WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN REPETITION: NATION BUILDING, SOLIDARITY, AND ISLAM IN ZANZIBAR

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ABSTRACT

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Women's rights are commonly understood as having emerged out of major women's conferences from the 1970s onward and as aligned with major UN conventions. But contemporary women's rights in Zanzibar reflect a longer history of women's movements on the isles and a greater diversity of influences, including socialist state feminism in the 1960s and the increasing engagement of activists with a transnational Islamic feminist network.

This dissertation explores historical continuities and discontinuities between three women's movements in Zanzibar, beginning with a socialist state feminist movement in the 1960s that presented women as embodying *umoja* [unity] and as at the front lines of building and developing the nation. Second, in the late 1990s and early 2000s, in the wake of a global human rights and democratization movement, a media-based women's movement emerged on the isles. Women journalists translated transnational women's rights ideas into a Zanzibari cultural context, in the process imbuing them with language and imagery from the socialist past. Third, in the 2010s, Zanzibari women's rights activists engaged with a transnational Islamic feminist network as they sought to reform the archipelago's Islamic *kadhi's* courts. Representing a departure from UN understandings of women's rights, Zanzibari civil society activists relied most heavily on Islamic feminist arguments in their 2017 *kadhi's* court reform efforts.

In my dissertation, I put forth several arguments related to rights and memory, including an overarching methodological argument that women's rights are best understood from an ethnohistorical approach. In Chapter 1, I argue that Zanzibari women's understanding of rights—

which are often imbued with language from the socialist 1960s—are informed by their own political alignments and by memory. Using a case study approach, I argue in Chapter 2 that one woman's appropriation of historical language during a millennial media-based women's movement did not represent her endorsement of the past but rather her efforts to mediate collective memory. I argue throughout my dissertation that anthropological frameworks for understanding human rights should incorporate historical memory as a central analytic concept.

In Chapter 3, I transition from relying on archival evidence and a few oral histories to relying on participant observation, interviews, and media sources. I chronicle the efforts of a coalition of Zanzibari women's rights activists to reform the archipelago's Islamic legal system, during which they relied on a transnational Islamic feminist network and to a lesser degree on transnational women's rights conventions. Activists passed some reforms but were unable to convince lawmakers to allow women to serve as *kadhis* [Islamic judges], which highlights the limits of transnationalism in a local context. Activists plan to harness an increasingly faith-based *umoja* in their continuing efforts to ensure the right of women to serve as *kadhis*.

Chapter 4 is similarly ethnographic and explores the grassroots social involvements of a non-elite woman from the Tanzanian mainland in a women's *madrasa* [Islamic studies group] and in a women's *vicoba* [savings cooperative]. Her negotiations of agency across different social groups are multiple, nonlinear, and often contradictory, which reflects relational understandings of rights and obligations as well as the multiplicity and diversity of Zanzibari communities. It also highlights the continuing resonance of gendered language, ideas, and imagery from the socialist past, even in the midst of a deeply rooted Islamic revival. The future for women in Zanzibar will depend in part on how they negotiate multiple solidarities—that often come with different expectations and obligations—in their daily lives.

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KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

akina mama	group of women, mothers
baraza	verandah; council
buibui	traditional black cloak worn by Swahili women
dira	loose fitting, long dress, often made of cotton and worn under the *buibui*
fasikhi	court-ordered annulment of marriage that is free of cost and initiated by women, usually due to men's abandonment or perceived misbehavior
heshima	honor; respect
hijab	any respectable/modest attire, usually refers to head covering
ibada	pious habits
imam	person who leads prayers in a mosque
imani	faith
kadhi	Islamic judge
kanzu	long robe that is worn by Muslim men
kazi za mikono	handiwork, the making of handicrafts
khanga	decorative textile with Swahili sayings, worn by women and used as a medium of communication
khuluu	annulment of marriage initiated by women, requires dower repayment
kofia	embroidered skull cap worn by Muslim men
kujitegemea	self-reliance
madrasa	*Qur'anic* school
maendeleo	development
malezi ya zamani	communal, watchful childrearing methods of the past
mfumo dume	patriarchal system
mkaja/mikaja	piece of cloth tied around the belly of woman who has just given birth
mradi	project, program
mtumishi	domestic worker
niqab	veil worn by some Muslim women, cover the face except for the eyes
sadaka	giving alms, central tenet of Islam
sheha	ward executive officer, local leader
shehe	Muslim leader
shuka	cloth worn around a man's waist
Taarab	Swahili popular music that merges Egyptian and Indian melodies with African rhythms
Ujamaa	African socialism, implemented by Julius Nyerere in Tanzania in 1967
ukombozi	liberation, emancipation
ulama	group of Muslim scholars recognized for specialized knowledge of Islamic law and theology
umoja	unity, fellowship; singularity
uongozi/utawala bora	better leadership or rule
utenzi	epic praise poem
utu	humanity, human nature; personhood
vicoba	village community bank, savings cooperative
washauri	advisors

INTRODUCTION

Ethnohistory and women's rights

On July 22, 2017, I attended an *mradi* [project launch] in Kizimkazi on the southwest coast of Unguja, the Zanzibar archipelago's most populous island, where I was based for the majority of my dissertation fieldwork. The Zanzibar Female Lawyers Association (ZAFELA) and the Zanzibar Legal Services Center (ZLSC) were implementing a new paralegal program as subgrantees of the more prosperous Foundation for Civil Society on the Tanzanian mainland. I had traveled the far corners of the island of Unguja the previous week with ZAFELA's driver, Said,*[1] to deliver *mradi* invitations to police stations and *shehas* [local leaders], among other invited guests. I was particularly excited to deliver an invitation to Bi Tunza in central Koani district, whom I had heard was Zanzibar's second ever woman *sheha*, but she was unfortunately not home to receive us. During my nine months of fieldwork, I spent at least a few mornings each week observing ZAFELA's work, which involved sitting in on client mediation sessions, attending coalition meetings with other organizations engaged in women and children's rights-related advocacy, and attending major women's rights-related events.

I was instructed to arrive at 2pm *kamili* [exactly] to ZAFELA's office in a neighborhood called Mpendae within a larger urban area called Jang'ombe. Garth Myers has written eloquently on Zanzibari place naming, which is often intended to be humorous and reflects urban politics during the colonial and post-revolution periods. Mpendae means, "You have to love it," insinuating in subtle Zanzibari humor that you have no other choice (G. A. Myers 2009). When I began my fieldwork, the area surrounding ZAFELA's office in Mpendae was a demolition zone, since a new water pipeline was being installed beneath the earth alongside the main road that snaked through Jan’gombe. In the process of installing the pipeline, road workers knocked down segments of houses and businesses that had purportedly been illegally built too close to the road decades earlier, which for several weeks made the colorful interior walls of homes viewable to passersby. Former interiors soon became the exteriors of now smaller homes and businesses, heavily coated with the dust and debris of roadwork.

I arrived at 2pm on the dot to ZAFELA’s Mpendae office to radio silence. I sat in a plastic chair and chatted with an elderly roadworker, Salum,* who was wrapping up a prayer break on ZAFELA’s lawn. He explained that his parents had long ago moved to Zanzibar from the mainland in search of *maisha madogo*, or “a small life.” I commented on the seeming laboriousness of underground water pipeline installation, to which Salum responded that hard work was necessary in order to earn a living. Salum asked me what it was like to come from a place with as much gun violence as the United States, and I admitted that it made me nervous but that I had come to realize that as much as I liked to travel, the US was at the end of the day my home. He probed me about Donald Trump’s presidency, across the street from a barbershop with Barrack Obama’s picture plastered on the exterior, lamenting that you would be hard pressed to find support for Trump in Africa. “Maybe in Saudi,” he added, “but not in Africa.” Salum agreed with my sentiment that Trump lacked respect for women, observing that while nations like Germany and the UK had elected women leaders, the US still had not and seemed unlikely to anytime soon. Said and a few ZAFELA employees who lived in the area trickled in during my conversation with Salum, so I bade him farewell. As we boarded ZAFELA’s emblazoned van for the *mradi*, I reflected to Said on the contrast between a group of men in their 20s, who sat outside of ZAFELA’s office every day, tinkering with their motorbikes and resituating themselves occasionally to be underneath moving slivers of tree shade, and Salum’s hard labor.

Said giggled and agreed before suggesting that his generation was less convinced of the fruits of their labor than Salum's generation, who would have come of age during the socialist era.

We embarked on our journey to Kizimkazi, picking up a few ZAFELA women lawyers who had journeyed from their homes to places that Said would know en route to the *mradi*. On the way to Kizimkazi, we passed over a segment of road in Bungi that was lined with perfectly spaced, mature mango trees, next to the crumbling ruins of the former seaside home of Bi Khole. Bi Khole was a member of the Omani royal family, who went against rigid social norms for elite women in Zanzibar in the 19th century and established her own homestead (Ruete 1989). Childless and unmarried at the age of 20, Bi Khole built a palace on the seaside in Bungi in 1879, with slave labor, which she used as a base for processing and exporting cloves and lived a storied life of leisure (Lichtenstein 2018). Rumor has it that each mango tree marks the grave of one of Bi Khole's many lovers, whom she ordered her slaves to kill in order to maintain her respectability. The lingering mythology of Bi Khole's violent love life, 140 years after she established her seaside plantation in Bungi, in part reflects people's enduring discomfort with a childless, unmarried woman who lived a mostly independent life, which was enabled by a slave economy.

When we arrived at the *mradi*, we were met by an SUV that was emblazoned with the names of various local legal organizations and that was blasting a *Zenj Flava* song about gender equality on repeat. *Zenj Flava* is a type of local pop music that takes traditional Zanzibari *Taarab* music and R&B-influenced *Bongo Flava* from the Tanzanian mainland as inspiration.

In an open grassy lawn by the roadside, there were mismatched plastic chairs arranged in a semicircle and a wooden table in the center, covered in a green tablecloth, where the *mradi's* special guests—local political leaders—would occupy matching, ornate wooden chairs. Many attendees wore tee-shirts stenciled with the acronyms CEPAU (Central Paralegal Unit) and SOPAU (Southern Paralegal Unit). Guests, which included ZAFELA staff members, local leaders, paralegals, local community members, and a radio journalist, made their way to the semicircle of chairs and sat down.

A man named Maulidi,* who appeared to be in his 60s and wore a pressed, navy blue dress shirt and slacks, introduced himself as a leader among the newly trained paralegals and acknowledged the *mradi's* distinguished guests, among which was a district-level politician. We all stood to signal our deference and respect. Next, a man stood and sang a few verses from the *Qur'an* in Swahili, after which Kauthar,* a ZAFELA lawyer, described the goal of the *mradi* and of the paralegal project more broadly to increase awareness of the law among Zanzibaris in order to better ensure the rights of men, women, and children.

What happened next would be a common feature of women's rights campaigns and civil society gatherings that I attended time and time again throughout my fieldwork. A woman paralegal, Zaytuni,* who wore an elaborate floral dress with a *hijab* [head scarf] and was adorned in henna, stood up to sing an *utenzi*, or an epic praise poem. With 56 four-line stanzas, the *utenzi* begins by praising God and acknowledging guests and members of the audience before proceeding to describe the purpose of the *mradi*. Stanzas 17 and 18 explain,

17. Our goal is to help
Those who suffer from adversity
With legal assistance
Indeed, we will offer it to them
18. We will offer education
So that every person is aware

Of his or her human rights
And is able to understand them

Stanza 24 continues,

24. Cases of gender-based violence
Are now multiplying
Because of this, we are compelled
To engage with our communities.

Everyone was fixated on the woman as she sang the *utenzi* and ended each stanza with a lengthy trill.

Later, the *utenzi* requests that audience members contribute money for materials that paralegals will need to do their work.

35. We have our offices
But there is nothing in them
So, we are asking you, as our colleagues
If you are able to help us.
36. We would like a computer
In order to store our data
Together with a printer
And printing paper
37. We will need a photocopier
And a small fridge
In order to store drinking water
For guests who come to see us.

As Zaytuni sang, audience members made their way up to a bag that she had placed on the lawn in front of her and deposited Tanzanian shilling notes with dramatic flair.

The *utenzi* then describes the goal of paralegals to cultivate *umoja* among them so that no enemy can infiltrate their work. *Umoja* is a Swahili philosophical concept that connotes solidarity, unity, and relational personhood (Nyerere 1967). It is in part a relic of Zanzibar and Tanzania's parallel but distinct processes of nationalism and has become a defining tenet of Zanzibari civil society and feminist activism. The *utenzi* continues by welcoming ZAFELA and lamenting its lack of donor funding before lauding ZLSC for acting as a proverbial mother and birthing the paralegal program. It concludes with a lengthy prayer. At the end of Zaytuni's performance of the *utenzi*, I asked her if I could have a copy of it, after which she gave me her own copy and introduced me to the poet who wrote it, Maulidi, who was the emcee of the *mradi*. Maulidi told me that he wrote *utenzi* on commission and offered to write me my own praise poem at a discount for my birthday.

As I sat there beside several ZAFELA paralegals and lawyers, I had a moment of worry that I had tasked myself with trying to understand and describe to outsiders how women's rights ideas circulated in Zanzibar. I had just watched a woman perform an *utenzi* that primarily praised God and asked for material support, with some mention of gender-based violence cases and the goal of paralegals to raise awareness of the law and human rights strewn in. I took notes the next evening questioning whether the *utenzi* might be an example of "vernacularization," which Sally Merry (2006) describes as happening when transnational rights are adapted to "local institutions and meanings" (39). Vernacularization often includes a concordant process of "indigenization," which Merry (2006) describes as "the ways new ideas are framed and presented in terms of existing cultural norms, values, and practices" (Merry 2006, 39). Merry's description of indigenization implicitly assumes that the “existing cultural norms, values, and practices” used to present new human rights ideas in a local context serve primarily as a form of cultural accoutrement to make transnational rights ideas more legible. Perhaps the *utenzi* was a local cultural form that was used to make transnational women’s rights ideas more legible. But more prominent than subtle allusions to transnational women’s rights ideas were Islamic and nationalist references and requests for material support.

I tabled my thinking about the *mradi* and vernacularization and began to engage in archival research at the Zanzibar National Archives. I found evidence suggesting that women’s and human rights ideas have long been circulating in Zanzibar during my pre-dissertation fieldwork and so was eager to explore women’s rights discourses and representations of women over time in Zanzibar. Early on in my archival research, I discovered *utenzi* after *utenzi* in newspapers from the pre-revolution 1950s and the post-revolution 1960s with gender and nationalist themes. The ability of ethnohistorical research to reveal much more than ethnographic or historical research alone became clear to me as I continued to explore *utenzi* poetry at major human rights events and in the archive.

The *utenzi* as a form of narrative poetry consists of four-line stanzas, with the last words in the first three lines of each stanza rhyming with each other and the last line of each stanza rhyming with the last line of every stanza throughout the *utenzi*. Among the most well-known *utenzi* in Swahili East Africa is one written by Mwana Kupona in the 1850s, which concerned her daughter’s marital and religious duties (Biersteker 1991). More recently, Kai Kresse (2011) chronicled a popular *utenzi* in Mombasa, Kenya, that tells the story of a young girl who loses her respectability after being seduced by a male friend, who abandons her when she becomes pregnant. Her parents subsequently commit suicide. It is meant to encourage young women to not succumb to temptation and to protect their honor, which is inextricable from their familial honor.

Utenzi are rife with gendered messages concerning girls' and women's respectability. While reading through old issues of *Mwongozi*—a newspaper published by Zanzibar's elite Arab-led nationalist party, ZNP, in the 1950s—I came across an *utenzi* published on May 25, 1956, that inspired a lengthy dialogue and extensive admonishment in *utenzi* form for months thereafter. The *utenzi* that inspired so much dialogue in *utenzi* form was called, "Women, what shall we do?"[2] and lamented both the suffering of women and the bad behavior of men. It was presumably written by a woman author who simply went by "Al-Mukhlisa." It begins by praising God and then lamenting that there are no intelligent men remaining in the world with a sense of justice. It complains about men's widespread abuse and thoughtless divorce of their wives, which leaves both women and children destitute and deprived of their rights. It also complains about men's propensity to spend their limited budgets on alcohol and many women's regret of ever having married. It concludes by calling on God to help women cope with their difficult situations.

The following week, a man poet, who went by "Ibnur-Rumy," responded with an *utenzi* entitled, "God will judge you."[3] In it, Ibnur-Rumy scolded Mukhlisa's condemnation of all men, warning,

1. Mukhlisa, the things which you have said
Are bad, not good
The way in which you have condemned
All men
2. All men

For every evil you have brought upon us
God will judge you
For how you have oppressed us.

Later, responding to Mukhlisa's breach of existing gender norms in her *utenzi*, in which she spoke overtly of the effects of men's behavior on women, Ibnur-Rumy insisted that his readers abide by existing gendered expectations of men and women.

19. A husband has been the one in the front
Since ancient times
A wife should display politeness
Not noise and commotion.

As I flipped through fragile archival issues of *Mwongozi*, I was stunned to find *utenzi* after *utenzi*—at least nine in total—admonishing Mukhlisa's original *utenzi*, which asked rhetorically how women should respond to men's misbehavior and criticized men for infringing on the rights of their wives and children. In *Mwongozi* in 1956, the *utenzi* was both a vessel for challenging gender norms and bringing to light gendered injustices just as it was a vessel for reinforcing existing gender norms and ideas concerning women's respectability. Furthermore, *utenzi* were usually in dialogue with the *utenzi* published before them.

After the Zanzibar Revolution of 1964, gendered *utenzi* continued to appear in the post-revolution government's propagandist and nationalist *Kweupe* newspaper. In a context with so many abrupt historical shifts and with so much unaddressed violence, I cannot say that the citizen poets of *Kweupe* were necessarily inspired by the poets of *Mwongozi*. The citizen poets of *Kweupe* would have been familiar with the *utenzi* as a literary form, replete with ideas about how women should behave, and they would have interacted with nationalist discourses that promoted gender equality and called on women to build and develop their nation. So, it was perhaps only logical and natural that nationalist gendered messages would appear often in *utenzi* form in propagandist *Kweupe*. One such poem, published on November 5, 1966, was entitled, "Well done, women, well done, for joining the army."[4] Another such poem, published on November 26, 1964, was entitled, "Let's stand shoulder to shoulder, sisters and brothers."[5] Another one, published on April 12, 1966, was entitled, "God bless the unity of women,"[6] referring to the women's wing of the then-ruling Afro-Shirazi Party (ASP). Another one, published on January 4, 1967, was entitled, "For sure, we are moving ahead, the women of these islands."[7] And the list goes on and on.

In the months following my attendance at the *mradi* in Kizimkazi, archival research enriched my understanding of the *utenzi*. I came to understand that whenever an *utenzi* is performed or written, it conjures memories of, explicitly references, and/or emulates the *utenzi* that came before it, most famously the *utenzi* of Mwana Kupona, in which a woman poet advises her daughter on religious matters and wifely duties. I also came to understand the *utenzi* as a form that signals to its listener or reader that ideas about gender are about to be challenged or reinforced. For Zanzibaris who came of age in the 1960s, the *utenzi* as a form conjures the propagandist, gendered messages of nationalism put forth by *Kweupe*.

I chose to forecast my dissertation with an exploration of the *utenzi*, because it exemplifies a central premise of my dissertation, which is that anthropological frameworks for exploring women's rights can be enriched and enhanced with an ethnohistorical approach. I argue specifically that Sally Merry's (2006) framework of vernacularization for theorizing the spread of women's rights from transnational to local settings should acknowledge that when transnational rights ideas are translated into local cultural contexts, they are often imbued with language, symbols, and ideologies from the past. Ideas from the past are often politically laden and did not move linearly from the past to the present, which means that memory necessarily effects how Zanzibaris interpret and experience rights ideas that are imbued with historical language, symbols, and ideas. To illustrate, at Kizimkazi, I saw human rights ideas presented in *utenzi* form. But the *utenzi* is not a neutral cultural vehicle for sharing ideas about women's rights, nor is it simple cultural accoutrement. It conjures memories of the *utenzi* of Mwana Kupona and of nationalist messages from the 1960s, the latter of which are especially controversial and would affect how Zanzibaris interact with rights ideas shared in *utenzi* form.

Related to this, when women's rights vernacularizers—which in Zanzibar have often been journalists—translate rights ideas from transnational to national or local settings, they often imbue new ideas with language, imagery, and ideologies from the past. Their appropriation of ideas and language from the past does not necessarily reflect an endorsement of that past but rather often highlights their roles as the mediators of historical memory.

Central theoretical and methodological arguments I put forth in my dissertation, then, are that an anthropological framework of vernacularization for understanding women's rights would benefit from an explicit incorporation of historical memory and that anthropological explorations of human rights should rely more on ethnohistorical approaches. Because much of my dissertation is about the role of memory in people's interpretations of women's rights ideas and the role of a millennial media-based women's movement in mediating collective memory of Zanzibar's contested revolutionary past, some historical contextualization is necessary before I provide methodological and chapter overviews.

Women's grassroots organizing in Swahili East Africa before the 1960s

Before I delve into a broader historical and political overview and describe the major events and forces that surrounded the three major post-1960s women's movements that I chronicle in the first three chapters of my dissertation, I want to briefly acknowledge how women in Swahili East Africa organized themselves to confront what they perceived as societal injustices prior to the 1960s. First, Margaret Strobel (1979) describes women's collectivizing in Mombasa, Kenya, from the early to mid 1900s into *lelemama* dance associations and life-cycle ritual groups called *makungwi*, which allowed women from diverse ethnic and class backgrounds to integrate their diverse rituals and practices into an overarching Swahili cultural identity. While women from diverse ethnic and class backgrounds joined together in *lelemama* and *makungwi* groups in Mombasa in the first half of the 20th century, Strobel argues that the strength of ethnic and class divisions in Mombasa prevented the development of a feminist consciousness. Later, in the late 1950s, Arab women in Mombasa began to form women's improvement associations, within which they organized for women's suffrage but did not directly challenge or attempt to change structures of male dominance like the Islamic legal system (Strobel 1979).

In the context of post-abolition, colonial Zanzibar, Laura Fair (2001) describes how Zanzibari women and men used leisure pursuits like *Taarab* music and soccer between the late 19th century and mid 1940s to contest colonial policy. Fair showcases woman Taarab musician Siti binti Saad, who wrote and sang songs with her band that challenged class oppression and men's abuse of women under colonial rule. Also in the context of colonial Zanzibar, Corrie Decker (2014) outlines the successful efforts of early women teachers to prove that they could work as professionals in the public sphere and still maintain their respectability, thus solidifying their own economic and social mobility and expanding opportunities available to all Zanzibari women. Decker argues that because women teachers were more interested in economic gains than political rights, the mobilization of Zanzibari women teachers to work as professionals in the public sphere should not be understood as a self-conscious movement to advance women's rights. Commenting on the years preceding the Zanzibar Revolution of 1964, Amina Issa (2016) suggests a more active role among Zanzibari women in the movement for women's suffrage through the mobilization of political *khanga*[8] [communicative textile with Swahili proverbs inscribed on them].

Susan Geiger (1997) chronicles the important role of working class, urban, Muslim women in colonial Tanganyika's nationalist TANU party in the mid 1900s, whom she credits with "constructing, embodying, and performing Tanzanian nationalism" (14). Women members of TANU felt compelled by the party's commitment to ending religious and gender discrimination and channeled these elements of TANU ideology to challenge gender oppression in their society. They were disappointed by the post-independence incorporation of TANU women into a government-controlled group—*Umoja wa Wanawake Tanzania* [the unity of Tanzanian Women] (UWT)—that was more concerned with promoting a western version of domesticity than engaging women politically.

To understand the three post-1960s Zanzibari women's movements that I chronicle in my dissertation, it is important to acknowledge the creative mobilizing of Swahili women before the 1960s. However, the individual-level and grassroots negotiations among individual women of their rights—broadly conceived—is for the most part not my unit of study in this dissertation, with the exception of Chapter 4. My unit of study is rather the language of women's rights. Departing from anthropologists who have explored the movement of women's rights ideas across space (e.g., Merry 2006; Abu-Lughod 2013), I explore how women's rights ideas have shifted over time in Zanzibar. By looking at the language of women's rights over time in Zanzibar, I am able to locate major shifts in gendered public discourse and in ideas concerning women's rights and responsibilities, which often reveals moments when the "local" and the "global" have strongly intersected. In my dissertation, major shifts in gendered public discourse include a state feminist movement that emerged in the socialist mid 1960s, which reflected the archipelago's Eastern Bloc relationships and its enmeshment with the implementation of Pan-Africanist *Ujamaa* [African socialism] on the Tanzanian mainland. Another major shift in gendered public discourse occurred during a millennial media-based women's movement in Zanzibar in part due to the attendance of Zanzibari women journalists at major UN women's conferences in the 1980s and 1990s and a global human rights and democratization movement that swept across Africa in the 1990s (Tripp et al. 2009). A third major shift in gendered public discourse occurred in the 2010s, when Zanzibari women's rights activists began to engage strongly with a transnational Islamic feminist network in their efforts to reform the archipelago's Islamic legal system.

Looking at the language of women's rights over time helps me to locate moments when the interaction of transnational women's rights structures and ideas with so-called "local" women's rights ideas (which in Zanzibar, have always been inspired by the global) have led to major shifts in gendered public discourse and in ideas concerning women's rights and responsibilities. Perhaps more importantly, however, it reveals the continuing resonance of a 1960s discourse of women's *umoja* and of women as at the front lines of development and nation building. The continuing resonance of gendered language from the 1960s and its more recent appropriation does not reflect an uncritical endorsement of the past but rather reflects important differences in how the past is remembered among Zanzibari women's rights activists. It also reflects linguistic change, since a word like *umoja*, which once was inextricable from Zanzibar's autocratic post-revolution regime, has shifted in meaning and connotations to primarily represent an apolitical solidarity among Zanzibari women's rights activists. Exploring the language of women's rights over time elucidates the ways in which activists and ordinary women in Zanzibar have relied on their own historical, linguistic, and cultural resources in their efforts to evoke gendered social change.

Historical and political overview

Zanzibar is a semiautonomous archipelago 22 miles off the coast of mainland Tanzania. The majority of Zanzibaris hail from one of two main islands—Unguja, where Zanzibar City, government offices, and most civil society organizations are based, and the less populous and more politically marginalized island of Pemba. Historically, Zanzibar was an important base for Indian Ocean traders, coming under Portuguese rule in the early 16th century until falling under the control of the Sultan of Oman in the late 17th century. The Sultanate of Oman relocated its capital from Muscat to Zanzibar in 1840, benefitting economically from clove plantations, ivory, and the slave trade. Zanzibar became a British protectorate in 1890, remaining under British colonial rule until the archipelago gained independence from the United Kingdom as a short-lived constitutional monarchy in 1963. Just a month and two days later, on January 12, 1964, the Sultan and Zanzibar's democratically elected government were overthrown in a violent revolution, during which thousands of Zanzibaris of Indian and Arab descent fled or were killed, marking a rupture in Zanzibar's recent history that has continued to play out in contemporary political alignments.

Zanzibaris know the period of time leading up to the revolution as the "*zama za siasa*," or the time of politics, which was marked by vitriolic, racialized exchange between the archipelago's pro-Sultanate Zanzibar Nationalist Party (ZNP) and the Afro-Shirazi Party (ASP), which roughly aligned with polarized "Arab" and "African" ethnic identities (Glassman 2011). After the revolution, ASP leader Abeid Amani Karume was designated president of the isles and reformed it into an African socialist state. In April of 1964, Karume agreed to a controversial union government between Zanzibar and then-Tanganyika, led by Julius Nyerere, soon after combining their respective country names to become the United Republic of Tanzania. Nyerere assumed the presidency of Tanzania, while Karume assumed its vice-presidency but remained at the helm of Zanzibar's Revolutionary Council, which maintained control over domestic affairs.

In the aftermath of the revolution, inspired by its relationship with Eastern Bloc-aligned Russia and East Germany and by communist China, Zanzibar enacted sweeping socialist reforms, which included housing, education, and health projects; the nationalization of Zanzibar's clove and other industries; and the redistribution of land among citizens (Loimeier 2018). In its propagandist *Kweupe* newspaper, the socialist state projected itself as having liberated women from sultanic colonialism and called on women to reciprocate by building and developing the nation, which I describe in much greater depth in Chapter 1. Just as it described itself as a liberator of women, Zanzibar's post-revolution government forced young women of Arab and Indian descent to marry ASP party stalwarts (Maoulidi 2011a) and summarily arrested and executed anyone it deemed a threat to its autocratic power (Othman 2014), even after the assassination of Karume in 1972 (Shafi 2003; Maoulidi 2011a). In 1980, following the 1977 merging of mainland Tanzania's ruling TANU and Zanzibar's ruling ASP parties to form the *Chama cha Mapinduzi* (CCM), or the revolutionary party, the power to elect Zanzibar's president was moved from the revolutionary council to the electorate, which was an early step in the archipelago's democratization (Othman 2014). The same year, Zanzibar also established an elected House of Representatives (Othman 2014).

The 1980s marked economic liberalization and an Islamic revival in Zanzibar, which went hand in hand. Wealthy individuals from the Gulf States began to fund Islamic education and social services on the archipelago, and young Zanzibari men were offered opportunities to advance their Islamic knowledge abroad, in places like Saudi Arabia and Sudan (Turner 2009). As one of my informants, Shifaa Said Hassan, describes in my second chapter, religious leaders emerged as a moralizing force upon the demise of the socialist state in the 1980s, dictating what women should wear and instituting a new regime of respectability in Zanzibar.[9]

By the 1990s, Zanzibar found itself in a period of social, cultural, and political flux, which is reflected in archival newspapers from the millennial era. A global democratization movement swept across Africa in the 1990s (Tripp et al. 2009), resulting in the establishment of multipartyism in Zanzibar in 1992 and in a subsequent explosion of Zanzibari civil society. Just as women's movements emerged in the wake of democratization processes in other African countries (Tripp et al. 2009), a media-based women's movement emerged in Zanzibar at the turn of the millennium. Women journalists like Shifaa Said Hassan, Mzuri Issa, and Husna Mohammed promoted women's solidarity, shed light on social issues like gender-based violence, and encouraged women to vote and to run for political office, which evoked controversy and which I further explore in Chapter 2.

Archival newspapers from the late 1990s and early 2000s also highlight a widespread fear among Zanzibaris of moral and cultural erosion, which was often attributed to the morally corruptive forces of globalization and tourism and to an influx of mainland migrants. For example, a multi-authored editorial published in *Zanzibar Leo* in 2003[10] called on Zanzibaris to protect their culture, customs, and traditions. The editorial claimed that Zanzibaris did not have a culture of drinking alcohol and that social ills like financial scams, prostitution, and theft were the results of widespread behavior change wrought by globalization and an influx of tourists. Zanzibar had an Islamic culture, *Zanzibar Leo* said, but now, people had even begun to eat with their left hands, and men had even begun to wear *kanzu* [long robe worn by men when praying] without *kofia* [Muslim men's head covering]. *Zanzibar Leo* editors framed the archipelago as at risk of losing its Islam-inspired morality to tourism and globalization, fears that continue to echo today.

This fear of a loss of Zanzibari culture and of an Islam-inspired morality is exemplified in countless cartoons, articles, and editorials during the millennial era that lamented the loss of the *buibui* [traditional black Swahili cloak worn by women], a symbol of women's honor and respectability and of cultural preservation on the isles. To illustrate, in the following cartoon, published in *Zanzibar Leo* on December 6, 2002, a man laments to a woman, "Where did this value of wearing a *buibui* disappear to?" His woman companion laments, "The *buibui* is a thing of the past, now it has become bye bye." In the distance, a woman's *buibui* is blowing in the wind, which shows her revealing clothing to onlookers. A small creature in the corner of the

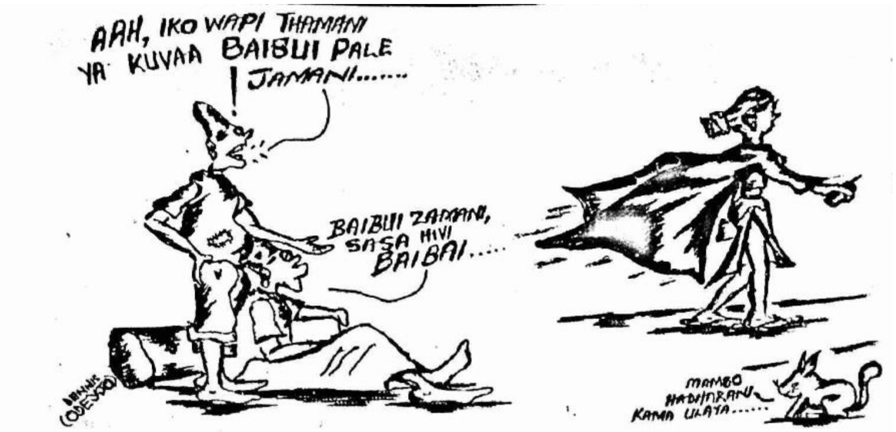
AAH, IKO WAPI THAMANI YA KUVAA BAIBUI PALE JAMANI......
BAIBUI ZAMANI, SASA HIVI BAIBAI.....
MAMBO HADHARANI KAMA ULAYA......

Figure 1: Cartoon showing how women's clothing has served as a symbol of cultural preservation and morality in Zanzibar. *Zanzibar Leo*, December 6, 2002. Zanzibar National Archives.

cartoon, which was a cornerstone in Zanzibari millennial era political and social cartoons, laments that Zanzibar has become like Europe. The cartoon illustrates the longstanding and oppressive social expectations placed on women, since the socialist era, to serve as living symbols of Zanzibari culture and respectability (Maoulidi 2011a).

Since the establishment of multipartyism in 1992, Zanzibaris have tried to settle old political scores through new political alignments. CCM has worked to solidify a hegemonic narrative of the revolution's fruits, accusing the opposition Civic United Front (CUF)—which has tried to discredit both the revolution and Zanzibar's union government with Tanzania—of wanting to return to an era of sultanic colonialism (Bissell and Fouéré 2018a) and of cultivating contacts with terrorist groups (Turner 2009; Muhajir and Myers 2018). CCM and CUF established a tenuous power sharing agreement in 2010, which was broken after the CCM-led government's annulment of 2015 election results, once early vote counts suggested a likely CUF victory (Muhajir and Myers 2018). During my fieldwork, from June 2017-June 2018, many Zanzibaris were still lamenting a loss of CUF influence after the party's boycotting of a follow-up election in 2016 to the government's annulled election of 2015, which in effect led to an overwhelming CCM majority win. The boycotting of the 2016 election by CUF reflects widespread disillusionment with electoral politics in Zanzibar and has raised fears of election violence in 2020.

To say that Zanzibar today is a CCM-controlled state would be a simplification. Religious leaders, many of whom are perceived of as aligned with the political opposition, exert an unprecedented influence over ideas concerning respectability and morality and even on state policy in Zanzibar. To illustrate, in their efforts to reform the archipelago's Islamic legal system in 2017 to reflect a more egalitarian Islam, Zanzibari women's rights activists faced serious backlash from religious leaders in the form of public curses and accusations of blasphemy, which I reflect on more in Chapter 3. Afraid of how their Muslim constituents might react to their affirmative vote and perhaps heeding the calls of religious leaders that they would be going against their religion by voting affirmatively, members of Zanzibar's CCM-dominated house of representatives voted overwhelmingly against the Islamic legal reforms that were most controversial among religious leaders.

Contemporary women's rights activists must thoughtfully negotiate a tenuous political landscape, where their ability to pass major reforms depends on their ability to appeal to CCM lawmakers without ostracizing or angering religious leaders or the political opposition, which are not entirely distinct. In an era when religious leaders have been successful at dismissing transnational women's rights ideas and conventions as imposed by the west and as un-Islamic,[11] Zanzibari civil society activists have begun to rely on the support of a transnational network of Muslim women's rights activists from Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia, which I describe in greater depth in Chapter 3. Alongside their engagement with a transnational Islamic feminist network, civil society activists have worked to cultivate an Islam-inspired *umoja* as a national coalition, appropriating the language from a tenuous socialist past to reap the changes they want to see in their society.

Methodological approach

As I demonstrated with a joint ethnographic and historical analysis of *utenzi* poetry in my introduction, I relied on both historical and ethnographic methods in my dissertation research. At the archives, I perused colonial and post-colonial files related to women's groups and organizations; colonial-era newspapers produced during Zanzibar's "time of politics," including

Mwongozi and *Afrika Kwetu*; the post-revolution, propagandist *Kweupe* newspaper; and the millennial era weekly *Nuru* and then daily *Zanzibar Leo* government-affiliated newspapers. I spent the vast majority of my time reading and taking photographs of *Kweupe* articles published between 1964-1970 and reading and taking photographs of *Zanzibar Leo* articles published between 2000-2005. The former reflected socialist state feminist discourses from the post-revolution era, while the latter reflected a millennial media-based women's movement and an effort among civil society organizations to increase women's political representation and participation.

Since I was primarily reading state propaganda from the post-revolution era and a state-affiliated newspaper from the early to mid 2000s, I sought to read "along the archival grain" (Stoler 2009), attuned to the role of state newspapers as "transparencies on which power relations were inscribed and intricate technologies of rule in themselves" (Stoler 2009, 20), and I tried to be mindful of historical silences in the state press (Trouillot 1995). The post-revolution government compiled *Kweupe* into a singular volume intended to relay the story of post-revolution nation building and development for future generations. When reading through it, I noticed the presence of stock photos, which were used to illustrate the successes of the socialist state and the engagement of citizens in nation building, which I interpreted as alluding to the government's deliberate inclusion of certain narratives and its exclusion of others in a process of historical production (Trouillot 1995). Similarly, in Chapter 2, I discuss the conscription of a journalist to repair an increasingly breached official state narrative of the past in the state-affiliated *Zanzibar Leo* newspaper in 2002. While the millennial era marked Zanzibar's enmeshment in a global democratization movement and a freer press, there were limits to what journalists could express in the state-affiliated *Zanzibar Leo* newspaper, which sought to reproduce a celebratory narrative of the revolution and its many “fruits” (Bissell and Fouéré 2018a).

Beyond trying to ethnographically engage with archival materials, I relied primarily on the ethnographic methods of participant observation and on semi-structured interviews. For the former, I embedded myself within a civil society organization called the Zanzibar Female Lawyers Association (ZAFELA), which sought to raise awareness among Zanzibaris of their rights, to support women and children in advocating for their rights, and to ensure more gender equitable governmental policies in Zanzibar. While at ZAFELA, I spent many days observing a paralegal, Rahma,* as she provided legal advice to clients, constructed clients’ legal claim forms, and facilitated legal mediation sessions between current and former spouses. Observing Rahma’s work gave me insight into gendered social norms in Zanzibar and ideas surrounding women’s respectability, just as it made me aware of the entrée of women lawyers as authoritative purveyors of Islamic legal knowledge in Zanzibar and the centrality of Islamic theological arguments in women’s rights advocacy. On slow days, with few clients, I perused ZAFELA’s archive of case files and legal claim forms, where I learned about the legal woes of past clients; Rahma’s frequent citation of physical and verbal abuse in legal claims for divorce; and an increasing incidence of mind bogglingly complex property and land cases. Rahma often lamented to me, “These days, all I see are property cases! I wish I could go back to the days of child support cases.”[12]

In addition to providing me with the opportunity to observe legal cases and peruse old case files, my relationship with ZAFELA enabled my access to diverse civil society spaces, within which I engaged in an “analysis of the interconnections between language, relationships, and the material groundings of power” (Ramazanoglu 2002, 154). I was constantly witness to social and political interactions that reflected, sometimes in barely perceptible ways, Zanzibar's complex geography of religious, civil society, and state power. To illustrate, I began to attend meetings of a broader coalition of women and children's rights-oriented organizations, in which women's rights activists reflected on their past efforts and strategized their next steps, which I chronicle in greater depth in Chapter 3. I also attended the coalition's tense gender-based violence advocacy meetings, where government officials, police officers, local judges, religious leaders, and citizen activists were brought together to discuss controversial issues, like the mishandling of sexual assault cases by criminal justice system actors who were there in the room. I attended high school debates, where young people debated the perils and benefits of globalization, and a leadership training for Zanzibar's CCM-affiliated youth council, where ZAFELA director Jamila Mahmoud engaged youth attendees in a debate about women's capacity to lead.

Through my engagement in participant observation at ZAFELA's Jang'ombe office, I additionally became connected with a former ZAFELA lawyer turned major CCM political figure, Bahati,* whom I traveled all over Unguja with to observe her intertwined activist and political work. My observations of Bahati especially provided me with insight into the political resonance of women's rights ideas and discourses and the liability of her CCM affiliation to Zanzibar's gender coalition and its advocacy work. Through Bahati, I became connected with a Zanzibari political family, who invited me to wedding rituals and to *iftari* [the breaking of the fast] during the holy month of Ramadan. I very quickly became aware of the liability of being associated with a CCM political figure to my own research, when I ran into a major women's rights activist while dropping off birthday treats with Bahati at her son's private primary school, who subtly signaled her disapproval, and when ZAFELA activists scolded me for spending too much time observing Bahati's work. It was a sobering moment, realizing that I could be a political liability to the gender coalition's work, after which I much more carefully managed my public interactions with Bahati.

My participant observation was not limited to ZAFELA's office in Mpendae or to civil society spaces. In my daily life, I interacted with Zanzibaris who went into exile for many decades after the revolution, which exposed me to important counternarratives of the revolution and illuminated historical silences in Zanzibar's state press. I also spent a lot of time with Rehema,* a domestic worker from the Tanzanian mainland, who provided me with access to grassroots, non-elite spaces of women's sociality, like the ubiquitous women's *vicoba* savings cooperatives and Islamic *madrasa* prayer groups across the archipelago, which I explore in depth in Chapter 4.

In addition to engaging in participant observation, I conducted short, informal interviews on an almost daily basis with Rahma and other ZAFELA employees related to the legal advice and mediation sessions that I observed, just as I often asked clients themselves for elaboration when they offered narratives related to their relationship struggles and legal cases. Before each client advice or mediation session, I described the purpose of my presence and obtained clients' consent. I was surprised by the degree to which clients seemed to appreciate my presence as a witness to their relationship and legal challenges. Through my relationship with ZAFELA and with a retired Tanzanian women's rights trailblazer, I gained access to major Zanzibari women's rights activists like Maryam Hamdani, Shifaa Said Hassan, Jamila Mahmoud, and Hawra Shamte, among others, with whom I was able to conduct semi-structured life history and key informant interviews. Because they were coveted by the international and local press and often called upon to share their opinions, I observed that activists were particularly skilled at citing international conventions and at producing relevant sound bytes. As such, I found that when I was able to ask gender coalition members about their work that I actually observed, my interviews were particularly fruitful.

Recognizing that I had much more access to women's perspectives than to men's in my daily life, which is in part a function of living in a society with so many sex-segregated spaces, I tried as much as possible to ask men their thoughts. For example, upon observing a child support or divorce case, I might strike up a conversation about child support or divorce with my taxi driver, Ramadan,* on our ride from ZAFELA's Jan'gombe office to my temporary home in Zanzibar's historically elite, tourism-laden Stone Town quarter. Or if someone at ZAFELA reflected on something like the pervasiveness of weddings before the holy month of Ramadan and divorces after, I might probe male security guards at the entryway of the Zanzibar National Archives to get their thoughts. I tried as much as I could to incorporate a diversity of perspectives in my own process of knowledge production while conducting dissertation fieldwork.

Chapter overviews

The first two chapters of my dissertation rely primarily on archival sources, with each showcasing the life history and personal reflections of a woman who was intimately involved in an important feminist moment in Zanzibar's history. In Chapter 1, relying primarily on archival issues of *Kweupe* newspaper and on other archival documents, I highlight a state feminist discourse from the 1960s that presented women as joining together to build and develop a self-reliant socialist nation. I explore some of the sources of this discourse and the forces that fueled it, which included Zanzibar's relationships with communist China and Eastern Bloc countries like the German Democratic Republic and the Soviet Union. I also explore the reflections of Bi Naima Mali Madai, who joined the women's wing of Zanzibar's ruling Afro-Shirazi Party, the unity of Afro-Shirazi Party mothers (UWASP), which conscripted women in gendered nation building activities and which was lauded in propagandist *Kweupe* for playing a central role in building and developing the nation. Bi Naima's reflections on her role as a nation building member of UWASP are influenced by memory, which, as Priya Lal (2015) thoughtfully points out, "works toward the preservation of individual dignity and evolves with the passage of time and the ongoing accumulation of experience" (219). Bi Naima remembers a post-revolution era when she was able to make a decent living, which she contrasts with her worsened present material conditions.

Throughout my dissertation, I highlight the ways in which more recent women's movements have appropriated the socialist state feminist language of Bi Naima's era. In Chapter 1, I argue that Bi Naima's involvement in UWASP and her understanding of a state feminist movement in the 1960s affects how she engages with contemporary rights movements and initiatives that are rife with the imagery and language of Zanzibar's socialist past. Because Naima's memory of her experience as a woman in the socialist 1960s affects how she understands contemporary women's rights initiatives that appropriate language and imagery from that era, I argue that memory should be a central analytic in anthropological explorations of women's rights.

Chapter 2 similarly relies on archival newspaper articles and on a case study. In my second chapter, I chronicle a media-based women's movement in the late 1990s and early 2000s that was led by Zanzibar's chapter of the Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA). Responding to the marginalization of Zanzibari women in narratives of Tanzanian women's movements, I explore the life history of Shifaa Said Hassan, a woman journalist who was at the helm of millennial era civil society women's organizing in Zanzibar as a journalist and editor with the state-affiliated, weekly *Nuru* and daily *Zanzibar Leo* newspapers and as a program manager of TAMWA Zanzibar. Shifaa describes a millennial media-based women's movement in Zanzibar that was inspired by but distinct from the feminist organizing of her peers on the Tanzanian mainland. In her millennial newspaper articles, Shifaa appropriates language from the past, but her reliance on imagery and language from Zanzibar's state feminist past does not mark her endorsement of that past, nor does it simply reflect a process of vernacularization, or the translation of transnational women's rights ideas into local cultural symbols, language, and ideologies (Merry 2006). Rather, it marks her attempt to mediate how the past is remembered.

In Chapter 2, I add to my argument from Chapter 1 that memory affects how people interpret contemporary women's rights initiatives that are imbued with historical language and imagery, insisting that women's rights "vernacularizers" (Merry 2006) themselves often act as mediators of collective memory. In response to her attempts to mediate how the past was remembered, Hassan was conscripted in a process of national memory repair, which ultimately influenced her decision to leave her editorial position at *Zanzibar Leo* and to assume the directorship of the Zanzibar chapter of the Media Council of Tanzania, an independent media watchdog organization.

Chapter 3 chronicles my observations of Zanzibar's gender coalition, from 2017-2018, as it sought to enact major reforms to Zanzibar's *kadhi's* courts [Islamic legal system], which included an especially controversial stipulation that would allow women themselves to adjudicate Islamic legal cases as *kadhis* [Islamic judges]. In their organizing for major *kadhi's* court reforms, Zanzibari women's rights activists, like ZAFELA director Jamila Mahmoud, relied on the support of a transnational network of Muslim women's rights activists associated with Malaysia-based "Sisters in Islam." Unfortunately, Zanzibari women's rights activists tried and failed to establish peaceful relations with Zanzibar's Organization of Muslim Clerics (JUMAZA), whose members issued public curses against gender coalition figureheads. The gender coalition succeeded in passing some reforms but failed to pass the most symbolic of their proposed amendments, which would allow women to become *kadhis*.

Chapter 3 illuminates an increasing reliance among Zanzibari women's rights activists like Jamila on Islamic theological arguments as well as the strengths and limitations of transnational networks in a local Zanzibari context. Moving forward, Zanzibari women's rights activists seek to further cultivate their own faith-based solidarity as gender coalition members and to encourage women's engagement in advanced Islamic studies, which Jamila envisions as ensuring a more egalitarian Islam in Zanzibar.

In Chapter 4, I move out of the relatively elite space of Zanzibar's gender coalition and explore the life history and social engagements of Rehema, a domestic worker from the Tanzanian mainland, in a socialism-inspired women's *vicoba* [savings cooperative] and in a reformist women's *madrasa* [Islamic prayer group]. By highlighting the social engagements of a mainland woman migrant in Zanzibar, I am seeking to position Swahili coastal mobility as the norm rather than the exception among women. Heavily indebted to Saba Mahmood's (2005) seminal work on the piety movement, I join critics of the "piety turn," like Sehlikoglu (2018), and argue that Rehema's subjectivity and negotiations of agency are influenced by much more than her Muslim faith and her commitment to cultivating and enacting *ibada* [pious actions and habits]. Rehema's sense of self and her actions are additionally influenced by her class status; her lifelong enmeshment within different patriarchal social structures, which she reflects eloquently upon; her belief in the power of women's education; and her adherence to the Swahili philosophical and Tanzanian nationalist tenet of *umoja*, just to name a few.

Through participant observation of Rehema's women's prayer group and savings cooperative, informal conversations over our nearly four-year friendship, and a life history interview, I explore Rehema's daily negotiations of agency in different social spaces, which are multiple, nonlinear, and sometimes contradictory. For example, in her daily life, Rehema reflects eloquently and often on the propensity of many men to misinterpret Islamic texts in order to oppress women, which she attributes to *mfumo dume* [patriarchy]. However, teachers in Rehema's *madrasa* frequently project patriarchal interpretations of Islam that she does not challenge. I interpret Rehema's daily negotiations of agency as a process in which she is constantly weighing what she has to gain and what she has to lose. My exploration of Rehema's life history and multiple social engagements sheds light on how a non-elite woman is engaging with and negotiating the linguistic and ideological tenets of Zanzibar's socialist past and an Islamic revival in her daily life. I incorporate a case study approach throughout my dissertation, since it offers a more textured and grounded analysis of how women like Naima, Shifaa, Jamila, and Rehema have engaged with women's rights ideas, in civil society, government, religious, and other spaces, in Zanzibar's past and present.

The theme of *umoja*

Following in the footsteps of scholars who have explored how human rights ideas are influenced by and imbued with local conceptions of personhood, particularly in African contexts (Nyamnjoh 2004; Englund 2011; Morreira 2016), I explore the Swahili philosophical concept of *umoja* throughout my dissertation. *Umoja* literally translates as "unity" or "fellowship" and implies an understanding of personhood as relational. *Umoja* was a defining characteristic of first Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere's political and philosophical system of *Ujamaa*, or African socialism, which was only very incompletely and haphazardly implemented in Zanzibar but which had lasting ideological effects. Nyerere's *Ujamaa* was based on a premise that the distribution of wealth in traditional African society was equitable and fair and promoted an ideal of extended African familyhood, or *ujamaa*, which would be characterized by *umoja* (Ochieng'-Odhiambo 2010).

Heeding Nancy Rose Hunt's (2013) call to seize hold of historical repetitions, I trace *umoja* over time and in diverse media, civil society, and government spaces, which are often indistinct from each other. For example, the post-revolution government's propagandist *Kweupe* newspaper repeatedly called on women to join the women's wing of the ruling Afro-Shirazi Party, *Umoja wa Akina Mama wa ASP* [the unity of ASP mothers], and lauded women's *umoja* for its important role in nation building and development. During a millennial media-based women's movement, journalists like Shifaa Said Hassan and Mzuri Issa began to use appeals to *umoja* as a feminist strategy. For example, Mzuri called on civil society organizations to practice *umoja* in order to more effectively bring about meaningful social change,[13] which manifested in the establishment of a gender coalition of women's rights-oriented civil society organizations that is still active today. Similarly, in a 2002 article, Shifaa called on women to practice *umoja* in order to ensure women's greater political representation and participation,[14] insinuating that women should prioritize voting women into office over political affiliation. In 2017 and 2018, during tense civil society-led meetings related to police corruption, I observed major women's rights activists like Asha Aboud appeal to the *umoja* of attendees, in order to remind diverse participants of their unity and shared goals. Also, in 2017 and 2018, one of my primary informants, Rehema, often cited the purpose of her women's savings cooperative as enabling *umoja* among women members.

The theme of *umoja* ties the various chapters of my dissertation together and emphasizes the power of words, which have been appropriated by different historical actors for diverse purposes. A word that was used coercively by Zanzibar's post-revolution regime was remarkably used by millennial era journalists to promote an apolitical solidarity among women to ensure that their peers be elected into political office. Tracing a word like *umoja* across space and time reveals its fraught historical associations as well as its remarkable endurance and flexibility. My dissertation highlights the power of *umoja* as a feminist strategy and the resonance of a discourse of women as building and developing the nation, even among people who did not and do not support the regime that presented women as unified nation builders in the pages of *Kweupe*. A nationalist discourse of women's *umoja* and women as building and developing the nation has transcended the regime that authored it. In an era marked by disunity between religious leaders and Zanzibar's gender coalition, and in an era characterized by political discord, women's rights activists are increasingly mobilizing a shared commitment to social unity, a shared conception of personhood as relational, and a collective narrative of Zanzibari women as having built and developed the nation as they stake claims to women's capabilities and seek to ensure justice.

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[1] Asterisks denote the changing of a name to protect confidentiality.

[2] Al-Mukhlisa, "Wanawake Tufanyaje," *Mwongozi*, May 25, 1956, 3.

[3] Ibnur-Rumy, "Mungu 'Tatuhukumia," *Mwongozi*, June 1, 1956, 3.

[4] "Heko Kina Mama Heko Kwa Kujiunga Jeshini, *Kweupe*, November 5, 1966.

[5] "Tuweni Bega Kwa Bega Kina Dada Kina Kaka," *Kweupe*, November 26, 1964.

[6] "Yarabi Upe Baraka Umoja wa Wanawake," *Kweupe*, April 12, 1966.

[7] "Hakika Twasonga Mbele Kina Mama Visiwani," *Kweupe*, January 4, 1967.

[8] A *khanga* is a local textile worn by women, usually adorned with symbolic designs and Swahili sayings. It has historically been used as a medium of communication among women.

[9] Hassan, Shifaa Said. March 14, 2018. Interview with Jessica Ott. English. Zanzibar Town, Tanzania.

[10] "Utamaduni, mila, silka, na desturi za kizanzibari zilindwe," *Zanzibar Leo*, March 7, 2003, 5.

[11] E.g., "Mswada mpya wa mahakama ya kadhi wapingwa Zanzibar," posted by "Zaima TV," October 11, 2017, https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=jlhjiuMxAbY, accessed May 21, 2018.

[12] E.g., personal conversation with Rahma on March 15, 2018.

[13] Issa, Mzuri, “NGOs zifanye kazi kwa pamoja kutatua matatizo yanayowakabili, *Zanzibar Leo*, March 25, 2003, 8.
[14] Hassan, Shifaa Said, “Nafasi zaidi za uongozi kitaifa zitolewe kwa wanawake,” *Zanzibar Leo*, October 9, 2002, 5.

CHAPTER 1: "The revolution liberated women, and women built the nation:" exploring the meaning of an Eastern Bloc-influenced state feminist movement in post-revolution Zanzibar, 1964-1970

Introduction

"*Umoja* is development," says the headline on the front page of Zanzibar's propagandist nationalist newspaper, *Kweupe*, from June 28, 1967.[1] Beneath the headline is a picture of then-first lady, Fatma Karume, addressing a crowd of women in her role as patron of Zanzibar's post-revolution nationalist women's organization, *Umoja wa Akina Mama wa ASP*, or "the unity of Afro-Shirazi party mothers" (UWASP). The use of the word "mother" as a marker of womanhood was not accidental.

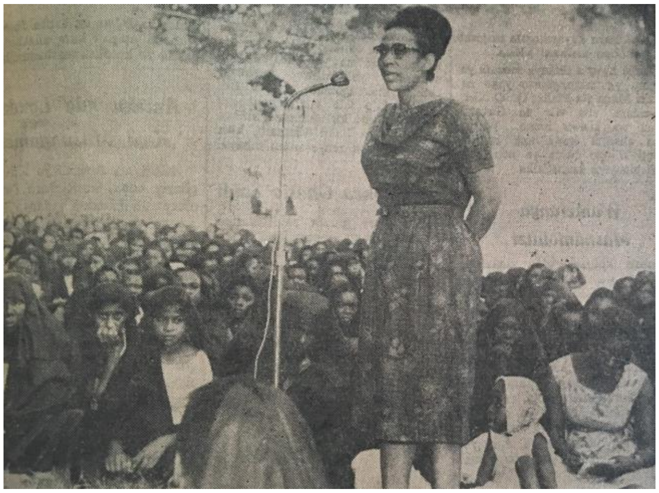

Figure 2: Bi Fatma Karume addressing a large crowd of women at Zanzibar's Old Fort about the important role of women in nation building. *Kweupe*, February 22, 1967. Zanzibar National Archives.

The article is a nationalist women's manifesto and was published numerous times,[2] in slightly altered versions, in the pages of *Kweupe*. It continues,

> "The unity of mothers, which was ignored by the past rulers of these islands, is continuing and fulfilling its responsibility in the building of this nation. This unity,

> immediately after being offered a hand by the citizens' government, will never be forgotten. Women were granted with equal rights to develop their nation, which includes further cultivating their rights and the nation's development goals."

In most versions of the women's manifesto, women are called upon to "*funga mikaja*[3] *yao*" [fasten their birthing belts] and engage themselves in building the nation and improving their development. The revolution is framed as having liberated women from colonial oppression,[4] thus granting women with their rights to participate in development and nation building. The role of women's *umoja* [unity and solidarity] in development is often emphasized, as is the image of a mother fastening her *mkaja*[5] before joining forces with other mothers to build and develop the nation.

A headline in Zanzibar's state-run newspaper, *Zanzibar Leo*, on March 24, 2005, reads, "The women of Zanzibar are fastening their *mikaja* in the fight for their development."[6] The language of a millennial media-based women's movement in Zanzibar channeled the gendered language of Zanzibari nationalism from four decades earlier. The 2005 article continues, "As a result of UN campaigns, women have begun to receive noticeable results in bringing themselves development together with liberating themselves from patriarchy." The role of the revolution in supposedly liberating women was replaced in 2005 with the role of UN campaigns, which provided women with the impetus to liberate themselves from patriarchy rather than from colonialism. The 2005 article includes a picture of women harvesting seaweed, with the caption, "Coastal mothers in Zanzibar have been at the front lines of entrepreneurship." In the mid-late 1960s, *Kweupe* often used the militaristic descriptor of women as "at the front lines of development,"[7] while *Zanzibar Leo* described women in 2005 as "at the front lines of entrepreneurship," using the revolutionary moniker, "mothers." A more recent *Zanzibar Leo* headline from March 18, 2018,[8] similarly explains that "*umoja* is development" is planning to liberate women and children from gender-based violence. "*Umoja* is development" is the name that a local development organization on the island of Pemba has given itself, reflecting the continued resonance of ideas of *umoja* and development from the post-revolution era in contemporary responses to gender-based violence.

The gendered nationalist language of the past emerged again during a millennial media-based women's movement and remains resonant today. Some of the language is tweaked to incorporate new realities, like UN campaigns and an emphasis on women's entrepreneurship, while some of it seems to be extracted straight from the pages of *Kweupe*. New rights ideas are presented with a nationalist lexicon of women's solidarity and development together with the image of revolutionary mothers fastening their *mikaja* and joining together to build the nation.

The presence of historical rights discourses in more recent women's rights organizing in Zanzibar highlights the shortcomings in an anthropological framework for understanding women's rights that describes a top-down spread of rights ideas from more recent, post-1985 transnational women's conferences to local contexts. For example, in her seminal ethnography of the spread of women's human rights ideas from transnational conferences to local settings, Sally Merry (2006) thoughtfully describes a process of "vernacularization," during which transnational women's rights ideas are translated into local cultural contexts. These translations happen on a continuum, with little alteration from their original transnational forms on one end and so much cultural appropriation and adaptation that their transnational forms are barely recognizable on the other. Somewhere in the middle are hybrid rights, in which transnational human rights ideas are translated into culturally familiar local terms, symbols, and ideologies, without completely losing their originally intended meaning. However, as Shannon Morreira (2016) has thoughtfully pointed out in her ethnography of human rights discourses among Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa, the idea of vernacularization falsely assumes the joining together of two "pure" forms into a new, hybrid form. She argues that there were never pure wholes, because local rights ideas in Zimbabwe have always interacted with global rights discourses.

Morreira's analysis holds true in the context of Zanzibar, too, since 1960s nationalist women's rights discourses were intertwined with global, Pan-Africanist, and even Eastern Bloc-aligned women's rights ideas. Additionally, it is not enough to simply locate the imagery of women fastening their *mikaja* and the language of women developing and building their nation as local cultural language, symbols, and ideology. These are terms, symbols, and ideologies from the past, and they have not moved linearly from the past to the present. Beyond acknowledging the ways in which transnational rights ideas become imbued with local terms, ideas, and imagery, it is necessary to additionally explore how the local cultural symbols, ideologies, and language inherent in Zanzibari women's rights discourses have moved from the past to the present and how diverse groups of people have experienced them over time.

In this chapter, I explore how a nationalist discourse of women's rights came to life in Zanzibar, depending primarily on the pages of a propagandist newspaper, *Kweupe*, published between the years of 1964 and 1970. The pages of a propagandist newspaper allow me to highlight strategies employed by the autocratic post-revolution state of Zanzibar to cultivate women into particular kinds of nation building, development-oriented citizens. Unfortunately, the pages of *Kweupe* only allude to the ways in which ordinary Zanzibaris interacted with state discourses. I therefore additionally depend on the oral history of a woman, Bi Naima Mali Madai, who was involved in the post-revolution nationalist women's group, UWASP, selling crafts and commodities out of a government-subsidized kiosk.

I argue in this chapter that explorations of the vernacularization (Merry 2006) of human rights from transnational to local settings must not take for granted the local language, symbols, and ideologies upon which "new" ideas are grafted and their own complicated, nonlinear histories. For example, Naima's oral history highlights the important work of memory in her reconciliation of the nationalist language and imagery of women's rights dispatched in the 1960s with her current material situation and with more contemporary women's rights initiatives that appropriate 1960s language, ideologies, and cultural symbols. Her reflections on women's movements in the past and present in Zanzibar shed light on the important role of memory in shaping how the so-called "beneficiaries" of women's movements experience and interpret women's rights initiatives that are imbued with politically laden language, ideologies, and symbols from the past. In the space of this chapter, I argue for the explicit incorporation of a framework of historical memory within predominant anthropological modes for understanding the spread of women's rights ideas from transnational to local contexts.

The origins of UWASP

The establishment of "the unity of Afro-Shirazi party mothers" (UWASP) after the revolution of 1964 did not mark the birth of a gendered critical consciousness in Zanzibar. Well in advance of the establishment of UWASP in 1964, *Taarab* music in Zanzibar served as a medium for gendered social critique, with musicians like Siti binti Saad writing and performing songs in the early 20th century commenting on the adverse effects of colonial policies on women's lives (Fair 2001). Furthermore, since the precolonial era, Zanzibari women have been actively making claims to their Islamic legal rights in the archipelago's Islamic *kadhi's* courts (Stiles 2009; Stockreiter 2015).

Among the first formalized women's organizations in Zanzibar was the colonial era Ladies Club, established in 1946 as a "mixed social and recreational club for ladies." The Ladies Club had 216 elite members of English, Arab, and Indian descent as of 1947 and ran its offices out of Zanzibar's imposing Old Fort.[9] In 1953, Vera Davies, Zanzibar's Women's Welfare Officer and a Ladies Club member, sought to establish another women's organization in Zanzibar with more of a social welfare approach, compared to the then primarily recreational Ladies Club. Davies was following a general shift in British colonial administration worldwide to a welfarist way of doing things (e.g., Lindner 2014). In a 1953 letter to colonial administrators in Zanzibar and in Oxford, Davies wrote,

> "It would seem that there is a place in Zanzibar for an organization of women of all races, who, by virtue of their membership of that Society, are ready to assist in any particular way required. There are many sides of social service to cater for all interests—to mention a few—the blind, the sick, delinquents, poor, crippled, club work, games, Scouts/Guides, literacy work, theatricals, baby welfare, necessary needlework, special efforts (Flag days, sales of work, Fetes, etc.) in addition to official schemes to be supported."[10]

In her letter, Davies obscured social inequalities with the language of volunteerism and social welfare. She envisioned a women's organization that would focus on volunteerism, social and leisure activities, and women's domestic roles as mothers. In their response, local colonial administrators encouraged an organization that would mirror its counterpart in Tanganyika—the Tanganyika Council of Women,[11] which had an explicit welfarist approach and prioritized women's domestic roles as mothers (Geiger 1998).

The Zanzibar Women's Association (ZWA) was established in 1954, restricting its membership to English-speaking elite women who were able to pay an annual subscription fee of

Tsh10.[12] In her letter to the Senior Commissioner, Davies promised that meetings would take place on “neutral ground,” alluding to the era of vitriolic, racialized politics during which the ZWA was founded.[13] The ZWA held its first few monthly meetings at Victoria Gardens Hall, soon relocating to the Old Fort.[14] The Sultan’s wife and Mrs. Alford, the wife of the Acting British Resident in 1954, were designated co-patrons of the ZWA.[15] The ZWA and the Ladies Club do not appear to have been entirely distinct from each other, with overlaps in membership and activities and with both organizations running out of the Old Fort. I found archival evidence suggesting that the ZWA existed until at least March 1, 1963,[16] while the last archival evidence I found related to the Ladies Club was from 1960.[17] Both organizations likely only disintegrated after the revolution of 1964, and even then, a few of their former members joined the ranks of UWASP.

While the elite, colonialist Ladies Club and ZWA operated out of Zanzibar’s iconic Old Fort, women’s wings began to emerge in the archipelago’s dominant political parties—the Zanzibar Nationalist Party (ZNP) and the Afro-Shirazi Party (ASP). In an interview with *Zanzibar Leo* in February of 2005, Bi Khadija Jabir described street-level meetings held in ASP women’s homes as early as 1956 to strategize how they would support the party’s efforts to “demand dignity and freedom among Africans to be granted with rights and equal opportunities for development.”[18] Jabir attributed her entrée into ASP politics at the age of 19 to a lack of educational opportunities for Africans, together with her observation that all of the doctors providing medical services to Zanzibaris at the time were white. In her interview, she named Bi Fatma Karume, Bi Mashavu Bint Ismail, Bi Kipini, Bi Mtumwa Thabiti, Bi Mtumwa Fikirini, Bi Naima Issa, and Bi Haipe Mzee as co-leaders among early ASP women political organizers, many of whom were wives of major ASP members. Jabir and Karume would go on to be chief secretary and patron of post-revolution UWASP, founded in 1964.

Just as the ASP had its women's wing, so did the ZNP. There is much less archival information on the ZNP women's wing, since the party was overthrown in 1964 by a violent revolution that stemmed from an environment of vitriolic, racialized politics (Glassman 2011). Both ZNP and ASP women organized for women's suffrage. In her historical analysis of women teachers' professionalization in Zanzibar, Corrie Decker (2014) argues that male political party stalwarts orchestrated the movement for women's suffrage primarily out of a concern for their own political objectives. Amina Issa's (2016) article about ASP women's political organizing suggests a more active role among ASP women in the movement for women's right to vote through the mobilization of political *khanga*, just as Fatma Karume described a more active role among Zanzibari women in their suffrage movement during a 2018 public speech.[19] In organizing for women's suffrage, the ASP put forth Pan-Africanist rights arguments that centered on the personhood of both African women and men, while the Pan-Arabist ZNP primarily put forth Islamic modernist arguments that embraced both the role of Islam in public life and European social institutions and values. To illustrate the latter, the ZNP-affiliated *Mwongozi* newspaper published a three-part series in the late 1950s about the merits of Egyptian feminism in an attempt to convince its readership that women's political participation was not un-Islamic.[20] Islamic women's rights arguments—based not on Islamic modernist ideology but on Islamic theology itself—had a resurgence at the turn of the millennium and have since only grown in popularity, a phenomenon that I explore later in my dissertation.

UWASP was born in a space of abrupt social and political shifts after the 1964 revolution, inheriting the ZWA and Ladies Club's just-vacated offices at Zanzibar's Old Fort together with ASP suffragettes Khadija Jabir and Fatma Karume. UWASP additionally inherited some structural elements of the colonialist Ladies Club and ZWA, designating a "patron" in first lady Fatma Karume and holding "fetes." The post-revolution regime, however, adamantly framed UWASP as a continuation of pre-revolution ASP women's political organizing, which began in 1958, and not the Ladies Club or the ZWA. For example, in a speech given to celebrate the ten-year anniversary of UWASP on March 18, 1968, at the ASP headquarters in Vikokotoni just outside of Zanzibar's Stone Town, the President of Zanzibar's Revolutionary Council and Vice President of Tanzania, Abeid Amani Karume, said, "Women have been unshakeable and at the front lines of fighting for our *utu* [personhood] and bringing *heshima* [honor] to all of the citizens of these islands."[21] He then credited ASP women for the political successes of the ASP as a whole, citing a 1961 election when the ASP won a governmental seat in Chake Chake district on the island of Pemba by just one vote. The Sultanate of Zanzibar refused to grant the ASP its seat, after which ASP women raised Tsh36,000 to bring an outside election observer to Zanzibar to ensure that the ASP could claim its rightfully won seat. In the official public memory of Zanzibar's ruling party, UWASP is a continuation of ASP women's political organizing before the revolution.[22]

UWASP was not an extension of the colonialist ZWA or the Ladies Club,[23] nor was it a continuation of ASP women's political organizing. It was something new altogether, an appendage of state power intent on shaping women into gendered national citizens who involved themselves in the nebulous goals of development and nation building. Its enmeshment with the autocratic post-revolution state did not preclude women from gaining meaning out of their involvement with UWASP.

Representing women and molding gendered citizens: exploring state propaganda from 1964-1970

In this section, I explore how the state attempted to mold women into particular kinds of gendered citizens within the propagandist pages of *Kweupe*. The post-revolution regime depended on a myth that the revolution liberated women, so women therefore owed it to the government to do their part in building the nation and in bringing development. The myth that the revolution liberated women existed somewhat contradictorily alongside the myth that UWASP was an extension of the pre-revolution ASP women's wing.

Furthermore, the myth that the revolution liberated women was not solely influenced by Zanzibar's tenuous union government with mainland Tanzania and the mainland's political eminence but additionally influenced by Zanzibar's relationships with Eastern Bloc-aligned and other communist nations at the time. The Soviet Union, East Germany, and China were among the first nations to recognize the revolution, after which Zanzibar began to shift into a socialist regime, modeling itself after East Germany and China (Loimeier 2018). The German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the Soviet Union—both with consulates in Zanzibar—promoted similar myths to Zanzibar's that their own revolutions liberated women. For example, the sister organization of UWASP in the Soviet Union—the Soviet Women's Committee—devoted itself solely to combating global fascism and to convincing the world that communism emancipated Soviet women (Racioppi and O'Sullivan See 1995). *Kweupe* chronicles visits by UWASP to the Soviet Union and China, after which UWASP women leaders came back to Zanzibar and encouraged Zanzibari women to emulate their liberated counterparts in both places.[24] *Kweupe* also documents a visit by the Soviet Women's Committee to Zanzibar in 1967.[25]

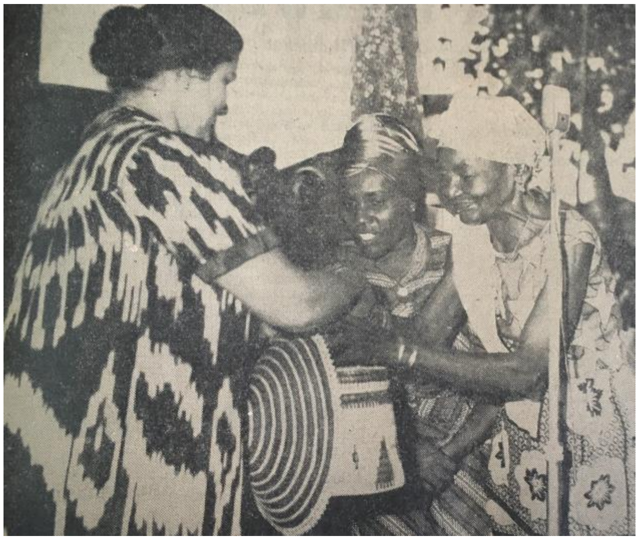

Figure 3: A UWASP chairwoman from Kidongo Chekundu in Zanzibar presents a representative from the Soviet Women's Committee with an *mkoba*, or traditional hand-woven bag. *Kweupe*, May 24, 1967. Zanzibar National Archives.

The pages of *Kweupe* are full of stories about parties hosted by the Soviet and GDR ambassadors' wives in Zanzibar to celebrate the sisterhood between UWASP and their respective communist women's organizations.[26] The GDR consulate hosted frequent parties to highlight and cultivate the relationship between UWASP and its sister organization in the GDR at its gleaming white "Friendship House" in Zanzibar Town. The GDR ambassador's wife often either hosted screenings of propagandist films about women's liberation and progress in the GDR or gave them to UWASP leaders as public gifts that they were encouraged to screen for Zanzibari women.[27]

I highlight Zanzibar's Eastern alignment at the start of this section to make it clear that the post-revolution government of Zanzibar was not simply a receptor of mainland Tanzania's development discourses and policies. Rather, the post-revolution ASP cultivated its own relationships with Eastern Bloc-aligned and other communist nations and their coordinate women's organizations, which influenced how they dealt with and what they envisioned for Zanzibari women. Unlike the numerous visits chronicled by *Kweupe* of UWASP's interactions with sister organizations in China, the GDR, and the Soviet Union, UWASP appears to have infrequently interacted with its sister organization just a short distance away on the mainland, "the unity of women in Tanzania" (UWT). This is despite Geiger's (1998) implicit suggestion that they were one and the same in her citation of Abeid Amani Karume's statement that UWT and UWASP were "different in name only" (197). Archival UWASP meeting minutes record the first official visit by UWT to Zanzibar as occurring in 1975, over a decade after Zanzibar's 1964 revolution.[28] Correspondence between the two organizations also highlights their infrequent interaction and a possible rift that existed between them. For example, in response to a letter sent to UWASP leaders by UWT in 1969, inviting them to attend a Pan-Africanist women's seminar in Kampala, Uganda, Khadija Jabir, the Chief Secretary of UWASP, wrote,

> "In your letter, you explained that you want women to attend who are able to speak English, which is the language that will be used at the seminar. We regret that UWASP has not yet prepared itself in terms of our English capabilities, since the official language of Zanzibar is Swahili."[29]

In her response, Jabir sheds light on the non-elite status of UWASP leaders relative to their more highly educated UWT peers. Jabir's response could be read as a strategic snub of increasing political control of Zanzibar by the mainland more broadly, just as it could be read as criticism of the irony of a Pan-Africanist women's conference to be held in English. It could be read, too, as a simple opting out. Regardless, it supports other archival evidence suggesting that UWASP operated autonomously and interacted more extensively with its Eastern Bloc and other communist-aligned peer organizations than it did with UWT.

Not only was UWASP spectator to curated tours and films of women's development and liberation in China, the GDR, and the Soviet Union, but the post-revolution government also sent young Zanzibari women to China, the Soviet Union, and the GDR for higher education.[30] Maryam Hamdani, one of my interviewees, received a higher education in China and the Soviet Union, after which she became a prominent radio journalist in Zanzibar and later a member of the feminist Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA). Today, she famously leads Zanzibar's only all-women *Taarab* musical group, and I interviewed her as she strummed a *qanun* [a harp-like instrument used in Zanzibari *Taarab* music] in her lap. Commenting on her decision to move from China to Russia for her post-bachelor's studies, Hamdani said,

> "Actually, my first interest was to study psychiatry, but it so happened that I was sent to China, the old China, and they told me it would take about 10 years. I said, "My goodness, 10 years, and I am so young!" I said, "I just can't." I just couldn't. Maybe had it been nowadays the China of today because by then it was the communist China. If you go there, you don't know when you are coming back to Zanzibar. And then for 10 years to live in a country, I said no no no no. Then my brother was in Moscow working there, and he said, "Okay, you come here, then you can take another course." So, then I took history and philosophy."[31]

Hamdani hopped from one communist country to the next for her higher education in the 1960s. Hamdani's commentary on not being able to imagine living in repressive communist China for ten years is in contrast to the laudatory stories of Chinese women's liberation put forth by UWASP leaders upon returning from official state visits to China.[32]

The post-revolution government leveraged the myth that the revolution liberated women—in part influenced by its Eastern Bloc-aligned and other communist friends—to cultivate a sense of obligation and responsibility among women to participate in building and developing the nation and as Salma Maoulidi (2011) has eloquently argued, to justify the violent revolution itself. It also lauded women for their development efforts since the revolution and called on them to maintain their progress. A version of the ASP's women's manifesto, published in *Kweupe* on March 13th, 1965, and republished in slightly altered versions many times thereafter, explained,

> "During the sultanic government, which was shared with the colonizers, everyone was far behind in this country, but women were especially kept behind and prevented from engaging in any activities with men. Then the revolution happened…and every woman can see the benefits that have come from it."[33]

The article continues that since the revolution, women have benefitted from joining together and forming UWASP, which has allowed them to contribute to Zanzibar's development and which has made them famous among similar women's organizations around the world. It concludes by telling women that they have developed a reputation as nation builders and should continue building the nation through communal farming and everything else that benefits their nation. The story is that the revolution liberated women, which benefitted women. As a result, the government expected women to leverage their supposedly improved status and contribute to development and nation building.

In its fragile, incomplete pages at the Zanzibar National Archives, *Kweupe* praises the nation building efforts of women. Just as Priya Lal (2010) and Susan Geiger (1998) have argued about the role of women in nation building on the Tanzanian mainland, women's domestic roles as mothers were prioritized. The post-revolution government emphasized women's roles as mothers in the name of the women's organization itself, "The unity of Afro-Shirazi Party mothers." But motherhood carried revolutionary connotations in the image of women fastening their *mikaja* and joining together to build the nation. To be a woman was to be a mother, and to be a mother was to be a nation builder. The moniker "*akina mama*," or "mothers," was so central to the identity of UWASP that when they were on the brink of being absorbed by their mainland sister organization, UWT, in 1976, upon Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere's creation of a new, single "Revolutionary Party" (CCM), they feared that they would lose the revolutionary connotations of motherhood with the loss of their name. They also feared that they were being grafted onto an organization with colonialist roots, since they viewed UWT to be an extension of the colonialist Tanganyika Council of Women and more akin to Zanzibar's own colonialist Zanzibar Women's Association and Ladies Club than to pre-revolution ASP women political organizers.[34] In response to this, at a UWT seminar on the mainland in 1976, Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere acknowledged, "It's true that colonizers established UWT, and it's true that its first members were the wives of big men like governors and those who studied." He responded to the concerns of UWASP leaders that they were losing the revolutionary connotations of motherhood and joining a colonialist organization by promising, "Our party will be revolutionary and stand for the rights of women and children."[35] He placated UWASP with a promise that the new party—replacing Zanzibar's ASP party and mainland Tanzania's TANU party and thus ensuring greater unity between Zanzibar and mainland Tanzania—would be the *Chama cha Mapinduzi* (CCM), or the revolutionary party, which meant that they (as an absorbed part of UWT) would be revolutionary by extension.

Like their colonialist predecessors in the ZWA and the Ladies Club and their sister organization on the mainland (Geiger 1998), Zanzibari women were called on to participate in the gendered tasks of *kazi za mikono*, or handicrafts, such as sewing clothing and weaving baskets and prayer mats. They additionally ran kiosks, from which they sold their own handicrafts and basic commodities provided to them by the government; they established and ran bakeries; they ran restaurants; and the government vested them with running a major petrol station.[36] Women also contributed to school and hospital renovations and to the construction of "modern" government-subsidized flats.[37] In the realm of agriculture, they raised chickens and were involved in communal farming collectives.[38] In the realm of health, they donated their own blood and delivered it to those in need at the V. I. Lenin Hospital, now the Mnazi Mmoja Hospital.[39]

Some of women's nation building activities were tasks that were traditionally gendered as women's work, while in others, they worked *bega kwa bega*, or shoulder to shoulder, with men. *Kweupe* tended to emphasize moments when women engaged in tasks that men would have typically done, thus contributing to a public imaginary in which women did everything that men did. For example, a *Kweupe* article published on February 21, 1969, chronicles Zanzibari women who helped build the infamous modern housing at Bambi, in the center of the island of Unguja, by cutting and shaping wood into window frames and doors.[40] Additionally, in an article celebrating the 10th year anniversary of UWASP on March 22, 1968, an unknown journalist explained how women in Makondeni, on the northwestern coastal area of Zanzibar's less populous island of Pemba, drove tractors and joined the army.[41] Women in Bambi were surely construction workers, just as a woman was likely spotted driving a tractor in Makondeni. I found no evidence that Zanzibari women were in the army, even though women were eventually required by law to enroll in the National Military Service from 1971 onward (Maoulidi 2011a). While women were not in the army before then and were likely in the military only on paper after 1971, the image of women soldiers circulated widely in Zanzibar's public imaginary. For example, *Kweupe* published and republished a user-submitted poem calling on Zanzibari women to join the army[42] as well as articles describing the presence of women soldiers in communist China.[43] The participation of sex-segregated groups of girls from Zanzibar's Youth Brigade in military parades may have fed the myth of women soldiers, in addition to the rhetoric of UWASP leaders who traveled abroad and came home with stories of women joining the Soviet, GDR, and Chinese armies.[44]

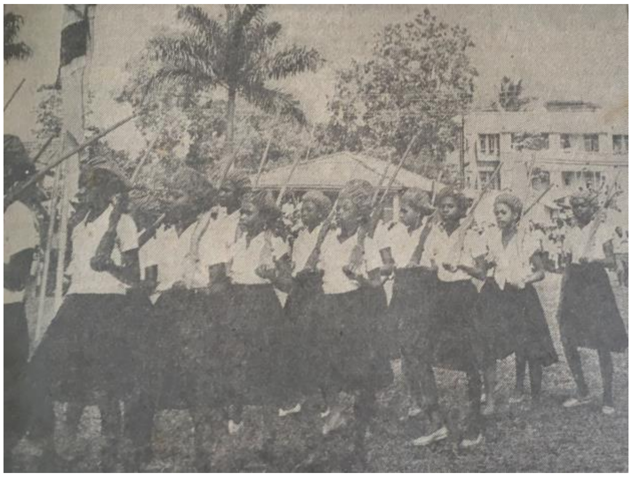

Figure 4: A sex-segregated group of girls from Zanzibar's Young Pioneers, participating in a military parade in Pemba. *Kweupe*, May 1, 1965. Zanzibar National Archives.

Even in traditionally gendered female tasks— like sewing clothes and weaving prayer mats—women were framed as businesswomen drivers of the national economy and enablers of *kujitegemea* [self-reliance]. In a notable example, during a speech given in Zanzibar immediately after the revolution but before the joining together of Tanganyika and Zanzibar to form Tanzania, in early April of 1964, Tanganyika woman freedom fighter Bibi Titi Mohamed called on women to engage themselves in handicrafts like weaving and sewing so that they could furnish their homes with local prayer mats rather than foreign carpets. [45] Mohamed called on women to engage in the gendered task of weaving so that they could reduce their national dependence on foreign goods and ensure national self-reliance.

The government intended for the proceeds from UWASP-run kiosks to be pumped back into the national coffers. It did not always happen this way, as a 1973 report detailing UWASP corruption reveals.[46] But when money did flow from UWASP back to the government coffers or from UWASP to nation building projects, it was heavily publicized in the pages of *Kweupe*. For example, a *Kweupe* article from March 25, 1967, outlines a contribution of Tsh12,000 from UWASP to the government for building four different structures in Tumbatu, a small island off the northwestern coast of Unguja; in Matemwe and Nungwi on Unguja's northwestern and northern coasts, respectively; in Machuwi in central Unguja; and somewhere on the island of Pemba.[47] In a major speech, Bi Fatma Karume explained that their donation of Tsh12,000 was just the start of UWASP's contributions toward nation building. She added that UWASP was willing to participate in nation building not just with monetary contributions to the government's coffers but also through hard labor. The article concludes that UWASP contributed 3% of the total government budget for the four buildings. It was not an insignificant donation, but the space and attention devoted to UWASP's donations in the pages of *Kweupe* reflect the government's efforts to convince women that they were central to the task of nation building.

The praise conferred on women in the pages of *Kweupe* and representations of women as businesswomen drivers of the national economy was in part to vest them in gendered nation building tasks, like sewing clothes and weaving baskets and prayer mats. Women sold these items out of UWASP kiosks, keeping some of their earnings and pumping the rest back into the post-revolution government coffers. Women ran the petrol stations through which the nation was fueled, and they ran the bakeries and restaurants through which the nation was fed. Perhaps the most ideologically important of their nation building tasks, however, was communal farming. Communal farming was framed as central to the national goal of self-reliance. It would theoretically enable Zanzibaris to not only feed their nation, but the surplus could be exported and thus generate much-needed foreign currency for the government. Communal farming was presented in the pages of *Kweupe* as a de-gendered task, performed by both men and women in farming collectives with self-conferred names like "*Tujenge nchi*," or "Let's build the nation.[48] In reality, however, like their sisters on the mainland (Lal 2015), Zanzibari women provided the majority of agricultural labor.

The extent to which rural women—many of whom had their own subsistence plots to attend to—participated in communal farming is difficult to glean from the pages of a propagandist newspaper. I interpreted the incessant reprinting in *Kweupe* of a photo of smiling rural women farmers as an allusion to possible resistance among rural women to communal farming.[49] The presence of a communal farming "stock photo" in *Kweupe* suggests that other pictures presented visions of less happy farmers or that the involvement of Zanzibaris in communal farming collectives was exaggerated. The difficulty of implementing a program of communal farming was also evident in a speech given by Fatma Karume in Mahonda in northeastern Unguja on July 25, 1969, in which she celebrated the rice farming activities of a small collective of women in southern Unguja. She lauded women farmers for being at the front lines of fighting against their common enemy of hunger. After praising the women's farming collective in Mahonda, which farmed rice on just 12 acres, Karume called on urban women to go to the countryside and engage in farming. "You can't just sit in the city and wait for food to show up from your sisters in the rural areas," she warned.[50] The contradictions presented by urban citizens to a project of agrarian African socialism was a headache for government officials on the mainland, too, eventually contributing to a project of urban cultural policing (Ivaska 2011; Lal

2015). A parallel cultural policing effort also took place in Zanzibar, in the form of ceaseless state television programs about *mavazi ya heshima,* or respectable clothing.[51]

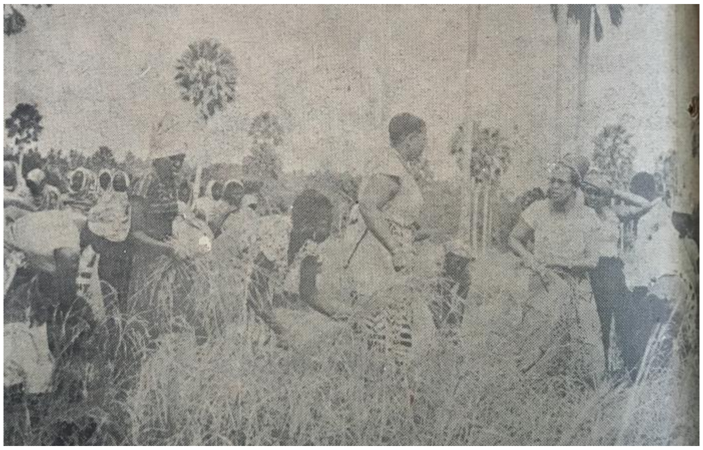

Figure 5: *Kweupe* explains in a caption to this photograph that Bi Fatma Karume "always participates with women in all development activities on these islands." Here, she is with rice cultivators from the women's farming cooperative called "Let's build the nation" in Chaani, Zanzibar. *Kweupe,* August 9, 1968. Zanzibar National Archives.

The work of UWASP in educating the public about respectable clothing was part of a broader government cultural policing effort, which involved the passage of the National Cultural Protection Act of 1973 that banned miniskirts, bell bottoms, and Afro hairstyles (Maoulidi 2011a). This was not an entirely new task for UWASP, which had been both lauded for and tasked with protecting the *utu* and *heshima* of "these islands" since the revolution.[52] Like their sisters on the mainland (Askew 2002), Zanzibari women were expected to bear and preserve Zanzibari culture through traditional music, crafts, and clothing, which the ASP likened to protecting Zanzibari respectability and personhood. For example, on February 27, 1965, UWASP hosted a fete at the youth party headquarters near Zanzibar Town's bustling Darajani market, where they created a display of Zanzibari culture.[53] The social gathering was held inside of a *makuti banda*, or a thatched-roofed structure, intended to celebrate traditional Zanzibari modes of building. The fete also featured *ngoma*, or traditional music and dance, while UWASP craftswomen sold prayer mats, baskets, and clothing. An unknown *Kweupe* journalist described dolls on display at the fete, adorned in the gendered clothing of the isles: *kanzu, shuka* [men's waist wrap], *buibui, khanga*, and even the traditional clothing worn by men selling coffee. The image of dolls adorned in traditional Swahili attire highlights the symbolic role that women played as the curators of culture, maintaining or perhaps resurrecting the personhood and respectability of islanders. Salma Maoulidi (2011) importantly highlights the oppressiveness in Zanzibar of the state's efforts to control women as its cultural symbols.

Both Zanzibari women's productive and reproductive labor were presented in the pages of *Kweupe* as central to the task of nation building, together with their roles as the bearers and preservers of a Zanzibari cultural identity. They were presented as businesswomen drivers of the national economy, making and selling cultural wares that would boost the government's coffers and protect Zanzibari personhood and respectability. This is not to say that there were not Zanzibaris who resisted a gendered vision of citizenship projected onto them by the autocratic ASP.

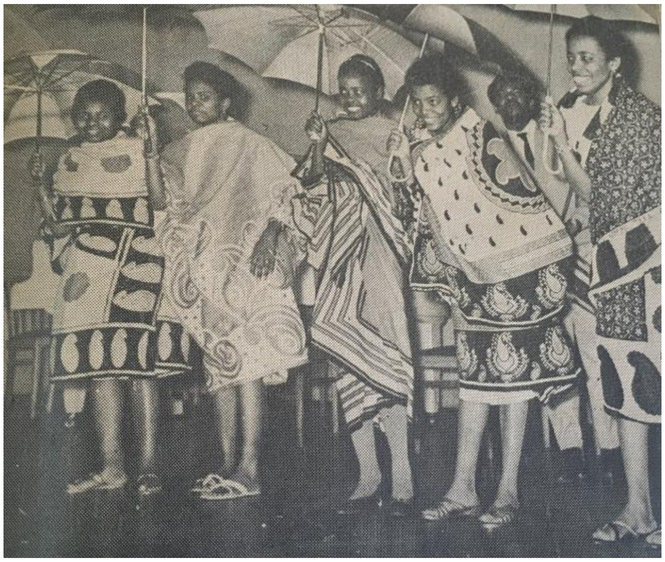

Figure 6: On the first anniversary of the Zanzibar Revolution, Zanzibari schoolgirls performed a traditional dance called "*mwanandege*" for an audience in the GDR. *Kweupe*, January 26, 1965. Zanzibar National Archives.

The image of a Zanzibari multitasking mother and laborer is not unlike the Soviet propagandist image that circulated during roughly the same era of a Soviet superwoman who expertly juggled labor force participation and motherhood (Racioppi and O'Sullivan See 1995), an image that would have been familiar to UWASP's leaders and to Soviet-educated Zanzibari women like Maryam Hamdani. The degree to which Zanzibar women as a whole were engaged in nation building activities is unclear, but the image of Zanzibari women nation builders continues to have symbolic power. When I asked my retired Swahili teacher, Faki*—who came of age during the revolution in Unguja's southeastern coastal village of Makunduchi—about UWASP in September of 2017, he immediately broke into a song about "the unity of mothers in Zanzibar," conjured entirely from his memory of that era: "The unity of mothers, we established restaurants, the unity of mothers, let's continue forward, we built the nation." In Zanzibar's public imaginary, especially among those who support the ruling CCM party, women built the nation.

"I don't know what it was that came and changed our development:" the story of Bi Naima Mali Madai

In my dissertation project, I explore the movement of women's rights discourses across time and space and between religious, civil society, and government spheres. I opted for depth within my wide breadth by incorporating a case study approach, in which I explore a few women's stories in depth, usually through ethnographic observation but also through a few oral histories. In my exploration of post-revolution women's rights discourses, I depended primarily on archival sources, which I have decided to intersperse, in this chapter, with the oral history of a woman who was involved in selling commodities and handicrafts from a UWASP kiosk—Bi Naima Mali Madai.

I met Bi Naima through my retired Swahili teacher, Faki, who literally sang the praises of UWASP when I informally asked him about the organization. He told me that he had a neighbor from his home village of Makunduchi who was involved in UWASP after the revolution and suggested that we visit her together to learn more. And so that is how I found myself in a taxi en route to Faki's peri-urban, dusty neighborhood of Magomeni on an uncharacteristically hot and humid day in March of 2018. Faki is animated and charismatic, usually adorned in a carefully pressed, monochromatic dress shirt and trousers, with an embroidered *kofia.* A charismatic storyteller, Faki frequently refers to himself in the third person and is well known in his dense, community, even among its large population of youth.

On the way to Bi Naima's house, Faki pointed out the small slivers of barely tillable land where people had managed to cultivate plants like spinach, cassava, and pumpkins, which, when ripened, they would sell informally outside of their homes on social ledges called *baraza*. Faki explained that this would allow people to get a little bit of cash to take care of their basic needs. While walking through dusty, winding walkways, past small plots of vegetables and brightly painted houses with corrugated metal roofs, Faki pointed out two prominent sewing schools that had been central to "women's development" in the neighborhood. One was consecrated in the late 1990s, while the other was established much earlier—likely soon after the 1964 revolution, he guessed.

The sewing schools, which seemed far less active than they must have once been, reminded me of the post-revolution ASP government's insistence, in the pages of *Kweupe*, that women engage in *kazi za mikono*, or handiwork, like sewing clothes and weaving baskets and prayer mats. Women's handiwork would reduce Zanzibar's dependence on foreign goods like imported clothing and carpet and thus strengthen their national economy and bring development. The crumbling façades of both sewing schools were symbolic reminders of the failed promises of development's future.

Soon after passing the sewing schools, we arrived at Bi Naima's modest house, where we found her on an outdoor stoop, plucking spinach leaves from their stems into a small, flat basket. She was wearing an oversized, airy Swahili dress, known as a *dira*, and a matching loose head covering. Bi Naima spoke slowly but deliberately, approachably but assertively. When she began talking, a few neighbor boys who appeared to be in their teens made their way to the edge of Bi Naima's small plot of land to listen. Bi Naima explained at the start of our interview that she began her work in a UWASP kiosk in 1966, when she would have been about 14. She explained,

> "I became an employee of one of the UWASP kiosks, where we made things, sold them, and received our pay. You see, we as mothers are bettering ourselves, we are sewing, we are weaving baskets, we are doing this business so that it will improve our lives and we will move forward in our development. Abeid Karume was there, and he involved us a lot in UWASP. We received the new flats that were built. Women were given them, workers were given them, and while we were at work, a person would come and say, "Mama, do work there. Mama, rise up, go over there to study." Now, things have fallen, those things of the past…after the revolution, we were going well, we are going well, we are doing our activities of UWASP, we are going to work, we are doing business, mothers are, but I don't know what it was that came and changed our development."[54]

While listening to Bi Naima, I was struck by the nonlinearity of her storytelling, in which she frequently jumped between the past and present tense. She reflected on a better era when she sold goods from a government-subsidized kiosk, which allowed mothers to improve their lives and move forward in their development. She also alluded to the authoritarian nature of the post-revolution regime in her recalling of the directives offered by the government to women, or mothers: "A person would come and say, "Mama, do work there. Mama, rise up, go over there to study."[55]

She and Faki reflected for a moment on what it was that changed their trajectory of development as Zanzibaris, and they suggested that it was the "hands-on," authoritarian nature of the post-revolution regime that made it so effective. Naima exclaimed, "Karume, the deceased, was there himself rather than sending other people to implement his policies. Karume was there doing things himself!"[56] Similarly, reflecting on the first lady and leader of UWASP, Naima said, "Mama Fatma Karume, she gave orders herself. "Mothers, we are doing this. Mothers, we are doing that." She never asked but instead ordered us. We were doing things ourselves, and she is ordering us herself. You can see, there's no issue. Life is continuing well."[57] Naima remembered the authoritarian nature of UWASP as being one of its strengths. However, when the ASP ousted Fatma Karume from her post as figurehead of UWASP in 1973, after the assassination of her ex-husband, they claimed it was in part because her less elite followers found her to be arrogant.[58]

When I asked Naima about changes in Zanzibar regarding the status of women, she responded, "Before the revolution, women's lives were not so bad. They were actually really good. After the revolution, it changed—after the death of Abeid Amani Karume, changes came. But the revolution itself, it didn't change things. It's true, when he came, he stirred up development, the development of mothers."[59] In recalling the changes that the revolution evoked in women's lives, Bi Naima earlier implied a drastic change but here implied that it played a less significant and perhaps even negative role.

A bit later in the interview, when I tried to clarify how women's lives changed after the revolution, since she had earlier implied a positive change but later implied a regression in women's lives, she said, "After the revolution, mothers, we woke up, there was an awakening. Before that, it was as though we were being clamped down and closed off from the world by men. But now, we have surpassed men. We have come up, women. But the state of life has changed right now. The state of life has really changed."[60] Here, Naima recited the official ASP (and now CCM) narrative of the revolution, that it liberated women, but she attributed their pre-revolution oppressed state to men rather than to the ASP-ascribed culprits of oppression—the British colonial government and the sultanate. Naima's contradictory reflections may reflect shifting nostalgias in Zanzibar for eras when things were different or better (Bissell 2005).

After she finished her above statement, a young man from the neighborhood, who was among a few youths who were listening to Bi Naima's storytelling from a slight distance away, said, "*Wanawake wanaweza*" [Women, they are able], which Faki repeated to highlight his strong agreement with the young man's statement. "Women, they are able" is an oft-spoken phrase that stems from more recent women's rights organizing and is also widespread on the mainland. Naima told a positive story about women's liberation and progress, followed by a contradictory statement about the poor current state of life for most Zanzibaris. While Naima shared stories about the past, a young man recited a contemporary feminist phrase that was perhaps less constraining than the story that the revolution liberated women, that women were able.

Naima's storytelling about the past and present status of women was fragmented and often contradictory. While transcribing Naima's interview, I had moments when I wanted to write down what I thought she intended to say. But I left it intact, in its nonlinearity, with its fragments and contradictions. After I immersed myself in the propaganda of *Kweupe* for several weeks, I realized that her nonlinear, contradictory storytelling reflected a nonlinear, contradictory historical epoch and nonlinear, contradictory discourses about women. Zanzibari women in the 1960s were told that the revolution liberated them, but they were absent in the upper echelons of politics, even though Fatma Karume was a national public figure in her own right, representing Zanzibar on official trips and at official events (Maoulidi 2011a). At one point in our interview, to highlight women's political progress since the revolution, Naima proclaimed, "Now, the vice-president of Tanzania is a Zanzibari woman! Next, we are going to look for a woman to be our president!"[61] She used this statement to contrast the progress of today with the lack of progress in the past. But she struggled to reconcile the supposed progress of women today with her own worsened material conditions since the revolution. During our conversation, Faki commented on the irony that when people had resources to buy various goods at the market, there was nothing there to buy. Now, Zanzibar is overflowing with goods from all over the world, which Zanzibaris have no money to buy.

Aware that Naima was a post-revolution businesswoman, I asked her what she thought about the government encouraging women to join savings cooperatives called *vicoba* [village community banks] and engage in collaborative entrepreneurship, something I comment on more in Chapter 4. Furthermore, just as the state media in 2005 encouraged women to "join the front lines of entrepreneurship," in 2018 the non-governmental TAMWA branch in Zanzibar implemented a formal, donor-funded project called WEZA, or "able," to engage women in collaborative entrepreneurship activities. When I visited TAMWA's offices in the rural satellite town of Tunguu in April of 2018, local women entrepreneurs were weaving traditional Zanzibari crafts on TAMWA's entryway steps, evoking an image for me of their UWASP craftswoman predecessors. In 2018, TAMWA's project was parallel to the government's long-term prodding for women to become entrepreneurs, highlighting the diverse social spheres from which women receive messages of encouragement to *kujiajiri*, or to become self-employed. Bi Naima commented on the relationship between women's cooperatives in 2018 with UWASP in the 1960s: "Those women's groups, they now want us to join together with other women so that we engage in business together and earn a living. But suppose you are a leader, don't you have the obligation to first bring us a bag of development, or am I wrong?"[62]

Here, Naima contrasted the government-subsidized businesswomen of the past, who were provided with *mifuko ya maendeleo*, or literal "bags of development" by the post-revolution government, with the self-made businesswomen of today. "Here, do business," she said, mocking the current government. "What are we going to do if there are no materials?"[63] Naima believes in the obligation of a nation to provide for its citizens and criticized the government of 2018 for not providing women with "bags of development," or government-subsidized goods.

Reflecting on her then-current material situation, Naima said,

> "There are many things which we have wanted until right now…to continue to improve the situation of women. Let's improve things for women. Let's return to the way things were. We have development right now, but let's return more to the past. We want to return more, let's continue more, because men have said, "Ah, no, let's stop women in their development." And something big we have discussed today is our lives, which are difficult lives. We want our lives to change a bit. Money is difficult to come by. There's

> no work. A person goes to work and returns with no money for eating, no money for educating his or her child. There’s no life. A father goes to work, and even at the end of the month, he doesn’t get his salary. His salary comes and he gets it, but he has to go immediately to all of the kiosks in the area to pay of his debts, and he is left with nothing. There’s no life. A child wants to study, and you have no life to offer that child. Right now, we ask God for our lives to change. We want to enter a new chapter in our country…Right now, you can see that I am preparing spinach to cook, I am preparing spinach, which I’ll cook, and on many days, I won’t even have coconut to cook the spinach in.”[64]

Naima alluded to the work of faith in enabling a better future for Zanzibaris and described her frequent inability to afford coconut, which reflects extreme material deficit in a setting where most things are cooked with the sweet flesh of ripe coconut. Naima earlier lamented her physical limitations, which she described as inhibiting her own ability to engage in nation building: “Like me right here, even though I have become an elderly woman, I want to go on with building the nation, but I can’t, because of my legs. I want to improve and to get development.”[65]

Naima began our conversation with an explanation of her own role in building the nation, later expressing regret that her then-current physical state made it impossible for her to continue building the nation. When we finished talking, I asked if I could take a picture, and Bi Naima insisted on first covering herself with a more modest, black head covering, highlighting changes to women’s clothing in Zanzibar since the post-revolution years and an increasing emphasis on women’s modest clothing as reflective of their piety and respectability. Unprompted by me, Bi Naima commented on her own choice of clothing in post-revolution Zanzibar, which she described as more revealing than her choice of clothing today because “I have become an adult.”

I sought out Naima's perspective to gain insight into the meaning of post-revolution discourses of women's rights, development, and nation building for the women who were there. I hoped it would help me begin to understand how and why post-revolution women's rights discourses were tweaked and reused during a millennial women's rights movement. But rights ideas do not move linearly from the past to the present, as Naima's story exemplifies. She talks about having built the nation while still expressing a desire to build the nation. She talks about working as a post-revolution businesswoman, bringing development to herself, just as she relocates the nebulous eventuality of "development" to a future era. Words like "development" and "nation building" serve as a currency of women's historical achievements, just as they serve as a currency of future possibilities. For Naima, the nation building and development of the past can only exist with the nation building and development of the future through memory, which "works toward the preservation of individual dignity and evolves with the passage of time and the ongoing accumulation of experience" (Lal 2015, 219). Naima's continued investment in the ideas of nation building and development highlight their resonance for her, but they do not translate into an uncritical acceptance of new "women's empowerment" initiatives imbued with a 1960s discourse of women as building and developing their nation. Furthermore, the possibly deceptive packaging of new women's rights initiatives with the post-revolution lexicon of women's liberation, development, and nation building does not degrade the symbolic power of the ideas of nation building and development for Naima.

Conclusion

On October 4, 2017, I observed a leadership training hosted by the Zanzibar Female Lawyers Association (ZAFELA) for Zanzibar's government-affiliated youth council, as a subgrantee of Tanzania's more prosperous Foundation for Civil Society. I engaged in participant observation of ZAFELA's work at their New Jang'ombe office in peri-urban Zanzibar at least biweekly during my year of fieldwork. The training took place at the shaded offices of Zanzibar's Organization for Disability Rights (UWZ), on the fringes of Stone Town's lush Jamhuri Gardens. Committed to inserting their own women's rights objectives into the leadership training, ZAFELA director Jamila Mahmoud turned the second half of the training into a debate on whether women were capable of being leaders. The debate became impassioned, with several young men arguing that Islam allows women to be the confidantes of men but never to lead in their own right. A few ZAFELA staff members—Kauthar* and Rahma,* a lawyer and a paralegal—argued otherwise, citing historical women leaders in Islam like Khadija and Aisha, the wives of the Prophet Muhammad. In the middle of a debate hinged primarily on Islamic theological arguments, a young man stood up and proclaimed that women had and could be leaders, since they "built the nation." ZAFELA staff members responded excitedly, as if he had hit an irrefutable nerve supporting the right and ability of women to lead.

The youth leadership training debate about women's leadership capabilities highlights the preeminence of Islamic women's rights arguments in Zanzibar at this particular moment, even in governmental and civil society spaces, just as it reflects the continued resonance of the story that women built the nation. To understand the spread of more recent women's rights ideas to Zanzibar—whether it be the spread of Islamic feminist women's rights arguments or the spread of transnational women's rights discourses—it is important to have an in-depth understanding of the existing lexicon of women's rights that new discourses are melded into. In Zanzibar, that lexicon includes the post-revolution language and ideology of women as nation builders, protectors of respectability and personhood, and cultivators of national economic development, just as it includes the imagery of revolutionary mothers fastening their *mikaja*. The language and ideology of the Zanzibari woman nation builder was influenced by Zanzibar's Pan-African and Eastern Bloc and other communist alignments, and it moved in and out of transnational spaces with the movement of UWASP and ASP leaders to and from mainland Tanzania, the Soviet Union, the GDR, and China, influencing and taking influence from the spaces it entered and left.

Not only should an exploration of the spread of rights in Zanzibar incorporate an understanding of the existing lexicon that "new" ideas move into, but it should incorporate an understanding of the messy, incomplete work of memory required to reconcile nation building and development both as things that women achieved and as things that have not yet happened. Explorations of women's rights in Zanzibar must also pay attention to the work of memory necessary to transfer the propagandist language of an autocratic regime into the space of a millennial media-based women's movement, which I highlight with Bi Naima's story and explore further in Chapter 2. Bi Naima was critical of the government's more recent attempts to encourage women to become entrepreneurs with the gendered language of nationalism. She saw through the veneer and observed that there was no "bag of development," or state support of women entrepreneurs through the provision of government-subsidized goods, as there was in her days as a UWASP businesswoman. Even though Bi Naima was skeptical of the government's women's entrepreneurship scheme, since she believed that the government has an obligation to provide for its citizens, she maintained a deep-seated faith in the future potentialities inherent in nation building and development.

To understand how Zanzibaris like Bi Naima interpret contemporary women's rights initiatives that are presented with a post-revolution lexicon of women's rights, it is necessary to explore how they have experienced the language, ideologies, and symbols of women as building and developing the nation. But as Bi Naima's recollections of the past demonstrate, memory necessarily affects how Zanzibaris describe and understand the post-revolution regime's gendered language and policies. Furthermore, old political scores are being replayed via new political alignments (Bissell and Fouéré 2018a). Zanzibaris who were critical of the revolution were likely to be suspicious of anything emerging from the state media in the late 1990s and early 2000s, including state discourses of women's rights. The language of nationalism is inextricable from the controversial Zanzibar Revolution and from Zanzibar's tenuous relationship with mainland Tanzania, which likely affected how Zanzibaris interpreted millennial women's rights ideas that were imbued with the language of a controversial past. A framework of historical memory is necessary to understand the movement of transnational women's rights into a discursive field in which liberated women built and developed the nation.

I am including Bi Naima's story not because it is necessarily representative of the stories of other Zanzibari women from that era. Channeling a more negative view of the effects of the revolution on Zanzibari women's lives, Salma Maoulidi (2011) has argued that political strife during Zanzibar's post-revolution era was often played out on women's bodies, in the form of forced and hurried arranged marriages and the criminalization of having a child out of wedlock. During my fieldwork, critical stories of the post-revolution regime often surfaced in unexpected sources and forms; for example, I learned about the isolated, ostracized post-revolution life of Bimkubwa Hanga—wife of executed Zanzibari political figure Abdullah Hanga—from the memoir of Abdullah's Russian daughter, which was serendipitously given to me at a conference in South Africa (Khanga 1992). Another one of my informants, a woman of Indian descent in her early 70s, described the era to me as a "reign of terror" due to the forced marriages of Arab and Indian women to ASP stalwarts, who plucked their brides from schoolrooms and from the street.[66] Other informants expressed dissolution with the post-revolution regime through more subtle means—a sigh, a nervous glance around. But post-revolution exiles are beginning to gather every year, during the holy month of Ramadan, to share memories of the "time of politics" leading up to the revolution at *baraza*, or social forums, at night by the seaside at Forodhani.[67] From their seaside tables, the Old Fort headquarters of the colonial-era Ladies Club and ZWA—which later became the headquarters of UWASP and now houses the offices of the Zanzibar International Film Festival—are in full view. Zanzibaris are increasingly discussing the revolution and their various interpretations of if in public, just as the ruling CCM party has worked even harder in recent years to solidify a hegemonic version of the revolution as liberatory (Bissell and Fouéré 2018a). The increasing circulation of diverse interpretations of the revolution in recent years and the government's attempts to create a singular narrative of the revolution are interconnected.

Zanzibaris' lives were forever shifted by the revolution, often in violent, unthinkable ways. But there were also women like Bi Naima and men like Faki, who experienced a noticeable material improvement in their lives after the revolution[68] and who struggle to reconcile their memories of a better life with their worsened material conditions now, particularly as the government's official narrative of the revolution revolves around the revolution's many lasting fruits (Bissell and Fouéré 2018a). I use an archival and case study approach in this chapter and throughout my dissertation to explore how individual women negotiate ideas and language from national and transnational spheres in their daily lives. In particular, Naima's oral history provides an in-depth example of how one woman made sense of women's rights ideas and language across space and time together with the work of memory that is required when old ideas emerge in new forms. Naima's story shows how one woman developed and built the nation and how she makes sense of contemporary feminist state policies that appropriate a nationalist lexicon that she holds onto so dearly. The relevance of history among women's rights activists in Zanzibar is embodied by the direct descendants of both the revolution's fatalities and its beneficiaries in their ranks. An incorporation of memory is essential in any exploration of women's rights in Zanzibar.

Before I move onto the more contemporary and ethnographic, I explore, in Chapter 2, the oral history and articles of Shifaa Said Hassan, a Zanzibari journalist who was at the forefront of a millennial media-based women's movement. Born in the throes of Zanzibar's "time of politics," right before the revolution of 1964, Shifaa represents a new generation of educationally elite Zanzibari women who mostly achieved a higher education on the Tanzanian mainland. They left the protection of their families to seek degrees alone in the bustling mainland coastal megacity of Dar es Salaam. As women and men like Naima and Faki were adapting to a reality of failed post-revolution promises and Zanzibar's liberalizing economy in the mid-1980s, Shifaa was boarding a bus from Dar es Salaam for the Nairobi Women's Conference of 1985, at the age of 22. Fifteen years later, in her late 1990s and early 2000s articles published in Zanzibar's state-affiliated daily newspapers, *Nuru* [Light] and *Zanzibar Leo* [Zanzibar Today], Shifaa would write about transnational women's rights concepts and ideas, like gender-based violence, with the nationalist lexicon of women as developing and building their nation. This chapter outlined a state feminist discourse from the 1960s and explored the important role of memory for Zanzibari women like Naima, who are interacting with new women's rights ideas and initiatives that are imbued with politically laden language and imagery from the past. The next chapter focuses on the appropriation of state feminist language from the 1960s during a media-based millennial women's movement and the role of women journalists like Shifaa as mediators of collective memory.

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[1] "Ni Umoja Wa Maendeleo," *Kweupe*, June 28, 1967.

[2] E.g., "Wanawake Na Jamhuri," *Kweupe*, February 15, 1964. "Faida Walizopata Kina-Mama Baada ya Mapinduzi," *Kweupe*, March 13, 1965. "Maendeleo Ya Wanawake," *Kweupe*, January 4, 1966. "Maendeleo Ya Akina Mama," *Kweupe*, January 15, 1966. "Maendeleo Ya Akina Mama," *Kweupe*, February 12, 1966. "Ni Umoja wa Maendeleo," *Kweupe*, June 28, 1967. "UWZ Unasonga Mbele," *Kweupe*, March 22, 1968. "Wako Mstari Wa Mbele," *Kweupe*, February 21, 1969. "Akina Mama Wajifunza Ufundi," *Kweupe*, February 21, 1969.

[3] The *mkaja* is defined as, "A piece of cloth, which a woman who has just given birth to a child ties around the belly, lest it become protruding." Krapf, Johan Ludwig. *A Dictionary of the Suahili Language*. London: Trubner and Co., Ludgate Hill: 1882.

[4] Maoulidi (2011) argues that the narrative of the revolution liberating women from the perils of colonialism was in part used by the post-revolution government to justify the revolution. There are a number of narratives to justify the revolution, one of them being that it was an uprising against British colonial rule and the sultanate. Other narratives justify it as a Marxist class struggle or as a rebellion of Africans against Arabs and Indians (Loimeier 2018).

[5] E.g., "Maendeleo Ya Wanawake," *Kweupe*, January 4, 1966. "Maendeleo Ya Akina Mama," *Kweupe*, January 15, 1966. "Maendeleo Ya Akina Mama," *Kweupe*, February 12, 1966. "Wako Mstari Wa Mbele," *Kweupe*, February 21, 1969.

[6] Hassan, Mwanajuma Abdi, "Wanawake Wa Zanzibar Wamejifunga Mikaja Katika Kupigania Maendeleo Yao," *Zanzibar Leo*, March 24, 2005, 7.

[7] E.g., "Wako Mstari Wa Mbele," *Kweupe*, February 21, 1969.

[8] Nassor, Haji, "'Umoja Ni Maendeleo' Yajipanga Kuwakomboa Vijana, Wanawake," *Zanzibar Leo*, March 18, 2018, 5.

[9] Ladies Club Report, 6 November 1950, AK 22/38, Zanzibar National Archives.

[10] Voluntary work among women, July 1953, AB 12/129, Zanzibar National Archives.

[11] Letter from the chief secretary in Oxford to the senior commissioner, 26 November 1953, AB 12/129, Zanzibar National Archives.

[12] Letter to the senior commissioner from woman welfare officer Vera Davies, 3 February 1954, AB 12/129, Zanzibar National Archives.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Chairman's report for the year, 1 April 1957-31 March 1958, AK 22/38, Zanzibar National Archives.

[15] Letter to the senior commissioner from Chief Secretary R. Alford, 14 April 1954, AB 12/129, Zanzibar National Archives.

[16] A ZWA meeting is advertised in *Mwongozi*, March 1, 1963, 1.

[17] Letter from chief secretary to Ladies Club Chairman Mrs. Rana, 25 August 1960, AK 22/38, Zanzibar National Archives.

[18] Ameir, Omar Said, "Bi. Khadija Jabir: Mwanaharakati Aliyeshawishi Wanawake Kuingia Katika Siasa Za Kudai Uhuru," *Zanzibar Leo*, February 27, 2005, 12.

[19] "Mama Fatma Karume Aongea Na Wanawake Kwenye Siku Ya Wanawake Wa Mfano," posted by "Wanawake TV," April 28, 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WOFtOEZS16E.

[20] "The Feminist Movement I," *Mwongozi*, February 13, 1959, 3. "The Feminist Movement II," *Mwongozi*, February 20, 1959, 3. "The Feminist Movement III," *Mwongozi*, February 27, 1959, 3.

[21] "Akina Mama Washerehekea Siku Yao," *Kweupe*, March 22, 1968.

[22] Maulid, Sharifa, "Ijue UWT Na Maendeleo Yake," *Zanzibar Leo*, October 23, 2003, 9.

[23] Geiger, TANU Women, 1998, describes UWT as an outgrowth of the colonialist Tanganyika Council of Women, comprised of elite women and concerned with women's domesticity, rather than as a continuation of Tanganyikan nationalist women's political organizing.

[24] E.g., "Ujumbe Wa UWZ Umerejea," *Kweupe*, April 8, 1967. "Umekuza Uhusiano Wetu," *Kweupe*, August 14, 1965. "Amewasili Uchina," *Kweupe*, July 17, 1965.

[25] "Akina Mama Wa Urusi Wawasili Unguja," *Kweupe*, May 24, 1967.

[26] E.g., "Wataunga Mkono Siku Ya Akina Mama," *Kweupe*, March 4, 1967. "Waungana Kusherehekea Sikukuu ya Akina Mama," *Kweupe*, March 15, 1967. "Akina Mama Wa Urusi Washeherekea Siku Ya Wanawake," *Kweupe*,

March 18, 1967. “Ujumbe Wa UWZ Umerejea,” *Kweupe*, April 8, 1967. “Pongezi Za Akina Mama,” *Kweupe,* April 29, 1967. “Mwenye Kiti Wa Kina Mama Apokeya Vifaa,” *Kweupe*, March 7, 1969. “Bibi Petron Karamuni,” *Kweupe*, October 31, 1969. “Umoja wa Akina Mama Umepata Mafanikio Makubwa,” *Kweupe*, June 5, 1970.

[27] “Waungana Kusherehekea Sikukuu ya Akina Mama,” *Kweupe*, March 15, 1967.” “Mwenye Kiti Wa Kina Mama Apokeya Vifaa,” *Kweupe*, March 7, 1969. “Umoja wa Akina Mama Umepata Mafanikio Makubwa,” *Kweupe,* June 5, 1970. “Bibi Petron Karamuni,” *Kweupe*, October 31, 1969.

[28] UWASP meeting report, 25 May 1976, AK 31/22, Zanzibar National Archives.

[29] Letter from Khadija Jabir to chief secretary of UWT, 5 June 1969, DC 1/7, Zanzibar National Archives.

[30] “Faida Walizopata Kina-Mama Baada Ya Mapinduzi,” *Kweupe*, March 13, 1965. Hamdani, Maryam. April 10, 2018. Interview with Jessica Ott. English. Zanzibar Town, Tanzania.

[31] Hamdani, Maryam. April 10, 2018. Interview with Jessica Ott. English. Zanzibar Town, Tanzania.

[32] “Amewasili Uchina,” *Kweupe*, July 17, 1965.

[33] “Faida Walizopata Kina-Mama Baada Ya Mapinduzi,” *Kweupe*, March 13, 1965.

[34] Speech of Mwalimu Julius Nyerere at UWT meeting, 18 December 1976, DC 1/7, Zanzibar National Archives.

[35] Ibid.

[36] “*Maendeleo ya Umoja wa Akina Mama 1964-1968: Kufikilia Mwaka wa Nne Tangu Kuzaliwa Kwake*,” March 1968, DC 1/7, Zanzibar National Archives.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid.

[40] “Akina Mama Wajifunza Ufundi,” *Kweupe*, February 21, 1969.

[41] “UWZ Unasonga Mbele,” *Kweupe*, March 22, 1968.

[42] E.g., “Heko Kina Mama Heko Kwa Kujiunga Jeshini,” *Kweupe*, November 5, 1966, 324.

[43] E.g., “Wanawake na Jamhuri,” *Kweupe*, February 15, 1964, 32.

[44] Ibid.

[45] “Bibi Titi Ametoa Nasaha,” *Kweupe*, April 7, 1964.

[46] Report outlining the problems of UWASP, 17 December 1973, DB 17/6, Zanzibar National Archives.

[47] “Umoja wa Wanawake Wasaidia Elfu 12,000,” *Kweupe*, March 25, 1967.

[48] “Bi-Petron Ahimiza Ukulima Wa Ushirika,” *Kweupe*, March 8, 1968.

[49] E.g., picture from *Kweupe*, March 27, 1970, 2.

[50] “UWZ Wavuna Mpunga Mahonda,” *Kweupe*, July 25, 1969.

[51] E.g., UWASP Report from Urban Zanzibar, January-March 1976, AK 31/22, Zanzibar National Archives. Report from UWASP National Meeting, 28 May 1976, AK31/22, Zanzibar National Archives.

[52] E.g., “Akina Mama Washerehekea Siku Yao,” *Kweupe*, March 22, 1968.

[53] “Fete Ya Kina-Mama,” *Kweupe*, March 4, 1965.

[54] Madai, Naima Mali. March 20, 2018. Interview with Jessica Ott. Swahili. Zanzibar Town, Tanzania.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Report outlining the problems of UWASP, 17 December 1973, DB 17/6, Zanzibar National Archives.

[59] Madai, Naima Mali. March 20, 2018. Interview with Jessica Ott. Swahili. Zanzibar Town, Tanzania.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Personal conversation on July 20, 2017.

[67] I frequently attended evening gatherings of post-revolution exiles at Forodhani during Ramadan with my Zanzibari host in 2016.

[68] Salma Maoulidi (2011) has acknowledged benefits in women’s lives as a result of the revolution and post-revolution government policies, including educational and professional opportunities.

CHAPTER 2: Writing women's rights and mediating collective memory: a millennial media-based women's movement in Zanzibar

Introduction

In July of 1985, at the age of 22, Shifaa Said Hassan attended the Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi, Kenya, as a broadcast journalist producing women and children's programs for Television Zanzibar (TVZ). She traveled from Shangani in Zanzibar Town to mainland Tanzania's port city of Dar es Salaam, before heading onward with her TVZ production crew on a bus from Dar es Salaam to the "conference tourism" East African megacity of Nairobi. When Shifaa recounted her experience of attending the Nairobi Conference of 1985 to me 33 years later in 2018, from the dark reception area of a small guesthouse in Zanzibar's touristy Stone Town, she reminisced frequently about what she was wearing. "I was so young, so beautiful. Frankly speaking, you know. And we were not wearing many things, you know, just ordinary dress, the skirt, the jacket, you know? The high heels, very smart. Very young, very thin, you know?"[1]

In 2018, Shifaa wore a loose dress shirt and a long skirt with a *hijab*. She was an animated storyteller, recalling the past with drama and zeal. Unprompted by me, Shifaa explained how she came to embrace a more conservative form of dress: "…it's something to do with the religious leaders. They come out publicly, and they say what we are doing is very wrong. We are wearing the wrong way…I don't know how we have become a little bit loose…"[2]

Shifaa's reflections on her clothing in the past and present were about much more than women's fashion. Abrupt shifts in Zanzibar's tenuous history have been marked by dramatic changes and policies related to women's dress. The violent and contested Zanzibar Revolution of

1964 was marked by a shift in the clothing choices of women public figures like Fatma Karume, who addressed large crowds in the mid-1960s wearing form-fitting A-line dresses. The post-revolution government unpopularly directed Zanzibari women to forego their *buibui* during celebrations commemorating the one-year anniversary of the revolution in 1965 as a marker of their emergence as modern, liberated women (Maoulidi 2011a). The government was attempting to rid Zanzibar of visible markers of the archipelago's Arab past, which many Zanzibaris mostly privately decried as the government's attempts to do away with Islam (Burgess 2009). Shifaa's return to more modest clothing from the late-1980s onward was in response to the pleas of religious leaders, who filled a moralizing gap left behind by the socialist state upon economic liberalization in Zanzibar (Turner 2009). More recently, many Zanzibari women have embraced the Gulf-inspired *niqab* [full face veil], reflecting more extreme interpretations of women's modesty and an Islamic revival on the archipelago, which has often been popularly associated with Zanzibar's political opposition (Turner 2009; Kresse 2006; Loimeier 2006).

This chapter is not specifically about women's clothing, but it is about the ways in which Zanzibar's unresolved past permeates contemporary social life. As Bissell and Fouéré (2018) have eloquently described, critiques of the revolution have long been expressed in subtle forms—in "spatial arrangements, material life, implicit social practices, and fashion, as well as in people's bodies and affects…" (7). Since the mid-1980s, explicit accounts and critiques of the revolution have additionally been published and have entered public discourse (Bissell and Fouéré 2018a; Loimeier 2018). Citing Jan Assmann (1997), Loimeier (2018) attributes the proliferation of accounts of the revolution to a process of reinterpretation that often occurs roughly 40 years after an event has occurred, when living memory is at risk of being lost and witnesses feel an urge to solidify collective memory for future generations.

Scholarly accounts of the Zanzibar Revolution have focused primarily on the more explicit accounts of the revolution written by men, in large part because far more men have published their recollections of the revolution in book form (Loimeier 2018). The more subtle critiques of the revolution written by women like Shifaa, who was at the helm of a millennial media-based democratization and women's movement in Zanzibar, have largely gone unexplored.

When I requested newspaper articles from the late 1990s and early 2000s in Zanzibar, workers at the archives often joked with me that such articles had not even yet been catalogued, because they did not yet count as "history." They were amused that I was interested in exploring something that was from Zanzibar's more recent past. When the manager of the national archives reading room fetched a pile of roughly 20-year-old articles from storage, they were twined together and coated in a thick layer of dust. He wore a facemask and coughed while slapping bundles of newspapers, which knocked much of the dust to the ground or into the air. Some bundles were damaged beyond repair. Whether intentionally or not, a trove of newspaper articles that reflect a millennial democratization and women's movement in Zanzibar are being silenced during a "moment of fact assembly," or in "the making of archives" (Trouillot 1995, 26).

While poring through millennial-era newspaper articles at the Zanzibar National Archives, I did not immediately recognize Shifaa's articles as part of a corpus of historical memory. She promoted gender equality and denounced domestic violence; she promoted "better leadership" in Zanzibar and critiqued the government's failure to involve women in development processes. Her ability to write such articles as the editor of a state-affiliated newspaper reflects a democratization movement in Zanzibar in the 1990s, which resulted in a more open society and a freer press (Othman 2014). But as I immersed myself in 1960s state propagandist newspaper articles upon leaving Zanzibar and returning home, I realized that Shifaa's articles were rife with historical discourses from the socialist 1960s. Her use of language from the past did not reflect her endorsement of the socialist 1960s, though; she often appropriated historical discourses in such a way to draw attention to the contradictions and unfulfilled promises of the past and as a way to critique the then-contemporary government. At the helm of a media-based democratization and women's movement in Zanzibar, Shifaa was both a major women's rights activist and a mediator of collective memory. She faced backlash from her community for challenging gender norms and from the government for publishing veiled critiques of the past and present in the state-affiliated *Zanzibar Leo*, eventually leaving the media to assume the directorship of the Tanzania Media Council (TMC), which acts as a non-governmental media watchdog.

Relying on an in-depth life history interview with Shifaa and on an analysis of several dozen of her archival articles, I highlight Shifaa's role as a major women's rights activist and as a mediator of collective memory. As the millennial texts of women journalists like Shifaa—such as Dr. Mzuri Issa and Husna Mohammed—risk succumbing to dust and other elements at the Zanzibar National Archives, and as men's book-length narratives of the revolution have been prioritized, it is important to acknowledge women's roles as the mediators of collective memory. Just as women like Shifaa have put forth subtle critiques of the past in their clothing and comportment (Bissell and Fouéré 2018a), they have put forth written mediations of collective memory as journalists affiliated with major newspapers. Shifaa herself did not have copies of most of her articles that I had retrieved from the archives, so I sent her soft copies of all of them at the conclusion of our interview.

This chapter contributes to a larger argument that is woven throughout my dissertation, which is that an anthropological emphasis on processes of "vernacularization"—or the cultural translation of women's rights ideas from transnational to local settings (Merry 2006)—must take into account local histories. I additionally argue in this chapter that anthropological frameworks for understanding human rights should pay attention to how human rights activists mediate collective memory as they translate rights ideas into local cultural contexts. For example, when Shifaa wrote about women's rights in the state press, she relied on historical language, ideologies, and symbols. Merry (2006) would call this a process of vernacularization, in which global ideas are translated into local terms, with local cultural idioms and symbols, to make them more legible in a given cultural context. What Merry leaves out in her description of vernacularization is that local cultural terms and symbols are often historically laden (see Chapter 1) and that their contemporary appropriation often reflects a mediation of collective memory. The appearance of language from Zanzibar's past in contemporary women's rights organizing is more than cultural accoutrement; it often represents an attempt to solidify or shift how the past is remembered. The likely frequent mediation of collective memory in processes of vernacularization should be more heavily incorporated into anthropological frameworks for describing the spread of human rights.

In my first chapter, I explored a state feminist discourse that circulated in Zanzibar from the mid-1960s and onward, that placed women as nation building mothers at the helm of development and that celebrated women's *umoja*. I then explored how a woman who eagerly embraced the task of nation building and development in the mid-1960s understands and reconciles the discrepancies between an official state narrative of Zanzibar's enlightened post-revolution past and her own difficult current life circumstances. As an elderly Zanzibari woman who lives in a society where women's rights discourses are circulating, Bi Naima's own history and memory of the revolution necessarily affects how she interacts with contemporary appropriations of a historical state feminist discourse that she is intimately familiar with.

In this chapter, I turn my lens from exploring how ordinary Zanzibaris interpret women's rights discourses, based on their own memories and historical and political alignments, to exploring how journalists wrote about women's rights ideas during a media-based women's movement in the late 1990s and early 2000s. I argue that just as it is important to explore the ways in which memory affects how women like Bi Naima understand and interpret contemporary women's rights discourses, it is important to explore how women's rights activists themselves have mediated collective memory in their advocacy.

Life history of Shifaa Said Hassan

In 2017, Fatma Alloo—a retired major women's rights activist and co-founder of TAMWA on the Tanzanian mainland—published a book with fellow TAMWA co-founder Edda Sanga chronicling the organization's 30-year history. Shifaa herself became a women's rights activist by way of TAMWA, despite tense relations between mainland Tanzania and the Zanzibar archipelago since their abrupt joining together in 1964. In my interactions with Alloo, she often lamented that the stories of Tanzanian civil society movements and organizations were not being recorded by the people at their helm and would thus disappear with the loss of civil society pioneers and the passage of time. Fatma was committed to preserving and sharing the stories of Tanzanian civil society.

Recognizing the importance of sharing first-person narratives of women's movements in Tanzania and on the Zanzibar archipelago, I include Shifaa's own reflections on her history of activism in this section. I begin with her stories about attending the Nairobi Conference of 1985, followed by her long-term relationship with mainland TAMWA-nites [a word used by TAMWA members to describe themselves] and their influence on her thinking and on her work as a Zanzibari journalist. In historians' and political scientists' important, revelatory accounts of Tanzanian women's movements and organizations (e.g., Geiger 1998; Tripp 2017), the experiences of Zanzibari women have often gone unexplored or have been conflated with their mainland sisters. By including Shifaa's own personal reflections on her feminist activism, I hope to shed light on a mainland-influenced and aligned but distinctly Zanzibari media-based women's movement and to ensure that the stories of Zanzibari women's rights activists are included in a corpus of important writing about Tanzanian women's movements.

Shifaa entered TVZ in 1983 at the age of 20, a few years before she would cover the Nairobi Women's Conference in 1985 as a TVZ broadcast journalist. She was tasked with covering women's and children's issues and with translating foreign news from English into Swahili for local audiences. She explained,

> "…before you start the real work, you have to do a little bit of training, pre-service training, for about three, six months, something like that, then I am given the task of doing women and children programs and sometimes I'm given the task of doing some sort of summaries or translation of the foreign programs…so when I started that, first, I like the children, because myself, I was so young, by then I was only 20 when I joined TV…And I didn't like much of women issues, because…they think, "Ah, you are not a woman, you are just a girl," you know…so they think that I don't really understand what they are going through…"[3]

Shifaa struggled much more with the task of producing shows about women's issues than she did children's issues, since women did not trust than an unmarried, childless 20-year-old would understand their lives. As I alluded to in Chapter 1, motherhood is commonly thought of in Zanzibar as a prerequisite to full womanhood. For example, at a wedding celebration in November of 2017, I was directed to join a photo of children attendees, because I was not yet a mother and had therefore not reached full adulthood in the eyes of the sister of the groom, who had invited me to the wedding.

I asked Shifaa what types of women's programs she produced for TVZ, and she explained,

> "Most of the time, when I was in television, I was doing, for instance, I do a very good program about these women's handicrafts by using…soil. How they can mold the pot…I did a very good program, and it went for a competition, although it didn't [win] the competition, but at least I tried. So, something like that, what women are doing in Zanzibar, the culture, maybe the food, yeah, something like that."[4]

Shifaa's early journalism reflected an emphasis on women's domesticity and on women as the preservers of Zanzibari culture. Her programs were broadcast during an era when the government was intent on both policing and preserving Zanzibari culture[5] and on parading women as its cultural symbols (Maoulidi 2011a).

When Shifaa was later sent by TVZ to cover the Nairobi Conference, it was not because of her own interest or exposure to a growing transnational women's rights movement. It was because she seemed like the obvious choice to cover a major women's conference as a producer of programs about women and children in Zanzibar. And when she described her participation in the conference to me, Shifaa downplayed its role as sparking her own interest and engagement in women's rights. That would come later. She did credit the conference with exposing her to new ideas:

> "I went there with my TVZ crew, and I also, by then, frankly speaking, I didn't know very much about these kinds of things. And I'm also not very, you know, conversant with that kind of language for that matter…and so I attended and started to, you know? So, there's a lot of literature, a lot of books, a lot of newspapers there, you know? And you found that when you work early in the morning, you are there at the conference 'til, you know? So, you get so many things."[6]

The influence of the Nairobi Women's Conference of 1985 on Shifaa's life came less in the content of the conference and more in the connections that she forged with mainland Tanzanian journalist women's rights activists who would two years later officially register TAMWA as a non-governmental organization. Reflecting on her long-term relationship with TAMWA, Shifaa explained, "[In Nairobi], even I met those founding members, we were together. Edda Sanga, the founding member of TAMWA, Chemi Che-Mponda, also we met there in Nairobi."[7]

After attending the Nairobi Conference, Shifaa began to participate in regional "short courses," where she started to develop a vocabulary of transnational women's rights and solidified her relationship with mainland TAMWA-nites. She explained,

> "I went to different short courses. I went to Nairobi, Dar es Salaam, you know, to do short courses about Family Health International, about gender…in Kenya, I went there several times. Because you know, most of the meetings for Africa, especially for Africa, the host most of the time is Nairobi. Because Nairobi is big big big…they have this, what do you call it, conference tourism…I went there several times. I attended this even

> feminism, you know, I attended the…Commonwealth Social Forum in 1987, something like that. I went a lot in Nairobi, you know?”[8]

Shifaa’s exposure to transnational women’s rights ideas began at the Nairobi Women’s Conference of 1985 but developed in the following years as she was sent on assignment to regional conferences with feminist themes.

Shifaa met her mainland peers again and again at regional meetings and conferences, especially solidifying her relationship with them upon beginning a diploma course at the Tanzania School of Journalism in Dar es Salaam in the early 1990s. Upon completing her diploma course, Shifaa did a three-month apprenticeship at the Tanzanian nationalist *Uhuru* [Freedom] newspaper, during which she was a frequent visitor to TAMWA’s office in the historic, dense, and central Kisutu ward of Dar es Salaam, which has long been home to a large population of the city’s residents of Indian descent, reflected in street names like “Indira Gandhi” and “India.”[9] Then in its early years, TAMWA produced a feminist magazine called *Sauti ya Siti*, after Zanzibari woman Taarab musician Siti binti Saad (Fair 2001), whose early issues reflected TAMWA’s Nyerere-ist orientation. Julius Nyerere was Tanzania’s first president, whose political and philosophical system of *Ujamaa* [African socialism] promoted racial, gender, and class equality.[10] Early TAMWA-nites engaged in an intersectional Tanzanian feminism, exploring the interconnectedness of gender, racial, and class inequality in their articles and work (Mama 2017). And while Shifaa herself grew up on the Zanzibar archipelago, whose autocratic, post-revolution government only haphazardly implemented Nyerere’s *Ujamaa*, and where Zanzibar’s absorption into a Tanzanian union government has long been deeply contested, some elements of TAMWA’s Nyerere-ist orientation would later manifest in her own articles.

TAMWA in Dar es Salaam eventually worked to establish a base of Zanzibari women journalist members in 1995, around the time when Shifaa was involved in establishing Zanzibar's first state newspaper since the collapse of propagandist *Kweupe* in the 1970s. It began as a weekly publication, *Nuru*, eventually becoming the daily *Zanzibar Leo* sometime between 2000 and 2002. Before 1995, TAMWA had a few Zanzibari affiliates in journalist and musician Maryam Hamdani, who studied in China and the Soviet Union and whom I quoted in Chapter 1, together with Nasra Hilal, but Shifaa interpreted 1995 as the year when Zanzibar gained a meaningful following of TAMWA-nites. She explained,

> "…we were called to a meeting, I remember it vividly, in the, one among the best hotels during that day, because we didn't have this Serena or what, in 1995…So we were called for a meeting, and some of the colleagues from Dar es Salaam were coming…it was a day meeting, they talked a lot about TAMWA, how it started, you know, its importance…during that time I was working with *Nuru* newspaper, I was the editor, and so I have just completed my diploma course in journalism in Dar es Salaam…And so then, I knew about TAMWA, I used to go to their office. By then, it was in Kisutu. But I didn't join in Dar es Salaam. So of course, when that meeting came here, I said, many of them I also know…many of us I can say joined, about 30, 25, something like that. They chose some of us here and there. So, we went there, we discussed, we said, "okay," so we joined Tanzania Media Women."[11]

A millennial media-based women's movement in Zanzibar was fueled by Zanzibari women journalists' affiliation with TAMWA's mainland office from 1995 onward. Shifaa was among just a few Zanzibari women journalists in the mid-1990s who had attended regional short courses on gender in places like Nairobi and Dar es Salaam upon becoming an official affiliate of

TAMWA. In its early years of operation in Zanzibar, TAMWA paid affiliates like Shifaa a stipend to write about issues like gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS, to ensure widespread media coverage in Zanzibar of issues that TAMWA cared about on the mainland.[12]

There was talk about TAMWA establishing a separate office in Zanzibar soon after it designated affiliate members in Zanzibar in 1995, and because of her ten-year relationship with mainland TAMWA-nites and her own notoriety as a journalist, Shifaa was identified as a potential candidate to lead the new office. Shifaa explained, "I was very active, and that's why Leila [Sheikh], she said, "Ah, Shifaa, I think you will fit for our office in Zanzibar." I said, "Ah, *bas* [enough], I am already working in government." You know, government people, we see that we are more secure. We're more safe."[13] Shifaa was reticent to leave the state press, because while it was lower paying, she did not want her paycheck to be dependent on the ebbs and flows of donor funding. TAMWA ended up establishing a separate office in Zanzibar much later, in 2002. Reflecting on TAMWA's earlier failure to establish an office in Zanzibar in 1995, Shifaa reflected, "I thought that Bi Leila [Sheikh] will open the office, but I don't know what went wrong. It was nearly 90%."[14] Leila Sheikh was a co-founder and leader of TAMWA in Dar es Salaam.

Zanzibari women's rights-oriented journalists like Shifaa and Mzuri Issa eventually established their own TAMWA office in Zanzibar in 2002 and later successfully lobbied for semi-autonomy in TAMWA's constitution, mirroring Zanzibar's tenuous relationship with the mainland and fears among Zanzibaris of mainland hegemony. Their semi-autonomy was generally supported by mainland TAMWA-nites, and they have remained close with their mainland peers, alternating their yearly retreats between Zanzibar and the mainland. Shifaa commented in our interview on TAMWA Zanzibar's semi-autonomy: "I'm in the governing committee of TAMWA Zanzibar. We do have this, what you call it, governing committee, according to the new constitution. Because now, it's autonomous, it's semi-autonomous. It's different from when I used to work with them. When I worked, my boss is in the headquarters in Dar es Salaam."[15]

The influence of Nyerere-ist mainland TAMWA-nites is evident in Shifaa's work, but her millennial articles highlight a feminist orientation distinct from her mainland peers. They reflect a very different social context, where a global Islamic revival had by then gained firm footing, and they reflect her mediation of collective memory in a place with an interconnected but distinct history from the Tanzanian mainland. Shifaa published articles and editorials in a context that was grappling with an influx of tourists; HIV/AIDS; and an intravenous drug problem, among other challenges, which fueled widespread fears of a corrupted Zanzibari morality.[16] As a journalist in an era of newfound openness and press freedom in Zanzibar, wrought in part by the archipelago's enmeshment in a global democratization movement, Shifaa seized the opportunity to mediate collective memory, which always doubled as subtle criticism of the regime that paid her salary. In the next section, I explore how Shifaa appropriated historical discourses in her millennial newspaper articles, both as a way to mediate how the past was understood but also as veiled criticism of the then-government. Shifaa's articles reflect a multitude of influences, ranging from transnational women's rights ideas, the Nyerere-ist orientation of mainland TAMWA-nites, and her own discomfort with the state's incomplete, hegemonic narrative of its past.

Promoting women’s rights and mediating collective memory

In 2002, Shifaa took a one-year leave of absence from her editorial position at the state-affiliated *Zanzibar Leo* to lead TAMWA’s newly established office in Zanzibar. Leveraging her notoriety at *Zanzibar Leo*, Shifaa published dozens of editorials during her year-long tenure with TAMWA in which she promoted TAMWA’s broad agenda of women and children’s rights and in which she subtly critiqued the ruling party’s “official story” (Bissell and Fouéré 2018a) of the past. Her articles served both as mediations of collective memory and as veiled critiques of the government, which was then led by Amani Abeid Karume, the son of Zanzibar’s first president, Abeid Amani Karume, and former first lady Fatma Karume.

Among the first of Shifaa’s many articles that I came across while perusing archival newspapers at the Zanzibar National Archives was one published during her tenure with *Nuru* in 2000. Her article was entitled, “Women, believe in yourselves and rely on yourselves,” and it was rife with a post-revolution state feminist discourse that called on women to join UWASP women’s collectives in order to build and develop a self-reliant nation. I initially thought of Shifaa’s article as an example of Sally Merry’s vernacularization, in which so-called local women’s rights “translators” like Shifaa imbue transnational women’s rights ideas with local language and cultural symbols in order to make them more legible in a Zanzibari cultural context. Shifaa relied heavily on a culturally resonant language of Zanzibari nationalism, after all, in her women’s rights-oriented articles. But as I further familiarized myself with Shifaa’s articles, immersed myself in propagandist newspaper articles from the 1960s, and engaged in an in-depth life history interview with her, I realized that Shifaa’s appropriation of a feminist state discourse of Zanzibari nationalism was much more than an attempt to make transnational women’s rights ideas legible in a local context. Her appropriation of a historical state feminist discourse did not mark her endorsement of the past but rather represented her bringing to light the inconsistencies and contradictions inherent in the state's official narrative of its past, which doubled as criticism of the then-contemporary regime. Shifaa was translating women's rights ideas into a local context with her *Nuru* and *Zanzibar Leo* Swahili editorials, but she was also mediating collective memory.

In order to understand exactly how Shifaa mediated collective memory in her articles, it is important to have an understanding of the state's official story of its past, which as Bissell and Fouéré (2018) thoughtfully point out, is constantly changing and shifting while maintaining some consistent threads. As I outlined in Chapter 1, the post-revolution 1960s state presented itself as a liberator of women as a way of obliging women to play their role in building and developing the nation. The government called on women to perform certain gendered tasks, like mothering, preserving Zanzibari culture, sewing, communal farming, and making handicrafts. The government also called on women to manage local kiosks that sold basic government commodities, to run restaurants, and to run petrol stations. The 1960s state propagandist *Kweupe* newspaper presented women as the businesswomen drivers of Zanzibar's national economy and as at the front lines of development and nation building.

While Zanzibar's post-revolution government originally described the revolution as a justified uprising against British colonial and Omani "Sultanate rule," Zanzibar's current ruling CCM party has shifted its official narrative of the past to focus on the "fruits" of the revolution (Bissell and Fouéré 2018a). In an era of material deficit and multiparty politics, CCM has tried to maintain its hegemonic power in part by highlighting the supposed material gains of the revolution (Bissell and Fouéré 2018a). Conversely, Zanzibar's opposition Civic United Front (CUF) party has largely worked to discredit the revolution.

In her articles, Shifaa appropriated then-new democratization catchphrases, like *uongozi bora* [better leadership], together with a post-revolution discourse of nation building and development, in the process calling into question the state's official story of its past as bringing about liberation and development for women. Sometimes, Shifaa's critiques of the past and present came in the form of strategic omissions. In this section, I focus specifically on articles that Shifaa wrote during her tenure with TAMWA in 2002. I analyze a few representative articles in chronological order, since they build on each other and ultimately led the state-affiliated *Zanzibar Leo* to attempt to repair an increasingly breached official story of its past.

Loimeier (2018) made a compelling argument that in their written accounts of the Zanzibar Revolution, authors have largely tried to produce one of a few hegemonic interpretations of the revolution rather than acknowledge both its fruits and its lasting scars. This is true of book-length accounts of the revolution, which Loimeier was referring to, but it is less true of journalistic writing about the revolution. For example, Shifaa's writing did not simply align with either the ruling CCM or opposition CUF parties' largely hegemonic narratives of the revolution; in her articles, Shifaa put forth a subtle, critical, and mixed account of the past. The subtler mediations of collective memory offered by journalists like Shifaa deserve attention so that in their representations of stories about the past, scholars do not unwittingly reproduce polar understandings of how history unfolded.

Article #1: Uongozi bora ni muhimu katika kuondosha umasikini [Better leadership is essential in eradicating poverty][17]

In one of her earlier articles during her yearlong tenure as local TAMWA manager, published on September 5, 2002, Shifaa used a global democratization catchphrase at the time—*uongozi bora*—to describe the trend of African leaders pilfering national coffers and too quickly accepting foreign assistance, which subsequently left many African countries in states of perpetual dependency. Shifaa explained, “This world has been divided into two large categories: the Global North and the Global South. Countries in the Global North are wealthy and continue to rule the world economically, while countries in the Global South continue to be completely covered in the thick shadow of poverty.” Shifaa then described the injustice of northern countries both developing themselves in part by pilfering the resources of southern countries and determining the prices of goods in the global market.

Shifaa continued to explain the lack of and need for careful leaders in African countries, often using the hopeful, liberatory language of Zanzibar’s own post-revolution regime to highlight the mismatch between discourse and action in many post-independence African nations. She explained, “After many southern countries gained independence, our leaders were at the front lines of stealing wealth and keeping it for themselves.” Shifaa’s description of leaders being “at the front lines” of plundering is in contrast to Zanzibar’s own post-revolution regime’s description of citizens being “at the front lines” of development. Here, she appropriated the popular catchphrase “at the front lines,” usually used to describe the role of citizens in development processes, to highlight the self-interested role of many leaders in processes of building and developing nations. She added, “There’s no one who denies that after the “wave of liberation” came the wave of dictatorship for many African countries.” Shifaa then named a few examples of dictatorial African leaders, like Mobutu Seseko of the former Zaire, King Mokassa of the Central African Republic, and Iddi Amin of Uganda, whom she described as interested in building their own personal coffers in lieu of “bringing development” to their nations. Throughout the article, Shifaa used the catchphrases of Zanzibar’s own post-revolution regime—“wave of liberation,” “bringing development,” and “at the front lines”—to highlight the ways in which many African post-independence regimes did not themselves embody the promises associated with Pan-African liberation and independence movements.

Shifaa then highlighted the careful leadership of first Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere, which reflected her involvement in transnational feminist conversations at the time about the gendered effects of global economic inequality (Moghadam 2005) and which highlighted Shifaa's long relationship with Nyerere-ist TAMWA-nites on the Tanzanian mainland. Shifaa lauded then-deceased Nyerere for cautioning African leaders against accepting major World Bank loans, which he argued would give wealthy countries too much power over development processes in poor countries. Shifaa's lauding of Nyerere would not have been controversial in Zanzibar's state press, since Zanzibar's ruling CCM party supported and promoted Zanzibar's contentious union with mainland Tanzania. Nyerere himself birthed CCM in the mid-1970s, when he insisted on the joining together of Zanzibar's Afro-Shirazi Party with mainland Tanzania's TANU party to promote greater unity between Zanzibar and Tanzania.[18]

Shifaa's article would have been more controversial for its omissions than for its laudatory recognition of mainland Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere. Central in the Zanzibari government's official narrative of its past is the role of first Zanzibari president Abeid Amani Karume as a visionary leader who built and developed the nation. Every year, Zanzibar's CCM-dominated government devotes an entire issue of the state-affiliated *Zanzibar Leo* to celebrating the legacy of the revolution and the leadership of first president Karume. Karume's absence in an article highlighting the dictatorial tendencies of historical African leaders and calling for "better leadership" in Africa would not have gone unnoticed during his own son's reign as president of Zanzibar in 2002. By not including Karume in her ruminations on "better leadership" and by appropriating the Pan-Africanist language of Zanzibar's own post-revolution regime to highlight the hypocrisy of some post-independence African leaders, Shifaa was implicitly calling into question the state's official narrative of its past in which Karume was an exemplary leader who built and developed the nation. Shifaa's editorials represent a growing wave of implicit and explicit critique of the government's official narrative of its revolutionary past, which has occurred alongside efforts by the government to further strengthen its own hegemonic narrative of Zanzibar's history (Bissell and Fouéré 2018a).

Article #2: Nafasi zaidi za uongozi wa kitaifa zitolewe kwa wanawake [More national leadership opportunities should be given to women][19]

Shifaa's article about the necessity of electing more women in higher up leadership positions in Zanzibar—published on October 9, 2002—is not at first glance a mediation of collective memory. But when one considers representations of women put forth by Zanzibar's post-revolution regime in the mid-1960s and the millennial-era CCM government's official narrative of women's history, Shifaa's role as both a women's rights activist and as a mediator of collective memory becomes clearer.

Zanzibar's 1960s post-revolution regime propagated a version of history in which it liberated women, which obliged them to develop and build their nation. It represented women as at the front lines of development and lauded their *umoja* [unity, solidarity] for enabling nation building and development processes. It claimed that women were liberated and now equal to men, even though women were nowhere to be found in the government's official leadership ranks. Subsequent regimes have held steadfast to the image of women as liberated nation builders who brought development.

Appropriating a historical discourse in which women were often represented as at the "front lines" of building and developing the nation, Shifaa points out that even though women have more recently been at the “front lines” of political organizing, they are virtually absent on electoral ballots. Reflecting on the past, she draws her readers’ attention to women’s historical involvement at the “front lines” of African independence movements and their utter lack of political representation in post-independence governments. Shifaa’s description of women’s history in Zanzibar differs from the state’s official narrative of its gendered past, which celebrates the post-revolution regime as a liberator of women and celebrates the public roles of women like first lady Fatma Karume as evidence of women’s political participation and liberation. It also presents women as having been at the front lines of nation building and development in Zanzibar. Shifaa challenges the narrative that the post-revolution regime liberated women and that they were at the front lines of nation building and development by highlighting their utter absence in positions of political power.

Again, calling into question the state’s official narrative of its past, Shifaa suggests that most African countries are “not developed,” to use her language, precisely because women have been excluded from politics. Shifaa distances herself from Zanzibar’s official state narrative of its past by referring to African countries more broadly, but she remarkably calls into question a central myth upon which Zanzibar’s ruling party rests, that the revolution brought development. If Abeid Amani Karume built and developed the nation, how can the nation be undeveloped? If women were at the front lines of developing the nation, how can the nation be undeveloped precisely because women were left out of development processes? Shifaa uses the language of the post-revolution regime to turn the state’s official gendered narrative of the past on its head. In this article and in others, Shifaa uses the phrase “*maendeleo ya kweli*,” or true development, insinuating that development has yet to happen in Zanzibar, which again calls into question the state’s official narrative that Karume developed and built the nation.

Again, appropriating the gendered language of Zanzibar's socialist past, Shifaa calls on women to have *umoja*, arguing that "*umoja*…is indeed the only weapon that will get women elected." Here, Shifaa calls for a different version of *umoja* than UWASP, which called on women to join together for the purpose of nation building and development. She calls for an apolitical solidarity in which women prioritize their own political representation and participation above party politics. While *umoja* in the mid-1960s represented an allegiance to the ruling Afro-Shirazi Party and its objectives, even as it was framed in *Kweupe* as connoting women's solidarity, Shifaa promoted an apolitical version of *umoja* that represented women's political allegiance to each other. Early Zanzibari women's rights activists embraced Shifaa's version of an apolitical *umoja* in their efforts to increase women's political representation, and it continues to be a defining characteristic of Zanzibari feminist activism (see Chapter 3). Shifaa's use of *umoja* again represents her appropriation of historical language to call into question the state's official narrative of its past and to envision a different future.

Near the end of the article, Shifaa again mediates collective memory through a significant omission. She describes the important role of African women in freedom struggles, citing mainland Tanzania's Bibi Titi Mohammed and Zanzibar's Mwanaidi Dai. In Zanzibar's official narrative of its past, first lady Fatma Karume is often celebrated as a pre-revolution suffragette and freedom fighter and as a post-revolution symbol of women's liberation. Her absence would have been notable during the presidential reign of her son. In articles #1 and #2, Shifaa critiques African leaders and women's political representation in African countries more broadly, which represents only a very distant, implicit critique of Zanzibar's own leaders and of a lack of women's political representation. When she does laud exemplary leaders and historical women figures, her omissions of first president Karume and first lady Fatma Karume are notable.

As a women's rights-oriented journalist, Shifaa promoted women's increased political participation, which was an articulated goal of the 1995 Beijing Women's Conference in its Beijing Platform. Shifaa promoted a transnational women's rights priority by appropriating the historical discourse and imagery of women as at the front lines of development and of *umoja*. Her use of local language and imagery was much more than cultural accoutrement, however; together with strategic omissions, Shifaa's appropriation of historical language represented her attempt to mediate how Zanzibar's gendered past was remembered and to imagine a different future.

Article #3: Elimu kwa mtoto wa kike ni nguzo muhimu kwa maendeleo [Education for the girl child is an important development pillar][20]

On October 19, 2002, Shifaa published an article promoting the importance of girls' education. Zanzibar's post-revolution regime promoted girls' education from the mid-1960s onward, sending equal numbers of young Zanzibari men and women, including Maryam Hamdani, abroad for advanced education[21] and further developing an existing infrastructure for girls' education on the isles. Shifaa implies in her article that efforts to improve girls' educational outcomes on the isles had largely been rhetorical.

Shifaa begins her article with a religious argument to promote the importance of girls' education. She explains, "All religions promote the importance of education so that their followers are able to understand the procedures, rules, and laws of their religion." This is an argument that has long been used on the isles to justify girls' education; for example, one of Zanzibar's very first woman teachers, Bi Zainab Himid, put forth the same argument in her oral history, framed in terms of Islam, to justify her own educational pursuits abroad (Barwani and Gerhardt 2012). Shifaa's front and center use of a religious argument for girls' education likely reflected the growing influence of religious leaders on the isles and Zanzibar's enmeshment within a global Islamic revival. Her words foreshadowed an increasing shift among major Zanzibari women's rights activists toward Islamic theological arguments and their future engagement with a transnational Islamic feminist network, which I elaborate on more in Chapter 3.

Shifaa quickly moves from a religious argument for girls' education to an adage often put forth by first Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere during his implementation of *Ujamaa*: "If you educate a girl, you educate the whole community." This proverb is ubiquitous on the Tanzanian mainland, and I have seen it used in Zanzibar by Shifaa in her articles; by a mainland Tanzanian domestic worker whose life I discuss in greater depth in Chapter 4; and by prolific Zanzibari author Said Ahmed Mohamed (1980) in his feminist novel, *Utengano*. Both Shifaa and Mohamed received their advanced educations on the Tanzanian mainland, which likely influenced the Nyerere-ist orientation of their work. Mohamed's novel itself is a commentary on post-revolution political corruption in Zanzibar and promotes an embrace of African socialism as Nyerere envisioned it. It was an explicit mediation of collective memory in Zanzibar, among the very first published critiques of Zanzibar's post-revolution regime. Like subtler journalistic critiques of the revolution and post-revolution regime, Mohamed's novel has largely been relegated to the margins in historical studies of collective memory and the revolution in Zanzibar, as explicit, nonfiction autobiographical accounts of the revolution and its aftermath have been prioritized.[22]

In the remainder of Shifaa's article, she discusses how the prioritization of girls' education will lead to *"ukombozi wa kweli kwa wanawake"* [true liberation for women]. Just as Shifaa used the phrase *"maendeleo ya kweli"* [true development] in article #2, to call into question the national myth that the revolution brought development to Zanzibar, she uses the phrase “true liberation for women” to similarly question the national myth that the revolution liberated women. Again, Shifaa appropriated a 1960s state feminist discourse of women’s development and liberation to highlight the contradictions inherent in Zanzibar’s official state story about its past. Shifaa’s mentions of “true development” and “true liberation for women” would have been disruptive to a hegemonic government narrative in which the revolution brought development and liberated women.

This article is different from the earlier ones I analyzed in that it better highlights Shifaa’s influences and strategies as she promoted women’s rights in Zanzibar. She relied on an Islamic theological argument as she promoted girls’ education; she exemplified her Nyerere-ist orientation and the influence of mainland TAMWA-nites on her work with her citation of an adage popularized by Nyerere about girls’ education; and she called into question the state’s official narrative of its past that the revolution liberated women. It is significant that as Shifaa was promoting the transnational women’s rights priority of girls’ education—front and center in the 1995 Beijing Platform—she was additionally relying on a religious argument put forth by one of Zanzibar’s first woman teachers, Bi Zainab Himid, to justify continuing her education in England (Barwani and Gerhardt 2012) and on a historical adage put forth by Julius Nyerere. Girls’ education was not a new idea in Zanzibar, so Shifaa relied on historical discourses promoting girls’ education in her article, just as she called into question the government’s official story of its revolutionary past as having liberated and educated women. Shifaa’s articles highlight how it is possible to leverage the culturally resonant language of the past without endorsing that past. She relied on a widespread social belief in the importance of girls’ education instilled in part by Zanzibar’s post-revolution regime while still attributing an absence of “true liberation among women” to a lack of historical investment in girls’ education.

Article #4: Utawala bora uanzie katika ngazi ya familia [Better leadership begins at the family level][23]

Shifaa published another article about “better leadership” on October 30, 2002, again highlighting a global democratization movement that swept through Sub-Saharan Africa during the millennial era that was inextricable from women’s movements in many countries (Tripp et al. 2009). She sheds light on the global clout of the term “better leadership” at the start of her article: ““Better leadership” is not a foreign concept among most people right now. This phrase has spread, and it has been heard in faraway places such as national and international meetings. International organizations have pushed for countries to ensure that “better leadership” is being given the attention that it deserves.” Shifaa then describes “better leadership” as reflecting a “true democracy” in which national legal procedures and rules are followed, emphasizing that even a “better leadership” ministry had recently been established in Zanzibar.

Shifaa then switches her emphasis from the importance of “better leadership” at a national level, putting forth her primary argument that better national leadership begins at the family level. She argues, “It’s true that in our families, there are still many people who pluck away other peoples’ democratic rights by not involving their families in decision making processes.” She laments that major familial decisions that should be made through *“mawazo ya pamoja”* [collaborative decision making] are being made by men alone. The word *pamoja* [together] is a word that is derived from the larger Swahili philosophical and Tanzanian nationalist concept of *umoja*, which connotes unity, solidarity, and relational personhood. Shifaa is contrasting “dictatorial” Zanzibari families with a vision of familyhood that prioritizes unity, solidarity, and the notion that everyone's fates are intertwined. The vision of ideal familyhood that Shifaa puts forth is an allusion to Julius Nyerere's *Ujamaa*, which promoted a vision of national familyhood where citizens advanced only through unity and cooperation (Nyerere 1967). Shifaa combines a millennial democratization code word, "better leadership," with a Tanzanian nationalist code word, "*umoja*," as she promotes collaborative, unified nuclear family units.

In her article, Shifaa is making an explicit argument against men assuming dictatorial roles in their families. She is also making several implicit arguments related to the importance of women's increased political participation and related to the importance of democratic decision-making more broadly in Zanzibar. She uses a historical metaphor that every Tanzanian and Zanzibari is familiar with—the nation as a family—to highlight the dictatorial tendencies of national fathers and to promote the increased national decision-making power of women. She also argues for increased decision-making power among children, who symbolize citizens in the national family. Her article represents a subtle commentary on the dictatorial nature of Zanzibari politics, where women and citizens more broadly were largely kept out of political decision-making processes. She envisions a democratic national family, which is characterized by the Tanzanian nationalist and Pan-Africanist code word, *umoja*. Shifaa again takes a word from Zanzibar's post-revolution regime—*umoja*—and repositions it as a national ideal rather than a national reality. In an article promoting the increased decision-making roles of women and children in nuclear families, Shifaa is rewriting a national historical narrative that positions all citizens as having built the nation and a national government that embodied *umoja*. Again, appropriating language from the socialist 1960s, Shifaa envisions national *umoja* as existing only in a truly democratic future.

Article #5: Karume alithamini mawazo ya watu wote [Karume valued the ideas of all people][24]

In articles advocating for better leadership, girls' education, and increased women's political participation, Shifaa mediated how the past was remembered and how the present was understood, which did not go unnoticed by the government. In the Zanzibar National Archives, amidst twined stacks of dusty millennial newspapers, I came across an article written by Shifaa and published on October 30, 2002, that seemed oddly out of place in her corpus of women's rights and democratization editorials. Shifaa's article was part of a special edition of *Zanzibar Leo* intended to honor the legacy of first president Abeid Amani Karume and bore the subtitles, "He [Karume] respected women's contributions toward emancipation and development" and "[During his era], there was no gender, race, or ethnic discrimination."

Shifaa was conscripted by *Zanzibar Leo* to write an editorial reinforcing the state's official narrative of its past that the revolution liberated women and that women built the nation, in which Karume is remembered as a national father figure. Shifaa made the editorial decision to write her article in interview form, citing former first lady Fatma Karume's ruminations on her husband's legacy rather than putting forth the arguments in her own first-person voice.

Right away, in the article, Shifaa cites Fatma Karume's reflections on her deceased former husband's role as an example of "better leadership." Citing Fatma Karume, Shifaa writes, "He considered everyone's ideas, whether they were men or women; he listened more than he spoke; and he always valued the contributions of his children and family, because he believed that every person had ideas and contributions to offer." Through her citation of Fatma Karume's reflections on her husband's "better leadership," Shifaa is repairing a narrative that she herself breached in her commentary on the dictatorial nature of political leadership in Zanzibar. In response to Shifaa's argument that better leadership begins at the family level, Fatma Karume reinstates her deceased husband as an exemplar leader whose democratic decision-making processes were most visible at the family level.

Soon after, again citing Fatma Karume, Shifaa contradicts her own recent ruminations on a historical absence of women's political participation and representation in Zanzibar and on a lack of historical investment in women's education. Shifaa writes, "Even though women weren't front and center in politics during his reign, he [Karume] prioritized educating and empowering them so that they were more prepared to enter politics." In her citation of Fatma Karume's words, Shifaa is directly contradicting her own recent article in which she reflected on a lack of historical investment in girls' education as a barrier to realizing "true development." Shifaa then cites Fatma Karume's insistence that women in fact held positions of political power after the revolution in the women's wing of the ruling Afro-Shirazi Party (UWASP), a direct contradiction to her own article reflecting on a lack of women's political participation in Zanzibar.

In the article, Shifaa is citing Fatma Karume's responses to her own direct and indirect criticisms of Abeid Amani Karume's post-revolution government. Throughout the article, Shifaa cites Fatma Karume's insistence that her husband's "better leadership" was most visible at the family level, likely in part a response to her own veiled criticism of dictatorial politics in Zanzibar and her own insistence that "better leadership begins at the family level." Shifaa additionally cites Fatma Karume's insistence that her husband brought about "*ukombozi wa kweli*" [true liberation] through his emphasis on education for all, again responding to Shifaa's own reflections on an absence of "true liberation" for Zanzibari women, which she attributes to a historical lack of investment in women's education.

National memory repair

Shifaa was tasked by the state-affiliated *Zanzibar Leo* to participate in a process of national memory repair. In her interview with Shifaa, Fatma Karume reinstated her deceased ex-husband as an exemplar leader whose democratic leadership was most visible at the family level. Fatma Karume took a democratization code word—"better leadership"—which had the ability to disrupt how historical leaders were understood, and she used it to strengthen the state's official narrative of its past. She reinstated her husband's reign as having liberated women by educating them and bestowing them with positions of political leadership. Responding to articles by Shifaa and others that criticized the government of Zanzibar for not involving women in development processes,[25] Fatma Karume reinstated her husband as having valued women's contributions to national development.

Shifaa's articles serve as a remarkable example of the power and vulnerability that came with being at the helm of a millennial media-based democratization and women's rights movement. Shifaa largely wrote articles from her own independent voice, using subtle arguments and strategic absences to call into question the state's official narrative of its past. Shifaa argued that post-independence African leaders were more interested in furthering their own economic interests than in developing their nations, putting forth Julius Nyerere as an example of "better leadership" and notably leaving out any mention of first president Karume in her article. Shifaa lamented a lack of women's political representation in Zanzibar, going against an official state narrative that positioned UWASP as indicative of women's post-revolution political power. Shifaa lamented a lack of historical investment in women's education as a barrier to their development, going against an official state narrative in which the post-revolution regime liberated and educated women and in which women were "at the front lines" of development.

And just before publishing her interview with Fatma Karume, Shifaa put forth a veiled criticism of dictatorial politics in Zanzibar, in which national fathers failed to involve citizens in decision-making processes. Shifaa pushed the limits of what could be written in the state-affiliated press and was eventually conscripted by *Zanzibar Leo* to backtrack on her own mediations of collective memory.

The expectation that she propagated the state's official narrative of its past in part led Shifaa to not resume her editorial post at *Zanzibar Leo* upon finishing her one-year position with TAMWA. She explained, "I don't want to go back to my job. I said, "Eh, I'm not interested anymore. It's just a waste of time there. Let me go somewhere else. I don't want to be with the government or what. I don't want to be the mouthpiece of anybody, I've got my own mouthpiece by the way.""[26]

Serving as a government mouthpiece was a liability for Shifaa, but it was not that alone that led her to leave journalism as a profession. Her attempts to shift gender norms in Zanzibar and ideas about women's roles and responsibilities led to a degree of social ostracization for Shifaa and her family. She explained,

> "And to work for TAMWA for me, it gave me a lot of challenges, even at the family level. It was so hard, because I mean, for the first time, the visibility of women in Zanzibar, we are really provoking, you know? So sometimes these things enter even in your family, and you know Zanzibar is very small, people know each other, so now Shifaa has started to change the attitude…the visibility of women…this is against our tradition, you know? So, when you are working with this, you get a lot of challenges."[27]

Shifaa experienced the power and vulnerability of being at the helm of a millennial media-based democratization and women's movement in Zanzibar. She promoted transnational women's rights priorities like girls' education and women's political representation in her articles, and in her appropriation of a 1960s state feminist discourse, Shifaa mediated both how the past was remembered and how the present was understood. Her promotion of women's rights came with social ostracization, while her mediation of collective memory led the state press to conscript her in serving as the mouthpiece of the government and in a process of national memory repair. Shifaa ultimately left the state media and TAMWA, remaining on TAMWA's governing board, to become the director of the Tanzania Media Council in Zanzibar, an independent body concerned with press freedom. Shifaa responded to her own call for free journalistic expression as a precursor for development[28] by becoming a media watchdog.

Reclaiming *umoja*: memory, women's rights, and moving forward

Anthropological frameworks for understanding the spread of women's rights should acknowledge how local processes of vernacularization—or the cultural translation of transnational women's rights ideas—often involve a mediation of collective memory. For example, when Shifaa wrote women's rights-oriented articles in the early 2000s, she appropriated a historical discourse of women as building and developing the nation. By appropriating a historical state feminist discourse, Shifaa was not simply imbuing transnational women's rights ideas with local cultural symbols and ideologies or endorsing Zanzibar's state feminist history, but she was drawing attention to the inconsistencies and contradictions inherent in the state's official narrative of its past. As a state media-affiliated journalist, Shifaa was then tasked with repairing collective national memory by reinforcing the official state narrative of the past that she called into question in her articles. Engaging in a process of national memory repair was too much of a liability for Shifaa in a politically tumultuous context with an unresolved, contested past, which led Shifaa to leave the state media.

Just as Shifaa's story highlights the costs to her of mediating collective memory, it demonstrates the ways in which words from the past gain new connotations and meanings through the efforts of women's rights activists. For example, Shifaa often relied on the word "*umoja"* in her articles, which implies unity, solidarity, and relational personhood. In post-revolution Zanzibar, *umoja* connoted coercion, as it was a term used to vest women in various nation building tasks that they did not always want to participate in, like collective farming. It was also a term used to both promote and mark one's allegiance to the post-revolution state. In the early 2000s, Shifaa and then fellow TAMWA-affiliated *Zanzibar Leo* journalist Mzuri Issa imbued the word *"umoja"* with new meaning. To encourage women's increased political representation, they promoted an apolitical *umoja* that prioritized women's allegiance to each other rather than to a particular political party.[29] During my fieldwork, I similarly often observed major women's rights activists make appeals to *umoja* at major stakeholder meetings as a strategy of depoliticization (see Chapter 3). The language of the past unearths that past, but it also acquires new meanings and associations.

My next chapter explores in greater depth the meaning of local historical discourses for women's rights activists in an Islamic revivalist context, where Islamic theological arguments for women's rights are gaining increasing clout. It explores the possibilities and limitations of various transnational women's rights discourses, just as it explores the continued strategic use among women's rights activists of language from Zanzibar's socialist past. As religious leaders have publicly discredited major activists for assuming authoritative Islamic knowledge, the language of the past has resurfaced in interesting ways.

[1] Hassan, Shifaa Said. March 14, 2018. Interview with Jessica Ott. English. Zanzibar Town, Tanzania.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.
[5] E.g., UWASP Report from Urban Zanzibar, January-March 1976, AK 31/22, Zanzibar National Archives.
[6] Hassan, Shifaa Said. March 14, 2018. Interview with Jessica Ott. English. Zanzibar Town, Tanzania.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.
[10] E.g., Kalamera, Rose, "Mwalimu Nyerere's Contribution to Women's Liberation in Tanzania," *Sauti ya Siti*, July-September 1990, 2.
[11] Hassan, Shifaa Said. March 14, 2018. Interview with Jessica Ott. English. Zanzibar Town, Tanzania.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.
[16] E.g., Shabaan, Bin, "Mila na desturi zetu zinaelekea wapi?" *Zanzibar Leo*, September 6, 2002, 7. "Utamaduni, mila, silka, na desturi za kizanzibari zilindwe," *Zanzibar Leo*, March 7, 2003, 5.
[17] Hassan, Shifaa Said, "Uongozi bora ni muhimu katika kuondosha umasikini," *Zanzibar Leo*, September 5, 2002, 5.
[18] E.g., Speech of Mwalimu Julius Nyerere at UWT meeting, 18 December 1976, DC 1/7, Zanzibar National Archives.
[19] Hassan, Shifaa Said, "Nafasi zaidi za uongozi kitaifa zitolewe kwa wanawake," *Zanzibar Leo*, October 9, 2002, 5.
[20] Hassan, Shifaa Said, "Elimu kwa mtoto wa kike ni nguzo muhimu kwa maendeleo," *Zanzibar Leo*, October 19, 2002, 5.
[21] Hamdani, Maryam. April 10, 2018. Interview with Jessica Ott. English. Zanzibar Town, Tanzania.
[22] Several contributions in Bissell and Fouéré's (2018b) groundbreaking volume on memory and the revolution in Zanzibar cite fictional works by Zanzibari authors like Abdulrazak Gurnah and Adam Shafi.
[23] Hassan, Shifaa Said, "Utawala bora uanzie katika ngazi ya familia," *Zanzibar Leo*, October 30, 2002, 5.
[24] Hassan, Shifaa Said, "Karume alithamini mawazo ya watu wote," *Zanzibar Leo*, October 30, 2002, 8.
[25] Hassan, Shifaa Said, "Sera 'pofu' na 'bubu' zinachangia kurejesha nyumba maendeleo," *Zanzibar Leo*, November 26, 2002.
[26] Hassan, Shifaa Said. March 14, 2018. Interview with Jessica Ott. English. Zanzibar Town, Tanzania.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Hassan, Shifaa Said, "Waandishi waandike habari za kina na uchambuzi ili kufanikisha maendeleo," *Zanzibar Leo*, October 24, 2002, 5.
[29] Issa, Mzuri, "NGOs zifanye kazi kwa pamoja kutatua matatizo yanayowakabili, *Zanzibar Leo*, March 25, 2003, 8. Hassan, Shifaa Said, "Nafasi zaidi za uongozi kitaifa zitolewe kwa wanawake," *Zanzibar Leo*, October 9, 2002, 5.

CHAPTER 3: Networking nationally and transnationally: women's rights activism and Islamic legal reform in Zanzibar

Introduction

In October of 2016, Subira,* a 31-year-old woman from Zanzibar town, entered the offices of ZAFELA seeking legal advice in her quest to receive a divorce from the archipelago's Islamic *kadhi's* courts. I learned about Subira's case in 2017, when I was engaged in participant observation at ZAFELA's Jang'ombe offices for my dissertation fieldwork and came across her case file. On Subira's client intake form, a ZAFELA social work intern listed her husband's inability to provide for her and their two children and domestic violence as her reasons for wanting a divorce. Rahma, a ZAFELA paralegal, drafted her legal paperwork, which Subira carried onward to the urban Islamic *kadhi's* court of Kwerekwe. *Kadhi's* courts handle all divorce cases in Zanzibar between Muslims, but only recently have ZAFELA paralegals and lawyers begun to complete the legal claim forms of divorce-seeking women, combining their Islamic legal knowledge with local cultural realities.

Seven months later, the *kadhi* [Islamic judge] of Kwerekwe, on Zanzibar's most populous island of Unguja, refused Subira her desired divorce. He handled more divorce cases than the rest of Zanzibar's *kadhis* combined[1] and had a reputation for refusing to grant women a divorce. Rahma sprung to action, appealing the *kadhi's* ruling to the more authoritative Chief *Kadhi* [head Islamic judge]. In Rahma's appeal, she contested the *Qur'anic* verse upon which the *kadhi* had depended in his ruling: "There's no wrongdoing if spouses are able to come up with a solution between them, and to come up with a solution is more desirable."[2] Rahma explained that the couple had exhausted their problem-solving efforts and that the marriage should be dissolved in order to avoid worse damage. Rahma then cited another *Qur'anic* verse, stating, "God is content to allow the dissolution of a marriage when each person has put forth his or her best effort."[3] Rahma concluded that maintaining a marriage is the responsibility of a husband and wife, and if one of them is defeated in living with the other in a state of love and sympathy, a marriage is irreparable and should be dissolved. Rahma then told Subira to first visit the office of the *mufti*, a state-appointed Islamic juridical scholar who is empowered to make overriding Islamic legal judgments in Zanzibar,[4] before proceeding onward to the Chief *Kadhi*. The *mufti's* office granted Subira a divorce, rendering Rahma's written appeal to the Chief *Kadhi* unnecessary. I was impressed by Rahma's extensive knowledge of Islamic law and asked where she was trained. She matter-of-factly explained that she gained most of her Islamic legal knowledge from her childhood *madrasa* [Islamic school], where she was exposed to all four Sunni schools of Islamic law.[5]

Rahma relies on her knowledge of Islamic jurisprudence as she drafts the legal claim forms of divorce-seeking clients, a task that was until recently relegated to *kadhi's* court clerks (Stiles 2009). Rahma also relies on her Islamic legal knowledge as she appeals the decisions of district-level *kadhis* to Zanzibar's Chief *Kadhi* and to the *mufti's* office. A devout Muslim, Rahma uses the client meeting room as a space of prayer and describes her paralegal work as divinely ordained. The role of ZAFELA paralegals and lawyers in writing Islamic legal justifications for divorce and in appealing the decisions of *kadhis* represents the entrée of women as authoritative figures of Islamic legal knowledge in Zanzibar's male-dominated *kadhi's* courts. This chapter is about the efforts of a broader coalition of Zanzibari women's rights activists who have tried to expand the Islamic legal authority that women like Rahma practice by advocating for women's right to adjudicate Islamic legal cases as *kadhis*.

Zanzibari women's rights activists have been advocating for women's expanded Islamic legal authority for over a decade, which has implications for women's Islamic leadership more broadly. I begin this chapter with an historical overview of Zanzibar's legal system and its *kadhi's* courts, which, despite their shortcomings, have long served as a space where women have been able to make claims to their Islamic legal rights. I continue with an overview of the Swahili philosophical concept of *umoja*, which has guided Zanzibari women's rights activists in their national and transnational networking. I then explore activists' recent efforts to reform Zanzibar's *kadhi's* courts, which began with a knowledge exchange between ZAFELA and Malaysia-based Sisters in Islam in 2013 and culminated in a strategic letter to the president of Zanzibar in 2017. Activists tried and failed to establish support among Zanzibar's Organization of Muslim Clerics (JUMAZA), which ultimately impeded their ability to pass a law that would allow women to serve as *kadhis*. They succeeded in passing other major reforms, including an equitable division of matrimonial property and a higher education requirement for *kadhis*.

Moving forward, Zanzibari women's rights activists are working to cultivate a cadre of young women Islamic scholars, whom they believe will bring about a depatriarchalized Islamic legal system through an ability to empathize with women litigants and a deep knowledge of their faith. Recognizing the limitations of transnational women's rights arguments and networks, Zanzibar's gender coalition is also trying to further cultivate a more localized religious solidarity in its future work.

Gender and the law in historical context in Zanzibar

The archipelago's Islamic *kadhi's* courts have arbitrated disputes in Zanzibar since at least the start of the 19th century (Stiles 2009). Upon Zanzibar becoming a British protectorate in

1890, European laws were superimposed on existing local structures of customary and religious law (Calaguas, Drost, and Fluet 2007), which constricted the jurisdiction of *kadhis* to marriage, divorce, and inheritance cases in which relatively small amounts of property were at stake (Stockreiter 2015). After the 1964 revolution, Zanzibar's Islamic legal system was disrupted until its reinstatement in 1985 (Stiles 2009). Today, Zanzibar's legal system is based primarily on British common law, with multi-level magistrate's courts that deal with civil and criminal cases; a high court that maintains unlimited jurisdiction over civil and criminal cases; and Islamic *kadhi's* courts that deal with cases related to marriage, divorce, and inheritance (Calaguas, Drost, and Fluet 2007). *Kadhi's* courts have clerks, who play a central role in constructing case arguments and determining the legal viability of cases (Stiles 2009); *ulama* [Islamic scholars], who meet with and advise litigants before *kadhis* hear their cases;[6] and *kadhis*, or Islamic judges. All *kadhis* in Zanzibar follow the *Shafi'i* school of Islamic law (Stiles 2009).

While Zanzibari women's rights activists have made it their mission more recently to reform the archipelago's Islamic legal system, the *kadhi's* courts have long served as a space where women have been able to make claims to their Islamic legal rights, most frequently to a divorce. The *kadhi's* courts have been accessible to and used by women from the precolonial period until the present day (Stockreiter 2015). In her ethnography of a *kadhi's* court in the northeastern coastal village of Mkokotoni on the island of Unguja in Zanzibar, Erin Stiles (2009) reported a widespread belief among Zanzibari men that the *kadhi's* courts were "one-eyed," or more likely to rule in women's favor. In neighboring Kenya, Susan Hirsch (1998) described women's decisions to seek legal recourse in Malindi's *kadhi's* court as enabling the reworking of patriarchal gender norms, since women who described their marital woes in the semi-public space of the court challenged a gendered Swahili cultural norm of not airing one's dirty laundry in public. At the same time, in order to successfully receive a divorce, women often had to perform the role of the devoted, persevering wife. The *kadhi's* court in Malindi served as a space for women to challenge some gender norms, while other gender norms were reinforced.

Critiquing the *kadhi's* courts

Zanzibari women's rights activists began to discuss their concerns with the archipelago's *kadhi's* courts in the early 2000s.[7] They were most concerned then and continue to be concerned with a high rate of divorce and its economic implications for women. In Zanzibar, men can easily divorce their wives through verbal or written repudiation, while women either have to convince a *kadhi* of their husbands' misdoings to receive a "free" *fasikhi* divorce [court-ordered annulment], or they have to initiate a legal proceeding called *khuluu*, which allows women to divorce their husbands with a payment that is usually in the amount of their original dower (Stiles 2009). While Islamic law mandates that fathers financially support their children, divorced women are often left with inadequate resources to raise their children. And Zanzibari women's rights activists are not alone in their concerns regarding the economic effects of divorce on women and children. In a 2003 newspaper article in the state-affiliated *Zanzibar Leo*, Omar Said Omar, a *kadhi* in urban Kariokoo, held men primarily responsible for a high rate of divorce, scolding them for failing to financially support their families.[8] *Kadhi* Omar also complained about a lack of perseverance in marriage.

Kadhi Omar's words reflect another worry among women's rights activists in Zanzibar: the role of *kadhis* as divorce gatekeepers who frequently order women to remain in unhappy marriages, in order to preserve the sanctity of marriage. As a coalition, Zanzibari women's rights activists believe in the sanctity of marriage and worry about the ease with which men are able to divorce their wives, sometimes unbeknownst to their families. They worry, too, about the aftermath of divorce, when women are often left to support children on their own.[9] But they believe in women's right to a divorce, particularly in instances of mistreatment, and worry that *kadhis* are allowing a belief in the sanctity of marriage to cloud their better judgment. In a 2018 interview, ZAFELA director Jamila Mahmoud explained,

> "Most of the time, the women who go to the *kadhi's* court, they don't even have the ability to speak for their rights. So, we find that men are the ones who have a voice, they pretend they are good and that women are the ones who did wrong. And the *kadhis*, because of the notion that women are supposed to obey their husbands, even though their husbands have done things that are wrong, the *kadhis* say, "Okay, you are a woman, you are supposed to obey our husband. So please go back to your husband.""[10]

Not only do women's rights activists worry about instances when women are ordered to stay with their husbands against their wishes, but they also worry about *kadhis* forcing women to repay their dowers in *khuluu* divorces despite having adequate legal justification to receive free *fasikhi* divorces.[11] In a 2018 interview, Hawra Shamte, current program manager of TAMWA Zanzibar, explained,

> "A woman goes there [to the *kadhi's* court] and asks for a divorce, and they directly ask her to pay back the dower without even looking at the circumstances of why this woman wants a divorce. Maybe because he causes her to suffer, maybe she raises her children all alone, maybe the man doesn't provide food for the family, and maybe he is beating her. But when the woman is tired and she is trying to get a divorce, these *kadhi's* courts ask her to pay back the husband."[12]

As a coalition, Zanzibari women's rights activists are worried about the financial implications for women of being unfairly forced to repay their dowers and then support children on their own.

Because *kadhis* arbitrate in divorce cases, they are theoretically charged with addressing divorce-related settlements like the division of matrimonial property and child support. However, litigants have the option of channeling property and child support-related cases through Zanzibar's secular government legal system, in part depending on their preferences and in part depending on the amount of money in question.[13] ZAFELA lawyers and paralegals usually advise their clients to formalize child support contracts before proceeding onward to the *kadhi's* court for a divorce. ZAFELA paralegals and lawyers often mediate in the creation of such contracts, collecting monthly child support payments on behalf of their clients through mobile phone banking systems like M-Pesa. When fathers refuse to formalize child support contracts via ZAFELA mediation, ZAFELA paralegals and lawyers refer their clients to the new government-established children's court, which usually requires fathers to pay a higher monthly child support payment than the Tsh50,000 (~$25) monthly maximum that *kadhis* are able to mandate.

Zanzibar has a dizzying plural legal system, with new legal structures like the children's court and the *mufti's* office creating a plethora of legal options for litigants. I have seen post-divorce property cases handled by ZAFELA lawyers through legally binding contracts; by *kadhis*; by district, regional, and high court judges in Zanzibar; by the Tanzanian high court; and by the *mufti's* office, depending on the value of property in question and litigants' preferences.[14] Just as Zanzibari women were able to choose from different schools of Islamic law as they negotiated their rights during the colonial period (Stockreiter 2015), they to some extent are able to choose from an assortment of civil society, government, and religious legal structures and figures as they negotiate their rights today. A hodgepodge of legal options available to women has even further constricted the already limited jurisdiction of *kadhis*. As Halima,* a ZAFELA lawyer, explained to me in August of 2017, “The *kadhi’s* court has no power these days.” And while the power of *kadhis* has been reduced, they are still the ultimate decision makers for divorce seeking women. ZAFELA tries to influence *kadhis’* decisions by writing up their clients’ legal claim forms, replete with cultural and Islamic legal justifications for divorce, but the *kadhi* makes the final call. ZAFELA paralegal Rahma can appeal the decisions of district *kadhis* to the *mufti* or to the Chief *Kadhi*, but the decision-making power in divorce cases ultimately rests within the overarching Islamic legal system.

If *kadhis* wield most of the decision-making power in divorce cases, how can women’s rights activists ensure better divorce outcomes for women? This question has guided activists in their recent *kadhi’s* court reform efforts. First, they have advocated for an equitable division of matrimonial property, recognizing that the Islamic and cultural ideal in Zanzibar of separately held spousal property does not often happen in practice. Spouses contribute, in diverse ways, toward maintaining shared homes, which activists want to be recognized in the division of post-divorce property.[15] Second, in conjunction with Zanzibar’s Chief Justice, Oscar Makungu, who has long advocated for a higher education requirement among *kadhis*,[16] activists want every *kadhi* on the archipelago to have at least a bachelor’s degree in Islamic jurisprudence. Activists believe that if *kadhis* were more versed in Islamic law, they would rule more equitably in divorce cases.[17] Third, and most controversially, activists sought a stipulation that would allow women themselves to adjudicate Islamic legal cases as *kadhis*. They believed that women *kadhis* would be better able to empathize with women and make more gender equitable rulings. In their efforts to reform Zanzibar’s *kadhi’s* courts, activists worked as part of a national coalition of women and children’s rights-oriented organizations, just as they were aligned with a transnational network of Muslim women's rights activists from Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia. Zanzibari women's rights activists benefitted from a spiritual alliance with their transnational peers in all of their advocacy efforts but especially as they controversially advocated for women's divine right to serve as *kadhis*.

Cultivating national and transnational *umoja*

In their recent advocacy efforts surrounding *kadhi's* court reform, Zanzibari women's rights activists worked together as part of a "national"[18] gender coalition, just as they networked with transnational Muslim women's rights activists. In their national and transnational networking, women's rights activists worked to establish *umoja*, a Swahili philosophical concept that implies solidarity, unity, and relational personhood. As a philosophical concept, *umoja* infers the increased power that a unified whole has over the sum of its parts and was a central tenet of first Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere's political system of *Ujamaa*, or African socialism (Nyerere 1967). Over time, the national and transnational *umoja* cultivated by Zanzibari women's rights activists has become increasingly influenced by a shared Islamic faith.

Women and children's rights organizations in Zanzibar initially formed a national coalition in 2002.[19] Among the leaders of today's gender coalition, TAMWA Zanzibar director Mzuri Issa was a proponent for civil society *umoja* as a journalist with the state-run *Zanzibar Leo* newspaper in the early 2000s (see Chapter 2). She published an article in 2003 beginning with the Swahili proverb, "*Umoja ni nguvu, utengano ni udhaifu* [unity is strength, division is weakness]," in which she called on civil society organizations to join together to collaboratively address social problems.[20] Like other African countries, Zanzibar experienced a civil society explosion during the millennial era, in part due to its enmeshment in a broader global human rights and democratization movement (Tripp et al. 2009). Mzuri envisioned a gender network in Zanzibar that would be modeled after mainland Tanzania's gender coalition and the Pan-Africanist Organization of African Unity (OAU). It would reflect national and Pan-African *umoja*.[21]

Zanzibari women's rights activists have long drawn on the philosophical tenet of *umoja* in their advocacy efforts, particularly in their ongoing organizing for women's greater political representation. For example, TAMWA-affiliated journalist Shifaa Said Hassan wrote in a 2002 *Zanzibar Leo* article, "*Umoja*…is indeed the only weapon that will enable women to be elected."[22] A few years later, in 2005, the women's caucus of Zanzibar's House of Representatives called on women from different political parties to maintain *umoja* in order to ensure women's broader political representation and participation.[23] *Umoja* as a tenet of Zanzibari feminism was front and center among women politicians, voters, and political aspirants in the lead-up to what would be a contentious 2005 election.

I observed the work of Zanzibar's national gender coalition from 2017-2018, which provided me with insight into the importance of *umoja* as a tenet of Zanzibari feminism. During that time, coalition members were working to improve the movement of gender-based violence (GBV) cases through Zanzibar's criminal justice system and advocating for major *kadhi's* court reforms. The gender coalition often held meetings with criminal justice system stakeholders and citizen activists, where they strategized together to improve GBV case outcomes. These meetings were rife with tension, since gender coalition members often pointed out the inefficiencies and corruption inherent in the criminal justice system. Whenever group tension mounted, however, the gender coalition's leader, veteran women's rights activist Asha Aboud, reminded participants that they were all "building one house."[24] Her frequent mention of "building one house" was an allusion to first Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere's metaphorical use of a shared house to exemplify *umoja* in his political philosophy of *Ujamaa* (Nyerere 1967). Zanzibar's gender coalition has channeled the Swahili cultural tenet and nationalism-tinged language and philosophy of *umoja* since their millennial-era formation, which has helped them in such a politically polarized context.

In addition to their national solidarity as members of Zanzibar's gender coalition, Zanzibari women's rights activists were engaged with a transnational network of Muslim women's rights activists in their recent *kadhi's* court reform efforts. Zanzibari women's rights activists became connected to a transnational network of Muslim women's rights activists from about 2006 onward, when current ZAFELA director Jamila Mahmoud attended the Second International Congress on Islamic Feminism in Barcelona, Spain,[25] under the tutelage of Zanzibari feminist activist and legal scholar Salma Maoulidi. Jamila explained in an interview that she gained insight at the conference on how men strategically interpret Islamic texts to deprive women of their rights.[26] There, Jamila became connected with Malaysia-based Sisters in Islam, which uses feminist interpretations of Islamic scripture and jurisprudence as a foundation for their activism (Basarudin 2016). The seminal First, Second, and Third Congresses on Islamic Feminism in Barcelona marked a mushrooming of new transnational connections and networks between Muslim women's rights activists (Badran 2010). New networks joined the existing Women Living under Muslim Laws (WLUML) and the Sisterhood Is Global Initiative (SIGI), two antifundamentalist networks of Muslim and secular feminists concerned with advancing women's rights in the Muslim world. Both WLUML and SIGI were formed in 1984 and have since been based out of Europe and the US, respectively (Moghadam 2005).

Sisters in Islam participated actively in the WLUML network from the early 1990s onward (Moghadam 2005), later launching its own transnational Islamic feminist network, *Musawah,* in 2009. *Musawah* describes itself as aiming to apply "Islamic teachings, universal human rights principles, fundamental rights and constitutional guarantees, and the lived realities of women and men today."[27] The most fundamental difference between *Musawah* and both WLUML and SIGI is its deliberate incorporation of an explicitly Islamic approach, among others, for ensuring equality and justice in the Muslim family. The location of its headquarters outside of the west is another notable difference.

Jamila and other ZAFELA leaders leveraged their earlier connection with Sisters in Islam as ZAFELA spearheaded major *kadhi's* court reform efforts from roughly 2011 onward. By connecting with the influential Malaysia-based Sisters in Islam, ZAFELA leaders were confronting the historical marginalization of African women in international Muslim women's movements. In an article for the Pan-Africanist *Pambazuka* news publication, Jamila's mentor, Salma Maoulidi (2011b), attributed African women's marginalization in transnational Muslim women's rights networks to "…the perception that they are new converts to Islam and thus not authentic enough when compared to non-Africans…Such a perception has probably prejudiced donors as well as Islamic foundations from giving to independent Muslim women's groups in African countries the way they do in the west or in Southeast Asia." Maoulidi suspected that a shift would come soon, upon attending the "Muslim Women Leaders at the Frontline of Change" Conference in Istanbul, Turkey, in 2011, where there were representatives from 12 African countries among 200 Muslim women leaders in attendance (Maoulidi 2011b).

Marking an increased representation of African women in global Muslim women's movements, ZAFELA leaders applied for and received funding in 2011 from the Open Society

Initiative for East Africa to support a knowledge exchange with Malaysia-based Sisters in Islam.[28] ZAFELA argued in its funding proposal that a knowledge exchange with Sisters in Islam "would expose [them] to the experiences of other women organizing in Muslim contexts and how they have responded to *kadhi's* court systems and the rights of women in general."[29] ZAFELA members visited Sisters in Islam in Malaysia in 2012, which was followed up with a 2013 visit to Zanzibar by Sisters in Islam and women from peer organizations in Singapore and Indonesia to meet with government and other stakeholders to discuss Islamic legal reform.[30] Gender coalition members employed the strategies they gained from their knowledge exchange with Sisters in Islam in their *kadhi's* court reform efforts, citing the presence of women *kadhis* in other predominantly Muslim contexts and citing Islamic textual support for allowing women to serve as *kadhis*. Commenting on the greater utility for Zanzibari women's rights activists of transnational connections with other Muslim women's rights activists versus with their peers on the predominantly Christian Tanzanian mainland, TAMWA Zanzibar governing board member Shifaa Said Hassan said in a 2018 interview, "But we find something from Malaysia, it really is a little bit sweet meat, you know? There's some sort of a similarity, and similarity in religion is very strong, especially when you want to challenge these *kadhi's* courts, you need to have a very strong argument."[31]

Sisters in Islam and members of Zanzibar's gender coalition actively present themselves as believing Muslims. The gender coalition's religiosity has become an increasingly important part of its public identity, particularly during its advocacy surrounding the right of women to serve as *kadhis*, which Jamila Mahmoud herself described as "a matter of believing."[32] In gender coalition meetings related to *kadhi's* court reform, Zanzibari women's rights activists talked about building *imani* [faith] and *umoja* interchangeably, alluding to an increasingly faith-based unity and solidarity among coalition members.[33] They developed both an instrumental and spiritual solidarity with Sisters in Islam, just as they continue to cultivate *umoja* and now *imani* as a national coalition.

An overview of women's rights activism and *kadhi's* court reform in Zanzibar: 2013-2017

ZAFELA's efforts to reform the *kadhi's* courts picked up speed when their knowledge exchange with Sisters in Islam culminated in a visit by their transnational Muslim women's rights activist peers to Zanzibar in 2013. I imagined the arrival of Malaysian, Singaporean, and Indonesian women's rights activists at Zanzibar's airport, which would have barely evoked notice on a cosmopolitan, Indian Ocean archipelago with deep historical and cultural linkages to Southeast Asia. The Sisters in Islam-led delegation met with Zanzibari stakeholders during their 2013 visit, which included national gender coalition members, the chief justice, magistrates, police officers, and Muslim leaders. The delegation shared *Qur'anic* verses with stakeholders in Zanzibar to highlight why women were permitted to be *kadhis* in Islam.[34]

Jamila remembered her excitement in the lead-up to the meeting and her disappointment when Zanzibari Muslim leaders spoke over the Sisters in Islam-led delegation, insisting, "There's no way women can be *kadhis*, because it's forbidden by the *Qur'an*."[35] A major figure in Zanzibar's judiciary, however, approached Jamila after the meeting to assure her that he would push for legal reform. Soon after the Sisters in Islam-led meeting, the government prepared an amended bill. ZAFELA was invited during the lawmaking process to contribute its recommendations, after which a committee of ministers met to review the new law. Jamila explained,

> “Then, a committee of ministers met and said, “No way.” They removed so many things, such as the matrimonial division of assets, the right for *kadhi’s* court clients to have representation in court, and the right of women to be *kadhis*. After this, we said, “Now we need TAMWA. They’re media advocates, so they can publicize, raise awareness, and educate the public about how our proposed recommendations are not counter to Islam.””[36]

After the ministers’ negative response to ZAFELA’s recommendations for *kadhi’s* court reforms, Jamila knew that they would need to rely more heavily on their coalition sister organization, TAMWA Zanzibar, which uses the media as a vessel for its activism (see Chapter 2). Zanzibar’s gender coalition would have to anticipate and respond thoughtfully in the media to criticisms of their efforts by local Islamic leaders and by the global Islamist press. For example, in 2014, Hizb ut-Tahrir, a pan-Islamist organization that seeks to reestablish an Islamic Caliphate in the Muslim world, issued a public statement on its blog, calling on Muslim leaders to challenge ZAFELA’s efforts to reform Zanzibar’s *kadhi’s* courts.[37] Like ZAFELA, Sisters in Islam has also faced resistance from the Malaysian chapter of *Hizb ut-Tahrir* (Basarudin 2016).

The increasingly important role of TAMWA in *kadhi’s* court reform was reflected in a 2016 *Zanzibar Leo* article written by TAMWA-affiliated journalist Husna Mohammed.[38] In Mohammed’s article, Zanzibar’s gender coalition formally called on the government to revisit their previously stalled efforts to work toward *kadhi’s* court reform. The issue of *kadhi’s* court reform became even more heated and intensified in 2017, soon after I began my fieldwork, when Zanzibar’s House of Representatives debated an updated bill that ZAFELA had again contributed its recommendations to. I tried to attend major stakeholder meetings during the gender coalition’s *kadhi’s* court reform efforts, but ZAFELA lawyers expressed a concern that it would not look very good for them to show up with a white western woman in tow, since religious leaders often tried to discredit them as being overly influenced by the west and as un-Islamic. Because I was unable to attend major meetings with government and religious leaders related to *kadhi's* court reform, I depend most heavily on interview and media data rather than on data collected from participant observation for my analysis in the next few sections.

On September 27, 2017, TAMWA-affiliated *Zanzibar Leo* journalist Husna Mohammed published an extensive article highlighting proposed *kadhi's* court reforms and the opinions of activists and members of the House of Representatives.[39] Mohammed quoted Jamila Mahmoud in the article, who explained, "All institutions are receiving complaints from women who are going to the *kadhi's* courts and not receiving their rights, such as their right to some of the land that they tended to and maintained while married." Dr. Mzuri Issa, the director of TAMWA Zanzibar and former proponent for *umoja* in her early *Zanzibar Leo* articles, similarly commented on the division of matrimonial property, adding that Singapore had policies within its *kadhi's* courts to ensure an equitable division of matrimonial property. Mzuri additionally highlighted that many predominantly Islamic countries allow women to serve as *kadhis*, *ulama*, and *washauri* [advisors] within their Islamic legal structures, such as Malaysia and Indonesia.

In the same two-page spread, Husna Mohammed cited members of the House of Representatives, many of whom were committed to improving the post-divorce allocation of matrimonial property. Elected officials were more conflicted about allowing women to become *kadhis*, which a male member of Zanzibar's gender coalition attributed to their failure to convince members of the house that allowing women to become *kadhis* was consistent with Islam.[40] To illustrate, Panya Ali Abdalla was among several members of the House of Representatives to reflect on the division of matrimonial property. She said, "Many married women are working together with their husbands to tend land and property, but when the marriage ends, these women are getting nothing at all for the land they have tended." Hamza Hassan Juma was the only quoted member of the house to comment on allowing women to become *kadhis*. She said, "Many people abide by a religious attitude that women can't be *kadhis* when in fact Islam has clearly explained, regarding this position, that anyone—man or woman—with a serious religious education is permitted to be a *kadhi*." While there was support among elected representatives for broader *kadhi's* court reforms, few representatives would publicly vouch for their support of women *kadhis*.

The day after Husna Mohammed's article was published in *Zanzibar Leo,* the House of Representatives issued an official statement that they had voted to cancel the previous *Kadhi's* Court Act of 1985.[41] In their press release, government leaders were vague about which suggested reforms would eventually become law, explaining that they were trying to simplify the existing legal system and to protect the rights of women and children. The skeletal new law included vague provisions for the division of matrimonial property and a higher education requirement for *kadhis*. On October 4th, 2017, a *Zanzibar Leo* illustrator published a cartoon

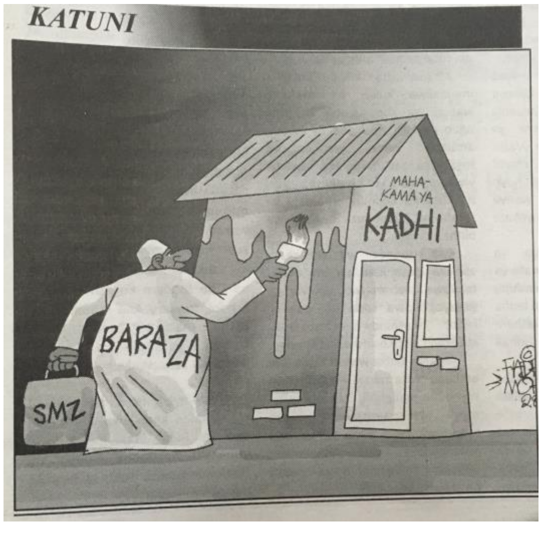

Figure 7: Cartoon offering critique of 2017 *kadhi's* court reforms as superficial. *Zanzibar Leo*, October 4, 2017.

criticizing *kadhi's* court reforms, in which a male member of the house, dressed in an Islamic *kanzu* and *kofia*, is painting the exterior of a *kadhi's* court. The cartoon insinuates that recent *kadhi's* court reforms represented nothing more to the existing Islamic legal system than a superficial coat of paint.

"President, don't sign:" exploring the strategic texts of Zanzibar's gender coalition

There was a catch after Zanzibar's House of Representatives cancelled the existing *Kadhi's* Court Act of 1985 and created a skeletal new law: the president had yet to officially sign the new bill into law. Members of Zanzibar's gender coalition met in the days following the passage of the revised *Kadhi's* Court Act of 2017 to strategize. In this section, I analyze a few strategic texts produced by the gender coalition during the period of time between the passage of the law at the end of September and its signing into law by the president in early November: a written press release and two public press conferences published on YouTube. In their strategic texts, activists carefully negotiated growing discontent with their efforts coming from Zanzibar's Organization of Muslim Clerics (JUMAZA) while also citing evidence that women were permitted by Islam to serve as *kadhis*. They additionally highlighted Zanzibar's obligation, as a signatory to major human rights conventions, to ensure "gender sensitivity" in the passage of new laws. In this section, I use strategic texts produced by Zanzibar's gender coalition to guide my analysis. Because I was a participant observer of ZAFELA's work from mid-2017-mid-2018 and a frequent attendee of gender coalition meetings and events, I have a unique base of complementary information and knowledge to enhance my analysis.

After the House of Representatives passed new *kadhi's* court reforms, Zanzibar's national gender coalition met to strategize. The gender coalition made public its first strategic text on

October 10, 2017: a press release calling on President Ali Mohamed Shein not to sign the bill until it included a provision for women *kadhis* and *ulama*.[42] The press statement—entitled, "President, don't sign—activists,"—was published in a news blog called "*Zanzibar Yetu*" [Our Zanzibar], produced by prominent Zanzibari woman journalist Salma Said. Since the millennial era, when the archipelago had just one primary state-affiliated newspaper in circulation—*Zanzibar Leo*[43]—Zanzibar has experienced a major influx of private media outlets and news blogs. The gender coalition released several subsequent strategic texts, including a press conference led by TAMWA Zanzibar director Mzuri Issa on October 11, 2017,[44] and another public press conference led by gender coalition member Salma Saadati in October of 2017.[45] In all of these texts, the gender coalition presented three major arguments for why Zanzibar should allow women to serve as *kadhis*. Their first argument was that having women as *kadhis* was not counter to Islam. Their second argument centered on Zanzibar's obligation to ensuring gender equitable governmental policies as a signatory to major transnational human rights conventions. In their third argument, the gender coalition attributed resistance to their efforts to allow women to become *kadhis* to "*mfumo dume*" [patriarchy].

In their strategic texts, Zanzibar's gender coalition focused most heavily on producing evidence to prove that having women as *kadhis* was not counter to Islam. To do so, they cited male Islamic authority figures, including the Chief *Kadhis* of Kenya and Malaysia. In their written press release, for example, they cited the Chief *Kadhi* of neighboring Kenya, Sheikh Ahmad Mudhar, who publicly stated in 2011,"There is no rule in Islam preventing a woman from being a *kadhi*. Islamic texts are quiet regarding this issue."[46] The gender coalition tried to appeal to male Islamic authority figures in Zanzibar by citing a male Muslim leader in Kenya.[47] In a press conference published on private Zaima TV's YouTube Channel (and since removed) on October 11, 2017, Mzuri Issa similarly described meeting the Chief *Kadhi* of Malaysia, who personally told her that there was nothing in the *Qur'an* forbidding women from becoming *kadhis*.[48] The gender coalition knew that statements from male Islamic authority figures would carry the most clout for religious leaders in Zanzibar, so they cited the primary argument posed by male Islamic leaders elsewhere that there was nothing in the *Qur'an* against having women serve as *kadhis*. Coalition members presented a simultaneous argument of presence in their official press statement, citing the work of the Prophet Muhammad's wife, Aisha, in recording and preserving Islamic teachings for future generations.[49] Their argument was that women like Aisha have served as authoritative figures in the history of Islam, which supported the notion of having women *kadhis*.

Beyond citing male Islamic authority figures and the historical presence of important Muslim women, the gender coalition cited a precedence of women *kadhis* in other predominantly Muslim countries to support their argument that having women Islamic judges was not counter to Islam. They again referred to the words of Sheikh Ahmad Mudhar that by allowing women *kadhis*, Kenya would join the ranks of predominantly Islamic countries like Egypt, Sudan, Tunisia, Kuwait, Turkey, and Palestine. Reflecting their knowledge exchange with Sisters in Islam, gender coalition members additionally cited the presence of women Islamic judges in Malaysia and Singapore.[50]

The second major argument that activists presented in their strategic texts was Zanzibar's obligation to enact gender equitable policies as a signatory to major human rights conventions. In their official press statement, Zanzibari women's rights activists wrote, "We believed that Tanzania/Zanzibar, as a country that has signed many international conventions that insist on gender equality, would allow women *kadhis*…But we have discovered as a coalition, to our surprise, that our decision makers seem to be blinded to our human rights obligations."[51] When women's rights activists cited Zanzibar's obligations to international conventions in their official press statement, they insisted that enacting gender equitable laws would ensure a future of nation building and development for all Zanzibaris. They depended heavily on a post-revolution lexicon of nation building and development from the mid-1960s, which carries powerful linguistic and ideological clout in Zanzibar.

Third, in their strategic documents, coalition members attributed resistance among religious leaders to *mfumo dume*, or patriarchy. To illustrate, in a Zaima TV-published press conference, coalition member Mzuri Issa suggested that while some people were legitimately afraid of going against their religion by allowing women to become *kadhis*, the vast majority of resistors simply wanted to maintain patriarchal rule over religious life in Zanzibar.[52] She called on male religious leaders to look beyond their immediate interests and to consider the interests of future generations. In their official press statement, coalition members suggested that historically, Zanzibaris attended Friday sermons in Arabic, which they could barely understand, yet alone question. They argued that many youths were now gaining a more solid grasp of Islam through their studies abroad, which would eventually result in a reformed, equality-driven Islam in Zanzibar.[53]

Beyond three overarching arguments that they put forth in several strategic texts, coalition members additionally tried, after a new law passed in the House of Representatives but before the president signed it, to establish more peaceful relations with local religious leaders in JUMAZA, who reflect Zanzibar's enmeshment within a global Islamic revival.[54] Sometime in October, ten activists met with JUMAZA leaders to discuss community-level issues in Zanzibar, strategically designating a male coalition member as their leader in the meeting. In a public press conference held later on the same day,[55] coalition members Salma Saadati and Hawra Shamte sat in front of a group of activists and journalists, each adorned in a traditional, black *buibui*[56]—a symbol of cultural preservation, morality, and women's respectability in Zanzibar. Salma and Hawra departed from their usual choice of colorful dress for the press conference, perhaps to strategically highlight their piety and religiosity as believing Muslim women, since religious leaders had previously dismissed them as un-Islamic. In the press conference, Salma Saadati explained how the meeting with religious leaders and activists unfolded: "Among the social issues we discussed today were moral erosion and the problem of Zanzibaris not protecting their communities."[57] Salma was referring to widespread frustration shared by Muslim leaders and women's rights activists alike that Zanzibaris were not watchful enough of their children's activities, which fueled the major problem of sexual assault.

Salma also explained another topic discussed at the meeting: the issuance of public curses by Zanzibari Muslim leaders against women's rights activists for their efforts to enable women to become *kadhis*. I later interviewed a major women's rights activist, who elaborated on the resistance that they faced among religious leaders: "When you want to destroy somebody, you use some *Qur'anic* verses to do that, and they decided to destroy us in the mosques. That's a big challenge we faced…They said that we think they don't know where we live, but they will see us…They scared us a lot."

In the YouTube press conference held sometime between mid-October and the start of November, Salma explained that while they did not discuss the issue of women *kadhis* at length in the meeting, all activist and religious leader attendees agreed to establish a committee comprised of three religious leaders and four activists to reach consensus regarding the issue of women serving in positions of Islamic authority in Zanzibar.[58] The agreement among activists and JUMAZA religious leaders to establish a committee to reach consensus represented a major step forward in an otherwise tense relationship. In the press conference, Salma continually mentioned the importance of working "*kwa pamoja,"* or with unity and togetherness, again reflecting the Zanzibari feminist tenet of *umoja*.

President Shein signed the *Kadhi's* Court Act of 2017 into law on November 1, 2017,[59] just three weeks after activists called on him to not sign the bill until it included their recommendations. "The president didn't rely," Jamila Mahmoud explained in an interview. "We think he called people who were concerned about what we wanted to add. We heard rumors that some of our recommendations were put in, and he signed it."[60] In the final *Kadhi's* Court Act, women were not permitted to be *kadhis*, but "the division of matrimonial assets was there," Jamila described, "and he agreed to have women as *ulama* in the courts, because we have women scholars of Islamic law here in Zanzibar." Women will hold new roles as authoritative purveyors of Islamic legal knowledge within the *kadhi's* courts, even if they are not permitted to adjudicate Islamic legal cases as judges.

In a surprising turn of events, soon after the final passage of the *Kadhi's* Court Act of 2017, JUMAZA's Sheikh Muhidin issued a vitriolic press statement condemning Zanzibar's gender coalition, perhaps because of the controversial reforms that they had succeeded in passing. A private television station, KTV Tanzania, published Sheikh Muhidin's statement on its YouTube channel.[61] In his statement, Sheikh Muhidin said,

> "The committee that we promised to establish with women's rights activists concerning the challenges that they face, this committee will not materialize. Take my word, it will never happen. We cannot agree to engage with this hypocrisy, with these two-faced activists—we cannot agree to be played by these people. Our communities should take

> every step to fight these activists, because they are dangerous in our Zanzibari communities. They are plucking ideologies from other places[62] that are having the effects of tearing apart our communities, causing us to become mentally confused, and taking away our awareness…There is nothing in the *Qur'an* that allows a woman to be a *kadhi,* so we cannot join hands with them in their efforts.[63]

Zanzibar's gender coalition was devastated by Sheikh Muhidin's public statement. The disappointment of Halima, a lawyer, was especially palpable when I saw her at ZAFELA's office on November 21, 2017: "It would have been better if he had told us to our face! This is patriarchy, not religion," she lamented. Women's rights activists nearly succeeded in cultivating some degree of *umoja* with religious leaders, through their joint agreement to form a committee in order to establish consensus on the issue of women *kadhis*. But just as quickly as the possibility of a committee came to fruition, it disappeared with the condemnation of Zanzibari women's rights activists by JUMAZA leader Sheikh Muhidin. JUMAZA counteracted an argument posed by the Chief *Kadhis* of Kenya and Malaysia that there was nothing in the *Qur'an* against allowing women to become *kadhis* with the opposite argument, that there was nothing in the *Qur'an* supporting women *kadhis*.

Moving forward, Zanzibari women's rights activists realized that it would be difficult to cultivate any degree of solidarity with JUMAZA in their continuing efforts to ensure that women would someday become *kadhis*. They had successfully developed *umoja* with the media and to some extent with the government, in part because of the membership structures of coalition organizations TAMWA and ZAFELA, whose feminist members occupied every media outlet and government ministry on the archipelago. When it came to the question of women *kadhis*, however, government leaders were reticent to challenge JUMAZA's public proclamations. In planning for the future, Zanzibari women's rights activists returned to an argument from their official press statement: that it would be young Zanzibari scholars of Islam who would sow the seeds of change.

"Let's continue to build *imani*:" strategizing for the future

During my fieldwork in Zanzibar, I was able to talk with two central members of the gender coalition—Jamila Mahmoud and Hawra Shamte—about how they envisioned moving forward in their quest to continue to reform the *kadhi's* courts. When I visited Hawra at TAMWA Zanzibar's rural Tunguu offices during the height of the rainy season in April of 2018, she was focusing most heavily on a new law regarding the division of matrimonial property after a divorce. She explained to me that the law had yet to be fully defined in terms of what would be recognized as a contribution by women in marriage and that women's rights lawyers should be centrally involved in ironing out the law's *kanuni* [rules].[64] In late 2018, TAMWA published another strategic text to exert influence over what would count as a woman's contribution toward marital property.[65] In it, TAMWA outlined diverse understandings of matrimonial property from different legal frameworks around the world. They argued in the report that Zanzibar's courts should recognize the labor that women have injected into the upkeep of a home when matrimonial property is allocated between divorced spouses. TAMWA Zanzibar sought a departure from mainland Tanzania's Law of Marriage Act, which usually requires monetary receipts from women to prove their contributions.

Reflecting its engagement with a transnational network of Muslim women's rights activists, who have been engaged in a feminist exegesis of the *Qur'an*, TAMWA began its report with a quote from medieval Islamic juridical scholar Ibn Qayyim: "The *shari'a* is all about justice, kindness, common good, and wisdom. Any rule that departs from justice to injustice…or departs from common good to harm…is not part of the *shari'a*, even if it is arrived at by literal translation."[66] Zanzibari women's rights activists are equipped with a deep knowledge of Islamic jurisprudence as they seek to influence the ironing out of the new *Kadhi's* Court Act of 2017. In their citation of Qayyim's quote, TAMWA anticipated and foreclosed the ability of religious leaders to put forth their predictable argument that the *Qur'an* did not permit an equitable division of matrimonial property. TAMWA's implied argument was that an inequitable division of matrimonial property was inherently unjust and could therefore not be considered *shari'a*, since divine law must by definition ensure the common good.

In her explanation of their next steps, Jamila Mahmoud talked about building public solidarity with Islamic leaders who quietly supported them, lamenting, "There are some *shehe* [Islamic leaders] inside there, they say, 'We are supporting you, but since we are men, we can't say anything in front of our colleagues.'"[67] Jamila was especially disappointed by the lack of support she received from a prominent Zanzibari woman Islamic scholar. Jamila tried to involve her in their advocacy surrounding the right of women to become *kadhis*, but the woman declined, not wanting to upset her male peers. Jamila lamented, "There are so many people that are afraid to speak in public, and for me, it's like, why are you afraid? Who are you afraid of? Because if you are a Muslim and believe in God, it's still loyal, how you are doing it. So why are you two-faced? You have to decide to believe or not to believe."[68] For Jamila, enabling women to serve as *kadhis* was an enactment of her faith.

Just as Jamila was dedicated to cultivating public support among religious leaders who secretly supported them, she was committed to fostering a separate women and youth-centered Islamic solidarity. She spoke excitedly about the gender coalition's goal of supporting a cadre of young women to study Islamic jurisprudence so that women are prepared to assume the post of *kadhi* when the law changes. She envisioned social change as stemming from young women, who would invest themselves in Islamic education abroad before returning home to assume positions of Islamic authority in Zanzibar.[69] They would feel more of a sense of obligation to their faith—an Islam that promoted equitable gender relations—than they would to the male-dominated status quo. The law would eventually change, and women would be equipped with higher Islamic education when it did. A third, not-quite-aligned next step forward for the coalition was to determine whether ordinary Zanzibari women even cared about whether women were allowed to become *kadhis*.[70]

Soon before I left Zanzibar, on April 25, 2017, I attended a gender coalition meeting at the offices of ANGOZA, a coalition organization in the energetic, peri-urban neighborhood of Mombasa, just below the path of descent to Zanzibar's Abeid Amani Karume International Airport. When I arrived, coalition members were in the midst of reflecting on their advocacy efforts during the previous year. They had ideas about how they could have done better. One activist suggested that they needed more *uvulimu* [perseverance] and *ushirikiano* [sharing, participation]. Others voiced their agreement, suggesting that TAMWA should not serve alone as the public face of the coalition.

Reflecting on their parallel efforts to ensure the more expedient movement of sexual assault cases through Zanzibar's criminal justice system and to enact harsher sentences for perpetrators of sexual assault, a woman coalition member in attendance, Farida,* lamented that despite all of their efforts, sexual assault cases—particularly among children—had become seemingly even more rampant on the archipelago. The strengthening of law enforcement accountability to survivors of gender-based violence is a central strategy of the seminal

Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979. In other words, criminal justice reform is a major transnational women's rights strategy for addressing gender-based violence. Unsatisfied that criminal justice reform would result in the change that she desired, Farida proposed an alternative: "We must return to *malezi ya zamani* [childcare methods from the past]." During my fieldwork, I observed many occasions in which ordinary Zanzibaris, activists, and even religious leaders suggested a return to *malezi ya zamani*, or the more punitive, watchful, and communal parenting methods of the past. The call for a return to *malezi ya zamani* was similarly common in early 2000s *Nuru* and *Zanzibar Leo* newspaper articles and reflected a widespread fear of a loss of Zanzibari cultural and social mores in light of an influx of globalization and tourism.[71] Farida then provided an example of how she enacted *malezi ya zamani* in her own home. After discovering love letters belonging to her daughter, Farida forced her to read them aloud. Coalition members whooped in appreciation for Farida's bold response to her daughter's possible relationship with a classmate.

Reflecting on the coalition's *kadhi's* court reform efforts, Suleiman,* a male coalition member whom I had seen at several other meetings, commented on the lack of support among members in the House of Representatives for their proposed *kadhi's* court reforms. "We could have done a better job of assuring them that they weren't going against their religion," he reflected, unsatisfied with their efforts to counteract the louder cries of religious leaders that allowing women to become *kadhis* was un-Islamic. Suleiman then countered his criticism of their efforts with a positive observation: "As activists, we have built *imani*. Let's continue to build *imani*." Most meeting attendees voiced their agreement with Suleiman's statement. His words reminded me of Asha Aboud's insistence at meetings of diverse stakeholders on the importance of *umoja*, which she exemplified with the metaphor of building a shared house. Suleiman was using the word *imani* not in its literal meaning as faith, but to refer to a faith-based *umoja*, or solidarity, that the coalition had cultivated in their efforts to reform the *kadhi's* courts.

Both Farida and Suleiman's reflections highlight the limitations of transnational women's rights conventions and networks for the gender coalition's own goals in the context of Zanzibar. While CEDAW calls for criminal justice system reform as a strategy for addressing gender-based violence, and while TAMWA and its sister coalition organizations received donor funding to advocate for criminal justice system reform, Farida and other activists were ultimately dubious that it would meaningfully lower a growing incidence of sexual assault against children on the archipelago. Farida vouched instead for the importance of more watchful, punitive, and communal parenting. Furthermore, the coalition's reliance on a transnational network of Muslim women's rights activists from Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore was not enough to counter JUMAZA's resistance to their efforts or to convince government leaders that their proposed *kadhi's* court reforms were not un-Islamic. But Suleiman's reflection that the coalition had and should continue to build *imani* and attendees' affirmative responses to his statement highlighted the coalition's commitment to continuing to cultivate a more localized, faith-based *umoja*. Suleiman's call for a continued cultivation of *imani* was not unlike Jamila's prediction that a solidarity of young women Islamic scholars would ensure a more egalitarian Islam in the future in Zanzibar or her conviction that their activism related to *kadhi's* court reform was a matter of faith.

The continued cultivation of a faith-based solidarity among coalition members reflects the dual influences of a nationalism and socialism-inspired *umoja* and of coalition members' shared Islamic faith in contemporary women's rights organizing in Zanzibar. In my next chapter, in part in response to Jamila's curiosity about how ordinary women interpreted the coalition's efforts to reform the Islamic legal system, I return to my case study approach employed in Chapters 1 and 2 to explore how Rehema—a domestic worker from mainland Tanzania—negotiates agency in her daily social engagements in Zanzibar, which include a socialism and nationalism-inspired women's savings cooperative and an Islamic reformist women's prayer group. My observations of Rehema's savings cooperative and prayer group provided me with important insight into how non-elite women in Zanzibar are negotiating the language and ideological tenets of the Islamic revivalist present and the socialist past in their daily lives in multiple, nonlinear, and often contradictory ways.

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[1] Between January and August of 2017, the *kadhi's* court of Kwerekwe opened 394 divorce cases, while the next busiest court of Mkokotoni opened 57 divorce cases. Zanzibar's most populous island of Unguja, where I conducted my field research, has seven *kadhi's* courts. "*Takwimu za Kesi, Mahakama ya Kadhi Unguja*," January-August 2017.

[2] Rahma's interpretation of verse 4:128 from the *Qur'an*.

[3] Rahma's interpretation of verse 65:2 from the *Qur'an*.

[4] Religion has become increasingly politicized in Zanzibar. Islamic reformists often aligned themselves with the opposition party, CUF, and perceived the establishment of the state-affiliated *mufti's* office in 2001 as an attempt by the ruling CCM party to claim undue religious authority in Zanzibar (Stiles 2009; Loimeier 2009).

[5] Personal conversation on September 19, 2017. Loimeier (2009) has written extensively on the increasingly expansive Islamic education provided by Zanzibari *madrasas*.

[6] Mahmoud, Jamila. June 5, 2018. Interview with Jessica Ott. English. New Jang'ombe, Zanzibar.

[7] "Jamii yatakiwa kujiepusha na migogoro ya kifamilia." *Zanzibar Leo*, October 13, 2002, 1-3.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Mohammed, Husna, "TAMWA yataka marekebisho sheria mahakama ya kadhi Zanzibar," *Zanzibari Leo*, June 16, 2016, 1-2.

[10] Mahmoud, Jamila. June 5, 2018. Interview with Jessica Ott. English. New Jang'ombe, Zanzibar.

[11] Stiles (2009) detailed the phenomenon of *kadhis* forcing women to pay back their dowers even in instances when their husbands misbehaved in marriage. She described *kadhis* as being concerned with the financial ability of men to remarry post-divorce, in a setting of increasing economic insecurity.

[12] Shamte, Hawra. April 24, 2018. Interview with Jessica Ott. English. Tunguu, Zanzibar.

[13] This may change, since 2017 legal reforms vested *kadhis* with more power over the allocation of matrimonial property after a divorce.

[14] Generally, cases involving smaller amounts of property are handled by ZAFELA lawyers, *kadhis* courts, district courts, or the *mufti's* office, while cases involving larger amounts of property are handled by ZAFELA lawyers, regional courts, the high court, or the *mufti's* office. Appealed cases move upward through the high courts of Zanzibar and Tanzania.

[15] Shamte, Hawra. April 24, 2018. Interview with Jessica Ott. English. Tunguu, Zanzibar. Mahmoud, Jamila. June 5, 2018. Interview with Jessica Ott. English. New Jang'ombe, Zanzibar.

[16] Mohammed, Husna, "Serikali kutafuta makadhi wenye taaluma kubwa," *Zanzibar Leo*, November 17, 2003, 1-3.

[17] Shamte, Hawra. April 24, 2018. Interview with Jessica Ott. English. Tunguu, Zanzibar. Mahmoud, Jamila. June 5, 2018. Interview with Jessica Ott. English. New Jang'ombe, Zanzibar.

[18] I use the word national in quotes, because while Zanzibar technically maintains a controversial union government with Tanzania and is thus a part of the Tanzanian nation, it has for the most part maintained a distinct civil society from the mainland.

[19] Mohammed, Husna, "NGOs za wanawake zaanzisha mtandao maalum wa kijinsia," *Zanzibar Leo*, December 19, 2002, 6.

[20] Issa, Mzuri, "NGOs zifanye kazi kwa pamoja kutatua matatizo yanayowakabili," *Zanzibar Leo*, March 25, 2003, 8.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Hassan, Shifaa Said, "Nafasi zaidi za uongozi wa kitaifa zitolewe kwa wanawake," *Zanzibar Leo*, October 9, 2002, 5.

[23] Abdi, Mwanajuma, "Wanawake wa vyama mbali mbali wataka wawe na umoja," *Zanzibar Leo*, July 29, 2005, 1-3.

[24] I observed two coalition-led meetings with criminal justice stakeholders in which Asha Aboud and others appealed to group *umoja* by reminding attendees that they were all "building one house"—on March 30, 2018, at the offices of Zanzibar's organization for disability rights, and on April 21, 2018, at a building simply known as "Malaria" in Kwa Mchina.

[25] Jamila described the conference as having occurred in Europe in 2006. Based on her description of the conference attendees and theme, I believe she was referring to the 2nd International Congress on Islamic Feminism held in Barcelona in 2006.

[26] Ousseina Alidou (2013) described a similar networking of Muslim women legal experts from Kenya and India, which she referred to as "legal transnationalism."

[27] "Musawah Framework for Action," *Musawah*, last modified November, 2018, http://www.musawah.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/MusawahFrameworkforAction_En.pdf.

[28] Mahmoud, Jamila. June 4, 2018. Interview with Jessica Ott. English. New Jang'ombe, Zanzibar.

[29] "Learning Exchange ZAFELA," *Scribd*, https://www.scribd.com/document/238149996/Learning-Exchange-ZAFELA, accessed October 19, 2018.

[30] Mahmoud, Jamila. June 4, 2018. Interview with Jessica Ott. English. New Jang'ombe, Zanzibar.

[31] Hassan, Shifaa Said. March 14, 2018. Interview with Jessica Ott. English. Zanzibar Town, Tanzania.

[32] Mahmoud, Jamila. June 5, 2018. Interview with Jessica Ott. English. New Jang'ombe, Zanzibar.

[33] I observed the interchangeable use of *imani* and *umoja* at a coalition meeting held at the offices of ANGOZA in Zanzibar's Mombasa neighborhood on April 25, 2018. It was also visible in a coalition press release from late 2017: "Rais Usisaini—Wanaharakati," *Zanzibar Yetu*, last modified October 10, 2017, https://zanzibariyetu.wordpress.com/2017/10/10/rais-usisaini-wanaharakati/, accessed October 12, 2018.

[34] Mahmoud, Jamila. June 5, 2018. Interview with Jessica Ott. English. New Jang'ombe, Zanzibar.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid.

[37] "Hizb uh Tahrir Wataka Waislamu Zanzibar Kupinga Muswada wa Sheria ya "Kuimega" Mahakama ya Kadhi," *Ahbaabur Rasul*, last modified August 2014, http://ahbaabur.blogspot.com/2014/08/hizb-uh-tahrir-wataka-waislamu.html, accessed October 12, 2018.

[38] Mohammed, Husna, "TAMWA yataka marekebisho sheria mahakama ya kadhi Zanzibar," *Zanzibar Leo*, June 16, 2016, 1-2.

[39] Mohammed, Husna, "Wanaharakati watoa mswaada pendekezi wa mahakama ya kadhi," *Zanzibar Leo*, September 27, 2017, 12-13.

[40] He said this at a gender coalition meeting held on April 25, 2018, at the offices of ANGOZA.

[41] Abdallah, Khamisuu, and Amina Haruna, "Gavu: Sheria kadhi kumaliza changamoto," *Zanzibar Leo*, September 28, 2017, 2.

[42] "Rais Usisiani – Wanaharakati," *Zanzibar Yetu*, https://zanzibariyetu.worpress.com/2017/10/10/rais-usisaini-wanaharakati/, accessed October 12, 2018.

[43] Mussa, Ussi, "Vyombo vya habari binafsi bado vinahitajika," *Zanzibar Leo*, December 5, 2002, 5.

[44] "Mswada mpya wa mahakama ya kadhi wapingwa Zanzibar," posted by "Zaima TV," October 11, 2017, https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=jlhjiuMxAbY, accessed May 21, 2018.

[45] "Kadhia ya Mahakama ya Kadhi," posted by "TAMWA Zanzibar," January 18, 2018, https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=ZRROa-Ozc0, accessed May 21, 2018.

[46] "Rais Usisiani – Wanaharakati," *Zanzibar Yetu*, https://zanzibariyetu.worpress.com/2017/10/10/rais-usisaini-wanaharakati/, accessed October 12, 2018.

[47] When he made a public proclamation supporting women *kadhis*, Sheikh Ahmad Mudhar was in a tough bargaining position to retain Kenya's *kadhi's* courts in light of major constitutional reforms and so eventually conceded to the demands of many Kenyan human rights activists that Muslim women be allowed to serve as *kadhis*. He channeled an argument that was circulating in Kenya at the time, that the post of *kadhi* was ultimately a judicial rather than a religious position and should therefore be open to women, who were permitted to participate as leaders in other parts of Kenya's judiciary (Alidou 2013).

[48] "Mswada mpya wa mahakama ya kadhi wapingwa Zanzibar," posted by "Zaima TV," October 11, 2017, https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=jlhjiuMxAbY, accessed May 21, 2018.

[49] "Rais Usisiani – Wanaharakati," *Zanzibar Yetu*, https://zanzibariyetu.worpress.com/2017/10/10/rais-usisaini-wanaharakati/, accessed October 12, 2018.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid.

[52] "Mswada mpya wa mahakama ya kadhi wapingwa Zanzibar," posted by "Zaima TV," October 11, 2017, https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=jlhjiuMxAbY, accessed May 21, 2018.

[53] "Rais Usisiani – Wanaharakati," *Zanzibar Yetu*, https://zanzibariyetu.worpress.com/2017/10/10/rais-usisaini-wanaharakati/, accessed October 12, 2018.

[54] Islamic revivalists in Zanzibar ascribe to heterogeneous beliefs but broadly focus on returning to a "pure" Islam, unencumbered by external threats (Turner 2009).

[55] "Kadhia ya Mahakama ya Kadhi," posted by "TAMWA Zanzibar," January 18, 2018, https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=ZRROa-Ozc0, accessed May 21, 2018.

[56] A *buibui* is a conservative, black, cape-like garment worn by Swahili women.

[57] "Kadhia ya Mahakama ya Kadhi," posted by "TAMWA Zanzibar," January 18, 2018, https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=ZRROa-Ozc0, accessed May 21, 2018.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar, "An Act to Repeal the Kadhi's Courts Act No. 3 of 1985 and to Provide for the Re-establishment of Kadhi's court, to Prescribe Certain Matters Relating to Kadhi's Court and Matters Incidental Thereto," last modified November 2017, http://www.zanzibarassembly.go.tz/act_2017/act_9.pdf, accessed January 8, 2019.

[60] Mahmoud, Jamila. June 5, 2018. Interview with Jessica Ott. English. New Jang'ombe, Zanzibar.

[61] "WANAWAKE WA ZNZ WATAKA UKADHI KTK MAHAKAMA YA KADHI," published by "KTV TZ," November 14, 2017, https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=HLSjD_DqxHE, accessed May 21, 2018.

[62] Malaysia-based Sisters in Islam similarly describes accusations of adhering to "western" ideas as one of the primary challenges they face in their advocacy efforts (Basarudin 2016).

[63] "WANAWAKE WA ZNZ WATAKA UKADHI KTK MAHAKAMA YA KADHI," published by "KTV TZ," November 14, 2017, https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=HLSjD_DqxHE, accessed May 21, 2018.

[64] Shamte, Hawra. April 24, 2018. Interview with Jessica Ott. English. Tunguu, Zanzibar.

[65] TAMWA Zanzibar, "Analysis of Section 5 of the Kadhi's Court Act (No. 9 of 2017) on Prescriptions Related to Actual Contribution to Matrimonial Assets," https://www.tamwaznz.org/reports/b0cade82e7685dc8419e2e90.pdf, accessed January 10, 2019.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Mahmoud, Jamila. June 5, 2018. Interview with Jessica Ott. English. New Jang'ombe, Zanzibar.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid.

[71] E.g., Makame, Ramadhan, "Bi Siyawezi Suleiman asema malezi ya zamani ndiyo yaliyojenga watoto," *Nuru*, 31 July-6 August 2000, 10.

CHAPTER 4: "If you educate a woman, you educate the whole community:" rethinking women's agency in post-socialist, Islamic revivalist Zanzibar

Introduction

On October 14, 2017, I watched Tanzania's Nyerere Day celebrations on television in Zanzibar with Rehema,* a mainland Tanzanian migrant and domestic worker in her mid-40s whom I had befriended a little over a year earlier. The holiday commemorates the death of Julius Nyerere, Tanzania's first president. Fatma Karume, the former wife of Zanzibar's first president and Tanzania's first vice-president, Abeid Amani Karume, appeared on screen wearing a polo shirt and a *hijab* in the ubiquitous green and yellow of Tanzania's ruling CCM party. At the time, I was poring through socialist-era newspapers in the Zanzibar National Archives, where Fatma Karume featured more heavily than her husband. I suggested to Rehema that Fatma Karume was perhaps more influential as first lady of Zanzibar than her husband was as Zanzibar's first head of state and Tanzania's first vice-president. "It's true, because if you educate a woman, you educate the whole community," Rehema responded, repeating a feminist adage from Nyerere's *Ujamaa* [African socialism]. I observed aloud to Rehema that Fatma Karume was dressed more conservatively than in her 60s photographs. "That's because we lost our Islamic culture, but now we are returning to it," Rehema explained, highlighting a widespread critique of the socialist years as marking an unfortunate turn away from Islam in Zanzibar and her own alignment with an Islamic revival on the archipelago, which has generally promoted a return to a purer Islam, unadulterated by local *bidhaa* [innovations] (Turner 2009).

Like Naima in Chapter 1, Shifaa in Chapter 2, and the Zanzibari women's rights activists whose work I observed in Chapter 3, Rehema espouses the feminist language of Zanzibari and

Tanzanian nationalism in her daily life. She especially uses the language of Nyerere's *Ujamaa* when she discusses her *vicoba*, or women's savings cooperative, which she established and has led since 2015. Rehema describes her *vicoba* as enabling women to establish *kujitegemea* [self-reliance] and *umoja*, two major pillars of African socialism. When Rehema uses the word "*kujitegemea*" to describe her *vicoba*, she is referring to women's self-reliance on each other, a gendered reworking of Nyerere's intended communal self-reliance that Shifaa Said Hassan and other TAMWA-affiliated journalists (see Chapter 2) introduced and promoted during a media-based women's movement in Zanzibar in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

Just as Rehema repeats the language of Tanzania's socialist past in her daily life, particularly in the space of her *vicoba*, she idealizes the notion of a return to a pure, unadulterated Islamic culture. On the days when Rehema does not have *vicoba* meetings, she usually attends a women's *madrasa* [Islamic prayer group] in a peri-urban neighborhood called Makadara, which translates in Swahili as "the will of God" (G. Myers 2003). Rehema's *madrasa* reflects a broader revivalist turn in Zanzibar toward more conservative interpretations of women's roles and responsibilities in Islam, which does not mean that all women attendees have internalized or that they follow more conservative Islamic norms and expectations.

During my year of field research in Zanzibar, I attended Rehema's *madrasa* for nine multi-hour sessions between November of 2017 and June of 2018. Inspired by Saba Mahmood's (2005) seminal work on women's prayer groups in Egypt, I was first inclined to interpret Rehema's *madrasa* as a space where she cultivated piety. After all, women *madrasa* teachers often prompted discussions about *ibada* [pious habits], and Rehema herself described the *madrasa* as a space where she developed *ibada*, which would improve her relationship with God in this life and confer her with more blessings in the afterlife.[1] But through my many interactions with Rehema, I realized that the *madrasa* was much more than a space where she cultivated piety. As a working-class woman from the mainland, in a context where mainlanders have often been blamed for Zanzibar's purported moral erosion,[2] Rehema agentively used the *madrasa* as a forum to further her basic Islamic knowledge, to negotiate her respectability, and to enact her commitment to women's Islamic education.

Furthermore, engaging with Rehema in almost daily conversations outside of *madrasa* and attending her *vicoba* revealed to me the limitations inherent in observing religious spaces alone to understand how women negotiate multiple social structures and expectations in their daily lives.[3] In this chapter, I explore Rehema's involvement in both a *vicoba* and a *madrasa*, to both contextualize the role of religion in her broader life and to highlight other discourses and structures of belief that inform her daily negotiations as a domestic worker, a gendered profession in East Africa that has received only marginal attention in scholarly literature.

Before delving into an exploration of her multiple social engagements, I include an overview of Rehema's life history, in her words (translated by me from Swahili into English), which I hope will shed light on the role of Rehema's social positionality in her daily negotiations of agency. In a context where stories of Indian Ocean mobility have focused overwhelmingly on the migration and exchange networks of men,[4] Rehema's life history situates her as an Indian Ocean migrant in her own right, navigating gendered labor networks and embodying an Indian Ocean cosmopolitanism derived in part from working in middle-class, multicultural households in coastal Kenya and Tanzania, in Zanzibar, and in the Gulf State of Oman.

Life history of Rehema

To gain any insight into Rehema's complex subjectivity as a Muslim domestic worker from mainland Tanzania in Zanzibar requires knowing a bit about her life. Rehema's oral history sheds light on how she has negotiated multiple social structures and daily contingencies in her life over time as a working-class Tanzanian woman. For example, Rehema's Islamic religiosity today is informed by her engagement 20 years ago with a Pentecostal women's fellowship on the mainland, which enabled her to escape an abusive work situation and to further her education. A case study and life history approach ensures a more textured and grounded understanding of women's agency and religious subjectivity, neither of which is ever static. By agency, I am referring to how Rehema navigates diverse social norms and expectations in various social spaces, ranging from her *madrasa*, to her workplace, to her home, to her *vicoba*, to her daily encounters in public transportation and on the street. Rehema's agency—like most people's agency who move between different cultural and social spaces, including my own—often manifests in multiple, nonlinear, and contradictory ways (Sehlikoglu 2018). Rehema shared snippets of her life story with me during our multi-year friendship, just as she shared a more narrative version of her life history in the context of an in-depth interview in December of 2017. I include her sharing primarily but not exclusively from the latter in this section.

Rehema described herself as having traveled to places as far away as Muscat, Oman, and Mombasa, Kenya, for work, because, "I like to live with every kind of person so I know the behavior of this person, I know the behavior of that person, and I'm able to learn what kind of behavior I'm able to live with…I try to live with people of every background, so I can learn especially about their habits and behavior."[5] Rehema actively sought a life of travel and of learning about people's habits and behavior in other places. I learned in many other conversations with Rehema that understanding people's habits and behavior was a first step in encouraging them to more fully commit to their Islamic faith, which was often a goal of hers.

Rehema first journeyed away from her parents' home in rural Tanga Region on the Tanzanian mainland upon finishing class seven at the age of 15, because she did not receive high enough marks on Tanzania's national examination to continue onward with secondary school. Located in northeastern Tanzania, Tanga Region borders the Indian Ocean and southern coastal Kenya and has long been part of a network of Swahili cultural exchange. She explained,

> "I decided then to look for the kind of work that would offer me a life, because this patriarchal system, it affects you, you are unable to leave easily from one village to go to another. Your parents can just say that they don't want you to go. I left by running away. I ran away from my village and went to the city, where I lived for 15 days with one woman. After staying there, she gave me work there that I could do inside of her house, but I told her that it wasn't what I was looking for. I looked for someone else to assist me in escaping that situation, and a woman helped me make my way to Dar es Salaam, where I lived with an Arab woman and worked in her house for three years. When I left there, she didn't shame me, because we lived together well, and I learned many things during my time with her. She didn't affect me badly."[6]

Rehema's first long-term job after running away from home was working for a woman of Arab descent in the booming coastal megapolis of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. She worked as an *mtumishi*, or domestic worker, which in East Africa is a stigmatized and precarious profession. In her descriptions of leaping from job to job, the line between Rehema's enmeshment in social support networks and in domestic labor trafficking circuits was unclear. It was only through hindsight that she was able to see her first job in Dar es Salaam as not so bad.

After finishing her first long-term job, Rehema began a new assignment as an *mtumishi* for another woman and her family in Dar es Salaam's outward urban sprawl: "I left there and entered Dar es Salaam again but in the part of Kijitonyama. I lived with a woman there who was called Mama Emma. I lived with her for about six years, but she did things to me that I didn't appreciate, because she did a lot of oppressive things to the workers inside of her home."[7]

Rehema reflected further on her experience working for Mama Emma in Kijitonyama:

> "I learned a lot there…I experienced a lot of suffering in her home. It's a long story, but the short version is that I lived with her like a mother, but she did things to me that I didn't appreciate. She lived together with her male children inside there, and I was there, too. And her male children were engaging in immoral behaviors there, they were smoking marijuana and doing other things that didn't make me happy. That woman, when I lived with her, she would believe me a bit but not entirely when I confided in her. Later, those children, they would come, they would humiliate me, and then she would ridicule and mock me. I didn't do much in response, because I knew it wouldn't help to fight with them. One day, they were forceful, and it was as though they had conspired with their mother. She herself delivered me to three young men, because maybe they wanted to rape me, but I thank God, I discovered that I had strength that I was unaware of, which God bestowed on me, because He saw that bad things were about to happen to me. I pushed one of those boys into a cupboard, he broke the cupboard, and I had the opportunity to run."[8]

In her work as an *mtumishi*, Rehema was exposed to verbal abuse and the constant threat of sexual harassment and assault. She credited God for bestowing her with the strength to escape a group of young men in Kijitonyama.

Rehema’s work in Mama Emma’s home ended abruptly, which left Rehema in the precarious position of looking for a job without a job: “After running from there, I went to the home of another mother, who was a Christian. I went there and I spoke with her, and she said my name and explained to me, “Rehema, don’t worry, stay here,” and I stayed until the mother of the house [her mother-in-law] showed up and started abusing both of us.”[9] In East Africa, mothers-in-law are often framed in television programs and in short stories as feared familial figures who wield too much dictatorial power,[10] a stereotypical representation that proved to be true in Rehema’s early work in a Christian woman’s home and in many of my own observations of client mediation sessions at ZAFELA. Often, running away abruptly from one place to the next did not result in a better outcome for Rehema. She was in survival mode, with few options except to agree to go with the next person who was willing to employ her as an *mtumishi*.

While Rehema was in an unideal situation in the Christian woman’s home, other Christian women came and offered her a way out. She explained, “They came and took me to their place. Among them was a woman named Mama Sam, who took me to her place and helped me to escape that situation. She said, “If you stay here, they are going to do terrible things to you, so it’s better that I take you with me.” So, she took me. It’s true that when I went with her, I was entered into a Bible fellowship. I entered a Bible fellowship for a year, and I learned there all the way to the point of being baptized.”[11] The entrée of other women who promised to help her again highlights Rehema’s enmeshment in networks of women who sought to simultaneously alleviate and benefit from her vulnerability. Rehema implied that the Christian women were genuinely seeking to help her by welcoming her into the Pentecostal Church.

When Rehema narrated her near conversion to Christianity in our interview, it was not the first time I had heard about it. I followed up, in our interview, about her decision to convert to Christianity, and she corrected me: "It's not as though I actually changed my religion, but I was living with them in order to continue with my studies…The people I was living with were offering me broader horizons than religion itself. There's an expectation, though, when you're studying, that you eventually agree to accept their religion."[12] The Pentecostal Bible fellowship was a better living and working situation for Rehema than her experience working as an *mtumishi* in a slew of houses in Dar es Salaam, allowing her to make a living and to further her education. But it came with the expectation that she would genuinely convert to Christianity, so she headed home to seek her father's permission to become a Christian.

> "I lived with the Pentecostals. I lived with them well, and they created a job for me where I worked in a kiosk, I sold things in the kiosk for about two years. After that, I returned home. I returned home to talk with my father about converting, and he told me, "You can't be a Christian." I asked him why, and he said, "You have surpassed the age of 18, and now you're in your 20s. If you had reached a point of being completely self-reliant, I would give you my permission to convert, but you're still a bit young and my responsibility, so you're going to continue being a Muslim for now." It was so hard for me. I told my father that I had already promised them [the Pentecostals] that I'm a Christian. He told me, "No, not yet, keep studying until you understand more. And when you understand more, then you'll be able to convert." I told him, "Okay, I am going to continue with my studies." He said, "Okay, study first.""[13]

Rehema's father discouraged her conversion to Christianity, using the language of self-reliance when doing so. In a Swahili cultural context, personhood is considered to be relational and often described with the term *umoja* or its derivates, which imply togetherness (Nyerere 1967). An understanding of personhood as relational was not enough to sway Rehema from running away and possibly damaging her familial connections at the age of 15, but it was enough to influence her decision to not convert to Christianity in her early 20s, since her father viewed religious conversion as a major breach of familial unity. As long as Rehema was in a relationship of familial interdependency with her father, the cost to her of swaying from their shared Muslim faith was too high. In this situation, Rehema was not just a passive recipient of Pentecostalism but rather agentively negotiating the material and educational benefits of the church with the social costs of conversion. Ultimately, she made the decision to prioritize familial harmony over her own individual educational and material advancement. After visiting her father, Rehema faced the challenge of returning back to the Pentecostal women and explaining to them that she was unable to genuinely convert from Islam to Christianity.

Rehema continued her Pentecostal studies for a short while before eventually going onward to Mombasa on the Swahili coast of Kenya in 1995, where one of her siblings was living. While in Mombasa, Rehema became involved in a women's revolving credit society, which in part influenced her later embrace and establishment of a women's *vicoba* on the Zanzibar archipelago. Rehema lived in Mombasa for roughly a year before she received a request from one of her younger sisters to accompany her on a trip to find work in Oman. Prior to leaving for Oman, Rehema went to Morogoro on the mainland for a few months before moving onward to Zanzibar for two years and then to Dar es Salaam for another year.

> "I returned to Zanzibar in 2000 and prepared for my journey to Muscat in Oman. I lived there for most of 2001 before returning...I met a life there that was so difficult, I cannot even explain it to you. There were different kinds of gender-based violence that women who worked inside of homes experienced. I broke my contract and returned to my home in Zanzibar."[14]

In an earlier conversation, Rehema described traveling to Oman in her mid-20s, after which her employers took possession of her passport and forced her to work long days with very little rest, hitting her and even occasionally threatening her with a knife. Rehema prayed to God every night and told her employers that she needed to travel to Zanzibar for a family emergency but that she would be back. They returned her passport, after which Rehema escaped to Zanzibar and never returned,[15] joining the ranks of many Tanzanian domestic workers who have faced the plucking away of their passports, sexual abuse, and labor violations in Oman and in the United Arab Emirates.[16]

When Rehema returned to Zanzibar, she worked as an *mtumishi* and in a hotel for several years before returning to her home in rural Tanga Region to recover from stomach ulcers. Eventually, she returned to Zanzibar and married. In our interview, Rehema explained,

> "After I married, I continued working. My husband assured me that our marriage should not prevent me from working. I was really grateful that he wasn't patriarchal. He said he knew that if I tried to live an isolated life as a housewife, I would suffer psychologically…he was very different because he wanted a wife who would work and have her own activities rather than a woman who would depend on him for everything… After that, I began working at a guesthouse, where I have been able to interact with people from all over…I am even continuing with my studies now in a *madrasa*."[17]

In narrating her life history, Rehema delved deeply into the time she spent in a few work situations while glossing over others. She was especially interested in talking about the time she spent in a Pentecostal Bible fellowship, which provided her with welcome respite from earlier work endeavors and with the opportunity to further her studies. Rehema was additionally interested in talking about her time as a domestic worker in Oman and her relationship with her husband, which she was proud to describe as more equitable than most marital relationships in Zanzibar.

Rehema was a cosmopolitan worker enmeshed in a gendered Indian Ocean domestic labor circuit, moving to and from coastal Kenya, mainland Tanzania, the Zanzibar archipelago, and the Gulf State of Oman. Rehema sought social stability, which she saw as hinging on furthering her education. When an opportunity to further her education presented itself, Rehema considered religious conversion, which she ultimately determined was not worth the social cost to her of familial disunity and loss. Rehema constantly negotiated multiple social structures and pressures in her daily life, frequently reevaluating the cost of her shifting engagements in some social institutions, like the church, marriage, and school, to other social structures, like her family and work. An exertion of agency in one social structure often destabilized Rehema's engagement with other social structures, which required renegotiation.

An eloquent and reflective storyteller, Rehema was proud of her history of travel and of the life that she had managed to carve out for herself, just as she lamented serious abuse and hardships that she endured along the way. I was intrigued by Rehema's life and by her work in pioneering both adult women's Islamic education and women's microfinance in the context of Zanzibar, so when she offered me the opportunity to attend her *madrasa* and *vicoba*, I eagerly accepted and began a journey in which I would learn about the meaning that Zanzibari women like Rehema glean from their joint participation in different social groups.

The *vicoba*

Midway through my field research, on November 27, 2017, I attended a training session in the village of Dunga, in the middle of Zanzibar's most populous island of Unguja. The training was for women who were interested in establishing *vicobas* or in strengthening their existing *vicobas*. The leader of the training, Bahati,* was a major CCM-affiliated political figure and women's rights activist whom herself was a *vicoba* member and the chairwoman of a network of over 2,000 *vicobas*. Bahati and I were late to the training, entering in the middle of a local male leader's speech to the group:

> "We are going to help you to become self-reliant. People in other places have a perception that we're hungry. But after this training, our lunches will come from our own gardens, and we'll all have access to small loans. Many people come to me and say, "I need your help." I always ask, "What kind of help?" They reply, "Help starting a small shop." I reply, "A small shop to sell what?" And they reply, "Everything." Many people will ask for a loan for millions of shillings without any kind of a plan…When you finish with this training, people will call you *wasomi* [scholars]."

I was struck by the local leader's marketing of individual loans—an offshoot of privatization and global economic restructuring—with the socialist language of self-reliance. A byproduct of neoliberalism was being marketed with the language of socialism, in part because of the multivalence of self-reliance, which has always had diverse meanings in Tanzania (Lal 2015). First Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere intended a communal meaning of self-reliance (Lal 2015), but today, the word easily accommodates neoliberal understandings of people as individual, autonomous economic agents who rely on their individual earnings and efforts.

Scholars have described the *vicoba* as emerging from mainland Tanzania in 2002 in response to the government's call for community ownership of the development process (Madaha 2018) and as inspired by the Bangladeshi Grameen Bank, which emphasizes skills building among women (Lindvert, Yazdanfar, and Boter 2015). Established by Muhammad

Yunus in 1983, Grameen is a microfinance organization and community development bank that provides credit to low-income Bangladeshis through a group lending system (Yunus 1999). Rehema traces the *vicoba* even further back, to women's craft cooperatives that emerged from the women's wing of mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar's ruling parties in the socialist mid-1960s (see Chapter 1).[18] UWASP women's collectives were provided with government-subsidized goods to sell, with the expectation that they would channel their profits back into the government's coffers, which did not always happen in practice.[19] The socialist government encouraged women to form cooperatives in order to establish *umoja* and lauded women for building and developing the nation.[20] Rehema locates the roots of the contemporary *vicoba,* a neoliberal economic institution that encourages entrepreneurship and loans, as an offshoot of post-revolution, socialist-era women's cooperatives.

More recently, some Africanists have called for a careful exploration of how contemporary African governments have appropriated historical, deeply culturally resonant language—like self-reliance—to promote neoliberal economic policies like entrepreneurship and individual borrowing.[21] In Zanzibar, the women's *vicoba* has been additionally promoted by civil society organizations like TAMWA, who appropriated a 40-year-old discourse of women's self-reliance, unity, and development in the early 2000s as they called on women to join together in cooperatives.[22] The government's historical appropriation of the language of *Ujamaa* in its marketing of women's *vicobas* is likely for a number of reasons, one being that the language of self-reliance, unity, and women as building and developing the nation is popular and culturally resonant. For example, during the socialist era in Zanzibar, the government strengthened its precarious autocratic power in part by appealing to the role of women as nation builders (Maoulidi 2011a) and as the businesswomen drivers of Zanzibar's national economy. Now, Zanzibar's ruling CCM party in part strengthens its own hegemonic power with the highly popular language of women's empowerment and development, which carries semblances of the past.[23] The government and civil society's promotion of the *vicoba* is also likely in response to a lack of economic opportunities for working-class women in the impoverished context of Zanzibar. The government has the additional incentive of deflecting demands from Zanzibaris that their basic economic needs are met in the form of employment through its promotion of women's entrepreneurship and microfinance.

How does Rehema reconcile the conflicting neoliberal goals and socialist language inherent in the social institution of the women's *vicoba*? Rehema herself in some ways supports the neoliberal end goal of a more individualistic, atomistic self-reliance, but she does not think that Zanzibar has reached a level of economic security where individuals can support themselves through their own efforts. She explained, "We are different from mainlanders, who have reached a point where they're able to produce things on their own. We have not reached that ability. Here in Zanzibar, we have to rely on our ability to help each other with our ideas. Your ideas, my ideas, and the ideas of another person, if we join them together, we will be economically better off and have the ability to do many things."[24] Rehema described the *vicoba* as a space where the socialist values of unity and communal self-reliance will help women get by until Zanzibar reaches a state of economic security.

During my fieldwork from 2017-2018, I observed the ubiquity of the *vicoba* among women from diverse backgrounds. While engaging in participant observation at ZAFELA, for example, I attended a staff meeting in September of 2017, where Kauthar, a lawyer, suggested that ZAFELA establish its own *vicoba*. She calculated that if staff members contributed Tsh10,000 (~$5) per week, they would have upwards of three million shillings after several months (~$1,500), which they could use to support each other's educational endeavors. ZAFELA's director, Jamila Mahmoud, applauded Kauthar for her suggestion, lamenting, "*Hatusaidiana* [We don't help each other enough]." Kauthar was most concerned about providing access to educational opportunities for the organization's driver and its janitorial staff. In arguing for the establishment of a *vicoba*, Kauthar espoused a vision of *umoja* in which the progress of the organization as a whole relied on the educational progress of every staff member.

The *vicoba* is a vibrant, ubiquitous grassroots social institution, promoted by government and civil society actors but ultimately established and led by women members themselves. Rehema co-founded her *vicoba* in 2015, under the auspices of an organization of mainlanders living in Zanzibar that she is a member of. Male members of the organization were originally resistant to the idea of a *vicoba* among women members, which Rehema attributes to *mfumo dume* and men realizing their own loss of power that might accompany women's advancement.[25] But Rehema had an early supporter in one of the group's male leaders: "Our head chairman of the group told us it was necessary we enter into entrepreneurship. He said that without this, it would be impossible for us to improve our lives. It would leave us dependent on men. There were six of us who established the *vicoba* on December 7, 2015."[26]

The chairman of a civil society group of mainlanders living in Zanzibar encouraged Rehema and other women members to engage in collaborative entrepreneurship—a byproduct of privatization and economic restructuring—to reduce their dependency on men. The language of self-reliance in Zanzibar is dynamic, often connoting individualistic self-reliance, communal self-reliance, and in the above instance, women's communal self-reliance on each other. Civil society actors (see Chapter 2) have especially promoted the *vicoba* as reducing women's economic dependence on their husbands through a communal self-reliance on other women.

Rehema cofounded the *vicoba* with five other women members of an organization of mainlanders living in Zanzibar. They named their *vicoba*, "*Wanatusichoke* [Women, let's not become tired]," which is an allusion to the persistence it took to establish the group. Rehema describes the *vicoba* as enabling women's financial *kujitegemea* from their husbands and as enabling women's *umoja*, channeling *Ujamaa*-inspired women's rights discourses that regained clout in Zanzibar at the turn of the millennium.[27] Archival newspapers reveal other women's solidarity and Islam-inspired *vicoba* group names in Zanzibar, such as *Tupendane* [Let's love each other];[28] *Tusaidiane* [Let's help each other];[29] *Umoja ni Maendeleo* [Unity is development];[30] *Nia Njema* [Good intentions];[31] and *Tunaomba Mungu* [We humbly ask for assistance from God.][32] The names alone highlight the ways in which women's religiosity and involvement in *vicobas* are not atomistic but rather permeate and inform each other.

I attended Rehema's *vicoba* for the first time on September 24, 2017. She was forced to work past her normal hours at a guesthouse and swung by my place with her brother, a taxi driver, at around 4pm on a Sunday. He drove us to a typical one-story home in Makadara [the will of God] (G. Myers 2003), passing by the East Germany-funded brutalist flats of Michenzani and the Chinese-funded Kariokoo amusement park on the way. The *vicoba* meeting took place in a small brick home with a corrugated tin roof. When Rehema and I entered, a few women were already there, and they warmly greeted both of us. Most of the women wore vibrant Swahili dresses known as *dira* with colorful *hijabs*, in shades and patterns ranging from red to yellow to leopard print. They were dressed less conservatively than Rehema, who draped her *niqab* behind her head upon entering the home.

I was immediately struck by the closeness of women group members. Rehema introduced a few women as her *wadogo* [younger sisters], whom she was related to via her father and his many wives or perhaps married to her father's sons. Muhammad Yunus, founder of the Grameen Bank, described the necessity of Bangladeshi women's lending groups having close social and even familial connections in order to ensure that group members felt a social obligation to repay loans (Yunus 1999). In Rehema's *vicoba*, familial relations among group members additionally enabled group unity.

Group members' close social connections and relationships were evident in their exchange of banter and expressions of empathy. Soon after we arrived, several women wrapped themselves in religious *khanga* and relocated to another room to pray. Rehema exclaimed, "Jessica, can you believe that I struggled to make it here on time from work, while they all have the audacity to disappear and pray?" Rehema was in part joking and in part trying to instill a sense of accountability among group members to make the most of their time together and to respect the goals of the group. For deeply religious Rehema, there was a time to pray and a time to get down to business.

Later, another woman invited me to view her "office" across the street, leading me to a nearby hair salon, where she quickly applied a pair of false eyelashes for a waiting client before returning to the *vicoba* meeting. When we reentered the meeting, an older group member was narrating her extreme fatigue after waking up to a thief in her home, which had made it difficult for her to sleep. Other group members expressed empathy with audible clicks of their tongues. Their light-hearted banter and more serious sharing reflected tightknit social relationships.

Near the end of the meeting, every group member pulled out an exercise book to mark members' weekly contributions. They also used their exercise books to keep track of group members' loans. Rehema explained that everyone maintained a record book so that if they lost one, they would still be able to recover important financial information. Each of the eight group members in attendance wrote down everyone’s weekly contribution of Tsh11,000 (~$5) in her exercise book, which their secretary then signed. The secretary, selected by group members for her trustworthiness, kept the money in a safe place in her home, since few working-class women in Zanzibar maintain formal bank accounts.

The *vicoba* is structured in such a way that group members are able to take interest-free loans from a sum of money made up of group members’ individual weekly contributions. It differs from microfinance organizations like the Grameen Bank, since women are borrowing directly from each other’s contributions rather than from a formal financial institution (Yunus 1999). Members take out loans in order to purchase expensive household items like refrigerators or cookers; to pay for their children’s school fees; to pay for medical or funeral expenses; or perhaps to fund their small business ventures. Group members collaboratively determine whether someone should receive a loan, and the expected time of repayment differs depending on the type of loan and the group member’s life circumstances. When group members have saved up a large amount of money, they often instigate an *mradi*, or an income-generating group project like making and selling soap. The group aspires to cultivate skills and expertise in order to initiate and benefit from collaborative entrepreneurial activities. Through its allocation of loans for things like school fees and medical expenses, Rehema’s *vicoba* has helped to fill some gaps in the provision of welfare services by the government of Zanzibar, as Madaha (2018) has observed on the Tanzanian mainland.

The group in part serves as a basic social safety net for members, who are usually able to take out a loan to pay for major, often unexpected life expenses and to support their basic daily needs with money from income-generating group projects. Rehema appreciates the role of the *vicoba* as a social safety net but describes the benefits of her own *vicoba* involvement more along the lines of Kauthar's earlier description of ZAFELA's *vicoba* as enabling *umoja*. When talking about how her *vicoba* enabled *umoja,* Rehema cited the Swahili proverb, "Unity is strength, division is weakness." She added, "I cannot be self-reliant all by myself, because I like to help and be helped by other people. If I bring my ideas to the *vicoba*, they can help another person, and I can also take another person's ideas to improve my own life, which means that I can't be self-reliant without the *vicoba*."[33] Rehema envisions her own fate as inextricable from the fate of other members, and this *umoja*-inspired philosophy guides the structure and functioning of her *vicoba*. For Rehema, agency is relational. Her actions are inspired by the wellbeing of the overall group. Her adherence to *umoja* is in part due to economic necessity, but she is also agentive in grasping onto the concept of unity with so much veracity. *Umoja* for Rehema is both an economic necessity and an ideal to strive for.

While the *vicoba* is presented by the government of Zanzibar and by NGOs like TAMWA Zanzibar as an almost utopian endeavor,[34] enabling women's economic self-reliance, Rehema's *vicoba* has had its fair share of challenges. At the September meeting I attended in Makadara, only eight of the group's 11 members were in attendance. Two members were ill, while one was unable to get her husband's permission to attend the meeting. Rehema lamented the toll exerted on the group by women who were unable to attend or to contribute on a weekly basis. Similarly, at the *vicoba* training I attended in Dunga, one participant complained about the collapse of her *vicoba* after the secretary's theft of group contributions. Bahati, the leader of the training, demanded the rogue secretary's phone number and called her on the spot, much to the delight of meeting attendees.

I attended a meeting in 2017 that shed more light on the *vicoba's* challenges. The overarching organization of mainlanders living in Zanzibar that Rehema is a member of held its annual meeting on October 1, 2017. The meeting was important, since the women's *vicoba* would be publicly revealing what it had achieved since its establishment in 2015 in order to justify its continued existence. Rehema invited me to accompany her to the meeting, in part because my presence as a foreigner legitimized the group. I was relying on Rehema to learn more about grassroots women's social and religious groups, and she was relying on my presence to legitimize her *vicoba* in the eyes of male group members.

Near the end of the meeting, during which attendees discussed things like paying for group entertainment and procuring group polo shirts, the women's *vicoba* was invited to read its report, written by Rehema, aloud to the group. The women's *vicoba* attributed their success to God before acknowledging male group leaders with honorifics. They proceeded to describe the group's primary purpose as helping them to finance major life expenses like illnesses, weddings, and deaths, before revealing their group savings of Tsh6,900,000 (~$3,400), to much fanfare. They continued,

> "Our honorable chairman, together with these results, we have several challenges. Our biggest challenge is a failure among members to attend meetings and to pay their required weekly contributions. We would therefore like to request that the male members of this group grant their wives with permission to attend the *vicoba*. Additionally, we invite all women members of the group to join hands with "Women, don't become tired."[35]

The group report was a performance in negotiating patriarchy. They emphasized the utilitarian function of the group in terms of financing things like medical expenses, funerals, and weddings rather than their goal of improving women's knowledge and expertise and enabling group *umoja*, or solidarity. They attributed their success to God, adding a divine legitimization of their existence, and they appealed to male group members to grant their wives with permission to attend the *vicoba*. To me, Rehema described the overarching group of mainlanders living in Zanzibar as patriarchal, but to the group, Rehema appealed with deference to male leaders for their continued support. Rehema's negotiation of her *vicoba's* continued existence destabilized her engagement with the larger, male-led organization of mainlanders living in Zanzibar, which required a renegotiation that ironically manifested in deference and a performed passivity. Rehema negotiated the patriarchal social structure of the overarching group in multiple, contradictory ways, which ultimately enabled the continued existence of her women's *vicoba*.

Rehema's attribution of the *vicoba's* success to God highlights the socially protective role that religion plays in her life. Her attribution of the *vicoba's* success to a higher power also highlights the ways in which Rehema's different social involvements—in a *madrasa* and in a *vicoba*—intersect with each other in meaningful ways.

The *madrasa*

Zanzibar has been in the midst of an Islamic revival since the 1980s, when its economy liberalized and social morality was no longer policed by the socialist state, which resulted in a move among Islamic groups to police moral behavior (Turner 2009). Globally, Islamic revivalism has been characterized by the proliferation of institutions of Islamic learning, an increased participation in religious life among men and women, and by public displays of "religious sociability," which include the adoption of the *hijab* and the mass production and consumption of mosque literature (Mahmood 2005). In Zanzibar, vendors sell popular mosque literature on tables outside of the Jabril Mosque in bustling, central Mkunazini. I bought multiple pamphlets from a vendor outside of the Jabril mosque, with titles ranging from "How to protect your marriage and have good children;" "The rights of a husband and a wife in marriage;" and "Marital discord and its treatment."

While Islamic revivalism is heterogeneous, in Zanzibar it is characterized by efforts to purify "Islam from within in order to strengthen it against threats from the outside" (Turner 2009, 240). Revivalists are Sunni and critical of local Sufi practices, like the widespread veneration of the Islamic Prophet Muhammad during a holiday called *Maulidi*, which commemorates the prophet's birth (Loimeier 2009; Turner 2009). Scholarly reflections on Zanzibari women's experiences with Islamic revivalism have often been limited to mentions of their embrace of the *niqab* (Loimeier 2009), which reflects more conservative Islamic interpretations of women's modesty in Zanzibar but tells very little about how women experience Zanzibar's Islamic revival.[36]

Turner (2009) dates the mushrooming of *madrasas* in Zanzibar to the 1980s, when wealthy people from the Gulf began to pour money into mosques and *madrasas* on the archipelago while simultaneously providing scholarships for young Zanzibari men to study Islam in places like Sudan and Saudi Arabia. It is unclear exactly when women's *madrasas* began to proliferate in Zanzibar, but they are now widely established and ubiquitous in Zanzibar's urban core and peri-urban fringe. While very little scholarship exists about women's *madrasas* in Zanzibar, Ousseina Alidou has written extensively about women's Islamic education in Niger and in neighboring Kenya (Alidou 2005; 2013). Alidou (2005) described Nigerien *madarasas* as spaces where women were able to advance their Islamic knowledge, generate revenue by selling entrepreneurial goods, and develop female solidarity. Alidou (2013) additionally differentiated between the emergence of a few women's *ma'had*, or institutions of higher Islamic learning, in neighboring Kenya from more rudimentary women's *madrasas*.

Rehema’s *madrasa* offers a more basic Islamic education to its women attendees. Unlike Alidou’s (2013) description of a women’s *ma’had* in neighboring Kenya, women attendees at Rehema’s *madrasa* are not engaging in advanced Islamic studies. Course materials cover the basic tenets of Islam, and classes are somewhat redundant, with participants spending several days on small sections in a widely produced and distributed adult Islamic education volume of books produced by the Islamic Propagation Center in Dar es Salaam, which promotes Islamic education and produces Tanzania’s most influential Islamic newspaper, *an-Nuur* (Loimeier 2007). I attended Rehema’s *madrasa* on nine occasions, spread out over a year, and I was always surprised by how little I had missed in terms of their progression in class textbooks. I think it would be a mistake to dismiss this repetitiousness of basic Islamic concepts as rudimentary, though. Among attendees of Rehema’s *madrasa* are women who speak fluent Arabic; a woman doctor who commented extensively on the moral and ethical tenets of Islam as they related to science; and other women with more than a basic understanding of Islam. Still, they attended the *madrasa* almost daily and engaged in a repetitious exploring and reexploring of Islam’s basic and most central tenets.

On October 2, 2017, I accompanied Rehema to her *madrasa* for the first time. We met at Zanzibar’s lush Jamhuri Gardens, where we boarded a *dala dala* [minibus] heading in the direction of Kwerekwe. We exited the crammed bus by a market called Haji Tumbo, which consists of a major dirt thoroughfare, lined by small kiosks selling industrial products like plastic pails and containers, blenders, and rolls of linoleum. Smaller stalls sell items like eggplant, onions, and tomatoes; locally caught fish; and crusty loaves of bread called *buflo*. I spotted a kiosk called “Emirates Shop” on the way to Rehema’s *madrasa*, highlighting an increasing Gulf influence in most of Zanzibar. We continued through the major market thoroughfare, before taking a left and following a few dusty, less frequented residential lanes until we reached a nondescript two-story building. The door was locked, so Rehema summoned a neighbor and fellow *madrasa* attendee, who was entrusted with a spare key, to open the door for us. We removed our shoes upon entering and climbed a tall staircase to a large, open room with a ceiling fan. Rehema unlocked a padlocked door on the left to allow airflow, and we made ourselves comfortable on the floor next to the open upstairs door and wrought iron balcony. Most women attendees wore *niqabs,* which they draped behind their heads upon entering the *madrasa*. The roughly 30 attendees came from diverse socioeconomic, educational, and ethnic backgrounds.

The *madrasa* was established in 2011, but the *madrasa's* physical structure was only built sometime around 2014. Rehema joined the *madrasa* after getting to know its founder and financier, Zainab,* whom she had met while working as a domestic worker for someone else. Rehema described their relationship to me:

> "I entered the *madrasa* after getting to know Zainab. I was involved in the back and forth work of being like an agent for her, helping her find domestic workers for herself and people she knew. She said, "Rehema, you do work so well, are you able to bring me someone like you?" Then, I would try to look for someone with behavior and habits like mine, who would be able to endure the hardships sometimes brought on by other people in this type of work...So Zainab and I knew each other because I brought her workers. Other people knew, too, that if they needed a worker, they could call me and I would bring them someone who would do a good job…One day, Zainab said to me, "I'm going to study, and you should come with me so we can study together." I told her, "Okay, if you'll take me with you." At this time, I was living in a rental house. She told me, "I can offer you a house to live in. That way, when you leave work, you won't run into any

> problems getting to *madrasa*." I said, "Okay." I was given a house to live in rent-free, so my husband and I only needed enough money to feed ourselves. I lived close to Zainab, and she helped me ideologically. She said, "Rehema, if you have a problem, come to *madrasa*, and you'll be able to study, understand, and even teach your husband what you learn.""[37]

Like Rehema's earlier entrée into a Pentecostal Bible fellowship, her entrance into a women's *madrasa* was accompanied by material resources and an opportunity to further her studies, with Zainab even encouraging Rehema to serve as a gateway for her husband's Islamic knowledge. Like the women who served as agents during Rehema's early life as an *mtumishi*, Rehema herself had become a sort of middle woman between Zainab's social circle and domestic workers, which was likely well-intentioned but which she stood to benefit financially from.

The *madrasa* served in part as a space where women cultivated a commitment to enacting *ibada*, or pious habits, in order to ensure a more prosperous afterlife. Discussions of *ibada* were front and center from the very first time I attended Rehema's *madrasa* on October 2, 2017. A woman doctor in attendance, Fatima,* described *ibada*, or pious habits, as "doing everything for the purpose of Allah. You do things with *ibada* so that when you reach the time of judgment, you'll receive blessings, and God will pay you." The notion of engaging in *ibada* so that "God will pay you" was widespread during the course of my fieldwork. At ZAFELA, women clients told me time and time again, often in the context of negotiating their rights to marital property or to child support, "God will pay me." One woman, Sharifa,* expressed her willingness to accept a far lower amount of money from her ex-husband than what she was due, because she trusted that God would eventually pay her for her pious actions.[38] Fatima and Sharifa both described *ibada* as a type of moral currency that would confer them with "pay," or blessings, in the afterlife. In a context where women were often shortchanged when making claims to property and child support and where it was hard to earn a basic living, the idea of contributing through *ibada* to a bank of future blessings was comforting.

For Rehema, too, the *madrasa* was in part a space to cultivate *ibada* in order to ensure a more prosperous afterlife. In her daily life, Rehema enacted *ibada* in diverse ways, inside and outside of religious spaces. Once, she offered to take me home after *madrasa*, which I argued was unnecessary, but she insisted that making sure I got home safely would be an enactment of *ibada*.[39] On another occasion, one of Rehema's housemates, Tatu,* described that when restaurants served beans to patrons without diluting the beans with too much water, they were enacting *ibada*.[40] Rehema also shared with me that she made it through her less desirable domestic work by reconfiguring it into an opportunity to enact *ibada*.[41] Domestic work could transform for Rehema into an act of religious worship, which would confer her with more blessings in the afterlife. Enacting *ibada* enabled her to persevere and ensured more harmonious social relationships. She explained, "I really have gratitude for my *madrasa*, because…if I wasn't such a persevering person, I wouldn't have real love for people…"[42] While Rehema's *vicoba* was a space for her to cultivate social unity with other women and to confront patriarchal social structures, in theory lessening social inequality, the *madrasa* was a space that enabled her perseverance in the face of difficult work and discomfort, which in effect solidified the social distance between Rehema and the people she worked for. She alternated between challenging the unjust social inequalities in her life in the space of her *vicoba* and cultivating the ability to endure through them in the space of her *madrasa*, both of which were important to her economic and social functioning.

Just as Rehema engaged in undesirable work tasks with *ibada* in order to cultivate piety and thus ensure a better afterlife, she also often used her Islamic knowledge together with Islamic antidiscrimination discourses to make claims to her social worth as a working-class mainlander living in Zanzibar. In another *madrasa* class, on November 15, 2017, Zainab led a discussion on the importance of *sadaka*, or giving alms, in Islam. She explained, "Wealth is meant to help others—it's not for a person to acquire in order to become rich. Wealth is for the benefit of the community, so don't be selfish." Later in class, Zainab opened the floor for students' thoughts and contributions. Rehema raised her hand, and when Zainab called on her, she amended Zainab's earlier description of *sadaka* in Islam: "*Sadaka* doesn't have to be dependent on one's money or wealth. A lot of people say, "Me, I don't have," but…there are so many ways of helping people, by sharing your ideas and contributing your knowledge.…It's not just about wealth, but it's about making an effort."

Here, Rehema depended on her own Islamic knowledge in order to rework Zainab's description of *sadaka*, a central tenet of Islam. Zainab's definition of *sadaka* as relying on the sharing of one's personal wealth would preclude Rehema's ability to give alms, which is one of five central pillars in Islam. So Rehema suggested ways in which Muslims without monetary wealth might be able to contribute *sadaka*, reinstating herself as a pious Muslim woman who could participate in the central Islamic pillar of *sadaka*. Her description of offering *sadaka* through the sharing of ideas and knowledge was remarkably similar to her description of women's solidarity and economic self-reliance in her *vicoba*. Even though Rehema used *ibada* as a tool to persevere through difficult interpersonal, unequal relations in this life, with an eye to the blessings she would receive in the afterlife, she did not shy away from making claims to her social worth in this life as a true believer.

There were moments in *madrasa* when Rehema put forth her own Islamic knowledge, like when she challenged Zainab's definition of *sadaka*. But there were additionally moments when information presented in class led Rehema to at least publicly question her own knowledge of Islam. For example, on March 17, 2018, Zainab led a class session on the importance of the Friday sermon in Islam, with about 15 women in attendance, who sat in a circle around the circumference of the room. Zainab insisted that the main role of women in relation to Friday prayers was to ensure that their male children and husbands were able to pray in the mosque. Zainab insisted, "Women…receive extra blessings from God for praying at home on Fridays, while men receive extra blessings from God for praying in the mosque." Rehema interjected, explaining that when she visited her home on the coastal mainland, she often attended mosque on Friday.[43] She asked Zainab if she would still receive blessings from God for attending mosque during the Friday sermon, and Zulfa,* a classmate, interjected. "Women have the right to pray, but whether you like it or not, a man is your leader." Zulfa added that if Rehema received her husband's permission to attend mosque and had no other obligations, she would still receive blessings from God. Zulfa put forth a version of *ibada* in which women were required to elevate the spiritual needs of their husbands above their own in order to receive blessings in the afterlife.

The *madrasa* minimized rigid class and ethnic boundaries in Zanzibar, as evidenced by the diversity of attendees and by the democratic quality of *ibada*, just as it solidified gender inequality by projecting patriarchal interpretations of Islam. Rehema did not uncritically accept the patriarchal interpretations of Islam presented in her *madrasa*, however. In our interview, she complained about patriarchal Islam in Zanzibar and men's propensity to misinterpret and misuse certain verses in the *Qur'an*:

> "It's not as though Islam is inherently patriarchal, but men conveniently pluck things from religion in order to oppress women…If you look in the *Qur'an*, it's clear that women are permitted to travel to lots of places and that they are permitted to share and to socialize with other people. But a man will think he's somehow more powerful than religion and say, "I've been told that if my wife doesn't obey me, she won't go to heaven…" Unfortunately, you'll meet a lot of women who lack the ability to even leave their homes because they've been deceived by their husbands' misuse of certain verses in the *Qur'an*. It's true that there are verses in the *Qur'an* that designate men as the protectors of women, but not in every area of life. A man has his freedoms and a woman has hers."[44]

Rehema often lamented the propensity of many Zanzibari *imams* [Muslim leaders] to selectively pluck Islamic textual evidence to support their argument that women require men's permission to leave their homes.[45] At the same time, one of Rehema's *madrasa* textbooks entitled, "The Muslim Family," produced by the Islamic Propagation Center in Dar es Salaam, discouraged women from leaving their homes except under special circumstances and on special occasions. Women were ironically reading a textbook that discouraged them from leaving their homes in an Islamic educational space that they left their homes almost nightly to attend, which highlights the multiple, sometimes contradictory ways that women negotiate different patriarchal structures in Zanzibar.

Furthermore, even as her *madrasa* textbooks discouraged women's mobility, Rehema, Zulfa, Zainab, and a few other women often traveled on the weekends to rural Zanzibari villages to try and establish satellite *madrasas*. In the process, they sometimes encountered public officials who dismissed them as fundamentalists because of their decisions to publicly don the visually dramatic and symbolic *niqab*. After one such weekend, Rehema complained to me about a group of public officials who forbade their entrance into the coastal, tourism-heavy village of Jambiani and accused them of being affiliated with *Al Qaeda*, even though they were just trying to increase women's access to Islamic education.[46] The reaction of public officials to Rehema, Zainab, and Zulfa reflects a general tendency among ruling CCM party officials in Zanzibar to dismiss revivalists as extremists affiliated with the political opposition. There is some truth to the perceived connection between revivalists and Zanzibar's most prominent opposition party, CUF (Turner 2009), whose leaders have historically described CCM hegemony as a threat to Islamic morality in Zanzibar (Burgess 2009), but it is not as neat of an alignment as CCM officials in Jambiani describe it as being. For example, both Zainab and Rehema actively eschewed party politics and criticized the politicization of religious spaces in Zanzibar.[47]

Rehema has ultimately opted for group solidarity in the *madrasa* leaders' attempts to increase rural women's access to Islamic knowledge, which has strengthened her own conviction in the importance of women's Islamic education and solidified her relationship with the group's leaders. In their efforts to establish satellite *madrasas* in rural areas on the weekends, Rehema, Zainab, and Zulfa have negotiated with their husbands, with male reformist leaders who often minimize women's Islamic authority and knowledge, and with local CCM leaders, who have discounted them as terrorists affiliated with the political opposition. They have negotiated diverse social structures in multiple, nonlinear, and contradictory ways. Rehema's efforts to advocate for women's Islamic education reminded me of her frequent repetition of a popular adage from Nyerere's *Ujamaa*: "If you educate a woman, you educate the whole community." Women in Zanzibar rely on nonreligious strategies and discourses in their negotiations of religious social structures, just as they rely on religious strategies and discourses in their negotiations of nonreligious social structures. A life history and case study approach reveals enactments of agency by Rehema that transcend her own cultivation of piety and religious social spaces like her women's *madrasa*.

What do women have to lose?

I began to write this chapter with the intention of exploring how women outside of activist spaces are negotiating the socialist past and the Islamic revivalist present in their daily lives. If they were to attend her *madrasa*, major activists would likely understand Rehema as adhering to a revivalist Islam that they see as encroaching on women's rights. However, my prolonged relationship with Rehema reveals a more complicated story. She engages with diverse social structures and spaces—including her *madrasa*, her *vicoba*, an organization of mainlanders living in Zanzibar, and local politicians in rural Zanzibar—in multiple, contradictory, and nonlinear ways. For example, Rehema's *vicoba* promotes the socialism-inspired contemporary feminist tenets of women's solidarity and communal self-reliance. But in order to ensure the continued existence of her *vicoba*, Rehema strategically appealed to the patriarchal leadership of an organization of mainlanders living in Zanzibar on its own terms. Furthermore, Rehema frequently critiqued men's patriarchal misinterpretations of Islamic texts outside of her *madrasa*, just as she engaged with Islamic textbooks that promoted similar ideas in her *madrasa*. The women in her *madrasa* read and accepted segments of textbooks that discouraged women from leaving their homes, even as they left their homes to advance their Islamic knowledge in the *madrasa* almost every night.

When I interviewed ZAFELA leader Jamila Mahmoud about how a coalition of Zanzibari women's rights activists would move forward in reforming the archipelago's Islamic *kadhi's* courts (see Chapter 3), one of her responses to me was that they hoped to explore whether ordinary women in Zanzibar wanted women to become *kadhis*. Perhaps a better question would be, “What do women have to gain and to lose from vouching for their support of women *kadhis* in different social spaces?” When I mentioned the efforts among women’s rights activists to reform Zanzibar’s *kadhi’s* courts to Rehema, she argued vehemently that efforts by *imams* [religious leaders] to suppress women from becoming *kadhis* were akin to efforts among male leaders of an organization of mainlanders living in Zanzibar to suppress her *vicoba*, attributing both to *mfumo dume*.[48]

When framed as a question of what women have to gain and lose from vouching for their support for women *kadhis* in different social spaces versus a question of want, Jamila herself had a lot to gain and a lot to lose in her public advocacy for allowing women to become *kadhis.* She faced the scrutiny of religious leaders, who issued public curses against her and other activists, but she ultimately believed that advocating for women to be *kadhis* was an extension of her Muslim faith, which for her was an egalitarian Islam with a mostly transnational solidarity of women followers. Vouching for women’s right to serve as *kadhis* only strengthened Jamila’s religious solidarity with other Muslim women in a transnational Islamic feminist network. In Rehema’s *madrasa*, however, I suspect that publicly vouching for one’s support of women *kadhis* would have been an aberration. At risk for Rehema would be a much more local, community-level religious solidarity with her *madrasa* classmates; her engagement in increasing access to rural women’s Islamic education in Zanzibar; and a precious space where she is able to make claims to her respectability and social worth as a domestic worker from the Tanzanian mainland.

But Rehema's gains and losses would shift in different social contexts. The best answer I can put forth in terms of how women are negotiating the socialist past and Islamic revivalist present is that both discourses and social structures are deeply culturally resonant in Zanzibar and offer women different things. In their negotiations of diverse, interconnected patriarchal social structures and pressures in Zanzibar, the strategies put forth by women like Rehema are multiple, nonlinear, and naturally contradictory. Rehema's life story reveals the complexity and nonlinearity of these negotiations for a working-class mainlander in a precarious profession, in a context where mainlanders have often been scapegoated for the purported moral erosion of Zanzibari society. The future for women in Zanzibar will ultimately depend on how women negotiate their multiple social engagements—religion being just one of them—and on what combination of social structures emerge as offering the most security or perhaps enabling the most *umoja* in their daily lives.

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[1] Rehema. December 15, 2017. Interview with Jessica Ott. Swahili. Zanzibar Town, Tanzania.

[2] *Zanzibar Leo* published several articles in the early 2000s that blamed women from Tanga in mainland Tanzania for bringing HIV/AIDS to Nungwi in northern Unguja and for stealing the husbands of local women, which reflect a more widespread blaming of moral erosion in Zanzibar in part on migrants from the predominantly Christian Tanzanian mainland. Such articles include Issa, Mzuri. "Nungwi hatarini kukumbwa na balaa la ukimwi ikiwa…," *Zanzibar Leo*, February 28, 2003. Issa, Mzuri. "Wanawake wageni wazua kizazaa Nungwi," *Zanzibar Leo*, February 25, 2003.

[3] Scholars like Sehlikoglu (2018) have put forth criticisms of a piety turn in studies of gender in the Middle East for overemphasizing women's religious lives at the expense of exploring other social structures and pressures that women navigate on a daily basis.

[4] Historical accounts of Indian Ocean networks of commerce and cultural exchange in East Africa have typically mentioned women insofar that Arab migrants married local women. Rehema's story highlights the contemporary presence of women in Indian Ocean networks of migration and exchange.

[5] Rehema. December 15, 2017. Interview with Jessica Ott. Swahili. Zanzibar Town, Tanzania.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid.

[10] E.g., Lwanga, Rukia, "Kisa cha mama wa kambo," *Zanzibar Leo*, September 6, 2002, 8. Nasbat Ali, "Mama wa kambo," *Zanzibar Leo*, June 27, 2002, 8. Yahya, Cassium, "Kisa cha mama wa kambo," *Zanzibar Leo*, May 30, 2002, 9.

[11] Rehema. December 15, 2017. Interview with Jessica Ott. Swahili. Zanzibar Town, Tanzania.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Personal conversation with Rehema on September 13, 2017.

[16] Human Rights Watch, *"Working Like a Robot" - Abuse of Tanzanian Domestic Workers in Oman and the United Arab Emirates*, 14 November 2017, available at: https://www.refworld.org/docid/5a0ad6be4.html [accessed 18 June 2019].

[17] Rehema. December 15, 2017. Interview with Jessica Ott. Swahili. Zanzibar Town, Tanzania.

[18] Ibid.

[19] E.g., Report outlining the problems of UWASP, 17 December 1973, DB 17/6, Zanzibar National Archives.

[20] "UWZ Unasonga Mbele," *Kweupe*, March 22, 1968.

[21] E.g., "Announcing 2020 ACIP Workshop: Rethinking Resilience," H-Africa, last modified June 24, 2019, https://networks.h-net.org/node/28765/discussions/4224494/announcing-2020-acip-workshop-rethinking-resilience.

[22] E.g., Hassan, Shifaa Said, "Wanawake wajiamini na wajitegemea," *Nuru*, March 6-12, 2002. Juma, Mwajuma, "Wanawake wana nafasi muhimu katika kuchangia maendeleo," *Zanzibar Leo*, September 18, 2005, 8.

[23] E.g., Juma, Mwajuma, "Wanawake wana nafasi muhimu katika kuchangia maendeleo," *Zanzibar Leo*, September 18, 2005, 8.

[24] Rehema. December 15, 2017. Interview with Jessica Ott. Swahili. Zanzibar Town, Tanzania.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Hassan, Asya, "Uanzishaji wa vikundi vya wanawake kupunguza umasikini, utegemezi," *Zanzibar Leo*, March 20, 2018, 7.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Nassor, Haji, "'Umoja ni Maendeleo' yajipanga kuwakomboa vijana, wanawake," *Zanzibar Leo*, March 18, 2018, 5.

[31] Juma, Zuhura, "Wajasiriamali wataka wawezeshwe kufikia masoko," *Zanzibar Leo*, December 30, 2017, 5.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Rehema. December 15, 2017. Interview with Jessica Ott. Swahili. Zanzibar Town, Tanzania.

[34] Hassan, Asya, "Uanzishaji wa vikundi vya wanawake kupunguza umasikini, utegemezi," *Zanzibar Leo*, March 20, 2018, 7. Zuhura Juma, "Wajasiriamali wataka wawezeshwe kufikia masoko," *Zanzibar Leo*, December 30, 2017, 5.

[35] *Ripoti ya Kinamama wa Umoja wa Watu wa Tanga Zanzibar (Wanatusichoke)*, October 1, 2017.

[36] Felicitas Becker (2016) reflects on patriarchal representations of masculinity in three widely traded sermons that were produced in a Zanzibari context of Islamic reform.

[37] Rehema. December 15, 2017. Interview with Jessica Ott. Swahili. Zanzibar Town, Tanzania.

[38] Sharifa. May 21, 2018. Interview with Jessica Ott. Swahili. Zanzibar Town, Tanzania.

[39] Personal conversation with Rehema on October 5, 2017.

[40] Personal conversation with Tatu on October 5, 2017.

[41] E.g., personal conversation with Rehema on October 19, 2017.

[42] Rehema. December 15, 2017. Interview with Jessica Ott. Swahili. Zanzibar Town, Tanzania.

[43] Loimeier (2009) reflected on a widespread belief in Zanzibar that women should not be allowed into mosques, which he attributed to an idea advanced by the prominent Zanzibari religious scholar Sheikh Muhammad Nassor. Loimeier described Nassor's promotion of the exclusion of women in mosques as his resistance to a reformist development in mainland Tanzania in the 1980s to provide spaces for women in their mosques.

[44] Rehema. December 15, 2017. Interview with Jessica Ott. Swahili. Zanzibar Town, Tanzania.

[45] Felicitas Becker (2016) has highlighted the more frequent presence of non-Islamic arguments supporting patriarchal masculinity in her thoughtful analysis of three widely distributed Islamic sermons that were produced in Zanzibar.

[46] Personal conversation with Rehema on March 28, 2018.

[47] Personal conversations with Rehema and Zainab in *madrasa* on March 12, 2018.

[48] Personal conversation with Rehema on September 25, 2017.

CONCLUSION: “Let’s all continue to build one house together, because the thing we all want is development”

Several months after the gender coalition met at ANGOZA’s offices in peri-urban, energetic Mombasa to reflect on their efforts to improve the movement of GBV cases through Zanzibar’s criminal justice system and on their efforts to reform the archipelago’s *kadhi’s* courts, which I commented on in Chapter 3, gender coalition members convened again at ZAFELA’s office on June 6, 2018. Among those in attendance at the meeting were Mzuri Issa, director of TAMWA Zanzibar; Rahma and Kauthar, a ZAFELA paralegal and lawyer; Hawra Shamte, program manager of TAMWA Zanzibar; Salma Saadati and another representative from Zanzibar’s Organization for Disability Rights (UWZ); Jamila Mahmoud, director of ZAFELA; and Bahati, an activist and political figure whom I traveled the island of Unguja with to observe her work during much of the previous November. Upon seeing me, Mzuri shared her excitement that Harvey Weinstein had just been arrested on rape charges. Throughout my dissertation research, I was surprised by the reach of the #MeToo movement to Zanzibar and comforted by how eager activists and others, like Salum in my introduction, were to commiserate with me about US politics and to celebrate major #MeToo milestones.

When I saw Bahati arrive at ZAFELA for the gender coalition meeting, I worried that there might be conflict. Just over a month earlier, members of the gender coalition had provided training to local judges on how to deal with cases of sexual assault among children. In the middle of the training, Bahati stood up and accusatorily shouted at local judges for taking the law into their own hands rather than allowing police officers to do their jobs, which prompted a local judge to stand up and repeatedly demand that she be removed from the room. Bahati had just been designated permanent secretary of a major government ministry and was known for being a staunch supporter of Zanzibar's ruling CCM party. A gender coalition leader interjected, scolding Bahati for threatening the happiness and respectability of local judges in attendance and reminding attendees that they were there to contribute toward building a shared house. When I brought up the incident later to a gender coalition leader, she explained that things had gone awry because Bahati was not an activist but rather a politician. Politicians were divisive, while activists sought to cultivate an apolitical solidarity in their advocacy efforts.

But Bahati had just been appointed to an important political position within a major ministry, so activists were forced to balance their ongoing frustrations with her controversial behavior with their need for her political support. Everyone whooped upon her entrance at ZAFELA and greeted her with the honorific, "*mheshimiwa*" [honorable]. A gender coalition member asked if she could have a picture with the infamous Bahati. Bahati was unaccustomed to being called "honorable" by her activist peers and responded by trying to minimize their social distance, insisting, "*Tuko pamoja*" [We are together], relying on a derivative of the word *umoja*. The strength with which activists responded to Bahati's new position was verging on mocking.

The purpose of the meeting was to determine what children's rights issue activists would prioritize for the "International Day of the African Child," which took place annually on June 16th. Upon convening the meeting, a major activist lamented that Zanzibari activists were left out of the national planning process for Tanzania's International Day of the African Child commemoration to take place on the Tanzanian mainland. "They have a "message sent" mentality," she complained. "They say that this union government is a marriage, but what kind of marriage is this?" Her comment mirrored a general frustration among many Zanzibaris of feeling marginalized from political, civil society, and other social spheres on the Tanzanian mainland.

Activists then began brainstorming how they would commemorate the International Day of the African Child in Zanzibar. Someone suggested a focus on GBV, to which an activist lamented, “But we do GBV every year.” Yet another attendee suggested, “What about this issue of reproductive health? Our youths are provided with no information at all.” Someone interjected, “Eeeeh, it’s too much of a taboo to teach girls about reproductive health in our Zanzibari education system. Especially after these *kadhi’s* court reforms, we can’t afford to further upset religious leaders.” Another attendee suggested, “How about we use the slogan, “The girl child isn’t just for marriage?”” A major activist insisted, “We can’t keep using this term “the girl child,” because it’s exclusive, and we’re trying to focus on challenges that all African children face.”

Meeting attendees eventually decided that they would focus on the right to a quality education among students with disabilities, who were being neglected within Zanzibar’s public education system, which reflected the gender coalition’s longstanding commitment to disability rights since its inception in 2002. Mzuri explained that unlike European countries and the US, Zanzibar failed to provide any meaningful special education services to schoolchildren. As a leader of Zanzibar’s Organization for Disability Rights, Salma added that students with disabilities were failing their exams. “Blind primary school students have no religious textbooks and no Arabic textbooks. In secondary school, they have no textbooks at all,” she elaborated. Several activists insisted to Bahati that she should address issues related to special education as part of her ministry work. When Bahati responded that the Ministry of Education was responsible for special education, another activist scolded, “You should address it, too, because it's also related to your ministry!" Activists were milking Bahati's political position for all it was worth and relishing in holding her accountable to her newfound position as a public servant.

The gender coalition scheduled a follow-up planning meeting to take place on Friday, June 8th. The follow-up meeting would be held at the Organization for Disability Rights (UWZ), next to Zanzibar's lush Jamhuri Gardens, where they would bring together the teachers and parents of children with disabilities as well as children themselves to discuss barriers to receiving a quality education among students with disabilities in Zanzibar. They planned to share their findings at a joint stakeholder meeting and press conference that would take place on June 14th, where they were working on conscripting a well-known young woman leader of Zanzibar's youth council, who was blind, to perform an *utenzi*.

I left early on the 14th for the press conference and meeting at Zanzibar's Organization for Disability Rights from my nearby home in Kikwajuni. The streets were bustling, with men and women buying new clothing for their children and stocking up on food to prepare for the Eid festivities to take place in just a few days. I was among the first to arrive, with activists, journalists, schoolchildren, teachers, parents, and Ministry of Education representatives trickling in after me. Bahati would later arrive with two CCM representatives who were visiting her ministry from the Tanzanian mainland, adorned in CCM green and yellow polo shirts, which evoked raised eyebrows and led to activists giving Bahati a bit of a cold shoulder to avoid appearing politically aligned. Salma convened the meeting at 9:30am, soon after handing the floor over to veteran activist Asha Aboud, who would lead the meeting.

Asha started by providing audience members with an overview of the International Day of the African Child, which was designated after the Soweto Uprising of 1976 in apartheid South Africa, when black school children marched to protest the introduction of Afrikaans as the language of instruction in local schools. Asha recounted how hundreds of children were killed by South African police officers and shared the purpose of the day as being to "recognize and acknowledge the *utu* [personhood] of African children." Asha's description of the Soweto Uprising highlighted Pan-African influences in the work of Zanzibar's gender coalition.

ZAFELA director Jamila Mahmoud took over to project a slide show with data from their information gathering session the previous Friday at UWZ. Jamila explained to the audience, "There are countries with less *imani* [faith] than Zanzibar who are doing far more to protect the educational rights of children with disabilities." Jamila positioned the neglect of children with disabilities as morally inconsistent with their shared Islamic faith, highlighting the increasing importance of Islam in the organizing efforts of Zanzibari women's rights activists like Jamila, who had come to see their work as inextricable from their faith.

During Jamila's slide show presentation of data about the educational experiences of young people with disabilities in Zanzibar, representatives from the Ministry of Education took diligent notes. There were moments of tension, such as when a government leader stood up to insist that Zanzibaris should not expect the Ministry of Education to do everything and that collaboration was necessary. "Activists should also look for new sources of funding to support special education services," he insisted. In response to the government leader's frustrated reaction to their report, Hawra Shamte and Asha Aboud insisted, in succession, "*Sisi tunajenga nyumba mmoja*" [We are all building one house], appropriating Julius Nyerere's metaphor for *umoja*.

Before the event ended, Saada,* a woman youth leader who was blind, appeared in front of the audience to perform a 10-minute *utenzi* with one of her peers. Both young women sat at a table in the front of the room and followed the *braille* text of an *utenzi* while they took turns performing individual stanzas.

The *utenzi* brings to light the barriers that children with disabilities face in Zanzibar's education system. The sixth stanza explains,

6. Even on the road on the way to school
Obstacles pile up like cargo in a bus
Upon reaching school
Many problems have already happened.

Saada's *utenzi* further elaborates in stanzas 15-17,

15. And deaf students, my God
They have really experienced challenges
When they are in school
They are especially left behind.
16. They don't know what's being said
They can't hear the meaning
Their teachers haven't learned
The language of signing.
17. If they manage to make it
As far as secondary school
It is a true miracle
If they make it to university.

While the two young women sang the *utenzi* aloud, cameramen from various media outlets crowded around them, and Hawra Shamte and Asha Aboud deposited a few Tanzanian shilling notes in front of them, which is customary in any performance of an *utenzi*. Near the end of the *utenzi*, Saada issued directives to audience members, before acknowledging the government and activists for their efforts to date:

26. Improve the environment
Remove challenges
So that they will do better
And those who do not deserve to be left behind aren't forgotten.
29. Congratulations to the government
For establishing a department
An educational department
For helping children with disabilities.
30. A sincere thank you
To the activists
For thinking of a smart idea
To worry about those of us who are disabled.
31. And to everyone who participated
We say thank you
God will pay you all
With many good blessings.

My dissertation research year was sandwiched between an *utenzi* performed at the launch of a paralegal program in Kizimkazi and an *utenzi* performed at the Day of the African Child meeting and press conference at UWZ. When Saada finished the final stanza, Asha Aboud performed an impromptu sequel stanza herself, thanking Saada and her colleague for describing “*hali halisi*,” or the real situation. Asha twirled around and ended her own addendum to the *utenzi* with a dramatic trill, which caused women audience members to ululate. The Ministry of Education representative interjected again, reminding audience members that helping children was not equivalent to negatively criticizing the government, to which Asha responded, “Let’s all continue to build one house together, since the thing we all want is development.”

During the course of the meeting and press conference, activists alluded to the Pan-African, Islamic, and nationalist influences in their work. Asha Aboud cited the importance of commemorating the Soweto Uprising under apartheid South Africa and of recognizing the personhood of children. Jamila Mahmoud cited the *imani* [Muslim faith] of Zanzibaris as compelling them to ensure the educational rights of all children. Both Hawra Shamte and Asha Aboud addressed tense moments with proclamations that they were all building a shared house, alluding to Nyerere’s metaphor for *umoja,* a central tenet of his philosophical and political system of *Ujamaa*.

Activists additionally incorporated an *utenzi* into the press conference and meeting, a literary and cultural form that conjures memories of other gendered *utenzi* poetry from Zanzibar’s pre-revolution and socialist past and that often either challenges or reinforces existing gender norms. By commissioning an *utenzi* about the experiences of children with disabilities, activists put forth an intersectional understanding of gender as influenced by one’s disability status, a definition of gender that has characterized their coalition since its inception.

In my dissertation, departing from anthropological explorations of women’s rights across space (e.g., Merry 2006; Abu-Lughod 2013), I explore the language of women’s rights and gendered public discourse more broadly over time in Zanzibar. In Chapter 1, I highlight a socialist state feminist movement that emerged in the 1960s in Zanzibar. Despite the controversial legacy of Zanzibar's autocratic post-revolution regime, a gendered public discourse that emerged in the 1960s of women's *umoja* and of women at the front lines of development and nation building has remained important in subsequent women's movements. In Chapter 2, I highlight the work of Zanzibari journalist Shifaa Said Hassan as a women's rights vernacularizer during a millennial media-based women's movement. In her articles, Shifaa presented transnational women's rights priorities, conventions, and ideas with language from Zanzibar's past. Shifaa's use of language from the past did not simply reflect a process of indigenization, which Merry (2006) defines as "the ways new ideas are framed and presented in terms of existing cultural norms, values, and practices" (39). Shifaa strategically appropriated historical language as she put forth a version of history that conflicted with the government's official narrative of the past. A look at women's rights language over time rather than across space allowed me to understand Shifaa's use of language from the past as an attempt to mediate collective memory.

In Chapter 3, I highlight more recent attempts by major women's rights activists to reform the archipelago's Islamic *kadhi's* courts, during which they were supported by a transnational Islamic feminist network. Because I explored the language of women's rights over time rather than across space, I was able to observe similarities between the use of Islamic feminist arguments among women's rights activists in the 2010s and a series of 1950s newspaper articles that tried to convince Zanzibaris that feminism was not inconsistent with Islam by citing a feminist movement in predominantly Islamic Egypt.[1] Second, I was able to understand the engagement of Zanzibari women's rights activists with a transnational Islamic feminist movement as reflecting a major departure from a millennial media-based women's movement that relied most heavily on language from the socialist 1960s and on transnational women's rights arguments. Third, I was able to identify a historical repetition in the gender coalition's continuing recognition of the power of *umoja*, albeit a more faith-based *umoja*, in their future work.

In Chapter 4, I explore the grassroots social involvements of a non-elite woman from the Tanzanian mainland in Zanzibar in a women's prayer group and savings cooperative. Her negotiations of agency across different social groups are multiple, nonlinear, and often contradictory, which reflects relational understandings of rights and the multiplicity and diversity of Zanzibari communities. It also highlights the continuing resonance of gendered language, ideas, and imagery from the socialist past, even in the midst of a deeply rooted Islamic revival.

By looking at women's rights ideas over time versus across space, my dissertation supports a claim put forth by Shannon Morreira (2016) that so-called "local" rights ideas have always interacted with global rights discourses. My dissertation also illustrates the central role of historical memory in human rights movements in places like Zanzibar that have endured major historical ruptures. For example, a women's movement emerged out of the Zanzibar Revolution of 1964, which remains deeply contested and still structures social and political life in Zanzibar. How one appropriates language from the past often reflects how one understands the past, which complicates an implicit assumption in Merry's (2006) framework of vernacularization that local language, symbols, and imagery primarily serve as cultural accoutrement for women's rights ideas as they are translated from transnational to local contexts. In other words, the local cultural language and imagery that transnational women's rights ideas are merged with during processes of vernacularization often reflects the political alignments and historical understandings of vernacularizers themselves, which means that rights movements should be understood as spaces where historical memory is likely to be negotiated, mediated, and/or shifted. Third, looking at women’s rights ideas over time rather than across space reveals linguistic change over time. For example, while words like *umoja* once most strongly connoted the coercive efforts of Zanzibar’s post-revolution regime to involve women in nation building, it now additionally connotes an apolitical solidarity among Zanzibari women’s rights activists, who have mostly subsumed their own political alignments in their advocacy work.

My decision to explore gendered public discourse and the language of women’s rights over time in Zanzibar allowed me to understand the significance of the gender coalition’s use of the *utenzi* as a medium for promoting children’s educational rights. Just as the *utenzi* has historically been used to either reinforce or change gender norms, it was used on the Day of the African Child to promote the educational rights of children with disabilities, which Zanzibari activists understand as inextricable from women’s rights. It also helped me to identify Asha Aboud’s allusion to Julius Nyerere’s metaphor of a shared house from the 1960s and her use of the word “development” in part as an allusion to militaristic imagery from the 1960s of women at the front lines of development. It made me remember Bi Naima Mali Madai’s expressed desire to continue to contribute to nation building and development.

Asha concluded the meeting with her typical proclamation that activists were building a shared house, adding this time that they all shared a goal of development. Since the revolution, development has oscillated in public discourse between something that happened and something to strive for. Like the word *umoja, maendeleo* [development] has ultimately transcended the regime that authored it. The last major women’s rights event of my dissertation field research shed light on a fragile political dance that activists must constantly engage in, which involves both challenging the government and appealing to political leaders, without threatening a hard-earned façade of political neutrality. It also highlighted the significant role that activists’ own cultural, linguistic, and religious resources—like the *utenzi*, gendered language from the socialist past, and *imani*—have played and will likely continue to play in their politically tenuous work.

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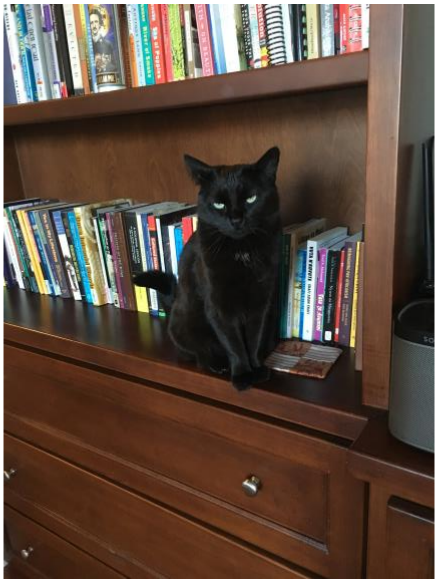
[1] "The Feminist Movement I," *Mwongozi*, February 13, 1959, 3. "The Feminist Movement II," *Mwongozi*, February 20, 1959, 3. "The Feminist Movement III," *Mwongozi*, February 27, 1959, 3.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Figure 8



Picture of the author’s cat, Meems, whom she thanks in the acknowledgments.

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