speech is used by Swahili poets as a rhetorical device to increase credibility (role of historian) and add vitality (role as poet) to their works (Bromber 2003b:82, Biersteker 1996:174). It also gives them the possibility to include critical views and assign them to other actors, that is, to “avoid possible accusation of having made a controversial statement” (Biersteker 1996:174).

⁶¹ For extensive information on the author Hemedi bin Abdallah and this particular work, see also Mieke et al. 2002:90, Saavedra Casco 2007:148-171 and Mulokozi / Sengo 1995:28-29.

<i>Population</i> 1.D/15 1.E/126	The number of people that meet there like a flight of Golden Weaver changing daylight into darkness due to such a gathering.	[...] and masses of people surround it [the wall] as many as leaves
<i>Warships</i> 1.D/12 1.E/129	[...] and the ocean very close to it where warships are ready waiting.	And how many warships are there on Zanzibar? It would shame you to tell for you would lose count.
<i>Decoration</i> 1.D/10 1.E/132, 184	He has adorned the city with valuable decorations and the King's palace is beyond my description. The whole palace appears glittering you may take it to be a certain star and lamps cover all the walls and how wonderful they shine!	His town is clean. It shines with bright lights. The Sultan's palace, who can fail to notice it, with its beautiful adornments and how it is orderly kept.

Figure 4. Abstract ideals of a town as represented in two poems

Technological superiority in the form of warships (*manowari*) was especially important to inhabitants of the coast to depict sovereignty and security. Before German conquest, British warships had been patrolling the coast as a matter of anti-slave trade campaigns. German gunboat diplomacy and outright bombings of Bagamoyo town were known at least to the author of the later poem. I have omitted in the above analysis other symbols of military power such as soldiers, guns, swords and cannons since these are not particular to towns and refer more to powerful rule in general, if on the coast or elsewhere (cf. Bromber 2003b:79).

Importantly, in both descriptions, the town is the ruler's town. It belongs to the Sultan and he is the one responsible for its improvement and the improvement of the inhabitants' lives. This is again a common motif in coastal historical consciousness. Founding myths and chronicles of Swahili towns tell about times when kings came to the coast and established towns, or significantly changed the character of existing settlements. Coastal traders going inland would always say to have entered the "town of Sultan so-and-so" (Pesek 2005:79; Middleton 1992:30-31).

On the Tanganyikan coast, there is an excellent historical example of a ruler actually wanting to build a town. That is the scheme of urban development which was developed by Sultan Majid of

Zanzibar, as early as 1862⁶². For commercial and political reasons, Majid planned to shift his residence from Zanzibar to a sleepy yet attractive spot called Mzizima on the mainland coast where the local population mainly lived on farming, fishing, boat-building and slave trade (Brennan / Burton 2007:14). The geographical conditions of the bay were perfect to construct a harbour. After the local leaders (*majumbe*) had agreed to allow the Sultan to settle, building materials were shipped to the site with the help of an imported steam-tug from Hamburg, and construction works for the Sultan's palace and officials' quarters finally began in 1865 or 1866 under Majid's personal supervision. Land was given for free to attract people who were urgently needed as labourers and food suppliers. Majid encouraged Arabs from Hadramaut (in today's Yemen) and Indian traders to establish coconut plantations and trading houses. In order to turn the new colony into a booming commercial trading centre, novel caravan routes into the interior and a road stretching northwards and southwards along the coast were projected. As an observer remarked later, "it was an ambitious scheme of colonisation, and the more interesting because it was an Arab scheme" (Coupland cited in Cadiz 1946:79)⁶³.

As so many other development schemes that were to follow in the twentieth century, Sultan Majid's plan was a complete failure. The main problem proved to be shortage of labour, since multitudes of slaves simply escaped and settled with the local population. Majid died in 1870 and his brother Bargash, who succeeded him, showed no interest to complete the project, leaving the half-built walls of the palace to be overgrown by vines and populated by goats. "[L]ike an Arab woman in rags in the ruined home of her former husband," a French missionary wrote in 1886, "Dari Salama appears to mourn its isolation and poverty" (cited in Burton / Brennan 2007:18). The "Harbour of Peace", or Dar es Salaam, as the town was called, was left to decay by the succeeding Zanzibari rulers. Despite imperial neglect, Dar es Salaam and the older settlements surrounding it grew in economic importance as a rice-supplier to Zanzibar and population continually increased – though without being a locus of imperial power, without prestigious buildings and ignored by Swahili poets⁶⁴. They were to pay attention to Dar es Salaam only when the Germans relocated their

⁶² This section is based on Cadiz 1946:79, Velten 1907:289-294, Brennan / Burton 2007:14-19, Becher 1997:28-29; also confer Fabian 2007:448-450.

⁶³ Denoting the scheme as "Arab" is misleading. According to Becher (1997:28), scheme and implementation closely resembled Islamic traditions of urban development as they can be found in North African and Arabic towns as well. The influence of European and even US-American "advisors" also influenced activities and thoughts at the Zanzibari court, though their role in this project is unclear. (ibid., Cadiz 1946:78, Velten 1907:290). For a broad discussion of the essentialising and distorting aspects of the term "Arab" in the East African context, cf. Mazrui / Shariff 1994:27-41.

⁶⁴ The anonymous Swahili account about Dar es Salaam in Velten's volume dedicates but two sentences to the time between Majid's death and the arrival of the Germans, mentioning laconically that Zanzibar continued to rule over the area (Velten 1907:292).

administrative centre from Bagamoyo to Dar es Salaam and activities of town-improvement and beautification were to take place.

In the German period, poets described coastal towns like Tanga, Pangani, Saadani, Bagamoyo and Dar es Salaam as built “in a style you'll see them always shining” with “very beautiful houses”, especially Dar es Salaam “that looks European” (1.G/36-38; cf. 3.A/15). The beauty of the houses is no end in itself, for it makes the heart go faster, “satisfies your inner self” and pleases the soul (7.O/39; 1.G/45; 7.F/123). The governor's house was so beautifully decorated that “you would like to lick it” when looking at it (7.O/41).

The verbs that are most frequently used to describe the improvement of the town(s) as a whole are *-tengeneza* (e.g., 1.D/33, 3.A/16, 7.F/8, 7.F/57) and *-tulia* (e.g. 1.D/37, 1.E/610, 7.F/57, 7.O/91). *Tengeneza* is translated in Mieke et al. (2002) as “develop”, “prepare.” The verb may also mean⁶⁵ “repair” or “fix”, which seems appropriate as well if we consider the several battles and fights between German troops and rebels which killed dozens and hundreds of people, severely damaged the structures of the towns and rocked social hierarchies⁶⁶. Fittingly, to “calm down” or “come to peace” are possible translations of the second verb related to German presence in towns, *tulia*. The causative verb extension *-eza* (or *-iza*) was used if the development or the bringing of calm was said to be caused by somebody or something. Swahili poets credited a district officer (1.D/33), Governor von Schele (7.F/57, 7.F/128) or Governor von Wissmann (3.A/16) for calmed and developed, or at least re-constructed and improved, towns.

Yet, Germans were also blamed for devastation, death and destruction in the towns when the preceding invasion and conquest were described (1.C/8, 1.D/32, 1.E/347). The “founding violence” of colonialism (Mbembe 2001:25) had struck the coastal towns with full force and could not easily be forgotten⁶⁷. “Leaving the towns” was a figure used when the chaos of invasion and rebellion was described. To be forced to go to leave town symbolised to be in disorder, to be disrupted from normal life (1.A/43; 1.E/599, 6.C/12). One poet blamed the comfortable urban lifestyle of precolonial times for the unwillingness of some citizens to resist the invasion:

⁶⁵ This is highly speculative and may fit only the poetic context. Swahili native speakers I talked to in 2012 translated *kutengeneza* in relation to town or city indubitably as “to develop” and could not think of any other meaning. The term may also have a reconstructive meaning (personal communication with Katrin Bromber, 26 Nov 2012).

⁶⁶ We should not assume that hierarchies in Swahili towns were stable prior to German invasion. In fact, Glassman (1995) has shown that quite the opposite is true.

⁶⁷ A historical account about Dar es Salaam, submitted to Velten, describes the process of founding violence and ensuing peace through total subjection: *Na halafu alipokuja Magogoni, akatia moto, hatta ikiwa amani. Wahahokumu Wazungu, na watu kuwafunga, ndipo walipotii. Tena wengine huja pekeyao kuangukia, wakapewa amani.* (cited in Velten 1907:296).

- 1.C/16 *kuna wengine wanyonge* Among us were the weaklings
 wakiwambia majumbe: who quickly implored the chiefs:
 “tafazalini madiwani “Please, *Diwanis*,
 heri kuangukia; it's better to surrender.
- 1.C/17 *sisi hatuna imara* We lack the will and strength to fight
 siku nyingi pigana softened by not being engaged in war too
 humo katika biladi, [and] living in the comforts of the towns
 rohoni hofu zimeingia.” [long] we have lost courage and bravery.”

In another poem, political leaders of the coast were said to have told the leader of the rebellion:

- 1.E/375 *Mali na nafasi zetu* Our property and our lives
 twafidia nti yetu we pledge to our country.
 sisi kwenenda na mwitu But we are not accustomed
 hayo hatukuzoea to live in the forest.

Notably, progress is assigned to Germans only in poems of a more or less eulogistic character, while chaos and disorientation as caused through the invasion are found in poems of all intentions. Next to developing and calming, some poets mentioned Germans to have “built” towns (-*jenga*, 1.F/37), meaning the construction of buildings, and to have eliminated miseries such as hunger:

- 1.D/36 *toka mjini kukaa* Since they have settled in town
 nti inatoka baa, the country is free from calamity.
 na vyakula vinajaa There is plenty of food
 kwa kula shei tayari. and everything is ready.

Towns being the poets' place of residence and anchor of identity, it is not surprising that they paid much attention to German activities in the towns. Moreover, it was the coastal towns that felt these influences first and most clearly, since administrative, economic and military resources of the colony were concentrated at and directed to the coast and its hinterland, especially until 1905. European fantasies of arranging and regulating towns, of “putting them in order”, were implemented most intensively in the coastal towns of Tanga and Dar es Salaam (Speitkamp 2005:111; Becher 1997; Pesek 2005:20; Middleton 1992:80).

In the economic realm, another anonymous poet noted that the trade routes towards the interior were secured so that they had access again to “profit and wealth / which will benefit us” (7.N/8). Others lamented that the Germans had “opened the eyes” of the inland people for the “real value” of things, so that profits were now very meagre (Velten 1907).

Of course, colonial officials and European immigrants were first and foremost eager to secure bare necessities. Famines were a serious problem in early German East Africa. Cattle plague (1893-95) and the protracted drought of 1897-98, combined with a locust plague, severely affected the coastal

That the water-pipes were additionally qualified to come from Europe apparently serves as a marker of quality and is one of the rare instances in which we can suspect that a poet saw a superiority of Europe. However, abundant water supply in Zanzibar town was already ascribed to Sultan Khalifa in a very similar fashion by Hemedi bin Abdallah in 1889:

- | | | |
|---------|--|---|
| 1.E/130 | <i>na mto ameutimba
maji mjini hungia</i> | And he [Sultan Khalifa] has dug a stream
to provide it with water. |
| 1.E/131 | <i>Mto u ndani ya mji
kula utakapo maji
kusema hakuhitaji
wendapo utajinywea</i> | A stream is inside the town.
Whenever you want water
you don't need to ask for it.
You drink it wherever you go. |

That Swahili poets assigned urban improvements to German influence may also reflect the fact that most of the projects were state-led rather than arising from (foreign or local) capital investment (Brennan / Burton 2007:21). This is especially true of the towns Tanga and “European-looking” Dar es Salaam. Bagamoyo retained a leading commercial role as the endpoint of trade routes until the railway from Dar es Salaam to the interior made caravans obsolete (cf. Fabian 2007; Iliffe 1979:137), but still it is not explicitly mentioned as site of improvement in the poems – possibly a sign for the town's decreasing significance in contrast to Dar es Salaam's growing importance.

Yet, to live in the midst of all these state-driven urban improvements along the coast did not imply one also profited from it. Apart from roads and water and sanitation projects, few positive effects reached non-European quarters of the towns (Speitkamp 2005:11; Becher 1997:41, 71) We also need to remember that educated men, despite a high social standing, were not necessarily well-off. Poet Mzee bin Kidogo bin Ilqadiri invites us to observe him on the verge of finishing his latest poem in his modest home:

- | | | |
|--------|--|--|
| 3.A/34 | I thought by myself.
Me and my wife
Whilst I am writing
When the food is ready, | I gave this [poem] from my heart.
were sitting in a shabby house.
my wife is cooking.
we sit down to eat. |
|--------|--|--|

3.3.2 Benevolent and harmful rule

Just as in perceptions of urban improvement, Swahili poets applied already existing images of “good” and “bad” rule on the Germans as well as African political leaders (Bromber 2003b:73; on perceptions of good and bad rule among caravan traders, see Pesek 2005:79-80). Benevolent rule encompassed unchallenged power, justice, the improving of the subjects' lives and also the ruler's ability of self-control. The negative image of the benevolent ruler is the tyrant, personalised in the Hehe ruler Mkwawa. He was considered to be “full of ignorance” (*ujinga*; 2.D:31)⁶⁹. Mkwawa had

⁶⁹ Ascribing ignorance to inlanders, no matter if rulers or commoners, was a typical trait of coastal culture. I will deal

annihilated German garrisons and killed the military officer Emil von Zelewski, also called “hammer” (*nyundo*). Swahili poets grudgingly gave him credit for military power, but did not go out of their way to portray him as a good ruler. He may be “a hero from the mainland,” but, the disqualifier promptly followed, “his Empire was the bush” (*ushenzini*, 2.D:33, 34); and “[t]hough he is a Sultan there are nobler [Sultans] than him” (2.D:38). He “reigned for years”, “without opposition”, extracting tribute from his followers in the form of food (2.A:27) – this was “his way of peace” (*salama*; 2.A:28). If you failed to give tribute, Mkwawa “burns down your town, and you lose your life”⁷⁰ (2.A:30). Mkwawa's eventual defeat was reflected upon in a commissioned work by Mbaraka bin Shomari, a close friend of Carl Velten. To describe Mkwawa's basic mistake, he employed the metaphor “to play with the ocean”. The “ocean” may correspond to the coast understood as Swahili coast, or also as the place of origin of the militarily powerful Europeans (who all arrived by boat). Definitely, the ocean – as a contact zone – is seen as a place enabling wider connections and more knowledge than the isolated, constricting space of the imagined bush.

2.D/34	<i>hakika ni sultani,</i> <i>dola yake ushenzini,</i> <i>ana hikima gani</i> <i>ya kucheza na bahari?</i>	Truly he is a Sultan [but] his Empire was the bush. What wisdom did he have to play with the ocean?
2.D/35	<i>alizani bahari</i> <i>kana misli ya bari,</i> <i>anaposhikwa na hari</i> <i>kivuli kimsitiri.</i>	He thought that the ocean is like the mainland. If he feels hot and sweating, shade would shelter him.
2.D/36	<i>lao kana ajua kweli</i> <i>bara na bahari mbali</i> <i>wala haina kivuli</i> <i>cha muti kujisitiri.</i>	Had he really known that ways of mainland and sea are different and that there was no shade of a tree to give shelter,
2.D/37	<i>ansingali takabari</i> <i>akacheza bahari</i> <i>angejua ni hatari</i> <i>naye angetahazari.</i>	he would not pretend to be so powerful to play with the ocean, he would have known that it was dangerous and would have been careful.

The resisting and fierce, yet ignorant Mkwawa is juxtaposed with a female ruler of Usagara, Munyi Msagara. She had sent tribute to Mkwawa before colonial conquest but eventually cooperated with the Germans against him. She was “a just ruler who looked after her Empire and she didn't like

with this topic below.

⁷⁰ German *askaris* frequently employed similar methods to extract tax from Africans. It was reported that 2.000 people were killed in connection with the collection of taxes during Eduard von Liebert's governorship (1897-1901) alone. (Koponen 1994:218-219; Iliffe 1979:134)

injustices nor to harm any person” (2.A:35). Every year, “she used to surrender the tribute so as to live peacefully with those under her” (2.A:38). The positive connotation of subjection to preserve peace implies that rebellion against colonialism is to be condemned, though this is justified with the well-being of the ruler’s subjects.

Another example of benevolent rule is Sultan Khalifa of Zanzibar (in Hemedi bin Abdallah's poem from 1889 which we have already dealt with above). The Sultan is described as a kind, compassionate and fair ruler, giving everybody what s/he needs and supplying food to the poor (1.E/116, 139, 140). Paupers live on his expenses without having to work and people come to town just to receive presents which the Sultan regularly gives out to any visitor (1.E/142, 143). Sultan Khalifa had begun his rule only some few months before the poem was composed⁷¹. We can thus take the descriptions of his “unmistakable” (1.E/104) character and rule as an abstract ideal. The idealisation of Sultan Khalifa has intentional motives, yet might be on a formal level be explained through the conventions of the genres we are concerned with here, traditionally praising God, Muhammad, martyrs or Swahili heroes (Saavedra Casco 2007:152) Only in this way can we understand the praise of “Kaiser Wilhelm” who is celebrated as “great wonderful king” (1.D/2).

Benevolent rule did also include the practice of *shauri*, consultation of advisors, prior to important decisions (1.D/18; 1.E/75; cf. Pesek 2006, Biersteker 1996:171). The ruler did not rely on his own wisdom, but received valuable information from experts, eye-witnesses or trusted members of the aristocracy.

Military power was a vital part of unchallenged rule for Swahili poets. Portrayals of German⁷² soldiers' strength are abundant (e.g., 1.D/5; 7.O/16). Yet, admiration of strength and discipline sometimes tilted over towards a critical attitude (cf. Arnold cited in Mieke et al. 2002:88). In the case of Governor Freiherr von Schele, a renowned militarist who favoured army mobilisation as main method of interaction with non-compliant East Africans (cf. Koponen 1994:100), the poet makes use of an ironic⁷³, paradoxical image:

7.F/9

[...] hana shuruti raia kuwagharizi,
ikijiri harubati watu kuwataarazi
hutukua lake beti ndia akajendamia.

⁷¹ The Arabic manuscript of the poem is dated 1891, yet the content clearly suggests that the rebellion was still ongoing (Saavedra Casco 2007:159, 171). The idealization of Sultan Khalifa (according to Saavedra Casco 2007:167) reflected the poet's wish for a unifying power to lead the Holy War and defend Islam against the intruding (German) infidels.

⁷² German soldiers also refers to Sudanese, Zulu and East African troops who were part of the colonial military force.

⁷³ In general, we can hardly tell if irony was commonly used as a metaphor. Mieke et al. (2002:89) found out that Swahili speakers in the 1990s took all the descriptions at face-value. The nicknames that were given to almost all Germans in the colonial period do, however, point towards ample use of irony.

[...] he doesn't need to threaten his subjects.
When fighting breaks out [or] people meddle
he just takes his ammunition pouch and marches off.

There is a point where strength has to be controlled. The phrase “When he [Governor Schele] becomes angry, he loses his mind” (7.F/25), which is found in the same poem, is unveiled criticism. As the Swahili scholar Jan Knappert (1970:133) asserts, anger is the worst of all features for a character in Swahili thought; while patience is among the most highly valued. Swahili poets thus negotiated military power and moral. Just behaviour could not encompass cruelty or being in a violent temper.

Another positive aspect linked to German rule is the bringing (and provision) of advanced technologies. This theme was elaborated only by one (anonymous) poet considered here who praised the unprecedented “wonders” of telephone, railway transport and battleships that could advance without wind (7.O/35-38, 42-48). He conceived of his group, the Swahili people, as weak, foolish, “incomplete”, unable to invent new things and in need of German guidance. For we lack any other poems exposing a similarly stark view of Swahili fatalism and European progress, I see this as a highly individual opinion. To be sure, the poet couches all his laments and praises in a language far from European discourses of civilizing missions and colonial development. Yet, we also do not find any religious markers such as explicit invocations, which means that the poet was probably informed about German expectations of what a poem has to contain.

Noteworthy is that literacy is hardly mentioned. Belonging to the most educated strata of coastal society, formal education and the technique of writing were no novelty to the poets, all of whom had attended Islamic *madarasa* (classes): “writing of poems has meant no more to them than a means of preserving and more recently, of publicising the poems to a certain extent” (Mazrui / Shariff 1974 cited in Saavedra Casco 2007:81; on Islamic education cf. Pike 1986:216). The major innovation here was that the Germans “romanised” Swahili⁷⁴, and some administrators who had previously known to write in Arabic characters aspired to learn the European alphabet too (Bromber / Becher 2003:68). Only by 1906, Arabic script was not used anymore in official colonial contexts (Pike 1986:229).

3.3.3 Justice and discipline in German colonial times

The one substantial change which Swahili poets most frequently attributed to the Germans is the introduction of rule of law: “They installed the jurisdiction, / for whoever had complains. / And

⁷⁴ The use of Latin instead of Arabic characters was mostly encouraged as a means to “de-Islamise” the Swahili language and introduce German cultural values including Christianity (Pike 1986:224, 229; Wright 1968:626).

whoever oppresses people, / disgrace will fall upon him.” (7.P/26). German administrators were praised for their knowledge of how to judge and to be fair and not to disfavour anyone regardless of status (3.A/31; 7.H/6, 7; 7.J/4, 7). Justice was a staple of praising poems. If a poet as close with the Germans as Mbaraka bin Shomari wanted to hint that Germans were mistreating the population, he put the criticism into some other persons' mouths to wash his hands of responsibility:

- | | | |
|-------|--|--|
| 7.K/1 | <i>ntasifu von Stranzi,</i>
<i>sitaki hatinafusi,</i>
<i>kuwafuata majusi</i>
<i>kwa yao kuwarizia.</i> | I'll fully praise von Stranzi.
I don't want to praise him half-heartedly
by following the slanderers
and backing their point of view. |
| 7.K/2 | <i>sikuona baya lake</i>
<i>katika raia zake</i>
<i>wala hokumu yake</i>
<i>sawa ajifanyizia.</i> | I see no badness in him
neither in treating his subjects,
nor in his judgement.
He tries to be fair. |
| 7.K/3 | <i>na hao wanaonena,</i>
<i>kwamba anawatukana,</i>
<i>sikupata kumwona,</i>
<i>labda wamsingizia.</i> | And those who say
that he abuses them:
I've never seen him like that.
They probably throw mud on his face. |
| 7.K/6 | <i>na kufanyiza ukali</i>
<i>kwake imesitahili,</i>
<i>tupate mhofu kweli</i>
<i>na dabu kutuingia.</i> | As for being fierce,
it is indeed justifiable.
We should fear him
and be full of discipline. |

In a poem dealing with the war against Hassan bin Omari (1895), the poet is at pains to depict at length the treatment of Indians who were accused of having taken part in the conspiracy against German rule. The author likens the treatment of Indians with the treatment of slaves. Like an interlude between the stanzas 30 and 32, there are four verses acknowledging the German judge's fair proceedings. To everybody, "slaves and noble men," it became clear that German rule was enforced among all social strata, including, *inter alia*, Indians.

- | | | |
|--------|--|--|
| 3.A/30 | <i>Wahindi wakatiwa nyororoni</i>
<i>Sitima wakangojea</i>
<i>wote kujisafiria</i>
<i>wote wakaonekana</i>
<i>wote wakatazama</i>
<i>wakashukwa kama watumwa</i>
<i>leo mnajuta nini</i> | <i>Wakawekwa karakoni</i>
<i>ilipokuja wakapakiwa</i>
<i>wakafika Bender-Esselama</i>
<i>watumwa na wangwana</i>
<i>hapana asiwaone</i>
<i>kette⁷⁵ ilivowangia</i>
<i>baa la kujitakia?</i> |
|--------|--|--|

⁷⁵ From German “Kette”, chain

The Indians were chained	and put into prison,
waiting for the steamer.	When it arrived they were put onto it.
They all had to travel.	and reached Dar es Salaam.
All were presented	to slaves and noble men
and all witnessed it.	There was nobody who didn't see them
They disembarked like slaves	chains were cutting their bodies
Why are you regretting?	Isn't it the calamity you asked for?

3.A/31

<i>bana Sahha twamjua malumu</i>	<i>ajua sana hukumu</i>
<i>kawafunga kwa siku zake</i>	<i>aijua myaka yake,</i>
<i>halafu atawafungua</i>	<i>hukum yao kabisa</i>
<i>myaka saba ikafika</i>	<i>wote watafunguliwa.</i>
<i>leo mnajuta nini</i>	<i>baa la kujitakia?</i>

We know Bana Sahha, the great.	He knows well how to judge.
He imprisoned them	for a certain time.
He'll release them	at the end of their sentence
When seven years will be over.	all will be released.
Why are you regretting?	Isn't it the calamity you asked for

3.A/32

<i>Wakapakiwa sitima ingine</i>	<i>na kwao wasikuone</i>
<i>wakawa kama wagane</i>	<i>Tanga wakasikilia</i>
<i>Wakatiwa katika kaziya gari</i>	<i>kufanyiza hawajui</i>
<i>Wahindi wanaolia</i>	
<i>msimamizi tayari.</i>	<i>yupo kuwapokea</i>
<i>machozi hujofuatia</i>	<i>kazi wakifanyia:</i>
<i>leo mnajuta nini</i>	<i>baa la kujitakia?</i>

They were put onto another steamer.	They didn't see their home.
They were confused.	Then they were sent to Tanga.
They had to work on the railway,	a work they didn't know
The Indians were crying,	
the foreman was ready	to force them on.
They dried up their tears	whilst they were working.
Why are you regretting?	Isn't it the calamity you asked for?

The relevant issue is thus not a new form of justice, or punishment. Chains and prison sentences had already been introduced by Arabs, hearings in front of courts was known as well (Velten 1903:360). Moreover, minor cases (that is, minor from German perspective) were usually dealt with in “native courts”, mitigated by German-appointed East Africans who could (and should) exercise customary law. On the coast, that was Muslim right, the *sheria* (Speitkamp 2005:65; Bromber 2003b:86). Some poets sang about the poor and oppressed getting their right under the Germans (7.N/5, 6), yet this was no novelty (1.E/116). What was new was the Germans' radical disregard for *higher* social positioning and origin – under Zanzibari rule, Indians and Arabs had enjoyed special protection and their rights were scrupulously enforced with the help of prisons (cf. Glassman 1995:60). This

turnaround, I would argue, is exactly why the poet Mzee Ali bin Kidogo dedicates so much space to the treatment of the Indians who had been accused of conspiracy against the Germans in the War of Hassan bin Omari⁷⁶. Mbaraka bin Shomari, who himself had analysed correspondences in Arabic letters that were used as evidence against the convicts (Saavedra Casco 2007:222), witnessed the execution in the aftermath of the same war:

3.D/66 *Wakawaua rijali,* They [the Germans] killed the men –
 waume wenyi amali, noble men
 tena watu kabaili, of respected families –
 matozi yanatujiri. tears came from our eyes.

Equality before the law did exist inasmuch nobility was (theoretically) disregarded and Africans, Arabs and Asians did not receive a differentiated treatment – all were defined by the legislation as *Eingeborene*, “natives” (Iliffe 1979:119)⁷⁷. To actually speak of equality in a colonial system in which Europeans were privileged to “natives” forbids itself, seen from an academic perspective⁷⁸. The verdict – if execution, compulsory labour, prison or release – depended on German interests, not on rule of law. Yet, for those poets who saw no other chance than to accept European rule, it nevertheless had to appear as a more equal kind of justice:

7.O/95 *khassa sisi mafakiri* Especially we, the poor people,
 tumezidi kukukirri, we really accept you.
 kwani hawa matagiri Since these rich people
 wali wakituonea. used to oppress us.

7.O/96 *wali wakituazibu,* They used to punish us
 wala tusipo sababu, without any reason.
 sasa hawana sababu Now they have no chance anymore
 illa ni kuhokumiwa. because they are equally charged.

⁷⁶ This may be read as a suggestion to answer the question of Saavedra Casco (2007:229): “Why does a Zanzibari poet like Mwalimu Mzee bin Ali Kidogo worry so much about the Indian community implicated in Hasan bin Omaris rebellion?” The town crier of Lindi, a slave who called himself Manga (which means Omani Arab), recognized the German's disrespect for these differences right on the eve of conquest when he ridiculed them: “Hear ye! Hear ye! The Germans have come! Hitherto only one flag flew here; now there are two! Anyone who wishes to bring goods to town, whether taxable or not, must take them first to the customs house. Anyone who wishes to lie with his wife, *be he Arab, Hindu or African*, must first take her to be inspected by the Europeans. Anyone who fails to obey will have everything taken from him: house and rafters, bed and cooking pots, and the grass growing in his backyard. This all will be sent to Germany and he himself imprisoned.” (cited in Glassman 1995:208, emphasis added).

⁷⁷ According to Iliffe 1979:140, this judicial “levelling” of all non-European groups to natives “greatly offended Asians among whom colour racialism was deeply engrained.”

⁷⁸ Pesek (2003:124) states that after 1908 (the year of the Mecca Letters Affair), colonial authorities tried to ameliorate their relations towards “better” Swahili and Arabs by means of easing methods of punishment – as had been usual before with Indians. From a strictly historical perspective, the statement of “equality before the whip” among all natives would not hold, especially since the Germans shared common interests with the Arab elite, Indian traders and a good share of the members of the Swahili-speaking aristocracy.

A Tanzanian academic remarked that the Germans “were equally cruel to everyone” (Mahiga 1968:218).

Were there any possibilities for East Africans in the new aspects of the judicial system or are the poets' praises of justice mere convention of praise forms? Archival sources show that, as far as civil law was concerned, natives could well take court action and win cases against Germans or other Europeans⁷⁹. To my knowledge, this aspect has received little attention in literature on colonialism and might be worth further investigation. It shows how the colonised appropriated the system for their ends, as far as this was possible.

But the much more notorious aspect of judicial practice in German colonies was the *kiboko*, a whip made from hippo-skin). Flogging and whipping were a “trademark” of other German colonies as well (cf. Trotha 1995:521) and further north along the Kenyan coast, in the neighbouring British colony, people sang a song (cited in Pike 1986:227) which contained the words:

<i>Kata, piga, chinja!</i>	Cut, strike, slaughter!
<i>Lete moto, choma!</i>	Bring fire, burn!
<i>Twaa upanga, nenda mbele,</i>	Take a sword, advance,
<i>Chinja!</i>	Slaughter!
<i>Hizo ndizo sifa zao</i>	These are the praises
<i>Wasifizo walimwengu</i>	With which the world praises them

No matter if commoner or local leader, an oral informant remembered in 1968, all experienced “equality before the whip” (MMRP 7/68/2/1). In the case of corporal punishment, power in German East Africa displayed itself to the poets very similar to what Michel Foucault described for the time before the birth of the prison in France, up to the point that the exact number of whiplashes was codified (Foucault 1994:46). The Indians were displayed as prisoners in public and “[t]here was nobody who didn't see them” (3.A/30). Embarrassment and painfulness emanated from the chains cutting into their flesh. During the numerous rebellions and uprisings in German East Africa, rebels were on purpose transported to other towns for more people to witness the executions (3.D/67-69). The accused men were “killed like chicken” (3.D/75) under the eyes of “trembling” masses gathered in anxiety (3.D/59), left hanging on the gallows for several days and denied proper burial procedures (7.P/18). Through military expeditions and wars, inland people like the Hehe and the Mafiti were said to have “become disciplined” (*adabu zimewingia*, 7.I/6). A more literal translation

⁷⁹ I found several court records in which “natives” won cases, most of them involving issues such as unpaid fees and salaries and most of them initiated by suitors from coastal towns (TNA G21/36A, G 21/37,). Indubitably, this must have been known “all over the towns” and especially to the poets who had close connections to German officials and institutions. This was more common in the later years of German colonialism, while most of the poems considered here were written before 1900 (the records are from 1913 and 1914).

would be “manners entered them,” drawing attention to the fact that the “right” behaviour came from outside and was then internalised.

That these forms of coercion had to be used was justified with preceding misbehaviour of the rebels and offenders, even by some Swahili poets: “who doesn't agree / gets twenty-five strokes” (6.A/24)⁸⁰. An official with the reputation to mistreat people was seen as particularly effective to suppress crime and misconduct:

7.K/9	<i>kazi moto ni mzuri,</i> <i>na aishike shauri</i> <i>kwa kulla mtu jeuri,</i> <i>adabu itamwingia</i>	Kazi Moto [von Strantz] is a good person, he should judge the case of every misbehaving person. Then he'd learn discipline.
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7.K/10	<i>mji utatulizana,</i> <i>hapana kunyang'anyana,</i> <i>wala watu kupigana</i> <i>na kufanyiza ghazia.</i>	The town will be peaceful then. There'll be no more robbery, no more fighting among people, and no more trouble.
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7.K/11	<i>kazi moto si mcheza,</i> <i>mji anautengeza</i> [...]	Kazi Moto does not play around. He has disciplined ⁸¹ the town. [...]
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Whipping was a common method of disciplining in precolonial East Africa, especially on the caravan routes and plantations (Glassman 1995:111; Pesek 2005:59). But the twenty-five strokes with the *kiboko* came to symbolize German punishment and German rule in general. Germans were known as the “people of the twenty-five lashes” (*watu wa hamso ishirini*, Tambila 1995:511). Official numbers register 64,852 floggings in German East Africa between 1901 and 1913, with the most incidences in the last recorded year (ibid.).

Beating as punishment and means to rectify behaviour also appears in Swahili tales which were surely uninfluenced by German measures and methods of punishment (Velten 1907:40). Tanzanians interviewed in the 1990s also legitimized violence that occurred during the German colonial period with the view that then “people still lived in darkness and were uneducated”⁸² (cited in Bromber 2003b:85, my translation). Corporal punishment was thus widely held as an appropriate tool to “produce” obedience, peace and security in the public sphere. The constant threat of the *kiboko*

⁸⁰ This was possible because punishments were defined by legislation, but not the offences for which they might be imposed (Iliffe 1979:119).

⁸¹ Note that *tengeza* was translated by Mieke et al. 2002 in other contexts “develop” or “prepare,” while here is translated as “discipline.”

⁸² The quote stems from Shauro Maro, a former British colonial official and father-in-law of former Tanzanian state president Benjamin Mkapa (1995-2005). The other informants were residents

combined with the arbitrariness of judgement led to dread even among those who pledged total submission:

7.O/81	<i>Hatufanyi kwa taadi,</i> <i>ni ujinga kutuzidi,</i> <i>tasema, ndio mradi,</i> <i>kumbe vile twapoeta.</i>	We don't misbehave out of disobedience. We are just too foolish. We think, this is correct, while we go astray.
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7.O/99	<i>na mimi hivi handika,</i> <i>roho yanitetemeka</i> <i>nna hofu kughazibika</i> <i>bana, ukaja tukiwa.</i>	And while I'm writing, my soul is shaking I fear that I may be punished, Bana, when you become angry.
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The result was speechlessness (Bromber 2003b:83). Not knowing what one is still allowed to say, “[n]obody dares to speak out” (1.E/238; cf. 3.D/82). The calm of the towns that we mentioned above in a positive context of re-established urban security is thus inherently ambivalent. Peace and security rested on fear of punishment. Since it was unclear what counted as offence (or to be more precise, what possibly annoyed the Germans), individuals felt deeply unsettled and lacked orientation. German judicial experiments and the never-ending flow of new decrees must have perpetuated that feeling of insecurity beyond the years of conquest (cf. Tambila 1995:510).

Outside of the courts, *askaris* represented the “blunt edge of colonial rule” (Moyd 2010:156) and were responsible for orderly behaviour. They had the right to shoot prisoners who wanted to escape but were also responsible to enforce the prohibition of “native” dances in European areas or the decree that all people were to sweep in front of their houses (Velten 1907:165). *Askaris* themselves were an embodiment of discipline to the poets, but they were not the only ones. German domestic servants too “stand in lines” (7.F/37). Civil administrators were another group ordered and subjected. German institutions were looked at as being particularly efficient, being staffed with obedient employees:

1.G/41	<i>na bwana wa forzani</i> <i>mtu mzuri wa shani,</i> <i>forza kaizaini</i> <i>na makerani tayari.</i>	[You'll see] the Bwana of the customs a very good person indeed [who] has decorated the customs houses [which are] with clerks ready to serve.
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1.G/42	<i>forza inanawiri</i> <i>na majumba mdawari,</i> <i>kwa kula neno lajiri</i> <i>baharia wa tayari.</i>	[You'll see] the customs houses shining, the houses which are circular in shape, [there] everything runs smoothly as all the crews are ready to due [do] their duties.
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1.G/43	<i>na makerani kwandika</i> <i>watu wamekutanika,</i> <i>na vitu ndani kutoka</i> <i>wala pasipo usiri</i>	He has employed the clerks [and] people of various skill come together and things move on smoothly, [they move] without any delay.
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What often counts as a typically German set of disciplines – punctuality, obedience, orderliness, diligence, honesty and prudence – was already taught to coastal Swahili in the precolonial Islamic schools (Bromber 2003a:53), which explains the positive value assigned to the proceedings outlined above. Similar conceptions of how to mould characters facilitated the cooperation of East Africans who had passed through Islamic education and German administrators (ibid.).

Finally, as was the case with military power, discipline too could “tip over” and become too much. Governor von Schele and military commander von Trotha were ridiculed for their overly correct politeness to reply to the habitual morning salute of the poet⁸³ – when they were walking together and greeted, the two of them would instantly reply both at the same time (7.L/18).

3.4 Coastal superiority and subjection

Looking at how the poets defined developmental differences, or if they did at all, we are going to make use of the concept of mimicry, though in an unorthodox way. Colonial mimicry has been defined by postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha as „the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, *as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite*“ (Bhabha 1994:86, original formatting). Contrary to what the definition suggests, Swahili poets did not aspire to become like Germans, although they recognized their military and technological superiority. Rather, they sought to defend a cultural identity which was threatened, seen from the poets' perspective, from above by German power and from below by migrants pouring into the towns. Indeed, migrants to town were very eager to get a share of the town's privileges and willingly adopted Swahili practices and language as well as an Islamic set of religious beliefs – the relevant mimicry we have to speak of here was thus not directed towards German, but towards Swahili identity. In contrast to colonisers, however, Swahili poets did not even want the immigrating populations to be “almost the same” like them and made use of concepts that devalued the self-styled Swahili as superficial imitators. Noble Swahili identity was expressed in the terms of being a *mstaarabu* (pl. *wastaarabu*) or *mwungwana* (pl. *waungwana*), both terms referring to urbanity, freedom and a high social standing (Bromber 2004:67; Glassman 1995:117). People from the interior and inlanders who were said to imitate Swahili behaviour were called *washenzi* (sg. *mshenzi*). The dichotomous difference was later fused with European concepts of civilization and barbarity.

⁸³ On greeting and saluting in the context of German colonial rule in East Africa, cf. Pesek 2005:260-261.

3.4.1 *Mshenzi*: The infidel Other from the inland

The central distinction that dominated Swahili identity was what the Tanzanian historian Gilbert Gwassa aptly called “*mwungwana-shenzi-complex*” (cf. Saavedra Casco 2007:259). *Mshenzi* (pl. *washenzi*) was used as a derogatory umbrella term to refer to basically all inlanders, especially if they were not Muslim. Many English translations of the Swahili poems emphasize this religious aspect and translate *washenzi* as “infidels” (e.g. 2.C/23, 5.A/10). Other translations emphasize other aspects of the term and translate it as “vulgar people” (5.A/54) or “barbarians” (Glassman 1995:xvi) to express backwardness, or “bumpkins” (Glassman 1995:62) to draw attention to the rural-urban divide. The opposite of the abusive term *mshenzi* was *mwungwana* (pl. *waungwana*), meaning “a gentleperson; a refined urban Muslim” (Glassman 1995:xvi). Coastal slaves, too, used the term *washenzi* to refer to inlanders and prided themselves as *waungwana*.⁸⁴

People coming to the coast were sure that they could leave behind their status as *washenzi*, and they had considerable incentives to do so since to be a full and respected citizen of the town also meant to have more economic possibilities, e.g. to get loans from fellow Muslims (Glassman 1995:63). A visitor to Dar es Salaam, curious to know the tribe of some Africans he met, was disappointed to hear that so many answered ambiguously: “I am a Swahili, but in former times, I used to be a Makonde or a Hehe” (Eckenbrecher cited in Becher 1997:122). Coastal society was inherently pluralistic, yet its cohesion derived exactly from the imagined distance towards the culturally different and socially inferior, the *washenzi* (Becher 1997:122).

Further away from the coast, in several (though not all) inland societies which had been involved in the long-distance trade, the cultural ideal of the educated and free gentleman, the *mwungwana* also found approval. With economic activities directed to the coast, even rulers aspired to be identified with the urban Muslim culture of the coast (Glassman 1988:17; also cf. 3.2.1 above). As the command of the Swahili language and the fairly easy conversion to Islam were basically the only essential prerequisites (Becher 1997:122), many claimed themselves to be Swahili. The cultural struggles were no end in itself and “can be best explained in terms of struggle over participation in the commercial economy” (Glassman 1988:16). The interest of Swahili townsmen was to safeguard economic privileges against the newcomers, but urban ways of life held open an arsenal of possibilities for migrants to acquire cultural, social, political and economic capital and even to integrate their own practices in coastal society (Glassman 1988:356, 362; Glassman 1995:117). The excessive spending for public events, which will be more thoroughly discussed in the chapter about *beni ngoma* dance associations, was one of the responses of the aristocracy to secure their

⁸⁴ I found no explicit information on how the *washenzi-waungwana* complex was played out among women.

crumbling privileges, at the same time weakening their position in the long term through hopeless indebtedness (Glassman 1988:365). Another response of the Swahili elite was the continued instrumental use of the constructed difference between *washenzi* and *waungwana*.

Yet, the crucial question is if Swahili poets also envisaged ways to overcome the cultural divide between *washenzi* and *waungwana*. A historian of slavery in German East Africa states that

as slavery declined, the former oppositional distinction between the *waungwana* and the *washenzi* became less pronounced, and in certain respects even vanished, between coastal people and those living in the interior as well as between the different social strata within coastal society.

(Deutsch 2006:231)

The poet Hemedi bin Abdallah, who was employed as a magician⁸⁵ by Abushiri to spy on the Germans, states that he wanted slaves as reward for his activity. The slaves should be “of gentle appearance, / calm and collected” (1.E/431). The used adjective (*kiungwana*) refers to the same aspired ideal. With the help, for example, of an influential father-in-law or enough wealth, everybody could ascend to highest ranks in coastal social life (Glassman 1988:363-364) and pride himself as *mwungwana*. Wearing urban clothes also meant that one could strip off one's inland descent, as a proverb said: “Give the raw slaves new clothes,' [slave] masters were advised, 'so he will forget his homeland” (Glassman 1995; on clothes as markers of civilization and status, cf. Wirz 2003, Glassman 1991, Deutsch 2006:230) However, a common strand of discourse was to describe the adaptations of people from the interior as superficial. In a statement of the people of Pangani against German invasion, the writers distrusted their own troops because these came from further inland: “we feared the actions of our upcountry warriors,” since “mimicry does not make proper manners” (Glassman 1988:655)⁸⁶. Even for recognized and growing members of the coastal in-group, imitation was strongly discouraged. Hassan bin Omari and his allies, who rebelled against the Germans in 1895, were told by a poet: “You were just wrong, imitating the Manga [Arabs from Oman]” (3.C/7). An adage that Swahili children were taught went “If you imitate an elephant defecating, your anus will burst” (*Ukega tembo, kunya, utapasuka* cited in Pike 1986:213). It drew attention to the fact that one should not be an imitator unless one had the material to properly do so. The evidence thus points to a general possibility of “acquiring civilization”, since imitation is less

⁸⁵ Hemedi bin Abdallah was a celebrated “cultural hero” of the coast, a Muslim healer experienced in soothsaying and a variety of ritual practices (Saavedra Casco 2007:154-155).

⁸⁶ Glassman explicitly states that he is not fully certain of the meaning of the phrase “*ni nkiri si murua*”, which constitutes the “mimicry” part of the statement.

discouraged by referring to a (stable) origin than just by referring to the proper scale of one's lifestyle (which can change).

A change is definitely noted in the behaviour of inland societies which used to be a threat for passing caravans like the Masai, Hehe or Gogo. In correspondence to the “calmed towns” where people have been disciplined through violence, the inland people too “do not dare [anymore] to raid, [because of] the way they are fearing” colonial punitive expeditions (cited in Velten 1907:219, my translation⁸⁷). Another transformation which is observed is the advance of the cash frontier, or monetarisation of the interior. The despised, so-called *washenzi* “now know that money means wealth” (*Washenzi hujua sasa, kama mapesa ndio mali*; cited in Velten 1907:223, my translation). Of course, these changes are of prior importance for traders and are recognized primarily due to their importance in regard to economic interests. They are also far from any criteria set out for members of coastal society and must thus remain “Other,” an out-group.

At least, scorned Hassan bin Omari was respected as a member of the in-group and directly addressed with the personal pronoun “you” (see next chapter) – a privilege that *washenzi* did not come to enjoy in Swahili poems. The supposed cultural gap was big enough for the poets to always write *about* them, never *to* them – since they were deemed ignorant, illiterate and inexperienced in crafted, poetic Swahili language anyway. Despite all these caveats – if one had the means to imitate and fulfilled the requirements of mannered behaviour, language and religion, there seems to have been no reason for the poets to not recognize somebody as *mwungwana*, a respected member of coastal society, no matter his or her origin. But, in the course of the nineteenth century, “it became increasingly difficult for an outsider to claim status as a Muslim townsman, especially at Bagamoyo and Dar es Salaam” (Glassman 1995:63). As evident in the coastal rebellion, the distinctions could be put aside if there was a common enemy – in this case, the Germans – but mistrust outlasted the short-term common interest and the temporal alliance soon became a yawning gap again (cf. Iliffe 1979:1979).

An interesting feat is also the display of how the powerful themselves become savage. One Swahili poet may have agreed with the postcolonial writer Achille Mbembe (2001:238) who rhetorically asked: “In what does the process of becoming savage consist, if not in a way of being an animal?”⁸⁸

⁸⁷ The original quote reads: “Wagogo na Wahehe na Washenzi wengine na Wamasai hawasubutu kunyanganya, jinsi wanavoogopa.” The text from which this quote and the following quote stem (*Matengenezo ya safari ya barra*) is a fictional account of a German-sponsored caravan going inland. It mainly consists of dialogues between the European and the experienced, knowledgeable caravan leader. The author was probably Mbaraka bin Shomari, whom we have already discussed several times.

⁸⁸ Mbembe refers, however, to the *colonised* becoming savage, becoming animals, to be tamed by colonialism. My use of his idea differs from the way he outlined it because here it is the coloniser becoming the beast.

In an otherwise praising poem – it is the same from which we took descriptions of the Kaiser's town Berlin – the anonymous poet wrote how some Germans, acting as they did, turned to beasts⁸⁹:

- | | | |
|--------|--|--|
| 1.D/31 | <i>Biro kaja kama nundo</i>
<i>na kutoya vishindo,</i>
<i>huzani ila madando</i>
<i>walio katika bari.</i> | Biro [Governor von Bülow] came like a <i>nundo</i>
[snake species]
making a big fuss
Think of a big snake [boa constrictor],
those living on the mainland. |
| 1.D/32 | <i>bwana Schmidt, wenzangu</i>
<i>alingia kama nungu,</i>
<i>akatuwanya mafungu</i>
<i>mbio tukazidabiri.</i> | Bwana Schmidt [Schmidt], my friends,
entered like a porcupine.
He scattered us into heaps
and we ran away quickly. |

Contrary to the metaphor of the powerful lion (e.g., 1.E/280, 1.E/610), I would interpret the images of the snake and the porcupine as instances of degenerated, uncontrolled and eventually harmful power. This interpretation is, however, highly speculative, for I did not find other examples of snake and porcupine metaphors in Swahili literature.

3.4.2 “No more respect for the coastal people”: The re-negotiation of Swahili cultural superiority

Although it is unclear if the poems dealt with here were actually recited, they do include interactive elements that are typical for oral poetry. Among those interactive, interpellating elements are “group-identifiers like *raia* (citizen), *wenzangu* (my friends), *wandani* (my followers), *nduu* [sic] *zangu* (my friends), *majirani* (neighbours), *jamaa* (kinsmen) and *walimwengu* (people) to define his audience” (Miehe et al. 2002:36). None of these identifications included the infidel, uncivilized Other, the *mshenzi*.

Swahili poets just assumed a common position with people from the inland as far as subjection to German conquest was concerned. As has been pointed out (Miehe et al. 2002:47), *all* East Africans are clearly portrayed as subjected, inferior people. The “era of the Europeans” (3.D/77) was accompanied by a mixture of admiration for military power, the idealisation of the past Omani (Arab) rule and self-pity which revealed a genuine identity crisis:

- | | | |
|--------|---|---|
| 3.D/77 | <i>Nawahubiri wenzangu</i>
<i>Hii ezi ya Wazungu</i>
<i>Shikeni maneno yangu:</i>
<i>Wepukane na hatari.</i> | I’m telling you, my friends,
this is the era of the Europeans.
Hold to my words:
Try to avoid trouble. |
|--------|---|---|

⁸⁹ On Germans “losing their mind” in battle, also confer 7.I/7: “When he [military commander Tom von Prince] enters the battle, / he loses his senses, / you think he is drunken, / the way he becomes fierce.”

3.D/78	<i>mwenyi lake ana lake, hataki la mwenzi wake na ukimwendea pake wala hakupi shauri.</i>	This is a world of personal interest Don't rely on your neighbour. And if you go to his place he won't give you any help.
3.D/79	<i>yale tuliyozeoa sasa yametondolea na tushukuru jalia labuda ikiwa heri.</i>	What we were accustomed to that has now changed. Let's thank God, Things may get better.
3.D/80	<i>yamekwisha na wahibu wafalme wa kiarabu, tukilitaka jawabu si wenyi kutukasiri.</i>	The time of our beloved has gone, the Arab sultans. If we were in need of something, they never refused.
3.D/81	<i>zimeondoka heshima kwa watu wa kimrima. hatunalo lla kusema kwa kuchelea hatari.</i>	No more respect for the coastal people. We have nothing to say for fear of repercussions.
3.D/82	<i>kunena hatusbutu vifungo vyao vizito, tokea asili zetu hayakupata kujiri.</i>	We don't dare to speak, their imprisonment is too hard. Since the time of our ancestors such things never occurred.
3.D/83	<i>sasa wanatuzurubu, majumbe hata Waarabu, na tuzishike adabu tuifuate amri.</i>	They now beat us – the <i>Jumbes</i> ⁹⁰ and even the Arabs. We should behave ourselves and obey orders.
3.D/87	<i>babu zetu madiwani, kwanza ni masultani; sasa atujue nani kwa mato kutubusuri!</i>	Our grandfathers were <i>madiwani</i> ⁹¹ . They were the real Sultans. But who knows us now, who takes notice of us!

This identity crisis must have been widely felt among the Swahili gentry which had had a strong sense of superiority⁹². The open critique of German oppressive rule is evidence of an author whose position and activities seemingly fit the paradigm of a “bootlicker”⁹³ (Saavedra Casco 2007:193-

⁹⁰ Swahili-speaking local rulers.

⁹¹ Local rulers; administrators of the Zanzibar state along the coast.

⁹² One might be led to the view that the Swahili aristocracy was already subjected to an Arab political elite before the arrival of the Germans and thus should not have experienced problems to simply readjust their location to be under European rulers. Yet, instruments like claiming Arab descent and incorporating “Arab” symbols into social practices had existed for a long time. Resentment against Arab rule was apparently more common among commoners, cf. Glassman 1995.

⁹³ Mwalimu Mbaraka was a close friend of Carl Velten and contributed to the condemnation of the rebel Hassan bin Omari.

194), yet in his poetic activity is confident to express discontent. Mwalimu Mbaraka bin Shomari sees his contemporary world as a world ruled by personal interest in which one cannot even trust the neighbour – another metaphor of uncertainty that delves right into even close personal networks of solidarity and reciprocity.

Despite their respect for military power, technology or discipline, poets did not express the wish to become like the colonisers. The collective “we” of the poems contracts and stretches (cf. Tonkin 1995:82), but never expands to include Germans. Neither is there a direct identification of a poet's self with the Germans, or German rule. In the “Poem about the German rule” (*Sifa za Wazungu*, 6.A), the author expresses a variety of wishes: that the Germans' wealth, power, military strength etc. may be increased. All of these improvements are meant for “them”. The only wish with a relation to “us” is that “the German” may get “more mercy in caring for his subjects” (6.A/7). Quite the opposite of colonial mimicry, Swahili poets were eager to uphold distinctions between themselves and the Germans. Gustav Denhardt, an explorer and researcher, was ridiculed by an anonymous poet for his imitative behaviour⁹⁴:

7.E/1	<i>Bwana Gustavu apenda mpumbao</i>	Bwana Gustavu likes pleasure.
	<i>usiku huvua libasi za kwao</i>	During the night he takes off his European clothes.
	<i>sikumtambua kiona ujao</i>	I didn't recognise him when he came.
7.E/2	<i>Mevua makoshim metia ziatu</i>	He took off the boots and put on sandals.
		He put on loin cloth of our kind.
	<i>mevaa kikoi libasi ya kwetu</i>	He knows the language more than the
	<i>mejua na lugha zaidi ya watu.</i>	people.

A laudatory poem fittingly entitled *Sifa za Wazungu*, "Praise of the Europeans," praises the “wonders” brought by Europeans like telephone and railway but also warns the audience: "Don't long for their things, leave them to themselves" (3.C/1, cf. 3.C/2). The criticism of German practices of knowledge collection might also be mentioned here once more as evidence for the wish of Swahili poets to remain in control of sociocultural privileges. The poets' area of expertise, knowledge, was colonised through scholars like Carl Velten who collected and, in the opinion of some, misused this knowledge. The following “Poem for the Europeans” (*Shairi kwa wazungu*), which I will quote in full, is an elaboration of this criticism. The anonymous author sent it to Velten following his request for transmittal of poems, riddles, etc. Velten describes the poet as “one of the few elements who cannot warm to European rule” (Velten 1907:367). It is one of only two poems in which Europeans are directly addressed, though the author sometimes switches to address his

⁹⁴ This interpretation of the poem *Bwana Gustav* is taken from Bromber 2003b:94-95.

“friends.” The poem gradually turns to a general historical treatment of superior knowledge coming from outside, first from the Arabs and then from the Europeans. The religious influence becomes clear in the final stanzas, mentioning forbidden meat.

6.C/1	<i>zitendawili zishile, na haisi zimalize ngano zihitimile, msisaili zote pia.</i>	The riddles are already done, and the stories are finished, and the fables are completed. Don't ask for more.
6.C/2	<i>mkusanyize hadisi, mandishile na warisi, ilimu zenye kiasi pia mwalizipapia.</i>	You've collected stories, written by the descendants, valuable knowledge, also you consumed it.
6.C/3	<i>hapana mulisazalo, litaonekana lelo kuwa ni tunu kwa hilo kwenu yetu mambo pia.</i>	There is nothing you've left. This will be obvious today. For it is a rarity and, it belongs to you as well.
6.C/4	<i>muyapata kwa akili na fikira na dalili, mambo haya yamo kweli tena mnajua yote pia.</i>	You got this intelligently through thinking and signs. There is truth in them, and you know everything.
6.C/5	<i>kwenu haya za zamani, mawlipata majiani kwenda na kuja barrani na bahari zote pia.</i>	To you these are old things. You got them on the paths when going and coming from the hinterland and all the coastal towns.
6.C/6	<i>Kwa hila zenu mpete hamkuona utete, killa neno mtetete na daula yote pia.</i>	You got the things through your tricks. You never met any objection. Every word was discussed, and all the powers as well.
6.C/7	<i>bassi wacheni jawabu la kujibu makatibu, nandike nini, sahibu? na yote mmesikia.</i>	Stop to give an answer, to reply to the officials. What should I write, my friend? You've heard everything.
6.C/8	<i>Na wasia na waraka yote pia mwayataka na mkataba kuandika, neni lipi tawambia?</i>	The will and the document, you want them, too. And written contract. What should I tell you?
6.C/9	<i>Asili twali wajinga, werevu wetu maninga, kana watu si wajinga hatukuwa watu pia.</i>	Formerly we were fools. Our wisdom was superficial. But if people were not fools, we wouldn't have been dehumanised.

6.C/10	<i>wajilepo Waaraba, wakafumua vitabu wakatia na irabu, tukaona wote pia.</i>	When the Arabs came, they opened the books, and filled them with letters. ⁹⁵ We all saw it.
6.C/11	<i>tukufuata werevu, bado ujinga wa ngivu; hikaya hiyo mpumbafu, hapana la kuwambia.</i>	We followed their wisdom, but still we were great fools. That is a story of the fool. There is nothing to tell you.
6.C/12	<i>wakangia na Wazungu wakauawinia na mafungu wakatonesha matungu na miji kuikimbia.</i>	Then the Europeans came. They scattered us into groups. They added more pain to us, and we fled the towns.
6.C/13	<i>tukarejzwa mjini, tukatiwa amanini, tukapawa tamkini katika miji kungia.</i>	We were returned to town. We were kept in peace. We were allowed to go into the towns.
6.C/14	<i>Kwa kizungu andikeni wasia na khati za deni, lugha lolote tieni, pia tutazipokea.</i>	Write in European style, wills and credit documents. Use any language. We will accept them.
6.C/15	<i>yote tukayafuata, hatuna kutatata, kulla neno mwalipata, sina kuwatilia.</i>	We've followed all of this. We don't argue. You got every word. I don't have anything to add.
6.C/16	<i>mlete na walimu, kizungu tutaalamu, tupate jua masimu na hesabu yote pia.</i>	You brought us teachers, so that we can learn German, to use the telegraph and mathematics as well.
6.C/17	<i>Mazungumzo mwataka, na raia kupitika, wapate kurahika, ndio haya nawambia.</i>	You want conversation with the citizens, so that they may be happy. That's what I tell you.
6.C/18	<i>na kitandawili changu sikilizani, wenzangu, hayo mambo ya kizungu yametudawaza pia.</i>	My friends, listen to my riddle. These European affairs have dumbfounded us.

⁹⁵ My translation of this line diverts from Miehe et al. 2002, who translated: “and explained them things.” In accord with Velten 1907:368, I see the noun *irabu* as concretely referring to Arab characters and to symbolize writing in general.

6.C/19	<i>sikiliza, matongozi</i> <i>kulla nyama mwanzo ngozi,</i> <i>kuna nyama mwisho ngozi?</i> <i>Mimi sijui, nambia.</i>	Listen to my words: Each animal starts with the skin first. Is there an animal with the skin last? I don't know, tell me.
6.C/20	<i>nyama huyu nyama gani?</i> <i>nitoane ujingani,</i> <i>ndugu zangu, nambiani,</i> <i>munondolee uzia.</i>	What sort of animal is that? Release me from ignorance. Tell me, my friends. Help me out of my confusion.
6.C/21	<i>Kuna na nyama harumu,</i> <i>ni halali yake dami,</i> <i>wala si kana nyamu,</i> <i>mawazo yamenipotea.</i>	There is forbidden meat, but the blood is permissible, and it is not like other food. Alas, I've lost thoughts.
6.C/22	<i>tama yangu, nikomele</i> <i>haya yangu matungole,</i> <i>uamke walilele,</i> <i>huna tena kusinzia.</i>	I end my poem. This is my composition. Wake up, those who have slept, and don't sleep anymore!

As the author submitted this poem anonymously, he probably felt free to express his real opinion. The final stanzas (18-22) are the ones most difficult to interpret – they might, on one level, serve as a riddle that the Germans would be unable to solve. The poet would thus recapture his position of privileged knowledge that was endangered through European academic interest⁹⁶.

Despite the subjection and parallel upkeep of distance, the concept of the coastal society's superiority over the interior fitted well with German (or, generally, Western) conceptions of Arab superiority over Africans, “Oriental” culture standing at a higher stage of development (Naranch 2000:315; Bennett 1988:92). Swahili people were usually considered by Europeans to be “Arabised” and thus to be more progressed than Africans. Arthur Hardinge, Governor of Kenya, regarded Swahili culture “as the one civilized element which stands between us and the utterly barbarous races of the interior” (cited in Ranger 1975:32). A missionary in German East Africa stated that both Europeans and Swahili used the term *mshenzi* to pejoratively refer to any immigrant who “apes foreign manners” (Klamroth cited in Becher 1997:124; cf. 2.C/23). Germans paid special attention to an Arab-African difference, especially as far as appearance was concerned (e.g. Baumann 1890:65) and readily accepted the *mshenzi-mwungwana* dichotomy if it helped them. A German district officer reported to his superior that Mkwawa had refused to sign a peace treaty with

⁹⁶ Mieke et al. (2002:374) believe the riddle to refer to the riddle which goes *Nyama juu, ngozi ndani: Firigisi la kuku* (“Meat outside, skin inside – chicken gizzard.”)

the Germans, thus showing that he was a *mshenzi*⁹⁷. In German colonial newspapers, the term *mshenzi* was also used to refer to Africans in a derogatory manner. Indeed, the German colonial policy of using coastal notables for the administration of inland districts reflects their belief in the supposed superiority of the Swahili gentry. (Pesek 2006:407; DOAZ 7 Jan 1905; Wright 1968:624; cf. Pesek 2010:352)

Conceptual adaptations were thus no unilateral process with only Africans absorbing European ideas; rather, as has been pointed out, it was mutual and colonial actors were very much dependent on local knowledge (Pesek 2006:407). Three different poets likened the actions or appearance of Germans to Arab characteristics (3.A:16; 7.L:14; 2.C/15), herewith referring to their good manners, decent behaviour and symbolic military power. Generally, Germans were assigned the respectable status as *waungwana* (Bromber 2003b:81-82). Moreover, as Glassman (1995:9) has convincingly argued, Europeans viewed the coast and its rural hinterland in the light of the meta-narrative of urbanization as progress, which assigned stagnation and ignorance to the rural areas. The Islamic urban centres dotting the East African coast were recognized by both Swahili poets and Europeans as “oases of 'civilization'” (ibid.).

However, civilization in Swahili terms was not to be directly absorbed in a Westernised version of civilization, at least not during the German colonial period. As established above, a strong sense of and desire for difference were abided by most Swahili-speaking intellectuals. In a Swahili newspaper debate in the beginning of the 1920s, the “project of civilization” was still described to correspond to East African concepts of developmental difference. The author uses the term *wastaarabu* (which is very close to *waungwana*): “If you ask a European, I do not think he would say that they primarily came to Africa to turn black people into Europeans, no, but into *wastaarabu*, so that they would be equal to other people” (cited in Bromber 2006:67). The ideal that people were to be uplifted to was thus the coastal ideal of *wastaarabu*. Later in the 1920s, the terms *ustaarabu* and civilization (or, referring to people, *wastaarabu* and civilized people) increasingly approximated until *ustaarabu* came to be used as civilization in a Western sense by some, though far from all, intellectuals (Bromber 2006; cf. Mambo Leo No. 1, Jan 1923:9-10; Glassman 2004.)⁹⁸.

⁹⁷ Mkwawa refused to sign because, according to the *liwali* Amer bin Nassr who reported to the German station he mistrusted paper and saw it as *dawa*, harmful medicine from the Germans. While Amer bin Nassr interpreted Mkwawa's refusal as a deed of a *mshenzi* because he did not handle the artefacts of writing as the emissary expected, the German station officer saw him as a *mshenzi* not signing the treaty because of fear of the Europeans. The term of *mshenzi* was thus incorporated into a framework of colonial rule, very unlike the cultural distinction made by Amer bin Nassr (Pesek 2005:221-222).

⁹⁸ Concerning contemporary times, the Swahili-English Dictionary (Tuki 2001) translates *ustaarabu* only with civilisation, and Tanzanians I asked in 2012 for other meanings of the word were unable to give any alternative translations. The pejorative term *washenzi* has kept its religious connotation of referring to a non-Islamic (and *for this reason* barbaric) lifestyle on Zanzibar until today (Robert 2010:364).

During the first half of German rule, similarity of disciplining processes in Islamic education and German (particularly Prussian) education, as discussed above, was an important prerequisite for the merging of ideas. The other one was that well-positioned Swahili shared economic interests with German administrators. It became clear that the interests of colonial authorities and aristocratic coast-dwellers and merchants were partly the same: a strong, unchallenged state for a well-functioning economy and security of those who had a relative profit from the colonial order: “The impossibility of confronting the German power, the opportunity of being incorporated into the colonial bureaucracy, and the coincidence of common interests in exploiting the interior guaranteed the loyalty of the *waungwana* class in general and the *ulama* [learned Islamic] sector in particular” (Saavedra Casco 2007:253). For this reason, Ali bin Rajabu celebrated the German victory over the Hehe in the inland (2.C/89) and Abdel Karim bin Jamaladini, despite his understanding for their motifs, condemned the *Maji Maji* rebels – *washenzi* – who directed their anger not only against colonial institutions, but also looted the houses of Indians and stole property wherever they found it (5.A/37, 145, 152; cf. Saavedra Casco 2007:257-259).

As we mentioned above, all of the poets dealt with here were Muslims. Religious difference figured strongly as marker of superiority towards the “infidels” (*washenzi*) from the interior. In Hemedi bin Abdallah's resistance poem about the coastal war, Europeans are portrayed as Christians (*Nasari*, 1.E/271) who got drunk until they soak themselves with alcohol (1.E/193) and desecrated the mosque by entering with their big dogs and wearing shoes during the holiday of Eid (1.E/243-244). The Germans “wrapped up the flag” of Islam and “now they intend to raise their own” (1.E/246, cf. Biersteker 1996:171). The offensive behaviour reached its peak when the Europeans “even wanted to judge, to charge the Moslems, to rule over them.” (1.E/275) These violations of Muslim beliefs⁹⁹ justified a holy war and, together with the disunited nature of coastal rebellion, incited the author to idealize Sultan Khalifa, then ruler of Zanzibar, as saviour of the Islam faith (Saavedra Casco 2007:167).

In all later poems, the religious difference plays no major role. Once, the introduction of Christianity is surprisingly mentioned favourably. The German Kaiser is represented to be “placed by God” (6.A/11) and to rule with Jesus's blessing (6.A/13). Churches should be spread all over the country (*waeneze makanisa*, 6.A/13). This wish for the expansion of Christianity is all the more surprising since the author, Abdel Karim, was a teacher deeply devoted to Islamic principles and later became involved in the Mecca letters affair.

⁹⁹ For a reconstruction of the events, see Glassman 1995:4-5. Hemedi bin Abdallah's poem, since in a historiographical form, closely sticks to the course of events.

In another poem, a German official based in Tanga was said to have built a mosque (7.H/9), but the author does not evaluate this. Given that the rest of the poem is eulogistic in tone, the matter-of-fact style in the relevant stanza stands out. The construction of the mosque might have seemed strange to the poet. The desire to retain differences sure extended to the distinction of Muslim and Christian spheres, mosques being one of the few spaces along the coast where Europeans had almost no influence.

3.5 Prescriptions: Calling for divine intervention, calming the towns and avoiding trouble

Bromber (2003b:97) has argued that the (submitted) poems were explicitly directed to colonial officials so as to convey the poets' norms to them. I hold this to be possible, though only to a limited extent, since – as shown above – poets usually used devices addressing members of their in-group which excluded the Germans. Of course, German power would have dictated that criticism could not be expressed openly and poets had to employ indirect means of speaking out in disfavour.

Two types of thought directed towards the future can be found in the poems. First, there was the hope for divine help against German invasion. This is most clear in Hemedi bin Abdallah's poem which was written before German rule had become effective.

Resistance is deemed necessary, yet the chaos and divisions of Swahili society led Hemedi bin Abdallah to emphasize the need of divine intervention to ensure a “controlled” rebellion:

1.E/618	<i>Na kula mwinyi kwinuka</i> Everybody who stands up <i>kwa vita na mashabuka</i> in war and rebellion <i>uwashike kiwenika</i> hold and pull them down <i>wote wawe maridhia</i> so that all obey him [Sultan Seyyid Khalifa].
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Sometimes thoughts directed to the future were expressed as a vague hope that “things may get better” (3.D/79). Alternatively, the future was imagined as a return to the past: “What we lost, if God wishes, we shall obtain again” (unknown poet, cited in Bromber 2003a:84; my translation).

With German rule along the coast secured through a variety of coercive means, most Swahili poets hoped for an end of violence, logically discouraging uprisings. This accommodationist view was the second major type of strategy and was expressed in phrases of personal advice like “[t]ry to avoid trouble” (3.D/77), “[w]e should behave ourselves and obey orders” (3.D/83). Typically, religious invocations and political prescriptions accompanied each other (cf. 6.F/9):

1.D/37	<i>ya rabi mola karima</i> Oh Lord, the Beneficent, <i>uwazidishe huruma</i> give them more mercy, <i>waitulize mirima</i> so that they calm the coast <i>pamwe na bwana Ameri.</i> together with Bwana Ameri ¹⁰⁰ .
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¹⁰⁰ Acc. to Velten, *liwali* of Bagamoyo (Miehe et al. 2002:117)

1.D/38	<i>ya rabi mola rabuka</i>	Oh God, our Lord,
	<i>awazidishe baraka</i>	bless them.
	<i>kula ambalo wataka</i>	Whatever they want
	<i>walione likijiri.</i>	they should see it coming.
1.D/39	<i>wapende raia sana</i>	They should love the subjects
	<i>kwa amri ya rabana,</i>	on the Lord's order.
	<i>na ambaye awanena</i>	And whoever opposes them
	<i>itoke yake jeuri.</i>	shall lose his pride.

These pro-colonial accounts basically wish for gradual improvement, keeping the political *status quo*. Improvement was meant to encompass both people¹⁰¹ and their environment. Returning to Bromber's argument, the norms and values that the poets wanted to communicate would have entailed peace, availability of basic goods and modest prosperity, beautification, respect for the citizens, justice and urban improvement, occasionally also technology. They disapproved of cruelty, individual excesses in anger and strongly rejected arrogant behaviour (6.A/20; 7.J/1; 7.L/20). In its strongest version, this entailed a desire to be developed by (but not to become the same as) the colonisers (7.O).

The strong emphasis put on calming or developing towns, the coast, or dominions (1.D/37, 1.E/610-611) that we have observed throughout the analysis indicates that it would be unwise to assume an irreconcilable dichotomous difference between European rule as rule over a territory and African rule as rule over people¹⁰². It seems that rule in Africa could be conceptualized as rule over a territory too. Divergent views to accommodation, stemming from the educated strata of coastal society, were less present in the poems but circulated in a Swahili newspaper called *El Najah*, published in Zanzibar in Arabic script. It was directed to Arabs, but widely read in the coastal towns. In 1912, the editor Suleiman bin Nasor "urged the Arab people to found an association to encourage agriculture, an independent agricultural bank, a trading association, and Arab religious schools" (cited in Iliffe 1969:208). But improvement was not enough: "People tell us: knowledge and work. But more important is effective unity." (ibid.) These statements became more common in Tanganyika after World War I with the founding of different associations of interest of Indians and the African educated elite. The quote from the newspaper does, however, tell us that quite concrete

¹⁰¹ As one poet couched the need of human improvement: "We look like people, / but we are not complete." (7.O/79)

¹⁰² This essentialising view of African rule to equal rule over people and European rule to embody rule over territories has become a staple in writings on European colonial rule in Africa, e.g. in Koponen 1994:119: "Both [*akida* and chiefly administration] represented, in the European fashion, rule over a certain spatial territory and not, in the African fashion, rule over a certain group of people. The functions and nature of *akidas* and chiefs varied sometimes more within these categories than between them."

conceptions existed already during German colonial times. The so-called Mecca Letters Affair¹⁰³ that took place in 1908 hints at widespread religious concepts of revival. One of the poets we dealt with, Abdel Karim Jamalidini, was very active in the Sufi movement and embraced its egalitarian principles (Saavedra Casco 2007:249). If these more recent influences were also cast in poetic forms, they were surely not given to the Germans¹⁰⁴. As we have seen, the form of the submitted poems approximated European expectations of historiography and narration, probably as a concession to the collecting scholars.

Still, the Swahili coast never fully calmed under German rule. Calls for a more fundamental change than mere improvement were voiced in the poems as well, vague as they were:

6.C/22 *tama yangu, nikomele* I end my poem.
 haya yangu matungole, This is my composition.
 uamke walilele, Wake up, those who have slept,
 huna tena kusingia. and don't sleep anymore!

3.6 Hemedi bin Abdallah's *A History of Africa*: Twenty-six developments in German East Africa

To summarise and situate the results of our analysis of Swahili poems during the German colonial period, we will make a small digression of genre and time. The richest single document as far as “indigenous” development concepts during the German colonial period are concerned is not a poem, but a historiographical pamphlet written in Western, prosaic style entitled *A History of Africa* which has received almost no scholarly attention so far. Many of the themes we have dealt with above reoccur. The author of the text, most likely Hemedi bin Abdallah el Buhry¹⁰⁵, is said to have written it at the request of the German authorities “who liked to collect such information regarding past events”, as E.C. Baker quotes Hemedi bin Abdallah's son in his introduction to the text (Hemedi bin Abdullah 1952[1914]:65). The prose form is a clear adaptation to European preferences of historical writing which is also visible in other works of the period, such as the

¹⁰³ The Mecca Letters Affair began when colonial officials found out about a letter, supposedly from Mecca, which proclaimed the coming of an Islamic age. In connection with an unorthodox Muslim revivalist movement, the content of the letter was spread in religious gatherings – which were also attended, for example, by German *askaris* (see Pesek 2003:104-114, Iliffe 1979:211-212).

¹⁰⁴ One poem which Abdel Karim gave to the Germans was the eulogy *Shairi la Dola Jermani*, which Swahili scholar Ann Biersteker (1996:156) reads in a very interesting way: “a closer reading of the poem suggests it may be reasonably considered a “eulogy,” in the sense of “praise of the dead,” only if the “praise” given is recognized to be for Islam and the “death” depicted is that of Christian ideology and German rule.” Regrettably she does not elaborate on this statement nor does she back it up with further arguments.

¹⁰⁵ The document itself was unsigned and only bore the date and place of completion: Dargube (Tanga), 12 July 1914. The work's translator and editor E.C. Baker as well as the scholar Ann Biersteker assign *A History of Africa* to Hemedi bin Abdallah el Buhry (Saavedra Casco 2007:150). E.C. Baker spelled his name “Abdullah,” which I will use for citing. All other scholars, however, spell it “Abdallah” – the version I will continue to use in the running text.

Habari za Wakilindi. The original language of the document is Swahili. Unfortunately, the published version only comprises of the English translation and we are thus not able to see which terms exactly the author uses. The title – *A History of Africa* – is somewhat misleading, for the text deals with genealogies of Swahili towns and East African societies of the coastal hinterland. This might be an indication that the author lacked detailed knowledge of regions further away. Nevertheless, the area he covers means a significant increase of scale in comparison to other contemporary texts and also the poems in which the unit of description was usually the coast or a specific society (cf. Biersteker 1996:152).

As is typical for the genre of *habari*, the author does hardly add any evaluative comments to these listings of events (Bromber / Becher 2003:66). The final three pages, dealing with the German colonial period from the 1890s onwards, are a surprising rupture in tone and style¹⁰⁶. These few pages surely are eulogistic, inasmuch as they credit the Germans with the achievements mentioned. But they are also much more than that – they tell us what exactly it was that the author perceived as progress. The final part is introduced with the following sentences:

Then Africa was governed by the Europeans who divided up the land and each took his portion. During the rule of the Germans we have gained happiness and prosperity and many beautiful things. May their rule be great for they live the people greatly. It is now twenty-six years since the Europeans began to rule: they have done away with twenty-six bad things and have brought twenty-six good things to the country.

(Hemedi bin Abdullah 1952[1914]:80)

In twenty-six sentences, the author juxtaposes the “bad things” that have been replaced with the “good things.” As *History of East Africa* was written in 1914, it reflects on much of the changes that were not yet felt by or visible to the poets who wrote until 1907 (the poems discussed above were written between 1889 and 1907, most of them being from the 1890s). It is worth to quote the relevant part in full, all the more since to my knowledge no scholar has taken a closer look at these twenty-six bad and twenty-six good things:

1. There was famine in the land and there was no place in which one could get food but now there is great prosperity; rice and other foodstuffs arrive in so that there is no hunger.
2. People used to wear garments of hides but now they wear good clothes.
3. Men used to live in huts of mud and grass but now they live in stone houses, whitewashed and with corrugated iron roofs.

¹⁰⁶ Saavedra Casco calls these three pages an “embarrassing” eulogy, “praising German rule in East Africa [surpassing] all the praise poems gathered by Velten” [Saavedra Casco 2007:150].

4. Formerly they burned wood split small to light their houses but now they use glass lamps and lanterns.
5. Formerly one travelled in doubt and difficulty but now one goes by train.
6. If one wished to go anywhere one would travel for many days: now one goes by bicycle.
7. Formerly when one wanted to journey by sea one went in craft sewn together but now one goes in a steamer.
8. Those who lived in towns used to be killed by the Masai or other enemies but now even a woman can go out safely without anyone harming her.
9. There used to be many lion and leopard but now they have disappeared, we do not see them.
10. People used to be simple and stupid but now they have become astute, they know how to read European writing and also they know how to count.
11. Men used to walk through the grass and stubble but now one walks on the highroad.
12. There used to be much poverty but now there is cash and to spare.
13. The people were idle, they did no work and there was no work; now there is work for all.
14. There used to be many thieves but now they do not dare to steal.
15. Formerly, if one wanted to send news it took a long time to arrive but now one telegraphs and even if the person to whom one wants to speak lives a month's journey away the telegram will arrive at once.
16. Those who were poor and weak used to be cheated but now justice is the rule; everyone gets what is due to him.
17. People used to eat vegetables and fish but now they eat beef and goatflesh.
18. There used to be much intrigue but now no one dares to say a slanderous word.
19. People used to rub their bodies with castor oil and were evil-smelling but now they use scent and have a pleasant smell.
20. The sick used to be given medicine of sticks and leaves but now they get medicine from the hospital and are immediately cured.
21. Water used to be very dear in the hot season but now that wells have been built and pumps installed it is plentiful.
22. Women were not beautiful because they had no clothes but nowadays they are very beautiful: they wear clothes and silver ornaments and are pleasing to look upon.
23. The woods and forests in the country used to be menacing but now it is full of plantations and a man may go forth without fear.
24. Formerly it took ten days to sew a kanzu [white robe for men] but now with the aid of a sewing-machine one can sew ten kanzus in a day.

25. When a man wanted to send a thing of value elsewhere there was doubt as to whether it would arrive but now one places it in the post and it arrives without delay.

26. Should a stranger visit one, one was doubtful as to his food but now one sends him to a coffeeshop and he gets food immediately.

And these are the twenty-six bad things where were done away with and the twenty-six good things which came in the reign of the Germans.

(Hemedi bin Abdullah 1952[1914]:80-81)

The author treats a variety of aspects, so that we get quite a complex picture of the progress he praised. In contrast to the poems, this enumeration of advancements does not speak of us and them, but of people in general. Only a few times, specific social groups are mentioned (Masai, women, the poor), though their mentioning additionally serves to bring out the universality of the positive developments for the benefit of the whole country.

First, the author deals with the issue of more and better *food*. Famine has been eradicated and supplies to the town are stable (1), guests can easily get food at “coffee shops” (26). The diet has been improved from common vegetable and fish dishes to plenty beef and goat meat (17). Events like the famine in 1898, which also affected the coast (Speitkamp 2005:111), sensitised poets for the question of food supply to the towns though the interest remained superficial and did not extend to questions of where the food came from. Agricultural production was neglected in the poems as well as in this *History of Africa*.

Second, the *appearance of people* was said to have improved. They changed their dress from hides to good clothes (2)¹⁰⁷. To the delight of the male eye, women too are now elegantly dressed, wear silver jewellery and are “pleasing to look upon” (22). Sensual pleasure was heightened further through the use of perfumes which replaced foul-smelling castor oil (19). The importance of sensual pleasure was also emphasized when poets praised the beauty of towns.

A third area of improvement is *housing*. Mud-grass huts, typical for coastal towns, were increasingly replaced by houses built of stone and covered with corrugated iron roofs (3). Houses built of stone marked the wealth and power of their inhabitants (Glassman 1995:34). The colonial regulation was that new houses for residential and commercial purposes had to be built using stones or bricks (Speitkamp 2005:111), but most Africans and Asians continued to live in grass-thatched huts. Inside the stone houses, glass lamps and lanterns substituted firewood as sources of light (4).

¹⁰⁷ People aspiring a higher status were supposed to abstain from wearing hides, cf. Poeschel 1940:215 and 7.O/66. For the importance of dressing as a claim to social status, cf. Glassman 1995:43, 134-135,171 and Glassman 1991.

Fourthly, and probably most importantly, *technology* advanced substantially. While in the past one had to travel “in doubt and difficulty”, on journeys taking “many days” passing through the bush, people were now able to use the reliable train (5) or fast bicycles (6) on ways cutting through the wilderness (11). Seafaring was by now done in a more secure steamer (7). Items sent by post were said to arrive certainly and timely at their place of destination, just like news which could now be sent in the form of telegrams (13, 25). The main advances in this area are formulated as shortened durations of time and increased certainty of arrival. Increased speed and efficiency is also the advance in the production of *kanzu*, the long white dress worn by coastal gentlemen. According to the author, the process became a hundred times more efficient through the use of sewing-machines (24).

Security in an explicit sense is the fifth area of progress. Town-dwellers, in the past fearing raids from inland societies, were now secure up to a level that even lone women¹⁰⁸ could walk the streets safely (8; cf. 7.N/6). Ever-threatening nature – if in the shape of lions and leopards or “menacing” woods and forests – has been repulsed or transformed into domesticated areas like plantations (9, 23). While other poets were also concerned with security against human invaders, this display of the threatening quality of nature is outstanding. We should remember here what was mentioned already in the chapter on the development concepts of the Shambaa: cultivation meant civilization. To control pests such as tsetse or bush pigs, and to hold predators at bay, land needed to be cleared (Iliffe 1979:163-167). It is also noteworthy that plantations are not mentioned in a context of prosperity or labour.

In the sixth field of advancement, *knowledge*, the author only mentions that people developed from being “simple and stupid” to now be wiser, having knowledge of counting and European writing (10). European writing probably refers to the introduction of the Roman alphabet. There seems to be a teleology at work in the becoming wiser of Africans, since some pages earlier, the author writes (in one of the very few evaluative notions before the section on changes during German rule): “Now at that time the people of Africa were very simple folk and, through cunning, he [the chief Selemani bin Selemani bin Mudhfari] ruled them and cheated them until his death” (Abdallah bin Hemedi 1952[1914]:74). The sentence implies that this simpleness has been overcome, and Africans in the present cannot be deceived anymore as they were in the past.

¹⁰⁸ During raids, women and children had often been taken captive and sold as slaves. This practice was gradually suppressed during German colonial times, but colonial military campaigns also resembled raids. During World War I, raids were very common again (Monson 1998:96).

The seventh field experiencing change to the better, *prosperity*, is described only very generally. Poverty has made way for the availability of cash and to spare (12). The depiction here is not exactly enthusiastic; possibly the author thought that there were was still some way to go for the people to actually attain prosperity.

Closely connected is the eighth area, *labour*. Since there used to be no work, people were idle, whereas now there is work for all (13). The author's concern with this point might be traced back to European influences, since problems of labour and education to labour were central to colonial discourses. In our poems, the aspect of labour did not have any significance.

Ninth, *justice*. As we have seen, poets were very interested in this issue. In the *History of Africa*, justice is only mentioned once and said to have become the rule even for the weak ones (16).

Tenth, *discipline* in the public realm is said to have improved to the point that nobody dares to say even a slanderous word (18) and thieves “dare not steal” (14). Discipline is, since the author uses the verb “to dare” in both instances, implicitly described as resulting from fear of coercive power.

Eleventh, *water* which used to be scarce in the hot season became readily available throughout the year through the construction of wells and pumps (21). Water was already seen as central for urban development in the poet's description of the Sultan's town in Zanzibar.

The twelfth and last realm of amelioration is *health*. Ineffective treatments like “sticks and leaves” have been replaced by treatments in the hospital leading to “immediate cure” (20). Comparable descriptions are missing in the poems, but Velten has described some conversations at the hospital which indicate that people consulted European hospitals only after local practices had failed (Velten 1907:168-169).

Of course, some of the advances that are mentioned can hardly be imputed to German colonial activities or at least not to German activities only. Maybe the author himself knew that, since the Germans are not mentioned a single time in the enumeration. Moreover, most of the improvements were enjoyed by relatively few people only. Yet, keeping with our methodological premise, the text is to be read not as a factual account of how things really were but as a socioculturally shaped representation.

In some areas, the concrete “tools” for improvement are mentioned. These are wells for water, hospitals for health, sewing-machines for higher productivity, plantations for a safe environment, and of course the new instruments for faster and more secure transport and communication. Implicitly, coercive power figures as cause for discipline. The same causality was found in the poems.

3.7 Conclusion

In sum, Swahili poets expressed through the medium of poems wishes for urban improvement, justice, respect and, most of all, peace. The changes brought about by German conquest and rule were evaluated ambivalently. Most of the norms which the poets applied to judge social transformations had been similarly used to evaluate events in precolonial times. The representations were evidently influenced by the social position of the poets – in their dismissive attitude towards inlanders, in the praises of Germans for whom many of the poets worked or, being intellectuals, also in their silence on issues of agriculture and production. Yet none of these markers fully explains what we found out, and there are descriptions of thoughts and feelings as contradictory as the choices that educated members of Swahili society had to make during early colonialism.

For descriptive concepts of development, we have relatively little evidence for perceptions of long-term change. We saw, however, ideals of towns and rule that were applied to the ruler of Zanzibar and his town as well as German colonial officers and the Kaiser's town, Berlin. The most comprehensive single document describing changes for the better is the historical treatise *A History of Africa* which combines the admiration of technological advance with culturally particular perceptions of beauty. Improvements were assigned to individual persons, mostly colonial officials, in the eulogistic tradition of coastal poetry. Some poets also criticised developments of the German colonial period like

Normative concepts of development would be informed by the distinction between *waungwana* and *washenzi*, or Muslim gentlemen of the coastal towns and non-Muslims from the interior. All poets belonged to the group of Muslim gentlemen and shared feelings of despise for inlanders. The Germans readily accepted coastal conceptions of superiority and made use of the terminology as well. A novelty of the colonial period was the temporal dimension in the construction of differences, meaning that groups were seen as representing successive stages of development or civilization. The thought of “civilizing the Other” had also been foreign to the coast before European rule.

Prescriptive concepts of development largely depended on the individual poet. While some few wished for a return to pre-colonial rule or divine intervention to get rid of the Germans, most had accepted the new situation and called for adaptation in order to avoid further warfare and destruction. Nevertheless, all poets also aimed to transmit their ideals of good rule to the Germans – as a good number of the poems were written specifically on the request of German Swahili scholars. The form of the poems changed in the colonial context so that religious invocations and formulas were mostly omitted – as the poets knew that the Germans were “infidels.”

Another form of expression which had precolonial roots and survived long into the 20th century, undergoing fundamental transformations, was a dance called *beni ngoma*. Its appearance – Africans dressed in uniforms, performing war manoeuvres, exercising military drill and addressing themselves with German titles – was read by colonial observers as “aping” of Europeans. With a look beneath the surface, the dance associations which were responsible for the performances can be seen as institutions of social change and “markers of modernity” with their own concepts of development deriving from a variety of sources, both colonial and local.

4. DANCING MODERNITY: THE *BENI NGOMA* DANCE ASSOCIATIONS

Since the late 19th century, *beni ngoma* associations were present in the towns of the East African coast. The festive events, with their marching parades, brass bands, uniforms, drill and ranked hierarchies, appeared at first glance as blunt copies of European military traditions. But the societies behind these events had their own structures, philosophy and pride.

This chapter is concerned with dance as a representation and enactment of modernity. In East Africa, different to West Africa, there is little plastic art, and literacy for the most part remained a privilege of Muslim scholars until the late 19th century and the arrival of Christian missions. The main cultural forms that can be investigated for the late precolonial and early colonial period are oral literature, ritual, as well as music and dance. Music and dance have been used by historians as excellent indicators of social change for these forms were so significant at the time that the period was even termed the “era of dance” (Iliffe 1979:33; cf. *ibid*:298). However, music and dance were not only indicators, but could also turn to institutions of change¹⁰⁹. As Jonathon Glassman (1995:20) states, “[c]onflict in nonindustrial societies [...] frequently took the form of multivalent struggles over community institutions”, of which the dance societies were one of the most important. Dance in East Africa, also in the colonial period, was expression and contestation of power, a means of societal bonding as well as dissociation, and a statement of desired forms of citizenship¹¹⁰.

In dealing with dance in the East African historical context, we need to withdraw any distinction between music and dance, between sound and action, between drumbeat and step. They are one, and more than the sum of its parts. The Swahili noun *ngoma* refers to both a drum and dance, but also to public festive rituals based on drumming and dancing (Glassman 1995:xvi, Weule 1909:84.). *Ngoma* is thus not to be perceived as a genre, but rather as an “environment within which various music genres are played out” (Janzen cited in Gunderson 2000:11). Singing and oral poetry were

¹⁰⁹ A later example for dance as modernity in Tanzania would be a ballroom dancing style called *dansi*, which is described in Graebner (2007) and Suriano (2011). Confer also cases of other dances in Sub-Saharan Africa: For women's dances in postcolonial Malawi's party politics as a means of participation, see Gilman (2009). For the role of music in healing rituals in Northern Malawi, see (Friedson 1996). On dance as a means to re-interpret history and a tool of nation-building in Zimbabwe, see Welsh Asante (2000). Similar examples of brass band developments outside of Africa are the brass band traditions of eighteenth century Jamaica, marching bands in Brazil and the famous orchestras of New Orleans' black communities (Martin 1991:76).

¹¹⁰ This statement, and the chapter in general, is inspired by the Keynote lecture held by the ethnomusicologist Frank Gunderson held at the 6th Ethnomusicology Symposium, University of Dar es Salaam, 1 Aug 2012 under the title “*Expressive Bodies/Controlling Impulses: Exemplifying the Recurring “Dance” between Official Culture and Musical Resistance in Colonial Era in Western Tanzania*”.

also intertwined with the phenomenon of dance. On the Swahili coast, for example, poems were composed for the purpose of public performance in the framework of dance competitions “to debate important community issues, including resistance to Omani and, later, German rule” (Glassman 1995:161; Glassman 1988:354).

Some dances, or *ngoma*, of the colonial period can be easily recognized to have been heavily influenced by the experience of colonialism. This is the case with *robota*, which imitated movements of decorticating and baling sisal (Iliffe 1979:238). Sisal was introduced to the area only in the 1890s and became German East Africa's main export commodity (cf. chapter 5). Another dance entitled *Bom* (derived from *bombom*, a Swahili word for cannon or machine gun) imitated German military drill. Aspects of drill were also prominent in a *ngoma* called *beni*, the dance that is primarily dealt with in this chapter. The noun *beni* derives from the English term “band.”

Beni was a clear expression of modernity. More strikingly, it was not only an expression, but also an instrument to enact modernity. The central argument here is that this instance of modernity was not imported, but one among other “synthetic products of local and European economies, politics, and cultures; 'pidiginizations' that in turn shaped the modernities that have long been regarded as external to Africa” (Zimmerman 2006:427). *Beni ngoma* was more than the sum of its parts.

Beni transcended its origins, at which we will look shortly, in two substantial ways: geographically and functionally. Clerks and soldiers diffused *beni* to other administrative centres of the colony. In its function, *beni* societies were inclusive, supra-ethnic mutual aid organisations and an important source of prestige for their leaders. They were feared by colonial officials to undermine colonial authority. *Beni* members conceived of themselves as modern and civilized. Yet, as we will see, *beni* is ambivalently remembered among its ex-members as being both a progressive, unifying modern dance and an obstacle for development because of excessive spending and factionalism between the rivalling dance societies.

4.1 Dance on record

In contrast to ideologies and thoughts of East Africans during the colonial period, public rituals are well-documented in written sources and thus “relatively accessible to historical investigation [...] if approached with a sensitivity to local cultural idioms” (Glassman 1995:22). Colonial sources give us a first and tentative impression of how the societies emerged and what *beni* festivals looked like:

In Tanga and Pangani some years ago, amongst many *ngoma*, there were two named respectively the *Dar-i-Sudi* and the *Dar-i-Gubi*, who were friendly competitors... As usual the contact of European civilization affected the rising generation. The obtrusive simulation of a superior race by the specious elegants of the youth was not an effect that was lacking. The brass

instruments of the military band appealed to them and eventually the younger section of the military band appealed to them and eventually the younger section of the *Dar-i-Sudi ngoma* formed 'The Marine Band', which constituted itself on military lines with ranks ranging from Kaiser down to Gefreite and Soldat... After the institution of the Marine Band it was not long before the *Dar-i-Gubi ngoma* produced a similar offshoot under the name of the 'Arnoti Band'... The young bloods joined. Anything in the nature of *Kishenzi* [barbarian, uncivilized] was eschewed... European apparel and, with the higher ranks, grotesque pretensions to military uniform, were *en règle* at ceremonial meetings. The various ranks were recognized according to degree. The old songs, dances and figures were eliminated and their peculiar ideas of a modern European musical club substituted. Considerable punctiliousness in their attention to etiquette is exhibited.

(British officer 1919 cited in Ranger 1975:38)

Additionally to colonial sources¹¹¹, oral accounts have been used by scholars to reconstruct the different forms, activities and meanings of dance associations – most notably by Terence Ranger, on whose seminal work *Dance and Society in East Africa 1890 – 1970* this chapter primarily builds. Oral accounts were collected by himself and by his students, who went to collect testimonies on *beni* in their home societies (Ranger 2000:3). I referred to the male bias of his work in the introduction (chapter 1.2.2.2). Other complementary primary and secondary sources served to get a firmer grasp of the complexities of *beni*, particularly the work of the German scholar Michael Pesek who referred to the dance associations in several publications (Pesek 1997, 2003, 2005, 2010).

4.2 The sociocultural roots of *beni ngoma*: The *chama*

That *beni* was recognized by contemporary European observers as an aping imitation and interpreted by some scholars as adaptation to German power (cf. Ranger 1975:9) exhibits their failure to acknowledge the historical development and the socio-cultural environment in which *beni* evolved. Those functions of *beni* associations that could not easily be recognized during the festive dance competitions have also remained hidden to colonial observers.

The tradition of dance societies in which *beni* arose had existed along the East African coast for several decades¹¹². These dance societies were heterogeneous social groups and in Swahili called *chama* (pl. *vyama*). A *chama* had several functions, including negotiating political power and to ensure discipline among the community members (Glassman 1988:344; Glassman 1995:158). The

¹¹¹ I tried to find the colonial files that Terence Ranger had used in the Tanzania National Archives. Unfortunately, shortly after Ranger's research the archive introduced a new index system so that the archive employees were not able to find the documents I would have liked to see.

¹¹² I found little information on the date of origin of the *chama*. The most concrete statement traces the evolvement of the *chama* back to times when the Busaidi Sultana became increasingly important along the Swahili coast – that is, in the mid-nineteenth century (Pesek 2003:121).

dance societies had a system of ranks, with the highest rank being *akida* (pl. *akida* or *maakida*), followed by *jumbe* (pl. *majumbe*) and further sub-offices. These hierarchised titles were later also also by the Germans for native administrators. The *chama* was a very urban institution in the sense that any inhabitant of the town, no matter his or her origin, might join (Glassman 1988:356). Slaves could take part in these societies just as well as the freeborn. According to custom, when a runaway slave attained the status of *jumbe*, his master lost all claims upon him (Velten 1898:37). Accessions to rank of a new *jumbe* or *akida* were celebrated with festive dances, the *ngoma*. Drumming and dancing seemed to be the obvious main task of the dance societies' leaders¹¹³; yet, as one among many informants of Glassman (1988:354) objected:

Dances and drumming weren't the job of the *maakida*, but were rather among the things which they did. They had the *ngoma kuu*, they had the *goma* drum [These are drums that were restricted to men of rank]. They played them on festive occasions. It's just like nowadays: The army has drums, hasn't it? But drumming isn't their only job!

In the coastal town of Pangani, *maakida* and *majumbe* not only presided over dances, but also over the economically extremely important trade caravans going inland (Glassman 1995:76). In some few instances, slaves who had climbed to a high position in the *chama* commanded freeborn porters. Dance societies and the caravan trade were thus inherently linked in their influence on wealth and social standing. Glassman (1995:78) even argues that Pangani's aristocrats and their clients “sought prestige far more than profits” in the risky undertakings of the caravan trade.

Preceding colonial conquest, dance associations had been a central site of power and contestation of power. Festive rituals decided if a newly appointed *jumbe* could win backing among other ranked citizens and the wider public (Glassman 1995:161). Songs and poems were composed to stimulate public debate on current issues, including first Omani and later German rule, and resistance against the rulers (Glassman 1995:161; cf. Baumann 1890:346-349).

In a typical type of contest, the positions at stake were represented by poets discussing in alternating verse and also by rivalling dance societies. Competitive poetry and competitive dance complemented each other¹¹⁴.

Concerning the organisation, and this is the aspect which will interest us more, every *chama* or dance society was typically tied to a powerful patron, in most cases the *jumbe* himself. Persons of lower ranks, no matter if town-born or immigrants, were eager to join for they could increase their status and participate in the ritual life.

¹¹³ Lambert (1962:18) brought forward the same suggestion in regard to the dance society: “[...] its sole function appeared to be the organisation of dances [...]”.

¹¹⁴ During the end of the 19th century, *maulid* prayer groups also merged with the competitive societies (Glassman 1995:161).

Beni ngoma, then, was a dance style that evolved within exactly these structures of competing dance societies in the quarters of East African coastal towns. The first *beni* society was probably founded in 1899, when German and British were already firmly established in East Africa, in Mombasa with a male and a female detachment (Ranger 1975:22). It was called *Kingi*, referring to the British King George. The person responsible for the music and early compositions was a man named Mgandi, who had been educated in a German native school of music (Ranger 1975:23). It was the first brass band to be seen in East Africa outside of the royal court of Zanzibar and the European military forces (cf. Kiel 2012). Not long after the establishment of *Kingi* in Mombasa, *beni* arrived in German East Africa – first in Tanga and Pangani, later in Dar es Salaam and in the end all over the territory.

4.3 *Beni ngoma*: An African modernity

Beni was distinguishable from other dances through three characteristics (Ranger 1975:5). First, it is marked through the sound of a brass band, though the degree of elaboration varied significantly. There were well-equipped orchestras with Europeans instruments as well as stripped-down rural variations in which the beating of a big drum was meant to create the marching band effect and trumpets made from pumpkins imitated the European brass instruments (Bender 1985:138). Second, military drill was the core element of the choreographies. Again, there were different forms like processions, circle dances or platoon formations. The third element was a hierarchy of officers with elaborated ranks, titles of honour and uniforms. The dignitaries, often displaying pseudo-European titles, participated in the dance but bore furthermore important functions of administration and welfare of the dance society. Women were part of the audiences, played important roles in the poetic competitions which were part of the events and also had separate structures of organization for dance events, e.g. a special detachment with *beni* group. Women were also participants of the dances. The militarist mode in its most refined version, however, including uniforms and mock-manoeuvres, seems to have been confined to men¹¹⁵ (Glassman 1995:158; Lambert 1962:18; Martin 1991:76; Ranger 1975:22, 27).

The Tanzanian ethnomusicologist Damas Mpepo (2011:43) emphasizes the European influence on *beni ngoma*. The Germans and the British (on Zanzibar) brought with them not only military power, but also military culture of which brass bands were an integral part. German anthropologist Karl

¹¹⁵ Dances similar to *beni* are known especially from Malawi, though the relation between them and *beni* is unclear. In a rural dance in Northern Malawi, a women's "battalion" plays a kind of rattle (*visekese*) to create a marching rhythm, starting the session like a military exercise with counting "Eins zwei." According an elder informant whom Gerhard Kubik (1982:202) interviewed in 1967, this dance was a local and "recent" invention. Kubik suspects that the form evolved shortly after World War II and mentions that "Eins zwei" could be Afrikaans (although this would be "Een twee"). I think it is more likely that the origin of this dance dates back to the period of World War I.

Weule (1909:412) was delighted to find that “Dar es Salaam enjoys the advantage of two bands, that of the sailors of the two cruisers, and that of the askari.” The *askari* band played on official occasions such as the Kaiser's birthday and other festivities of the Germans, thus also getting insights into European club activities. Additionally, Lutheran churches established marching band traditions in Dar es Salaam, Lushoto and Tanga. In the Lutheran Boys School at Vugha – the former royal capital mentioned in chapter two of this work – and the Kisarawe Primary School of the Bethel Mission, students were taught brass instruments and later, as young men, required to join the colonial military forces as bandsmen (Mpepo 2011:43).

These aspects of missionary and colonial education may be seen as important influences on the form and appearance of *beni*, but surely not as the cause for its structure and organization. The formation of the dance societies “followed the pattern of earlier dances on the coast by dividing into high status [*Marini*] and low status [*Arinoti*] societies” (Ilfie cited in Graebner 2007:180). Moreover, we need to remember once more that *beni* “did *not* arise in or out of the mission villages or schools” (Ranger 1975:15, italics in original). The competitions between dance societies gave rise to a modernising dynamic which encompassed first “Arab” and then “European” symbols of power.

4.3.1 The reflection and creation of modernity

In the 1870s and 1880s, dance associations followed a trend of “Arabisation” which was inspired by the economic boom of Zanzibar. The mainland's coast was informally ruled by Zanzibar's Sultan Bargash, an Arab with Omani descent. The administrators he installed in the coastal towns were also mostly of Arab origin. Sultan Bargash was, and is, known for his “orientation towards modern innovations” including the construction of much of Stone Town, the introduction of electricity and public water supply with pipes, baths, a hospital, parks, improved roads, the famous elevator in his palace, the so-called “House of Wonders,” and also the import of new musical styles which were played first exclusively at the royal court and then became more and more popular (Kiel 2011:135-136).

These changes were observed and incorporated into the organisational structures of the dance societies. Rank titles of Bantu origin such as *mkuu*, *kijumbe* or *mwinyi* were in some instances replaced by Arabic names, e.g. *khatibu* (clerk), *shaha* (sheikh) or *waziri* (vizier). The Bantu *jumbe* and the Arab *diwan* were interchangeable (Glassman 1988:360). Performers now took pride in sword dances¹¹⁶ and shunned the upcountry dance styles that had heretofore exerted a considerable

¹¹⁶ Ritualized fighting characterized many of the competitions throughout the 19th century, sometimes leading into open violence (Glassman 1995:163). A competitive sword dance is described in Baumann 1891:53. The rise of *beni ngoma*

influence on the coastal dances. During German colonial times, the ranks took – in complete accordance with the dynamics of the dance societies – German names like *Kaiser* (title of the German emperor), *König* (king), or *Bismarck* (referring to Otto von Bismarck who had been Imperial Chancellor until 1890). In correspondence, members addressed each other with *M. König v. Hindernberg* (referring to Hindenburg) or *S.M. Friedrich August König von Sachsen* (His majesty, Friedrich August King of Saxony) (Ranger 1975:57). Some few members took these kinds of identification more serious and clung to German titles even in the early British colonial period, but the overwhelming majority kept with the dynamic mode of appearance. Soon after World War I, most associations adopted English equivalents. Without any sentiments of loyalty to the ousted Germans, they flew the Union Jack or the flag of Islam (Ranger 1975:56).

Wherever *beni* was performed, we find this duality of factions which was every now and then updated to reflect current events. Factionalism was a long-standing tradition (examples taken from Ranger 1975:24-25). In a Kenyan coastal town in 1824, a dance was observed to express the rivalry between the Sultan of Zanzibar and the Mazrui family of Mombasa. In a Kenyan village in 1861, two competing factions called themselves “Englishmen” and “Frenchmen” since “there are no worse enemies than these two” (von der Decken cited in Ranger 1975:20). Later, also along the Kenyan coast, people observed a conflict between the English, whose highest authority was known to be King Edward, and the recalcitrant Scottish, so that the rivalling factions represented these parties with trumpets and bagpipes and came to bear the names *Kingi* and *Scotchi*. In Malindi, *Kingi* competed against *Sultani*, representing the Sultan of Zanzibar. In Tanga, under German colonial rule, the youth divisions of the two older organisations of Dar-i-Sudi and Dar-i-Gubi took the names *Marini*, referring to the marine, and *Arinoti* (Ranger 1975:37).

From a sociological perspective, such “patterns of opposites, factionalism, 'famous pairings' or dualisms' ... offer the solution to the problem of social order by holding out the promise of balancing contending forces in perpetual equilibrium” (Maybury-Lewis 1989 cited in Gunderson 2000:9). This will become clearer when we look at the differences which were reshaped and created through *beni*.

4.3.2 *Beni* in contrast to “tribal” dances

With dance being a primary medium of expression and participation in society, other dance forms emerged as well during the German colonial period. A general tendency was that certain dances became “tribalised”, that is to say, they became exclusive markers of certain ethnic groups. As people of different origins interacted in the towns, one or the other dance might become more

did also not lead to the extinction of sword dances (cf. DOAZ 8 Jan 1908).

popular and associated with a certain region. The most visible display of these dances was during the annual celebration of the Kaiser's birthday where dance groups were to represent different dance styles as “tribal” folklore (Iliffe 1979:238, Pels 2000:141). In rural areas, performances were identifiable in terms of their origins and most often enacted by members of the respective society (Martin 1991:78). In contrast to these “traditional” dances in both rural and urban areas¹¹⁷, *beni* was a completely new experience:

Thus, for many migrant workers coming to Dar es Salaam for the first time, participating in *beni ngoma* was their first experience in a multi-ethnic musical activity. The ethnic music that would predominate would be that which had the best musicians represented in the group, since everyone was generally invited to contribute to what may be called an eclectic music event.

(Martin 1991:79)

Beni members clearly were proud to be modern and to set their modernity against the traditional dances (Pesek 1997:23). Wherever *beni* dancers went during the German colonial period, they self-consciously embodied a program of advancement and modernity as a result of their identification with the *Marini* or the *Arinoti*. During *beni*'s early years, the assertion of modernity was connected with a coastal bias towards inland societies (cf. chapter 3.4.1), especially by the *Marini* who sang: “We *Marini* are coastal people / Savages from upcountry, Ah, you are not able!” (anonymous 1938 cited in Pesek 1997:24). Let it suffice here to mention that young *beni* dancers, wearing Western fashions, wanted to “show that the Swahili coast, always in their view more civilized and more 'modern' than the societies of the interior, could now become even more so” (Ranger 1975:31). The use of the Swahili language in the dance songs was observed not only on the coast, but even in the remotest rural areas where the language was not commonly known (Martin 1991:79). The lyrics of two songs in the tradition of *beni* from the German territory exemplify how superiority was further expressed in terms of association to the coast and by using religious symbols:

<i>Sisi Wamarini watu wa Peponi</i>	We Marini are the people of Paradise
<i>Twafikiri sana kwendu kwetu pwani</i>	We long to go to our home on the coast
<i>Hawa Arinoti watu wa Motoni</i>	These Arinoti are people of hell

¹¹⁷ The self-perception of being modern through dance continued to influence Tanganyika's colonial history, most notably in the form of *dansi* ballroom dancing, which was pursued by young Africans as a way to social advancement. Next to going to the cinema and dressing up, ballroom dancing was *the* leisure activity associated with modernity. Elders regarded *dansi* as a waste of time and were shocked by the scandalous display of personalized sexuality (Brennan 2007:34). In late colonialism, modern *dansi* was seen by intellectuals as morally questionable – the traditional *ngoma* were cherished again as true African culture, a view which influenced postcolonial cultural policies (Suriano 2011).

Twamsifu sana Saidi, mkubwa wa ngoma We praise Saidi, leader of the dance.
Jenerali Hamisi, liondoe hilo zunga; General Hamisi, remove that foreskin;
linatutaabisha. it causes us distress.

(cited in Lambert 1962:19)

Modernity, as I hope to be able to show below, was seen as coming from different sources (Europe, Turkey, Zanzibar and the Swahili coast), while backwardness was implicitly assigned not to the interior per se but to those who had not yet experienced instances of modernity. *Beni* triumphantly spread to the interior via newly established administrative posts and secured trading centres.

4.3.3 The embracement of literacy and bureaucracy

The first leaders of *beni* associations were apparently those individuals who had become intermediaries between local societies and the colonial system (Pesek 2003:120). Next to civil servants of different offices, policemen and soldiers were the main impetus for the territorial expansion of *beni* societies. The main mechanism of expansion before World War I was, as Ranger (1975:43) argued, the re-posting of lower rank officials from one German administrative centre to another¹¹⁸. Typically, the establishment of a new *Marini* branch would be balanced by its necessary competitor, the *Arinoti*, shortly after. The central figures in *beni* dance societies were thus not, as in the *vyama*, powerful patrons but men in colonial service who were joined by all sorts of people.

Although a fair share of the members were illiterate, literacy was hailed. A song of the *Marini* went: “We *Marini* are favoured by God. To be able to read and speak the language of Europe¹¹⁹ the gates of Heaven are opened for us” (cited in Lambert 1962:20). In some districts, almost all African clerks were enrolled in *beni* associations (Ranger 1975:64). “Enrolled” here is the appropriate term, for enrolment bears the connotations of signing up, of registering in a very formalized way, of writing down a name. The leaders of the associations announced the feasts by the means of a formal letter sent to the members. On the first day of the event, he was received with the pomp and circumstance that was usually reserved for travelling high-ranked colonial officials like district officers and the governor: the hoisting of flags, provision of food and accommodation, welcome committees (Pesek 2003:139). These performances of colonialism were themselves heir to practices of the caravan trade (Pesek 2005).

An appointed official in the *beni* hierarchy was responsible for the collection of fees and presents of the members, and to keep a written account thereof (Ranger 1975:64). From a *beni* association from

¹¹⁸ Gunderson (2000:9) has proposed alternatives to Ranger's model of “coast-to-inward diffusion,” but his argument relates to dance practices which are not *beni* in the sense of our definition. We have to note, however, that wherever *beni* went, it merged with to local dance practices, some of which were competitive as well.

¹¹⁹ Perhaps this song was composed in Kenya, where English was the official language. Alternatively, members claimed to speak German – though this was very rare – or the song was composed after the British had taken over the territory.

the town of Ujiji, we still have a document in which rules of registration were fastidiously set down after World War I:

Beni is an organized society. Persons wishing to play – Beni must first agree to enter the society and have their names inscribed in it. Every inscribed member must agree to follow the laws of the ngoma and to obey all orders given by the heads thereof. The society is hierarchically organized. The head of Beni inscribes the names of the member. He selects members for positions of office in the society.

(anonymous 1938 cited in Pesek 2003:138-139)

Pesek argued that “this form of club activities with its membership fees, elected committees and hierarchies citing the colonial world” (Pesek 2003:119, my translation) was novel, but goes on to mention that they could not only be observed in colonial offices and European clubs¹²⁰. Similar bureaucratic structures had also existed in the *tariqas*, Islamic Sufi orders (Pesek 2003:120). In these orders, individuals travelling from one town to another received a letter from their teacher for the introduction in the mosque of the destination so that the traveler would be adequately received¹²¹. The procedure seems to have been almost identical in *beni* societies, which were dominated by adherents to Islam. One might add similar bureaucratic procedures known from Zanzibari state functionaries. We can thus safely assume multiple sources of inspiration for the bureaucratic elements in *beni* societies.

During World War I, control of *beni* societies had shifted to the soldiers, but clerks took over again after the war. One of the letters intercepted by British censors illustrates this. It came from *General Brigadier* K. Zibe Kidasi in Dar es Salaam and was addressed to *Konig* Mzee Sehemu in Tanga. The letter was, as the censor noted, “in formal terms and headed: Kommando der Arnot Regt. [It] inquires whether a rubber stamp for the Regiment is required as the writer can obtain one.” (Political Officer Lindi 1919, cited in Ranger 1975:62).

Bureaucracy and literacy, the latter of which was not novel at all to the coast but novel to dance societies, were embraced as superior methods of social organisation, allowing for the expansion of the societies and the constant and orderly exchange of ideas aiming at improvement. In an exchange of letters between *marini* members, Saleh bin Mkwawa from Iringa inquired about the latest songs, procedures and rules of the Dar es Salaam branch with the aim of standardization (Pesek 2003:140, Ranger 1975:57). The complexity of the organisation becomes clear in the fact that *beni* societies even developed a “judicial” system to mitigate conflicts which transcended colonial boundaries:

¹²⁰ A more direct copy of European club structures were clubs founded for Africans and Arabs as early as 1905 (Pesek 2003:119).

¹²¹ I owe this information to Katrin Bromber (personal communication, 26 November 2012).

when conflicts could not be solved locally in Kenya, they were referred to an impartial “high court” in Tanga (Ranger 1975:50).

4.3.4 Movements, music and costumes : Uniformity and discipline

The dance itself was different from earlier *ngoma*, and *beni*'s central characteristic was the militarised style:

The effect of the imported marching band traditions and other imported cultural practices on Tanganyika's existing culture includes i. Uniformity and precision in performance movements, ii. performers putting on uniforms, iii. smartness of presentation, iv. Music performed at a constant tempo to facilitate the steady movement (marching), v. militaristic titles of the marching musicians, vi. militaristic authority and others.

(Mpepo 2011:44)

It seems that these aspects – precise movements to a steadily beating drum performed by bodies dressed in uniforms – were markers of modernity. Mpepo here sees the *import* of cultural traditions as major cause for the change of musical practices¹²². What needs to be added is that one can hardly speak of a unilateral diffusion of culture, of “imports”, as Mpepo states, nor are all phenomena he lists really new. As Ranger (1975:164) has shown, “the brass-band tradition itself had extra-European origins”. Pesek (2003:119) maintains that *beni* dancers copied troop parades from Zanzibar, which themselves were inspired by parades in Constantinople. Mpepo (2011:41) himself lists precolonial traditions of procession which, he goes on, were influenced by European traditions. We do not know if traditions of procession among the Zaramo of the coast or along the caravan routes also influenced the *beni ngoma*¹²³, but we know for certain that dance styles from the interior continued to be incorporated into the patterns of drumming and movement (Martin 1991:76). Even concerning the “modern” elements, *acts of appropriation and dispersion* of musical and dance styles were a result neither of state power nor of mission schools but of local initiative. One individual's impact exemplifies this proposition: Mgandi, the most influential composer of *beni* tunes.

Mgandi had received knowledge of compositions for military bands in a German native school in Tanga. His compositions, which were clearly “European” in style, sparked the evolvement of the

¹²² As does Martin 1991:72. The curious aspect is that both Martin and Mpepo also describe influences other than European, but fail to articulate the different sources of origin.

¹²³ Karl Weule (1909:412) states that he could not judge the quality of the native brass bands for “their music was accompanied by a great deal of noise”. Ethnomusicologist Stephen H. Martin (1991:72) interprets this “noise” as “very likely a battery of actual or simulated African percussion used by the askari band to aid in ensemble coherence as well as rhythmically embellishing for them the otherwise bland rhythms of German military band music.” Although Martin's interpretation of Weule's statement seems bold, it points to the fact that even those bands trained directly by the Germans will surely have made use of own rhythm patterns.

earliest *beni* bands in Mombasa in 1899¹²⁴. Back in German East Africa, he became the chief composer of the *Arinoti* association. His knowledge meant that Africans were independent from European mentors. Members of *Arinoti* would travel along the railway lines from Tabora to Ujiji and teach Mgandi's latest tunes. In a way completing the circle, his compositions became so popular that some were later even adopted by German and British armies. (Ranger 1975:23, 43)

The same is true of the instilment discipline, an aspect which has recently received more attention in the historiography of Tanzania (cf. Bromber / Eckert / Wirz 2003, Pesek 2005). As we noted above, to ensure discipline among the community members had also been a central function of the *vyama* (Glassman 1988:344; Glassman 1995:158). But *beni* was something else. According to oral information, participants of *beni* “felt that they were participating in something which called for and taught a *new* discipline” of a military kind (Ranger 1975:75, emphasis added). For the movements, one inspiration were doubtless war manoeuvres as performed by German *askaris* for the sake of practice, but these experiences and observations were intertwined with local forms of dance:

The form of dance practised was very simple, the dancers forming an arc which moved very slowly round a circle, shifting their feet an inch or so at a time to the rhythm of the song. There was a master of ceremonies who moved here and there inside the circle and often led the singing. He kept order and exhorted the dancers to sing with vigour.

(Lambert 1962:18¹²⁵)

That steps were learned properly was ensured through *beni* officials of higher rank. Those dancers who performed badly could even be lashed with the hippo-hide whip, the *kiboko*. The *kiboko* was often the most-often used instrument for punishment by German authorities. Lashing with the whip was described by one scholar as probably the most dreadful gesture of conquest (Trotha 1995), and the whip was the central instrument to instill discipline in the public sphere – including, of course, dances. A newspaper account reports how three men were sentenced to whiplashes because they had mocked Europeans during a dance competition (DOAZ 9 Aug 1909). The incorporation of flogging into the drilling procedures is not easily reconciled with a picture of *beni* associations to be concerned with mutual aid (see below, chapter 3.5). Members of *beni* joined the society because they wanted to. That they were “dancing under the lash” (Hazzard-Gordon 1996:101) was, unlike colonial rule, an act of their own free will. It seems that corporal punishment was seen as an effective and necessary means to bring about discipline, and the whip or other instruments of beating were part and parcel of the military character which marked not only colonial troops but

¹²⁴ Mombasa itself seems, however, not to have been the origin of *beni* dance forms. Ranger (1975:14-15) and colonial newspapers (DOAZ 8 Jan 1908) suspect Zanzibar as place of origin.

¹²⁵ A very similar dance is described in Velten 1903:154. The circle element is an obvious influence of “traditional” dances (cf. Pesek 1997:22).

also *beni* regiments. Dance and competition thus played a significant role to internalise structures of authority and forms of discipline which were inspired by both militarist and bureaucratic practices (cf. Wirz 2003).

Uniforms, a largely new phenomenon in East Africa, were imitated by *beni* dancers as well. To the Germans, uniforms were symbols of colonial rule. Among members of *beni*, they most likely were not. Even within the colonial *Schutztruppe* and among policemen, German patriotic and military symbolisms were re-appropriated with different meanings and own codes of honour specific to *askari*, many of whom were recruited from Sudan and Mozambique. We can only speculate what uniforms meant to *beni* members. Possibly it was close to concepts of what being an *askari* meant – and *askari* proudly distanced themselves from inlanders whom they called *washenzi*, or uncivilized. (Pesek 2005:231; Moyd 2010:151, 179; Pfeifer 2012:128-132)

4.3.5 Social functions and transformations: Spending, prestige and mutual aid

The *vyama* (dance societies) were, as we have established above, the sociocultural predecessors of *beni*. In an indigenous account, the formation and organization of the competition in coastal towns was reported to occur in the following way:

For they used to say, 'Let us make a single society as between such-and-such a district and another district'. They would choose their head-man and one councillor and a committee and a messenger ... In these competitions there were dances; all night long, for six or seven days they would just dance. They spent a lot of money, because if people of one society slaughtered two goats, the others would slaughter four. On the last day of the dancing they would make a feast... and unless this was done the relevant district was disgraced.

(Velten 1903 cited in Ranger 1975:35, cf. Velten 1903:47)

The first newspaper account of *beni* festivities in the German colonial period tells us about the competition between two groups named *Maji Maji*¹²⁶ and *Lelemama* in Dar es Salaam in 1907/08. Apparently, *Maji Maji* started off with dances accompanied by a feast for which four oxens were slaughtered. *Lelemama* answered with a much bigger *ngoma*, slaughtering not less than 21 oxens. 350 women and 450 men attended the event, 100 of whom had come from Bagamoyo, some 75 kilometres north of Dar es Salaam, just for the spectacle. Members of *Maji Maji* proclaimed their intent to answer with a feast in the course of which not less than 40 oxen should be slaughtered (DOAZ, 8 Jan 1908). The aspect of excessive spending was, typical for the right-wing settler newspaper DOAZ, interpreted as an indicator of *laissez-faire* colonial policy which was regarded as

¹²⁶ *Maji Maji* was the wide-spread rebellion in the South of the territory. The name itself was a provocation of all Europeans in Dar es Salaam who feared the outbreak of a new rebellion which would then also reach the towns where the majority of them lived (cf. Pesek 2003:121).

too beneficial for the natives (Pesek 2003:119). In a later issue (DOAZ Feb 1 1908), the information is corrected: *Lelemama* only slaughtered 6 oxen, but gave the others away to local administrators (*majumbe* and *akida*) and other dance societies as gifts. The district office enjoined *Maji Maji* to proceed with the undertaking of buying 30 oxen for the next feast, restricting the size of *ngoma*. Historians (Harries 1967, Glassman 1995:24, Pesek 2003:120) have analysed this behaviour of “excessive spending” and gift-giving with the help Marcel Mauss' influential theory of reciprocal social relations which says that the giving of presents is constitutive of social relations and a way to gain prestige. Mauss' most famous example was the “Potlatch,” a ritual among native Americans of the north-western coast in which presents were exchanged competitively, creating a prestige economy. Harries thus circumscribed a *beni* dance competition as “a Swahili potlatch.” Mauss' theory definitely fits for the competitive aspect of the dance societies. As Mauss (1961:63) said, the parties “must always return more than [they] receive.” Furthermore, the competitions were not only economic in their function, but rather “total” social events (Mauss 1961:76). A poetic account of such a competition of gift exchange, written in 1913 in Kenya, gives an insight how the different rationalities of dance associations and the colonial state clashed.

- | | | |
|----|--|--|
| 22 | <i>Simba kashika kainda</i>
<i>ng'ombe kumi kama inda</i>
<i>wakaenea kiwanda</i>
<i>damu ikenda ikiya.</i> | Then Simba took and slaughtered
ten cows from sheer wilfulness
and they covered the whole yard
the blood was everywhere. |
| 23 | <i>Mara kapita balozi</i>
<i>hakimu wetu miyuzi</i>
<i>changalia ile kazi</i>
<i>ni mijali kupoteya.</i> | Just then the district commissioner passed by
our knowledgeable magistrate
and he saw what was being done
it was a waste of property. |
| 24 | <i>Mngereza wa asili</i>
<i>kwanda kafanya ukali</i>
<i>kamwita wetu Luwali</i>
<i>kamuuza nini haya.</i> | An Englishman by birth
at first he was very angry
and he called our Headman
and asked him what these things meant. |
| 25 | <i>Luwali wetu Saidi</i>
<i>asiche akamrudi</i>
<i>kamwambia tangu jadi</i>
<i>watu hushindana haya.</i> | Our Headman Saidi
without fearing replied
and told him, 'Since the beginning
people compete in this way. |
| 26 | <i>Watu hugharimu mali</i>
<i>zaidi haya kawili</i>
<i>na nafuu serikali</i>
<i>hupata cheti rupia.</i> | 'People pay the expense
twice as much as this
and the Government gains from it
receiving rupees for the permit.' |

some American cities” (Anthony 1983 cited in Pesek 2003:120). Very similar to previous functions in the *chama*, individuals who obtained a rank within *beni* not only enjoyed more prestige but also had to fulfil social functions (Ranger 1975:63). Coming back to the officeholder of the *Bismarck* rank, he had to handle the grievances the sick and needy from the funds of the organisation and if unable to do so he was to report to his superior, the *General*, to arrange for a general collection of more funds (Ranger 1975:63). The welfare function of the dance societies was thus quite elaborated and embedded in the organisational structure itself. For later decades, the role of *beni* societies in the allocation of jobs and housing in town is also documented (Ranger 1975:100). In the framework of my argument, I interpret these changes as results of prescriptive strategies for development. We have almost no information of what the concepts to *consciously* bring about positive change looked like, yet their outcomes are recorded.

4.4 Modern identity and factionalism as obstacle to development

In contrast to Kenya's main sites of *beni*, Mombasa and Lamu, the early *beni* hotspots along the coast of German East Africa had a very different social composition (cf. Gulliver 1956:ii, 1). In Tanga, Swahili were outnumbered by labour migrants heading for sugar and sisal plantations while in Dar es Salaam, the most “autochthonous” groups who were thought of as permanent African population were ex-slaves¹²⁸ originating from upcountry and the Germans' African soldiers from Sudan and Portuguese East Africa, which today is Mozambique (Ranger 1975:38-39). In German East Africa, then, difference was established not between residents of different town quarters, belonging to different patrons, as happened in Kenya. The rivalry between *Marini* and *Arinoti*¹²⁹ instead very much took the form of a more elitist society made up of Christian clerks, soldiers and policemen against a more inclusive society dominated by workers and unskilled labor migrants. The “posh” *Marini*, the name stemming from “marine,” highly valued literacy and initially only admitted persons who could claim to be respected members of coastal society. Those who were turned down by the *Marini* still had an excellent chance to get accepted among the rows of the *Arinoti*. The origin of the name *Arinoti* is unclear, but apparently it means “the unclean ones” (Ranger 1975:40). Translations given by Swahili scholar Lyndon Harries (1967:9) for the very similar terms *harenauti* and *harnauti* are simply “association” or “quarter.” The difference between

¹²⁸ On slavery and “emancipation without abolition” in German East Africa, see Deutsch 2006. In 1914, due to the gradualist approach of German colonial authorities, there were still an estimated 10% of the territory's population with the status of slaves (Sunseri 1993:490).

¹²⁹ There were other groups as well, such as *Maji Maji* or *Lelemama*. I could not find out if *Marini* and *Arinoti* were the only two *Beni* societies with smaller subsections, or if *Maji Maji* and *Lelemama* existed independently of these two famous factions. In any instance, I assume constant interaction and entanglements between different dance traditions and dance factions in the towns and rural areas, both within German East Africa and beyond the borders of the territory.

“posh” and “vulgar,” or high status and low status, could be easily found in all administrative centres of the colonial territory.

No matter which faction one belonged to, *beni* groups “were self-consciously modern” (Graebner 2007:180). Next to songs in which the parties mocked one another, a European observer also saw “parodies of incidents in, or phases of, European life in its contact with the native... in the form of light comedy, with the laugh against the ignorant or inexperienced blackman” (cited in Ranger 1975:75).

During World War I, *Marini* and *Arinoti* changed their structure and came to be dominated by *askari*. The aspect of status remained to inform the duality, but the difference was reformulated to one of marine forces (*Marini*) and infantry (*Arinoti*). An informant of Ranger also remembered the *Marini* to be “mostly associated with Europeans, Indians, Arabs, and other races” for all these people came to the country by the sea (Mzee Thabit bin Ismaili cited in Ranger 1975:55). But when *beni* members returned to their rural areas of origin and brought the new dance style with them, they came as representatives of modernity, that is, as representing modernity *itself*, not modernity as defined through a particular Swahili coastal civilization or Europeans (Ranger 1975:106). This was a development that took place mostly after the First World War, with soldiers porters, and their dependents¹³⁰ returning to their home areas and proudly showing within the framework of *ngoma* what they had experienced and learned during the campaigns (Pesek 2010:368). *Beni* dancers represented themselves as more advanced and experienced to those who had remained at home. Especially in the rural areas, *beni* was to survive for a long time in a variety of different modifications. In some areas, these varieties became “traditional” dances for the region, expressing local identities¹³¹. Though extremely interesting, I cannot further track these developments in the rural areas here. Let us instead return to organisational changes of *beni* in the towns.

In urban settings, the former key organisers increasingly turned to other forms of community-building. As Tanganyikan *beni* changed its character due the leave of the elite, other associations sprang up all over the British territories. Employees of the colonial state left the dance associations probably as a result of two factors. First, according to oral accounts, all employees of the colonial system – clerks, soldiers and policemen – were forbidden membership (Ranger 1975:92; see below). Second, the importance of *beni* as a source for prestige and welfare decreased after the war as new possibilities opened up (Ranger 1975:93). Given the organisational, communicational and

¹³⁰ During travels, many men – porters, labour migrants or soldiers – were accompanied by their wives and children (Giblin 2005:138).

¹³¹ Of course, a good number of dance traditions in the interior had also incorporated competitive elements and underwent processes of innovation. The unilateral diffusionist model, as the ethnomusicologist Gunderson (2000:8) argued, is too simple.

leadership skills developed in *beni*, it is little surprising to find ex-leaders of dance associations to be key actors in the less carnivalesque and more formal improvement and welfare organisations founded in the 1920s. As a British officer remarked in his annual report of 1932, “I declined to take seriously the original ngomas”, but “it would be foolish not to take notice of the powerful associations which have descended from them” (cited in Ranger 1975:102).

Most important among these “powerful associations” would be the Tanganyika African Association (TAA) which later became the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), the major force in the struggle for independence. In the TAA of 1929, the leadership group comprised Zibe Kidasi, who had carried the title of *Brigadier-General* in Dar es Salaam’s *Arinoti*; Ramadhani Ali, who had been *King of Marini*; and Kleist Sykes Plantan who had become acquainted with *beni* during in his time in the German troops in World War I (Ranger 1975:94-95, cf. Sykes Buruku 1973:98). They followed *beni*’s supra-ethnic character¹³² by proclaiming “that we may unite together as brothers and follow the paths of progress in education, games, and other matters which have been followed by other enlightened people” (cited in Ranger 1975:95). TAA’s goals of advancement and improvement were much more explicit as in *beni* associations, therefore the organisation was quite élitist (cf. Iliffe 1973:73). The formation of African improvement associations was significantly inspired by the establishment of the Arab Association (1911) and the Indian Association (1918) some years earlier¹³³, but the aspect of dance was exclusive to the Tanganyika African Association. Though less concerned with carnivalesque activities, dance remained a core activity to enact modernity also among TAA members. The dance itself – *dansi* – was more of a ballroom kind and cherished two individuals dancing with each other. Colonial observers once more considered it as “aping” of Europeans customs¹³⁴. *Dansi* was “an elite dance mainly associated with christianity, urbanity, formal education and ‘good manners’” (Ranger 1975:16) and remained confined mostly to a small educated elite until the 1930s (Ranger 1975:96, Suriano 2011:43). The TAA had a modernising function just like *beni* associations, though much more explicit and elaborated, but bore no traces of the division between *Marini* and *Arinoti*. Their credo was unity.

Elsewhere, the group identities formed or strengthened by *beni* would be clearly visible in

¹³² Also confer Suriano 2011:46 on the sociopolitical role of *dansi*: “After the foundation of Tanganyika Africa [sic] National Union (TANU) in 1954, nationalist politicians, musicians, and their audiences widely turned *dansi* into a political tool to show the British Africans’ modern organizational skills and to raise money for TANU. The pan-ethnicity of *dansi* was central in its future politicization.” That Africans were capable of fund-raising and organising they had already shown with *beni* some forty years earlier.

¹³³ Another forerunner and actually the first modern organisation of its kind was the Tanganyika Territory African Civil Service Organisation (TTACSA), established as early as 1922 in Tanga (Iliffe 1979:267). The founding document emphasized mutual improvement, education and sportsmanship combined with an exclusive use of these benefits by civil servants only.

¹³⁴ Bender (1985:139) states that *dansi* diffused especially because of Indian traders who had brought the first gramophones to the territory and played Indian music in their shops to attract customers.

succeeding organizations as well. This was the case in Ujiji, where competing *beni* groups had represented local rivalries between the so-called Manyema, ex-slaves which originated from the Congo and considered themselves civilized due to their claimed Arabic heritage and Muslim religion, in opposition to their opponents, labour migrants who displayed their pride to be (and always have been) free men. Even before 1914, local elites instead of re-posted clerks had dominated the societies. In the aftermath of the war, economic conditions were devastating, jobs were scarce and tensions between the two groups aggravated. The two associations which replaced the dance societies – the *Kongo-Arabian Association* and the *Tanganyikan Freeman Association* – came to be characterised by their business-like cooperative proceedings, but also continued to mock each other, calling the opposite faction “slaves” or “still very uncivilized” (Ranger 1975:102-103). In oral accounts recorded in the 1960s, *beni* was remembered both positively for its unifying and negatively for its dividing effect. Mzee Thabit bin Ismaili is an excellent example for this irreconcilably ambivalent perspective. On the one hand, he hailed *beni* as “the greatest influence of unification I had ever seen”¹³⁵ and “the first organization that transcended tribalism” (cited in Ranger 1975:65). On the other hand, he still loved the thought of having once been an *Arinoti* and found that

later this dance proved to be very destructive. Instead of being the greatest influence of unification I had ever seen it turned out to be the greatest dividing force I had ever seen! One African group was set against another, they fought and tried to bewitch the other... The colonialists enjoyed that. They knew as long as we talked in terms of “I am *Arinoti*, you are *Marini*”, we could not conceive a concerted action against them...

(Mzee Thabit bin Ismaili, cited in Ranger 1975:96)

Moreover, Mzee Thabit had lost his brother in a fight against *Marini*. Ranger is right when he says that the account “is coloured by the experience of the radical nationalism of the 1960s, as when *Arinoti* is compared to TANU as the poor man's association” (Ranger 1975:96). Yet criticism of factionalism was not a new issue of the 1960s. Rivalry was already mentioned as a cause for stagnation of urban development in the 1920s¹³⁶ and critiques of factionalism might have existed in the German colonial period as well. It is definitely misleading to assume their sole origin in

¹³⁵ *Beni* was not the earliest instance of organization transcending linguistic and ethnic categories – this pioneering role is until today prominently played by the Maji Maji rebellion (cf., among many others, Giblin / Monson 2010).

¹³⁶ Ali bin Hemedi, in a Swahili language newspaper close to the British administration, saw rivalry between different *jumbes* as the one and only reason for the absence of large cities along the Northern coast (Mambo Leo No. 143, Sep 1934:174). The original quote, which I provide here because it is not easily accessible, reads: “Ujumbe ndio Usultani wa Mrima, wenyewe ndivyo wauitavyo [...] Uliharibika kwa sababu ya wingi, kila nchi, kila mji, kila mtaa hata kila mlango wa ukoo huwa Majumbe mawili au zaidi. Na kwa jambo hilo imekuwa ndiyo sababu ya Mrima usipatikane mji mkubwa, kwa kuwa kila Mtawala ataka apitishe amri yake na kuwa yeye juu ya wenzake, na mara hugomana, mara wengine hutoka katika mji ule kwenda kujenga mji mwingie ili kupata kuweza kupitisha amri juu ya alipendalo.”

nationalist discourses. In any way, the organisational forms that followed *beni* carried on its dual character of unification and factionalism, the latter of which was often marked by claims to elitism or feelings of superiority towards the rival organisation. In Kenya, where *beni* dances were much more elaborated than in Tanzania and people spent more money, the brother of the founder of the *Kingi* association remembered the movement of dance associations to

have retarded people's progress very much. [...] It has caused much loss. People used to sell their farms and houses to get money to make carvings, 'submarines', and so forth. *Beni* was of no value whatsoever.

(cited in Ranger 1975:89)

This attitude mirrored a colonial critique centring on the economic dimension which had been brought forward by a German newspaper already in 1908 and was also widely discussed in the Swahili newspaper *Mambo Leo* in the 1920s and by Muslim intellectual “modernisers” in Kenya in the 1930s (DOAZ 8 Jan 1908, Ranger 1975:87-88).

4.5 Organisation, expansion and reconciliation of social fissures

An important contextual aspect that I have not yet emphasized in this chapter is that Germans and Europeans in general were deeply conspicuous of any African organizational activities, always suspecting rebellion and a threat to their interests – be they settlers, colonial administrators, missionaries, petty traders or plantation owners. Especially after the *Maji Maji* rebellion, which had induced widespread fears among all Europeans of a colony-wide uprising, opportunities for public gatherings of Africans were few and far between. In the politically, legally and economically restrictive context of German East Africa there were few opportunities to acquire status and carve out niches of prestige, respectability, responsibility and aspiration. The festive congregations and competitions of *beni* were tolerated during German colonial rule, for despite their occasional mocking remarks of Europeans and smaller street battles between the rivalling factions, they were regarded as peaceful gatherings which in the end amounted to nothing more than dance and gluttony¹³⁷ (Pesek 2003:120).

To the most part, we can only speculate what kind of strategies for development were explicitly debated in the dance societies. From a functionalist and retrospective perspective, several scholars have interpreted *beni* associations – and competitive dance societies in general – as “great social equalizers, simultaneously antagonizing existing orders and helping to bridge seemingly

¹³⁷ Other public rituals were forbidden, most notably *dhikir*, the unorthodox form of Muslim prayer which became very popular during German colonial rule. According to Pesek (2003:121), these prayers were so threatening because they undermined privileges of the educated Muslim elite which cooperated with German administration. *Beni ngoma*, on the other hand, did not seem to threaten African elites.

insurmountable gaps between social classes” (Gunderson 2000:11; cf. Pesek 2003:121). The elite could display its cultural power and newcomers had a chance to find new identities in the towns. Only in dance could the different social groups – labourers, artisans, porters, African soldiers, clerks, men and women, ex-slaves from up-country and free-born gentleman from the coast claiming Arab ancestry, house servants and traders – interact with each other and shape a common public event of significance (cf. Hazzard-Gordon 1996:115; Pesek 2003:120-121).

The modernity created within and through the events of *beni* associations cannot be unilaterally assigned to Europeans. First, because *beni* was created by Africans. And second, because “[b]eing modern does not mean being Western” as Tom Salter (2011:1) titled an interesting discussion of the terminology of modern and traditional in the context of Congolese music. Clearly, *beni* was – despite occasional critical remarks in its songs – neither anti-German nor anti -colonial¹³⁸. The members shared “the desire to work within the colonial administrative structure and to be accepted as an ally by the colonialists” (Ranger 1975:56). Ranger's forceful statement that „Europeans did not set out to produce Beni; did not produce Beni; and did not approve of it when it was produced” (Ranger 1975:164) is most forcefully supported by the aspect of subversion.

The colonial state was eager to regulate public events and promote dances only as far as they benefited their own interests and did not jeopardize the colonial order. Already in the German period, dances in towns had been permitted on Saturdays only and were prohibited altogether in European quarters. As restrictive as this may seem, the events were at least deemed legal – contrary to other public gatherings. Dance associations had to acquire an official permit to hold their dances and slaughter the animals¹³⁹. Weapons, common regalia in competitive dances, were forbidden. Policemen had to ensure that these tiresome regulations were observed and report any festive events taking place without a permit – probably a rare occasion for there were many clerks in the dance associations who readily issued these permits and even traded with them. Nevertheless, Baumann (1894:121) reported that people along the coast felt annoyed by nagging policemen prohibiting dances and by Germans for whom they should dance for amusement during the Kaiser's birthday or other colonially sanctioned festive occasions. Nevertheless, the Germans confined themselves to regulation and taxation of dances and were, in sum, not disquieted by *beni* – not taking into account

¹³⁸ An openly symbolic incident similar the destruction of a portrait of Kaiser Wilhelm II during a feast in the coastal hinterland of Lindi (DOAZ 5 Feb 1910, Pesek 2003:121) is not known to have taken place during a *beni* performance. Even if so, it would have to be interpreted additionally in the framework of factional competition. One example for *beni* as resistance is known from beyond the borders of Tanganyika, in the Copperbelt. Here *beni* societies played an essential part in the organization of widespread protests of mine workers in 1935 (Ranger 1975:139). This openly political function was not yet present in the time before World War I, though complex communication and organisation networks had existed then as well.

¹³⁹ In 1908, the costs of such a permit were according to a colonial newspaper 21 Rupees, which was a little above the average monthly salary of an African skilled worker (DOAZ 8 Jan 1908).

disturbance of the peace by night through the drumming and singing, which was frequently lamented in colonial newspapers. (Weule 1909:84; Velten 1907:165; DOAZ 7 Jan 1905, 8 Jan 1908, 1 Feb 1908; Ranger 1975:92; Pesek 2003:120-121; Pesek 2005:261-263)

The British administration came to look upon the *beni* dance associations with a much more suspicious eye than the Germans. As oral accounts emphasize (and colonial records fail to mention), *liwali*, *majumbe*, *maakida*, clerks and *askari* employed by the colonial government were forbidden membership in the associations shortly after the war. Reasons for this were not only what were considered “Germanophile” tendencies, for instance the continued utilisation of German titles and factions representing German battalions (a practice which, as we have seen, had been long common in East African traditions of competitive dance). What astonished the British even more was how *beni* societies had been able to organize events and expand throughout and even beyond the borders of former German East Africa, sustaining a wide network of communications. Similarly, the colonial hierarchy and line of authority as represented in police and military *askari* was undermined through the *beni* societies. At times, *askari* serving the colonial administration were seen taking orders from ordinary civilians – because the civilians held a higher position within the *beni* hierarchy than the *askari* who had to obey. Obedience to higher officials was, as we have seen, a precondition to be admitted to the dance societies. We do hardly know how individuals negotiated these contradicting claims for loyalty, but there is evidence that in some cases the *beni* rank was more important than the rank in the colonial system.

The status achieved through *beni* was thus not, or at least not to a dominant extent, a “fantasy participation” (Mitchell cited in Ranger 1975:74) in imagined European ranks from which the colonised were excluded. The prestige and mutual aid which *beni* extended to its members was very real and of high significance among Africans (Ranger 1975:74). The strict organisation and concerted expansion of the dance societies under communal values points to an imagination of advancement through mutual help, regularised through bureaucratic procedures. *Beni* dancers during the German colonial period did not exhibit egalitarian values, since the militarist hierarchy precluded any levelling of differences. Obedience to authority was a central value in the “regiments.” The improvement and advancement of each member, which also meant the improvement of the whole group, was ensured through top-down teaching and disciplinary measures. Communication networks connecting different towns allowed for the dispersal of knowledge to other branches. Throughout the decades from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century, the primary impetus for expansion and growth was the antagonism inherent in dance traditions. Wherever *beni* dancers went during the German colonial period, they self-consciously embodied an implicit program of advancement and modernity.

4.6 Conclusion

I do not know if *beni* dancers and officers would have agreed upon the abstractions that I have laid out above, but the activities of some of the higher-rank officials in succeeding organisations of improvement and development clearly point in that direction. *Beni* dancers expressed their developmental differences between factions and towards the rural population. Bureaucratisation, instilling of discipline and standardisation within the association were some of the strategies followed to improve performances and increase group cohesion. *Beni* associations, it is true, were a reflex to cultural imperialism, but they were also engaged in actively forming a new society (cf. Glassman 1988:15). *Beni* groups were adaptive institutions “concerned with the survival, success, and reputation of their members, acting as welfare societies, as sources of prestige, as suppliers of skills” (Ranger 1975:75, cf. Grabner 2007:180). In contrast to other (and later emerging) dances enacting modernity such as *dansi*, *beni* involved members of all ages and origins, included people from low and high status and called upon communal values (cf. Ranger 1975:86, Suriano 2011). The groups also validate an argument made in a discussion concerning intellectuals from colonial Ghana that “‘modernity’ is not to be equated with ‘Western’ but is instead located in the relational, intercultural flows and patterns of human interaction” (Dolby 2006:42). The source of inspiration for *beni* was not only the European colonial presence, but also images of the Zanzibari and Turkish royal courts and dances from further inland. The framework which allowed this were the adaptable Swahili traditions of competitive dancing, with their internal dynamics of updating, transforming, re-interpreting and improving. After World War I, many ex-members of *beni* used their experience gathered and networks established in these days and became active in improvement associations with clearly defined, explicit aims of economic and political advancement. “All of these developments,” we may conclude this chapter, “could be regarded as representing an advance over the ‘false consciousness’ of *Beni*; as being more rational, more pragmatic, more forward-looking” (Ranger 1975:104).

For the last case study, we are going to leave the towns shortly and shift our focus to the South of Tanzania, just to return to the cities with some of the labour migrants and see the urban coastal space from their perspective. The *leitmotif* of migrants heading towards the coastal towns, plantations and railway construction sites was that of anybody who struggled to pay taxes and make ends meet:

7.O/83

Tutafute masurufu We should look for money,
kulima na kibarua cultivation and day labouring.

5. MIGRATING PEASANTS FROM UBENA: THE MORAL IMPERATIVES FOR WEALTH

I did not become someone different
That I did not want to be
But I'm new here
Will you show me around
Gil Scott-Heron, "I'm New Here"

Labour migration was an experience shared by many in German East Africa, and by 1914 only people from few regions did not economically depend on it. Iliffe (1979:162) maintained that so “wide was the migration network by 1914 that the illuminating question is which peoples were not involved.” Most (statist) analyses of colonialism treat labour migration as a phenomenon unilaterally brought about by state or state-backed activities, first and foremost taxation, labour recruitment and forced labour. More recent contributions have challenged the view that labour policies and the social reality of labour migration were but an outcome of colonial imaginations and emphasized the role of peasants and workers (as well as other actors) played in policy formation through their actions (Sunseri 1998, Sabea 2008).

This chapter aims to give another example of indigenous development concepts in German East Africa, arguing that the perceptions of workers and their families significantly contributed to motives and shape of temporary labour migration. The material “incentives” are indubitably to be found in taxation, famine and monetarisation, but for a proper understanding of the process a consideration of the perspective of the labour migrants is indispensable. From the Sukuma people, for instance, it is known that they used music to appropriate the experience of labour migration and in this way “made it their own” (Gunderson 2001). The Nyamwezi, who had been porters since the early decades of the caravan trade, also had a sense of “owned” labour migration and claimed the revolutionary infrastructural achievements like the railway for themselves:

We [the Nyamwezi] know every kind of work. From long ago we have carried the white men's boxes in every direction. When the coastal people, through their idleness, failed to build the railway and lay the rails, we took up our hoes and pick-axes, we broke the rocks and the hills, and soon the job was finished. Now the locomotive has arrived in Tabora. Soon we shall send it on to Ujiji. Do you see?

(Paulo Kondemzigo 1912 cited in Iliffe 1979:163; cf. Pesek 2005:68)

Perspectives like these are instructive to see how people made sense of their activities and differ substantially from views of Swahili poets that development was “brought.” Another issue involved here is mobility and translocality. As the anthropologist George Marcus (1995) has recommended, researchers should follow the people wherever they go and not see them as bound to a certain place. We already followed the *beni ngoma* dance societies on their way from the coast to the inland regions. In this chapter, we will follow peasants from Ubena whose search for wage labour brought them from the Southern Highlands to plantations further north and on the coast, and – if everything went as planned – back to Ubena.

5.1 The historical context: Group interactions and colonial taxation

When the Germans arrived in the Southern region, Ubena had already been a site of contesting claims to regional hegemony for more than three decades. Surrounded by military powers, the small-scale communities in Ubena were exposed to struggles between the politically centralised groups of the Hehe, Sangu and Ngoni, and later the Germans and the British. The area, mountainous and less accessible than neighbouring territories of the Hehe and the Sangu, was bypassed by the caravan trade, the nearest branch of which went from coastal Kilwa to Lake Nyasa. A couple of chiefs were able to offer provisions to the caravans and get access to the trade routes¹⁴⁰, but in general societies in Ubena thus could not significantly capitalize on the caravan trade and remained politically decentralised. The development of a common Bena identity was a long and complex process during the 19th century which cannot be reconstructed here due to limited space. What needs to be pointed out is that the ethnic marker “Bena” is a shorthand obscuring other affiliations like clan and kinship while differences in status and gender also played a central role in the construction of identity, forging of loyalties and in the way history was experienced. Other groups of people – the largest of them called Ndamba – also lived in the area and became subjects of the Bena. During the German period, “the establishment of sultanates, *jumbes* and the tax collection system allowed Bena to extract labor and resources from their subjects” including the Ndamba (Monson 2000:365). When I henceforth speak of people from Ubena this is meant to include both Bena and Ndamba, as well as other groups who lived in the area during that period. (Giblin 2005:29; Monson 1998:110; Monson 2000:354, 365; Nyagava 1977)

¹⁴⁰ Pesek (2005:99), relying on a German publication from 1929, mentions that the Bena had had to send sub-traders to the caravan routes to sell ivory and female slaves. This would imply a certain distance between their settlements and the East African arteries of trade. The usual procedure in the caravan trade was the direct contact between local political leaders and caravan leaders.

5.2 Sources

In comparison to the preceding chapters, this one has the most tentative argument – for the source base is scanty. Sources containing voices and information about practices of Africans are much fewer for the region of Ubena than for the coast or the West Usambara mountains. During German colonialism the area was administered from other regions before *Maji Maji* (1905), and mission work also started comparatively late in 1898 (Nygava 1977:10). Some of the evidence given, especially the praise-names, cannot be said to refer to the German colonial period only. This is much due to the fact that the information on which the argument of this chapter is based largely stems from oral sources (MMRP 1968, Swartz 1964, Monson 1998, Monson 2000, Giblin 2005). Yet, as James Giblin, the scholar who has researched the social history of Ubena probably more thoroughly than any other, assured me, there is no reason to assume that there would have been a marked rupture between the German and the early British colonial period in the aspects I am concerned with¹⁴¹. This is first and foremost the way how labour migrants and their families perceived their undertaking and which concepts may be derived therefrom. As in the case of the political concepts of the Shambaa (cf. chapter two), central terms and axioms of economic discourses of the Bena remained remarkably stable throughout the twentieth century. Relations of authority on a village level were not shaken, very different to the Shambaa whose systems of chiefship and Kilindi rule were abolished in the German colonial period. But let us first take a step back to get a picture of the social and historical context in the late nineteenth century as seen in retrospect by the Bena.

5.3 Perspectives on history and the forging of alliances in Ubena

A local, retrospect perspective of an era of war gives an idea of the wider context. Furthermore, even accounts collected by Europeans in the 1890s exhibit the region of Ubena as a bone of contention among Hehe, Sangu and Ngoni. Only in the context of warfare can we understand the meaning which family-based concepts were to have for people living in this area. Even stories of war from the German period were placed in contexts of family, marriage, kinship and sexual desire (Giblin 2005:39-40). Of course, there is no general rule that experience of warfare and constant insecurity leads to retreat into private spaces, but it is an understandable outcome¹⁴², and all the

¹⁴¹ Personal communication with James Giblin, 28 July 2012, Dar es Salaam.

¹⁴² Experiences and memories of warfare were among the chief reasons for people not to join *Maji Maji*, or *Homa Homa* (as it was called in the region). Up to the 1950s, suspicion of openly political activities was significant enough for people of the Southern Regions to deeply mistrust TANU and its nationalist endeavours. The teaching the survivors of *Maji Maji* had drawn from their past experiences was that “our country suffered because of believing an unknown person” (Mzee Ibrahim Uzengo, MMRP 1/68/2/4/6; cf. MMRP 1/68/2/3/7, Laurien 1995:362-363).

more so in decentralized societies. What is to be noted that the display of the familiar sphere is not idealized, but instead full of conflict and obligations.

5.3.1 An era of war

The southern area of what is today Tanzania went through a period of perseverative warfare (this chapter is based on Giblin 2005:28-36 and Laurien 1995). Oral traditions make no distinction between the precolonial and the German colonial period, for both were marked by violence, kidnapping, cattle raids, forced dispersal, fear and insecurity. The “era of war,” which can be dated roughly from 1860 until 1918, started with the arrival of the Ngoni and included the whole German colonial period. They were militarily powerful newcomers to the Southern Highlands whose migration can be traced back to the *mfecane* conflicts in South Africa during the 1820s and 1830s. In the face of Ngoni presence, other groups in the region, namely the Hehe and the Sangu, improved their military organization under strong leaders and expanded so that the decentralised populations of Ubena found themselves in the middle of intense struggles for regional hegemony. The Germans with their African *askari* exploited existing rivalries and did not differ in their methods of conquest and “punishment” to what the population of Ubena had experienced before. Raids, enslavement (particularly of women), murder, forced labour and destruction of villages belonged to the repertoire of the Germans as well as other groups. A usual precaution for the people was to flee into the bush upon sign of any threat and hide until the enemies had gone (MMRP 4/68/4/2). Tuhuvye, an elderly woman, responded to the inquiry of the historian concerning this period:

Oh don't remind me of those by-gone days. There was not a single time we could say we were in peace. Very often the Sangu came in this area and attacked people. After fighting and defeating the people they took human captives; they took our cattle too. Sometimes they came to the village and did not find people. In this case they took what they could and burned down all the houses and some of our things and our food... those were very bad years. Sometimes all the people left the village and we hid in the forest until we heard that there was peace – the enemies had gone away.

(quoted in Giblin 2005:33)

Although some people, like Tuhuvye, found refuge with missionaries and shuddered thinking of having to go back to “village life” (MMRP 4/68/4/2), the arrival of the Europeans does not mark a watershed in history as remembered by people from Ubena. Mbembe's figure of the founding violence of colonialism does not apply to these local perspectives. Even *Maji Maji*, in nationalist historiography celebrated as a widely supported, proto-nationalist rebellion against German colonial rule, was remembered by elders of Ubena as part of an era characterized by violence and destruction. *Maji Maji* rebels themselves figure as “monsters” in the narrative of a man who had

been 8 years old during the rebellion and remembered how he and his mother fled from them in terror (quoted in Giblin 2005:34). The end of that period was marked by impacts of World War I between 1916-1918, when German and British forces recruited huge numbers of people as porters, took captives and caused widespread starvation.

5.3.2 Patterns of conflict and migration in oral sources

The historian Jamie Monson (1998:99) has analysed narratives of older residents from the Southern Highlands and came to the conclusion that “for local people, there was continuity in the causes and consequences of large-scale conflict in the southern highlands from the later nineteenth century through the period of German rule.” The main cause for conflict was regarded to be competition for territory, expressed in the term *kugawania nchi* or “dividing up the country.” To divide up the country was both the strategy of the political leaders in this area of conflict as well as the outcome for the local population. Next to land, rulers also sought access to labour, markets, tribute and a loyal following. The narratives about the division of the land widely differed in their content, but were always variations of a sequence of “conflict over highland resources leading to migration of a chief and his followers, that group’s subsequent resettlement in a lowland environment and subordination of the inhabitants of the new area” (Monson 2000:360). This framework includes a differentiation of better and worse environment, the struggle for which constitutes the prime catalyst of dispersal. Migration and relations of political dominance were also included in the concept. The pattern of these three stages (conflict in a homeland, migration, and domination in the new area of settlement) does not always correspond to chronological facts but is typical for the memory formation in the Southern Highlands. It was, and still is, a local framework for explaining conflict, power relations and settlement in the “era of war”. The framework is so wide-spread in the region that it was probably elaborated in some form before World War I. I would consider it a descriptive concept of development. (Monson 1998:101-105, Monson 2000:360-361)

Counter-narrative to these accounts can be found in oral traditions of the Ndamba who had lived in the area before the Bena and other groups came in. A testimony by Cyprian Makumba Lihengelimo emphasizes the initial peacefulness of the immigration process into the valleys:

Other tribes (*makabila*) like the Wangoni, Wahehe and Wabena, entered the valley from the uplands. They came without war (that is they were running away from wars in their home areas) and the Wandamba took them in (*waliwapokea*), because the Wandamba were a peaceful people.

(cited in Monson 2000:362)

The reason for the coming of the Bena to the valley of the Ndamba was also formulated with reference to the advantages the area gave: “The Bena came into the valley, according to M.

Kalimang'asi of Utengule, because it was a good place, where they could farm and get food” (Monson 2000:363). Initial hospitality was followed by intermarriages. Relations only soured with the advent of colonialism, when the Bena were made a hegemonic group which could extract taxes and work from others. Here the concept of dividing up the land comes back in. In previous times, these loyalties to higher political authorities had been much less meaningful among the Ndamba; but in the process of “dividing up the land” demarcations of groups identities, too, became significant: “Then people divided themselves up, they said, 'me now, I can't cross this river, I will stay right here with Kiwanga's son” (Anton Kimamule cited in Monson 2000:363). The quote illustrates the territoriality of loyalty. To move beyond the river meant that one pledged allegiance to another local ruler.

For both types of narrative it is unclear if and to what extent they were in place before and during German colonial rule. A practice definitely established before colonial rule and disrupted by the (different groups of) Germans was alliance-building.

5.3.3 Alliance-building and expectations of military reciprocity

Bena society was politically organised under rulers called *vatwa*. Swartz (1964:244) was told in 1962/1963 that before 1870, there had been no alliance-building whatsoever between the individual *vatwa*, each of whom controlled not more than five villages: “Even in the face of common enemies, each operated entirely independently.” The forging of strategic alliances became a main strategy to secure a favourable position in the context of the caravan trade and political rivalries of the nineteenth century. The means used to form alliances were diverse and included intermarriage, fictive kinship relationships such as blood brotherhood, *utani* joking relationships (cf. Tsukuta 2006), but also formal agreements and treaties. Germans – no matter if missionaries, military officers or traders – entered into these networks of local alliances as just another factor. It was not uncommon that alliances of military reciprocity involved a strong and a weak partner, and oral testimonies are full of examples of weak leaders trying to gain the support of stronger neighbours. (Monson 1998:101-105; Nyagava 1988:203)

The first official delegation to the area under the leadership of Joachim Graf von Pfeil is a case in point for the use of local idioms and instrumentalisation of rivalries. Pfeil operated within symbols, signs and alliances of the region. As he recalled, “I found an open welcome among all the tribes that I now visited. This was because people saw us as enemies of the Wahehe and therefore as natural allies against them” (Pfeil cited in Monson 1998:103). He also became aware that not only did he have interests in securing treaties, but that local leaders also wanted to instrumentalise the Germans. In reference to Nalioto, a minor ruler in the area, he noted that “[w]ith cunning tactics (*schlaue*

Politik) he thought to use me, and through me to make the superiority of the whites serve his own purposes” (Pfeil cited in Monson 1998:104). Missionaries were even more dependent on alliances with local rulers, but failed to fulfil the military part of the reciprocative agreement. Mwangela, who had apparently seen the Berlin missionaries as political liberators, waged a war against a superior neighbour. The military help he had expected from the missionaries did not materialise. Mwangela was branded a warmonger and put in chains by the German authorities. After another incident in which the Germany military had retaliated upon Bena soldiers for a threat posed against *askari*, the Mwangela clan turned against the mission which had once more failed to live up to local expectations of alliance and protection¹⁴³. (Monson 1998:103-105)

Whatever the case, all leaders had failed to bring about security and stability for the population of Ubena in the late 19th century. The people had to be obedient when orders were given (see also section 6.6)¹⁴⁴, but they did not rely on politics for their own well-being.

5.4 The push-factors and local appropriation of labour migration

Most of the labour migrants from Ubena went to construction sites of the central railway and sisal¹⁴⁵ plantations near the coastal town Tanga and Morogoro, a trading centre which had developed after the construction of the central railroad. Peasants from Ubena began travelling to the railroad construction sites and sisal regions when authorities intensified tax collection and the effects of the colonial counterinsurgency in the *Maji Maji* war including scorched earth tactics proved devastating even years after the rebellion.

Coercive means employed by *askari* in tax collection in Ubena comprised holding the chief hostage or confiscating and consuming cattle until taxes were paid (Iliffe 1979:134). When resourceful dodges like tricking tax clerks into “accepting one and the same tax certificate to cover a whole village” (Koponen 1994:218) became increasingly hard to pull off, wage labour came to be a necessary means to eke out a living. The common explanation in the historiography is thus one in which the “push”-factors are deemed crucial: “Tax and famine brought the Bena of the Southern

¹⁴³ This does not imply that missionaries managed to stay clear of the fray, nor did all of them want to. A missionary of the Berlin Mission, Alexander von Merensky, exercised German administrative functions of tax collection, signing treaties and jurisdiction (Nyagava 1979; Monson 1998:108).

¹⁴⁴ A major method to evade overrule by unwanted groups and representatives of the colonial system was migration to inaccessible areas. This strategy is recalled in oral accounts of people in the Southern Highlands (Monson 2000:364). Thaddeus Sunseri (1998) similarly interpreted archival sources as “anecdotal evidence” to the end that villagers in Western Tanzania who did not join in labour migration, most of them women, took the initiative to establish dispersed settlements in order to evade colonial and chiefly control.

¹⁴⁵ 62 sisal plants had been imported to German East Africa by German botanist Richard Hindorf from Florida in 1893 and within few years sisal became the most important and most successful cash crop of the territory's economy; also because its supply was inelastic and prices as a result were less susceptible to fluctuations of world market prices (Sabea 2008:411; Iliffe 1979:147)

Highlands into the labour market in 1908-1909, initially as railway navvies and then as sisal workers” (Iliffe 1979:161; cf. Giblin 1999:311, Swartz 1964:249, Kaijage 1979:15).

The process of labour migration was initiated by recruiters who “discovered” Ubena as a new area of origin for labourers. Yet, right after the contracts ended, the recruits from Ubena made their way back home and thereafter established own, more self-determined ways of travelling and finding work placements (Nyangava 1988:283). Men to go on a journey for their first time, or families sending their young sons, would rather trust experienced travellers whom they already knew as their relatives or neighbours than rely on the detested professional recruiters who were notorious for violence, lying and unfavourable contracts. In 1914, the German officer in charge of the district's administration estimated that “almost half of all the men” (cited in Koponen 1994:640) of Ubena migrated to the coast for labouring. An oral account by Mzee Ibrahim Uzengo from Ulugru, north-east of Ubena, nicely sums up the structural “incentive” ultimately leading to familial and individual initiative:

Understand that many people had not yet seen Europeans here. Only those who worked for them knew something about them. People paid tax without seeing the German himself. The tax was not heavy but the means of getting it was difficult. Both taxes in millet and then in goats were easily obtained. Great difficulty was faced when they said, 'Now what is required is tax in Rupees.' People suffered in finding them. A person could not get money unless he went out of this place to work in plantations near Kilosa or Morogoro.”

(MMRP 1/68/2/4/5/1)

Local conceptions of migrant labour: Travelling and bringing home wealth

Established patterns of travelling in the Southern part of the territory are known from the Ngoni, who often went as porters on the southern caravan route (Koponen 1994:636). Although the region of Ubena had been less involved in the precolonial caravan trade, traveling was not uncommon. The central local conception to embed, encourage and evaluate labour migration was *kupagala*, that is, “to make a journey to bring home wealth” (Giblin 2005:116). The comprehensiveness of the concept of *kupagala*, by far transcending the relatively specific journeys to plantations in the colonial period, is an indicator for its precolonial origin¹⁴⁶.

With the interpretation of labour migration within the family sphere, traveling and working far from home were interpreted as self-education and preparation for adult life (Giblin 2005:117). Travel was widely appreciated as a strategy to gain knowledge and experience also among other societies, especially the Nyamwezi who had even made participation in the caravan trade part of male

¹⁴⁶ E-mail communication with James Giblin, 17 Dec 2012.

initiation procedures. The “traditional” encouragement of individual improvement stands in marked contrast to the argument that it was only colonialism which had “brought ideas of progress, development and modernisation which put a high premium on self-improvement” (Brown / Brown 1995:15). Of course, traveling was not new in the colonial period and certain ethics also existed to make journeys safe and predictable. Most notably, there was “an ethic of mutual responsibility” between travellers (Giblin 2005:117). This ethic was interrupted when European planters were desperate to get more labor and agencies and recruiters tried to appropriate the process. *Majumbe*, local headmen in the German colonial system, as well as *maakida*, the administrative rank above *majumbe* usually filled with Swahili-speaking Muslims from the coast, were urged to cooperate with these recruiters. For Ukena, it seems that most people tried to avoid violent recruiters¹⁴⁷ and instead followed an experienced worker and traveller from their own community (cf. Sabea 2008:420). Some European recruiters were clever enough to sub-contract Ukena men and thus get the trust of families. Monson (2000:364n79) states that lax taxpayers could even be *sent* to work at the coastal plantations. A missionary from Sangi wrote in 1913 about the multiple claims for local labour:

“Now they are harassed by a government official, now they are sent away into the forest by a police officer, now they are fleeing from the sultan's *mganga* (healer / diviner), or the *karani* (clerk) of a recruiting agent. The latter try to snatch away the tax papers of every passer-by in order to prepare him for a *safari* to Tanga.”

(Schall 1913 quoted in Monson 2000:364)

Traveling, even in groups, was full of dangers. During the German period, literally all journeys from Ukena to the plantations had to be made on foot. Water and food supplies were meagre, wild animals posed a real threat and robbers waited along the routes. Deaths on the journey were not uncommon, in some rare cases 25-40% the members of a travelling party died. Despite the importance of burial rites, corpses could not even be buried, for nobody carried hoes.

Having arrived on sisal plantations, many newcomers had to realize that sisal cutting was heavy work and approaching the thorny plants required fearlessness. But there were also other, less well-paid and less dangerous jobs available¹⁴⁸. Life on plantations was not only hard because of the harsh and often degrading treatment of workers¹⁴⁹, including the already mentioned hippo-hide whip named *kiboko*, it was sometimes outright dangerous. Diseases and death were not uncommon. In

¹⁴⁷ For cases involving charges of violence against recruiters, cf. TNA G 21/124; TNA G 27/63.

¹⁴⁸ These were, with reference to sisal plantations, clearing of land, nursery planting and cleaning; drying, brushing, and baling of leaves. Others went into different jobs altogether, doing housework, cooking or gardening on the plantation estates or in the towns.

¹⁴⁹ Means of enforcing discipline on the plantations as well as workers' strategies of passive resistance have been described in numerous publications, for instance Koponen 1994:359-365, Sabea 2008, Iliffe 1979:158-161.

one incident, workers were killed by lions directly on the plantation because the plantation owner had forbidden them to build a shelter for protection from game (TNA G21/636). Another risk for those eager to save the salaries was to spend the money earned right away for the numerous temptations of plantation life like alcohol, unknown yet delicious food and – since only a tiny fraction of the workers were accompanied by their wives in these years of dangerous travelling – women (Giblin 2005:138). Labour migrants were further inclined to have a go at modern lifestyle lest they were considered “bumpkins” (*washamba*).

In their practical implications, ideals of learning through traveling and being rigorous in clinging to the hard-earned money were not far from colonial imaginations of plantations as loci of civilization and progress and sites of discipline (cf. Sabea 2008:415). During their work period away from home, people often stuck together in linguistically defined groups, for Swahili was not yet widely known in the South. Those migrants who had managed to exercise strict self-discipline on the plantations and coastal towns still feared to be robbed of all their belongings on their journey home. The evaluation of the whole undertaking occurred only in the moment of home-coming: “Smart men were the ones who could return home with money to buy cattle and other things,” while those who returned without any money were “the ones who drank and ate chicken gizzards” (Andreas Ligonile cited in Giblin 2005:129). (Giblin 2005:124-126; 128-129; Koponen 1994:600-601).

With the conception of *kupagala*, “to make a journey to bring home wealth”, the whole endeavour of migrant labour was embedded in the realm of the family. It was, as a former plantation worker said, “a mission ordered by our parents” (Nehemia Luwondo cited in Giblin 2005:116).

5.5 Developmental differences and moral imperatives in gaining wealth

Improvement and accumulation of wealth was thus an outcome of proper moral behaviours and the exercise of frugality. Character and behaviour were described and sometimes judged in praise-names. To situate the praise-names in the proper sociocultural context, we need to go back to the second half of the 19th century.

In the era of warfare, military power was a crucial quality. Ambitious rulers of the area were thus keen to improve military organization in their societies. The main impetus for this innovation came from the Ngoni, whose social organization was highly militarized. A genuine system of military improvement existed roughly from the last third of the 19th century under the Sangu ruler Mbeyela¹⁵⁰, who ruled in Ubena for a decade or so. The primary innovation was a rank-system in which merited warriors or even whole groups of fighters were promoted to higher ranks. The army was thus graded for motivational purposes “from the least efficient to the most dynamic” ones

¹⁵⁰ According to Swartz (1964:247), Mbeyela was a Bena but “ruled as a conqueror just as the Sangu and Hehe did.”

(MMRP 4/68/1/1:225). Qualitative improvements could, however, not outweigh the lack in quantitative terms – with a total population in the area of not more than 10.000 people, the number of soldiers was just too small to stand a chance against the larger armies of the more powerful neighbours, let alone the German *Schutztruppe*. What survived from the period of regional warfare and military improvement was, in Ubena, the practice of taking on praise-names. In labour migration to the coast, Swahili practices of nicknaming merged with the custom of taking praise names. Many of the names derived from the Swahili language.

5.5.1 Accomplishment, failure and moral imperatives in praise-names

According to a German ethnographic account from the early colonial period, a child in Bena society retains the name which it received at its birth until it becomes *sui juris* ... Later any one may change his name of his own choice ... If the warriors think that they have performed some special act of bravery in a fight, then they give themselves such names which have some reference to their military fame.

(quoted in Giblin 2005:115)

“Battle names” were taken by militarily excelling men before colonialism. The changed conditions under colonialism provided new motives for the bestowal of praise-names. Among these were the journey to the coast, employment for Europeans and the moment of conversion to Christianity. Many of the names resulted from the observations of one's behaviour and character (all translations and interpretations of the names taken from Giblin 2005:112-115¹⁵¹). A man of healthy self-confidence, for instance, might be called *Mwadegenda*, or He Who Goes About With His Penis Swinging Loose, while a self-assertive women could go by the name *Gililameza*, or She Who Eats at the Table [with men].

Many names commented on wealth, the main indicator of which even long after monetarisation of the area through colonial policies was cattle (cf. Swartz 1964:250). These “cattle names” commented on the relationship the owner had to his wealth. Names like He Who Has Lots of Cattle (*Kawalakang'ombe*), Wealth in Cattle (*Maling'ombe*) or He Who Walks With Pride In His Cattle (*Toganang'ombe*) denoted rich men. He Who Throws His Cattle Around (*Tagamang'ombe*), perhaps to provide bridewealth for his sons, apparently was the opposite character of He Who Refuses Others His Cattle (*Tanaling'ombe*). As Giblin (2005:113) asserted, a common suggestion of the names was “that worries about wealth should not dominate one's existence.” It concerned the relationship to wealth. People who neglected their social obligations for the pursuit of wealth were

¹⁵¹ Whereas James Giblin heavily relied on advice from his wife Blandina Kaduma Giblin, a native Bena speaker (see Giblin 2005:18).

called One Who Allows Cattle to Get In His Way (*Mang'ombegatalime*) or He Who Associates Only With Cattle (but not with people) (*Hanganisenga*).

We can assume that the more the twentieth century advanced, the more common names referring to wealth in other terms than cattle became, as expressed in units of Six Machetes (*Pangasita*), Two Coins (*Pesambili*) or Two Cloths (*Kangambili*). More impressive amounts of wealth, of course, were seen as Wealth of the European (*Maliyamzungu*) or Wealth of the Master (*Maliyabwana*). Men from Ubená who actually succeeded in making a fortune, such as The Money Tree (*Kalembokamale*, from the Bena language) and The Stick Which Beats Wealth (*Malifimbo*), must have been rare exceptions in the German period. Names like Lust for Wealth (*Tamaayamali*) and A Head for Wealth (*Akilimali*) show once more that the quest for material gains of some individuals was to be criticized on moral grounds.

That many travellers took a praise-name of the admired Swahili language was connected to the cosmopolitan sound it had in the villages of Ubená even until the 1960s. Journeys and the experience of migrant labour were emphasized in names like Traveller (*Msafiri*), One Who Comes From Afar (Mtokombali, *Wambali*) or for the desperate seeker of opportunities One Who Will Go Anywhere (*Pakalipote*).

Noteworthy is the attention paid to time and speed. Those walking fast to the plantations were called A European March (*Machiulaya*), Speed of a Ship (*Mwendameli*) or The Speed of a Clock (*Mwendowasaa*) – all three names exhibiting European features. Slow walkers or workers were called Slow Pace (*Mwendapole*) and *Mwendapono*, the latter name referring to a fish called Pono which moves extremely slow.

Those who had learned Kiswahili “looked on themselves as more advanced than those who did not know it” and were sure to be admired at home (Giblin 2005:128, cf. Poeschel 1940:213) Though the main purpose of labour migration was indubitably to earn cash, learning too was an important incentive to go to the plantations. The fascination for the coast, and the association of the coast not only with Swahili but also with European symbolisms was reflected in names like Beach Sand (*Mchangawapwani*), Harbour (*Bandali*), Ships (*Meli*), Many Ships (*Melimeli*), European Ships (*Meliulaya*), Water of Europe (*Majiulaya*), European Work (*Kaziuluya*) or European Camp (*Kambiulaya*). One person became known as European Witch (*Sohaulaya*, Bena language), indicating that “European” did not automatically in all cases ring positively.

Despite occasional unflattering connotations, the lion's share of the praise names were “honorifics”, as an interview partner of Giblin said, and “referred to a certain time in a person's life” (cited in Giblin 2005:113). The giving of praise-names was practiced well into the twentieth century and constituted one of the familiar idioms to describe and evaluate new experiences. Praise-names

“mapped the physical geography of migrant labour, its social contexts, moral imperatives and demands on the body” (Giblin 2005:113).

He Who Loves Work (*Mpendakazi, Kazikupenda*) was lucky compared to the one whom hardships of labour migration had led to Harden One's Heart (*Fungaroho*). A disciplined individual using even the night-times to earn cash in bars by Frying After Dark (*Kangagisani*) was contrasted by the ones who did their Work for Alcohol (*kazipombe*), spent lavishly like He Who Left His Wealth Behind (*Malinyuma*) and He Who Eats Up All the Money (*Mlapesa*) or were sexually unreserved such as He Who Spreads Diseases (*Mwagalamasi*).

Individual behaviour as reflected in the names always has to be thought as embedded into the moral imperative of the family within the concept of *kupagala*, or making a journey to bring home wealth. As Nehemia Luwondo remembered:

Because there was no real school, your father wanted you to go and bring him back a blanket. Then he would be pleased, but they didn't think about schooling. [...] So you would do your first *kipande* [nine-months term of work] and send him money so he could get food and a blanket. To get their blessing you would return with blankets for your father and mother, as well as money to buy cattle. When the cattle had calved, it was time to marry.

(cited in Giblin 2005:116)

Nehemia Luwondo refers to the British colonial period, but concerning the bond of the traveler to his family the statement is valid for the time before World War I as well. Important is furthermore his remark that his parents' refusal of sending him to school did not mean that they attached little value to knowledge. On the contrary, a young man's skills in accumulation and knowledge were thought to increase through the journey. His parents “thought that, if you worked and accumulated money, [...] that how you would become wealthy, not by studying” (Nehemia Luwondo cited in Giblin 2005:117). Wealth and intelligence were often seen as two sides of the same coin (cf. Swartz 1964:250).

For those who were already married, moral obligations also applied to their wives at home¹⁵². If a wife was careless about her husband – who was, far from home, in a state of vulnerability – this was seen as causing misfortunes in his well-being and material success, e.g. incurrence of wounds from cutting sisal or a reduction of her husband's pay. Causation was very direct: Dropping a load of wood led to the husband not earning money, hesitate at a doorstep and he wouldn't be paid. The wife had to behave properly, constantly keep her absent spouse in mind and be faithful. In British

¹⁵² As already mentioned, some women accompanied their husbands to the plantations right from the beginning of labour plantation. It became more common only with motorized transport and safer traveling in the 1940s. Giblin (2005:138-155) also gives a fascinating account of two women who traveled on their own and at times had to pass themselves off as men.

times, the experienced leader of a travel group (the *mnyapara*) even sent letters of warning to the wives when he observed problems of her husband in Tanga (Giblin 2005:121-122). In rituals and festivities of homecoming, the traveller was then re-integrated into the familiar sphere and could show off what he had learned during his journey – and how he had developed.

5.5.2 Missionaries and other Europeans: Intruders without Knees

The first Europeans to the region were seen as “transparent people without knees” (*valangala vadzila mafugamilo*), “[b]ecause they wore trousers and shoes which concealed both their knees and toes” (Nyagava 1988:201). The Bena were highly impressed by the “rapid fire magic” of guns and considered Europeans to be endowed with supernatural powers. This and the possession of the cultural technique of the written word made the strangers attractive allies to the local rulers (Nyagava 1988:201).

The Germans were remembered as “barbarians” in the 1960s, at a time when the terms *mshenzi* and *mstaarabu* were currency in all of Tanzania and were used in some regions (like the Southern Highlands) without their Muslim religious connotations. Assigning somebody to the status as *mshenzi* (barbarian) in this context probably served to exclude the person from the own moral universe. In an oral account from the 1960s, the moral component outweighs all other criteria like military superiority – it is the Germans and slave-trading Arabs who are described as *washenzi*. The informant said: “The Germans were as uncivilized [*washenzi*] as the Arabs who tortured our grandfathers and as a result made us migrate as far as Kilosa” (MMRP 2/68/1/4/3:118)¹⁵³. The term *washenzi*, as we know, had been used on the coast and by coastal traders going into the interior to pejoratively refer to inland societies and non-Muslims. I doubt that many people from Ubena made wide use of this term before 1918, for most of them strove to return to their families instead of staying on the coast or near the plantations. The author of the quote above probably also adopted it later.

Missionaries, on the other hand, had readily accepted the abusive *mshenzi* from the very outset of their proselytizing work. They employed it from their Christian perspective, scorning all local customs going against their religious code of morality as *tabia za kishenzi*, or “barbaric habits.” Prohibiting local customs made the missionaries challengers to the local rule of the *vatwa*, and some missionaries openly instructed new converts not to obey their “pagan” leaders. and fostered a division of social groups into converts and adherents of traditional beliefs. The mounting tensions

¹⁵³ The informant, Josiah Mlahanwa, was born in the late 1890s and experienced the Maji Maji war as a small child. His original quote reads: *Wajerumani walikuwa washenzi sana sana sana na Waarabu ambao waliwatesa babu zetu mpaka sie tutakapaka hadi sehemu hizi za Kilosa* (MMRP 2/68/1/3/3) Note the triple repetition of *sana* (“very”).

were further aggravated through the religious-political double role played by the missionaries. Hence, “German missionaries were looked upon as disruptive elements not only to the existing religious customs but also to the social status” (Nyagava 1988:244; Nyagava 1988:233).

5.6 Prescriptions

Several sources and oral testimonies indicate that decision-making in Ubena on the village level was a top-down process during the period under consideration. The political authority of one or several villages rested with the aforementioned *mtwa* (pl. *vatwa*). Almost all society members held a rank which entitled them to certain respects and honours. Public criticism of the highest ranking member, the *mtwa*, was a taboo. Moreover, if the leader gave orders, these were to be obeyed no matter what – the only questions might have concerned on how to execute the orders. The political leader could, however, be warned indirectly or privately and also be removed from power. German disregard for rank and rules of social behaviour was a major reason for the widespread hate and fear of the agents of the colonial state. While personal changes occurred, the structure of local political rule remained basically unaltered (Swartz 1964:241; Nyagava 1988:243).

James Giblin (2005:130) has convincingly shown that the people of Ubena understood themselves in retrospective as those who took initiative and pursued “the material resources, knowledge and personal improvement the colonial economy withheld from them.” The failure of political authorities to guarantee even basic protection from external threats in the forms of raids and war was, however, manifest even before colonial rule. Under politically restraining circumstances during German colonialism, combined with the respect traditionally paid in Bena society to members of high social ranks, which initiatives could the people take?

The moral prescriptions which had to be adhered by both traveling men and women at home have already been described above and need not be repeated here. They served as practical guidelines for daily behaviour, called the individual to discipline and were widely accepted ways to achieve material success, knowledge and social status. We cannot establish to what degree these moral imperatives were passed down or novel in German colonial times. Most likely is that they were widely used already in the late 19th century but were also thoroughly re-worked in the widely shared experience of labour migration.

One innovation was the appropriation of the travel networks between Ubena and regions of wage labour. Professional recruiters often worked together with local chiefs, especially in the German period¹⁵⁴. We have already seen that among the Bena, orders from above were not to be debated (cf. Swartz 1964). Yet the cooperation of chiefs with recruiters, who quickly had a damaged reputation,

¹⁵⁴ Email communication with James Giblin, 17 Dec 2012.

discredited their rule. What we know for sure is that at a certain point, the recruiters and chiefs were avoided as middlemen. Since families sent their sons to the plantations with the aim of improving *familial* wealth, they were very concerned to put them into the hands of trustworthy relatives or neighbours¹⁵⁵. The scale of self-organized journeys to the plantations and the coast was definitely more significant in later decades, but the beginnings of it are most likely situated in the German period. The crucial question is not a qualitative, but a quantitative one.

Another strategy which was apparently followed, if we look at the changes in settlement patterns in the beginning of the twentieth century, was dispersion. When raids became less frequent and the German counterinsurgency against the *Maji Maji* rebellion had ended, settlement schemes in Ubena changed in a characteristic manner which has also been observed in other areas where many men left the villages (cf. Kjekshus 1996, Sunseri 1998). The more concentrated, protecting village structures were not needed anymore and spatial organisation moved towards scattered settlements. In this way, peasants could have their homes closer to their fields. We need to differentiate between two motives in this dispersion. One would be economic, with shorter distances to the fields increasing productivity. The other one would be first and foremost political. As Thaddeus Sunseri (1998) suggested for Nyamwezi women, people in Ubena might have sought to evade close control through their chiefs and other colonial agents. This seems all the more likely as social rules forbid any open criticism and chiefs, negotiating between choosing either the interest of their people or of the colonial state, would naturally go for the stronger ally at the expense of their subjects. Stronger enforcement of taxation coincided with forced labour “and general deprivation of political rights and influence” (Nyagava 1988:286). Forced labour was widely felt as an abuse of customary law¹⁵⁶ (Larson 1976:168). Through dispersion, people of lower social ranks sought to evade this control, taxation, forced labour and forced recruitment for wage labour.

Striking is, in addition, the tendency of the workers to return to Ubena after their job was done and their persisting self-image as peasants and cattle-owners. In comparison to other groups, Bena or Ndamba speakers are less frequently found among those who stayed and settled on the coast or near the plantations. The bonds with the family proved strong and enduring. The life which was aspired was not in an urban, but in a rural setting. (Nyagava 1988:284; Swartz 1964:249)

¹⁵⁵ Apparently, not all of the *wanyapara* paid back the advanced trust. Some were also harshly criticized for their failure to offer proper guidance (Giblin 2005:123)

¹⁵⁶ From the neighboring district of Ulanga, two people even travelled all the way to Dar es Salaam to file personal complaints with the government against this abuse in 1914. They pointed out “that labour for the Sultans was first introduced under the German administration” (cited in Larson 1976:168).

5.7 Conclusion

The quote by US American poet and musician Gil Scott-Heron preceding this chapter succinctly sums up how I perceive the perspective of people from Ubona on labour migration. Migrant labourers ventured into new areas, but did so – from their perspective – in a self-determined project of gaining wealth for the family. Their journey was embedded in local understandings and made meaningful through own concepts of moral obligation towards the familiar sphere. The colonial attempt of controlling recruitment for plantation work was rebuked by the people of Ubona who trusted their more experienced kin and neighbours in leading them safely to the area where labour was needed and assisting them in finding a fitting placement (cf. Giblin 2005:122-124).

The “indigenisation” of labour migration as well as the strategy to disperse the settlements were strategies for commoners to create autonomous, self-determined pockets in a context where politics failed to offer any acceptable options to improve one's life. Retrospective accounts and oral traditions thus couch conflicts and achievements in the language of the family, a sphere separate from the influence of the state. Individual peasants who could transform their experiences of labour migration into wealth and knowledge were recognised as successful and advanced, though their contribution was to themselves and to the family, not to a community at large.

In a more historical perspective, larger frameworks in the oral testimonies concerning precolonial experiences of political integration and migration suggest a sequence of different stages. From a time of isolated, decentralised polities to alliance-building with neighbouring societies (and later German representatives) there comes up an image of increasing cooperation and incorporation. Yet, although the higher-level politics changed drastically between the 1870s and 1918, the political system on the local level remained remarkably stable – remarkable it is because its leaders failed to offer protection to their subjects during the whole period under consideration. An amelioration of suffering they could only expect by taking own initiative.

6. CONCLUSION: THE DECOLONISATION OF DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

ESTRAGON: All the dead voices.

[...]

VLADIMIR: What do they say?

ESTRAGON: They talk about their lives.

VLADIMIR: To have lived is not enough for them.

ESTRAGON: They have to talk about it.

VLADIMIR: To be dead is not enough for them.

ESTRAGON: It is not sufficient.

Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*

Up front, in the very beginning, the reader was welcome to this thesis with a quote from Samuel Beckett's play *Waiting for Godot*. In this quote, partly reproduced on this page, the play's characters Vladimir and Estragon referred to the voices of the dead which, they claimed, they could still hear. The voices could still be heard because for the dead it was not enough to have lived – they had to talk about their lives. The dead are still present, if one listens to them. I have tried to approach the topic of development from a historical perspective by engaging with discourses of the past, with poems from the late nineteenth century and dance events, the steps of which can still be heard if one carefully listens.

In the case of development studies, what can be won in a perspective which is both historical and hermeneutic? I went to the extreme margins of the term development, and even beyond its fringed boundaries, looking if there were concepts of development in Tanzania even before development was to become a project of German colonialism. In the late 19th century, evolving global capitalism and modernisation had already penetrated much of the East African coast and parts of the hinterland. Yet questions remain how changes were appropriated or rejected locally – how development, progress, or social change were conceptualised and articulated with existing discourses.

The task of looking into the past of concepts can be related to a present need of conceptual decolonisation. The colonial impact on normative and philosophical terms like development, but also civilization, progress, or time, makes necessary a critical reconstruction of these concepts in earlier times lest to avoid the assumption that these ideas were but a unilateral import of Europeans.

The project of conceptual decolonisation has been formulated by the Ghanaian philosopher Kwasi Wiredu (1995:22-32) to avoid the uncritical assimilation of categories embedded in non-African languages. The positive aim of Wiredu's project is to foster “the exploitation of the resources of our indigenous conceptual schemes” for contemporary problems (Oladipo 1995:7).

Wiredu's call could be complemented through a more explicit historicisation of the effort. An archaeology of concepts will yield more results than just trying to think through the concepts in African languages as they (both the concepts and the languages) are today. The history of the Swahili term *ustaarabu*, civilization, is exemplary for the fact that African languages were not exempted from a colonial impact. Of course, the language of Swahili is a highly atypical example for Africa. German East Africa was exceptional in the regard that not a European tongue but Swahili became the language instrumental to establish colonial rule in the territory. After World War I, debates in the government-sponsored newspaper *Mambo Leo* and elsewhere illustrate a shift in the usage of *ustaarabu* towards Western semantics of civilization (Bromber 2006). The term of civilization, or *ustaarabu*, was widely discussed in the public sphere starting with the 1920s until the 1960s (cf. Suriano 2011, Brennan 2006, Glassman 2004). In the 1940s, the Tanganyika African Welfare and Commercial Association outlawed the term *mshenzi* (barbarian, uncivilized) in the hope “not only to promote African unity, but also to affirm that civilization and barbarism were achieved in life [and] not ascribed by birth” (Brennan 2006:410). Thinking through the concept of *ustaarabu* in Swahili today would mean to think through something very different as opposed to the concept of *ustaarabu* some one hundred years earlier (cf. chapter 6.5).

Decolonising the term “development” and closely related terms like “civilization” would need, I propose, a historical approach going further back than just to the 1940s, when the so-called welfare colonialism emerged. This is especially true for Tanzania where Swahili was the language of colonial administration. The task of historicising the concepts and the language is one side of the issue. The inquiry into other languages than Swahili is, I believe, the other. This is why I have taken up examples from Bena- and Shambaa-speakers as well, though I had to rely completely on secondary sources as I do have no command of these languages. The overall aim of conceptual decolonisation would not be to uncritically cherish older concepts, but to recognize them as meaningful sources for people's explanations and actions, or, as Clifford Geertz (2002:63) said, as models *of* reality and models *for* reality. African world-views and actions of the past could be understood in a less distorted manner, enabling us to get a better perspective on African history. It would be possible to discern influences of African thought systems on colonial practices for a more thorough understanding of not only the local roots of colonial rule and how European domination was achieved by using and manipulating African concepts and knowledge, but also of the local

perspectives on colonialism (cf. Wright 1968, Pesek 2005). Moreover, in regard to development studies, an emic anthropological perspective could emerge in which not only theories of Marx, Rostow, Nyerere and Prebisch are discussed, but also non-scientific concepts of development. The benefit of this would be that societies in which science was not yet relevant would not have to be analysed solely by using sanctioned academic theories, but also through a critical engagement with indigenous concepts. The yardstick of development would be most likely a different one.

Many of the results presented in this work are tentative and more substantial statements would need more thorough research, especially on the local level. One way forward in this direction would be to further trace the history of the concepts presented to qualify or disqualify my assumptions made, e.g. that the framework of moral obligations to the family, as held among the people of Ukena, was already applied to traveling in the German colonial period, and did not evolve all of a sudden after World War I under British colonialism. In the scope of this work, a more thorough validation was not possible for the chapters based on secondary sources. The most confident statements were made about the concepts of Swahili poets, for they left us more or less direct accounts of their thinking.

In the following sections of this conclusion, I will summarize very briefly the main results of the four preceding chapters within a cautious analytical, comparative perspective. The aspects of time and teleology, treated briefly in the introduction, will be taken up again for discussion. I will finally return to methodological aspects and ask for the limitations of my approach, while pointing to open questions which could be answered by further research.

6.1 Descriptive concepts of development: Social change in individual and folk thought

The Shambaa concept of healing and harming the land (chapter 2) laid a major emphasis on a strong ruler. In today's parlance, it would be a theory of good governance. In this concept, well-established state structures and the unquestioned authority of the ruler formed the precondition for social well-being at large, including fertile lands, justice, security and the steady growth of the royal capital. When oral traditions tell of the former ruler Kimweri ye Nyumbai, his rule is not just remembered as good rule. The golden era occurred due to certain determinants, namely relations among ruler and the sub-chiefs. In the same vein, periods of conflict and famine were seen as ultimately caused by unfavourable relations between the members of the royal lineage. This theorisation and abstraction distinguishes the Shambaa view of history as researched by Steven Feierman from so many other genealogies of rulers in which it would be a much more difficult task to discern any concepts of development (cf. Booth 1975:86). For narratives of origin and settlement in the Southern Highlands (chapter five), a basic framework of stages informed many oral traditions, but it

is questionable if these stages of conflict, migration and resettlement can be put meaningfully in terms of progress and development.

The major shortcoming of the Shambaa discourse of healing and harming the land, making it practically useless during German colonialism, was its exclusive focus on internal circumstances. It proved inadequate to explain neither the impact of the caravan trade nor German invasion. John Iliffe (1979:574) found that indigenous religions – for our purpose, we may also speak more generally of world-views, or models of the world – were unable to explain the wider world; a capacity that Islam and Christianity did have. Hence, he argues, the monotheistic religions could fill this explanatory vacuum during the colonial period and became as successful as they were. Though I hold this argument to be problematic¹⁵⁷, it can tentatively be extended to concepts of civilization and advancement as well. Were indigenous concepts inappropriate to incorporate new experiences of the caravan trade and colonialism, of the military superiority of outsiders? Was the Swahili coast, as it seemed to the Germans, everywhere in the territory seen as advanced in comparison to the interior?

The “enlargement of scale” which John Iliffe (1979:2) postulated as a central movement in Tanzanian history was visible in the development concepts only to some extent. On the one hand, rulers from Shambaai as well as labour migrants returning from the plantations to Ubena definitely had (or had acquired) some fascination for coastal culture, and the economic possibilities which were associated with the coast. Colonial concepts of development had an impact on some of the Swahili poets, especially the author of the *History of Africa* from 1914, but they had largely kept with their units of towns and the coast. The Shambaa political discourse of healing and harming the land moved into a shadow existence during German colonial rule and when it resurfaced, encouraged by British colonial policies of indirect rule, there was no need to enlarge its scale. Their area of explanation and impact did not expand – it remained confined to local scale. Forced to earn cash, people from the Southern Highlands had to leave for plantations and railroad construction sites – but the concepts they used to embed these experiences were formulated in the moral language of the family (Giblin 2005). Enlargement of scale was, however, very evident in the new knowledge and experiences the wage labourers made, and also in activities of *beni* dance societies which were all about expansion already in the German colonial period.

Particularly striking is the important role attached to discipline (cf. Pesek 2005). In the poems from the Swahili coast, in the *beni ngoma* dance associations and in the moral imperatives of labour

¹⁵⁷ Iliffe here side-lines what one might call the political economy of religion. Aspirations to power and profit, as well as coercion and material incentives, were surely more important aspects in the success of Islam and Christianity than their essence in the form of beliefs and explanatory power.

migrants from the Southern Highlands the behaviour of individuals looms large as an important determinant in the explanation of general peace and security or individual success in gaining wealth for the family. The internalization of behavioural norms proved crucial to reach a better, though not uncritically cherished, life in future – peace or wealth. Negative impacts of disciplining figured strongly in Swahili poems. This was, first and foremost, fear. Being silenced and losing one's voice were common metaphors of this fear (Bromber 2003b). From Bena praise names, we also know that experiences of labour migration were tiresome and made people to harden their hearts. Swahili poets assigned disciplining power very often to the Germans and actors of the colonial state, while the moral imperatives of Bena-speakers originated from a familiar sphere of responsibility. The target of disciplining effects was, in both cases, the individual. A better state for a group of people had to be traded off against constraints on the part of individuals.

The already mentioned philosopher Kwasi Wiredu (1996a:131), writing about societies with communalistic ideals, stated concerning the harmonization of the individual's and the community's interests: “The good life will be one in which individuals are able to gain the means to secure the well being of themselves, their household, their lineage and their communities.” This premise would probably fit all descriptive concepts of change encountered here, with historically contingent and cultural particularities making for the differences. Idealising conceptions of the past in written accounts of Swahili poets, oral traditions from the Southern Highlands and even in interviews with former members of *beni* always involved a supposed harmonic state in the group.

6.2 Normative concepts of development: Differences between societies, groups and individuals

The units in which differences were recognized varied and depended on the context as well. The distinction between *waungwana* (or *wastaarabu*) and *washenzi*, or between civilized and uncivilized people, was significant in Swahili poetry and, to a lesser extent, in *beni ngoma* dance associations during the German period. It became visible that the definition of a civilized group entails the definition of the uncivilized ones, and vice versa.

The aspect of emphasizing differences between entities, that is, the *othering* implications of development (as difference) are often seen as a colonial legacy (Kothari 2006:10). This is too one-sided an explanation. In the interior societies we looked at, some aspects of civilization from a Swahili perspective were adhered to as well. The discussion of differences hinted at the fact that development concepts, no matter if of academic or non-academic origin, derive much of their argumentative power through “othering.”

The essential contrast which I would see between the various concepts of difference looked at in this work on the one hand and concepts of difference in colonial concepts of civilized and uncivilized people is that the latter was inherently connected to the action of civilizing the uncivilized, while the former did not imply any civilizing mission. In the terms of Franz Martin Wimmer (2004:54-56), colonial concepts of development were part of an *expansive* centrism, while Swahili concepts of *ustaarabu* or Shambaa ideas of adaptation to the mountains were *integrative* or *separative* centrisms. The latter did not want to actively civilize those other groups which did not correspond to the own ideals of good living, but were generally open for incorporation. Especially in coastal society, outsiders could become “civilized” through adaptation to the ideals and social practices (e.g. in religion, language, dressing style, etc.). This possibility to cross boundaries was, however, not inherent to the concepts. Under circumstances of competition for prestige and economic resources, it was a result of struggles in precolonial times (cf. Glassman 1995). New boundaries with more rigid criteria of “race” were to shape and sustain colonial society. In eulogistic poems from the coast, Germans were described as Arabs – which points to an existing indigenous discourse with racist undertones. These local discourses, merged with colonial discourses, continued to shape world-views and historical events in the decades that followed (cf. Glassman 2004).

To me it seems that differences between groups or societies were not formulated in terms of a temporal difference (see below, chapter 6.4), while spatial difference was more important. Swahili values of urbanity and the coast or Shambaa identity being attached to living in the mountains were negatively mirrored in the imagined and despised Other of *washenzi*, non-Muslim barbarians from the interior, and Mbugu semi-pastoralists living in the plains. These concepts of difference existed despite considerable interdependence with the respective groups. *Beni* members might have had a sense of temporal difference between themselves and populations of rural areas, a difference in terms of being modern and backward or civilized and savage.

What was also pointed out in the case of Shambaa peasants and labour migrants from Ubona was that the idea of individual self-improvement was not a unilateral colonial import. “Traditional” society also gave incentives to self-improvement, and local discourses continued to inform ventures of earning wealth in colonial times.

6.3 Prescriptive concepts of development: Towards a better society

Despite the unevenness of German rule, three similarities in the many societies' experiences of the colonial intervention are obvious. First, European power became evident. It became evident in most cases through displays of military power. Second, the colonial period went hand in hand with

disasters like famine, which in many a society led to images of the Germans as the ones bringing the disaster (Pesek 2005:203-204). These indigenous views of a correlation between the colonial presence and environmental deterioration do have an empirical basis and correspond to newer perspectives of political ecology and research of environmental history. Third, local political structures were superseded with a colonial superstructure or, more rarely, abolished altogether.

In the case of the Shambaa political concept of harming and healing the land, the royal elite had the exclusive power to influence the condition of the land – at least in the dominant version of the discourse. When *Simbamwene* (King) Kinyashi, who had been installed by the Germans, neglected his duties as a rainmaker, drought, famine and other disasters covered the land so that many people in the area turned to the missionaries to get what they usually expected from their chiefs and the king – protection, rain and fertility.

In a nutshell, the models *of* and models *for* the world (explanatory and prescriptive concepts) proved inadequate to provide effective strategies in the new situation and new ones were not yet formulated in consistent or hegemonic forms. *Beni* dance associations were a mixture of old principles of mutual aid as well as an economy of prestige and new aims of territorial expansion beyond ethnic boundaries. It is not fully clear to what an extent this expansion was planned or it simply occurred as a by-product of low-ranking native officials being re-posted in the territory and the impact of World War I. Bureaucratic procedures and objectives of standardization within the associations suggest, however, that conscious planning *did* play a role. While *beni ngoma* associations remarkably resembled later organisations of improvement, openly political associations with African membership did not appear until 1922. Furthermore, the “unit” which should be advanced through the societies' activities was more the respective group (*Marini* or *Arinoti*) than society at large. Within the framework of *beni*, dance associations *were* the society. There was no overarching nation that could be served, for German efforts of promoting German cultural values and patriotic sentiments were hardly successful and Tanganyikan nationalism had not even reached a nascent stage. Nor did ethnic identities play a decisive role in the general activities of *beni* societies.

None of the groups under scrutiny was “using a 'modern' political language defining political aims in terms of control of the state or the shaping of state policy” (Glassman 1995:13). Only patterns of action suggest that labour migrants from Ubena, as elsewhere in German East Africa (cf. Sunseri 1996), were sticking to village society. Shambaa peasants, dwelling where the Germans tried to realize their dreams of plantation agriculture, effectively resisted to be incorporated into the colonial economy as wage labourers and instead supplied food from their own farms (Huijzendveld 2008).

This is a sharp contrast to Swahili poets whose identity rested on values of urbanity and locatedness on the coast.

The case of labour migrants from Ubona is also instructive in relation to power structures. While the colonial state sought to control labour migration with the help of professional recruiters and chiefs (*vatwa*), the colonised commoners were keen to evade control by outsiders and trusted people whom they knew. They probably followed the same objective of power evasion by dispersing settlements, thus undermining colonial preferences of concentrated village structures.

In sum, however, concepts directed to the future were very vague. Swahili poems ended with calls for (a continuation of) peace and order or divine intervention, benevolent colonial rule or a return to good old times in which the poet as an educated man had been held in high esteem. In a way, this duality is to be expected in the colonial situation. Yet even poems affirmative of colonialism contained ambivalences and were subtle strategies to inform the Germans of Swahili norms and values of rule (cf. Bromber 2003b). Direct challenges to colonial rule were side-lined due to the analytical focus of my work. Enquiries into the so-called Mecca Letters Affair from 1908 or Zanzibari newspapers would yield more testimonies in which the abolition German condition rule was seen as a precondition for a better society. If liberation is seen as a precondition for development, aspects of rule and power take centre stage. I did not look more closely at liberation movements and wars of resistance because these have been well-researched.

All the development concepts displayed in this work were of a much more ambivalent nature than outright rebellion and resistance. We need to remind ourselves that colonial rule was highly uneven in the territory and something like a shared identity of the colonised did not exist. Individuals and families thus tried to use the new possibilities to earn prestige and wealth or protection in a context which was far more complex than the adjective “colonial” evokes. German presence was deeply felt on the coast. But even along the coast, there were realms which colonial rule did not dominate, and *beni* dance associations would be one of them. The consciousness of these actors aspiring benefits within the colonial system, or by using its symbols like the *Kaiser* and uniforms, was contradictory. It was contradictory in a way that old forms of discourse were used to describe new situations. It was contradictory also in that these forms of discourse which had served as stabilizing the rule of royal Kilindi in the West Usambara mountains or bolstered prestige economy of the coast now directly or indirectly supported European domination.

6.4 Time, teleology and universality in development concepts in German East Africa

Notions of chronological narratives extending from the past to a present, and sometimes projecting into the future, were clearly visible in all chapters with the exception of the *beni* chapter. In Swahili poems, a chronological structure was obvious. The same is true of oral traditions of the Shambaa and people from Ukena. Still, it seems that notions of difference in a *temporal* sense (as implied in the terms backwardness and progress) were foreign to precolonial East Africa and a marker of European thinking (cf. Wirz 2003:31). There was no evidence for a difference which was constructed in a way that the superior group would be a future version of the inferior, or vice versa. Swahili identity, as the anthropologist Middleton (1992:30) claimed, incorporated a *timeless* picture of itself and also a timeless duality with the non-Islamic, disordered hinterland. The Swahili, he further said, “conceive of themselves as a single ‘civilization’ (*ustaarabu*) that belongs to them and to them only, and that has been unchanging over the centuries” (Middleton 1992:3). This statement is insightful but has to be qualified by referring to a strong historical consciousness, evident in narratives of coastal towns in which economic, political and cultural change figure prominently (cf. Velten 1903:243-312).

As already mentioned above, my results suggest that superiority and difference were hardly expressed in temporal differences. Any evidence that can be interpreted in that direction, like the transformation of Mbegha in the founding myth of the Shambaa kingdom or self-perceptions of *beni* members as more advanced than their counterparts, is also open for other interpretations. A temporal conception of difference is, if at all, most likely in the *beni ngoma* dance societies, where civil servants and *askari* who stood in close interaction with Germans played leading roles.

In relation to a perceived final point of development (teleology), Shambaa discourses of healing and harming the land had a clear ideal state of healed land which could be reached cyclically. Swahili poets differed widely in their conceptions of teleology. While before the colonial conquest, coastal civilization was a self-sufficient and timeless ideal (cf. Middleton 1992:3, 30), German presence led at least some poets to cherish technological developments which they had observed. But only in poems in which colonialism was openly criticised was a qualitatively different future projected, often with a rhetoric inspired by Islam. *Beni* members, or at least the leaders of the associations, exhibited a quite clear sense of progress-still-to-come. The activity of many *beni* leaders in later associations of improvement and development is thus not surprising; however, these individuals were also most closely involved in colonial education and administration.

None of the case studies revealed any evidence for universalist tendencies of the development concepts. All images of civilization or good life were focussed on the own group. The universalist

tendency of Western discourses of development and civilization seems, from this perspective, very particular. Though not being expansive in nature, all concepts also allowed for inclusion and incorporation of outsiders through the “right” social practices. Culturalist and racialist elements were most visible in accounts from the coast, but were still far from the rigidity of European colonial rationalities of discrimination.

6.5 Open questions and points of entry for further research

I must admit that the explorative and multi-sited character of my work made it somewhat weak on the theoretical and analytical side. Historically descriptive elements to facilitate understanding were favoured to the detriment of causal explanations – why certain concepts survived, or transformed in a particular way¹⁵⁸. For my work and my present level of knowledge, I found that answers to causal questions were out of scope and would have required much more effort. My contribution aimed, more modestly, at a re-negotiation of the term development and a re-engagement of colonial with cultural history. Behind this stands the conviction that a struggle about meanings is no end in itself. It is correlated to the material world.

The generic, threefold definition of development which I proposed served fairly well wherever evidence was available in the form of texts. For the definition to be operationalised in a more effective way, it would be necessary to define more clearly where its boundaries are – e.g., under which conditions historical narratives involving structural change belong to descriptive concepts; if and under which circumstances moral imperatives focussing on individual behaviour should be considered as part of development strategies, or how the question of the social unit (individual vs. group vs. society) is to be treated in this framework.

The case studies have shown that peasants, poets and dancers in German East Africa had development concepts with which they explained how social change took place, how groups differed in a hierarchical sense and how a better life or society could be reached. Open questions remain and more material is available for the cases I have dealt with. For instance, Carl Velten also edited travel accounts of Swahili individuals and historical narratives about the past of specific coastal towns, which I did not consider in my work. They could yield a more complex picture of how change and group differences were conceptualized¹⁵⁹. Several scholars pointed out to me that mission archives are also still relatively “underresearched” as far as the German colonial period in

¹⁵⁸ An interesting question would be, as an example, the change of the term of *ustaarabu* (civilisation) which has its roots in Swahili culture. It was central to discussions during colonialism and, to less extent, after Independence. One could also embark upon a comparative perspective between Kenya and Tanzania.

¹⁵⁹ I am planning to discuss these travel accounts and histories of coastal towns in a Bachelor paper in Cultural and Social Anthropology.

East Africa is concerned, especially the documents of an Italian mission¹⁶⁰. Steven Feierman's accounts have, in my opinion, shown how diaries and other documents from missionaries can be fruitfully used to reconstruct local agency and thought if used carefully. One could also strive to engage with current philosophical discourses which are underrepresented. Kai Kresse (2007) has proposed an “anthropology of philosophy” and applied his methodology during research in Mombasa. One of the philosophers he discussed with, Salum, had some interesting things to say on the term of civilization and three different Swahili variants of it – *ustaarabu*, for instance, standing for technological development without morality (Kresse 2007:147).

These voices of today can be meaningfully put in relation with all the (dead) voices of the past. An enquiry into the past may help, as Kwasi Wiredu stated, to tackle problems of today. It certainly is a necessity to understand in a historical sense how different concepts of superiority, social change and progress evolved and mingled. My effort aimed at such a better understanding of the past. That it unearthed more questions than it could deliver answers may hopefully encourage further research into a history of development which takes account of local perspectives and concepts.

¹⁶⁰ James Giblin, Personal communication, 28 July 2012, Dar es Salaam.

Annex

Glossary

akida (pl. *maakida*): “Title given by the Busaidi sultanate of Zanzibar to a commander in chief of a fort or a delimited region. During the German colonisation of Tanganyika this position was used to appoint local representatives in a city or a district” (Saavedra Casco 2007:295). Also, highest rank within the *chama*.

askari (pl. *askari* or *maaskari*): African soldier in European colonial armies

beni: derived from English “band”, referring to an East African dance style marked by brass band elements, military drill and hierarchical organisation of its members

chama (pl. *vyama*): a festival guild or “dance society” (literally, a society or social group). *Chama* members took social titles, the highest of which was *akida*. (Glassman 1995:xv)

dansi: from English “dance”; a kind of ballroom dance which in the 1920s and 1930s was confined to an elite of Western-educated Africans and later became popularized.

darasa (pl. *madarasa*): Koranic school / classes.

jumbe (pl. *majumbe*): local authority. Lower administrative position in German colonialism, under *akida*. Intermediate position between local communities and the colonial state.

kifu: denotes “a patrimonial fund for the well-being of all the dead man's sons and their progeny” among the Shambaa; a collective institution on the principles of collectivity, reciprocity and mutual aid providing funds for rituals and food in times of need (Feierman 1990:59-64)

liwali (pl. *maliwali*): governor. Highest position in Zanzibar's administrative system on the East African coast (Saavedra Casco 2007:296), and highest position of non-Europeans in German colonialism.

Maji Maji: Literally “water water”; an interethnic and geographically widespread rebellion in Southern Tanzania between 1905-1907. The name of the rebellion refers to a medicine given to the warriors meant to protect them from enemy bullets. In the South of Tanzania, *Maji Maji* is also known as *Homa Homa* (*homa* = to stab).

mshenzi (pl. *washenzi*): infidel, barbarian, uncivilized. “A term of abuse used to refer to upcountry people, including newly imported slaves.” (Glassman 1995:xvi) Opposites: *mstaarabu* and *mwungwana*.

mstaarabu (pl. *wastaarabu*): a civilized, knowledgeable person. In our time context, strong connotation of Islamic education and urban values, Arabo-centric.

mtwa (pl. *vatwa*): political leader of one or more villages in the Southern Highlands; depending on specific location and time only secular authority or also including ritual functions (Monson 2000:352-353; Swartz 1964)

mwaliimu (pl. *waliimu*): (Koranic) teacher.

mwungwana (pl. *waungwana*): “a gentleperson, a refined urban Muslim. The term was also used as a euphemism by coastal slaves who labored as porters on caravans, and who portrayed themselves as superior to so-called *washenzi*.” (Glassman 1995:xvi).

mzee (pl. *wazee*): elder. Title to show respect to older community members.

ngoma (pl. *ngoma*): dance, drum . Also means both, and the festive rituals associated with dancing and drumming (Weule 1909:84, Glassman 1995)

Schutztruppe: German Defense Force, protectorate troops

shairi (pl. *mashairi*): Swahili for poetry, derived from Arabic *shahr* (Saavedra Casco 2007:21). Also used for a eulogistic genre of Swahili poetry with strict formal rules, in contrast to → *utenzi*.

ulama: “Learned sector of a Swahili Muslim community.” (Saavedra Casco 2007:297)

utenzi: Swahili for a formal literary genre of narrative and historiographic poems, traditionally dealing with epic themes related to prophet Mohammed as well as the heros and martyrs of the Muslim faith (Saavedra Casco 2007:1).

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ML - Mambo Leo , accessed at the East Africana Collection, University of Dar es Salaam.

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1.A Vita vya Bagamoyo

Author: Makanda bin Mwenyi Mkuu

Edition used: Miehe et al. 2002:101-107.

1.C Vita vya Kwanza

Author: Unknown

Edition used: Miehe et al. 2002:109-112.

1.D Utungo wa Habari ya Mrima

Author: unknown; poem given to Bagamoyo Bezirksamt in 1894; poet probably from Bagamoyo

Edition used: Miehe et al. 2002:113-117.

1.E Utenzi wa Vita vya Wadachi Kutalamaki Mrima 1307 A.H.

Author: Hemedi bin Abdallah bin Said bin Abdalla bin Masudi al Buriy.

Edition used: Miehe et al. 2002:118-188.

1.G Utenzi wa Habari za Mrima na za Bara

Author: Makanda bin Mwenyi Mkuu bin Wangi Wapi

Edition used: Miehe et al. 2002:193-204.

2.A Vita vya Kondoa

Author: Mwenyi Shomari bin Mwinyi Kambi

Edition used: Miehe et al. 2002:205-222.

2.C Vita vya Uhehe

Author: Ali bin Rajabu bin Said Elmardjebi

Edition used: Miehe et al. 2002:240-255.

2.D Kufa kwa Mkwawa

Author: Mwenyi Shomari bin Mwenyi Kambi

Edition used: Miehe et al. 2002:256-277.

3.A Shairi la Makunganya

Author: Mwalimu Mzee bin Ali bin Kidigo bin Il-Qadiri

Edition used: Miehe et al. 2002:278-288.

3.C Sifa za Wazungu

Author: unknown

Edition used: Miehe et al. 2002:292-293

3.D Vita na Hassan bin Omari

Author: Mwalim Mbaraka bin Shomari

Edition used: Miehe et al. 2002:294-303

5.A Poem about the Majimaji revolt

Author: Abdul Karim bin Jamaldini

Edition used: Miehe et al. 2002:324-361.

6.A Shairi la Dola Jermani

Author: Abdelkerimu bin Jemali Eddini Elmalindi

Edition used: Miehe et al. 2002:362-371.

6.C Shairi kwa Wazungu

Author: unknown, from Bagamoyo

Edition used: Miehe et al. 2002:372-374.

7.D Shairi la Bwana Mkubwa Wismani

Author: Nasoro bin Halefu bin Insani

Edition used: Miehe et al. 2002:389-392.

7.E Bwana Gustav

Author: unknown

Edition used: Miehe et al. 2002:393.

7.F Shairi la Bwana Mkubwa

Author: Mwalimu Mbaraka bin Shomari

Edition used: Miehe et al. 2002:394-434.

7.H Pendo la Bwana Saint Pual (Sampuli)

Author: Mwabondo Mwinyi-Matano

Edition used: Miehe et al. 2002:438-439.

7.I Shairi la Bana Prinzi

Author: Mwalimu Mbaraka bin Shomari

Edition used: Miehe et al. 2002:440-442.

7.J Shairi la Bana Saha

Author: Mwalimu Mbaraka bin Shomari

Edition used: Miehe et al. 2002:443-444.

7.K Shairi la Bwana von Stranzi

Author: Mwalimu Mbaraka bin Shomari

Edition used: Miehe et al. 2002:445-446.

7.L Shairi la Bana Torotha

Author: Mwalimu Mbaraka bin Shomari

Edition used: Mieke et al. 2002:447-450.

7.N Shairi la Guverni

Author : unknown, from Mtangata

Edition used: Mieke et al. 2002:457.

7.O Utenzi wa Bwana Guverni

Author: unknown

Edition used: Mieke et al. 2002:458-470.

7.P Utenzi wa Kaizari

Author: Bin Auwi Hamisi (mentioning Mombasa as his hometown)

Edition used: Mieke et al. 2002:471-477.

Abstract (English)

Historically oriented research into development concepts in Africa has traditionally been confined to the late colonial and postcolonial periods. A frequent underlying assumption is that concepts of development are an import of European colonialism, a bias that also informs works about German colonialism in East Africa. I argue that it is necessary to engage in a task of de-centering and de-colonising both development concepts as well as historical narratives of development. One possible avenue in this undertaking is a gaze on particular societies and times, with a focus on hermeneutic understanding.

The basic framework for analysis is a proposed threefold function of development concepts. A development concept can be seen as sketching a process (of social change or advancement), as describing differences (between groups or individuals) and delineating strategies (to attain advancement). In their function, development concepts can thus be descriptive, differentiating or prescriptive.

Following a multi-sited, ethnographically inspired approach different social groups and their cultural forms of expression are taken as case studies. All case studies are set in the same macro-context between 1870 and 1918 in the region of East Africa which was, for some three decades, called German East Africa. The studies comprise (1) an indigenous political discourse of Shambaa peasants in the Usambara mountains, (2) poems by Swahili poets from the coast, (3) the activities of the competitive *beni ngoma* dance associations as well as (4) discourses of peasants from the Southern Highlands migrating to the coast and sisal plantations for labour. The chapter based on Swahili poems constitutes original research; all other chapters rely on secondary literature, and herein especially works making wide use of oral methodology.

All case studies reveal that the local development concepts originated from multiple sources. This is also true of ideas concerning discipline which inform some of the concepts. While the colonial influence was just one among others in this realm, it was more central in the re-negotiation differences between social groups. All case studies show that images of superior and inferior groups existed, but in none of them differences were clearly couched in terms of temporality – that is, groups were considered more or less civilized, but not backward or progressive in the sense of time.

Change most clearly associated with German colonialism was of a technological kind. A source so far unstudied, Hemedi bin Abdullah's *A History of Africa* written ca. in 1914, illustrates the perception of the colonial impact from a contemporary, yet culturally particular perspective. It is perspectives like these which further the understanding of African history as well as development.

Abstract (German)

Die historisch orientierte Erforschung von Entwicklungskonzepten beschränkt sich üblicherweise auf die spätkoloniale und postkoloniale Ära. Eine häufige Grundannahme ist, dass Entwicklungskonzepte europäische Importe seien. Zu dieser Annahme neigen auch Darstellungen des deutschen Kolonialismus in Ostafrika. Ich argumentiere, dass es notwendig ist, sowohl Entwicklungskonzepte als auch geschichtliche Narrative von Entwicklung zu dezentrieren und zu dekolonisieren. Eine Möglichkeit, diesem Unterfangen nachzugehen, ist ein hermeneutischer Blick auf partikulare Gesellschaften in bestimmten Kontexten.

Das analytische Grundgerüst für meine Untersuchung ist eine generische Dreiteilung der Funktion von Entwicklungskonzepten. Ein Entwicklungskonzept kann einen Prozess (sozialen Wandels oder Fortschritts) beschreiben, Differenzen (zwischen Gruppen und Individuen) konstruieren und Strategien (zur Erlangung von Fortschritt) skizzieren. Entwicklungskonzepte können daher in ihrer Funktion deskriptiv, differenzierend oder präskriptiv sein.

Vier verschiedene soziale Gruppen und ihre kulturellen Ausdrucksformen dienen als Fallstudien. Alle Fallstudien sind situiert zwischen 1870 und 1918 in jener Region Ostafrikas, die für drei Jahrzehnte Deutsch-Ostafrika genannt wurde. Die Studien umfassen (1) einen indigenen politischen Diskurs von *Peasants* in den Usambara-Bergen, (2) Gedichte von Swahili-Dichtern der Küste, (3) die Aktivitäten der kompetitiven *beni ngoma* Tanzgesellschaften sowie (4) Diskurse von *Peasants* aus den Southern Highlands, von denen viele zur Lohnarbeit an die Küste und zu Sisalplantagen gingen. Das auf Swahili-Gedichten basierende Kapitel stellt originäre Forschung dar, während die anderen Kapitel auf Sekundärliteratur aufbauen, die selbst unter Verwendung von Oralquellen verfasst wurde.

Die Fallstudien zeigen, dass die lokalen Entwicklungskonzepte mehrere Inspirationsquellen hatten. Das trifft auch zu auf Ideen der Disziplin zu, die in einigen der Konzepte eine Rolle spielen. Der koloniale Einfluss war hier nur ein Faktor unter anderen. Zentraler war die koloniale Präsenz in der Verhandlung von Differenzen zwischen sozialen Gruppen. Bilder von überlegenen und unterlegenen Gruppen existierten zwar, jedoch wurden diese Differenzen nicht als zeitliche aufgefasst.

Am deutlichsten wurde technologischer Wandel mit deutschem Kolonialismus assoziiert. Eine bisher unbeachtete Quelle, Hemedi bin Abdullahs ca. 1914 verfasstes *A History of Africa*, illustriert diese Wahrnehmung des kolonialen Einflusses aus einer zeitgenössischen, kulturell partikularen

Perspektive. Es sind Entwicklungskonzepte wie die seinen, die unser Verständnis sowohl von Geschichte als auch von Entwicklung erweitern.

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Publikationen

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