(IM)MOBILITY IN A SEA OF MIGRATION: RACE, MOBILITIES, AND TRANSNATIONAL FAMILIES IN ZANZIBAR AND OMAN, 1856-2019

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ABSTRACT

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The central aim of this dissertation is to examine the history of connections between Omanis and Zanzibaris from the point of view of non-elites. The principle actors of histories of movements and connections between East Africa and the Arabian Peninsula has, in past scholarship, generally been elite men, principally statesmen and merchants. Many of the core assumptions about this history that have shaped past scholarship have been based on the priorities of this cast of actors whose goals and motives have been recorded in archival documents. Using oral history, this dissertation is able to offer a history "from below" that instead privileges the experiences of women and the rural poor. This research is based principally on interviews in Pemba, rural Unguja, and Oman. By shifting the central actors in this history, this dissertation is able to make several important contributions. It highlights the important divisions between Arabs in East Africa, a racial category too often discussed as if it represented a unified bloc. Further, it offers immobility as a crucial missing piece in this history that has been most often typified by the mobility of its most elite actors, arguing that mobility has been too central in our understanding of transnational communities.

Keywords: Immobility, Transnationalism, Oral History, East Africa, Indian Ocean, Arab, African, Identity, Gender, Class, Race, Rural, Pemba, Zanzibar, Oman, Mobility, Migration, Revolution

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

INTRODUCTION

The first time I went to East Africa, I met with a local gatekeeper to discuss my planned research. When I told him that I intended to work on a project about the history of migration from Oman, he responded, "Oh *them*!" and proceeded to tell me all the reasons that I was wrong for doing so. The criticisms he offered echoed widely circulating narratives in the region. It was repeated to me again and again during the course of my research that the history of Arabs in East Africa was one of wealthy elites. This man's assumption that I would be writing about a cast of Sultans, aristocratic landowners, and merchant gentlemen was based on the same set of discourses about racial identities in Zanzibar that have endured in the region since the colonial era. Specifically, the narrative that Arabs have historically represented a racial solidarity at the top of East Africa's social hierarchy, uniformly upper class with easy access to trans-Indian Ocean connections and mobilities. Despite this story's longevity and broad acceptance, it is based on fundamentally misleading ideas about racial unity and Arab identities in East Africa. Rather than the uniformly elite monolith that this narrative describes, my informants within the Zanzibari Arab community were socially and economically diverse.

Scholarly writing on Arab connections across the Western Indian Ocean has largely presented a similarly narrow perception of Arabs as elite men—quintessentially as merchants,[1] aristocrats,[2] and sultans.[3] Michael Pearson in his history of the Indian Ocean

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[1] Alan Villiers, *Sons of Sinbad* (New York: Scribner, 1969); Abdul Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices, & Ivory in Zanzibar: Integration of an East African Commercial Empire into the World Economy, 1770-1873* (London : Athens: J. Currey ; Ohio University Press, 1987); Erik Gilbert, *Dhows & the Colonial Economy in Zanzibar* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2005); Thomas F. McDow, *Buying Time: Debt and Mobility in the Western Indian Ocean* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2018); Abdul Sheriff, *Dhow Cultures and the Indian Ocean: Cosmopolitanism, Commerce and Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

suggested that scholars should consider more aspects of oceanic connections than they do, critiquing a schema that "found that the three main forms of cross-cultural interaction are migration, commerce, and conquest."[4] To these categories he added travelers, disease, and cultural connections. And yet from Beatrice Nicolini's histories of the entanglements of sultans, to Gijsbert Oonk's migrating Indian businessmen, to Thomas McDow's history of debt among Arab merchants in East Africa, the cast of actors that feature in this literature rarely reflect the diversity implied by these categories of connections.[5]

I am writing a "bottom up" history of a people usually understood as elites and a history of immobility within a population that has been largely defined by their transnational mobility. Rather than the landed aristocracy and the Stone Town intelligentsia, I center rural villagers, women, and working class Arabs. This cast of non-elite actors reveals the cleavages *within* the easily glossed transnational community of Omani-Zanzibaris. In prioritizing their perspectives, I show the variable experiences of this community's history, adding my voice to those who insist that the ways history is felt by individuals is always contingent on a host of variables, among them gender, urban/rural divides, economic inequalities, and diverging social networks. These divisions have

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[2] Randall L. Pouwels, *Horn and Crescent: Cultural Change and Traditional Islam on the East African Coast, 800-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Jonathon Glassman, *War of Words, War of Stones: Racial Thought and Violence in Colonial Zanzibar* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011); Nathaniel Mathews, "The Zinjibari Diaspora, 1698-2014: Citizenship, Migration, and Revolution in Zanzibar, Oman, and the Post-War Indian Ocean" (PhD Dissertation, Northwestern University, 2016).
[3] Christiane Bird, *The Sultan's Shadow: One Family's Rule at the Crossroads of East and West* (New York: Random House, 2010); Beatrice Nicolini, *The First Sultan of Zanzibar: Scrambling for Power and Trade in the Nineteenth-Century Indian Ocean* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2012).
[4] Michael Pearson, *The Indian Ocean* (London: Routledge, 2003), 7.
[5] Nicolini, *The First Sultan of Zanzibar*; Gijsbert Oonk, *Settled Strangers: Asian Business Elites in East Africa* (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications Pvt. Ltd, 2013); McDow, *Buying Time*, 2018.

structured many aspects of life in Zanzibar, and by shifting our view to center those who have largely been excluded from the history of Arabs in East Africa, new narratives become salient. In particular, this transnational community continues to flourish into the present due in part to the fact that social and economic inequalities created an uneven access to mobility, prompting many Omani-descended Arabs to stay in Zanzibar.

This dissertation begins not with warfare between competing Portuguese and Omani imperial ambitions in the late 17th century,[6] nor with the Omani Sultan moving his court to Zanzibar in the late 1830s,[7][8] but several decades later in 1856 when a change in leadership in Oman triggered a wave of lower-class migrants from the desert interior to voyage by dhow to East Africa. In the following century, more poor Omani immigrants came, prompted by droughts, economic downturns, and civil wars in Oman as well as the hope of potential prosperity in Zanzibar. In the aftermath of the 1964 Zanzibari Revolution and the 1970 Omani coup, many more prosperous and well educated Zanzibari-Arabs relocated to Oman, where they found jobs in the rapidly expanding technocratic government and new oil industry. However, for many working class Arabs, and especially for women, this mobility was out of reach. Those who remained have, in recent decades, instead constructed new identities, social linkages, and economic dependencies as immobile members of a transnational network of connections that continues to stretch between Oman and Zanzibar.

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[6] See: Clifford Edmund Bosworth, *The New Islamic Dynasties* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); Michael Pearson, *Port Cities and Intruders: The Swahili Coast, India, and Portugal in the Early Modern Era* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998).
[7] The exact date for this move varies depending on what source you look at, but the most commonly cited dates are 1832 and 1840.
[8] See especially: Nicolini, *The First Sultan of Zanzibar*.

The principle argument in this dissertation is that (1) the history of Arab migration in the Western Indian Ocean, and of Zanzibar-Oman connections specifically, needs to include the experiences of those outside the structures of power, the archival sources, and top-down histories of Arab elites. The archetypal elite, mobile, male Arab merchant who inhabits so many histories of Zanzibar was just one example of a far more expansive and diverse population of Omani-Zanzibaris that included women, the working poor, rural villagers, and mixed-race families. By centering non-elites, largely through the intervention of oral history in an archival landscape that has privileged merchants and colonial bureaucrats, different narratives of the history of Arabs in East Africa come to light.

Derived from this methodological argument is a historiographical intervention. Namely, I argue that (2) the divisions *within* the racial category of Zanzibari Arab are as salient as any *between* racial groupings. The historiography on race on the Swahili coast has long struggled with reconciling the sociopolitical salience of racial divisions with an equally salient history of intermixing *between* those racial divisions.[9] What has been left behind in this discussion is an analysis of racial categories as fractured sites of social friction *within* their own boundaries. This is particularly true of the historiography on Arabs in East Africa. Writing about the legacy of Mau Mau in Kenyan political history, John

[9] For a non-exhaustive list of examples from this literature: Carol M. Eastman, "Who Are the Waswahili?," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 41, no. 3 (July 1, 1971): 228–36; Alamin Mazrui and Ibrahim Noor Shariff, *The Swahili: Idiom and Identity of an African People* (Trenton, N.J: Africa World Press, 1994); Laura Fair, *Pastimes and Politics: Culture, Community, and Identity in Post-Abolition Urban Zanzibar, 1890-1945* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2001); Gary Burgess, *Race, Revolution, and the Struggle for Human Rights in Zanzibar: The Memoirs of Ali Sultan Issa and Seif Sharif Hamad* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2009); Glassman, *War of Words, War of Stones*, 2011; Elisabeth McMahon, *Slavery and Emancipation in Islamic East Africa: From Honor to Respectability*, African Studies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Oonk, *Settled Strangers*; Sana Aiyar, *Indians in Kenya: The Politics of Diaspora* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2015).

Lonsdale argued that ethnicity is not "unthinking conformity" but rather "the arena for the sharpest social and political division."[10] In this dissertation, I apply Lonsdale's insight about the politics of "tribes" in Kenya to my discussion of race among the Arabs of Zanzibar, seeking to illuminate the internal patterns of social rupture.

Specifically, I argue (3) that one of the more important divisions that existed within the population of Arab Zanzibaris was the variable access to and desire for mobility. There is a certain bias towards mobility within the study of migration, an impulse to explain movement while leaving immobility implicitly the norm without need of analysis. The history of Omani migration to and from Zanzibar seems on the surface a ripe opportunity for the metaphors of fluidity that so often describe mobility within transnational networks, as the constant flow of dhows was slowly replaced by the daily current of airplanes. And yet, it was immobility that was far more readily apparent in my interviews. Most of my informants in Zanzibar had never been to Oman. This dissertation centers immobility as a constructed and denaturalized feature of the Arab-Zanzibari community. Equally, it frames immobile individuals as transnational in their own right, engaged in constructing transnational identities and social networks.

Whose history gets told? Oral histories in rural Zanzibar

The word *wamanga* is a somewhat unstable term for lower class Omani-Arabs in Zanzibar that has been used variously over time to imply "fresh off the boat," rural working class Arabs, Omani-Zanzibaris who are less Arab than the elite Arabs, or simply a slur for all Arabs. Although I hesitate to claim the word due to its changeable, contradictory, and sometimes derogatory connotations, this dissertation might be thought of as a history of

[10] Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya & Africa, Book 2: Violence & Ethnicity* (London : Nairobi : Athens: Ohio University Press, 1992), 268.

the *wamanga*. The slippery term seems suited to describing a set of actors defined not so much by what they do—in the first chapter they are the "fresh from Oman" working class migrants arriving secretly by dhow and by the third chapter they are the Zanzibaris who by choice or circumstance are left behind in East Africa while more prosperous cousins moved to Muscat—but rather by what they are not.

They are not wealthy merchants or sultans or leaders in the Arab Association. They are not really mentioned in the colonial archives. They are for the most part not even *waarabu*, which literally translates to "Arab" but in practice until very recently actually connoted only higher class Arabs, or rather the *waarabu* were the people who could claim to have *ustaarabu*, meaning both "Arabness" and "civilized-ness." For the purposes of this dissertation, "*waarabu*" is used to denote this upper-class Arab identity while "Arab" is meant more neutrally to imply ancestry from Arabia. But the term *wamanga* also does not go quite far enough as I am also at pains to include here those who have been outside of the historiography on Arab Zanzibaris in other ways. For example, by being rural and thus geographically proximal from the concerns of Zanzibar's urban center.

Gender is a particularly crucial piece of the puzzle. Mapping women onto racial belonging in East Africa is complicated by the long history of interracial marriages as well as the fact that officially race is passed on along patrilineal lines. Even the "Arabian" princess, Sayyida Salme, of *Memoirs of an Arabian Princess from Zanzibar*, for example, would have been half Circassian on her mother's side if race were not considered so strongly patrilineal.[11] So would a study on Circassian Zanzibaris not include Sayyida Salme? Would her mother, that Circassian member of the Sultan's harem, not be considered a part

[11] Emilie Ruete, *Memoirs of an Arabian Princess from Zanzibar: An Autobiography* (Zanzibar: Gallery Publications, 1998).

of a *waarabu* household? When including women, racial identities suddenly become murkier, but it is crucial that we do so not least *because* their presence adds nuance to simplified racial categories. But also because much of the history of Arabs in East Africa has been so starkly masculine, leaving a large portion of the region's past invisible to us without including women.

And yet, most scholarship on Arabs in East Africa has neither meaningfully included women, leaving these trans-Indian Ocean connections strangely genderless at best. Thomas McDow includes more named women than is typical of this literature in *Buying Time*,[12] but there the focus was largely on those women's utility for male structures of connection, particularly as strategic marriage partners.[13] His approach builds on scholarship that demonstrates marriage and genealogical ties play a role in facilitating mobility in the Indian Ocean.[14] However, understanding women's role as the objects of strategic marriages does not quite go far enough towards actually including women as historical actors. One of the only examinations of female Arab mobility in East Africa is a single chapter in an edited volume by Nidhi Mahajan, "Seasons of sail: The monsoon, kinship, and labor in the dhow trade," in which she argues that the mobility of men in the dhow trade rested largely on the labor and immobility of women. This project extends that insight, seeking to include both more examples of women as historical actors and the ways that their addition to this narrative allows us to glimpse the gendered experiences of this history.

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[12] By which I mean, there are a few.
[13] McDow, *Buying Time*, 2018.
[14] Engseng Ho, *The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); Guo-Quan Seng, "The Gender Politics of Confucian Family Law: Contracts, Credit, and Creole Chinese Bilateral Kinship in Dutch Colonial Java (1850s-1900)," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 60, no. 2 (2018): 390–414.

The focus on relatively elite male merchants and statesmen in studies of Arab migration in the Western Indian Ocean is partially due to the intellectual interests of the authors. Past scholarship has focused on the political interactions of imperialism[15] and the social history of mercantile economic structures.[16] But it is also partially due to the biases inherent in both the written and oral archives. Documentary records are largely limited to Arabic manuscripts and colonial files, both of which assume a cast of upper class, male actors to be natural. More than that, they reflect the interests and concerns of the upper class men who wrote them. The colonial archive, for example, is full of memos between functionaries of the British colonial state, letters of complaint from the leaders of the Arab Association, and examples of bureaucratic maneuvering between these politically powerful groups of men.

But the content of these memos, letters, and political agreements were not necessarily matters of interest for those outside of this cadre of elite men. For postcolonial history, there has recently been a glut of published memoirs about the expulsion of Arabs from Zanzibar in the aftermath of the 1964 Revolution. But here again, we hear only the point of view of the relatively wealthy class of men who were able to marshal the resources to move to abroad, primarily to Oman, not to mention to record and publish their memories of that event. Even in interviews, family histories also generally started from the male lineage and feature the deeds of notable paterfamilias, what Gijsbert Oonk calls the

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[15] Pearson, *Port Cities and Intruders*; Beatrice Nicolini, *Makran, Oman, and Zanzibar: Three-Terminal Cultural Corridor in the Western Indian Ocean, 1799-1856*, Islam in Africa, v. 3 (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2004); Glassman, *War of Words, War of Stones*, 2011; Nicolini, *The First Sultan of Zanzibar*.

[16] Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices, & Ivory in Zanzibar*; Gilbert, *Dhows & the Colonial Economy in Zanzibar*; McDow, *Buying Time*, 2018; Sheriff, *Dhow Cultures and the Indian Ocean*.

"founding father" myth.[17] I found that it was often only when I pushed to hear about aunts and grandmothers that my informants thought to include them in their narratives at all. And yet, in interviews I had the option of pushing for more information rather than merely "reading the silences" of the archive.

Methods of oral history

Oral history is the backbone of this project. As a methodological approach, oral history has long been a standard tool for both Africanist historians[18] and scholars of Zanzibar in particular.[19] However, in discussions of Arab migration and racial identity specifically, more often than not the impulse has been to privilege the archive—relying for example on Arabic business deeds[20] or government documents.[21] Although Jonathan Glassman writes in defense of his reliance on written sources in his analysis of Zanzibari racial thought that "It has become almost an unthinking fashion for historians of colonial Africa to privilege oral sources," in truth a history of Arab migration to East Africa that *does* privilege oral sources has not yet been written.

Moreover, it matters *who* we interview and what about. Rather than taking my cues from the archive and seeking people with specific knowledge about the issues represented there, I cast a wide net, largely interviewing those who claimed *not* to have any special knowledge of history. These interviews were mostly with people in rural spaces who were

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[17] Oonk, *Settled Strangers*, 68–75.
[18] Jan M. Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History*, 1 edition (Madison, Wis: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985); Luise White, Stephan Miescher, and David William Cohen, eds., *African Words, African Voices: Critical Practices in Oral History* (Bloomington, Ind: Indiana University Press, 2002).
[19] Fair, *Pastimes and Politics*; Burgess, *Race, Revolution, and the Struggle for Human Rights in Zanzibar*, 2009.
[20] McDow, *Buying Time*, 2018.
[21] Nicolini, *The First Sultan of Zanzibar*.

not a part of the same social networks whose interests are represented in the colonial archive. Our interviews were primarily about family history and connections. Although I certainly do draw on archival sources, especially in chapters 1 and 2, I privilege both oral sources and the insights drawn from interviews about family histories in my interpretation of those sources.

The interviews that serve as the primary source base for this project were largely conducted in the rural villages of the Zanzibar archipelago. Ultimately, I conducted 235 interviews for this project. The lion's share of interviews took place in Unguja, where over the course of 2017 and the summer of 2019 I interviewed 117 individuals. 99 of these were in the rural areas of the island with the additional 18 in Zanzibar Town. Most of my best interviews, however, were done over a three-month period in late 2017 in Pemba, where I interviewed 85 individuals scattered across the island and mostly located in rural villages. I added to these an additional 33 interviews in Oman. This oral archive is supported by document-based history, which I collected at the Zanzibar National Archive, Pemba National Archive, Oman National Archive, the British Library, the British National Archive at Kew, and the archive of the British Red Cross.

Early on in commencing interviews for this project, I made the crucial decision to employ research assistants, without whom this project would look very different. With respect to the culture of secrecy within Zanzibar,[22] I promised my research assistants the relative anonymity of only mentioning them by their relatively common first names, without giving enough details to identify them personally. My main research assistant was Suleiman, who found many interviewees for me in Unguja and, during the early days of

[22] Another way this culture of secrecy manifests in my writing is that the majority of my informants wished to remain anonymous.

interviewing when I was less confident in my Swahili, acted as translator. He also introduced me to the two men who would become my research assistants in Pemba, Hemed and Makame.

Although by the time I came to Pemba I did not need the translating help, my research assistants were still critically important in terms of access. They knew people and had spent their entire lives building social networks of friends and acquaintances who in turn could point us towards other potential interviewees; I knew no one. Hemed, from southern Pemba, and Makame, in northern Pemba, together helped me find interviews all across the island. Towards the end of my time Zanzibar, I debated the use of research assistants with a fellow researcher I knew in town. Her hesitation was that a third person in the equation would bias the conversation. I admit that this was occasionally a concern of mine, especially when doing interviews with women as all of my research assistants were men, but ultimately, I assume that my own presence as a foreign researcher introduces more bias and hesitancy on the part of my informants than the presence of my Zanzibari assistants. For me, the benefits far outweighed the downsides.

Most importantly, however, without my research assistants, the attention I give in this project to rural spaces and working class villagers would not be possible. Left to find interviewees on my own, I would certainly have stuck to the familiar cohort of individuals within Stone Town, rather than venture into the relative unknown (to me) spaces of rural Unguja. Compared to wandering rural villages by myself, it was relatively straightforward to find people to interview in Stone Town on my own. Before starting to work with Suleiman, I had interviewed a variety of Arab gentlemen on Mkunazini road in Stone Town, where I lived during those early months, who I happened to know through my landlord

there. Additionally, the old town is lined with *baraza*, the stone front benches where elderly men lounge to drink coffee, chat with old friends, and play the board game *bao*. The epicenter of this activity is a square called Jaws Corners. Sitting on the *baraza* or on the tables in Jaws Corners myself was another of my earliest efforts to find interviews. The third location I sought interviews was the University, full of people who understood what I was looking for and, more importantly in those first interviews, spoke English. These early efforts were all good decisions that yielded quality interviews with knowledgeable elderly gentlemen. But they did not depart meaningfully from the cast of actors who had always populated the narratives of Zanzibar's history.

That changed the moment I started working with research assistants. Crucially, none of my research assistants were from Stone Town themselves. We started with people who they knew, invariably their neighbors in the outlying villages. As we ended every interview with a request that the person we were talking to direct us to someone else who might be willing to speak to us. We quickly moved beyond my research assistants' own social contacts. But the focus on poorer villagers in the rural spaces of Zanzibar remained relatively constant. Makame in particular opened many doors in Pemba that would otherwise have been closed to me because he is an *mzee*, an elderly retired man who seemed to know everyone on the island and was instantly respected wherever we went. Although I continued to chat up the old men drinking coffee on their *baraza* throughout my time there, the meat of the oral archive that I collected for this project was from these rural interviews done with my research assistants. Those were the conversations that shifted my own understanding of these histories and the variable experiences of Arab-Zanzibaris.

There were of course some limitations to this approach. Most crucially, I struggled throughout to interview women. Generally, when we were referred to someone new to interview, they were a *man* perceived as having useful knowledge. Asking directly if my informants knew women I could interview was occasionally successful, but inconsistently. Several times at the end of an interview, I would ask the man's wife if she would also be willing to be interviewed. But these were rarely productive interviews as these women's attitude was, perhaps understandably, *My husband just told you all of this. Why are you asking me?* I was, from the beginning, dedicated to at least asking the men I was interviewing about their female relatives. And in truth, this produced some fruit. Although they could not comment on their relatives' interior worlds, men certainly knew the biographical details of their lives. Chapter 3 in particular makes use of such an interview to discuss the gendered mobility of my informant's parents.

However, this strategy was hardly the same as interviewing women themselves, which I was able to do through patience and a variety of strategies. Approximately a quarter of the interviews that I did with my research assistants were with women. To these I added a handful more by leaving my strategy of relying on research assistants behind and instead sitting for long hours in various marketplace spaces. Although the women who I interviewed in the marketplace were to some extent a self-selecting sample as they were choosing to be out in public and open to being approached by a nosy foreign researcher, that apparent drawback was in its own way another move towards the particular focus of this project. These women selling fabric and fruit were more urban than the villagers my research assistants had helped me find, but they too were working class.

My strategy of interviewing women working in marketplaces was a useful one to take with me to Oman, where I could not afford to hire research assistants as I had done in Zanzibar. However, I knew about fabric stores that sold the Swahili-style *kangas*, largely staffed by men from India, where I found a few customers willing to give me short interviews. More importantly, there was a women's market every Wednesday in the interior desert town of Ibra. Although it is not a short drive from Muscat, I traveled to Ibra most Wednesdays for several months. This desert marketplace was more similar to the hustle of Zanzibar's marketplaces, and I was much more successful at finding interviews sitting among the stacks of *kangas* there. Beyond the female spaces of *kanga* stands, the other places that I haunted to find people to interview in Oman were places to buy Zanzibari food. Specifically, there are several Zanzibari restaurants in greater Muscat, owned and mostly frequented by Zanzibaris, albeit staffed again by Indian migrant workers. Additionally, the beach BBQ stands in Muscat were almost exclusively staffed by men from Pemba.

In the end, however, I was more successful in finding interviewees in Oman by (1) tracing social contacts of people I had known in Zanzibar and (2) posting on the "Zanzibar & Oman" Facebook page a request for willing informants. Both of these methods came with a built in introduction. Transnational connections are mostly maintained via the private webs of social connections and familial ties. On the occasion that I was myself able to move along these social linkages, introducing myself as an acquaintance of a cousin from Zanzibar instantly opened doors. The Facebook page is a popular site of public identity performance as bereaved exiles for expat Zanzibaris both in Oman and throughout the world. The posts on there are largely nostalgic outcries of mourning for a lost Zanzibar.

Particularly popular posts are almost uniformly historical photos of colonial Zanzibar. Although there was a certain narrow representation of society among the interviews I found via this platform, these conversations were detailed and lengthy with men passionate about maintaining their connections to and identities as Zanzibaris.

One of the ways that I direct attention towards the diversity of experiences within the category of Omani-Zanzibari is by flushing out more fully a particular case study drawn from my interviews to illustrate each chapter. I framed earlier iterations of this project in terms of microhistory or biographical history. Although this dissertation as it now stands carries the fingerprints of that effort—most notably in chapter 2, which is a microhistory of a single court case during the Zanzibar Revolution—a more accurate way to describe my approach might be that I maintain a consistent interest in the experience of the individual, those histories more easily illustrated by an individual's relationship with their aunt, for example, than are encapsulated in broader data about Zanzibar's shifting relationships with the country of Oman. This ultimately is a history about the relationships between people—connections between distant family members, divisions between neighbors, inequalities between spouses, friendships across party lines. It is the very particular lives of the individuals that animate these chapters, and it is through individual stories that complex webs of relationships are able to reveal themselves.

Race in East African historiography

Over the course of this project, I offer numerous examples of the divisions *within* the racial category of Zanzibari "Arab." During the colonial period, the established Stone Town gentlemen of the Arab Association are contrasted with the newly arrived *wamanga* coming by dhow from the Omani interior. The violence of the Revolution was gendered and varied

by location and the contingencies of one's social network. Access to mobility during the period of mass emigration in the 1970s and '80s depended on numerous variables—gender, social resources, and economic liquidity chief among them. More contemporary transnational connections have themselves re-entrenched class divides between Arabs, deepening financial inequalities between those who do and do not have the support of relatives in Oman. That gender, socioeconomic power, or freedom of movement *matter* to peoples' lives or to our understanding of history might perhaps seem a transparently obvious point. But in the specific context of the Swahili coast, and Zanzibar in particular, there is a longstanding and deeply rooted tendency to see race as a primary structure of Zanzibari society as well as a prominent fixture of Zanzibari historiography.

The ways that we as scholars talk about race in Zanzibar have largely been in reaction to colonial social orders and the rhetoric of the Revolution. Colonial depictions of the people of Zanzibar used simplified racial categories to make the archipelagos complex society legible to outside observers. A prominent example of this genre is *Zanzibar: Island Metropolis of Eastern Africa* by Major Francis Barrow Pearce.[23] Pearce describes Zanzibar as a cosmopolitan mélange of many races:

> In addition to representatives of every European country; cannibals from the Congo, China-men, Nubians, and Abyssinians, Somalis and Cape "boys," specimens of humanity from every part of Africa, the deep-chested coast negro, and the sturdy Yao; the Baluch and the Egyptian; the Persian and the Chinaman; the exclusive Hindu and the native from the Comoros and Madagascar; the Indian trader of every caste and persuasion are there in hundreds; the Cingalee and the Turk; the Goan and the Japanese; the would-be pirate from the Persian Gulf and the Syrian Jew; and in

[23] Francis Barrow Pearce, *Zanzibar: Island Metropolis of Eastern Africa* (Zanzibar: Gallery Publications, 2006).

> addition, the visitor will most certainly see the stately Arab, looking almost as strange and out of place in the promiscuous throng as the Englishman.[24]

In colonial era writing, the difference between Arab and African was understood as a fundamental divide. Pearce speaks disparagingly of "African" Zanzibaris as uncivilized compared to Arabs.[25] In contrast, his description of Arabs is of an indolent class of landowners in decline for a perceived lack of hard work. [26] Another colonial travel writer, W.H. Ingrams, describes the simplified racial categories of the Zanzibar of colonial imagination as a natural hierarchy: "The Arab is looked to by the native as his natural master, and the native accepts his control very readily, each understanding the other perfectly."[27]

Prior to the 1964 Zanzibar Revolution, which has itself been primarily understood as a racial conflict, race relations in Zanzibar were believed to be stable and peaceful. The racial hegemony that Ingrams described was thought to have existed for millennia in relative harmony. Local political leaders shared this understanding of racial divisions within Zanzibar as not only primordial, but also fundamentally the most salient organizing principle of society. Throughout the colonial era, the Arab Association advocated for policies beneficial to the vision of Arabs as a racial elite. The imagined ancientness of this hegemonic division was the foil against which the Afro-Shirazi Party organized itself, appealing directly to racial nationalism as non-Arabs.[28] Against the supposed stability of peaceful racial hierarchies, the Revolution was shocking. But the racial violence and

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[24] Pearce, 213.
[25] Pearce, 214.
[26] Pearce, 219.
[27] W.H. Ingrams, *Zanzibar: Its History and Its People* (London: Frank Cass and Company Limited, 1931), 204.
[28] On the development of racial political thought in Zanzibar, see: Glassman, *War of Words, War of Stones*, 2011.

discourse of the Revolution also seemed to confirm the salience of race as the primary organizing principle of Zanzibari society.

Since the Revolution, there has been a sustained interrogation of the origin of racial divisions.[29] The colonial vision of inherent racial divides was easy fodder for post-colonialist revisions to the historiography of the Swahili coast. For much of the latter half of the twentieth century, the widely accepted interpretation was that European colonists introduced racial division. This understanding is perhaps most clearly articulated in Ibrahim Noor Shariff and Ali Mazrui's book on Swahili identity, in which they describe Swahili assimilative paradigms in opposition to European categorization paradigms.[30] In dismissing race as a category of analysis, this reversal did little to unseat the idea that race in Zanzibar, once introduced, served mostly as a hegemonic organizing principle for the hierarchical system of late colonial era society. However, the broader literature on Swahili culture that has devoted considerable energy to explaining the many ways that the social history of the coast involved numerous regular interactions *across* racial divisions.[31]

In the last decade, Africanist scholarship has turned instead to discussing racial thought in Africa, especially Arab Africa, as an emic process, examining the ways that Africans have constructed racial meaning themselves.[32] In Zanzibari historiography in

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[29] For a detailed historiography of this query, see: Glassman, chap. Introduction.
[30] Mazrui and Shariff, *The Swahili*.
[31] Carol Eastman, "Women, Slaves, and Foreigners: African Cultural Influence and Group Processes in the Formation of the Northern Swahili Coastal Society," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 21, no. 1 (1988): 1–20; John Middleton, *The World of the Swahili: An African Mercantile Civilization* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); Jonathon Glassman, *Feasts and Riot: Revelry, Rebellion, and Popular Consciousness on the Swahili Coast, 1856-1888*, Social History of Africa (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1995); Fair, *Pastimes and Politics*; McMahon, *Slavery and Emancipation in Islamic East Africa*.
[32] Glassman, *War of Words, War of Stones*, 2011; Bruce Hall, *A History of Race in Muslim West Africa, 1600-1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

particular, this work has been done by Jonathan Glassman's analysis of Zanzibari racial thought in *War of Words, War of Stones*. This development resurrects race as a category of analysis and offers us a stronger starting point for understanding race in Africa as not simply an organizing principle of colonial rule but as one among many identities around which social life has developed. My contribution to this literature is in turning the discussion not to the development of these divisions or to interactions *across* them, but rather to the ways that racial categories were themselves subdivided. *Within* the category of "Arab" in Zanzibar, there were cleavages, inequalities, and diverging experiences of and entanglements with the social history of Zanzibar and migration to and from Oman.

Immobile transnationalism

I originally set out to study migration between Oman and Zanzibar. I would come to their houses that had been paid for by brothers who live in Muscat, and they would great me with dates that a cousin had sent from the family date plot in Rustaq or Ibri. We would sit across from each other under a hanging picture of the Omani Sultan Qaboos, each dressed in clothes that marked our international belongings, me in linen trousers from the Gap and my interviewees in clothes brought from Oman by visiting aunts last Ramadan. The Omani-style *hijab, kofia* cap, and long white *kanzu* gown all signifying simultaneously Islamic piety, respectability, fashionableness, and wealthy connections in Oman. Amidst the material evidence of lives entwined with the idea of Oman, I would always ask, "Have you ever been to Oman?" And nine out of ten times, they would respond, "Not yet." In the course of doing research for this project, I repeatedly and, at first, largely by accident stumbled across the same apparent paradox. While my informants spoke eloquently of the

importance of Omani connections in their lives, few of them had ever been to Oman or indeed had ever even left the Zanzibar archipelago.

The problem with studying immobility is that it appears normal, even natural. Moving to some distant place, in contrast, is transparently a tremendous undertaking and often a risky gamble. But in understanding *immobility*, the focus must be turned instead to an apparent absence, a silence, a something *not* done. It is this reversal, the turning of a lens on what had previously been merely the null hypothesis, that prompted Joya Chatterji to write, "Immobility raises awkward questions for theorists of migration."[33] Because it *feels* obvious, as if *not* moving was simply the normal state of affairs. And so migration scholars have formulated numerous theoretical approaches to understanding *why* people move, while largely neglecting its inverse, why people do not move.[34] This has generated what Kerilyn Schewel has termed a "mobility bias" within the field of migration studies, in which despite the commonality of immobility, it is mobility that has generated the scholarly attention and interest.[35]

The authors of *Worlds in Motion* determined that any description of international migration should explain the following aspects of that migratory flow: (1) the push out of the place of origin, (2) the pulls towards the place of destination, (3) the social and economic connections between those two places, and (4) the internal motivations of

[33] Joya Chatterji, "On Being Stuck in Bengal: Immobility in the 'Age of Migration,'" *Modern Asian Studies* 51, no. 2 (March 2017): 512.
[34] For an overview of many of these theories, see: Douglas S. Massey et al., "Theories of International Migration: A Review and Appraisal," *Population and Development Review* 19, no. 3 (September 1993): 431–66.
[35] Kerilyn Schewel, "Understanding Immobility: Moving beyond the Mobility Bias in Migration Studies," *International Migration Review* 54, no. 2 (2019): 328–55.

migrants themselves.[36] While I address each of these aspects with regards to the multiple migrations back and forth between Oman and Zanzibar in the chapters that follow, ultimately, I contend that these elements are not enough to form a full picture for the simple fact that they only address the forces at work on mobility, ignoring entirely the structures and motivations at work behind immobility. The principle actors of this dissertation are those who stayed in Zanzibar, either out of financial or social necessity or simply out of a loyalty to home. They are immobile members of the transnational community of Zanzibari-Omanis, and a central focus of this dissertation is in understanding both the ways that their immobility has been itself constructed and maintained as well as the ways that they navigate own priorities vis-a-vis their identities as Arabs, as transnational actors, and as connected or less connected to Oman.

This dissertation thus joins a small but growing collection of scholarship on immobility. One interpretation of immobility is the way non-movers use the option of staying as an active choice. Consciously electing to stay is framed an act of agency.[37] Another thread of this scholarship takes the opposite approach, exploring involuntary immobility as a product of the elaborate forces arrayed to prevent movement.[38] I seek here

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[36] Douglas S. Massey et al., *Worlds in Motion: Understanding International Migration at the End of the Millennium* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 281.

[37] B. Gray, "Becoming Non-Migrant: Lives Worth Waiting For," *Gender, Place, & Culture* 18, no. 3 (2011): 217–32; A. Hjalm, "The 'Stayers:' Dynamics of Lifelong Sedentary Behaviour in an Urban Context," *Population, Space, and Place* 20 (2014): 569–80; A. Stockdale and T. Haartsen, "Editorial Introduction: Putting Rural Stayers in the Spotlight," *Population, Space, and Place* 24, no. 4 (2018); D. Mata-Codesal, "Is It Simpler to Leave or to Stay Put? Desired Immobility in a Mexican Village," *Population, Space, and Place*, 2018; J. Preece, "Immobility and Insecure Labour Markets: An Active Response to Precarious Employment," *Urban Studies* 55, no. 8 (2018): 1783–99.

[38] Jorgen Carling, "Migration in an Age of Involuntary Immobility: Theoretical Reflections and Cape Verdean Experiences," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 28, no. 1 (2002); Belachew Gebrewold-Tochalo, ed., *Africa and Fortress Europe: Threats and Opportunities*

to incorporate both understandings. Immobility among my informants was at times an active decision to stay in the homes they had always known, and for others an involuntary result of the social and economic structures that blocked free or easy movement.

However, their lack of mobility has not been a barrier to leading transnational lives. It is not simply that they receive "social remittances,"[39] nor indeed the many material remittances that they receive. But rather, Arab Zanzibaris create transnational identities for themselves without traveling anywhere. Although transnationalism as a field study explicitly encompasses those who remain at home, unlike the literature on migration out of which it grew, scholarship on transnationalism most often emphasizes mobility, relying on metaphors of fluidity and rhizomatic networks.[40] Transnational actors are generally either elites capable of jetting frequently between home communities[41] or working-class migrants,[42] but rarely are immobile individuals centered.[43] This dissertation, and

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(Aldershot, Hampshire, England ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007); Stephen C. Lubkemann, "Involuntary Immobility: On a Theoretical Invisibility in Forced Migration Studies," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 21, no. 4 (2008): 454–75; Adam McKeown, *Melancholy Order: Asian Migration and the Globalization of Borders* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008); Chatterji, "On Being Stuck in Bengal"; David C. Atkinson, *The Burden of White Supremacy: Containing Asian Migration in the British Empire and the United States*, 1 edition (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017).

[39] Peggy Levitt, *The Transnational Villagers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

[40] Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity At Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, 1 edition (Minneapolis, Minn: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); Ulf Hannerz, *Transnational Connections: Culture, People, Places* (London: Routledge, 1996); Thomas L. Friedman, *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century*, 1st edition (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005).

[41] Aihwa Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality* (Durham: Duke University Press Books, 1999).

[42] Levitt, *The Transnational Villagers*; Michele Ruth Gamburd, *The Kitchen Spoon's Handle: Transnationalism and Sri Lanka's Migrant Housemaids* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 2000); Christine Chin, *In Service and Servitude: Foreign Female Domestic Workers and the Malaysian "Modernity Project"* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

particularly the later chapters, seeks to center Arab Zanzibaris who were largely immobile, whether by choice or circumstance. It concludes (chapter 4) with a discussion of transnational identities and lives among this immobile population of non-elites.

Some notes for clarity before proceeding

A note on chronologies

One of the recurring arguments of this dissertation, particularly in the later chapters, is that the timelines of Zanzibari history have relied too much on the mid-twentieth century political shift towards racial nationalism and post-colonial nation states. The 1964 Zanzibar Revolution in particular looms large over this historiography. Generally, histories of Arab settlement, trade, and activity in East Africa end at or before the Revolution, both reflecting and entrenching a perception that the mobile Arab community largely left in response to the pressures of the post-Revolution period and moved to Oman. There is a alluring coherency to the idea that, after the simultaneous end of the age of internationally oriented empires in the 1960s and the violent fall of Arab hegemony during the Revolution, Arabs largely returned to Arabia and Arab concerns, leaving Africa a land of Africans and constructing new political identities as citizens of the rapidly modernizing nation state of Oman.

Aside from the problems of sorting a community of Arab-Africans into easily coherent racial categories, I argue in this dissertation that many, perhaps most, Arabs in East Africa did not in fact go anywhere due to unequal access to mobility. And those who did emigrate out of East Africa continued, nevertheless, to invest financially, emotionally,

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[43] As an exception, see: Keumjae Park, "Constructing Transnational Identities without Leaving Home: Korean Immigrant Women's Cognitive Border-Crossing," *Sociological Forum* 22, no. 2 (2007): 200–218.

and socially in maintaining their connections to East Africa and their identities as Zanzibaris. The politics of the region no doubt changed, but the transnational connections between Zanzibar and Oman have continued to expand and impact the lives of people in both places and beyond.

This dissertation therefore expands that timeline to 2019. This end date was originally a simple reflection of the year in which I stopped doing research, but since then two major events have occurred that retroactively offer some coherency to this date. First, Sultan Qaboos, who has ruled Oman since 1970 and who is personally responsible for encouraging migration of East African Arabs to Oman during the later 20th century, died in 2019. Second, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted international travel and socioeconomic realities globally, including in Zanzibar and Oman. Although I am confident that neither of these events marks an ending of this narrative, future histories will have to account for their impact.

A note on geography

For the purposes of this dissertation, "Zanzibar" refers to the whole archipelago. When I need to refer to only one island, I will use the Swahili name of that specific island. The main island in the Zanzibar Archipelago is Unguja. North of Unguja lies the more rural island of Pemba, known as the "Green Island" in Arabic for its rich soil, which has long supported the heart of the clove industry. Although there are other smaller islands in the archipelago, most notably the island of Tumbatu, these two larger islands are the focus in this project. In Unguja, the main urban center is often simply called "mji" or "town," a straightforward name as there is only the one town, although many of the "villages" have grown to such an extent in recent decades that it is becoming harder to justify not labeling

them urban centers in their own right. Zanzibar Town, as I and most others writing about it have chosen to call it, is divided in two parts divided by Creek Road, which was once actually a creek: Stone Town and Ng'ambo, literally meaning "the other side." I have been at pains to decenter Stone Town as the "main" part of town in my own writing in order to avoid reproducing the racial and economic inequalities of the town. I thus frequently replicate the terminology used in Unguja and simply refer to "Town" as an umbrella term. Lastly, although I generally refer to the country of Oman by its contemporary name, I am aware that in the early decades of the period covered here, these terms were not really applicable, a geographical ambiguity that I explore further in chapter 1.

A note on the approach to quotations and the language of interviews

My research assistants, interviewees, and myself all possessed different language competencies. As a result, the interviews in this project took place in a variety of languages and dialects. Most frequently, interviews were in Swahili. Among the Swahili-language interviews, there were small dialectal differences, reflecting both class variation and the linguistic patterns of Unguja and Pemba. A small minority of my interviews were in Arabic. In these instances, I usually spoke Modern Standard Arabic and my informants used Omani Arabic. In both cases, Swahili and Arabic, dialectal distinctions were mutually intelligible. The remainder of my interviews, a sizable minority, were in English, which is a common second language in both East Africa and Oman. A mixture of English and Swahili was also common in these interviews, as the interviewee or myself sometimes switched languages for emphasis or to clarify a point or a research assistant jumped in with a translation or explanation. Some amount of "Swanglish" appeared throughout my interviews. When I

quote an interview originally in Swahili, I include both the transcription of Swahili and my translation into English.

In my writing, I made an effort to reproduce the exact words and phrases that were used in the interviews themselves. While I have not gone out of my way to reproduce the variations in dialect that might be visible in spelling (for example, Pemban Swahili often uses a "n" sound where Ungujan Swahili would use a "m"), I do follow closely the dialect-specific word-choice and turns of phrase as they were spoken in the moment of the interview. Moreover, these interviews were spoken conversations, rife with both the fumbling natural to all oral speech as well as the particularities of communicating in a second language. Which is to say, I have not edited others' words, even if that means reproducing moments of imperfect grammar.

Outline of chapters

Each chapter of this dissertation, organized roughly chronologically, is set not only in the context of a different historical moment or period but also within the social context of a separate case study or microhistory drawn mostly from my interviews. Chapter one functions partially as a background section in that attempts to explain how rural working class Arabs got to Zanzibar in the first place, covering an ambitiously long stretch of time, namely the hundred years from the mid 19th century to the mid 20th. However, it is also an analytical chapter in its own right. Drawing on the case study of Ahmed Rashid, a Pemban man who traveled in the 1950s by dhow multiple times between Zanzibar and Oman, as well as his relatives, this chapter makes the argument that migration to Zanzibar during the colonial period happened largely outside of the control or oversight of the colonial regime. Moreover, the formation of a colonial bureaucracy and its efforts to control the flow of

people into and out of the islands did not meaningfully affect this migration. Rather, this chapter argues that archival documents which speak to the importance of such bureaucratic maneuverings on the part of colonial elites, misses the aspects of this century of migration that were actually of interest and importance to the migrants themselves, namely escaping the pressures of life in the Omani interior, difficult dhow journeys, and gendered social networks of support.

Chapter two is a microhistory of Revolutionary violence drawn from a criminal trial. It follows the social networks of a rural family during the months leading up to their murders. In this chapter I argue that the narrative we have about the Revolution has privileged race as the key division too much. Race was an important aspect of the Revolution, but by zooming in to the level of the individual family, rather than that of Revolutionary rhetorics and politics more broadly, we can more easily see the other variables that were important. The cleavages that are centered here are that of gender, rural experiences, and the social connections and exclusions between neighbors.

In chapter three, the emigrations out of Zanzibar and to Oman of the 1970s and '80s are filtered through the prism of the experiences of an informant named Jamal's parents, Mama Jamal and Baba Jamal. These two individuals both faced challenges during the turbulent decades of the post-Revolution period, but they had fundamentally different access to mobility. This chapter argues that "returning" to Oman was actually a difficult and expensive process of moving to a distant foreign country that most "returnees" had never actually even visited. Moreover, it was a movement that was simply never available to many Zanzibari Arabs, as gender, financial liquidity, social connections, legal frameworks, and education level determined access to such mobility.

The fourth and final chapter seeks to reframe the migrations of the 1970s and '80s in light of the transnational community between Zanzibar and Oman that not only continues to exist but has expanded since the 1990s. Arguing that this "return migration" was not in fact a "return" in the previous chapter takes on new significance here, as such a framework incorrectly points to these migrations as an endpoint to Zanzibar-Oman connections, which indeed is how they have been understood both in scholarship and by the Zanzibari public. Rather, I argue that there has been since the 1990s as a result of these migrations an intensification of transnational exchanges, identity formations, remittances, travel, and social and familial connections.

CHAPTER 1: *WAMANGA* MIGRATION IN AND OUT OF THE ARCHIVE: MIGRATION, CLASS, AND THE INTRODUCTIN OF THE COLONIAL STATE 1856-1950s

I met Ahmed Rashid at his home in the small market village of Konde in northern Pemba. He wore a *kikoi* wrap that a relative in Oman had sent to him and a tee shirt, the casual uniform of coastal men at home. As an old man, he has become known in Konde as particularly knowledgeable about the past and about Oman, which was why I was squatting on a plastic mat in his sitting room with my research assistant, Hemed. Although Ahmed said he was too ill now for the airplane ride to Oman, as a youth he made the voyage to his ancestral home in the Sharqiya region of the Omani interior by dhow and camel, following in reverse the path of his father and uncles, various grandmothers and grandfathers, and his great-grandfather. Ahmed spoke at length about the voyages between Oman and Zanzibar that he and his relatives had made over the past century, but the only time he mentioned anyone getting a visa or indeed any sort of official paperwork was when his father's third wife moved to Oman many years after the revolution. This lack of memory of about colonial era migration laws was a common silence across my interviews. Multiple informants even got frustrated with me for repeatedly asking if they remembered what the process of getting travel documents had been like or if they had experienced any bureaucratic difficulties. Initially this absence had surprised me as documents in the colonial archive suggested that migration laws had been a hot political topic, especially in the 1940s and into the '50s. But while Arab and British colonial elites debated the control of migration in Stone Town, migrants like Ahmed had other concerns.

This chapter highlights multiple sets of actors with differing priorities and points of view on migration between Oman and Zanzibar from 1856 through the 1950s. One fault line that I examine here is between the British colonial regime in Zanzibar and Stone

Town's Arab Association, whose struggles over control within the colonial structures of power defined the laws surrounding migration. Another division running through this chapter is of class and geography, namely the experiences of non-elite migrants. I argue that the urban elites of Stone Town who have long dominated the historiography of Western Indian Ocean Arab oceanic connections are only a small fragment of the story. Because the British and the Arab Association were so focused on political authority and the macroeconomics of the dhow trade, we miss the elements that were central to the lives of actual migrants if we prioritize those sources. Further, I argue that, despite officials' efforts, migration between Zanzibar and Oman largely remained outside of colonial control. While the colonial archives are full of discussions of various new migration policies and control measures, outside of that world of paper, the colonial state had relatively little ability to track, understand, or meaningfully interfere with the comings and goings of people on small dhows.

The narratives that have guided scholarly understanding of connections across the Western Indian Ocean have generally been influenced by the priorities of those whose concerns were preserved in the colonial archive. This archive tells a story of the importance of the documents and political maneuvering that surrounded migration policy, of bureaucratic compromise and struggle between Arab elites and the British regime over migration. However, we get an entirely different narrative when we consider the experiences of non-elites, who represented the majority of migrants in this period. In this alternate narrative, the colonial state fades to the background and the goals, priorities, and concerns of the migrants themselves come to the fore. This chapter highlights several of

their priorities, issues that have gone unexplored in much of the historiography on this region and its histories of migration..

First, most non-elite migrants were moving from the rural space of the Omani interior to the rural space of Pemba. Thinking of this as a history of connections between port cities misses not only the actual geographies of this movement, but the social, environmental, and economic context. They were fleeing a politically alienated area to another underdeveloped area. Their priorities in making this move were largely fleeing (1) the political violence of a series of civil wars over the course of the century considered here and (2) the environmental collapses of a series of severe droughts and floods in Oman. Their journey was long, dangerous, and expensive. The arduous dhow journey did far more to limit mobility than any oversight the colonial state pretended to have. Upon their arrival in Zanzibar, the colonial archive suggests that migrants faced the control efforts of the colonial state. But in truth, the angst of the colonial bureaucrats was largely in vain as they had no real way of enforcing their policies, regardless of the forms and structures under debate. Finally, when we broaden the scope to the social world of the migrants themselves, as revealed through oral history, we can begin to see the ways that these movements were socially bound, supported by the familial networks of the migrants, and gendered.

This chapter puts the experiences of migrants like Ahmed's family in conversation with colonial debates over migration by more elite voices in order to draw a contrast. While the state stressed over creating migration policies, migrants worried about how they would pay for dhow voyages and what they would eat once on board. While the Arab intelligentsia was motivated to campaign for migration rights by nationalist political currents, the migrants themselves were motivated by family connections and the search for

a more comfortable life away from warfare, environmental catastrophe, and economic depression in Oman.

Historical actors of colonial Zanzibar and their diverging worlds

The actors at the center of this chapter would have been considered *wamanga* rather than *waarabu* (literally "Arabs") because the word *waarabu* was associated with the aristocracy, in other words those with *ustaarabu* (civilization or "Arabness"). Although the definition of *wamanga* changed over time, by the 20th century it was a pejorative word for Omani Arabs, implying a low-class socioeconomic identity as well as being rural and "fresh of the boat." *Wamanga* as a term comes from the Arabic word *munqa'a*, meaning "the sea." The 19th century connotation of *wamanga* as any Omani Arab coming from overseas gradually narrowed to only the lower classes, the implication in the early 20th century was still that *wamanga* were more recent migrants. The people of the Omani interior who would become *wamanga* came to Zanzibar to escape drought, recession, and war and in order to join family already in East Africa. In so doing they were extending a long history of mobility between the Omani interior and coastal areas. New migrants easily circumvented the colonial structures of migration control within Zanzibar, but social and economic limitations on mobility meant that movement between these areas was never fluid or easy, especially for women and the poor.

Ahmed's family history is riddled with voyages between Pemba and Oman. These days most of his family in Oman lives either in Muscat or Nizwa, but originally he traces his origins to the Sharqiya town of Ibra. Ahmed's father Rashid was born in Sharqiya around the turn of the 20th century. When Rashid was about ten or twelve years old, his mother took him by camel and then dhow to the island of Pemba to live with his maternal family

there. He grew up and was educated in Pemba and eventually married three different women, each with their own differing connections to Oman. While his family was privileged in being able to afford traveling between Zanzibar and Oman more often than most of my informants, there are several aspects of this family history that are representative of the typical migration stories in my interviews in the Zanzibar archipelago. Rashid's origins in the Omani interior, the presence of women as historical actors, his arrival on a beach in Pemba rather than at an urban port, and the importance of family connections in motivating and facilitating migration were all common features of my interviews despite being largely unmentioned within the colonial archive.

A second set of actors that populate this chapter are the upper class *waarabu*, particularly the bureaucratic class of men in Stone Town whose political actions were intertwined with the history of colonial politics in Zanzibar. The political body known as the Arab Association represented their interests during the first half of the 20th century. The Arab Association was formed in 1911 by a collection of the most prominent Arabs in the islands, largely consisting of the descendants of the 19th century ruling class of Zanzibar. They quickly expanded their influence from an economic coalition to other facets of public life, which they influenced both through directly making demands of the colonial government and later through the newspaper *Al Falaq*, a public mouthpiece of the Association beginning in 1939.

The Arab Association had a complex history of complicity with and opposition to the British colonial state. In the first few decades of their existence, they collaborated with the British to promote the idea that Zanzibar had a dual Arab-British mandate, which suited both the British principles of indirect rule and the Association's description of the

archipelago as an Arab state. By the 1950s, however, the Arab Association was one of the major nationalist bodies in opposition to British rule, demanding constitutional reform and condemning colonialism in a series of articles in *Al Falaq*.[44] The members of the Arab-dominated Zanzibar National Party which formed in 1955 were largely drawn from the Arab Association, borrowing their experience in political action formed through earlier campaigns, such as wrestling control of migration from the British in the previous decade.

The British colonial regime in Zanzibar comprises the final set of actors in this chapter. Although the British had been gradually gaining influence in Zanzibar for many decades prior, a formal relationship between Britain and Zanzibar began in 1890 with an agreement between Britain and Germany that British interests would take precedent in the islands. The islands' protectorate status meant that the archipelago was technically an independent state under the protection of the British, but that was largely a legal fiction which nevertheless served to open a space for ethnic associations like the Arab Association to assert legitimacy and compete with the British for hegemony over certain arenas of public life, such as migration control. For the British, Zanzibar linked two key spheres of global imperial power, British East Africa and the Indian Ocean. Control of migration through Zanzibar meant control of the movement of people moving between these imperial spheres. Moreover, successfully creating a "documentary regime" governing migration would be a step towards making a complex society more legible and thus governable.[45] I

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[44] Michael Lofchie, "Party Conflict in Zanzibar," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 1, no. 2 (June 1963): 189.

[45] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992); P.L. Madan, *Indian Cartography: A Historical Perspective* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1997); Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2002); Mahmood Mamdani, *Define and Rule: Native as Political Identity* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2012).

argue that this control, however, eluded them both because the Arab Association wrested oversight of Arab migration from their hands in the 1940s and because migrants found many loopholes to migration policy.

Africanist histories have often framed the arrival and departure of colonizing powers as moments of rupture. However, the history of Arab migration in pre-revolution Zanzibar is a story of continuity. The British made little effort to create a migration policy until the 1940s, and what laws they did create were largely incoherent and unenforceable. Efforts towards migration reform in the 1940s were blocked by the political interests of the Arab Association, once again preventing the British from making a significant impact on Arab migration. The colonial state was not nearly as much of a constraint to mobility and transnational connections as simple distance and economic limitations. This chapter therefore joins a growing body of literature that seeks to undermine the apparent stability of the "colonial era" as a coherent historical period in Africa. To quote from William Bissell's work on another arena of public life in Zanzibar over which the British largely failed to establish hegemony, urban planning, "By focusing on the inchoate nature of colonial rule, we can begin to rethink the state as an unfolding practice or process of becoming, drawing attention to the gaps and inconsistencies of power across space and time."[46]

I take the social world of migrants as central to narratives about migration between Zanzibar and Oman, moving social and microeconomic constraints on movement come to the fore. This perspective contrasts with scholarship focused on debates over colonial

[46] William Cunningham Bissell, *Urban Design, Chaos, and Colonial Power in Zanzibar* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), chap. 2; On colonial era city planning, see also: Garth Andrew Myers, *Verandahs of Power: Colonialism and Space in Urban Africa* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003); Fair, *Pastimes and Politics*, chap. 3.

policy that formed the bedrock of the colonial archival documents in the Zanzibar National Archive. Immobility is a recurring theme of this chapter, which could easily be read as a discussion of what did and did not determine immobility during the colonial era of Zanzibar. The British largely failed at enforcing immobility and the Arab Association viewed immobility to and from the Arabian Peninsula as a political problem. The migrants meanwhile had a rich variety of social and economic limitations to their mobility that had nothing to do with the colonial bureaucracies of Zanzibar. This is important to note as the colonial period has frequently been imagined, both by contemporary historical memory among Omani/Zanzibaris and within scholarship, as a time of frequent, fluid movement. In comparison to the structures of modern visa requirements and sky-high airplane prices, the romanticism of dhow travel as a less constrained foil for these modern inconveniences is appealing, but it masks the extent that social factors such as difficult and expensive journeys as well as social obligations represented significant limitations on the mobility of individuals.

Migrants from the Desert

Who were these *wamanga* migrants who came by dhow to new lives in the rural villages of Zanzibar? Where did they come from and why were they coming? If we look at both the oral evidence on where my informants in Zanzibar trace their ancestry from and the reasons why people left Oman for Zanzibar, it becomes clear that the supposedly isolated people of the interior of Oman made up a majority of migrants out of Oman. Not only were individuals from the interior the main migrants to Zanzibar, but migration to Zanzibar was in many ways an extension of longstanding patterns of emigration from the interior, which prior to the mid 19th century had been oriented towards Muscat.

A note, first, on potentially confusing geographical terminology: the name "Oman" itself is what the area that we now refer to as the "Omani interior" was once called, only later lending this name to the modern nation-state. For consistency with the rest of this project, which generally sticks to the more contemporary geographies of the 20th century, I have tried to reserve the word "Oman" to refer to the larger region that now makes up the Sultanate of Oman. But historically, this region was often called "Muscat and Oman," ie the coast "Muscat" and the interior "Oman." The Omani interior primarily consists of land that now falls in the Dakhiliya and Sharqiya districts. As the bird flies, you do not need to go far inland to reach the interior, but prior to the construction of modern highways, it was a difficult journey through the steep rocky Hajar mountains by way of the Sumayl Gap from Muscat or through the desert foothills of southeastern edge of the mountains from Sur. The Omani interior begins in the Hajar mountains, where the cities of Nizwa and Rustaq are located, and stretches south across arid plains, eventually fading into the Wahiba Sands to the south.

In histories of the Western Indian Ocean, the emphasis has traditionally been on the peoples of the coast, leaving interior regions largely presumed to be outside the supposedly more cosmopolitan world of the Indian Ocean. However, there is a small collection of scholarship which has pushed the boundaries of the Indian Ocean World further into both the East African interior[47] and the Omani interior.[48] The role of the Omani interior in the Indian Ocean world in particular deserves more attention than it has received, however, as

[47] For example: McDow, *Buying Time*, 2018; Glassman, *Feasts and Riot*; Stephen Rockel, *Carriers of Culture: Labor on the Road in Nineteenth-Century East Africa* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2006).
[48] McDow, *Buying Time*, 2018, chap. 1; Mandana Limbert, *In the Time of Oil: Piety, Memory, and Social Life in an Omani Town* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2010), chap. 6.

majority of those who traveled from the Arabian Peninsula to Zanzibar in the late 19th - early 20th centuries were not from the coastal ports, but rather from the deserts and mountains of the interior. Returning for a moment to the family whose story opened this chapter, Ahmed's grandmother, like the majority of my informants, was from the Omani interior. She was from the town of Ibra in the Sharqiya region of Oman. Ibra is a desert town with strong historical connections to Zanzibar. Walking through the ruins of old Ibra, called Al Menzifah, you can still see today the barazas and carved doors evocative of the Swahili coast. These are remnants of a time when the town of Ibra prospered greatly through its strong connections to East Africa. Although it is not a large city, it is one of the few places outside of Muscat where self-styled "Zanzibari" restaurants can be found today, speaking to the sense of connection that Ibra residents still feel for the archipelago. Among informants who did know where their ancestors originated from, the vast majority claimed ancestry from the Omani interior (85.71%). The remainder came from the general area of Muscat, including Mutrah and Ruwi as well as more outlying areas such as Seeb, which have in the intervening century been absorbed into the growing megacity of Muscat (14.29%).

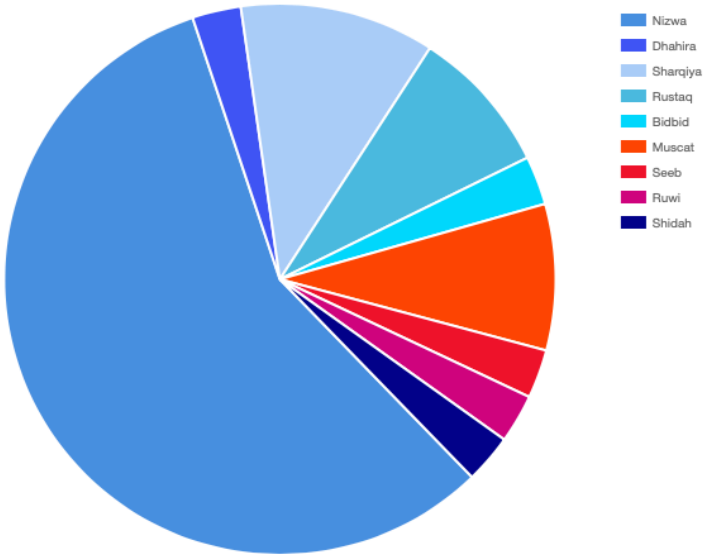

Figure 1: *Pie chart of family origins*: Locations in the interior are in blue. The coast is in shades of red.

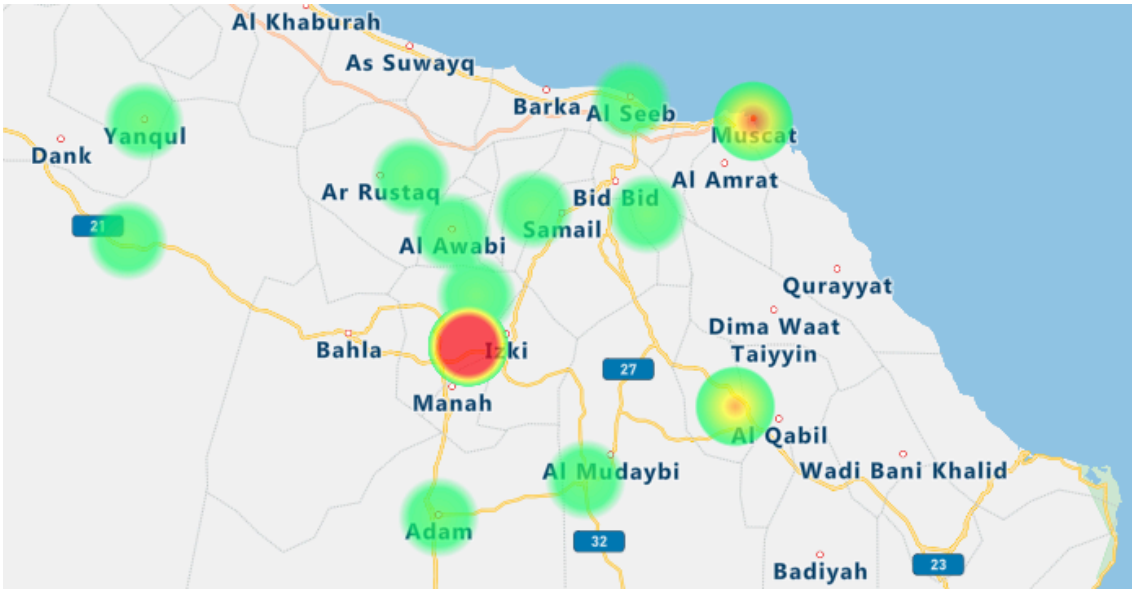

Figure 2: *Heat map of family origins*: Based off of the 88 interviewees who remembered where in Oman their ancestors has come from. The large red spot is Nizwa. The mostly yellow location near al-Qabil is Ibra, where Ahmed's family was from. The only two sending locations that are on the coast are Seeb and Muscat/Mutrah/Ruwi. Most of the sending locations cluster in the Hajar Mountains from Nizwa up to Rustaq and across to Bid Bid.
Colors based on percentage of average density:
Green: less than average density
Yellow: equal to average density
Red: greater than the average density

Among the majority who came from the interior, about two thirds came from the Nizwa area, which was by far the most common sending area among my informants. Next most common among those from the interior was Sharqiya (13.33% of the informants from the interior), followed by the area around Rustaq (10% of families from the interior). There was also a scattering of individual families from other villages in the interior. While my data from interviews in Zanzibar doesn't capture the origins of those who left the islands in the latter half of the 20th century, we can see a similar prominence of the interior in the demographic data of Oman as the largest numbers of Swahili-Arab returnees claim kinship with the *qabilas* (tribes) "from Inner Oman, like the Habus, Hirth, Bani Kharus, Kinud, Mahariq, Masakira, Mazari' (who ruled Mombasa until 1839), Bani Riyam, and Bani Ruwaha."[49]

That the large majority of my interlocutors were from the interior is in stark contrast to traditionally negative stereotypes of the region that appear both in older scholarship and in casual conversations with many of my informants in Muscat. While the coast is imagined as a place of fluid mobility and cosmopolitan life, the interior has frequently been described as its opposite:

> The mobility of the region's people was severely restricted by these geographic barriers and by poor communications dictating that practically all trade between Oman's coast and the interior depend on camel caravans. The interior populace's restricted view of the world was reinforced by the conservative ideology that was supreme in the locale. There a highly static society organized to preserve a fundamentalist, conservative Ibadi environment held sway.[50]

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[49] Marc Valeri, *Oman: Politics and Society in the Qaboos State* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 20; Valeri is getting his data from: S. al-Mughayri, *Juhaynat Al-Akhbar Fi Tarikh Zinjibar [Established Facts about the History of Zanzibar]* (Muscat: Ministry of National Heritage and Culture, 1995).

[50] Robert Geran Landen, *Oman since 1856: Disruptive Modernization in a Traditional Arab Society* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1967), 110.

The difficulty of travel in the region certainly started long before getting on a boat at the coast, but this dismissal underplays the extent to which individuals did in fact take on the task. The mountainous desert of the interior has often been imagined as somehow distinct from the mobility of the Indian Ocean periphery, but when we look at the data of where the ancestors of *waarabu* in Zanzibar are actually from, we see the extent to which interior regions were in fact represented in migrant populations. In fact, even this Ibadi stereotype speaks to the extent to which the people of the interior were present in East Africa as the association of being "Ibadi" followed them there. In Oman, Ibadism is primarily associated with the interior regions, while the coast hosts many Sunnis. Meanwhile, in East Africa, to be Ibadi is to be of Omani descent. If migrants from Oman were neither primarily coastal merchants chasing the dhow trade nor courtiers and state functionaries following the movement of the Omani court to Zanzibar,[51] as certain older sources have imagined,[52] but rather from these so-called isolated regions of the interior, then why did they go to Zanzibar?

Moving out of Oman and on to Zanzibar

> The life of Oman is very difficult for that time. There is no education, and also there isn't any transport even bicycle there is no there. People they use camel for transport. There is no hospital. If someone gets sick you should go somewhere and get cure using maybe like a knife that they are going to put in fire then you get cured. This is how they were getting cured. So some of them they decided to come here [to Pemba].[53]

[51] Dates for when Seyyid Sa'id bin Sultan moved the Omani Sultanate to Zanzibar vary in different sources between 1832 and 1840

[52] For more on this interpretation, see: C. S. Nicholls, *The Swahili Coast: Politics, Diplomacy and Trade on the East African Littoral, 1798-1856* (New York: Africana Pub. Corp, 1971), 378.

[53] Ahmed Rashid, Interview in English with Author, September 16, 2017.

This is Ahmed's description of life Sharqiya in the 1950s. His memories are fairly representative of my informants' explanations. In my interviews with elderly migrants and their descendants, they simply concluded that they moved because life was tough in Oman. Although they were speaking of the 1950s and not the 19th century, the description they offer of a disaffected and largely impoverished desert is not so different from what their parents' and grandparents' generations also faced in the interior regions. The main push factors out of the interior during the century of migration that stretches from the later half of the 19th century to the first half of the 20th century were a series of wars, droughts, and a severe economic recession. Although the particularities within what would become Oman changed over time, of course, these themes run through this turbulent period of Omani history. However, the principle reason that migration to Zanzibar flourished beginning in the mid-19th century were that they represented an elaboration of earlier patterns of migration within Oman. These earlier migrations were not to Zanzibar, but rather between the coast and the interior.

The coastal region in the mid 19th century had long been a place to which those pushed out of the interior by the pressures of an unstable desert climate and various political conflicts could go. Interior travel across the deserts and mountains was difficult, but once in one of the port cities, there was the dhow trade and the various other industries of a port city through which one could potentially make a living. So by the 1850s, when Muscat was still a thriving port of the dhow trade, the city housed approximately 55,000 inhabitants,[54] but this number dropped to an estimated 8,000 people by the 1870s

[54] J.B.F. Osgood, *Notes of Travel or Recollections of Majunga, Zanzibar, Muscat, Aden, Mocha, and Other Eastern Ports* (Salem: G. Creamer, 1854), 92; J.R. Wellsted, *Travels in Arabia* (London: J. Murray, 1838), 32.

following the economic crash.[55] The city continued to dwindle for the next century as the economy failed to revive, and by 1967, the population hovered between 5,000 and 6,000 permanent inhabitants.[56] During that hundred-year period of relative economic depression in Muscat, the general pattern of outwards migration from the interior established in the early 19th century did not simply cease, but rather shifted its center to Zanzibar. So we are left with two guiding questions: why were people leaving the interior? And why did the destination of this migration shift away from the coastal regions of what would become Oman?

Let us start with the first of these questions. Many people in Zanzibar trace their ancestry to the Nizwa area, a major cultural capital in the heart of the Omani interior. What exactly was happening there that would spur migration? Over the course of the century between 1850 and 1950, war has *repeatedly* hit the region around Nizwa and nearby Jebel Akhdar particularly hard. This is partially because the people of this area of the Hajar Mountains were particularly loyal to the Imam, whose center of power was most often in Nizwa, and supported a series of small wars in protest of the Busaidi sultans' longstanding underdevelopment of their region. Recurrent political violence between these two centers of power, Nizwa and Muscat, both spurred migration and harmed the economic life of Oman. For example, the first major upset following Sayyid Sa'id's reign of relative unity was the war of succession in 1856 that commenced upon his death and continued until the Sultanate of Muscat and the Sultanate of Zanzibar split in 1861. The resulting division of

[55] J.G. Lorimer, ed., *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman, and Central Arabia*, vol. II (Calcutta: Government of India, Foreign Department, 1908), 181–86; Cited in: Landen, *Oman since 1856*, 126.
[56] Landen, *Oman since 1856*, 126.

the empire caused Oman to lose its most prosperous port city, namely Zanzibar, negatively affecting the economic prospects of Oman.

The twin challenges to Busaidi rule in the decades that followed were the perennial problem of losing the cultural legitimacy conferred by the title of Imam and the simple issue of their being too many claimants to the throne, each with their own factions of support. The result was that the throne passed, generally violently, among a series of ineffectual rulers over the next few decades. Notable moments of political violence include 'Azzan bin Qais's conquering of Muscat in 1868 with the backing of the *shaykhs* of the interior, the 1895 Siege of Muscat by Salih bin Ali al-Harithi again with supporters from Nizwa and the Western Hajar mountains, a major rebellion of the interior against the control of the Muscat Sultan in 1913 to 1920.

The rebellion that began in 1913 had many causes. Outlining them here casts light on the interior's dissatisfaction with the hegemony of the coast, dissatisfaction that ultimately prompted not only the rebellion, but also migration. The rebellion was spurred in part by a wave of religious revivalism. Oman's history of civil war was shaped in large part by the political traditions of Ibadi Islam. Ibadism's ideal is that an elected Imam should be an enlightened leader for both the religious and secular needs of society.[57] In reality, the backing of powerful *shaykhs* has generally been necessary for election to this often quite political position. In the eighteenth century, the al-Ya'arubi dynasty had styled themselves primarily as Imams and held a comparatively high degree of centralized power. In contrast, since 1793, the Busaidi family have variously adopted the title of Sayyid or Sultan, an

[57] Valerie J. Hoffman, *The Essentials of Ibadi Islam*, Modern Intellectual and Political History of the Middle East (Syracuse, N.Y: Syracuse University Press, 2012), 14.

entirely secular designation.[58] In theory, this should leave the Imam as a primarily religious designation, but in fact, the Imams periodically served as a rallying point for opposition to the Sultans through the mid-twentieth century, particularly in the interior. The religious justification for rebelling against the sultanate in support of an Imamate masked a laundry list of more material grievances: dissatisfaction with the declining economy, the failure of the Sultan to send traditional monetary stipends to the *shaykhs*, frustration over the influence that the British exerted over the politico-economic decisions of the coast, and the Sultan's general disinterest in the interior.[59]

Jumping ahead to one of the most devastating wars to touch the region around Nizwa, and likely the reason why so many of my informants' families in particular were from that area, the Jebel Akhdar war of the 1950s should be understood as an elaboration on similar political impulses that animated previous wars in the Nizwa area. Familiar rhetorics of Imamate revival and suppression by the British-backed Sultan spurred the Jebel Akhdar war, but this conflict was further animated by the newly discovered presence of oil, resulting in the direct involvement of the British. Additionally, the policies of Sa'id bin Taimur had led directly to the severe underdevelopment of the Omani interior as well as Oman's unofficial colonialism by Britain. What ensued in the Hajar mountain region of the Omani interior was five years of guerilla warfare and violent suppression of the interior, including the bombing of villages, the date palm groves that were the backbone of the economy of the interior, and the *aflaj* irrigation systems that make life in the Hajar

[58] For more on the rise of the Sultanate as Oman's primary political institution: John Peterson, *Oman's Insurgencies: The Sultanate's Struggle for Supremacy* (London: Saqi, 2007).
[59] John Peterson, *Oman in the Twentieth Century: Political Foundations of an Emerging State* (London: Croom Helm, 1978), 169–70.

Mountains possible.[60] The latter two would have been considered especially egregious to the people of the interior as the destroying of the *aflaj* and palms is specifically frowned upon in the Ibadi rules of war.[61] The recurring episodes of violence of the Nizwa and wider Hajar Mountain region made living there untenable to many migrants who left for Zanzibar, and the wave from this most recent upset arrived only a few years prior to the revolution in Zanzibar.

The reason for leaving the Omani interior that was most commonly remembered by my informants was the difficult environment there. For the most part, my informants were rural villagers who had small farms. The environmental conditions for subsistence farming was important to them in a way that urban colonial elites did not account for in their frustration with the constant influx of people. When I asked Ahmed about why his family left Sharqiya, for example, he described the environment for farming in the environmentally marginal desert region of Sharqiya: "When [my father] was in Oman, the life was very tough there. He was just planting onions and they get water by taking it using ox car. They took it for a long journey until after that when the time came that they had to plant dates."[62] Even today, many people I've spoken to in Zanzibar cite the environment as a reason why they would still rather live in Zanzibar than Oman. For example, an elderly man named Sultan, who I regularly ate fruit with on the *baraza* in front of his house in Mkunizini (the neighborhood of Stone Town where I lived), told me that the reason that he

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[60] D Eickelman, "From Theocracy to Monarchy: Authority and Legitimacy in Inner Oman, 1935-1957," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 17, no. 1 (1985): 19–20.
[61] John Craven Wilkinson, *Water and Tribal Settlement in South-East Arabia: A Study of the Aflāj of Oman*, Oxford Research Studies in Geography (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 264–65; Also cited in: Thomas F. McDow, *Buying Time: Debt and Mobility in the Western Indian Ocean*, New African Histories (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2018), 32.
[62] Ahmed Rashid, Interview in English with Author.

moved back to Zanzibar after living in Oman for seven years in the 1970s, "Everything is really fresh and organic. I grow mangoes in Pemba and there are no chemicals. Even the beaches are clear and organic."[63] Sultan's misguided belief that there are fewer chemicals in Zanzibar aside, in the 19th century there were much more severe environmental reasons to choose to leave the Omani interior. Droughts and floods plagued the region that the fragile economic reality of the Omani interior simply could not weather. For example, the extreme drought in the 1840s in the Nizwa region spurred so much migration that the town of Majah's population dwindled to only 500 inhabitants.[64]

Migrating in the face of drought is a recurring pattern in Omani history. For example, in the 1790s a similar drought occurred and similarly prompted migration:

> During Hamed's administration there was a severe drought in Oman, far exceeding that which had occurred before his father Sa'id transferred the government to him. Most of the date-trees died, and the greater portion of the inhabitants fled to el-Batinah and Maskat, and the price of a bucket of water at el-Matrah rose to ten *fals*, the owners of the wells there refusing to sell it for less.[65]

Humaid Ibn-Muhammad published the above passage in 1871, the beginning of a decade that would similarly be etched with environmental catastrophe; this time in the form of floods that repeatedly destroyed the date crops. The most devastating of these was the floods of 1877-78, which destroyed almost the entirety of the country's date crop and hit particularly hard in Rashid's home district of Sharqiya where 90% of the crop was lost.[66]

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[63] Sultan, Interview in English with Author, July 25, 2019.
[64] C.S.D. Cole, "An Account of an Overland Journey from Leskkairee to Muscat and the 'Green Mountain' of Oman," *Transactions of the Bombay Geographical Society* 8 (48 1847): 113; Also cited in: McDow, *Buying Time*, 2018, 38.
[65] Ḥumaid Ibn-Muḥammad Ibn-Ruzaiq, *History of the Imams and Seyyids of 'Oman: From A.D. 661 - 1856*, trans. George Percy Badger, Reprint by the Hakluyt Soc. of 1871 original, Works Issued by the Hakluyt Society (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 212.
[66] McDow, *Buying Time*, 2018, 41.

While reporting the floods and their effect on the date crop to the Foreign Department in Calcutta, British agent E.C. Ross noted that year that "a steady emigration is taking place from Oman to the young and thriving kingdom of Zanzibar" in response to this environmental and economic insecurity.[67] The late 18th century migrations to Muscat recounted by Humaid Ibn-Muhammed and the emigration to Zanzibar that Ross observed almost a century later were not radically different from each other. What had changed was simply which urban center represented the most opportunity at the time. This would continue to shift over the course of the 20th century as Muscat began to rise again as an economic land of opportunity, such that when drought struck the Hajar Mountains again in the 1970s, a significant proportion of the population of the small village of Ghayzayn left for Muscat.[68]

And so we arrive at our second question: why did the destination of migration out of the Omani interior shift for a century from the coastal regions to Zanzibar? In large part, of course, this can be attributed to the pull of the potential prosperity that Zanzibar represented during this period. However, there were economic shifts occurring within Oman as well that prompted this change. The political instabilities of the interior regions during the hundred-year period from the mid-19th century to the mid 20th century were accompanied by a simultaneous economic decline in the coastal regions. Through the early 19th century, the coast was a major node of the dhow trade, which enabled it to act as a nearby site of short-term economic migration in times of trouble. From the mid-19th,

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[67] E.C. Ross, "Report on the Administration of the Persian Gulf Political Residency and Muscat Political Agency for the Year 1877-78" (Calcutta: Foreign Department Press, 1878), 129.

[68] J.S. Birks, "The Reaction of Rural Populations to Drought: A Cast Study from South East Arabia," *Erdkunde* 31, no. 4 (1977): 299–205; McDow, *Buying Time*, 2018, 38–39.

however, the coast's ability to thrive off the dhow trade plummeted. For example, Muscat's import and export trade had dropped by 1875 to less than a quarter of what it had been less than 50 years previous.[69]

There are several reasons for this decline. First, the rise of British and Indian steamers, beginning in the 1860s, as the principal carriers of Indian Ocean goods in the early 20th century cut the Omani ports out of large parts of the Indian Ocean trade because their more shallow ports were never well trafficked by steamers.[70] Second, the political instability that broke out in the 1850s was a threat to business that could just as easily be held in less precarious ports, like Aden. Third, the economic situation was further aggravated by a currency crisis that arose in the final three decades of the 19th century as the Maria Theresa dollar, which had been the primary currency in Oman, lost value.

Even Oman's illicit trades were mostly based out of Sur, as commerce of all types fled Muscat. Beyond simply representing an economic decline that prompted migration to find work, the decline of the coastal port cities as centers of regional trade meant that the labor migration that already existed between the interior and the coast needed to find a new destination. That new destination was Zanzibar, which had entered the Omani zeitgeist as the place to go to find prosperity and a comfortable life away from the desert environments. But these concerns over finding good farming land and escaping wars, floods, droughts, and economic depression that migrants carried with them as they traveled to Zanzibar were not the interests of the political elites whose thoughts about Omani migration to Zanzibar are preserved in the colonial archive.

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[69] Landen, *Oman since 1856*, 123.
[70] On the lack of steamer traffic to the Gulf and southern Arabia: Gilbert, *Dhows & the Colonial Economy in Zanzibar*, 116.

Migration policy—a terrain of colonial struggle

This section begins in the colonial archive, where I establish the legal conditions of migration into Zanzibar according to the preserved documents created by the Arab Association and the British colonists. But as I delve into the loopholes and shortcuts that migrants used to go around the colonial migration laws, it quickly becomes apparent that the struggle over migration policy between the Arab Association and the British largely occurred within the world of papers preserved in the archive rather than in the experiences of the average migrant. This section sketches the contours of migration as understood through the lens of bureaucratic struggle over migration law between Arab elites and the British colonial regime from roughly 1904 through the 1950s. What appears is a flawed and contested system in which the British colonial state created a patchwork of often-contradictory rules without having the ability to enforce their policies. Rather than acting as meaningful oversight of migration, this system served as a platform for the Arab Association to promote an anticolonial idea of Arab nationalism.

Rising Arab nationalism and anticolonial activism set Arab political actors up to conflict with British colonial interests. In the 1940s the Arab Association began to champion the cause of Arab immigration in particular in order to protect their own economic and political interests as well as to grapple for an element of control against the British state. Migration policies and racial politics were intertwined in the first half of the 20th century. The imagined organization of colonial Zanzibar was structured around a simplified racial hierarchy. As J.E. Flint described the British vision for the colony, "The population was labeled by race, and race denoted function; Arabs were landowners and

clove-planters, Indians were traders and financiers, and Africans were labourers."[71] In addition to owning land and clove trees, the ideal Arab in the mind of the British was a political intermediary, and indeed much of the day-to-day administration was staffed by Omani aristocrats.[72] Notably, newly arrived *wamanga* who owned no land or clove trees were not a part of this imagined racial collection. However, the elite Arabs of Stone Town who were supposed to play the part of ally to the British colonial regime were themselves the source of another set of problems for the state.

A state of confusion

Most of the early efforts of the British colonial government to control migration in the protectorate were riddled with confusion and frustration. While a "documentary regime," to use Thomas McDow's term, aimed at controlling mobility in the Western Indian Ocean can be said to have begun with the 1873 antislavery treaty, it was the 1904 Immigration Restriction Decree that began coding documentary control of mobility as specifically related to migration.[73] This decree was aimed at controlling what was understood in the correspondence of those drafting it as an unchecked horde of destitute migrants that would not be accepted at other ports that had more ordered policies.[74] From the 1904 decree to the 1944 compromise with the Arab Association, the British colonists' attempts to introduce and modify migration policies were stymied by mass confusion both within and outside the government itself over what those policies even were and a race- and nationality-based system of laws that imperfectly mapped onto more complicated

[71] J.E. Flint, "Zanzibar, 1890-1950," in *History of East Africa*, ed. Vincent Harlow and E.M. Chilver, vol. 2 (Oxford, 1965), 651.
[72] Glassman, *War of Words, War of Stones*, 2011, 41.
[73] McDow, *Buying Time*, 2018, chap. 7.
[74] John Sinclair, "Mr. Sinclair to the Marquess of Lansdowne," 1904, L.PJ.6.686 File 1728, British Library.

multiracial reality of the Western Indian Ocean's social landscape. I will outline some of the major recurring themes of colonial migration law here. In particular, a lack of a shared understanding of race, class, and even geography made constructing a policy to govern the movement of people primarily categorized by race and class across that geography a difficult task.

Migration policies at their inception were specifically intended to keep poorer migrants from arriving at or staying in Zanzibar. In 1905 Zanzibar was the only port in British East Africa that officially allowed the immigration of destitute migrants, and thus steamship captains often dumped all of their passengers who would not be able to get off in Mombasa, Dar es Salaam, or Tanga, for example, in Zanzibar. The colonial regime cited this relative laxity and the alleged resulting hordes of impoverished immigrants as the main reason why the British colonists needed to invent migration laws in the first place.[75] The definition of who was considered an undesirable migrant expanded overtime. By 1934, the list of prohibited migrants included paupers, people with severe mental illnesses, diseased people, criminals, prostitutes and pimps, opium addicts, and anyone else the immigration officer decided should not enter.[76] At its core, this list still specifically targeted impoverished migrants.

For those with the money to make a deposit at the port, the process of securing the appropriate documents could be circumvented entirely. The Provincial Commissioner in 1940 explained the logic of this system, writing, "We allow people to come and land without papers, provided they make a deposit for their return passage, and they are issued

[75] John Sinclair, "Mr. Sinclair to the Marquess of Lansdowne," 1904, L.PJ.6.686 File 1728, British Library.
[76] "Laws of Zanzibar," 1934, Zanzibar National Archives; Referenced in: "Passport Regulations for the British Empire," 1946, AB26.28, Zanzibar National Archives.

with identification papers free of charge to facilitate internal control over them." [77] The implications of this policy are, first, that the journey to Zanzibar necessitated in theory the inconvenience of acquiring papers ahead of arriving only for the poorer migrants for whom paying a deposit would be a financial hardship. Second, this serves as an example of one way that the British were able to get some people to cooperate with their migration policies. Namely, by adjusting their policies to be convenient for those local elites that they needed as intermediaries and who were best positioned to make the task of governing the protectorate more difficult. Nonetheless, cooperating with the demand to secure travel papers would have been inconvenient for the majority of even more wealthy Omani migrants as the only place to do so was in Muscat.

The British existed in a reality where Muscat was the capital of a coherent, if prone to civil war, geographical entity known as Oman. The creation of a coherent policy to govern migration between Zanzibar and Oman required Zanzibar and Oman to be understood as separate places. Until the 1860s, Zanzibar and Oman had been a single Sultanate. This, combined with the long history of connections and movement between Zanzibar and Oman, means that there is a limit to the extent that it can be assumed that Omani Arabs in Zanzibar in the early 20th century perceived a real difference in national identity between the archipelago and the peninsula. Even today, when my interview questions about cultural differences between Zanzibar and Oman were too broad and open ended, my informants in Zanzibar generally insisted that there is no real difference. Moreover, many of the more recent migrants from Oman in the late 19th and early 20th centuries had come from the interior where there had been a series of civil wars rejecting

[77] Provincial Commissioner, "To the Chief Secretary from the Provincial Commissioner," March 18, 1940, AB26.39, Zanzibar National Archives.

the Sultan of Muscat as the legitimate ruler in favor of the Imam. So it was unlikely that there would be much inclination on the part of these migrants to spontaneously identify as subjects of the Sultan of Muscat upon arriving in Zanzibar, adding a further complication to the British colonial state's desire to sort individuals into two nationalities—Zanzibari and Omani.

Because of this geographical confusion, one of the major areas of illegibility within the British colonial state itself was who should be issuing passports to Omani Arabs who lived within Zanzibar. In 1914, common practice was for the Sultan of Zanzibar to issue passports to Arabs from Muscat who either lived in Zanzibar or lived in both Zanzibar and Oman, regardless of whether in the minds of the British these individuals were still considered citizens of Oman. This system of passports was opaque to everyone from the British consul in Baghdad, who wrote to Secretary Harcourt in London because he assumed that people from Zanzibar should have British passports, to the Foreign Office in Zanzibar, who also wrote to Harcourt to ask if it would not just be easier to issue passports to these residents of a British protectorate themselves, to the "Muscat Arabs who frequently apply [to the Foreign Office] for passports."[78] The attempt to change this rule, to put passport control more firmly within the purview of the Foreign Office, simply resulted in further confusion as different statements by those drafting the new guidelines suggested contradictory policies. Where one policy stated that passports were not to be issued to Muscat Arabs, another policy stated that British passports should be issued to Zanzibar subjects. This was a contradiction as the Nationality Decree had stated that Muscat Arabs who had resided in Zanzibar for a certain amount of time would acquire Zanzibar

[78] Foreign Office, "Directed to Secretary Harcourt at Downing Street," February 24, 1914, AB26.39, Zanzibar National Archives.

nationality.[79] Sorting out this mess satisfactorily would have required parsing national identities between Zanzibar and Oman that were blurry even to members of the Zanzibar-Oman transnational community themselves.

Indeed, even in their own internal correspondence on the subject of to whom to issue passports, British officials in Zanzibar expressed some doubt as to whether they would be able to determine the national identity of the "many here who, though undeniably of Muscat origin, have spent the greater part of their lives here and regard themselves as Zanzibaris but legally they cannot claim" to be Zanzibari.[80] Nevertheless, in 1914, the British changed the policy so that British passports would be issued to anyone deemed a national of Zanzibar but not to Muscat Arabs in Zanzibar. This did not actually solve their problem in classifying people as they wished to, as there simply was no easy division between who was a "Zanzibari" and who was an "Omani." This confusion continued to arise in the internal correspondence of those tasked with controlling migration into the protectorate. It is this frustration that we can read in a 1932 letter that begins by noting that the issue of passports for Arabs has already been thoroughly discussed, and continues to complain, "Many Arabs state that they are Sultan's subjects, but it is not a simple matter to differentiate."[81]

The differentiation of people proved the colonial regime's greatest source of confusion over governing migration, as we shall see in the next section. The state had no way to distinguish recent migrants from those who had been in the islands for generations, creating massive problems with enforcing migration policies. Additionally, many aspects of

[79] "Correspondence to the Chief Secretary," 1914, AB26.39, Zanzibar National Archives.
[80] "Correspondence to the Chief Secretary."
[81] "To the Chief Secretary," March 19, 1932, AB26.39, Zanzibar National Archives.

these policies were created with the assumption that class mapped easily onto race, severely underestimating the complexities of racial identity in the Western Indian Ocean. In colonial Zanzibar, Arabness was widely equated with the aristocracy, and so on the surface race-based immigration laws which favored Arabs would serve the state's deeper goals of preventing the immigration of the destitute. Arabs thus had far greater freedom of legal movement into and out of Zanzibar than Africans or even Indians. The Chief Secretary for example wrote to the Arab Association to assure them:

> The Government has, as you are doubtless aware, no wish to place unnecessary obstacles in the way of traditional interchange of visits between Arabs of His highness' dominions and Arabs of Arabian peninsular nor to do anything that would weaken the close ties of common origin and interest which happily line these territories together.[82]

He went on to point out that, even under wartime conditions, the regulations imposed on Arab migrants are "less strict that those generally applicable under the Immigration Decree to immigrants of other races."[83] But the simplistic categories of Arab, African, and Indian, while certainly increasingly salient within the archipelago, did not account for the numerous divisions and complexities obscured by these umbrella terms, nor for the degree of mixture between these allegedly rigid divides. And they certainly never neatly matched the supposedly natural economic roles assigned to each of these identifiers. The category of Arab for example did not only extend to the Omani Arabs descended from Zanzibar's 19th century ruling class, but also to the *wamanga* arriving on dhows and the even more impoverished *washihiri* from Yemen.

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[82] The Office of the Secretariat, "To The Honorary Secretary of the Arab Association in Zanzibar," July 16, 1940, AB26.39, Zanzibar National Archives.
[83] The Office of the Secretariat.

For instance, the British colonial regime and the Arab Association had negotiated very lenient immigration restrictions for Arabs in the 1940s. But these new policies quickly needed to be amended else the state be expected to grant same leeway to less desirable Arabs when a group of immigrants from Hadhramaut needed to be sent somewhere, but none of the authorities in East Africa were willing to take them in. A letter to the Immigration Officer in Zanzibar points out that because colonial racial hierarchies treated all Arabs as a single unit, then "Arabs wishing to obtain entry into the Protectorate from other parts of Arabia will be extended similar treatment to that meted out to Arabs from Oman" and therefore the Hadhramis should be allowed entry if they have any family in Zanzibar.[84] To resolve this loophole, the government eventually sited the continuation of extenuating wartime concerns despite the fact that hostilities had in fact ceased by November 1945. They also released a statement that explicated a de facto, if not official, division within their policies concerning Arab immigration: "Although this government cannot accept the statement that Zanzibar is a second home for Arabs in general, it has always been its policy to preserve the historical and time honoured contact between the Arabs of Zanzibar and of the Oman, between whom there exists strong ties of relationship and sentiment."[85] Even this statement, while attempting to introduce the idea of differences between Arabs, still misses the large divisions within the category of Omani Arabs. The disorganization of colonial migration policy and the extent to which its assumptions failed to match the more complex social reality of the Western Indian Ocean created a major

[84] Provincial Commissioner O'Brien, "To the Immigration Officer," August 11, 1944, AB26.92, Zanzibar National Archives.
[85] Provincial Commissioner O'Brien, "To Chief Secretary Baker-Beall," November 1945, AB26.92, Zanzibar National Archives.

enforcement problem for the colonial regime as migrants continued to travel across the boundaries of the archipelago.

A porous border in colonial Zanzibar

Having read so much correspondence between colonial officials and the Arab Association debating the details of colonial migration law, I was eager to hear from my interviewees what the experience of navigating this confusing system was like on the ground. This seemed like an easy avenue of questioning; after all everyone remembers and wants to complain about irritating bureaucratic processes that made their trip difficult. And it would fit so well into a project that I was coming to understand would be as much if not more about immobility as mobility! But not a single one of my informants could remember any encounter with the bureaucracies of migration control during this period. They had a lot to say about current visa and passport problems, but when I pushed them to remember experiences from their youth in the 1950s, they could not. In part, this could be a function of the fallibility of human memory. Nevertheless, whether most of them arrived through unofficial means or simply if the official means were remarkably non-memorable, this silence speaks to the extent that colonial policy failed to establish itself as a significant hurdle for migrants to overcome. My interviews were almost entirely in rural villages with lower class Arabs who would have been precisely the type of individuals who should have been denied an easy entrance according to the letter of the law. Moreover, the first-generation migrants who were still alive to tell me about their arrival would by necessity have come during the final few decades prior to the 1964 revolution, when colonial systems of migration control were at their most established and competent. And yet still, their arrival to Zanzibar was remarkably free of bureaucracy. What we cannot see in the

colonial archive is that the angst over migration policy on the part of the British regime and the Arab Association was largely meaningless on the ground to actual migrants.

The success of colonial era migration policies depended on the state's ability to note, find, and arrest those who were "illegal," a task the colonial government was incapable of doing. One elderly interviewee in northern Pemba who wished to remain anonymous laughed when I asked about what paperwork he needed to come to the island when he arrived in what he thought was the 1950s. He replied, "No no, ni njia siri" [it's a secret way] and refused to elaborate any further.[86] This "secret way" was probably just the beach near his house in the village of Jiso or else another nearby beach.[87] Not all of my informants were as mysterious about their arrival in the archipelago. Saleh, for example, who I interviewed in the town of Wete, Pemba, discussed the ease with which his family traversed the colonial migration policies at length, comparing them favorably to the relative strictness of today's visa requirements:

> At that time, people from Oman were coming here via local boats, through the sea, they came here. My brothers were given a permit, but they lost it and the one for my grandfather. Just a piece of paper! Not a passport book, just paper. So they came without anything. They didn't have a passport book, or the permit paper, or permission to come here. So it was a very simple thing. No going through immigration, no strictness, no information. There was no strictness to come at that time.[88]

In fact there were requirements for immigrants to acquire and those "pieces of paper," but there was not much ability to enforce these requirements. To the British, it was seemed reasonable to assume that any would-be migrants could apply to their office in Muscat.

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[86] Anonymous, Interview with author in Jiso, Pemba, September 29, 2017.
[87] For more on the ease of smuggling by dhows: Gilbert, *Dhows & the Colonial Economy in Zanzibar*, 145, 163–64.
[88] Saleh Muhammed, Interview with author in Wete, September 23, 2017 Original interview was in a confusing mix of Swahili, English, and Arabic. Translation by author.

Migrants, however, moved in a reality where locations such as Muscat, Sur, and Nizwa were distinct locations separated by many miles of desert and mountains and which were only sometimes unified by a single ruler. Given that the only British agent was located in Muscat, there were some rather predictable problems in regulating travelers leaving from elsewhere in the country. Most simply neglected or refused to make the arduous journey to Muscat before departure. Letters shunted between various offices noted a variety of instances in which travel documents were unable to be attained other major ports of dhow departure, such as Mirbat and Sur.[89]

Even when migrants did go through the trouble to procure documents, they often did not meet with the standards expected by officials in Zanzibar. For instance, Arabs arriving by way of Aden simply had blank sheets of paper with Arabic writing on them in pen, which officials in Zanzibari sometimes deemed to be without "satisfactory provision for evidence as to the identity of their bearers."[90] Similarly, travel permits from Oman's Dhofar province consisted of "mere paper" in part due to the fact that "a photograph [could not] be obtained in Dhofar."[91] The colonial state's obsession with documents did not really register as possible or necessary with migrants themselves.

In fact, my informants who mentioned immigrating without legal permission did not often seem to realize that they were violating the rules. The man who laughed about his "secret way" was in that sense an exception, but he was not alone in arriving by way of the local unmonitored beach. The many creeks, sheltered beaches, and inlets of Zanzibar,

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[89] Immigration Officer, "To Chief Secretary from Immigration Officer," March 3, 1941, AB26.39, Zanzibar National Archives.
[90] G. Beresford-Stooke, "To Governor in Aden from G. Beresford-Stooke, Acting British Resident," March 1941, AB26.39, Zanzibar National Archives.
[91] JB Howes, "To the Chief Secretary to the Government of Zanzibar from Captain JB Howes MBE Political Agent in Muscat," October 10, 1941, AB26.39, Zanzibar National Archives.

particularly in Pemba, offered numerous opportunities for smuggling, not just trade goods but people as well.[92] For example, a woman who I interviewed in Gando, a small village north of Wete in Pemba, recounted, "My grandfather came direct from Oman and they arrived at Kilwa. When I was a child, we decided to come to Pemba Islands, and we landed at Gando."[93] This was a common refrain in my interviews. When I asked where exactly the boat landed, about three quarters of my interviewees who remembered at all named a small beach village or else just replied "hapa hapa" [right here], referring to the village that they still reside in. And indeed there were many easy places for dhows to make land in Pemba in particular. As Erik Gilbert described the island,

> Pemba's eastern coast is moderately indented and unlike the eastern coast of Unguja, which is exposed to the full force of the Indian Ocean, outlying islands protect much of Pemba's eastern shore. The western coast is deeply and frequently indented and lavishly endowed with fringe islands. As a result, no place on Pemba is more than 4 miles from the sea, and in most places some inlet or creek is quite close by. The creeks and inlets not only provide shelter for dhows, but some of the creek heads are as much as a half-mile to a mile from the sea.[94]

This plethora of harbors that were easy for dhows but impossible for larger ships, combined with very little colonial oversight in Pemba in general, meant that arrival by dhow to Pemba went easily undetected by the government. It was impossible for immigration authorities to monitor, or even know about, all of these landing spots. They certainly could not have meaningfully enforced any sort of requirements for documents when they had no way to oversee the comings and goings of people on small dhows.

It is perhaps not so surprising then that there is little interest or even awareness in the surviving colonial documents about this apparently common way of circumventing

[92] Villiers, *Sons of Sinbad*; Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices, & Ivory in Zanzibar*; Gilbert, *Dhows & the Colonial Economy in Zanzibar*.
[93] Anonymous, Interview with Author in Gando, October 29, 2017.
[94] Gilbert, *Dhows & the Colonial Economy in Zanzibar*, 88–89.

migration restrictions. In one instance, the colonial government became aware of a group of boats avoiding the law only because the dhows' captains bothered to get clearance papers and thus made the Provincial Commissioner B.C. Johnstone aware of their ships' existence: "These dhows were wood cutting in the Kichange Creek of North Wete, owing to adverse winds they were given clearance papers for Zanzibar at Tumbe, this was done to save a call at the Wete Port. The Dhows sailed on May 4th [1933] from Tumbe; as none have reported in Zanzibar, it can, I think, be presumed they have sailed direct to Muscat and have therefore contravened the law."[95] Commissioner Johnstone noted that simply ignoring the requirements to report with the port authority was "an easy method of smuggling."[96] Of course the concern on the part of the government in this incident was the wood smuggling, but people could travel through those secluded creeks just as easily.

Disregarding colonial migration laws would have been easier for dhow passengers than for those traveling by steamer or airplane, and as travel gradually shifted away from dhows in the mid 20th century, there was a transition towards cooperation with the paperwork of migration regulations. One Abdulla Abdulrahman Ahmed, for example, did follow the migration policy rules, and through when he bothered with various bureaucracies we can see the slowly growing importance of legal paperwork. For those like Abdulla who were not considered an undesirable migrant, there were relatively few barriers to movement and thus a certain advantage to following the rules. Abdulla was able to use the fact that he had consistently had his passport endorsed as he traveled between Zanzibar and Mozambique over the course of 35 years to demonstrate that he always

[95] Provincial Commissioner Johnstone, "To the Chief Secretary on Wood Cutting by Foreign Dhows," July 19, 1933, AB45.44, Zanzibar National Archives.
[96] Provincial Commissioner Johnstone.

returned to his house at Vikokotoni after traveling, thus negotiating a certificate of permanent residence in 1955.[97] And yet, it wasn't until the mid-twentieth century that he felt the need to codify his residence in Zanzibar and thus ease his re-entry. The bureaucracy of migration control became more salient to travelers as the twentieth century progressed because steamships and airplanes gradually replaced dhows as the primary means of transportation and casually ignoring the colonial state's laws became more inconvenient.

In 1905, a little over half of the 12,276 people *officially* arriving in Pemba by boat came by steamer rather than dhow, but this data captures most if not all of the steamer passengers, while likely missing much of the dhow traffic. Three years later, only a little less than a quarter of the recorded passengers came by dhow, but the number of people officially arriving in Pemba had shot up to 21,578—almost doubling from three years previous.[98] What had changed was the opening of the steamer port at Mkoani, and many of the additional passengers likely would have traveled by dhow previously and thus been invisible in the records. It is clear that steamers and then airplanes gradually replaced dhows as the main mode of transport, but dhows remained a major means of transportation for migrants going to and from Oman for much of the colonial period. My informants above who remember arriving on beaches and inlets arrived late in the colonial period, for example.

Besides the issue of dhows arriving on unmonitored coastlines, the colonial regime's inability to differentiate between individual Zanzibar residents created numerous opportunities for migrants to avoid its interference even when they did go through the

[97] Chairman of the Immigration Control Board, "Abdulla Abdulrahman Ahmed," March 24, 1955, AB26.2, Zanzibar National Archives.
[98] "Port and Marine Annual Report," 1910, BA18.3.214, Zanzibar National Archives; also cited in Gilbert, *Dhows & the Colonial Economy in Zanzibar*, 80.

major ports. For example, many Omani-Zanzibaris were mixed-race and multilingual, thus opening the door to the possibility of claiming whatever racial identity was useful in a given situation. For the most part, this would have meant identifying as Arab. However, when it suited them, some individuals did use policies intended for Africans. For example, identity documents intended for Africans only were frequently issued to non-African fishermen:

> The fishermen usually call at mainland ports for fishing purposes. I think they have to possess something to prove that they are Zanzibar inhabitants. Use of passports in this respect is impracticable as local people are not expected to possess passports unless they wished to leave the Protectorate on long safaris.[99]

In another instance, an identity document that was intended for Africans "was returned to an immigration officer at the airport by an Arab on his return from Tanganyika on 21st July, 1959."[100]

The general chaos of colonial migration policy created still more loopholes for migrants to exploit. One useful way for migrants to get paperwork for travel once they had arrived in Zanzibar was to secure travelling permits that were intended to ease travel within British East Africa. These permits were introduced during WWI as a way both to exercise more control over movement during a time of war and to continue to allow normal travel around the region. These documents were issued and given out at a nominal price (1.50 shillings, the equivalent of $5.19 today). Significantly, they were valid even for travel to Arabia.[101]

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[99] Town Mudir, "To District Commissioner J.D. Stringer," September 17, 1959, AB26.91, Zanzibar National Archives.
[100] J.D. Stringer, "Letter to the Town Mudir from the Office of the Senior Commissioner," July 23, 1959, AB26.91, Zanzibar National Archives.
[101] Commissioner of Police, "From Commissioner of Police to Chief Secretary," October 23, 1939, AB26.39, Zanzibar National Archives.

Regardless of the method, avoiding or simply ignoring colonial migration policy was both easy and fairly common. Because of the general disorganization of the migration laws and the lack of much effort to enforce them, it is possible and even likely that many people were not aware of any migration laws existing. In a letter to the Port Officer, the District Commissioner wrote, "I am to inform you that it has come to my knowledge that a number of children who normally leave the school at Std. VIII, finding themselves with nothing much to do, escape from their parents in the dhows to Arabia. Most of these boys, I am given to understand, carry no passports."[102] Apparently, hopping on a boat to the Arabian Peninsula without any paperwork was child's-play.

Stakes and Priorities for the British State

A couple of early readers of this chapter asked, if the British knew that their policies were ineffective, why did they bother going to so much trouble? There are several answers to this question. The first is, they did not go to much trouble. From 1904 until the pressures of war and a flailing economy in the 1940s, colonial bureaucrats expressed frustration that there was not a coherent system of migration control and proposed ways to clarify what policies they did have, but made little attempt to drastically reform the status quo. For the British, Zanzibar's importance rested on its prosperity as a port. Avoiding disrupting the dhow trade was central to British migration policies in Zanzibar. As early as the 1904 immigration decree, this question had featured prominently in discussions of what Zanzibar's policies should be: "The question as to how to frame the Decree so as not to interfere with the dhow traffic, which is very extensive, and native intercourse with the

[102] District Commissioner, "To the Port Officer," April 3, 1957, AB26.91.3, Zanzibar National Archives.

mainland, was one which occupied our careful consideration."[103] The stressors of the 1940s only exacerbated this tension. Wartime restrictions walked a delicate line between limiting migration and encouraging trade.

Second, it is not entirely clear to what extent the colonial regime was aware of just how unenforceable their policies were, at least initially. The British considered Zanzibar an ideal colony, technical protectorate status aside. Prosperous and relatively peaceful, Zanzibar was a port through which raw materials from the East African interior could easily be extracted and which would eagerly purchase manufactured imports. There were problems with dhow crews and the occasional riot, but why would they assume that migration would be so ungovernable? Some colonial projects were more successful than others, and without the benefit of hindsight, it would have been difficult to guess that this particular one would prove a failure. Certainly some individuals within the colonial bureaucracy were aware of the difficulties of migration policy enforcement, especially in the later decades of colonial rule, but others were not. Experienced members of the colonial government repeatedly had to inform more naïve colleagues that their latest schemes were not feasible. For example, the provincial commissioner wrote in 1940 in response to one of many proposed schemes that would have required a far greater degree of control over migrants to actually put into effect, "If we can insist upon all these passengers carrying passports or identification papers issued in their country of origin, our difficulties are more than half met, but, as things are at present, there are many hundreds of Mangas and Shihiris

[103] Sinclair, "Mr. Sinclair to the Marquess of Lansdowne," 1904.

[from Yemen] here who have no papers and to comply with paragraph 6 would be at least irksome."[104]

But these more informed members of the colonial regime were likewise a part of an empire that valued a documentary regime as foundational to their power and a worthwhile goal in and of itself. Bureaucratic power granted colonial powers cheaper and more stable authority than overt violence. Documents created legibility. Governing the movement of people via various travel documents was understood as modernizing, civilizing, and fundamental to maintaining control. Adam McKeown's work on Asian migration has demonstrated that border control and the documentary regime associated with it were developed in the 1880s through 1910s for specifically racial and colonial purposes, namely the exclusion and control of the mobility of Asians—a system that by the 1930s had been fully universalized.[105] Despite the impossibility of enforcing migration controls in the Zanzibar archipelago, the colonial state adopted and gradually expanded racialized and exclusionary migration policies during this same period through the 1930s. The British regime then started actively expanding migration policy in earnest in the 1940s, largely in response to the world war. There was, by the 1940s, perhaps also an element of bureaucratic one-upmanship with the Arab Association, who were by then outspoken anti-colonialists. Migration control was a safer debate to have for the British than the question of majority rule, which would take center stage in the 1950s, as the issue of migration to and from Oman had higher stakes for the Arab population of Zanzibar than it did for the British.

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[104] Provincial Commissioner, "To the Chief Secretary from the Provincial Commissioner," March 18, 1940.
[105] McKeown, *Melancholy Order*.

Journeys by dhow

In noting that the colonial government's halfhearted attempts at inventing a border around the archipelago largely failed, it would be easy to assume that this was a time of unrestrained movement. Indeed, that is the image that often comes through of this period of Western Indian Ocean history. An emphasis in the literature on the dhow trade or on the traveling merchant class paints a picture in constant movement.[106] And in Zanzibar's popular historical memory of the pre-revolution period, a time broadly touched with nostalgia, migration is remembered as more "free" before the airplanes with well-controlled passport and visa regulations became the norm. But a close reading of the experiences of my informants reveals that this rosy past of unconstrained movement never really existed.

But there existed important limitations to easy mobility in the colonial period as well. The more significant barrier to mobility than the law was simply the cost and difficulty of the dhow journey, which was considerable. Ahmed Rashid journeyed between Oman and Zanzibar by dhow twice and spoke with me about his experiences. He traveled in the 1950s by dhow and camel from Pemba to his uncle's home in the Sharqiya region of the Omani interior. He emphasized two aspects of the journey. The first of these was that food on board was a major difficulty. He explained that everyone had to bring their own food on board. Beyond simply that bringing food to feed oneself and one's family for possibly as long as upwards of a month was a major expense, the tight rationing was hard.

The conditions on board, the length of the journey, and whether the boat arrived intact at all were dependent on weather, which could make a difficult journey even worse.

[106] For example: Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices, & Ivory in Zanzibar*; Gilbert, *Dhows & the Colonial Economy in Zanzibar*; Oonk, *Settled Strangers*; McDow, *Buying Time*, 2018.

The passengers were subject to sea sickness, packed sleeping conditions on deck, with no privacy and minimal protection from the elements. While the dhow Ahmed was on was transporting salt and dried shark and fish to sell in Oman, he and the 15 to 20 passengers on board with him could eat only the rice and a small amount of dates that they brought with them. He was at pains to emphasize that there was a sense of camaraderie and sharing about food on board and no one on the boat with him ever truly starved, saying repeatedly "Tunakula pamoja," or "we ate together." But also for him the dhow trip was a time of hunger, saying "You cook only a pinch so it will last, it will suffice" ["Unapika tu chakua kama kinabakia, kinatosha"]. At this point in our conversation, my research assistant Hemed jumped in to clarify that "there was no getting full," and Ahmed agreed that that was the way of it.

The second thing that Ahmed emphasized was that the dhow journey itself was only one part of the total trip. While the colonial government only cared about people crossing their borders, for the migrants themselves the over-land travel could be as difficult as the transoceanic trip. My own informants did not make the long journeys to the East African interior that Thomas McDow has described in his scholarship, but they did need to journey through the Omani interior. For Ahmed, his journey to Sharqiya from Pemba began with a trip to Unguja, where he and his brother waited for about a week to board a dhow in Stone Town. The longest section of the trip was the dhow trip from Stone Town to Muscat, which he described as between one to two months. But upon arrival in Muscat they did not know anyone there except those who had been on the boat with them, and it took them about five days in Muscat to arrange for transport by camel to Sharqiya. This would have been an arduous journey through the mountains and across the desert to his uncle's house near the

town of Ibra. Ahmed repeatedly emphasized that, in the short time that he spent living with his uncle in Ibra before deciding to return to Pemba, his main impression of the place was that life was difficult there. And one of his main examples of the difficulty of life there was that there was no easy transport. At four different times during our interview he said something along the lines of "in Oman life was very tough. There wasn't any transport, not even by bicycle. They just use horse or camel, or they use cow for transport of goods, nothing else."[107]

Another major barrier was financial. While costs varied some, a one-way journey in the 1950s cost a total of 465 shillings ($1,608 today).[108] These costs could quickly multiply if multiple family members wanted to move together, as was often the case. The difficulty and cost of the journey did far more to inhibit frequent travel than any ineffective bureaucratic intervention the colonial state could invent. Or to put it in the words of another interviewee who explained why he had not visited his family in Oman until recently, "before traveling was a great hardship. When one came by dhow, it was a great hardship at that time" [Zamani safari zilikuwa taabu sana. Ilikuwa ikishafika jahazi ilikuwa ni taabu kubwa wakati ule].[109]

Social networks as mobility

One of the main features of this migration often left out of the archival records is the role of social networks. This silence affects in particular the gendered story we tell about this migration. Ahmed's grandmother disembarked from the dhow that she had taken from Oman on a beach in Pemba in approximately 1910. She was traveling with her ten-year-old

[107] Ahmed Rashid, Interview in English with Author.
[108] Principal Immigration Officer, "To Chief Secretary," September 24, 1959, AK17/64, Zanzibar National Archives.
[109] Salim Hemedi Ali, Interview with author in Chake Chake, September 7, 2017.

son, Rashid, to live with her relatives in Konde, where her descendants still live. The archipelago to which she was moving was lush and green, which must have seemed a paradise not only after coaxing plants to grow in the desert but also after weeks packed on board a difficult journey by dhow. Most importantly, this new place where she had arrived was where her family lived. Many individual migrants did have longstanding family connections in Zanzibar, which were critical in enabling migration to the archipelago. While the difficulty and expense of the dhow journey represented a challenge to mobility, the existence of these connections made the hoped-for prosperity more possible.

Social networks were crucial for facilitating migration. 73% of my interlocutors told me that a family member had paid for their voyage. Additionally, while colonial migration control efforts were most easily simply circumvented, when migrants did go through official channels, having relatives already established on the island was the best way to guarantee entry. Even at the height of the second world war, when migration control was at its strictest, the colonial government maintained that, "Any [Arabs arriving from Oman] with established contacts here were allowed to land—those without were sent back. […] Provision is made for relatives sent for from Oman under the new form of control."[110] While being able to claim a relative on the island upon arrival was good strategy for being allowed entry, even better was if one's relatives first went themselves to request documents to be prepared for their Omani family members. The colonial policy was that "Arabs in Zanzibar who wish their relatives to join them here to assist them in their local enterprises, can approach the Arab Immigration Committee and give particulars of the intending immigrants, and the immigration officer will issue an entry permit on the

[110] Provincial Commissioner, "To the Chief Secretary on Control of Manga Arab Immigrants," July 23, 1943, AB26.92.1, Zanzibar National Archives.

recommendation of the Arab Immigration Committee."[111] But more importantly, if a migrant got off a dhow on some random beach in Pemba, having a social contact's house to then stay at made it more or less impossible for the colonial bureaucracy to ever identify that person as having arrived. Ahmed's father Rashid was a relatively financially successful individual in Pemba because he was able to rely on his family who was already established there.

What is revealed once we start to consider social networks is the presence of women in this history. If one of the goals of this chapter is to introduce the narratives of those left out of the colonial archive and the scholarly literature alike, then it would be difficult to find a group of people more excluded from these sources than women. The archival materials on migration policy consistently refer to migrants in masculine pronouns, and scholars have not challenged this assumption. And yet, women are indubitably part of this history. Even if you take Ahmed, our interlocutor from the above section, as an example, the only reason that he was on that dhow back to Oman was because his *mother* asked him to take his youngest brother to their uncle's house in Sharqiya. And Ahmed's father Rashid only came to Pemba from Oman in the first place with his *mother* in order for the two of them to live with *her maternal* family.

It is easy to look at Ahmed and just see the journeys of one man, but when we expand our view a little to take in his social context, he is suddenly one member of a vast social network, each with ties to each other and their own narratives of engagement with Oman. Ahmed's mother was named Asila. She was born in Pemba to parents who had both come from the Sharqiya region of Oman. When she died, Rashid remarried to a woman

[111] Provincial Commissioner O'Brien, "To Chief Secretary Baker-Beall," March 11, 1944, AB26.92, Zanzibar National Archives.

named Fatma, who was born in Oman and had migrated to Pemba. Fatma eventually left Rashid and took their children to her relative's house in Oman, and later after they saved some money it was Fatma and her children who paid for Rashid's third wife and her children to join them in Oman. Fatma was an Omani woman who migrated to Pemba, and ultimately left with her children to return to her parents' house in Oman. Three separate women were married to a man named Hasayu. Mariam* married him in Nizwa, and Joha and Asha were both born in Pemba of Omani heritage.[112] Asha's daughter Zaina was one of the family members who I interviewed in Pemba, and she has four sisters, all of whom moved to Oman after the revolution.[113]

The point is not to drown the reader in a deluge of names, but that these women who make up many nodes of this family tree are involved in this narrative as more than passive bystanders. Rather, they were key members of that social network that was so important to both mobility and success in establishing a new life in Zanzibar, and sometimes they were migrants themselves. Asha, for example, was instrumental in helping her husband Hasayu settle in Pemba. This was not uncommon.[114] Women often entered my interviews with male informants as objects collected on the way to their success—they arrived, they got a job, they got a wife, they got a farm, etc. I would generally interrupt these accounts to ask was where the wife in question was born and if her family was also from Oman. Approximately two thirds of the time her heritage would also be Omani, but in almost every interview these wives were born in Zanzibar. This means that, although the

[112] "Mariam" is a pseudonym because no one who I interviewed could remember her name.
[113] Zaina Hasayu Salo, Interview with author, October 28, 2017.
[114] Nidhi Mahajan, "Seasons of Sail: The Monsoon, Kinship, and Labor in the Dhow Trade," in *Reimagining Indian Ocean Worlds*, ed. Smriti Srinivas, Bettina Ng'weno, and Neelima Jeychandran (London: Routledge, 2020).

male interviewees generally framed marriage as a result of their success, they were in fact marrying into a more established Zanzibari family who would have had generations to build social, and often material, capital in the islands. Marriage to these women were not merely a *result* of male success, rather marrying well helped *assure* his economic success. In the case of Asha and Hasayu, when Hasayu first arrived he worked as a farm laborer, harvesting coconuts and cloves. He saved money from this job and gradually secured loans from other Arabs in the area, including Asha's family who had been in Pemba for two generations. Eventually, he and Asha got married and he was able to start buying his own trees. Given that a large part of his financial success hinged on getting loans from people in Pemba, being able to trade on Asha's family's connections would have been helpful, especially as Hasayu himself spoke only a little Swahili. Beyond lending her husband her family connections, Asha was quite literally his translator.

It is worth noting that within this one family, there are several examples of women traveling by dhow themselves, often with children in tow. Ahmed's grandmother came with a ten-year-old child; Fatma both migrated from Oman to Pemba and then later in life left her husband and took her children with her back to Oman by herself. Women as migrants on dhows in their own right are completely invisible from both the archival records and the scholarly literature. While men may have been the main travelers, I do not think that this family was particularly exceptional in this aspect. These are otherwise normal Pemban-Omani women. And yet, they are traveling by camel across the Omani desert and by weeks of the difficult and dangerous journey by dhow. They suffer through the ever-changing weather, the seasick vomit of themselves and the other passengers, and limited rations on

board, all while also taking care of their young children deal with the same. Fatma even found some way to pay for another woman's journey to come join her in Oman.

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the ways that oral interviews and family histories about coming to Zanzibar in the 19th century through the colonial period reveal a different set of concerns and priorities than what is centered in the archive. The colonial archive prioritizes not simply state control, but a struggle over that control on the part of the Arab Association. The impression it gives is that the details of colonial migration policy mattered. However, what actually mattered to the family and life histories of my informants were the conditions that they were leaving in Oman, the challenges of the journey itself, and the social networks within Zanzibar that made migration to the islands feasible. The jurisdiction of the colonial state was not only a non-issue in their memories, but given the numerous landing sites away from bureaucratic monitoring, the state had no meaningful ability to enforce their policies.

CHAPTER 2: THE MURDER OF AN ARAB FAMILY: A MICROHISTORY OF THE REVOLUTION IN RURAL ZANZIBAR, 1964

Mohammed Suleiman and his family enter the historical record at their deaths. They had lived in a rural village called Jumbi in the center of Unguja. During rainy season the deluge tinged off of the corrugated metal roofs of the houses and drenched the deep mud pathways. They lived in the midst of their small farm, the house whitewashed with a stripe painted around its base in the coastal style and a simple un-carved wood door. The back yard was host to coconut palms and banana plants, while the front baraza faced out onto a patchwork of mud and grass. A barbed wire fence enclosed the compound. At about midnight on May 11th, 1964, a group of men from the village, some of whom the victims had known for years, broke into their house and demanded money. After ransacking the house and stealing various items—a basket of dates, some clothes, whatever money the family had—they raped and killed the family with machetes. Of the nine people sleeping in the rural stillness that night, only three survived. The following morning, their neighbors discovered the attack and searched for help, recruiting the police and locating vehicles to carry the three severely wounded survivors to the hospital.

Mohammed Suleiman and his family did not leave much behind when they died. Their house rotted back into the land. It is now nearly indistinguishable from the forest surrounding where it used to stand. What small possessions they still had after the looting of the revolution were stolen the night they died. What they did leave behind, was a lengthy court document recording the attempt to make sense of their deaths and tracing a smattering of stolen objects that became the principal evidence in their murder trial. In this chapter, I use the legal testimonies from the trial as a window into a world now largely lost to us, that of the social and familial connections of a family of rural Arab Zanzibaris living,

and dying, in the midst of the Zanzibar Revolution of 1964. Ultimately, I argue that the perception of the revolution as a racial conflict between "African" and "Arab" is over simplified. Rather, I center the lived experience of the revolution in rural Zanzibar as a protracted period of vulnerability and uncertainty. Instead of taking place between racial groups, the revolution in this account took place between neighbors, as social connections represented by turns both desperately needed protection and conviviality, as well as deadly danger.

The Revolution is the most written about moment in Zanzibari history. The primary schism within this literature has focused on debates between three slightly overlapping categories of analysis: revolution as anti-colonial nationalist uprising,[115] as class struggle,[116] or as racial violence between African and Arab.[117] Of these, the lens of racial

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[115] Proponents of the nationalist lens: Anthony Clayton, *The Zanzibari Revolution and Its Aftermath* (London: Hurst & Company, 1981); Michael Lofchie, *Zanzibar: Background to Revolution* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1965); Jonathon Glassman, *War of Words, War of Stones: Racial Thought and Violence in Colonial Zanzibar* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2011); Don Petterson, *Revolution in Zanzibar: An American's Cold War Tale* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2002); Alison Purpura, "Knowledge and Agency: The Social Relations of Islamic Expertise in Zanzibar Town" (PhD Dissertation, City University of New York, 1997).

[116] Marxist analyses of the Revolution: Samuel Ayani, *A History of Zanzibar 1934-1964* (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1970); Abdulrahman Muhammed Babu, "The 1964 Revolution: Lumpen or Vanguard?," in *Zanzibar under Colonial Rule*, ed. Abdul Sheriff and Ed Ferguson (London: James Currey, 1991), 220–49; Mohammed Bakari, *The Democratisation Process in Zanzibar: A Retarded Transition* (Hamburg: Institut fur Afrika-Kunde, 2001); G. Thomas Burgess, *Race, Revolution, and the Struggle for Human Rights in Zanzibar: The Memoirs of Ali Sultan Issa and Seif Sharif Hamad* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2009); Gerard Pruner, "La Revolution de 1964," in *Zanzibar Aujourd'hui*, ed. Colette Le Cour Grandmaison and Ariel Crozon (Paris: Karthala, 1998), 95–112; Abdul Sheriff and Ed Ferguson, *Zanzibar under Colonial Rule* (London: James Currey, 1991); Amrit Wilson, *The Threat of Liberation: Imperialism and Revolution in Zanzibar* (London: Pluto Press, 2013); Haroub Othman, ed., *Babu: I Saw the Future and It Works: Essays Celebrating the Life of Comrade Abdulrahman Mohamed Babu, 1924-1996* (Dar es Salaam: E&D Ltd, 2001).

conflict has dominated within the analyses of both Western scholars and emic authors writing in East Africa or Oman. However, the story of this upper-middle class, mixed race family's murder does not easily fall into one mode of analysis or another. Rather, the answer here is that racial divides, class resentments, and conflicting nationalist sentiments were all among the mélange of variables that led to their deaths, as were their isolated location, the gendered nature of much of the violence, the coincidence of who in their village was and was not counted among their friends, their perceived prosperity, and their inability to leave the islands.

A somewhat tumorous outgrowth of the racial mode of analysis has in recent decades become popular among certain writers of Zanzibari descent. In this new model, the Revolution is reframed as a "coup" or "invasion," and its perpetrators are not only black Africans attacking Arabs but mainlanders arriving in the islands for the express purpose of casting out the native Arab populace. The coup model rejects both nuanced analyses of the

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[117] Racial analyses include: Deborah Amory, "The Politics of Identity in Zanzibar" (PhD Dissertation, Stanford University, 1994); Ariel Crozon, "Les Arabes a Zanzibar: Haine et Facination," in *Les Swahili Entre Afrique et Asie*, ed. Francoise Le Guennec-Coppens and Pat Caplan (Paris: Karthala, 1991), 179–94; Flint, J.E., "Zanzibar, 1890-1950," in *History of East Africa*, ed. Vincent Harlow and E.M. Chilver, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 641–71; Glassman, *War of Words, War of Stones*, 2011; Ali Kettani, "Muslim East Africa: An Overview," *Journal of the Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs* 4, no. 2 (1982): 104–19; T.L. Maliyamkono, *The Political Plight of Zanzibar* (Dar es Salaam: TEMA Publishers Co, 2000); Gavin Macarthur, "'Glittering Skin': Race, Rectitude, and Wrongdoing in Zanzibar," in *Social Memory, Silenced Voices, and Political Struggle: Remembering the Revolution in Zanzibar*, ed. William Cunningham Bissell and Marie-Aude Fouéré (Dar es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota Publishers Ltd, 2018), 223–50; David Parkin, "Black Banners and Islamic Consciousness in Zanzibar," in *Questions of Consciousness*, ed. Anthony Cohen and Nigel Rapport (London: Routledge, 1995); Petterson, *Revolution in Zanzibar*; Pruner, "La Revolution de 1964"; Purpura, "Knowledge and Agency"; Ibrahim Fokas Shao, *The Political Economy of Land Reform in Zanzibar* (Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press, 1992); George W. Triplett, "Zanzibar: The Politics of Revolutionary Inequality," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 9, no. 4 (December 1, 1971): 612–17.

history of racialization on the islands[118] and the connections between the lumpenproletariat and the upper classes assumed by Marxist analyses. The "African" revolutionaries become not simply a racial Other but a foreign racial Other with little to no history in the islands. To my informants within Jumbi, the identity of the attackers in this microhistory as Makonde was evidence of such an invasion. However, this actively ignores both the fact that these individuals had been resident within Zanzibar for years prior to the revolution and the presence of a large Makonde minority that continues to live and work within Jumbi today. The Makonde are one among many layers of immigrants *within* Zanzibar. While the "coup" model uses an intensification of the racial mode of analysis in order to work to discredit the Revolution, this chapter argues instead for an understanding of the Revolution as having occurred between individuals already embedded within the social fabric of Zanzibar.

As with any fabric, multiple overlapping threads were a part of the larger tapestry of social life in rural Zanzibar, and while race represented an important thread, it was one among many and not always necessarily the most salient identity when weighed against generation, class, economic success, place of origin, place of settlement, gender, and interpersonal ties. By cutting out the rest of the social context to focus exclusively on a binary racial division between "African" and "Arab," we risk adopting the rhetoric of the Revolution itself as historical fact. In fact, neither race was a unitary bloc. There were both important divisions within racial categories and considerable mixing across racial lines in both pre- and post-Revolutionary Zanzibar. The attack on Mohammed Suleiman's family occurred across racial and class divisions, but more importantly it occurred across social

[118] For example: Glassman, *War of Words, War of Stones*, 2011.

divisions in which alliances and exclusions alike had been formed through the day-to-day social exchanges of life in the village. The everyday social exchanges of Suleiman and others killed that night in 1964 were certainly influenced by the structures of race and class, but ultimately it was their micro- connections and exclusions that determined their fate.

Social Life of Things in a Revolution: Historical Methods

In the summer of 2018, I hired a villager in Jumbi to take me to the place where Mohammed Suleiman's house once was. It was a rather long walk through dense patches of forest, across the farming plots of other households in the outskirts of the village, and down muddy tracks. I was struck by the isolation of the family's home as we passed a house seemingly in the middle of nowhere and my guide told me that it had been the home of one of their relatives. I knew from the court documents I had read that the home was one of their nearest neighbors. When we finally arrived, there was very little to see. In the 54 years since the events of this chapter, the land had erased almost all signs that Mohammed Suleiman's family had ever lived there. Neighbors had repurposed what building materials were salvageable, and nature had crowded out many of the food crops that were once planted in the surrounding land, leaving only some of the trees.

I had spent a large part of the summer interviewing the villagers of Jumbi about their memories of the revolution and the attack on Mohammed Suleiman's family. Now it seemed that those memories and the court documents were all that remained. I was faced with a similar task to the one that challenged the original authors of those court documents: constructing a narrative of events based on the traces that were left in the wake of the family's deaths. To do this work, I used three major source bases to inform my arguments in this chapter. The first is the collection of documents on the Zanzibar

Revolution held by the British Red Cross, an archive that has not been utilized in previous studies of the revolution but which contain a wealth of useful documents.

My second body of sources is interviews I conducted in Zanzibar and Oman. In particular, I did a series of interviews with individuals in the village of Jumbi during the summer of 2019 on their memories of Mohammed Suleiman's family and of the revolution. I was particularly aided in these interviews by the lucky coincidence that my research assistant, Suleiman, lived in the village of Jumbi. Not only was I able to bring a known local around with me to make introductions, but I myself was somewhat known in the village prior to my asking a variety of personal questions about a painful period of my their lives, even if only as that American girl who works with Suleiman.

The last and most crucial source base is the court documents generated by the trial of the attackers in Jumbi. It is a rather unique court case. Among a sea of half-page rulings, this case generated nearly 200 pages of witness accounts and crime scene photos. Most of the violent encounters of the revolution went without investigations, arrests, or court documents of any kind. But for the purposes of using the case as a historical source, the exhaustive nature of this trial allows us to get a snapshot of this family's experience of the last several months of their lives.

The major focus of the court documents was tracking the movement of a small collection of objects that were stolen from the family's house. The provenance of these items was crucial to establishing the guilt of the defendants. The objects were rather mundane things such as a broken basket of dates and a small selection of clothes, but they would take on a new importance in the aftermath of the attack. Some of these items had cultural meanings within Zanzibar prior to that night in May 1964. For example, kangas

and date fruits are rife with political, social, and religious meanings, quite literally written on them in the case of kanga fabric. Beyond their cultural resonance, these everyday items transformed into evidence in a murder trial, and as evidence they developed a documentary trail within the historical record. Arjun Appadurai wrote in *Social Life of Things*, "even though from a theoretical point of view human actors encode things with significance, from a methodological point of view it is the things-in-motion that illuminate their human and social context."[119] As the court traced the movement of these things between members of the murdered family's larger social network and eventually into the hands of their attackers, they illuminated small portions of this family's interpersonal connections and the larger social context of these objects.

The focus of this chapter is not on the movement of these objects but rather on the social networks of Revolutionary Jumbi. However, one of the main ways that we are now able to access those social networks is through the court's testimony that tracked the items that had become physical evidence in the case. For example, testimony about the family's clothing leaves us clues about how the family tried to reassert a sense of normalcy while their world was turned upside down during their long detainment. Various fabric items that had belonged to the women of the family help tell the story of the revolution as a gendered set of violences and connections. A basket of dates stolen by the attackers was shared within a pre-existing social network of neighbors and relatives, illuminating the importance of these existing connections and exclusions.

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[119] Arjun Appadurai, "Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 5.

None of these snapshots pulled from the microhistory of the court case offer complete histories of the revolution and, while I have tried to impose some clarity here, in truth, their themes, actors, and events overlap. But this messiness is part of the point; the Revolution as it was experienced on the ground was not about easy binaries of race or class or politics. Rather, chaotic happenstance had real effects on peoples' lives as new vulnerabilities rubbed up against existing social systems. Despite the messiness of the murdered family's lived realities, this chapter is able to make the claims that it does largely because it is a microhistory of a single family's experience of the Revolution. The parts of the Revolution that were important to, for example, global cold war era politics were simply not the same elements that were important to a single family in rural Zanzibar struggling to survive. For instance, the political maneuverings in Stone Town that have dominated discussions of the months following the events of January 1964 simply do not feature in the story of Suleiman's final days as much as buying some dates to share with friends in celebration of his long-awaited release from detainment. These quotidian events matter, however, because they represent the ways that the vast majority of individuals experienced the Revolution.

The Rural Revolution

This narrative is firmly set in rural Unguja. This family was murdered *because* of their rural location—not only because the isolation of a rural farm gave their attackers the opportunity, but because small-village social networks and economic systems shaped the unstable cleavages of the Revolution in Jumbi and because of the structure of the detainment-violence cycle that shaped rural Unguja's experience of the later stages of the Revolution. The concerns, timelines, and experiences of the urban Revolution were not

those of the rural Revolution, nor were those of Unguja the same as those of Pemba. If one of the stated goals of this chapter is to introduce variables that complicated the bifurcated narrative of the Revolution as Arab vs. African, geography must surely be counted as a schism not only for how the Revolution was experienced but of whose experiences have been remembered and understood as important.

"Revolution Forever": A timeline of the rural Revolution

Roman Loimeier has divided the Revolution into three distinct phases that are useful in thinking through the timeline of the Revolution as it has generally been understood and how the narrative suggested by the court case at the center of this chapter diverges from that timeline. In brief, these phases are the initial coup in Stone Town, several days of mass violence and expulsions, and a few months of subsequent political power struggles.[120] This timeline is representative of the standard narratives of the Revolution. It can, for example, be mapped directly onto Clayton's chronology of a "seizure of power" and "the Terror" followed by an aftermath in which political leaders struggled for power.[121] But I argue here, it is more difficult to map this standard timeline onto the rural Revolution or to see its priorities reflected in the experiences of Mohammed Suleiman's family.

The first, and most widely discussed, phase occurred on January 11th-12th, 1964, arriving on the heels of a decade of political conflict known as the "zama za siasa" or "time of politics," the particularly contentious parliamentary elections of 1961 and '63, and

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[120] Roman Loimeier, "Memories of Revolution: Patterns of Interpretation of the 1964 Revolution in Zanzibar," in *Social Memory, Silenced Voices, and Political Struggle: Remembering the Revolution in Zanzibar*, ed. William Cunningham Bissell and Marie-Aude Fouéré (Dar es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota Publishers Ltd, 2018), 42.
[121] Clayton, *The Zanzibari Revolution and Its Aftermath*, 71–82.

Zanzibari independence from Britain. On the night of January 11th, a group of young men from the Ng'ambo area of Zanzibar Town stormed and eventually succeeded in taking over four police stations and the radio station at Raha Leo, which thereafter became the Revolution's headquarters, prompting the Sultan and his family to flee aboard the Sultanate's ship. By nightfall on January 12th, Abeid Karume, the leader of the Afro Shirazi Party (ASP), had been declared the new president, and various ASP and Umma Party leaders, such as Abdulla Kassim Hanga, Seif Bakari, and Abdulrahman Babu, had been appointed to their new positions. The initial coup was effectively over, but the Revolutionary violence that would eventually kill Mohammed Suleiman's family was just beginning.

The second phase of the Revolution was a period of mass violence. While in Town the Revolutionary Council was forming a government, an anarchic violence had taken root in the villages and developed a racial tone as the Revolution reinvented itself as an uprising of the "African" lumpenproletariat against an Arab/Indian/Comorian "elite." This chapter largely takes issue with the ways that the racialized script of the Revolution has been naturalized within scholarly writing about the Revolution, but it would be grossly misleading not to acknowledge race as a crucial schism of the revolution, and it is in this second phase that racial violence most clearly emerges.

Due to the chaotic nature of this wave of mass violence, it is difficult to give even basic information such as the approximate number of people who were killed. Estimates like Ali Kettani's suggestion that 70,000 people were killed[122] can be dismissed as

[122] Kettani, "Muslim East Africa," 112.

"apocalyptic fantasies," to use Glassman's turn of phrase,[123] but more conservative estimates still range widely from 3,000 to 8,000 deaths.[124] In addition to the deaths, the anarchic violence prompted a major emigration, particularly of Arabs and Indians, away from the islands such that the Arab population of Zanzibar was reduced by about a third.[125] But these numeric estimates of death and expulsion fail to capture the extent of the social upheaval and trauma caused by horrors such as bodies "buried five to an average-sized grave in some graveyards or pushed down well-holes."[126]

The period of anarchic violence lasted much longer in Pemba and in more rural areas of Unguja than it did in Town. Describing the second phase, Loimeier writes that it "went on for some days in Unguja and probably some weeks in Pemba."[127] This timeline is useful for understanding the political maneuverings in Town as the second phase leads logically to Okello's exile, which in turn precipitates the consolidation of the revolution into the rivalries of different factions of political insiders. However, this tidy timeline is far less useful for understanding the lingering vulnerability and violence experienced in both Pemba and the rural districts of Unguja.

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[123] Glassman, *War of Words, War of Stones*, 2011, 374.
[124] Clayton, *The Zanzibari Revolution and Its Aftermath*, 81; Marie-Aude Fouéré, "Film as Archive: Africa Addio and the Ambiguities of Remembrance in Contemporary Zanzibar," *Social Anthropology* 24, no. 1 (February 2016): 88, https://doi.org/10.1111/1469-8676.12282.
[125] G. Thomas Burgess, "Memories, Myths, and Meanings of the Zanzibari Revolution," in *War and Peace in Africa*, ed. Toyin Falola and Raphael Chijioke Njoku (Durham, N.C: Carolina Academic Press, 2010), 429.
[126] Clayton, *The Zanzibari Revolution and Its Aftermath*, 80.
[127] Loimeier, "Memories of Revolution," 42.

In Pemba, the Revolution is spoken about "as a total cosmic rupture: a cracking of both time and space" between *before* and *after*.[128] But the moment of that cracking was prolonged, extending from Unguja's coup in January over the course of the years until Karume's assassination in 1972.[129] The eight year stretch of violence between these dates was made up of the Days of Caning—a period of gruesome violence which lasted to the late 1960s designed to punish Pembans for not supporting the Revolution—and a series of literal witch hunts supposedly intended to root out those using occult powers to resist the new order but were in fact directed against "Arabs" and ZNP supporters.[130] For rural Unguja, the lingering violence was anarchic rather than state-sponsored as the Days of Caning were in Pemba. But revolutionary violence similarly persisted over the course of months and years. After the initial storm of violence passed, rural Unguja entered a holding pattern as detainments alternated with renewed sparks of violence and a vulnerable uncertainty about when it would be over held sway.

Mohammed Suleiman's family lived in such a rural area. The family was extended, multiracial, and multigenerational, consisting of the descendants of the elderly siblings, Mohammed and Jumila. In addition to family by blood and marriage, they were fostering a neighbor's son and hosting a fictive-kin "brother." Although the family was targeted for their racial status as "manga" Arabs, their perceived wealth, and their political support for the ZNP, the truth of their identity is more complicated. The family was multiracial through

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[128] Nathalie Arnold Koenings, "'For Us It's What Came after': Locating Pemba in Revolutionary Zanziabr," in *Social Memory, Silenced Voices, and Political Struggle: Remembering the Revolution in Zanzibar*, ed. William Cunningham Bissell and Marie-Aude Fouéré (Dar es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota, 2018), 163.
[129] Nathalie Arnold, "Wazee Wakijua Mambo!/Elders Used to Know Things!: Occult Powers and Revolutionary History in Pemba, Zanzibar" (PhD Dissertation, Indiana University, 2003), 322–23.
[130] Arnold, chap. 8.

intermarriage with non-Arab Africans. Their wealth was tied up in their farm and they did not have the liquid resources to flee the islands alongside many of the more prosperous Arab populace or even to act as a satisfying loot for their attackers' attempt to rob them. Their political involvement largely consisted of owning ZNP branded *kangas* (fabric). During the entire stretch of the timeline discussed so far, this family was in detainment. They were released one-by-one, the last of them being sent home in the aftermath of the Union with Tanganyika.

While Mohammed Suleiman's family was imprisoned and anarchic violence ruled in the rural areas, leaders in the urban center were entering what Loimeier terms the third phase of the Revolution—the period of political maneuvering that stretched from Okello's[131] ousting in February 1964 to the Union with Tanganyika on May 1st of the same year.[132] Beyond solidifying Karume's power as president above his political rivals, this political action in Town held international significance in Cold War global politics as it pushed Zanzibar leftwards towards nationalization of major industries and socialism.[133] Scholarship has largely looked to these political processes to find a coherent end date for the Revolution, ranging from Clayton's designation of the Terror as the second of two phases of the Revolution, largely over with Okello's downfall, to Loimeier citing the Union as the end of the third and final phase.[134] But that Union prompted Karume to release a large number of detainees, including Mohammed Suleiman and the last of his family

[131] John Okello was a Ugandan revolutionary who took a leadership position in the first two phases of the revolution and was then exiled by the new leaders of the Revolutionary government for his radical and violent approach.
[132] Loimeier, "Memories of Revolution," 48–53.
[133] Petterson, *Revolution in Zanzibar*.
[134] Clayton, *The Zanzibari Revolution and Its Aftermath*, 78–81; Loimeier, "Memories of Revolution," 51.

members still imprisoned. This return of people triggered a new wave of violence in the rural areas, one which killed Mohammed Suleiman's family only a week later. For rural areas, uncertainty and vulnerability lingered on.

In retelling the timeline of the revolution from the point of view of rural actors largely indifferent to the political maneuverings in Town or the Cold War implications thereof, an exact endpoint is more elusive. It is easy to look cynically on Karume's "Mapinduzi Daima" slogan ["Revolution Forever"], as it was a rather transparent attempt to translate the energy of the Revolution into lasting support of his regime. But to rural Zanzibaris the Revolution must have truly felt like it might continue forever, as perhaps as many as 20,000 more people disappeared over the course of Karume's reign.[135] The situation did gradually improve, and I am inclined to follow Nathalie Arnold Koening's lead in designating Karume's assassination in 1972 as the end of the Revolution,[136] although that too sparked another wave of detainments and violence. When I asked one of my research assistants when he thought the Revolution ended, he responded, "In truth, it is not yet over" and has made a point to message me on Whatsapp ever since whenever he has another recent example of state violence against Arabs, such as in November 2020 when one of my informants was arrested and beaten to death for supporting the opposition party in the recent election.

Detainment and the Rural Revolution

Mohammed Suleiman's family spent the first four months of the Revolution in detainment. At the time that Zanzibar and Tanganyika united to form Tanzania, May 1st, 1964, the Red Cross counted about 2,000 detainees in Zanzibar. As with all aspects of the

[135] Arnold, "Wazee Wakijua Mambo," 291.
[136] Arnold, 323.

Zanzibari Revolution, any numbers are disputed, and Al Barwani has claimed that closer to 26,000 people were imprisoned, although that number seems rather inflated.[137] In any case, about a thousand prisoners were released on that very day to not insignificant fanfare. The last of Mohammed's family to be released, including himself, were among those sent home that day. Karume's show of reconciliation, however, was rather overstated. For one, other prisoners continued to be held until 1967 and more people continued to be added to their number through a steady flow of arrests.[138] But also, the release of these prisoners triggered a new wave of rural violence, one that ultimately killed Mohammed and his family.[139] For the rural spaces of Unguja, the Revolution was a cyclical system of absences and violence as detainments disrupted the normal social networks of rural life and repeated waves of releases sparked renewed backlashes of violence.

Mohammed Suleiman's family was detained during the early days of the revolution. Initially, the whole family was taken to Raha Leo and then to the Aga Khan School. Eventually, the men and women were separated, with the men detained on Changuu Island, popularly known today as Prison Island, and the women at Smith Madrasa School. They were housed in a complex on Changuu that was built as a prison, but previously had only been used as a quarantine location for those with yellow fever. Many of the detained, including Mohammed Suleiman and his family, were arrested "for their own safety" under the guise of protecting Arab citizens from the prolonged rural violence. However, little to

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[137] Ali Muhsin Barwani, *Conflicts and Harmony in Zanzibar: Memoirs* (Dubai: Ali Muhsin Al Barwani, 1997), 35, 150.
[138] For more on arrests for imaginary conspiracies during Karume's administration, see: Anthony Clayton, *The Zanzibar, Revolution and Its Aftermath* (Hamden, Conn: Archon Books, 1981), 125–27.
[139] Janet Adams, who worked for the Red Cross in Zanzibar at the time, wrote to Anthony Clayton in 1977 on the subject of this May wave of violence: Clayton, *The Zanzibar, Revolution and Its Aftermath*, 125.

no effort was made to distinguish them from political prisoners who had been detained for a cause. It was not a foregone conclusion that the political struggle of the Revolution was over. Therefore, while the actual leaders of the ZNP were in detainment on the mainland until 1974,[140] the new Revolutionary state were not particularly interested in determining which Arabs were or were not a potential political dissident. The men of Mohammed Suleiman's family were thus imprisoned for several months longer than any of the women were, likely due to the gendered expectations of potential political action against the new power holders. But generally, appeals to release prisoners who even the state did not think constituted a legitimate threat to the revolutionary government had to be individually researched when they were heard at all. The effect of such disorganized mass detainment was that thousands of civilians were assumed to be political prisoners and treated accordingly until proven otherwise.

The main concern of the Red Cross, which did its best to provide for the basic needs of the prisoners, was not the living conditions of the detainees, which they reported to be "considering the conditions—not unsatisfactory," but rather that the "detainees are practically potential hostages who might be the first victims of a second revolution."[141] Despite this somewhat confounding and contradictory statement by the Red Cross, detainment represented a major disruption in the lives of those detained and the conditions were far from satisfactory. Mohammed Suleiman was one of many who fell ill while in Changuu Island camp, where conditions were worsened by severe heat as well as

[140] Naheed Akram, "Forty Years Later, Memoirs of a Zanzibari Nationalist," *Gulf News*, January 16, 2004.
[141] Red Cross, "Zanzibar Disturbances Volume 1 Part 3," 1964, 16, RCC.1.12.4.190, Archive of the British Red Cross.

lack of access to food and potable water.[142] Although detainments were less common in Pemba, Nathalie Arnold Koenings's informants there described even worse conditions—being buried up to their necks while their heads were beaten and *askari* rubbing salt and chili pepper in their wounds.[143] Meanwhile, the detainees' uninhabited homes were looted, and in many cases their land was confiscated by the state.

The detainment of thousands of civilians was broadly disruptive of daily life even for those whose families were not directly attacked or imprisoned. Schools were major sites of detainment, particularly in the first few months of the revolution. Nasra and Sheikha, Mohammed Suleiman's niece by marriage and third wife respectively, were detained at Smith Madrasa School. As February drew towards a close and thousands remained in detainment at various schools and prisons, concerns about how and where to move the detainees mounted. A Red Cross field officer, Janet Adams, along with three volunteers sent to assist her were tasked with aiding more than 2,500 detainees.[144] Adams wrote in a letter on the 19th of February:

> The government [is] very anxious to move them. I also [am] very anxious too (on Red Cross grounds). So far 146 have left but no ship for any more is yet available till middle/end [of] March—also Government whose responsibility this is, are very worried about cost even if ship available. Many of the men are detained in schools scheduled [to] open 3rd March. Therefore where to move them to. Also by April rains will start and maybe life more difficult.[145]

That same day Adams oversaw moving 600 women and children from detainment in a school to an immensely overcrowded house because the school that they had been in

[142] Clayton, *The Zanzibar, Revolution and Its Aftermath*, 80.
[143] Koenings, "For Us It's What Came After," 165.
[144] Red Cross, "Zanzibar Disturbances V1.3," 13.
[145] Red Cross, 3.

needed to be reopened for classes on February 24th. And yet by the 20th of April, the Red Cross estimated that there were still 1,980 Zanzibaris detained.[146]

Moreover, individuals who had previously performed important functions socially died for months or even years while they were detained. For example, the Ministry of Health wrote repeatedly to ask for the release of a driver named Taki Kassu who had been responsible for "transport[ing] medical supplies and rations etc. to all hospitals, dispensaries and clinics in Zanzibar."[147] Meanwhile, the financial burden of caring for the dependent family members of the detained fell on friends and neighbors. For those whose friends and neighbors included those with some power to turn the wheels of bureaucracy, this financial burden could occasionally be used as grounds to argue for the release of prisoners. The regional commissioner of Pemba's secretary, Sheikh Khamis Mohamed Rajaby, for instance was an influential friend to have as he successfully argued for the release of three men on the grounds that caring for their families was too burdensome.[148] For those who did not have the ear of a regional commissioner, however, this was not an option. Certainly, the relatives and neighbors who housed various members of Mohammed Suleiman's family as they were released one-by-one over the course of the first few months of 1964 had no recourse to argue for his release.

For the families of the detained, detention was hugely destructive. Among the archival documents saved by the Commissioner of Prisons are quite a few letters that made financial pleas for the release of their loved ones. For example Bibi Nuru binti Hamadi

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[146] Red Cross, "Zanzibar Disturbances Volume 1 Part 4," 1964, 15, RCC.1.12.4.190, Archive of the British Red Cross.
[147] W.G. Jones-Hughes, "Ministry of Health to Regional Commissioner," March 1964, AK17/20, Zanzibar National Archives.
[148] "Regional Commissioner, Pemba to Regional Commissioner, Urban," March 28, 1964, AK17/20, Zanzibar National Archives.

appealed for her son's freedom on the basis that he had fifteen dependents, including his wife, his mother, and his thirteen children, who were "hard up at present as family remittance is not forthcoming" and he had been the primary bread-earner prior to his three month imprisonment.[149] Bibi Nuru's grandchildren faced a similar state as another inmate's very young children, Hamed Sinan's, on whose behalf his twelve year old son contacted Commissioner Lemki to plea that his younger siblings "are faced with starvation if not death itself" if his father were not released.[150] Other letters request special permission to discuss family finances, such as one in which an eleven year old asks to visit his father to discuss school fees.[151]

While the emotive effects of detainment on the families of the detained are not as well recorded in the archival documents, the unnamed wife, whose state as she appealed for her husband's release was described as "a state of great anxiety as she has not seen her husband for a long time," would certainly not have been unique in her distress.[152] The worry of these families can be glimpsed in the archival documents in their requests to bring food from home to their detained relations, the refusal of which were believed by the prison medical commissioner to have caused an outbreak of digestive disease in July of 1964.[153] Reflecting on the effect of detainment on families, Ali Sultan Issa stated in 2009 that flogging dissenters "was better than sending them to prison, because if you send a

[149] S.H. Mauly District Agricultural Officer Pemba, writing on behalf of Bibi Nuru binti Hamadi, "Re: Abdulla Omar," April 1964, AK17/20, Zanzibar National Archives.
[150] AMS Lemki, "Re: Hamed Sinan," July 23, 1964, AK17/20, Zanzibar National Archives.
[151] AMS Lemki and writing on behalf of Mundhir Salim, "To the Commissioner of Prisons," June 5, 1964, AK17/20, Zanzibar National Archives.
[152] AMS Lemki, "Re: Husein Bachoo," July 24, 1964, AK17/20, Zanzibar National Archives.
[153] Regional Commissioner, "To Askari Mlinzi Wa Jela," July 9, 1964, AK17/20, Zanzibar National Archives; S.M. Bingurnah, Medical Officer I/C Prison, "To the Commissioner of Prison," July 17, 1964, AK17/20, Zanzibar National Archives.

bread earner to prison, you ruin the whole family. When he is gone, the family invariably disintegrates. When the man is 'inside,' people can do anything to his family, like rape his wife and plunder his goods."[154]

In the face of such destruction and vulnerability, however, we can see traces of Mohammed Suleiman's family fighting for the mutual support of their family structure and social networks, for a sense of normalcy, in the court testimonies. When Mohammed fell sick, his nephews tended to him, cleaning his *kofia* cap for him that he continued to where in detainment, a longstanding symbol of respectable Muslim masculinity on the coast. As Ramadhan fell in February that year, a month after the Revolution had first broken out, the typical rituals of visiting with family and friends would have been out of reach for the detainees and disrupted past recognition for pretty much everyone. However, we can recognize a searching for normalcy and perhaps piety in the actions of a woman named Tatu who donated a box of clothing to the detainees in honor of the holiday of charitable giving, including a dress that ended up with Nasra.

Sheikha, imprisoned alongside Nasra at Smith Madrasa School, also received a donated dress for Ramadan, which she altered into a skirt while imprisoned, perhaps reasserting a sense of normalcy or respectable clothing for herself or simply looking for something to do while detained. As a court witness, Nasra later said in defense of her ability to identify the polka dotted skirt, which became evidence of Sheikha's murder, that they "met daily and were together daily."[155] Because the concern of the court was establishing Sheikha's ownership of the skirt, we do not get much reflection from Nasra on their time

[154] Burgess, *Race, Revolution, and the Struggle for Human Rights in Zanzibar*, 2009, 91; see also Koenings, "For Us It's What Came After," 165.
[155] Resident Magistrate Court, "Sessions Case No. 13 of 1964," June 1964, 61, AK16/76, Zanzibar National Archives.

together at Smith Madrasa School. But we can infer two sources of support that Sheikha could draw on in detainment. The first is the charitable gifts of clothing that were sent in aid of the detainees. The second is the companionship of Nasra herself. As family members were released, they sought refuge with neighbors and relatives who had long been part of their pre-Revolution social network.

Although it is not the focus here, it is worth considering the role of race in detainment. Despite the continuing importance of the social ties of proximity within Jumbi, ties formed through long evenings chatting over coffee and dates on the *baraza, d*etainment acted in rural Zanzibar as a marker of racial Otherness that cut through such relationships. Not all Arabs were detained, certainly. But for those sent like Mohammed to Changuu, their social deaths as functioning members of Unguja's rural life marked them as Other when they returned upon their release, potentially vulnerable to the violence that each wave of release from detainment triggered in the rural areas who abruptly received these revived newly-coded Others back into their midst. The absences of detainment contribute to ongoing, fluid Revolutionary reimaginings of rural Unguja along racial lines. They also entrenched another cleavage: gender. Nasra and Sheikha were, like most women detained during the Revolution, released relatively quickly compared to the men in their family. While detainment morphed over the course of months into a male pattern of Revolutionary alienation, women were subjected to a gendered violence as they re-entered society without the benefit of male family members and seeking to mend recently fractured relationship networks changed by their time in detention.

Sexual violence and the Revolution

Gendered violence was central to how women experienced the Revolution. It is widely known that rape was a weapon of the Revolution.[156] And yet, depictions of Revolutionary violence from the secondary literature are too often strangely genderless, merely listing rapes as one of many violent actions if it is mentioned at all. But for women, rape as well as targeted, sexualized violence against women as a social category was a crucial, if not the crucial, aspect of the Revolution. This section follows Mwanakheri Alawy, who was raped and then killed during the attack in Jumbi along with most of the other women in her family. Mwanakheri was not an Arab by blood, but rather the daughter of a black African family also from Jumbi. Her little sister, Zena Alawy, continues to live in the village, on the main road through town and next to where the sisters' birth family kept a shop that sold sugar and other everyday essentials. When Mwanakheri married Seif Salami in her early 20s, it was both of their second marriage. Mwanakheri had been divorced not long before, and Seif Salami's first wife, Nasra Seif, was Mwanakheri's co-wife. Seif Salami was Mohammed Suleiman's nephew. As her sister describes her, Mwanakheri was committed to integrating herself into her husband's Arab family during the years between their marriage and the Revolution, going so far as to work as a secretary for the ZNP. Mwanakheri was about twenty-four when she was killed.[157]

Post-Revolution marriage laws sought to reverse the demographic norms that Mwanakheri exemplified in her marriage to Seif Salami. Marriage across ethnic boundaries was, and remains, extremely common. For instance, an analysis of birth certificates in the

[156] For a discussion of rape in war more generally, see: Claudia Card, "Rape as a Weapon of War," *Hypatia* 11, no. 4 (1996): 5–18.
[157] Many of the details in this paragraph are from: Zena Alawy, Interview with author, June 26, 2019.

decade preceding the Revolution showed that some 39% of "Hadimu tribe" children born in Unguja had a parent from a different ethnic group.[158] However, intermixing does not imply mixing freely, and status distinctions held sway over marriage patterns. The Islamic legal doctrine *kafā'a* safeguards Muslim women from marriage beneath their father's position in the socioeconomic hierarchy but does not apply when a Muslim groom wishes to marry down.[159] Accordingly, Arab woman rarely married non-Arab men, and indeed there are stories of last-minute halts to a wedding due to the "unsuitability" of the groom due to him being *khādim* (descended from servants/slaves)[160] or *bayāsirah* (a low-class Omani tribe).[161] However, marriages between Arab men and African women were not only common but expected. A standard Omani text on Omani migration history to East Africa, describes Arab-Omanis intermixing with Arabs saying, "And they married from among them. So some of their women became the mothers of noble Arabs."[162] This was very much the normal marriage pattern of pre-Revolutionary Zanzibar, and Mwanakheri's marriage to Seif Salami falls easily into this model.

One of the earliest laws that the Revolutionary Government put into effect was the 1964 Equality, Reconciliation of Zanzibar Peoples Decree.[163] This law put advocated for

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[158] Abdul Sheriff, "Race and Class in the Politics of Zanzibar," *Africa Spectrum* 36, no. 3 (2001): 307.
[159] McDow, *Buying Time*, 2018, 114.
[160] This failed wedding occurred in Oman between an Arab bride and a khadim groom: Limbert, *In the Time of Oil*, chap. 6.
[161] This failed wedding occurred in Tabora between an Baysari man and an Arab woman: McDow, *Buying Time*, 2018, 114–15.
[162] Sa'id bin Ali al-Mughayri, *Juhaynat Al-Akhbār Fi Tārikh Zinjibār* (Muscat: Ministry of National Heritage and Culture, 1979); Translation from Arabic found in: Limbert, *In the Time of Oil*, 145.
[163] Salma Maoulidi, "Between Law and Culture: Contemplating Rights for Women in Zanzibar," in *Gender and Culture at the Limit of Rights*, ed. Dorothy Hodgson (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 44.

racial integration by way of forced, non-consensual marriage. Specifically, this decree did away with the necessity of a parent's or guardian's consent for a marriage to take place, and in the process, it upset the *kafā'a* system of marriage regulation. On the surface, it seemed fall in line with general disintegration of the social role of the elderly in favor of giving power to the youth, a pattern that can be seen in many aspects of Revolutionary decision making.[164] However, in putting the decree into practice, it went considerably beyond freeing young people from inherited marriage taboos against low-class or racially "Other" grooms. In fact the most widespread use of the Decree facilitated the forcible marriage by the new Revolutionary elite to women, particularly young women, who would have previously been unavailable to them, not only Arab women but also Indian and wealthier Shirazi women.[165] This decree unleashed forced marriages as a key tool of the Revolution's goals of upending Zanzibar's racial hierarchy.

The most prominent example of forced marriages is that of President Karume, who married four young wives in the aftermath of the Revolution.[166] Karume's justification for forced marriages was allegedly, "In the colonial times the Arabs took African concubines without bothering to marry them. Now that we are in power the shoe is on the other foot. We have the rifles."[167] *Drum* magazine in 1971 reported a dramatic example of four teenagers ranging in age from 14 to 20 who were in their homes "when armed soldiers

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[164] For more on the Revolution as anti-elder: Arnold, "Wazee Wakijua Mambo."
[165] Maoulidi, "Between Law and Culture: Contemplating Rights for Women in Zanzibar," 45.
[166] I have not been able to find confirmation of this elsewhere, but Maoulidi uses his marriages as an example of the practice: Maoulidi, n. 19.
[167] Annie Smyth and Adam Seftel, *Tanzania: The Story of Julius Nyerere from the Pages of Drum* (Kampala, Uganda: Fountain, 1998), 217; Also quoted in: Fatma Jiddawi Napoli and Mohamed Ahmed Saleh, "The Role of Sexual Violence against Zanzibari Women in the Human Rights Conflict with Tanzania over Sovereignty," in *Resisting Racism and Xenophobia: Global Perspectives on Race, Gender, and Human Rights*, ed. Faye V. Harrison (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2005), 166.

stormed in and asked the girls to accompany them on a 'special' mission." The girls and their families argued but they were escorted to meet with a Kadi, who opened the wedding ceremony saying that "our performance today should open a new era in the history of our country." The girls, realizing that they were to be married, "became hysterical and bathed in streams of tears, and together with their parents and relatives screamed in chorus: 'No, no, no, no, How can it happen?' But the matrimonial blessing was made. The girls became the official wives of four tough and forceful men about 30 years their senior." The article goes on to report that the girls' fathers were "sentenced to one year's imprisonment and 24 strokes for contravening the island's marriage code."[168]

Anything like a numerical count of forced marriages during the Revolution are as impossible to come across as accurate numbers for just about anything else related to the Revolution, but it was certainly perceived as a common threat. In order to avoid this threat, some parents took extreme efforts. Salma Maoulidi, in her feminist legal history of Zanzibar, points to "many girls who were still in school [who] were hurriedly (and ironically forcibly) married off by their parents to protect them from undesirable suitors."[169] In particular, marrying one's daughter to a man living on the Mainland was desirable as it moved her further away from danger and offered a potential escape route for the rest of the family to follow her should the situation degrade still further in the islands. And so in 1969, the Revolutionary Government imposed strict fines on this strategy, under the guise of "repaying" the state for the woman's medical and educational expenses, and often imprisoned her family.[170] Forced marriage was both a reversal of racial

[168] Smyth and Seftel, *Tanzania: The Story of Julius Nyerere from the Pages of Drum*.
[169] Maoulidi, "Between Law and Culture: Contemplating Rights for Women in Zanzibar," 45.
[170] Clayton, *The Zanzibari Revolution and Its Aftermath*, 121.

hierarchies acted out on women's bodies and an even more widespread way to spread fear and the sense of vulnerability which pervaded society. As Mwanakheri's sister said, when she was trying to explain why most cases like her sister's went unpunished, "At that time, everyone was worried. But my father trusted to Allah."[171]

Thus far, this section's analysis about sexual violence has very much equated it with racial violence. However, talking about race is fundamentally talking about power, which manifests in different ways in different moments. In some moments, such as many of those surrounding forced marriage and especially the laws that facilitated forced marriage, race was very salient in the decision-making processes. But exclusively focusing on race would undercut the importance of class, proximity, gender, and wealth. Men like the villagers who raped and killed Mwanakheri and the other women of her family, for example, would likely have had little ability to seize the opportunity to forcibly marry anyone. Certainly, they would not have had the same access to Arab women to which the Revolutionary leaders in the *Drum* story availed themselves. Moreover, Mwanakheri's story demonstrates the extent to which women, *as a category*, were a target of Revolutionary violence, beyond their status as the object of racial policy.

Mwanakheri was not raped as part of a forced marriage or due to having been an ethnicity off limits to non-Arab men, which she was not. Rather, she was attacked because she was present in the house, the added indignity of rape because she was a woman vulnerable to such a sexual attack. The men attacking took sexual access to the women of the household simultaneously to looting what objects in the house they thought worth stealing. One of them dragged one of the other women of the household, Nasra, from the

[171] Zena Alawy, Interview with author.

hall where she was hiding back into the bedroom where the women had been sleeping earlier in the night and raped her three times, searching for nonexistent valuables in between. The other three men each raped one of the other three young women—Sheikha, Mwanakheri, and Mohammed's second wife, Aisha. They then herded all five of the women and one child into the bedroom in order to kill them with machetes. Mwanakheri died first.

I don't read much into the witness testimony that Mwanakheri was killed first before the men started to hack at the others indiscriminately. That night was chaos, and the survivors barely agree on what happened at any given time. But Mwanakheri's sister, Zena, does see her as having been a particular target. I asked her about why her sister's family was attacked, expecting any number of answers from the apolitical description of a robbery gone wrong, to revenge for old resentments against a family that was previously comparatively wealthy, to it having been a racial hate crime, but she responded by describing Mwanakheri's political activism. Zena told me that Mwanakheri was a supporter of the ZNP as a way to adopt her husband's family's Arab ethnicity: "Our family are not Arabs. But because my sister was living with Arabs—Seif Salam, Mohammed Suleiman—so she involved herself in politics. And this is the reason she was killed."[172] For Mwanakheri, involvement in party politics was perhaps a way of expressing political thought but also of solidifying her allegiance to her husband's family, a sociopolitical identity that was not only silenced by the Revolution but violently punished.

Zena went on to recount an event that occurred sometime early in the months between when Mwanakheri was released and when her husband Seif Salami was released in early May. A group of Makonde men (the same ethnicity as Mwanakheri's eventual

[172] Zena Alawy, translation by author.

attackers, but Zena wasn't sure if it was the same men or not) came to Zena's house demanding to know where her sister was. She told them that she was far away at their mother's house. This was a lie, as at that time Mwanakheri lived with their father in Jumbi. Her point in telling me this was that Mwanakheri was deliberately targeted for her politics. The Revolutionary Government imagined itself as in support of women's civic involvement, such as by enrolling them in the National Military Service and declared women citizens through the Citizen and Residents Decree of 1966.[173] But both Sheikha's and Mwanakheri's *actual* civic involvement was not palatable and perhaps even made them a target as Sheikha had to hide her ZNP kanga and Mwanakheri hid in her father's house. Beyond simply the explanation that Sheikha and Mwanakheri were supporting the losing side of the Revolution, there is a real irony that the Revolutionary Government would see itself as promoting women's rights while simultaneously perpetrating forced marriages, criminalizing many ZNP women's political beliefs, and benefiting an anarchic violence that targeted women as a category.

Nasra was the only survivor in the women's bedroom. The men in the second bedroom, who were targeted next, fared slightly better with two out of the three of them surviving the night. Without intending any dismissal of the horror that the men of the family experienced that night, there is a certain intensification of violence that was inflicted on the women, from the greater proportion of fatalities to the time spent sexually violating them while their husbands were hiding in the second bedroom. Examples of the mass rape of women as a weapon of choice for fomenting chaos and collapsing old structures of

[173] Maoulidi, "Between Law and Culture: Contemplating Rights for Women in Zanzibar," 47.

society abound.[174] In one of my interviews in Jumbi, an informant who asked to remain anonymous witnessed an Arab woman being raped on the side of the road during the Revolution. He climbed a tree to avoid being caught and potentially attacked himself. [175] Rape was at times a racial weapon, as non-Arab men seized sexual access to previously off-limits Arab women. But it was also a weapon of anarchy directed against women as a category, opportunistically as the systems of protection and propriety broke down.

Social (dis)connections

A network of dates

One of the key pieces of evidence in the murder trial was a basket of dates with a broken handle that was stolen by the attackers. Scant days after Mohammed Suleiman was released from detainment, he traveled by the *daladala* minibus for about an hour on what was then a dirt road from the village of Jumbi to the main market at Darajani to buy dates. Based on timing, this would have been one of Mohammed's first actions after being freed from Prison Island. Dates are objects of cultural significance in the Islamic world and in Zanzibar are often associated with connections to Oman. They are also social objects to be shared with friends and family. Date sharing reinforced a social network both within Zanzibar and stretching outwards to Oman.

In both Zanzibar and Oman dates were and still are an exceptionally social object. A visit to any home will prompt the host to offer his guest dates and little cups of coffee. During Ramadhan, the fast is first broken in the evening with dates before the full meal, as it is in the rest of the Muslim world. Similar to other nations of the Arabian Peninsula, it is

[174] See for example: Card, "Rape as a Weapon of War"; Helen Moffett, "'These Women, They Force Us to Rape Them': Rape as Narrative of Social Control in Post-Apartheid South Africa," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 32, no. 1 (2006): 129–44.
[175] Anonymous, Interview with author in Jumbi, May 22, 2019.

hard to overstate the extent to which the date palm and its economic and cultural significance have been embraced as a core aspect of Omani identity. There are exhibits at major museums in Oman dedicated to dates and their 6,000-year history in the country.[176] Omani halwa, a gooey dessert made of dates and spices, is to Oman as apple pie is to America. While dates make an appearance in many Omani dishes, halwa in particular has traveled to Zanzibar, and indeed the rest of the East African coast. Dates do not grow in East Africa, and yet, for religious and cultural reasons this fruit holds a similar importance in Zanzibar as it does in Oman.

Dates are an important object within Islamic culture in general and are exported from the Arabian Peninsula to the rest of the Muslim world, but within Zanzibar the fruit is particularly evocative of connections to Oman because of the ways that dates travel through families. Typically, family members in Oman will tend date palms on a farm that is owned either collectively or by a wealthier relative and then when the fruit are harvested, they are sent out to the rest of the family. Omani relatives bring their Zanzibari family giant bags of dates when they visit, both as gifts and because Zanzibari family members own shares in the farm. While many of my interviews began with eating dates with my interlocutors, one interview in Unguja with a man in who introduced himself as Mr. Suleiman ended with him sending me home with a bag of dates "fresh from Oman" that his relatives had recently brought to him. I had asked if he associated dates with Oman or not, and he responded, "Of course. They come from our family in Oman. They give me my part." He went on to explain that his family had 32 different types of date trees on their land in Oman, and teased me for glossing them all as simply dates, saying, "You just see dates, but

[176] Zaid A. and Arias-Jiménez E.J., *Date Palm Cultivation* (Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2002).

what dates?"[177] Many individuals who don't have direct family-based sources of dates, still get their dates through an indirect connection to Oman. For example, the Omani based charitable organization Istiqamah gives away bags of Omani dates in Zanzibar and Tanzania throughout Ramadhan.[178] Or on a more interpersonal level, people with family date connections distribute them to friends and connections within Zanzibar, as happened to me when I was sent home from that interview with a bag.

Mohammed Suleiman, however, did not get his dates from interpersonal connections. He had just been resurrected from the social death of detainment at Prison Island, his home had been looted, and what social ties to Oman he may or may not have maintained prior to the Revolution were far away and unable to help him or his family. In decades to come the upheaval of the Revolution would prompt many Zanzibari Arabs to rekindle connections to distant relatives in the Arabian Peninsula, including several of Mohammed Suleiman's own surviving relatives.[179] But in the immediacy of the rural Revolution, safety depended on leveraging *local* social connections against isolation. A man who I interviewed in Wete, Pemba, for instance, told me that his family was okay during the Revolution because they were well respected by their neighbors.[180] Mohammed Suleiman's family also had friends amongst their neighbors, but they were very isolated. On the night of the attack, it rained heavily all night in Jumbi—a pounding monsoon rain that would have clattered against the metal roof, turned the pathways into little rivers, and muffled sounds from carrying. The secluded house was almost a ten-minute walk from the family's

[177] Mr. Suleiman, Interview with author, May 28, 2017.
[178] Sabrina Najib, Conversation with author, June 20, 2019.
[179] See chapter 4 for discussion of contemporary transnationalism
[180] Mapate, Interview with author, October 29, 2017.

nearest neighbor, and the lush forest around them, which had once been a source of prosperity, now provided ample sound barrier.

The social connections that this family did enjoy, especially between the men of the village, were reinforced through the social act of sharing dates. About a week before Mohammed was murdered he went with a friend to a date shop in Mlandege, about a twelve-minute walk from Darajani Market, owned by a mutual acquaintance. There they bought a basket full of white *Makorome* dates. As they were getting off of the *daladala* minibus upon their return to Jumbi, the handle on the basket broke. Mohammed's nephew, Seif Salami, happened to be nearby at the time and offered to carry the broken basket of dates home for his uncle, but Mohammed insisted that he could do so himself. During the week that followed the family and their various visitors ate dates out of this basket often enough that when police recovered the basket from the possession of the attackers, Mohammed Suleiman's friends were able to identify that it was the same one that he had purchased.

The night of the murders did not begin when the family was awakened to the sound of their front door being hacked at with axes and machetes. Hours earlier, the men had sat outside sharing dates. Mohammed Suleiman often shared dates and conversation with his friends sitting on the covered baraza in front of his home. That evening Mohammed Suleiman, his niece Nasra, her husband Seif Salami, and two family friends, Mohammed Mahruni and Suleiman Issa, sat together eating dates. Suleiman Issa later identified the basket of dates in court. He was a shopkeeper in Jumbi who had worked for Mohammed as a driver for three years. Both he and his wife testified as witnesses during the trial. There were family connections by marriage between these neighbors. Additionally, Suleiman

Issa's young nephew, Wahid Muhain, was being fostered by Mohammed Suleiman and was killed along with the rest of the family. Suleiman Issa recounted in his testimony that he visited Mohammed Suleiman's house in Jumbi daily and always ate dates with him. Suleiman Issa left his friend's house just before sundown after having visited with him for almost seven hours during the day. Later, as the rest of the family went to bed, Nasra and Seif Salami sat up late into the evening with their other family friend who was there that night, Mohammed Mahruni. Eventually, they too went to bed, bolting both the exterior and an interior hallway doors. Mohammed Mahruni ended up staying the night, sleeping in Seif Salami's bedroom.

The connections forged over dates on the baraza transcended even party lines. The morning after the attack, the survivors rallied themselves to get help. Nasra dragged herself to the nearest house that she trusted, that of her co-wife's uncle, who raised the alarm in the village and searched for some sort of transportation to get the survivors to a hospital. Among the earliest people to arrive at the scene was Ali Khamis, the local chairman of the revolutionary Afro-Shirazi Youth League. He had been close to the family, having a personal history of sharing dates when he "used to visit them at their house before they were taken in detention during [the] Revolution" and was able to identify several of the objects that had belonged to Mohammed Suleiman during the trial.[181] Although his testimony is that he "used to visit," it is clear in his rushing to their house in the aftermath of the attack that this association had not actually ended. While such a close personal connection between a family that had openly supported the previous government and a leading member of the revolutionary party seems odd, Jumbi was a small village, and the affective ties engendered

[181] Resident Magistrate Court, "Sessions Case 13," 46.

by proximity and intra-village personal networks had real meaning. Ties reinforced by long hours conversing over dates constituted a social network not only of inclusions but of exclusions as well.

The excluded neighbors

The social network that we can see in their neighbors' testimony about date sharing was not enough to protect this family, but its exclusions helped to condemn them. Exclusions in Jumbi, as in any social network, operated along numerous axes—gender, race, "tribe," religion, class, geography, and the bonds of friendship formed over long evenings on the *baraza*. The Revolution and its discourses reified the narrative of racial exclusion at the expense of giving credence to all other social cleavages. And yet, this chapter has endeavored to draw attention to some of the fractures in this narrative, the moments when race has been less salient than other aspects of individual's personal identities and social networks. If I had started from the fact that this attack was by Makonde against a family of Arabs, the event itself might have seemed more simple to explain as an aftershock of a racially motivated Revolution, but it would have been much more difficult to see the roles of friendship or gender, for example. The narrative of racial violence is too simple, and its simplicity is precisely why it is appealing. However, it is also an erasure.

So let's consider the separations between the attackers that night and their victims, as well as how that distance has been understood as racial. But let's start not with that racial divide but with their social relationship as neighbors. The family's attackers were not faceless strangers but rather people they had known for years, neighbors who had occupied marginal spaces within the pre-existing social network of Jumbi. Seif Salami,

testifying at the trial, recalled listening to the man out in the hall demand money from his family members. He had recognized the intruder's voice. It was Helatano Msuwaki, who used to own a coffee shop that he frequented and who lived only a quarter mile away. He had known Helatano for nearly two years. Mohammed Mahruni, hiding with Seif, also recognized Helatano immediately as he had known him for even longer, about five or six years. When the attackers entered their room, Seif and Mohammed recognized the second man, Nawesi Mawili, as well as he too lived in the village.

As a point of comparison, within the historiography on the Rwandan genocide, there has been much contemplation of the fact that during the conflict, neighbors killed each other.[182] Yet amongst the numerous pages of attention spent on the Zanzibari Revolution, there has not been a similar grappling. Rather, the focus has been on the divisions, the seemingly gaping chasm between the revolutionaries ("African") and the overthrown ("Arab"). But in narrowing the scope to a microhistory of this single court case, it becomes far more difficult to ignore that this attack was a violence that occurred between individuals who shared the intimate space of a small rural village. The separations between Helatano and Nawesi versus the family that they killed were numerous and variable, but they are divisions *within* a social field. Writing about the problem of Mau Mau for the "imagined community" of Kenya, John Lonsdale argued that belonging, within a "tribe" or a nation alike, is not "unthinking conformity" but rather "the arena for the sharpest social

[182] Lee Ann Fujii, *Killing Neighbors: Webs of Violence in Rwanda* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009); Jean-Paul Kimonyo, *Rwanda's Popular Genocide: A Perfect Storm*, trans. Wandia Njoya (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2016); Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda*, First Paperback Printing edition (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001).

and political division."[183] Much the same can be said of the social and political divisions of the Zanzibari Revolution. Helatano and Nawesi were of the Makonde "tribe," Tanganyikan mainlanders, impoverished laborers—all points of separation from the landholding Arabs that they killed. They were not people with whom Mohammed Suleiman or his friends had ever shared dates on the *baraza*. These divisions, this exclusion, were all the sharper because of their shared social arena as Zanzibaris and as residents of Jumbi.

The revolution was, among other things, a struggle between members of a shared community over the meanings of existing social exclusions. That struggle went far beyond a simple division of "Arab" and "African" or between ZNP and ASP because the social exclusions of pre-Revolution Zanzibar were more multifaceted. For Ali Khamis, the ASP Youth League chairman, the social bond forged over dates and conversation on the *baraza* trumped party politics. For Mwanakheri, the non-Arab who married into this family, the loyalty of matrimony outweighed racial divisions. Roman Loimeier has called Zanzibar's historical memory of violence "an ideological script that increasingly interpreted the Revolution in racialist terms."[184] While this interpretation of the Revolution has solidified within Zanzibari memory along racial lines, these ambiguities have been set aside, diminished by the enormity that is Zanzibari racial discourse.

When it comes to the racial discourse surrounding the historical memory of the Revolution, much hinges on constructing certain elements of society as "foreign." For pro-Revolutionaries, it was the Arab presence that was foreign, representing generations of colonial hegemony by the Arab sultanate and land- and slave-owning classes. In contrast,

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[183] John Lonsdale, "The Moral Economy of Mau Mau: Wealth, Poverty, and Civic Virtue in Kikuyu Ethnic Thought," in *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya & Africa, Book 2: Violence & Ethnicity*, ed. Bruce Berman (London : Nairobi : Athens: Ohio University Press, 1992).
[184] Loimeier, "Memories of Revolution," 47.

Arab-Zanzibaris, especially the ex-pat community in Oman, go so far as to refer to the Revolution as an "invasion" by the mainland. For my informants in Jumbi, the fact that the attackers in this particular court case were Makonde carried particular significance. The Makonde are an ethnicity from southern Tanzania near the border with Mozambique. As much if not more than Arabs, many people in Zanzibar would have considered the Makonde foreigners, and lower class foreigners at that. Anthony Clayton writes of the Makonde involvement in the violent early days of the Revolution in Town that "the most ferocious and zealous of Okello's followers in this grisly work were Makonde, whose filed teeth and often unkempt appearance made them easily recognizable," adding in a footnote that the Makonde "had a long tradition of violent protest and revolt."[185] These beliefs about the Makonde persist and were repeated to me in interviews; one rumor that was told to me was that Nyerere and the CIA conspired to send Makonde soldiers to kill people so that the violence would limit Zanzibar's options other than to join with Tanganyika.[186] To be clear, however, this supposed violence of the Makonde was based largely on rumor and constructions of "Otherness" within Zanzibar.[187]

While the Makonde loomed large in the memories of my informants in Jumbi because there is a sizable Makonde population there and because of the particularities of this specific murder case, to ascribe foreignness to the worst wounds of the Revolution is commonplace in Zanzibar and the Zanzibari expat community. One of Kjersti Larsen's informants, for example, attributed violence to the Kikuyu, telling her, "Many of those who violated and killed people were Kikuyu from Kenya. They killed many, and we were so

[185] Clayton, *The Zanzibari Revolution and Its Aftermath*, 80.
[186] anonymous elderly man, Interview in Bwejuu, June 26, 2019.
[187] Glassman, *War of Words, War of Stones*, 2011, 216.

afraid."[188] Or take for example, the mythologizing of John Okello, the self-proclaimed "Field Marshall" whose self-aggrandizing and largely fictional memoir casts himself as almost single handedly responsible for the Revolution.[189] Speaking to Zanzibaris in Oman, I would frequently be corrected when I called the events of 1964 a "revolution," and one of the pieces of evidence that was often offered to me in favor of instead calling it an "invasion" was Okello's foreignness, being a Ugandan without even a Muslim name.

What the racialist interpretation accomplishes is the distancing of the Revolution from the social imaginary of Zanzibari life. The ambiguities of the actual interactions of multifaceted individuals that we can witness in the microhistory of the court case fall away, replaced by a social memory of Makonde killing Arabs—two groups imagined to be foreign and outside of the constructed identity of being "really Zanzibari." But the Makonde and Arabs who populate the pages of this court file were not archetypes of foreignness. Rather they were local people who lived embedded within the rural village of Jumbi and whose lives were shaped by a social network of inclusions and exclusions that operated on a number of axes beyond the racial divide—gender, party politics, proximity, friendship, date sharing, class alliances, and personal grievances.

Conclusion

The survivors of the attack that night did not stay in Jumbi. Seif Salami lives in the nearby town of Fuoni. Nasra moved to Pemba. And Mohammed Mahruni moved to Muscat, as did Seif Salami's sister and her children. I found this out when I returned to Jumbi in

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[188] Kjersti Larsen, "Silenced Voices, Recaptured Memories: Historical Imprints within a Zanzibari Life-World," in *Social Memory, Silenced Voices, and Political Struggle: Remembering the Revolution in Zanzibar*, ed. William Cunningham Bissell and Marie-Aude Fouéré (Dar es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota, 2018), 256.

[189] On Okello's memoir as historical fiction: Burgess, "Memories, Myths, and Meanings of the Zanzibari Revolution," 438–39.

2019 and interviewed Mwanakheri's sister Zena, whose own children also went to Oman to find work. One of the unspoken purposes of this chapter has been to describe the situation in Zanzibar that prompted thousands of Arabs in the 1970s and into the '80s to move across the Indian Ocean to create new lives for themselves in Oman, which will be the subject of the next chapter. And yet, Zena herself lives in Jumbi, in the same small house by the main road in which she has always lived. Of those surviving family members who did leave Jumbi, only a few went as far as Oman or even left the islands. This was not a family for whom the threat of anti-Arab violence was a vague possibility, but one that had experienced it in the most immediate of ways. But still they stayed in Zanzibar. Why?

CHAPTER 3: MAMA DIDN'T GO: IMMOBILIGY AT THE HEIGHT OF THE ARAB 'RETURN' TO OMAN, 1970s-80s

Mama Jamal[190] was not able to go with her husband's family when they moved to Oman. She herself had no ancestry from Oman, but had married into an Omani-descended family of ex-Zanzibaris after they fled to her hometown of Tanga in the wake of the Revolution. In 1973, her husband's father announced that the family would be moving to Muscat, a land that he himself had not seen since he was six years old and not one of the rest of the family had ever visited. However, the days when traveling between East Africa and Oman without any passport or other documents had ended by the 1970s as the means of travel had shifted from hard-to-monitor dhows to highly regulated airplanes. So while her husband's family could make use of their passports, their Omani heritage, and a vague hope of finding relatives in Oman to help them find a new life in Oman, Mama Jamal stayed in Tanga because she had no documents, she had no way to claim Omani heritage to immigration officials, and she had no means to acquire such things.

Oman's renaissance in the 1970s offered many Arab East Africans a needed relief from the statelessness into which the Zanzibari revolution and rising suspicion of Arabs across the region had thrown them. But the ease of movement and flexibility of identity implied by speaking of a "return" of East African "Omanis," as the wave of migration into Oman over the course of the 1970s and 80s is generally referred to, did not ever exist for Mama Jamal nor for the majority of Arabs in East Africa. In this chapter, I argue that for the non-elite, and especially for women and more visibly black individuals, both mobility and

[190] I do not have permission to use her given name, but her son Jamal allowed me to use his name for anything that wasn't directly political. In Swahili, "Mama Jamal" is a respectful term of address for the mother of a son named Jamal.

the ability to assimilate in Oman if they did find a way to migrate there were limited, shrouded behind layers of difficulties.

This chapter covers the wave of emigration that followed the Zanzibar Revolution, generally stretching from 1964 to 1990. In the immediate aftermath of the revolution, many Arabs left Zanzibar, but most of them could not go to Oman, which was not at the time accepting many immigrants. In fact, in 1964, Oman only allowed approximately 3,700 Zanzibari refugees to legally enter.[191] In addition to its closed borders, Oman in the 1960s was a poor desert land to which most Zanzibari Arabs would have had little reason to want to move, regardless of their distant family connections there. This situation resulted in a global dispersion of Arab, Indian, and Comorian Zanzibaris. Many of those who had the economic means and were able to secure the needed documents, including the former Zanzibari Sultan, moved to the UK or North America, especially Canada. Moving to Tanga, as Mama Jamal's husband and his family did, is an example of a move more feasible to the majority of those displaced by the revolution, as many Arab Zanzibaris made new homes on the East African mainland. Of course, also, not only did many individuals stay in Zanzibar, many emigrants did return to Zanzibar to take up the threads of their abandoned lives as the immediate violence of the revolution faded in the late 1960s.

Most of the Zanzibari immigrants to Oman came in the 1970s in response to Sultan Qaboos' public invitation for Oman-descended peoples to "return" to participate in a national rebirth. Moreover, Qaboos had made good on his promise of an Omani renaissance by mobilizing a new oil economy to create an era of significant economic prosperity and

[191] "J.S.R. Duncan, British Consul-General in Muscat, to Sir William Luce, Political Resident in the Persian Gulf. Muscat Annual Report for 1964," January 2, 1965; Cited in: John Peterson, "Oman's Diverse Society: Northern Oman," *Middle East Journal* 58, no. 1 (2004): 46.

launching a campaign of Omani nationalism bent on erasing internal divisions that had long plagued Omani attempts at peace and unity. His wildly successful reform efforts worked to create an Oman to which East African Arabs would *want* to move and count themselves as belonging. Between 1970 and 1975 approximately 10,000 Zanzibari Arabs of Omani descent moved to Oman, marking the highpoint of Zanzibari immigration to Oman.[192] However, Qaboos' invitation was not a permanent open door, and over the course of the 1980s, residence permits in Oman for new migrants gradually became more difficult to acquire. By the 1990s, the twenty-year era of comparatively easy entry to Oman by East African migrants had largely come to a close, just as a new wave of migrants from Rwanda and the East African interior, who did not have the same protection of having their status as "returnees" presumed within Oman, sought to arrive.

Both Swahili-speaking Omanis and scholarly writers speak of the migration of East African Arabs to Oman as a "return" of Omanis to their native country, despite knowing that most of these migrants had not been to Oman for generations. But within this simple word "return" are a number of implications. A focus on elite "returnees" has implied a certain easiness that only ever existed for a minority of individuals. Moreover, by framing this migration as a "return," Swahili-speakers utilize a racial nationalism in which individuals have a true and natural national origin that is passed on through lineages. This is a departure from the global Arab way of reckoning "Arabness" by ability to speak Arabic, but it is also an elaboration on the Omani mode of establishing "Arabness," which is dependent on not being descended from *khadim* (slaves or servants).[193] In truth, many of

[192] Marc Valeri, "Nation-Building and Communities in Oman since 1970: The Swahili-Speaking Omani in Search of Identity," *African Affairs* 106, no. 424 (2007): 485.
[193] Insert footnote to Mandana's article

the *wamanga* who came from East Africa likely had at one point been descended from *khadim*, but that lineage has either been lost or deliberately obscured by the convenient new identity of "returnee." Despite the huge variation in wealth and social class among East African Arabs, being a "returnee" intimates that one's African heritage comes from Oman's history of colonial expansion and *not* from Oman's history of importing African slaves. Finally, simply "returning" to one's native country also obscures that integration there was an active and contested process. In truth, for many Swahili-speaking, black Arabs "returning" to Oman meant actively reinventing themselves and navigating a new set of prejudices.

In disaggregating the idealized vision of "returning" to Oman typified by the experiences of individuals like Mama Jamal's first husband, this chapter speaks to the broader arguments of the dissertation in three ways. First, immobility takes center stage. The wave of "return migration" to Oman is the most notable and discussed transformation within the international community of Omani-Zanzibaris during the 1970s and 80s. And yet, "returnee" emigrants made up a minority of the population of Arabs in Zanzibar, the majority of whom stayed and reinvented themselves as Arab Tanzanians for a variety of reasons ranging from the social and emotive ties of home, to financial limitations, to legal barriers. This lack of access to mobility, regardless of the specific cause, disproportionately affected women, the poor, and black community members with less direct claims to Omani heritage, but who were nevertheless within the fold of mixed families. Mama Jamal is an example of all three of these traits, so her inability to migrate with her first husband in the early 1970s is perhaps not surprising.

Second, this chapter challenges the timelines of Zanzibar-Oman connections that are implied by previous discussions of the 1964 revolution and the 1970 coup as a brief period of mass emigration of Arabs out of Zanzibar. Generally, 1964 or 1970 are understood as logical end dates of the "Omani period" of Zanzibari, and indeed East African, history. 1964 perhaps makes some sense if the reign of an Omani sultan in Zanzibar is the primary focus. 1970 represents the inciting incident for a mass "return" to Oman from East Africa of Omani-descended Arabs, namely the invitation by Sultan Qaboos extended to those with Omani lineage. And yet this timeline suggests more rupture than I would argue is justified. For those who did migrate out of the region, the period of emigration was prolonged. In fact, even in noting that the bulk of migration to Oman largely had trailed off by the end of the 1980s, I am perhaps underselling the extent to which migration between these places continues to the present day. This movement was slow and often involved long periods of residence in intermediate locations, such as Jamal's paternal family's long residence in Tanga exemplifies. Furthermore, the majority of Arabs did not leave East Africa at all, contradicting the premise of adopting 1970 as an end date for Omani settlement in East Africa. Finally, a new wave of thousands of East Africans expanding the Swahili-speaking community of Oman hardly represents an end point of meaningful Oman-Zanzibar connections.

Third, this chapter speaks to a larger rejection within this dissertation of the simplified racial categories that have too often seeped from colonial understandings of the social order of Zanzibar into scholarly analysis. Referring to the migration of Arab East Africans to Oman as a "return" rests on a logic of racial nationalism that was available during the latter half of the 20th century as a widely used metageography. In other words, if

Arabs are "naturally" from Arabia and Zanzibar is within Africa, then the movement of Arabs from Zanzibar to the Arabian Peninsula appears expected, a "return" to the natural order. Jonathan Glassman has demonstrated the ways that racial thought developed in pre-revolutionary Zanzibar, ultimately creating the categories of racial identity that animated revolutionary ideologies.[194] Racial nationalism justified anti-Arab violence through assuming the fundamentally African nature of Zanzibar, recasting a diverse variety of individuals as uniformly Arab and consequently foreign. This chapter notes how the creation of the new identity of "returnee" within Oman continues the project of racialization charted in Glassman's work by obscuring the differences within these racial categories, such as of class, gender, phenotype, and lineage. Ironically, the same logics of racial nationalism that had condemned them during the revolution, now suited the purposes of East African immigrants to Oman eager to claim new identities as Omani. By becoming "returned" Omani Arabs rather than refugees from East Africa looking for work in the new economies of later 20th century Oman, they could invent a belonging in their new home. The racial nationalism that underpins this belonging obscures that this transition was a struggle, especially for those who did not easily fit the prescribed image of "returnee."

This chapter examines in turn the experiences of Jamal's birth parents and then Jamal himself. It starts with Jamal's father, who I will be calling Hemed,[195] who stands in for the archetypical "returnee." He was able to mobilize his resources to migrate to Oman, but even for him, this path was a difficult one to travel. How much more so it would have

[194] Glassman, *War of Words, War of Stones*, 2011.
[195] All names from Jamal's family other than Jamal's own are pseudonyms as I do not have permission to use their names.

been for those without his resources, like his first wife. Mama Jamal animates the second section of this chapter, which elaborates on the financial, social, and gendered limitations to mobility. The chapter concludes by turning to the life history of their son, Jamal, and the numerous challenges to reinventing oneself as Omani that faced those who did make this move to Oman.

Baba Jamal—The "Returnees"

Hemed was in many ways the prototypical "returnee," a man from a family of landed agriculturalists who had lived in Pemba for three generations and who responded to the call to move to Oman at the height of the wave of migration triggered by Oman's renaissance. Through him we can see the many small opportunities that he was able to exploit in order to reinvent himself in Oman. And yet, even from the experiences of men like Hemed, we get hints that moving to Oman was immensely difficult.

Hemed was born in Pemba on land his grandfather had bought and turned into a prosperous farm. Hemed inherited his grandfather's and father's successes as Hemed's grandfather lived the quintessential Zanzibar success story. Hemed's grandfather was from the Omani interior and traveled to Zanzibar by first donkey and then dhow in hopes of finding an easier life, as Jamal phrased it, his friends who had been to Zanzibar praised it, saying, "Oh life is so easy there. At least we get food. We get mangos on the trees."[196] After arriving in Zanzibar, Hemed's grandfather lived in the affluent Stone Town neighborhood of Shangani and worked for a Sheikh there. He "slowly slowly built up" a prosperous life in Stone Town until eventually he was able to buy a large piece of land in Pemba and move his

[196] Jamal Al Obeidani, Interview with author, February 27, 2018.

family there, where Hemed would eventually be born. When Hemed was a young man, however, the Revolution brought it all crashing down.

At this point in interviews in Zanzibar, my informants tended to gloss the emigrations out of the islands as "so and so left to Oman," as if it were that simple. I generally had to press for more information about why *they themselves* had not left with them before they mentioned the many barriers to such leaving. But even for relatively prosperous individuals like Hemed's family, "leaving" was not so simple. Rather, it was an indirect journey full of uncertainties at every step. For Hemed and his relatives, this consisted of a long interlude of relative poverty in mainland Tanzania and the eventual separation of the family as some of them made their way further to Oman. Sometime in the first year of Revolutionary chaos, Hemed and most of his relatives fled Pemba by boat for Tanga, which is the nearest town on mainland Tanzania from Pemba. There they found themselves without the financial resources that they had amassed over the course of three generations in Pemba as all of their property in Pemba had been first looted and then seized by the Revolutionary government. But they did have some friends on the mainland who helped them survive those first years in Tanga. Nevertheless, rebuilding a life in Tanga was difficult. Hemed's father, the formerly prosperous farmer, scraped a marginal living selling cups of coffee door-to-door. After nine years slowly saving enough to afford the one-way journey, Hemed, his father, and those family members who had the official paperwork that allowed them to travel legally, flew to Oman in 1973, taking advantage of the welcoming policies of the early years of Sultan Qaboos's reign. This too was a fraught leaving. Some family members, including Hemed's wife and their son Jamal, did not have that paperwork and were thus left in Tanga. Moreover, it was a gamble for those who did

leave. Hemed's father was the only surviving family member who had ever been to Oman and he had not been back since he was six years old. He knew vaguely that there was family there, an uncle and two sisters, but he did not know where they lived or how to contact them. Jamal described his grandfather's decision to move the family to Oman, "So he said I don't know where we are going to stay but it is time to go back to our roots where we came from."[197] Ultimately, it did work out for those who moved to Oman, as today the Oman side of the family is again relatively prosperous, but it was a risky transition.

A prominent example of another ex-Zanzibari's leaving narrative is that of Saud bin Ahmed Al Busaidi, who recounts his difficulties "returning" in his widely-read memoir, *Memoirs of an Omani Gentleman from Zanzibar*. An Oxford educated gentleman descended from the military generals who led Oman's conquest of the Swahili coast in previous centuries, Saud is the epitome of the pre-Revolutionary Zanzibari elite.[198] His sister was married to Sultan Khalifa and his memoir is sprinkled with casual references to royal friends such as childhood fishing trips with the Zanzibari Prince Abdulla.[199] Saud's experience is not at all representative of the majority of Zanzibari refugees. His account of the difficulties he faced with leaving Zanzibar and eventually rebuilding his life in Oman is however telling of the immense difficulties involved in this post-Revolution migration. And the ways that he was able to overcome those difficulties is revealing of the extent to which mobility and security were a privilege of the wealthy and well connected.

Saud was able to overcome significant legal threats to his mobility. He was nearly blocked from leaving because the Immigration Officer confiscated his passport and denied

[197] Al Obeidani.
[198] Saud bin Ahmed Al Busaidi, *Memoirs of an Omani Gentleman from Zanzibar*, ed. Patricia Groves and Jane Jaffer (Muscat: Hatim Al Taie, 2012), chap. 8.
[199] Al Busaidi, 25, 84.

him permission to leave the islands, both necessary steps for leaving the islands legally.[200] Permission to travel was difficult to secure in the aftermath of the Revolution, and the lack of a passport could make it extremely difficult to enter any other country. It is this lack of passports that led to Mama Jamal and her infant son to staying in Tanga, while Hemed and his relatives left for Oman.[201] Saud, however, was able to get a meeting with President Karume himself and prove to him that he had a legitimate reason to travel briefly to Kenya, as he had documentation supporting the fact that he had an inheritance to collect there.[202] Both the knowledge of how to secure a meeting with a head of state and the lucky coincidence of an inheritance from a wealthy aunt elsewhere in the former Omani sphere of influence are artifacts of Saud's formerly elevated position in society that most other Arab Zanzibaris would not have shared. Later, after moving to Mombasa, a fear gripped the population of Zanzibari refugees there that President Karume would be arresting all of them for illegally moving to Kenya. The extent that this was ever a real plan is a little unclear, but only a day later, President Kenyatta of Kenya announced that he would not be allowing the Zanzibari President to arrest asylum seekers in Kenya.[203] Prior to Kenyatta's assurances, however, we get a glimpse not only of the widespread culture of fear that ex-Zanzibaris in Kenya were still living in, but also of the ways that Saud would have been able to leverage his connections to avoid such reprisals. He immediately contacted a personal friend, a Ugandan prince, and received permission from the Kabaka to come to Kampala.[204]

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[200] Al Busaidi, 147.
[201] Al Obeidani, Interview with author.
[202] Al Busaidi, *Memoirs of an Omani Gentleman from Zanzibar*, 147.
[203] Al Busaidi, 150.
[204] Al Busaidi, 149–50.

Saud's social capital in the form of connections both with friends and family and various international royalty, categories with some significant overlap, was able to support him in the wake of the Revolution's damage to his material resources. In an effort to prevent Arab Zanzibaris from moving abroad and taking what remained of their wealth with them, it was prohibited to travel out of the country with large amounts of money. All but 40 shillings—not nearly enough to live on—was confiscated from Saud at the airport. This was stressful but could have been disastrous for someone less well connected. Saud was able to stay with friends in Mombasa for a time, until moving with his sister to live with his in-laws in Cairo. In the meantime, he did also still have that inheritance from his Kenyan aunt.[205] Even in the 1970s, when Oman was actively seeking educated Omani-Zanzibaris, leaving what livings ex-Zanzibaris had secured for themselves in the interim between the 1964 Revolution and the 1970 opening of Oman would have been a financial gamble. What if the promise of good employment in Oman didn't come through? It was more of a gamble for some than others, however, and Saud was well positioned to take advantage of the new opportunities in Oman. Not only were his Oxford education and previous high-level work experience attractive to potential employers, his social connections to Omani royalty, specifically to HH Sayyid Faher and HH Sayyid Fahd, lead to a new career in the Omani foreign service.[206]

None of this is intended to downplay the considerable disruption that Revolution represented in the lives of Saud, Hemed, or their families. Saud was imprisoned and had reason to fear execution, and he was eventually forced by circumstances to leave his

[205] Al Busaidi, 149–53.
[206] Al Busaidi, 169–71.

homeland.[207] Rather, the fact that even someone with such considerable material and social resources as Saud faced such difficulties, speaks to the immense challenges that were inherent in leaving Revolutionary Zanzibar. Despite the numerous difficulties, however, Hemed and Saud did both eventually succeed in moving to Oman, along with the some 10,000 other Zanzibari immigrants who came to Oman in the early 1970s. Such "returnees" have spoken of their new lives in Oman as a "silver lining" to the storm clouds of the Zanzibari revolution.[208] The major factors that allowed a subsection of Omani-Zanzibaris to make this transition were the political circumstances of 1970s Oman, the education that allowed a certain class of ex-Zanzibari to take advantage of those circumstances, and the social connections that provided a cushion for financial and legal vulnerabilities.

The Omani Renaissance: the Zanzibari educated class and 1970s Oman

The politico-economic moment of the 1970s favored immigration to Oman, particularly for an educated class of elite migrant. In the 1970s, Oman experienced rapid change in the form of both a new government under Sultan Qaboos and a new economy based on oil. Key to Qaboos' strategy towards creating a national renaissance was a policy favoring immigration of those with Omani heritage living abroad. In particular, this was a program of elite immigration that mobilized for the benefit of the state the resources and energy of the large Omani expatriate population that had been leaving Oman for centuries in order to amass individual fortunes not only in Zanzibar but elsewhere in the Indian Ocean, the Middle East, and Europe. For Qaboos' purposes, the Zanzibari Revolution's creation of a large population of Omani-descended stateless people with high-class educations was a fortunate resource. Those *waarabu* of Zanzibar who had previously

[207] Al Busaidi, chaps. 13–14.
[208] Al Busaidi, 165–85.

occupied elite positions within government and private enterprise were well positioned to take advantage of new opportunities in Oman. Although certainly a variety of individuals moved to Oman in the early decades of Qaboos's rule, the ideal "returnee" for the New Oman, and thus those best poised to take advantage of the pro-immigration policies of the time, was an educated man of the formerly elite class of Zanzibar, preferably with no other political loyalties and with some experience either in business, government, or a technical field.

Qaboos's pro-immigration policies were in large part a political project that build a population with a loyalty to him and his sultanate. After taking power in a bloodless coup against his father in 1970s, Qaboos sought to create a unified state that was free of the divisions that had defined Omani politics for centuries. In most of Omani history, the power and authority of the Sultan has been by no means guaranteed, weakened by internal divisions between "tribes," differing priorities for coastal and interior communities, and split loyalties between the Imam and the Sultan. Sultan Qaboos instead sought to make the state, specifically the authority and personage of the Sultan, central to the lives of all Omani people.[209] This created an opportunity for Swahili speaking newcomers as those Omani-descended individuals living abroad had been removed from the internal political fissures of Oman for several generations and had little reason to maintain a political loyalty to any competing political authority within Oman.[210] Moreover, Qaboos needed a constituency who would support his regime over his father's deposed rule. Again, the ex-Zanzibaris suited this role well as they had been on bad terms with his father's government, largely because he had denied them entry to Oman when they needed to flee Zanzibar in 1964.

[209] Valeri, "Nation-Building and Communities in Oman since 1970," 480.
[210] Valeri, 486.

These political motivations not only opened the doors for mass immigration of "returnees," but also meant that ex-Zanzibaris were attractive competitors for government jobs in the rapidly expanding and centralizing Omani State.

For elite ex-Zanzibaris, government roles and high level positions within the newly booming oil industry were attractive incentives to make a new life in Oman. Those Swahili speakers who had the opportunity to take up high-level jobs in Oman were able to do so in part because they not only had the needed education for such a position but also many had had some experience in leadership. These individuals were largely drawn from the governing class of East Africa, and represented those who had participated in the Arab Association, the Zanzibari sultanate, anti-colonial political struggles, the leadership of villages and districts within Zanzibar, etc. The much touted "land of opportunity" in Oman was also not a radical reordering of society. It was not generally the ex-Zanzibari shopkeepers and housewives who became CEOs or department heads the new Omani government. In my interviews with wealthy Omanis, there was frequently expressed a sentiment that success in Oman was due to a need to "get back what we lost" in the Zanzibar Revolution, an idea somewhat limited to those who had previously held rarified positions within society.[211]

While these prominently visible positions were generally held by the educated elite. Lower class ex-Zanzibaris were also employable in 1970s Oman, albeit in more menial jobs. East Africans were not bound by cultural taboos against gender-mixing to the same extent as non-Swahili speaking Omanis, which over the course of the 1970s and into the 1980s allowed more Swahili-speaking women to enter the workforce and in turn eventually led to

[211] Muhammed Al Rahbi, Interview with author in Muscat, April 28, 2018.

more Swahili-speaking men being comfortable taking jobs that would require working alongside female colleagues.[212] But most importantly, the average education level even for the non-elite in colonial Zanzibar was still higher than that in Oman at the same time. In particular, literacy, especially using the Roman script, was far more widespread in Zanzibar than it was in Oman.[213]

Timing was also critical to enabling the mobility of this wave of people coming to Oman. The period of welcoming immigration policies only lasted a little over a decade and slosly waned over the course of the early 1980s in the face of anxiety over immigration on the part of non-Swahili speaking Omanis as well as the declining need on the part of Qaboos for the political support of the "returnees." The economic successes of Swahili-speakers eventually lead to the end of pro-immigration policies. Non-Swahili Omanis have for decades viewed East African immigrants as an economic threat, but the nature of this threat has changed over time. In the 1970s, the incorporation of a comparatively wealthy population of foreigners signaled inflation within Oman.[214] Worse, the highly visible wealthy East Africans holding high-level positions within the government and the oil industry were perceived as arrogant aristocrats who snatched up some of the best jobs in the country and proceeded to get even richer. Over time, the non-Swahili Omanis' anxieties about the economic ramifications of immigration shifted from irritation over their elitism towards protectiveness over lower-level jobs. Today, many of the menial jobs in Oman are held by South Asians while the descendants of *wamanga* "returnees" have gradually moved

[212] Christine Eickelman, *Women and Community in Oman* (New York: New York University Press, 1984), 206.
[213] Corrie Decker, "Reading, Writing, and Respectability: How Schoolgirls Developed Modern Literacies in Colonial Zanzibar," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 43, no. 1 (2010): 89–114.
[214] Valeri 2007 288

up into semi-skilled positions such as store clerks and office workers, competing for employment with traditionally more elite classes of Omanis.[215] This transition only fed a growing fear that East Africans take all the jobs. New waves of East African migrants from further interior in the 1990s represented even further competition for unskilled labor positions, as well as the future possibility that the descendants of more recent migrants will also be able to compete for jobs that more elite Omani Arabs actually want. Due in large part to mounting competition for jobs and rising economic insecurity, in the 1980s the government of Oman quietly ended the opportunity for foreigners of Omani descent to easily claim residence in the country based on lineage.

Connections as mobility

Social and especially familial connections were crucial for gaining access to mobility. The legality of migration to Oman has largely depended on establishing a genealogical connection to Oman, which often depended on the willingness of kin within Oman to vouch for one's legitimacy as a family member. Legal restrictions on entry to Oman had important implications for what migration choices were available to individuals, particularly those with less clear family connections within Omani borders. It is widely acknowledged that this was particularly true of the period between the 1964 Zanzibar revolution and the 1970 Omani coup. While there was a wave of exodus from Zanzibar immediately following the revolution, Oman received only about 3,700 of these refugees, with most emigrants in the 1960s going instead to the East African mainland, Britain, Dubai, Kuwait, Cairo, or elsewhere. This is because prior to 1970, Sultan Said bin Taiumur's isolationist policies severely restricted even most well connected migrants. For example, a former Omani

[215] Valeri 2007 p492 On there being many Swahili within the semi-skilled laborers of Muscat

ambassador to the UK, Nasir bin Sayf Elbualy, arrived at Oman from Zanzibar on a refugee ship in the mid-1960s but was sent to Dubai until 1970 due to the strict limits on entry under bin Taimur's reign.[216]

In an interview in Muscat, a man named Hamdan Saif explained to me that his father's family left Zanzibar and came directly to Oman immediately after the revolution, but his parents went to his mother's family in Tanga, on the coast of mainland Tanzania, for a number of years before continuing on to Muscat because it was difficult to travel "direct from Zanzibar to Omani. There were a lot of restrictions so people who came to Oman at that time, they went through Dar es Salaam or through Tanga."[217] Hamdan himself did not come to Oman until 2001, and he has quite a lot of family who still live in East Africa. There are a number of threads to pull on in this short account, as it hints a web of social solutions to legal limitations on migration. First, we get a sense of the somewhat random nature of Omani immigration policy in the late 1960s, prior to Qaboos's coup. Hamdan's father's relatives were one of the small minority of people able to go directly to Oman, but this did not seem like an accessible option for his parents themselves, despite presumably having a similarly strong claim to Omani descent, at least on his father's side.

Second, much like Jamal's parents, Hamdan's parents found refuge with family in Tanga in the immediate aftermath of the revolution. Indeed, that the majority of immediate post-revolution migration was to mainland East Africa should be read not only as a statement on its proximity and the ease of entering Tanganyika and Kenya, but also because that is where the majority of people in Zanzibar would have had family members with whom they could shelter. This is particularly true of women due to the high rate of

[216] Peterson, *Oman in the Twentieth Century*, 215 n22.
[217] Hamdan Saif, Interview with author, May 22, 2018.

marriage between Omani men and East African women, and notably Hamdan's parents went to the wife's family on the Tanzanian mainland. Third, by staying with social connections in the mainland, they had the opportunity to bypass legal restrictions on direct travel between Zanzibar and Oman, which stayed in place for decades following the revolution.

By the time Jamal and Hamdan's parents went to Oman in the early 1970s, Sultan Qaboos had shifted the legal requirements for migration, but despite a much more liberal migration policy that sparked massive waves of immigration to Oman, legitimacy still depended on being able to demonstrate a genealogical connection to Oman. Beginning in 1970, one could claim Omani citizenship if your father was Omani or if you had an unknown father and an Omani mother. Additionally, you could claim Omani citizenship if you were descended from an Omani and had never had citizenship from another nation, which applied for example to those Omani descended peoples who had had citizenship rights denied to them by their newly independent land of birth.[218] Within five years of this more open immigration policy about 10,000 new migrants had entered Oman and become citizens based on Omani descent. The labor of authenticating individual migrants' supposed genealogical descent largely fell to sheikhs, an honorific referring to a respected local leader or religious scholar. One example of how such ancestry could be demonstrated comes from Zulfikar Hirji's analysis of Sheikh-Sir Mbarak Hinawy and his family. Hirji writes:

> That they were able to prove their Omani ancestry as members of the Banu Hina'a confederation of tribes certainly helped with their integration into Omani society. In this regard, they stated how grateful they were to their father's investigations in the 1950s, which allowed them to be clear about their genealogical links to the Banu

[218] Valeri, "Nation-Building and Communities in Oman since 1970," n. 24.

> Hina'a. But most family members also insisted that during the 1970s one's pedigree was important, but not as overtly as it appeared to them to have become in present-day Oman.[219]

Hinawy had been the governor (*Liwali*) of the Protectorate of Kenya throughout much of the 1940s and 50s, but even this exceptionally elite family had reason to be grateful that an ancestor had written down specifics of their kinship connections to Oman. Less elite families were less likely to have such records at hand. Which is not to say that there was not still a path towards demonstrating these connections, but rather that burden fell more heavily on surviving family members and other social connections within Oman to approach the appropriate Sheikh and make the would-be immigrant's case. Such connections were critical for establishing legal residence in Oman in the 1970s, and as Hirji's informants told him, being able to demonstrate familial connections to Oman has only become more crucial as migration restrictions have tightened in subsequent decades.

Beyond legal requirements, social connections enabled some individuals to move to Oman by providing financial resources or a place to stay upon arrival. Approximately two thirds of my interviewees in Pemba and Unguja reported that their relatives who had moved to Oman had done so with the financial help of family there.[220] One man in Chake Chake, Pemba explained further that the first of his relatives who went to Oman relied on Red Cross aid to go, but after they had established themselves there, they were able to pay for more relatives to join them.[221] Upon arrival in Oman, many East Africans stayed in the

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[219] Zulfikar Hirji, "Relating Muscat to Mombasa: Spatial Tropes in the Kinship Narratives of an Extended Family Network in Oman," *Anthropology of the Middle East* 2, no. 1 (March 31, 2007): 61.

[220] For examples: Saleh Muhammed, Interview with author in Wete, Pemba, September 23, 2017; Ahmed, Interview with author in Chake Chake, October 23, 2017; Zuena Mustafa, Interview with auther at Mwembe Makumbi, May 2, 2017.

[221] Anonymous, Interview with author in Chake Chake, October 23, 2017.

homes of family members or other members of their social network. I met Mariam by chance at the Women's Market in Ibra, a desert market town in the Omani interior, where she sells Kangas, bright rectangles of fabric with phrases in Swahili written on them. Seeing the East African fabric, I took a chance and greeted her in Swahili. Later, over lunch in her home, she told me about coming to Oman from the Zanzibar archipelago in the 1970s. She came as a teenager with her father, who had been a shopkeeper in Pemba. The only relative they knew who still lived in Oman then had been her father's cousin in Ibra, where Mariam's ancestors had come from. They stayed with this cousin for four years before her father was able to build a separate nearby house, and she married a man in Ibra and moved to his house not long after that.[222] Similarly, in interviews in the Zanzibar Archipelago about half the time when I asked where family members who had moved to Oman lived when they got there, my informants would respond with a list of relatives who had acted as host.[223]

Not everyone returned to the villages of their ancestors. But while Swahili-speakers can be found all over Oman, the majority of individuals had no desire to attempt to carve out a living in the desert, even if they were not of the class to secure a high-powered position in an oil company or the government. Instead, they relied on temporary housing with relatives or other Swahili immigrants in Muscat and the suburbs.[224] Even today, many Swahili speakers live in suburbs like Maabilah and Seeb. While today these suburbs are largely prosperous and comfortable, in the 1970s they would still have been fairly distant from the centers of commerce in Muscat and Mutrah. It was often with help from their

[222] Mariam, Interview with author in Ibra, Oman, July 22, 2015.
[223] For example, Fatima's aunt stayed with relatives when she went to Oman in the 1970s: Fatima, Interview with author in northern Pemba, September 12, 2017.
[224] Valeri, "Nation-Building and Communities in Oman since 1970," 488.

relatives that many of them were able to move out into their own, sometimes neighboring, homes.

Mama Jamal—(Im)mobility

Hemed's first wife, Mama Jamal did not have any of the things that allowed Hemed and his relatives to move from Tanga to Oman in 1973. She was not able to accompany her then husband because she did not have the passports and other documents that Hemed and his relatives from Pemba had. So Hemed left, Mama Jamal stayed in Tanga with their infant son, and they quickly got divorced. After that point, there was no opportunity to go herself, if indeed she even would have wanted to. Although she was a part of a mixed-race family like those Arabs had been forming with Africans for generations, she as an *individual* was a black African, non-Arab woman from Tanga. She lacked the lineage to claim a part in Oman's official welcome of "returnees," the wealth to purchase plane tickets, the connections to get a passport or to find housing upon arrival independent of her ex-husband's family, and the education to get the well paid work that some Swahili speakers were finding in Oman. Added to all this, women's entry to Oman was allowed on the basis of being listed on her husband's or father's paperwork until the 1990s. Although ex-Zanzibaris who moved to Oman, such as Mama Jamal's first husband, faced many struggles, they were the beneficiaries of numerous advantages to which Mama Jamal did not have access. This section examines mobility in the midst of the mass emigration of Arabs out of East Africa as a gendered, classed privilege.

Moving across the globe is expensive and hard: financial and logistical barriers to mobility

The main reason Mama Jamal did not accompany her first husband to Oman was that she did not have the correct travel papers. Years later, as the wife of a fisherman in

Tanga, the cost of airfare was the major reason why she was not able to visit her son in Oman until he grew old enough to start paying for her trip and sponsoring her visa in his capacity as an Omani man. In both instances, Mama Jamal was in good company. In a 1967 progress report on the situation in Zanzibar, the Red Cross wrote, "Many of those [Manga Arabs] remaining, having considerable difficulties in view of the situation on the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba, wished to leave the islands for good. However, they were unable to do so for lack of funds and travel papers."[225] While legal logistics were more salient for Mama Jamal, simply being unable to move for economic reasons was a major factor in why many people stayed, particularly in the aftermath of a revolution that had stripped many Arab Zanzibaris of most of their worldly possessions. 30% of the people I interviewed about staying in Zanzibar in the aftermath of the revolution mentioned financial reasons for why they could not have left even if they wanted to. Many of these would-be migrants would have struggled to pay for the journey to Oman even before the revolution, but the economic options of the Arab-Zanzibari community were further restricted by the extensive looting and property redistribution of the revolution. Ways around this barrier were limited and often dangerous.

How much did moving from East Africa to Oman cost? The Red Cross estimated in 1967 that moving the 121 people then on their waiting list to leave Zanzibar to the Gulf would cost about £4,000,[226] which works out to a little over £33 per person in 1967 or $852 per person in today's US dollars. That price, however, leaves out quite a lot of expenses and represents really the minimum necessary expenditure. For one, the Red

[225] Red Cross Geneva Headquarters, "Project: Movement of Manga Arabs in Zanzibar: Progress Report," August 1967, RCC.1.12.4.192, Archive of the British Red Cross.
[226] Red Cross Geneva Headquarters.

Cross really was only budgeting enough for the move itself, not for trying to start a new life in a new country. Without a waiting support network of relatives and friends in Oman, paying for housing and food and all the other small necessities of life while trying to find new work would have been an additional financial challenge. Additionally, the Red Cross was negotiating with ships to move people en masse, whether an individual family could negotiate a similar per person cost is in some doubt.

In the 1970s, making this journey by ship at all was becoming less and less common, and airfare prices would have been much higher at least until air ticket prices fell globally in the 1980s. Likely the cheapest option, albeit the most dangerous and difficult, would still have been aboard a dhow. But the long distance dhow trade was rapidly coming to an end, and over the course of 1970s, going by dhow would have been a decreasingly realistic option.[227] But although the more expensive airplanes rapidly took over the route between Zanzibar and Oman, they were not so useful for those entering Oman illegally. A much riskier mode of traveling to the Arabian Peninsula without having the money for a ticket was to stow away on a ship. Saud al Busaidi writes of those who attempted to do so, "Those unfortunate people who had stowed away on animal cargo ships, where they hid among the cattle and goats in straw and filth, had suffered dehydration and starvation. Others were dumped by dhows on the shores of the Arabian Gulf in extreme heat without food or water."[228] The reference to dhow passengers in the same thought as stowaways here is a subtle allusion to the illegality increasingly associated with traveling by dhow as the only real reason for a dhow to dump their passengers in the desert as opposed to at port is if they are avoiding the need to acquire travel documents. Some stowaways on cargo ships, as

[227] Gilbert, *Dhows & the Colonial Economy in Zanzibar*.
[228] Al Busaidi, *Memoirs of an Omani Gentleman from Zanzibar*, 166–67.

well as paperless dhow passengers and even those who undertook the perilous journey walking and hitchhiking by land, no doubt did successfully arrive and create new lives for themselves in Oman, but I do not have examples and statistics of successful illegal immigrants from this period.

The economic limitations on mobility would have been particularly salient in the aftermath of the Revolutions as, for most rural Arabs, wealth was tied up in clove trees and not liquid capital. Prior to the Revolution, many rural Arabs were farmers, and were particularly invested in clove farming.[229] Jamal's paternal family in Pemba, for example, were farmers beginning in Jamal's great-grandfather's generation. This would have been at the height of Pemba's dominance of the clove industry in the wake of the 1872 hurricane.[230] Jamal recounted to me his family's poverty after losing the farm in the wake of the revolution, saying that they had "whatever they had in their hands, and that's it."[231] Turning clove trees into the liquid capital needed to move to Oman would have taken time even under normal circumstances; however, the revolutionary government seized the immovable property of Arabs through the Land Decree of 1966, subdividing much of it into three-acre plots to be leased to peasant agriculturalists.[232] By 1972, the state claimed that it had redistributed 71,145 acres of land in this way.[233] While it would be a mistake to assume that all Zanzibari Arabs had large clove plantations, what wealth the Arab population had tied up in trees and land would not have been available to them by the 1970s.

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[229] Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices, & Ivory in Zanzibar*, 51–55.
[230] Sheriff, 134; Frederick Cooper, *Plantation Slavery on the East Coast of Africa* (Portsmouth, N.H: Heinemann, 1997), 130–34.
[231] Al Obeidani, Interview with author.
[232] Clayton, *The Zanzibari Revolution and Its Aftermath*, 137–39.
[233] Clayton, 138.

For a few years after the events of 1964, the Red Cross offered emergency resettlement of Zanzibari refugees fleeing the Revolution. In the course of the four years immediately following the Revolution, the Red Cross relocated over 1,174 Zanzibari Arabs.[234] By far the majority of these were taken to Muscat and the rest to elsewhere in the Gulf.[235] In truth, this effort by the Red Cross represented a small minority of the well over 10,000 Arab Zanzibaris that eventually moved to Oman and was largely over as a Red Cross project before the bulk of "returnee" migrations began in the 1970s. And yet, the role of the Red Cross looms disproportionately large in the historical memories of my interlocutors. Jamal, for example, was fairly confident in our interview that his father's family came to Oman through Red Cross aid. That struck me as unexpected as his family went to Oman in the mid-1970s, well after the time for which I had found records of the Red Cross transporting Zanzibari refugees, which seem to trail off in 1967. I asked if Jamal's relatives had gone by boat, knowing that the idea of Red Cross boats as the main post-Revolution mode of travel was a common one in my previous interviews. However, he was equally confident that his relatives had traveled by plane. By the time Jamal himself went to Oman in the 1980s, plane fares were relatively manageable, however in the 1970s, when his father's family went, airfare was extremely expensive. At no point in the Red Cross documents does that organization ever consider sending refugees from Zanzibar by plane. The cost of such an effort would have been prohibitive.

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[234] There were an additional 121 people on their waiting list at the time of recording this statistic in 1967, and it is unclear how many of that remainder also left, especially as this same document notes that people frequently put their names on the list to go and then didn't show up for their departure and that new people would sometimes fill their spots at the last moment. Red Cross Geneva Headquarters, "Project: Movement of Manga Arabs in Zanzibar: Progress Report."

[235] Red Cross Geneva Headquarters.

I had had similar conversations in Zanzibar. For example, I asked a couple living in Kengeja from where their relatives had gotten the money to move to Oman in 1974:

> Joho: Waliletewa msaada siku zile. [They were helped in those days.]
>
> Joho's wife: Red Cross waliwachukua nasikia. Dar es Salaam to Oman. [The Red Cross took them I heard. Dar es Salaam to Oman.]
>
> Joho: Walikuwa wnasaidia [They were helpful.]

I am not sure in the context of our conversation if Joho's wife[236] meant that she had heard that the Red Cross had helped their relatives in particular or if she was speaking more generally about Arabs who went to Oman. I don't doubt that their relatives were helped, but I suspect it was actually by family members or friends already in Oman. At the time of the interview, however, I understood their meaning to be that the Red Cross helped their family members move:

> Me: Ilikuwa Red Cross katika '74 pia? [The Red Cross was here in '74 too?]
>
> Joho: Ilikuwa ipo. [They were here.][237]

However, I have to believe that the meticulous records the Red Cross had kept of this project from 1964 to 1967 would have continued if they were still transporting people into the 1970s. Indeed, these records likely would have increased as the volume of people seeking to move to Oman was at its height in 1970 to 1975.

Whether they received some sort of Red Cross aid or not, Jamal's relatives attempted to build up the capital to move during their time in Tanga. This was a common strategy. Mohammed Saleh has argued in his ethnographic studies of the Zanzibari community in the Kariakoo area of Dar es Salaam that it was there that the post-revolution

[236] Who did not want her name shared
[237] Joho and his wife, Interview with author in Kengeja, Pemba, September 5, 2017.

Zanzibari refugees developed strategies to acquire the funds, official documents, and contacts needed for further migrations elsewhere in the world.[238] But for many others, mainland East Africa became their permanent home, or else they returned to Zanzibar. Economic limitations were certainly one reason not to continue the journey onto the Arabian Peninsula. Employment opportunities in East Africa were not necessarily available to everyone, especially those who had not been previously well employed or well educated. Jamal's grandfather, for example, worked as a coffee seller, which is a very low paid job. A substantial proportion of the Arabs fleeing Zanzibar would have been farmers and shop keepers who had lost their farms and shops. However, staying in East Africa cannot be solely attributed in economics. The majority of my informants cited social connections within East Africa as their main reason for staying.

The social ties of immobility

Not everyone had social connections in Oman that they could rely on to help them with the logistics of moving. It was difficult to get people to remember if they did in fact have contacts with Oman in the 1970's, as most informants instead talked about their relatives who they currently have living in Oman. And indeed, it is worth noting that even if those first relatives of theirs had not known anyone in Oman, later migrants would have had both those earlier relatives and other friends who had fled Zanzibar in the immediate aftermath of the revolution. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to assume that everyone with Omani ancestry and interest in moving to Oman in the 1970's would have had Omani

[238] Mohamed Saleh, "Les Investissements Des Zanzibaris a Kariakoo," in *De Dar Es-Salaam a Bongoland: Mutations Urbaines En Tanzanie*, ed. B Calas (Paris: Ades-Dymset-IFRA-Karthala, 2006); Mohamed Saleh, "Zanzibar Outre-Mer: L'importance de La Diaspora Insulaire," in *L'autre Zanzibar: Géographie d'une Contre-Insularité*, ed. Marie-Pierre Ballarin (Paris: Karthala, 2008), 281.

relatives to help ease this transition. Communication between family members between Zanzibar and Oman would have been much slower in the decades before common use of telephones.

Mama Jamal was supposed to have been listed as a dependent on her first husband's family's passport and only was not because they had not gotten around to it by the time they decided to move. But this system suggests the extent to which social ties were foundational to mobility. Getting an independent passport would have been much less common and more difficult for the majority of people than simply being listed on the family passport. If you were not listed on one of these family passports, entering Oman would have been considerably more difficult not least because it would have been harder to demonstrate one's Omani descent. For most people, like Mama Jamal, this would have simply meant that they could not go to Oman. For some, this would have been a reason to attempt a dangerously illegal arrival by dhow at a deserted beach. For a privileged few, it might not have been a problem as they could secure high paying jobs that would help them acquire travel papers.

Joho relayed an account of passport fraud, perpetrated against him by a family acquaintance trying to get around just this issue. When Joho's father fled Zanzibar to Dar es Salaam, he took his passport with him. This passport was really the family passport as it also listed all of his wives' and children's names as well. A man named Mansuri in Dar es Salaam wanted to go to Muscat but had no travel papers, and in the meantime, Joho himself could not get out of Zanzibar to join his father in Dar. So when Joho's father went to Muscat, Mansuri took Joho's name and they pretended it was him listed on the passport. Initially, this worked for Mansuri as he got a good job in Oman. He was only eventually caught

because when Joho's father died, the other relations did not want to continue the ruse and include Mansuri in the inheritance. Mansuri was eventually arrested and imprisoned in Muscat, and the Omani officials struck Joho's name out of the passport by literally drawing a red line through it. Joho now says that his name having been flagged by the Omani officials in this way is one of the main reasons he has not joined his family there even now.[239] While it is hard to estimate how common this sort of fraud would have been, it certainly was not uncommon to be without the travel and identity papers needed to move.

Frequently relatives already in Oman could help arrange family reunification visas. However, for Zanzibaris who had been in East Africa for generations, still being in touch with relatives in Oman was not guaranteed either. A man who I will call Fuad[240] discussed losing contact with his Omani side of the family with me in Pemba. I asked about whether his father who had come to Zanzibar in the early 20th century had ever sent back gifts of money and clothing to his family in Adam, a town in Northwest Oman, as many Zanzibaris today now receive from more prosperous relatives abroad. Whether his father had done this or not, his response was reveling of the lack of communication between his Zanzibari family and their relations in Oman: "there is no aid coming from Oman to Zanzibar for me, and also, there was no aid from me to my relatives in Oman. But one year I went to Oman. When I went there, most of our relatives had already died. There remained only one who is a woman, and she is blind."[241] That was only after one generation of removal, and without both a sustained interest in retaining contact and the resources to do so, it is easy to imagine how many Arab Zanzibaris would not have known their relatives in Oman after

[239] Joho and his wife, Interview with author in Kengeja, Pemba.
[240] A pseudonym as I don't have permission to use his name
[241] Fuad*, Interview with author in Kengeja, Pemba, September 5, 2017.

multiple generations in East Africa. Jamal's paternal relatives who left Tanga for Oman, for example, did so without knowing of any relatives to smooth the way there. They had been in the Zanzibar archipelago for several generations, Jamal being the fourth generation there.

The strongest social connections that Omani-descended Zanzibaris had would almost certainly have been to others within Zanzibar. Familial responsibilities and interpersonal relationships provided a strong affective motivation to stay in Zanzibar. An elderly man named Suleiman Hamoud told me in an interview in his home about how he had initially wanted to go to Oman and had the opportunity, but ultimately decided to stay in Zanzibar where his family was located: "After the revolution, I was jailed. So when we were in jail, the Red Cross came and wrote all the names of the people who wanted to go to Oman, and I wrote my name but didn't go because my parents were here [in Zanzibar]."[242] These social ties to Zanzibar were a common reason my informants in Zanzibar cited for why they stayed in the archipelago. 76% of the people I interviewed about why they stayed in Zanzibar mentioned either social obligation or ties to a sense of home as their main reason for staying.

[242] Suleiman Hamoud, Interview with author, April 29, 2017.

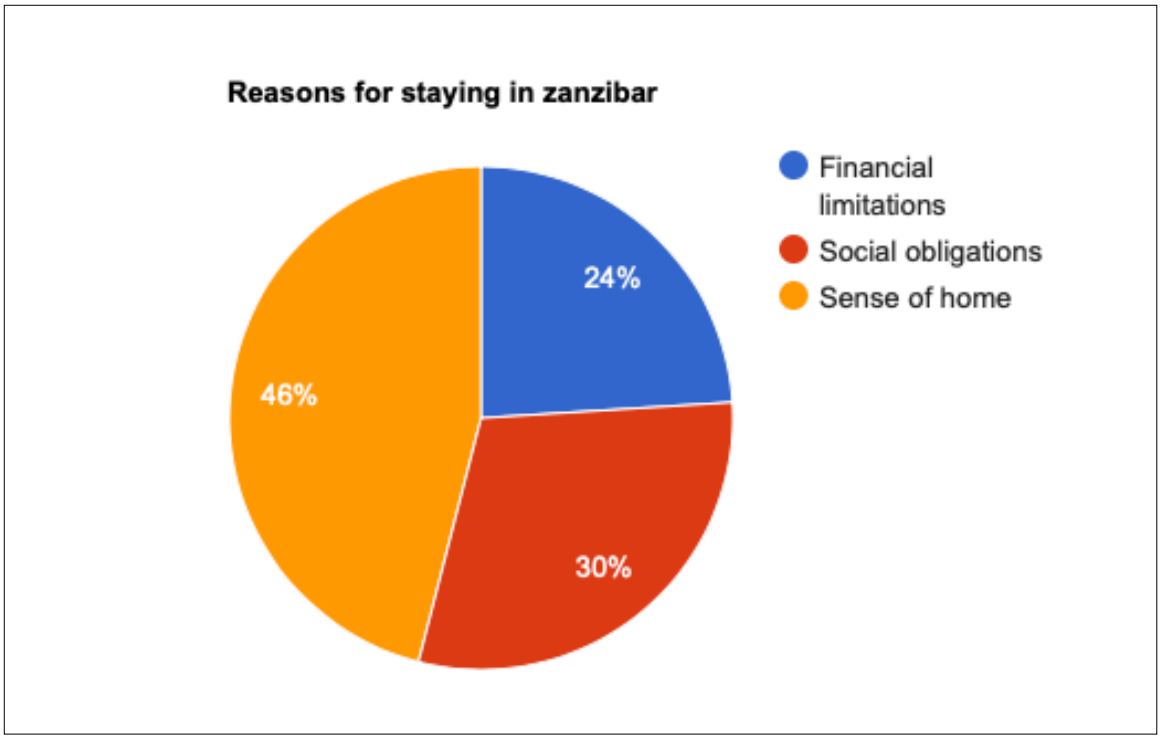

Figure 3: *Pie chart of reasons for staying in Zanzibar*

Social connections made Zanzibar a home that many people were loath to leave. One man in northern Pemba told me, "I couldn't leave here [Pemba]. There is our bed here. Our mosque is here. We have our farm; we have our house; we have our mosque. We couldn't leave because of our mosque, our home, and also our relatives and many other people are here. So we decided not to leave."[243] My informants, like this man in Pemba, often listed social connections in trying to evoke for me the idea that they could not leave because Zanzibar was their home. The emotional tie to the archipelago as home was the most common response which informants gave me for why they decided not to leave Zanzibar in the aftermath of the revolution. Many, like Amour who said that his family stayed because "we feel we are at home here [in Zanzibar]," simply stated this sentiment straight out. Others were more poetic in trying to communicate the idea of home to me. Another man in

[243] Anonymous, Interview with author in Pandani, Pemba, October 17, 2017.

Chake Chake, Pemba told me that his father had decided that "he didn't want to leave but rather to stay [in Pemba] with his children. There was an opportunity [to go to Oman], but he wouldn't leave his past."[244]

The descendants of Omanis had been in Zanzibar for generations. The simple fact was that the islands were the only home most of them had ever known. Certainly, the far away deserts of Oman were not an appealing option for many of them. Several informants noted specifically that they did not leave Zanzibar because Oman was not their home, saying that they had "no interest to go back and so they still live here [in Zanzibar]" or simply shrugging and saying of Oman, "It's not my home."[245] Abdul, an informant in Unguja, summed up the general sentiment of many of my interlocutors when explaining why his grandmother stayed, "Alipenda sana Zanzibar maana mazingira yake yalivyo na kutulia aliamua kustay [She loved Zanzibar very much because the environment was pleasant and so she decided to stay]."[246] Although referring to the environment in Zanzibar in the wake of the Revolution as "pleasant" is something of an anachronism, his larger point was that he could not imagine his grandmother wanting to live somewhere other than the island that was her home.

Social connections could be affective creators of home, but they were also ties of obligation. For example, some parents chose to stay in Zanzibar because children limited their mobility. For example, Abdul added that in addition to his grandmother's love of Zanzibar, she also would have found it difficult to move anywhere while raising a young child: "Babangu mimi alizaliwa 1961 ambapo revolution of Zanzibar inakuja hivyo alikaa

[244] Anonymous, Interview with author in Chake Chake.
[245] Anonymous, Interview with author at SUZA, June 9, 2017; Anonymous, Second Interview with author at Chake Chake, November 4, 2017.
[246] Abdul, Interview with author, April 14, 2017.

kwenye village moja. [My father was born in 1961 so when the revolution came she [his grandmother] stayed in the same village]," referencing the difficulty both of moving with a young child and raising a child far away from the support structures they had in their village in Zanzibar.[247] Such ties of obligation, particularly to young children, would likely have been particularly gendered. While Abdul's grandmother, who herself had been born in Oman, stayed to raise her son on the island that was her home, he was silent about his grandfather, just saying "I don't know":

> Abdul [in English]: "history of my family?"
>
> Me: Kwa mfano, labda kuanzia kwa babu yake babu, kama unafahamu [For example, maybe start with your great-grandfather, if you know.
>
> Abdul: Babu... sijui. Bibi yangu mzalia baba yeye alizaliwa Oman. Alikuja Zanzibar. Alikaa Zanzibar lakini miaka mingpi nilikuwa bado sijazaliwa lakini alikaa Zanziabr kwa muda wa miaka mingi. Hata yakatokea mapinduzi mwaka 1964 yeye bado alikuwepo Zanzibar na pia alikataa kwenda Oman. Aliishi Zanzibar kwa miaka mingi hata kifo chake kilimkuta Zanzibar. [My grandfather... I don't know. My paternal grandmother was born in Oman. She came to Zanzibar. She lived in Zanzibar, but it was many years before I was born, but she stayed in Zanzibar for many years. Even the Revolution in 1964, she was still in Zanzibar, and also she refused to go to Oman. She lived in Zanzibar for many years until death found her in Zanzibar.][248]

While it is now hard to know exactly to what extent social ties and obligations specifically affected disproportionately the movement or lack thereof of women in the 1970s, childcare in Zanzibar, and indeed in Swahili society generally, disproportionately falls to women. This is particularly true after divorce as the mother typically raises children after a separation, with little to no expectation of child support from the father.[249] Indeed, Mama

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[247] Abdul.
[248] Abdul.
[249] Susan Hirsch, *Pronouncing and Persevering: Gender and the Discourses of Disputing in an African Islamic Court* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1998); Fair, *Pastimes and Politics*, chap. 4; Erin E Stiles, *An Islamic Court in Context: An Ethnographic Study of Judicial Reasoning* (New York, N.Y.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Erin Stiles and Katrina Daly

Jamal is also one of numerous examples of women on the Swahili coast left to raise their children without the support of those children's fathers.

Women's Mobility and Immobility

A major variable affecting people's access to mobility was gender. While stories like Joho's do demonstrate that men were also affected by the system of listing the names of dependents on family passports, this overwhelmingly affected women as being brought as wives and daughters was more often than not the *only* path to migration open to women. For men, there was also the possibility of individual mobility that was not extended by Omani migration policies to women. And further, there were employment opportunities in the new Oman that paid for and incentivized male migration, which simply were not available to women. Those employment opportunities that were available to women, such as domestic labor, were a much riskier gamble than the booming oil industry and government service sector in which men were employed. This curtailing of women's independent mobility left them with few options even when they had such compelling reasons to go to Oman as custody battles for children kidnapped by ex-husbands. It really is no coincidence that Jamal's father moved to Oman and his mother stayed in East Africa.

In the mid-1980s, fourteen years after he had left for Oman, Mama Jamal's first husband returned for their son, Jamal. In the intervening years, she had remarried to a fisherman in Tanga, who had raised Jamal with her as if he was his own. In narrating this story to me, Jamal emphasized that, "until today, I count him as my father."[250] But Jamal's

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Thompson, eds., *Gendered Lives in the Western Indian Ocean: Islam, Marriage, and Sexuality on the Swahili Coast* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2015); Elke Stockreiter, *Islamic Law, Gender, and Social Change in Post-Abolition Zanzibar* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

[250] Al Obeidani, Interview with author.

birth father could offer opportunities that an impoverished fisherman and his wife in Tanga simply could not. By then, the fortunes of the Swahili coast and Oman had reversed. Oman was no longer the site of hard desert subsistence that previous generations had fled, but newly wealthy with oil and a comparatively progressive new Sultan eager to bring education, social change, infrastructure development, and economic fortune to his people. Jamal recalled to me his mother telling him that his birth father wanted to take him to Muscat to attend school there, saying that he protested "no, I don't want to go" and thought at the time that he was being punished. Jamal said, "My dream was to be a fisherman like my step-father. But he didn't want me to do that, he wanted me to study and to have a good future more than him, more than his future."[251] I am sure that the separation from her son would have been very hard, but at the least, according to Jamal's account, she had consented to this change in custody, believing it to be in her son's best interest.

Unfortunately, this was not always the case, as stories about Omani fathers taking their children abroad without the mother's permission abound in Zanzibar. The separation of mothers and their children is symptomatic both of male-preference custody laws in Oman and of the lesser access to mobility, both financially and legally, that women had when compared to their male counterparts. Asha lives in the town of Mwera in Zanzibar with her second husband. Mwera is a village, today about a twenty-minute drive away from the Zanzibar Town marketplace. It has housed a relatively large population of Arabs and was frequently mentioned in interviews as a place where many Arabs lived.[252] Asha, like many of her neighbors, is able to trace her ancestry back to Oman on both sides. In my

[251] Al Obeidani.
[252] Zack, Interview with author in Maugani, May 21, 2017; Sudi Abdi, Interview with author at Mwera, June 10, 2017.

initial interview with her, she seemed to be the prototypical lower-middle class Arab-Zanzibari: ancestry from Oman, various uncles and other assorted relations currently living in Oman, occasional gifts of dates and clothing sent by these relatives for Ramadan, both her first and second husband also of Omani descent. The most unusual thing about her narrative was that she, unlike 90% of the other women I had interviewed in rural Zanzibar both possessed a passport and had visited Oman a couple of times.[253] I only returned to Mwera for follow-up interviews because my research assistant later shared a piece of gossip he had heard that her first husband had essentially kidnapped her children a few years ago and taken them to Oman.

Asha was the only woman I was able to interview who admitted to having experienced an occurrence that I had been hearing rumors of for years, namely of Omani men taking their children to Oman and leaving the mothers without recourse in Zanzibar.[254] Despite her uniqueness among my interviewees, both rumor and Asha herself insist that in this respect as well, she is not exceptional. I asked in our second interview if her situation was common and was frankly rather surprised at the emphasis with which I was assured that this was not unusual:

> Me: Ni kawaida kwa watu wengine ikatokezea watoto wao kuchukuiwa kwenda Oman? [Is it normal for people to have their children taken to Oman?]
>
> Asha: Eeh, kama sio Oman sehemu tofauti tofauti. Lakini mara nyingi, ndio. Hivyo… [Yeah, if not Oman then other places. But often, yes. So…]
>
> Asha's 2nd husband [In English to be sure that I understood]: It is common.

[253] Asha, Interview with author in Mwera, June 10, 2017.
[254] However, I did here frequent rumors about this happening to other people. One example of an interview in which we discussed these rumors is: Amour Mohammed, Interview with author in Tunguu, June 2, 2017.

My research assistant Suleiman [also in English]: It happens to other people.[255]

Regardless of how common or uncommon this experience is today, Asha and her former co-wife who also had her children stolen by this same man, had some options available to them that would have not been available to women in similar positions in the 1970s and '80s. Specifically, they were able to go to Oman to search for her children and attempt to appeal her ex-husband's custody, an approach that would have historically been both legally and financially more difficult if not impossible. Financially, there are now charitable organizations that were willing to pay for Asha and her ex-co-wife to go to Oman in 2013 to begin legal proceedings to sue for custody. Asha's trip was paid for and arranged by a children's rights organization.[256]

The earliest of these organizations working for children's rights in Zanzibar were active beginning in the late 1980s with more joining in the 1990s. "Children of the World" was started in 1999, and SOS Children's Villages has been active in Zanzibar since 1995. A similar children's organization working in the Zanzibar archipelago prior to the 1990s was Save the Children, which began work in 1986 on Pemba and expanded to the rest of Tanzania in 1994. However, at the height of the 1970s wave of migration to Oman, options for financing a voyage to Oman without independent financial prosperity or the generosity of wealthy family members would have been more limited as there was not the proliferation of children's rights organizations that are now extant on the islands. However,

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[255] Asha and her 2nd husband, Interview with author in Mwera, June 15, 2017.
[256] She called the organization "Watoto wa Duniani." It is not clear exactly which organization she is referring to. My best guess is "Children of the World," which is an initiative of an organization called Muslim Charity and, while not specifically invested in Zanzibar, is active in the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa. Caity Bolton, a colleague who specializes in charitable organizations in Zanzibar and the Arabian Peninsula, also suggested SOS Children's Villages as a possibility.

these organizations are not able to help women reclaim their children because they have no power to sway Omani custody laws.

There would have been even more legal barriers to Asha's efforts in Oman prior to the 1990s. To be clear, because of Oman's fatherhood-oriented custody system as well as her ex-husband's friendship with several key gatekeepers within Oman, it is simply impossible for Asha to ever get custody of her children. Nor would it be possible for other women in her position; a non-Omani woman simply has no legal standing from which to press her case. But until the 1990s, her ability to even enter Oman *at all* would have been a legal challenge due to her gender. Omani policy considered women the dependents of their male family members, and therefore women needed the permission of their husbands or fathers, if they were unmarried, to enter the country, permission that if she was still legally married to the man who had absconded with her children, a woman would find next to impossible to get. This policy only changed after the main period of migration from East Africa had ended as part of a broader sweep of gender reforms in the late 1990s, including Oman's 1996 Basic Law, which acts as a de facto constitution and offers some basic protection from gender discrimination,[257] and the 2002 extension of suffrage to women.[258]

There are still legal restrictions on women's mobility in Oman that exist as legacies of this system. Although foreign women do not need their husband's permission to enter, Omani women must have such permission from male members of their household to travel

[257] Maike Didero, Sonja Nebel, and Carmella Pfaffenbach, "Gender and Mobility in the Car-Dependent Urban Society of Muscat/Oman," *Die Erde: Journal of the Geographical Society of Berlin* 152, no. 2 (July 12, 2021): 126–44.
[258] Mary-Jane Deeb, "Women's Rights in the Middle East and North Africa: Oman," *Freedom House*, October 14, 2005, https://www.refworld.org/docid/47387b6ec.html.

outside of the country.[259] Similarly, female university students need the permission of their fathers or husbands to leave campus.[260] Asha is frankly unlikely to regain custody of her children, but the barriers to women's mobility meant that in the 1970s and 80s, ie the height of East African migration to Oman, most women in Asha's situation would not have even been able to travel to Oman to attempt to challenge their ex-husbands for access to their children.

The main path to migration to Oman for men in the decades following Qaboos's coup was through employment, but this option was also not open to women. Men came to Oman in large numbers because they could get good jobs in the government and oil industry. Even today such high ranking jobs are rarely given to women without the personal intervention of the Sultan through his powers of appointment to ministry positions.[261] Despite the great leaps since the 1970s in women's education, Omani women are underemployed.[262] Only 20% of Omani women are in the workforce.[263] In the 1970s and 80s, women would have been unlikely to be employed outside the home at all, but at best employed as domestic laborers and semi-skilled service industry workers.[264] Realistically, the financial promise of the Omani Renaissance was not open to women except through their husbands.

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[259] Deeb.
[260] Zeinab Hussein and Leon Goldsmith, "Gender Politics in Oman: Between State, Sect, and Tribe," *Middle East Institute*, September 8, 2020, https://www.mei.edu/publications/gender-politics-oman-between-state-sect-and-tribe.
[261] Hussein and Goldsmith.
[262] Hussein and Goldsmith.
[263] Deeb, "Women's Rights in the Middle East and North Africa: Oman."
[264] In Eickelman's 1984 publication on women's roles in Oman, there is almost no mention of employment outside the home at all, despite extensive coverage of domestic labor listed in the index under "work": Eickelman, *Women and Community in Oman*.

Domestic labor was and still is the main employment for women migrants to Oman, but this field of employment is and was rife with dangers. The *Kafala* system of migration attaches continued residency to the sponsorship of one's employer, a system that has been widely criticized for its potential for abuse and sexual violence on the part of those employers towards their domestic workers.[265] Slavery was abolished in Oman in 1970, the same year that the severe migration restrictions of Qaboos's father's reign were loosened. For relatively prosperous "returnees" this was irrelevant, but de facto slavery masquerading as domestic employment for female migrants has remained an issue in Oman and other Arab nations that rely on the *Kafala* system ever since, prompting numerous calls for the abolition of this system.[266]

What made this situation particularly difficult for would-be migrant women to avoid was that whether a potential employment abroad was a genuine opportunity for a good job or a trap would have been nearly impossible to decipher until taking the gamble.[267] The difference really depended on the character of her employer rather than anything she could do to defend herself. And there was a wide variation in between. For a more contemporary example, the housekeeper in the guesthouse where I lived was mostly treated well and seemed to like her job, but her employer, my landlord, kept hold of her passport. Another woman who I met in Zanzibar had also been employed as a domestic laborer in Oman sometime in the late 1990s, she showed me the scars from boiling oil on her hands saying that she used to make *chapati* for her employer's family at all hours of the day and night:

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[265] Steven D. Roper and Lilian A. Barria, "Understanding Variations in Gulf Migration and Labor Practices," *Middle East Law and Governance* 6, no. 1 (April 10, 2014): 34, https://doi.org/10.1163/18763375-00601001.
[266] Rothna Begum, "'Working like a Robot': Abuse of Tanzanian Domestic Workers in Oman and the United Arab Emirates," *Human Rights Watch*, November 14, 2017.
[267] Begum.

"my arms got problems. They became swollen because of the activities. I went to hospital and I was advised not to do more chapatis and I had to get rest, but when I got back to my boss I was given the same chore of cooking chapati without relaxing."[268] The situation for domestic laborers in Oman has not much changed in Oman since the 1970s, but what has changed over time is the origin of these women, as now the majority come from southern Asia rather than East Africa. But for wealthy Zanzibari families in Oman, many East African women are still employed because there is less likely to be a language barrier and most importantly because they know how to make favorite Swahili dishes, like the *chapati* that my informant cooked.

If unaccompanied, employment-driven migration was not truly an option for women looking to go to Oman in the 1970s and 80s, the most realistic way to make this move was through their husbands. This too was by no means guaranteed, being both at the discretion of said husband and reliant on him having done the correct paperwork to claim her as a dependent, as both Mama Jamal and Asha demonstrate. However, this was and is a common mode of mobility for East African women, and I was told of many female relatives of informants in Zanzibar who had been "married to Oman."[269] This phrase, in English, was used by several of my informants to describe the process of an East African woman getting married to an Omani man and moving to Oman to live with him.[270] They perceived the marriage itself as a fundamental part of the woman's movement *to* Oman. Even to this day, the most likely route for women to move to Oman is through marriage to an Omani.

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[268] Ex-housekeeper, Interview with author in Bungi, June 10, 2017.
[269] For example: Suleiman Hamdan, Interview with author in Chake Chake area, October 23, 2017.
[270] This is at least partially a translation error on my informants' part, but still telling in their instinctual choice of "to" as the most appropriate preposition.

Typically, senior kin arrange these marriages. The young woman rarely knows, or has ever met, the man before marriage. Thus the phrasing "married to Oman," accurately reflects the overall strategies employed by families, or sometimes women themselves, to migrate via marriage to Oman.

In Chake Chake, Pemba, Rehema told me about her sister who had moved via marriage to Oman sometime around the time of the Revolution.[271] In the below conversation, Rehema switches to English midway through, possibly thinking I was not understanding and seeming frustrated that I and my research assistant, Hemed, kept pressing for details on how exactly her sister, who had never left Zanzibar, ended up married to an Omani man who had never been to Zanzibar:

> Hemed: Kwa hivyo ni mume alikuja kwa jirani yako? [So is it the husband who came to your neighbor?]
>
> Rehema: Eeh. Nafikiria ni jamaa yake. [Yeah. I think he was his relative]
>
> Me: Ni jamaa yake wa jirani yako? [He was the relative of your neighbor?]
>
> Rehema: Eeh, jirani yake dadangu ni jamaa yake. Sasa akamwambia amtafutie mke, wakamtafutia mke. Kwa bahati ndio wakaoana. [Yeah, the neighbor of my sister, it's his relative. Now he told him he'd find him a wife, and they then looked for a wife. Luckily, they got married.] [272]

She then continued in English:

> The situation is this: my sister was live at Unguja. So at Unguja there is neighbor who has heritage from Oman. There someone from Oman and he say to the

[271] Rehema is a pseudonym because she did not want her name used publicly. She was a little vague on exactly when this marriage happened, first saying "miaka mingi tena" [a long time ago]. And then when I pushed for more details, she said "kabla ya mapinduzi, labda baada ya mapinduzi" [before the revolution, maybe after the revolution]. Given that she was born in 1954 and would have been 10 at the time of the Revolution, her hazy memory of the order of events is understandable.

[272] Rehema*, Interview with author in Chake Chake, October 11, 2017.

> neighbor. So after time, he told this neighbor to find a woman in order to marry him. So he decided to bring to my sister and she get married to Oman.[273]

One of the things to note here is, not only did marriage allow her sister to move to Oman, but the role of social connections in the form of the neighbor recommending her to his Omani relative.

However, this path to mobility can also be constrained and difficult for other women. There has been a law in Oman against marrying foreign brides since 1986 as part of a general reversal of the welcoming stance towards migrants that Oman had taken in the 1970s. Rehema's sister would not have been affected by this law as she "married to Oman" in the 1960s, and this practice perhaps was more widespread when moving to Oman was at its height prior to the 1980s anyway. Yet, despite this supposed legal restriction, "marriage to Oman" is still relatively common. At one point in Pemba, for example, the man I was interviewing said that his teenage daughters, Amina and Tausi, would go to Oman to marry soon.[274] What then has the effect of this law been? Circumventing the 1986 marriage law requires getting special permission, a process that is greatly aided by the possession of the social and material capital to grease the wheels of bureaucracy. This situation both excludes less privileged Omani men and limits the options for Swahili women who might want to "marry to Oman."

Rehema might have described her sister's marriage as lucky, but when I asked after Amina and Tausi's feelings about going so far away to marry at such a young age I was told, "It was very difficult for woman taken far away from their family because of the law, Islamic law that allows the woman to be taken by the husband to anywhere, she should be

[273] Rehema*.
[274] Suleiman Hamdan, Interview with author in Chake Chake area. His daughters' names are pseudonyms, as I did not get permission from them to use their names.

ready for this situation so she going there."[275] There is a tendency when writing about mobility to frame the act of moving in and of itself as the end goal. Certainly, this section in framing itself around a discussion of barriers to that mobility and strategies of overcoming those limitations has occasionally fallen into the same trap. However, if the main method of moving to Oman for women was through a marriage that they may or may not have much agency over, it is difficult to justify writing about "marriage to Oman" as a female migration strategy as if (1) the important piece of that marriage was its movement to Oman and (2) the process were initiated and executed by the young women themselves. Surely the key detail for most of these women would have been whether they were able to live a good life after having arrived. Unfortunately, despite the rhetoric among Zanzibari expats of Oman representing a new land of opportunity, this too was a contested and sometimes difficult process.

Jamal—Becoming Omani

I met Jamal at a nice restaurant on the waterfront in Muscat. We both ordered ginger teas while commenting that they always reminded us of Tanzania. As we sipped our tea before our interview started, we chatted about sometimes going up the coast to get our fix of the Zanzibari soup "*urojo*" at the beach BBQ stands which are staffed by recent and generally temporary immigrants from Pemba. The labor migration from East Africa to the Arabian Peninsula that brought those BBQ cooks to a beach in Muscat has been fueled by the idea of Oman as a land of opportunity. This same dream of prosperity in the oil rich Gulf is what drove the wave of immigration to Oman in the 1970s. But even after the difficulty of

[275] Suleiman Hamdan.

simply getting to Oman, the process of becoming Omani was not as simple or uncontested as simply "returning" to an alleged homeland might imply.

Becoming Swahili—Language Barriers

So much of what made moving to Oman feasible depended on connections between East African migrants and their relatives within Oman. But such connections would have been particularly difficult to resurrect when there was a language barrier between East Africans and Omanis. Those Omani-Zanzibaris who had been in Zanzibar for multiple generations had largely stopped speaking Arabic in favor of Swahili. Jamal, for example, arrived in Oman when he was fourteen not knowing any Arabic. Despite this he enrolled in an Arabic speaking school and had to learn rapidly just as older migrants needed to quickly learn Arabic to be employed in Oman. Beyond the practical limitations, not speaking Arabic put in doubt both these "returnees" identity as Arabs and consequentially the justification for allowing them to move in large numbers into Oman. Arabic language ability is not the primary indicator of "Arabness" in Oman, however Arabic fluency is nevertheless an ingredient in the stew of factors that determines ethnic belonging.[276] Being unable to speak Arabic was a barrier to being accepted as fully Arab and thus fully a member of Omani society.

Jamal's struggle to learn Arabic to keep up in school and communicate with his classmates was embedded in a longer history of language divisions and exchanges between Oman and Zanzibar. The following paragraphs jump backwards and then forwards in time from that first few years of Jamal's arrival in Oman to trace this history of language barriers. Two observations arise from this narrative. First, learning to become Arabic

[276] Mandana Limbert, "Caste, Ethnicity, and the Politics of Arabness in Southern Arabia," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 34, no. 4 (2014): 590–98.

speakers was a crucial and difficult step towards becoming Omani for Zanzibari migrants to Oman in the later 20th century. Second, although the exodus of *Waarabu* from Zanzibar in the aftermath of the revolution is popularly understood as the disintegration of previously strong connections between Zanzibar and Oman, the linguistic division between these places actually softened in the aftermath of the revolution as thousands of Swahili speakers made a new home in Oman while maintaining communication with relatives in the islands.

While Jamal in the 1980s had to learn Arabic to hope for an education in Oman, his parents' generation in colonial Zanzibar had been educated in Swahili. To the British observers within the education department of the colonial government, that Swahili should be the language of instruction was only common sense as it was indubitably the vernacular language of the islands. While Arabic was taught as a foreign language starting at age ten in colonial schools in Zanzibar, Swahili was the first language of the majority of Arab children in the islands.[277] To colonial observers, it seemed clear that students did best in those classes that were taught in Swahili, as they could understand the language of instruction better.[278] From this point of view, Arabic was not commonly spoken in Zanzibar and it would therefore be useless to attempt to reinstate the language through the elementary schools when it was not used in the pupil's homes:

> Arabic in their homes has been largely replaced by Swahili. In most Arab homes Swahili is in fact the language of the fireside. When Arab children come to school it is rare even to find a child who knows the Arabic word for 'mother'! Arabic has no practical value or general interest in East Africa and it would be impossible to justify expenditure in attempting to revive it.[279]

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[277] Department of Education, "Minutes," October 6, 1926, AB1.390.33, Zanzibar National Archives.
[278] F.B. Wilson, "Memorandum on Arabic Studies in Arab Classes," March 1927, AB1.390.44, Zanzibar National Archives.
[279] F.B. Wilson, "Letter to the Chief Secretary," September 21, 1938, AB1.390.127, Zanzibar National Archives.

Education is certainly a reflection of what society considers culturally important knowledge, and so it should come as no surprise that Arab Zanzibari adults, who valued the Arabic language for a number of cultural and religious reasons beyond quotidian communication, did not agree with the department of education's reasoning.

Despite not being widely spoken, Arabic was a cultural marker of Arab identity that was granted more importance by the *waarabu* community themselves as Arab nationalist sentiment grew during the later decades of colonial rule. Ironically, Arabic was also a marker of non-elite status in colonial Zanzibar as it was generally more recently arrived *wamanga* who were able to speak it.[280] But in the face of rising Arab nationalism in the 1950s, the status of the Arab language began to change. Independence was on the horizon, and Arab language marked Zanzibar as an Arab nation. Moreover, by incorporating the lower class *wamanga* more firmly under the identity of "Arab," the Arab population could bolster its numbers within Zanzibar, a demographic trick with political implications as nationalists looked forward to a future with an elected legislature. And so while in the 1920s pro-Arabic agitation largely took the form of letters of complaint about the quality of second language education in general,[281] by the 1950s, Arab Zanzibaris were proclaiming Arabic as the primary language of the islands "which naturally and by right should be scheduled first" in the local BBC station's multilingual announcements.[282]

Despite its political renaissance in the decades preceding the Revolution, following the Revolution, Arabic in East Africa was almost a dead language, largely limited to

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[280] F.B. Wilson, "A Note on Adult Literacy in the Rural Areas of the Zanzibar Protectorate," 1939, AB1.390.132, Zanzibar National Archives.
[281] Seyyid Salim bin Kindeh, "Correspondence between Seyyid Salim Bin Kindeh and the Acting Chief Secretary," 1927, AB1.390.45, Zanzibar National Archives.
[282] "A Bull's-Eye," *Al Falaq*, March 28, 1951, Zanzibar National Archives.

religious use and *madrassa* schools. Even the most recent of migrants hesitated to openly speak Arabic in the aftermath of the revolution.[283] And so when Jamal came to Oman after a childhood in his Tanzanian mother's house, he spoke barely a word of the language of his biological father's ancestors. He spoke to me of his difficulties that first year in his new Arabic-speaking school, saying that he did not have many friends at that time and he had to study extra hard to learn Arabic on top of the curriculum. But Jamal did have the advantage of youth and time to learn while still in school. For adults who came to Oman in the 1970s, hoping to participate in the Qaboos' national rebirth, a lack of Arabic was a problem for securing employment. In 1978, Peterson noted of then contemporary Oman that there were a number of barriers to employment in Oman for new arrivals from East Africa. The two chief limitations were the suspicion of being political radicals due to the socialist leanings of 1970s Tanzania and their lack of Arabic fluency.[284]

Beyond the practical limitations of needing a common workplace tongue, language barriers represented a source of prejudice because Omani stereotypes about Zanzibaris only seemed to be reconfirmed by the Swahili language. Beliefs about Arabic as a more pure language spoke to a wider prejudice against Swahili speakers as tainted by their long absence in Africa.[285] A particular issue is that in the Swahili language, there is neither a grammatical gender system nor separate male and female pronouns, both of which exist and are socially important in Arabic. Ghari, an interlocutor in Muscat, told me, "Of course the Swahili male and female, when we speak Arabic we mix them up a lot. Because in Swahili, it doesn't have the difference. If you are male or female, it's okay, it's the same

[283] Anonymous, Interview with author in Jiso, Pemba.
[284] Peterson, *Oman in the Twentieth Century*, 208.
[285] Valeri, "Nation-Building and Communities in Oman since 1970," 484.

words. So that to them [non-Swahili speaking Omanis] is 'oh no, you cannot make it.' It will not be accepted. Some of them even find it insulting, very insulting."[286] He inserted this caution about potentially insulting Arabic speakers by using the wrong pronoun in the middle of a long monologue about Omani taboos against gender mixing and prejudices about Swahili speakers being too "relaxed" in their relations between men and women. It is easy to imagine the ways that linguistic blurring between genders in Swahili language would dovetail with prejudices about social gender interactions among Swahili people in the minds of Arabic speaking Omanis in a similar way that the two seemed connected in Ghari's description.

While the "returnees" needed to learn Arabic, the East African migrants in the 1970s and '80s also brought their own language with them. I interviewed Warith and Fatma in their home in Muscat about the languages they speak. Both of them speak English, Arabic, and Swahili, but learned these languages in different ways. Warith grew up speaking Swahili, first in Zanzibar and then in Dar es Salaam, and was educated in an English-speaking school. Fatma was born in England to a Zanzibari father and grew up speaking English. They have both learned Arabic to live and work in Oman but describe themselves as "not that fluent," especially when compared with their children. Their children speak Arabic outside of the house, English with them at home, and Swahili with their extended family both in Oman and in Tanzania. This is fairly typical; the children of Swahili-speaking informants in Oman were generally described to me as growing up speaking a mix of Arabic, English, and Swahili.[287] Fatma did not learn Swahili until she was an adult living in

[286] Ghari Zaharan al-Mauli, Interview with author at Coconut House in Muscat, June 27, 2018.
[287] For example: Hamdan Saif, Interview with author in Muscat, May 22, 2018.

Oman. She described her decision to learn Swahili as a social one as her aunts, relatives, and friends were all a part of the Swahili-speaking East African community of Muscat.[288] Because of the migrations of the 1970s from East Africa, Swahili is today a common second language in Oman. Due to the patterns of staying with relatives and other social connections upon arrival there are now whole neighborhoods of Muscat in which Swahili is the primary language.[289]

Prejudice, Race, and becoming Zinjibari

Despite their official welcome by the Sultan, Swahili speakers arriving in Oman in the 1970s and 80s encountered distrust and prejudice upon arrival in Oman. One edge of this prejudice is racial divisions between "returnees" and the non-African population of Oman. While officially the Omani way of distinguishing race is via patrilineal descent,[290] in practice, visual and cultural cues are also used to make judgements on ethnic belonging. *Khal* is a derisive term for an Omani man from East Africa that literally translates to "maternal uncle."[291] The term is in reference to generations of interracial marriages in East Africa. Intermarriage with African women, while theoretically not affecting the Arab racial identity of the descendants of such a match, has nonetheless created a new ethnic group that is perceived by non-Swahili speaking Omanis as both foreign and less fully "Arab." Since the definition of being "Arab" in Oman is a lack of connection to slave ancestors, it is no coincidence that another edge to this prejudice is the legacy of slavery. Swahili-speaking Omanis feel a need to distinguish between *khadim*-descended African-Omanis and

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[288] Fatma and Warith al-Kharusi, Interview with author in Muscat, March 3, 2018.
[289] Marc Valeri, *Oman: Politics and Society in the Qaboos State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
[290] Limbert, "Caste, Ethnicity, and the Politics of Arabness in Southern Arabia."
[291] Valeri, "Nation-Building and Communities in Oman since 1970," n. 17.

themselves, at risk of African features, languages, and patterns of behavior being uniformly associated with *khadim*.

Ghari Zaharan al-Mauli owns a restaurant in the suburbs of Muscat called Coconut House, which serves Swahili food. I met with him intending to ask about food, nostalgia, and his business, but what we spent the most time talking about turned out to be prejudice against Swahili-speaking Omanis. Ghari is from Mombasa. When he told me that he considered himself Kenyan, I was initially a little frustrated; he was the ideal interviewee, loquacious, opinionated, and unreserved, but would I even be able to use the information from our very long interview? Afterall, I was researching Zanzibari-Omani connections, not Kenyan. Ghari was neither the first nor the last informant assume that when I said "Zanzibar" I meant "Africa," and it gradually became clear that in Oman "Zanzibari," perhaps more accurately spelled "Zinjibari," was more a racial term than a geographical one. This makes sense as the etymology of "Zanzibar" is from the Arabic term for "black," *zinj*.

In re-understanding one of the terms of my own research as a racial term, some of my earlier interviews were cast in a new light. For example, in one of my first interviews in Oman, an informant got irritated with me for referring to him as Zanzibari when he was from Pemba rather than Unguja, which at the time had confused me as I had met many Pembans in Pemba who freely referred to themselves as Zanzibari and to their archipelago as a whole as Zanzibar. I asked Ghari directly why he called himself Zanzibari when he was from Kenya, and he said, "When I say Zanzibari, I mean Swahili."[292] One of Marc Valeri's informants was more direct with him about the racial nature of the term; speaking about

[292] Ghari Zaharan al-Mauli, Interview with author at Coconut House in Muscat.

being called "Zanzibari" when she was not from Zanzibar, she told him, "It hurts, it is difficult to accept. But the Omani say that we are all black people, so… What can we do?"[293]

There is in general a lot of hesitation to speak about prejudice in Oman. Most of my informants would shrug off any question that I asked about it. My landlord for most of the time that I was in Oman was a Swahili gentleman who both, as an East African "returnee," was a part of a community who had faced prejudice and who I saw daily perpetrate racism against Indians, his Filipina houseworkers, and lower class or more recently immigrated Africans. And yet, when I asked him about what he thought about prejudice in Oman, he maintained that there was no such thing. Ghari was also initially a bit fumbling and hesitant to talk about issues of prejudice, starting this segment of our interview saying, "I think we are… the main issue… the main thing… like for example, the way I dress. …The things which…"[294] When he eventually decided where he wanted to start talking about what was clearly a somewhat sensitive subject, he chose a relatively benign cultural difference as an example of a way that East Africans inadvertently out themselves as "less Omani" than non-Swahili speaking Arabs, namely sitting at tables instead of on the carpet. Notably, this first example was one with which he had every reason to expect that I as a Westerner would sympathize, and I did, joking a little that my knees are not good at sitting on carpets either. After that, the dam was open, and he monologued about prejudices against Swahili Omanis for about fifteen minutes.

The most prominent stereotype that Omanis have against Swahili-speakers is the idea that they are too loose and unconservative in their behavior. Ghari referenced this

[293] Valeri, "Nation-Building and Communities in Oman since 1970," 493 Citing a 2003 interview in Muscat.
[294] Ghari Zaharan al-Mauli, Interview with author at Coconut House in Muscat.

stereotype frequently, saying "When I come here [to Oman], I need to be careful. I can easily be spotted even if I try my best [to blend in] because I would deviate, I would relax, I would behave… Also I've been also thinking to myself, if you are in Africa as a community you are more relaxed, although our family is strict, we are relaxed."[295] Where Ghari positioned himself in relation to the divide between his Omani nationality and his Swahili ethnicity is telling. His language demonstrates his feelings of apartness from Oman, contrasting statements like "we are relaxed" with describing non-Swahili Omanis a minute later as "they will not be open. They will never be open." These non-Swahili Omanis he would sometimes refer to as "real Omanis," betraying a sense of not belonging. And yet, even he was hesitant to be counted among those "loose" Africans. He began his long description of relaxed Swahili culture, by noting that his *own* family was more conservative than the average East African, "My family was a little, I think because they were in government they could not just… they were conservative, even though we lost the [Arabic] language."[296] When he spoke of his own family in connection to the stereotype of the loose Swahili, he seemed to vacillate between being defensive that they were not so flamboyant and being proud that they were not as rigid as non-Swahili Omanis.

The condemnation of being "too loose" is a particularly gendered and sexualized prejudice when it comes to the Omani perception of Swahili interactions between men and women, which while still segregated are considerably less constricted in East Africa than in Oman. Ghari was frustrated that this stereotype limited who he felt like he was allowed to speak to:

[295] Ghari Zaharan al-Mauli.
[296] Ghari Zaharan al-Mauli.

> Although we preserve separation [in East Africa] but when you come here [to Oman], you should speak to women differently than men. You cannot just say anything to women. Although now because we work together, we are trying to ignore that, but the reality yeah. So if you speak to a woman and it looks like you are in a relaxed mode, 'Oh that is a Zanzibari.'[297]

For Ghari, even though he does not agree with such strict gender segregation, he feels he has to follow it not only because breaking with this Omani cultural expectation reveals him as a Zanzibari and thus ruins any attempt to integrate, but also by behaving in accordance to this stereotype he fears he would reaffirm the prejudice in the minds of observing Omanis.

A similar worry about reinforcing negative stereotypes of loose Swahili women likely was in the minds of "returnee" women in the 1980s, at which point most non-Swahili Omani women were just beginning to receive formal educations and had few models of what an educated Omani woman might do outside the house. But in 1984 there were already some East African women working as teachers in the coastal Omani cities.[298] Although more non-Swahili Omani women have since joined the workforce, even still many of the semi-skilled jobs in certain suburbs of Muscat are held by Swahili women, and East African women outnumber non-Swahili Omani women in the workforce.[299] The demographics of the workforce are a source of prejudice originating not only in the Omani fear that Swahili "returnees" have taken all the jobs in the country but also in its seeming confirmation of sexualized prejudices against East Africans.

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[297] Ghari Zaharan al-Mauli.
[298] Eickelman, *Women and Community in Oman*, 206.
[299] Valeri, "Nation-Building and Communities in Oman since 1970."

Conclusion

It was Jamal who originally contacted me for an interview. He noticed me soliciting interviews on a Facebook page devoted to connections between Zanzibar and Oman, a digital space of nostalgia for the Zanzibar of the pre-Revolution. He reached out because he cares deeply about his heritage from Oman and his identity as part of the Zanzibari diaspora. We talked at length about his nostalgia for Zanzibar and the many visits he makes there. Today, Mama Jamal and her second husband live in Oman because when Jamal grew up he paid for their trip, sponsored their visas, arranged the bureaucracy so that they could become permanent residents, and continues to support them financially. He is part of a transnational community of Zanzibari-Omanis who remains deeply invested in the family networks, cultural ties, identities that he maintains within East Africa. The following chapter turns to this transnational community more directly, examining the ways it has expanded since the migrations of the 1970s and '80s and how it continues to be embedded in the lives of my interlocutors.

CHAPTER 4: "IF THERE IS A DRUM WE DANCE TOGETHER:" ZANZIBAR-Oman TRANSNATIONALISM SINCE THE 1980s

Naziha has never left the island of Pemba, where she lives in the peri-urban outskirts of the northern town of Wete. She has relatives living in Oman and can speak of her ancestors who moved from there to Pemba, but on the surface, those connections seem distant and not immediately salient to her life in Pemba. Unlike the majority of the Zanzibaris who I interviewed, she has not kept in close contact with these family members who fled the archipelago during the Revolution, rarely communicating by phone, never having visited relatives in Oman, and only having been visited by those relatives in the over 50 years since they left. And yet, despite having much less contact with the Omani side of her family than was average among my informants, the impression that connections to Oman are not salient to her everyday life is entirely incorrect.

Naziha is part of a transnational community of Omani-Zanzibaris that has, contrary to popular discourse about the end of the "time of the Arabs," only grown more interconnected in the past forty years. These links go beyond a nostalgic transnationalism on the part of Zanzibaris who migrated to Oman, yearning for some pre-Revolution utopia that never was. Rather, I argue in this chapter that comparatively immobile individuals in Zanzibar, like Naziha, actively and strategically cultivated transnational identities and connections to Oman. For Naziha, this means both the construction of a self-consciously cosmopolitan identity as a Swahiliphone Arab and a reliance on regular remittances of money and clothes sent through intermediaries by her Omani relatives.[300]

This chapter sketches the material and emotive features of this transnational community from the mid 1980s to the present. In so doing, it makes the following three

[300] Naziha, Interview with author in Wete region, Pemba, September 23, 2017.

contributions to both the literature and the overarching themes of the dissertation. First, the latter half of this dissertation has maintained an argument for reconsidering the periodization of Arab settlement in Zanzibar. Building on the previous chapter's assertion that the Revolution and the subsequent migration of many Zanzibari Arabs to Oman does not make a sensible end date of Omani connections in Zanzibar, in this chapter I argue that in fact these connections have only intensified in the decades since the migrations of the 1970s.

Second, as this chapter turns more directly to transnational community, it joins a small but growing collection of voices calling for a closer consideration of the role of immobile persons within transnational communities. Peggy Levitt listed the ability to incorporate immobile individuals as one of the reasons thinking of migration as occurring within a single transnational social network rather than simply from one nation-state to another back in 2004, writing:

> One does not have to move to engage in transnational practices. Because people who stay behind are connected to migrants' social networks, they are exposed to a constant flow of economic and social remittances (or ideas, practices, and identities that migrants import) on a regular basis. Even individuals who have barely left their home villages adopt values and beliefs from afar and belong to organizations that operate transnationally.[301]

Despite this being one of the core benefits of considering migration through the lens of transnationalism, the focus of transnationalism historiography has largely been on mobile individuals.[302] While there is growing interest in immobility, there exists still what Kerilyn Schewel has termed a "mobility bias" within scholarship on migration. This chapter builds

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[301] Peggy Levitt, "Transnational Migrants: When 'Home' Means More than One Country," *Migration Information Source*, October 1, 2004.
[302] J. Urry, "Mobile Sociology," *British Journal of Sociology* 51, no. 1 (2000): 185–203; T. Faist, "The Mobility Turn: A New Paradigm for the Social Sciences?," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 36, no. 11 (2013): 1637–46; Schewel, "Understanding Immobility."

on the discussion of the reasons for immobility presented in the prior chapter to consider the transnational aspirations, identities, and livelihoods of those Omani Arabs who stayed in the Zanzibar archipelago.

Third, I have maintained the position that the simplified racial identities inherited from colonial regimes, such as the assumed dichotomy of "Arab" or "African," obscure the rich diversity of both identities and opportunities within those categories. This argument comes in two parts. First, in its discussion of transnational identities and the various ways they are taken up and cast off by my informants, nearly all of whom would describe themselves as *both* African *and* Arab, this chapter presents the variety of overlapping identities beyond this simple racial binary. Individuals within this community have access to an array of identities among which they can strategically choose in different moments.

Second, the reliance on racial groupings obscures the extent that material opportunities differ within the category of Arab. While overlapping identities may suggest a certain fluidity of belonging within this transnational community of Arab Africans, opportunities are more fixed albeit not along the lines of the simplified duality of Arab:have::African:have not. Rather, options for economic advancement and freedom of mobility cut through the bonds of community and even family. This observation has been central to the entirety of the dissertation, but in the decades since the 1970s, wealth in the region has been centered more and more firmly in the oil rich states of the Arabian Peninsula. This chapter describes the role that transnational connections to the Arabian Peninsula have in creating and maintaining divisions *within* the Arab Zanzibari community. Transnational relations and the increased potentiality for mobility to Oman are meaningful material resources for Arab Zanzibaris, but not equally available resources. Naziha, for

example, only receives monetary support from her family in Oman through the intermediary of her father, an intrafamilial dependency that has worked for her even as it has left other of my informants impoverished. Despite the assurances of brotherhood between Omani and Zanzibari on the part of my interlocutors and regional political pundits alike, this is also a relationship of economic dependence *within* social networks in which closer connections to Oman are directly proportional to economic opportunity.

The chapter begins by addressing the popular perception that Omani Arabs all left Zanzibar during the 1970s and 80s as I lay out the shifts that have facilitated an increase in such connections since then. This dissertation has centered itself on the less elite, "*wamanga*" segments of the Arab Zanzibari population, the majority of whom stayed in East Africa following the events of 1964-1970. The second half of the chapter therefore turns more directly to those still living in Zanzibar, interrogating first the ways that immobile individuals craft transnational identities and then to the economic schisms and dependencies within this community.

Interpretations of a departure

"All the Omanis are gone from here:" the story of an ending

My research assistant Hemed and I first came to Naziha's house in search of her husband, who had been recommended to us as a person who knew about history by another interviewee. However, he was not at home when we arrived. Hemed suggested that we could come back another time and pointed out that it was time for him to go to the mosque anyway, but I was excited to get the opportunity to interview a woman alone and so stayed to talk to Naziha while Hemed went to do his prayers. Naziha protested that she knew nothing about "the time of Arabs" [*wakati wa waarabu*], but I assured her that I did

not need her to know about history but rather to just tell me about her own family. This was a familiar exchange that I had with many potential interviewees insecure in their knowledge of history but confident that their own lived experience of transnational connections to Oman could not be of interest to a foreign researcher asking about Omani migration, which seemed an artifact of the distant past. In various ways, they assured me that "those times during Arabs here in Zanzibar" were long gone.[303] Some thought it was particularly important that I understand this as a tragedy of post-Revolution Zanzibar. For example, one man in Pemba, Manga Muhammed, when I asked at the end of our interview an open-ended question about what else I needed to know, became quite impassioned:

> In 1963 there were many Arab tribes here from Oman coming to here, tribes like the Farsi, Nabhan, Siabi, and the Mazrui. Then they were many. There were really many Arabs. There was their work and when it was late in the evening after dinner, they would play the drum and dance together. They held onto their culture and maintained their culture. But now for the first time all the Omanis are gone from here. [1963 palikuwa na makabila mengi ya kiarabu hapa kutoka Oman kuingia hapa, kama kabila la farsi, nabhan, siabi, mazrui. Sasa ilikuwa ni wao ni wengi. Ni wengi sana waarabu. Ilikuwa kazi yao ikishafika time ya jioni washashiba, wakicheza ngoma zao za zereza. Wanashikilia tamaduni zao na kudumisha tamaduni zao. Lakini sasa kwa muda huu kwanza Waoman yeyote hapa hayupo.][304]

There were many changes precipitated by the 1964 Revolution—the fall of the Omani-descended Sultanate, the death and imprisonment of many thousands of Arabs, the emigration of many thousand more out of the islands. But it strikes me as odd that this insistence that "*all* the Arabs left" is one change that so many of my interlocutors in Zanzibar perceived. It was a common enough assertion that I had a set response in my interview questions to it, namely to use it as a launching off point to ask about why they themselves had stayed if "everyone" left. Because the truth is that not only did *many* Arabs

[303] Ali Seif, Interview with author in Jumbi Kigorofani, March 31, 2017.
[304] Manga Muhammed, Interview with author in Tumbe, Pemba, October 22, 2017.

stay in Zanzibar,[305] but also they do continue to "maintain their culture" in numerous small ways. In fact, Manga Muhammed himself had just earlier in that same interview told me about how not only did he and about half of his relatives stay in Pemba but his uncle had moved *to* Pemba from Oman in 1976, at the height of when "everyone" was supposedly leaving.

This section argues that not only did the changes precipitated by the Revolution fail to end the transnational exchange between Oman and Zanzibar, various factors have occasioned an intensification of such connections in recent decades. Specifically, it considers first the effect of many Zanzibaris moving to Oman not as a "return" marking an ending but rather as a renewal of transnational exchanges. Then it turns to a series of politico-economic shifts in the past half century that have facilitated increased interactions. Finally, it concludes with what is likely the most crucial change—the introduction of new and far faster technologies of communication and mobility.

Or, the story of a fresh wave of connections

Over the course of the 1970s-80s tens of thousands of Arab Zanzibaris moved to Oman and many others to various parts of the rest of the world. This exodus has been termed a "return," but was in actuality a fresh wave of mobility as Swahiliphone individuals who had ancestry, but little tangible prior connection to Oman, abruptly moved across the sea to the distant land of their ancestors. Let's pause to reflect on the implications of these migrations on the state of transnational connections between Zanzibar and Oman. Certainly, connections did not end. But more than that, the surge of people moving between the two places resulted in a rapid expansion of connections. Suddenly individuals in

[305] See chapter 3

Zanzibar did not simply live with the distant knowledge that their grandfather had moved from Oman, but instead had sisters and nephews living there.

The tens of thousands of individuals who moved to Oman from East Africa in the late 20th century were part of a social network of even more people, many of whom had not gone anywhere, extending rhizomatically as a massive web of transnational connections. Estimates for how many migrants traveled between East Africa and Oman vary. In the previous chapter, I noted that by 1975 approximately 10,000 Zanzibaris had moved to Oman, but in truth, that was only the first five years after Sultan Qaboos opened the doors of the country to the descendants of Omani expats.[306] People kept coming. By the time the scholar Paul Zeleza visited Oman in 2012, he estimated "at the very least there are 100,000 East Africans in Oman; probably a lot more. This is a sizable community given that the country's population is about 2 million."[307] Only a few years prior, Madawi al-Rasheed had estimated that there were closer to 300,000 Zanzibaris in Oman.[308] I suspect that these numbers are somewhat inflated as both al-Rasheed and Zeleza's primary informant, Ibrahim Noor Shariff, have certain political motives for emphasizing the substantial nature of the East African population in Oman. No real effort has been made on the part of the Omani state to count the Swahiliphone population in its country, and "Zanzibari" is neither a category in Omani population or census data nor a term with a consistent definition within Oman, referring variously to all Africans or to those from the island of Unguja and

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[306] Number comes from: John Townsend, *Oman: The Making of a Modern State* (Croom Helm, 1977), 55.
[307] Paul Zeleza, *In Search of African Diasporas: Testimonies and Encounters* (Durham, N.C: Carolina Academic Press, 2012), 525.
[308] Madawi al-Rasheed, "Transnational Connections and National Identity: Zanzibari Omanis in Muscat," in *Monarchies and Nations: Globalisation and Identity in the Arab States of the Gulf*, ed. Paul Dresch and James Piscatori (London: Tauris, 2005), 100.

many shades of nuance between. So we are left with nothing resembling an exact count of East Africans moving to Oman and instead a vague impression of "many."

But the impact on transnational connections goes well beyond simply the "many" individuals who themselves moved to Oman. Each of these people was tied to a network of connections both within East Africa and increasingly within Oman and indeed the rest of the world. In interpreting this movement as an ending to the Omani presence in East Africa, we would be obligated to accept its designation as a "return" migration, along with the normalization of late-20th-century ethnic nationalism that is implied by describing the migration of thousands of East Africans to a country they had never visited as a "return" of "Arabs" to "Arabia."[309] Rather, in broadening the scope to include the social networks still in East Africa, we can begin to see the ways that these migrations offered opportunities for the expansion of these connections.

For instance, migrations occasioned some to make contact with distant relations that they had not known for some generations. I interviewed several families in Zanzibar who had lost all contact with relatives in Oman at some point in the generations since the initial arrival of their ancestors to Zanzibar, only to reunite in recent decades. Abdullah for example, told me that a distant cousin from Oman had visited them in Zanzibar during the previous year, 2016. That cousin, who had become interested in tracking down the branch of the family that had gone to Zanzibar generations ago, lived in the same village that Abdullah's ancestor had come from. His first attempt had been to look at the family's genealogical records, what Abdullah referred to as the "family key." When that failed, he asked various other relatives about what they might know about these missing Zanzibari

[309] See chapter 3 for more discussion of the problems of conceptualizing this migration as a "return"

family members. Some of those relatives had themselves lived in Zanzibar and had moved to Oman during the 1970s. They had found their Omani relations upon arrival in Oman by going to their ancestral village and asking the local Sheikh[310] if he knew the descendants of their known ancestors in Oman, a task for which the "family key" would have been very useful.

Engseng Ho's work on the Yemeni diaspora has demonstrated the importance of genealogy among the Hadrami as a genre rich with meanings beyond a mere accounting of descent.[311] A similar process was at work among the Omanis of the Indian Ocean, who understand their family trees, often physical works of art, as connecting themselves to a network of belonging that spans both space and time. And it was through artifacts of connection during the migrations of the 1970s that physical contact with long lost relations could be forged. Relocating family by going to an ancestral village and searching for the names on a family tree was the most common way reconnections occurred among my informants. Abdullah's cousin had some success by asking those relatives who had lived in Zanzibar, and they pointed him to Abdullah and other family members in East Africa.

Abdullah concluded this narrative by saying, "[those relatives] know different family members in Zanzibar so [when the cousin] asked, they say 'this family you can find them in this village or in this town or in this place, you sill find them here.' And you know, now because there is development of communication and technology, [our cousin] can know where he is visiting."[312] This last comment foreshadows an important piece of the growth of connections. New technologies enabled his cousin not only to quickly look up the

[310] a learned man, Islamic elder, or local leader
[311] Ho, *The Graves of Tarim*; See also: McDow, *Buying Time*, 2018.
[312] Abdullah, Interview with author at SUZA, March 31, 2017.

family's location in Zanzibar but also to contact them to arrange a visit and then to hop on a plane for a quick trip to the islands. But before all of that, new movement between Zanzibar and Oman in the 1970s and '80s spurred growing interest in maintaining such connections. The "returns," rather than marking an ending, allowed these families to reestablish lost connections.

Why does addressing the oversights of the "returning Arabs" narrative matter? By reperiodizing, we are forced to reconceptualize what large numbers of East Africans moving to Oman meant. Observers in earlier decades had incomplete information, which perhaps could have been signaling the abandonment of the Swahili coast in the hearts, minds, and wallets of "returnees" to Oman and a similar rejection of all things Arab by Zanzibaris. But that is not what happened. From our contemporary vantage point, the exchange was more indicative of renewed transnational identities and connections. In expanding the timeline, what may have appeared to be a return migration marking the ending of a transnational exchange between Oman and the Swahili coast is revealed to be a renewal of transnational connections that have real material, emotive, and social meaning.

The politico-economic undergirding of transnational exchange

On the subject of Zanzibar's connections to Oman, Mohammed Ali Bakari noted as an aside in his survey of Zanzibari politics, "Whereas the official relations between the governments of the two countries have been highly variable, the relations between Omanis and Zanzibaris have been more or less constant."[313] On first reading this passage, I found myself nodding along with Bakari. I agreed with his assertion that political discord between the two governments did little to cool the connections felt between the actual citizenry of

[313] Mohammed Ali Bakari, *The Democratisation Process in Zanzibar: A Retarded Transition*, Hamburg African Studies (Hamburg: Institut für Afrika-Kunde, 2001).

the two nations. However, upon reflection, calling such relations "constant" does not actually go far enough, as in truth the ability of people to move long distances easily and to communicate rapidly has changed, and generally increased, over time. Moreover, we cannot discount the role of governments, macroeconomics, and global politics. After all, it was the pro-immigration policies of the Omani state, the explosion of oil onto the global economy, and the anti-Arab stance of the Zanzibari Revolutionary Government that combined to promote the mass migration of the 1970s to Oman. Politico-economic events in the decades since have continued to expand opportunities for fostering connections.

The big-picture shift noted here is this: in the 1970s, Zanzibar was intentionally isolated and actively distrustful of Oman, but strong economic pulls and Oman's own welcoming policies promoted migration anyway. By the 1990s, however, the two governments were once again declaring their longstanding brotherhood and promoting both Omani investment in Zanzibar and the frequent travel of Omanis to Zanzibar. Migration during this period was at its zenith in the 1970s and had slowed in the following decades. Mobility and connections, however, only increased during that same period. Naziha's relatives who left in the 1970s, were not able to visit until the 1990s. This pattern was by far the norm among my informants in Zanzibar. Even those whose relatives in Oman visit multiple times a year in recent years, had a two to three decade gap in seeing their family members who had left in the late 1960s through the '70s. The reason for this change can largely be laid at the feet of two changing structures: (1) regional politico-economics and (2) technologies of globalization. Let's begin with the first of these.

In the 1970s, Zanzibar pursued a policy of political and economic isolation from the "West" and particularly from Oman, which was perceived as a threat to the "African"

Revolutionary hegemony. This stance discouraged the frequent travel to Zanzibar and sending of gifts that have so marked the exchanges of later decades between Omani and Zanzibari family members, even while it ironically exacerbated the economic pressures that motivated migration. While Zanzibaris largely ignored the post-Revolution government's efforts to block their moving out of the islands, these legal strictures made any sort of return visits by ex-Zanzibaris risky. My research assistant Hemed claimed that Fuad, a man he located for me to interview in Pemba, had used what Hemed called "panya routes," or "mouse routes," to smuggle himself into and out of the islands during the 1970s and '80s. Fuad himself was more vague and would only use a neutral second person to describe the risks of this journey:

> I don't know what the government was afraid of, but even getting a passport to go to Tanganyika, you couldn't get it, so you go through the smuggling routes between here and Tanganyika, but if you come back… if you are arrested, you'll be locked up. [Sijui serikali ilikuwa inahofia nini, lakini kupata hata pasipoti ya kwenda Tanganyika ulikuwa hupati, ila unakwenda kwa njia za magendo hapa na Tanganyika, lakini ukirudi… ukikamatwa unawezwa kuwekwa ndani].[314]

The heightened instability of the immediate post-Revolution period transitioned directly into economic collapse in Tanzania more generally. Some of Zanzibar's economic situation can be laid at the feet of embezzlement and mismanagement on the part of the Revolutionary government. However, the 1978 liberalization of Tanzania's economy and the simultaneous Kagera War against Uganda resulted in economic shocks for the entire country, particularly as they came on the heels of both a drought and skyrocketing oil prices.[315] The economic crisis in Zanzibari, and indeed in mainland Tanzania where many of those who left Zanzibar in the immediate wake of the Revolution had gone, represented

[314] Fuad*, Interview with author in Kengeja, Pemba.
[315] Shao, *The Political Economy of Land Reform in Zanzibar*, 3–4.

strong economic pressure to migrate elsewhere, especially when combined with the racial politics of post-Revolutionary Zanzibar.

The first real steps towards normalizing international relations with Oman, as well as with much of the rest of the world, came in the mid-1980s by way of President Ali Hassan Mwinyi's efforts to distance Tanzania from Nyerere's socialist politics and the associated Cold War orientations of the country's foreign relations.[316] The 1988 establishment of an Omani consulate in Zanzibar and a series of state visits solidified the normalization of international relations. By 1991, the official line of the Zanzibari government regarding relations with Oman had changed from the post-Revolution distrust to proclamations of a cordiality "beyond the borders of friendship" between the two nations "as if there was a telepathy in between communicating with us."[317]

The easing of political tension between Oman and Zanzibar coincided with burgeoning wealth in the Arabian Peninsula. Oman entered the oil industry in earnest late compared to its neighbors, but following the 1970 coup, Qaboos pursued a policy of rapid investment in oil. The two following decades witnessed rapid expansion in infrastructure availability, education, and individual wealth for Omanis. By the time Zanzibar was politically open to receiving Omani visitors, these long-absent cousins were in a financial position to not only visit but to pay for Zanzibari family members to come to Oman, either for a visit or to stay.

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[316] James R. Brennan, Andrew Burton, and Yusufu Qwaray Lawi, eds., *Dar Es Salaam: Histories from an Emerging African Metropolis* (Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa, 2007), 252.

[317] President Salmin Amour, Press Conference, November 5, 1991; cited in: Ahmed Omar, "Zanzibar-Oman Relations: A Historical Perspective" (Unpublished MA Thesis, Dar es Salaam, University of Dar es Salaam, 1996), 84.

However, the political landscape within Oman had also shifted since the 1970s. While once they had been eager to welcome those descendants of Omani expats into the national renaissance project, increasingly beginning in the 1980s Oman shifted away from these policies. While Oman as a country was still deeply invested in their "friendship" with East Africa, and particularly Zanzibar, it increasingly resembled a relationship of foreign investment. For example, in the late 1980s through the 1990s, Oman was particularly invested in Zanzibar's health sector, first sponsoring the 1986 construction of the Mbweni Health College and in the decade that followed supplying medicines, medical equipment, and medical training at the college.[318] But this financial investment was happening simultaneously with a number of measures designed to decrease easy immigration into the country. They phased out the policy of welcoming everyone who had ancestry from Oman. The feeling that new migrants would be threats to Omani jobs can be seen in successive waves of nationalization of various industries. This pattern in Omani economic strategy continues to the present, as every time oil revenues fall, Gulf countries scramble to find jobs for their own citizens by banning foreign workers from whole fields. Most recently, this year Oman has nationalized many jobs associated with insurance and the auto industry.[319]

The effect of these shifting policies was that there were fewer opportunities for new migrants to both legally enter Oman and to find successful careers once there. Although there are many counter examples of more recent arrivals to Oman, the pattern of connection over the course of the 1980s and '90s had shifted once again. No longer was it a

[318] Omar, "Zanzibar-Oman Relations: A Historical Perspective," 78–79.
[319] "Job Nationalisation Reflects Oman's Determination to Implement Reforms," *The Arab Weekly*, January 25, 2021.

steady flow of people out from East Africa, but rather a relatively settled community living dispersed across an ocean. But since the mid-1990s, connection has increased even as migration has ebbed. My informants' relatives started visiting. Some, like Naziha's, only once, but others came multiple times a year. In the wake of visits came boxes of gifts, Western Union transfers of increasing amounts of money, frequent phone calls, Facebook messages, and WhatsApp group chats. Which brings us to the next major transformation: changing technologies.

The new techno-geography

Air Travel and the shrinking earth

I asked Naziha, "Are there people you communicate with often in Oman by phone; do your relatives communicate?"[320] To which she responded that her relatives only contact her father because she does not speak Arabic and she does not herself own a cellphone.[321] It is hard to overstate the truly extraordinary extent that changing technologies of travel and communication have reshaped the geographies of the world in the past half century, bringing seemingly distant spaces like East Africa and the Arabian Peninsula into close digital proximity. Where once a letter full of the most pressing family news might be entrusted to a neighbor as they boarded a dhow with the hope that it might be delivered in a matter of months, now casual conversation between members of a social network scattered across the globe can occur in real time and a visit for a holiday would take only a few hours on an airplane. But, as Naziha demonstrates, these are also expensive

[320] Me: "Kuna watu ambao mnawasiliana mara nyingi kule Oman kwa kutumia simu; jamaa zako mnawasiliana?"
Naziha: "Jamaa zangu wanawasiliana na mzee tu, ushafahamu? Ehne, kwa mimi hatuwasiliani, mimi sijui kiarabu na sina simu."
[321] Naziha, Interview with author in Wete region, Pemba.

technologies not necessarily available to all, a fact worth remembering even as this section expounds on the ways that shifting technologies have enabled a dramatic expansion of quotidian transnational travel and communication.

Elsewhere in this dissertation I have written of the comparative ease of dodging visa requirements and other bureaucratic limitations to movement by traveling by dhow instead of airplane.[322] But in terms of time, safety, and effort, the superiority of planes is obvious. And yet, their takeover as the primary choice of travel between Zanzibar and Oman was later than I originally expected. In one of my earlier interviews, I somewhat naively assumed that my informant's aunts had gone by air to Oman when they left Zanzibar in the early 1970s, but the man I was interviewing laughed and corrected me saying, "No, it's not a plane ticket. They went through ships."[323] My early assumption that airplanes would feature heavily in this exodus did not come out of nowhere as today air travel *does* hold a near monopoly on travel between Zanzibar and Oman. So what changed? And how has this shift affected the lived geographies of this community?

The most important shift towards air travel occurred in stages over the course of the past 60 years, namely the gradual democratization of airfare prices. Erik Gilbert has identified the 1970s as the beginning of any meaningful amount of air travel by East Africans, writing "since the 1970s the types of encounters that once took place in port cities now happen in the restless transience of airports."[324] However, among my interviewees, all but the wealthiest Muscat elites could not afford an airplane ticket in the 1970s. Those of

[322] See especially chapter 1
[323] Salha, Interview with author in Tunguu, Unguja, June 5, 2017.
[324] Erik Gilbert, "Coastal East Africa and the Western Indian Ocean: Long-Distance Trade, Empire, Migration, and Regional Unity, 1750-1970," *The History Teacher* 36, no. 1 (November 1, 2002): 30, https://doi.org/10.2307/1512492.

my informants who flew to Oman largely did so in the 1980s or later. Falling global airline prices over the course of the early 1980s largely resulted from a global trend towards deregulation of the airline industry as well as the resolution of the 1970s oil crisis.[325] In the wake of deregulation came new budget airlines as well as the expansion of routes available from existing carriers, both leading to lowered prices.[326] So much so, in fact, that budget airlines have in the decades since the early 1980s occasionally been accused of predatory pricing, in other words of intentionally pricing airfare at a loss in order to bankrupt their competitors.[327]

While lower budget flights started to be available in the 1980s, airlines intentionally obfuscated access to cheaper fares. Deregulation allowed for "discount fares," which was at the time a "confusing variety" of variable pricing.[328] For example, in 1981, the Islamic Aviation Organization sought to encourage pan-Arabism and possibly the taking of the Hajj among young people by offering a 50% discount for Muslim youth to travel between Arab and Islamic States.[329] While it is unlikely that this particular discount affected anyone's travel between the Swahili coast and Oman, this atmosphere of airline travel as the new global norm had established itself by the 1980s. Airline prices fell as the airline industry expanded. Additionally, the availability of lower cost fuel and industry efforts to attract

[325] InterVISTAS-EU Consulting Inc., *The Impact of International Air Service Liberalisation on the United Arab Emirates* (Agenda for Freedom, 2009); Fred Smith and Braden Cox, "Airline Deregulation," The Library of Economics and Liberty, n.d., econlib.org.
[326] John Coyle, Edward Bardi, and Robert Novack, *Transportation* (St. Paul, MN: West Publishing Company, 1994).
[327] Stephan Brady and William Cunningham, "Exploring Predatory Pricing in the Airline Industry," *Transportation Journal* 41, no. 1 (2001): 5–15.
[328] "Air-Travel Changes: Air Travelers Who Can Make Sense of the Confusing Variety of New Discount Fares and Airline Routes Can Reap Big Savings," *U.S. News & World Report*, February 5, 1979, sec. Newsletters.
[329] "Reduced Fares for Islamic Air Travel," *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, March 31, 1981, sec. The Middle East and Africa: Weekly Economic Report.

new markets also played a role. And finally, new technologies in the 1990s that could sort flights by price, like Expedia and Priceline, made the variable pricing of airfare legible to the consumer, accelerating competition to be the top, i.e. cheapest, search result, although travel agents in the 1980s also served this role.[330]

While air travel undoubtedly became both more accessible in the region over time and gradually took over as the most common form of travel between East Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, that does not mean that it has been a viable option for the average Zanzibari. Airline prices have fallen, but they remain extremely expensive in a country that, even after a period of economic growth, in 2018 still had 49.4% of its population living below the international poverty line of US$1.90 per day.[331] Of the minority of my informants who had ever been to Oman at all, nearly all of them said that wealthier relatives in Oman had paid for their tickets.

Beyond individual purchases of airfare for family members, Oman as a country directly invested in the ease of travel into and out of Zanzibar by way of funding the redevelopment of the Zanzibari airport. Beginning in 1984, the Zanzibar Revolutionary Government announced their willingness to allow international flights to land in Zanzibar, in an effort to encourage tourism.[332] But five years later, a guide for tourists dismissed the idea of flying into Zanzibar as "erratic" and instead recommends the new hydrofoil ferry,

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[330] Derek Thompson, "How Airline Ticket Prices Fell 50 Percent in 30 Years (and Why Nobody Noticed)," *The Atlantic*, February 28, 2013.
[331] World Bank Group: Poverty and Equity, "Poverty and Equity Brief: Africa Eastern and Southern: Tanzania," April 2021, worldbank.org/poverty.
[332] "Tanzania: Plans to Allow International Traffic at Zanzibar Airport," *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, September 25, 1984.

listing its price as £11 (adjusting for inflation, £28 in 2020).[333] For most locals, the five to ten hour sail to Dar es Salaam by dhow would have been a more affordable option. The travel reporter describes his voyage in 1989 thusly, "the small vessel, of indeterminate age, was being loaded with 150 passengers. The captain and a fat agent argued over last-minute details. Women and babies were directed to the best places on or under the quarterdeck. Men had to make do on the open deck. I grabbed some space near the mast and found enough room to just about fold up my legs."[334] Not the easiest journey, but arguably easier than flying into Zanzibar would have been at the time.

The Zanzibar airport was in alarmingly bad shape, a fact hinted at in the same press release that announced their move towards encouraging international flights. The 1984 BBC report ends with the somewhat worrying sentence, "On the problem of lights at the Zanzibar airport, he [the minister of communications and transport] said this would be solved next month."[335] But there were more problems than a lack of lights. In the late 1980s, the Zanzibar airport was in danger of being shut down due to a failure to meet safety standards. In response, the Omani government donated spare parts, miscellaneous chemicals, two expert technicians, and five crash tenders.[336] They also invested heavily in redeveloping the airport, with the BBC reporting:

> The governments of Zanzibar and Oman concluded an agreement on a project to improve Zanzibar airport on 25th August. The project, to commence in November this year, aims to increase air traffic between Zanzibar and foreign countries. The

[333] Richard Lutz, "Island on the Way to Nowhere: Richard Luz Found Old Zanzibar Heavy with the Scent of Spice and Still Haunted by Its Colonial Past," *The Independent*, June 24, 1989.
[334] Lutz.
[335] "Tanzania: Plans to Allow International Traffic at Zanzibar Airport."
[336] Bakari, *The Democratisation Process in Zanzibar*, 2001, 194.

> work on the airport is expected to be carried out by foreign companies at a cost of 5,000,000 US dollars. [US$11,600,000 adjusted for inflation][337]

The completion of this project in 1993 was a step towards a shrinking geography of imagined space between Zanzibar and Oman. It paved the way for the direct Muscat-Zanzibar flights that have zipped between the two ports multiple times a day since the 1990s. A few decades previous, travel had been largely bound to the monsoon schedule. Dhow travel meant months on a small boat, a return only possible when the seasonal winds shifted directions. It was a journey. But airfare has shrunk this space such that from Zanzibar Town it takes about as much time to get to the northern tip of the island as it would to fly to Oman. Air travel's "leveling effect," as Jeremy Prestholdt terms it, not only turns travel into a "transitory event,"[338] but allows for a world where for someone living in Zanzibar, Muscat could not only *feel* closer than, say, a rural area of mainland Tanzania, but might in truth be quite literally quicker and easier to get to.

Digital transnationalism in the time of WhatsApp

Communication has gone through a similarly dramatic transformation as first telephones and then internet became commonplace on the islands. This is perhaps best illustrated with a series of examples of communication between Zanzibar and Oman at various points in time in the lives of my interviewees. First, an elderly informant in northern Pemba, Alfan Nasru, described his ability, or lack there of, to keep in contact with his parents in Oman during the decade prior to the Revolution. He came to Zanzibar with an uncle when he was a child and lived with his mother's family who were Pemban. I asked

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[337] "Tanzania: Omani Assistance in Improving Zanzibar Airport," *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, September 6, 1988.
[338] Jeremy Prestholdt, "Locating the Indian Ocean: Notes on the Postcolonial Reconstitution of Space," *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 9, no. 3 (July 3, 2015): 448.

about how he used to communicate with his parents, and he explained that at that time he had no telephone. He wrote letters and sent them back on dhows for someone traveling to Oman to deliver on his behalf.[339] This communication by an intermediary dhow traveler was a common refrain in my interviews about communication prior to the last few decades of the 20th century.

Moving forward in time, Said, who I interviewed on the university campus in Tunguu, told me about his memories of his childhood in the 1980s, by which point, communication had become much quicker. Said's mother used to carry letters between family members, similar to the older system of sending letters by dhow traveler. However, his mother's frequent travels were by airplane rather than dhow and much quicker. In addition, Said's family growing up got a landline telephone in the late 1980s: "My mother used to call them a lot and surprisingly here [in Zanzibar] it was cheaper than there [in Oman]. It's still cheaper calling them [than for Omanis to call to Zanzibar]."[340]

Doing interviews in 2017, my recordings are full of interruptions by cell phones, the familiar chirps of a new WhatsApp message or Facebook notification as frequent a background noise as cars going past or children chattering outside. More than once, an interviewee would take a call in the middle of talking about their family in Oman and upon hanging up would tell me "that was them on the phone." I interviewed Saif Mohammed, a young man in his 20s, in his home in Bububu, one of the peri-urban neighborhoods in the outer reaches of Zanzibar Town. When I asked about communication, his immediate thought, like that of many of my informants, was of social media, saying he mostly used WhatsApp and Facebook to keep in daily touch with "not all of them but some of them

[339] Alfan Nasru, Interview with author in northern Pemba, September 12, 2017.
[340] Said Said, Interview with author at SUZA, March 31, 2017.

especially my aunts. So many times we just talk."[341] Like Said, Saif too reflected on a time of transition as communication technologies within his own family changed. When he was a child in the 1990s, his parents had a landline telephone and would call family in Oman about once a month and through the intermediaries of his parents "they gave their regards to me and I said gave my regards to them."[342] But now he uses social media not only to communicate frequently with his aunts in Oman but also to get family news and gossip via the massive family WhatsApp group. WhatsApp has become a ubiquitous social media platform on the continent due to being free to use (unlike SMS), its ability to send voice messages, the lack of charges for even international calls made over Wi-Fi in the app, and being able to keep the same account despite ever-changing SIM cards.[343]

The observation that digital technologies have fundamentally altered global geographies is perhaps obvious at this point, having spawned the entire field of digital geography.[344] But for Zanzibaris, this new digital landscape emerged in the aftermath of a major wave of migration, roughly simultaneous to the easing of political relations and expanding opportunities for rapid travel. While my interviewees mourned the time of the Arabs, the world had shifted around them, bringing those distant relations in Arabia closer than they had ever been via the contracted techno-geography of airplanes and digital shared spaces. Janet McIntosh writes of the digital landscapes of the Giriama of coastal Kenya that, far from concerns about a flattening globalization of the digital, mobile phones

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[341] Saif Mohammed, Interview with author in Bububu, April 21, 2017.
[342] Saif Mohammed.
[343] Heidi Vogt, "Africa: What's up with WhatsApp?," *The Wilson Quarterly*, Spring 2020; "What's up with WhatsApp? How WhatsApp Is Used and Misused in Africa," *The Economist*, July 18, 2019.
[344] For a recent collection of current directions in this field see: James Ash, Rob Kitchin, and Agnieszka Leszczynski, eds., *Digital Geographies* (London: Sage, 2018).

have provided young people with new ways to engage in local concerns.[345] For the Zanzibari-Omani community, this same technology has allowed for a redefinition of what "local" even means, spanning a physical geography that once would have taken months to traverse by dhow.

Immobile transnationals

But Naziha, like so many of my interviewees in Zanzibar, does not fly on those frequent fast planes to Muscat. She neither keeps in touch with distant relatives nor owns a phone onto which she could download WhatsApp. What does the shrinking imagined space between these two locations mean to her? How is she part of this "imagined community" that has sprung up in the hypermobile and hyperconnected spaces between Zanzibar and Oman while she is living on the wrong side of the digital divide and without the mobility that would enable direct engagement with transnational experiences?

Despite these limitations, while Naziha and I sat in her living room, the material evidence of a life touched by transnational connection surrounded us. We sat in a house that had been partially paid for by money her father received from Omani relatives. We were alone because her children were at school, their fees paid by those same monetary gifts. A picture of the Sultan Qaboos hung on the wall in silent reminder, like a flag half forgotten in the corner of a classroom, unremarked upon but omnipresent in so many of my informants' homes. Naziha wore her black Omani-style abaya and matching hijab, and offered me the small cups of coffee and dates that commence any visit or serious conversation within the Omani-Zanzibari community. Although Naziha had never left Pemba and maintained limited contact with her relatives in Oman, she had cultivated a

[345] Janet Mcintosh, "Mobile Phones and Mipoho's Prophecy: The Powers and Dangers of Flying Language," *American Ethnologist* 37, no. 2 (2010): 337–53.

transnational identity and adorned her home in its fingerprints, carrying it with her in her consciousness and draped on her body wherever she goes. In this, Naziha is not an exception among my interlocutors. Although the vast majority of the people I interviewed in Zanzibar had never been to Oman, their lives are intertwined on both an emotive and material level with that distant place.

Creating transnational identities from home

Immobile individuals in Zanzibar demonstrate a high degree of what Keumjae Park calls "cognitive border-crossing" in the ways that they construct their own identities.[346] They appeal to a normalized mixing between Arab and African in defense of transnational belonging in the face of alienation in the geographical space of the nation state. When I started interviews in Zanzibar for this project in 2017, I struggled to find a way to refer to the transnational community that so clearly existed in exchanges and frequent visits between Oman and Zanzibar. I searched in vain for a collective noun to encapsulate this group. Asking my informants in Zanzibar directly about what identities they claimed as their own, as many embraced "Omani-Zanzibari," "Waswahili," "Omani-Arab," or "Tanzanian" as rejected it; most accepted "Arab," but extending this word even a few decades into the past, *waarabu* implied a more elite identity than my primary subjects would have claimed and in today's usage seemed so vague as to be almost meaningless besides. Giving up on naming, I instead sought descriptive prose, asking in interviews open-ended questions about how my informants would describe the relationship between Omanis and Zanzibaris, to which I perhaps understandably received a lot of bemused shrugs and the occasional assurance that "There is no difference [between Omanis and

[346] Park, "Constructing Transnational Identities without Leaving Home."

Zanzibaris]. If there is a drum we dance together. [Hapa hamna tofauti. Waarabu wote ni wamoja tu. Kama kuna ngoma tunacheza wote.]"[347]

What I was actually looking for, although I did not know how to communicate the idea, were the ways that members of this community constructed their own identities *as* community members. How did they articulate to themselves and others that they were enmeshed in a transnational network that had emotive resonance in their lives beyond the simple presence of a sister or aunt in distant Oman. Scholars have approached this question of transnational identity construction from a varied array of theoretical and methodological approaches. In my search for naming conventions, besides desiring a referential vocabulary less clunky than "people with relatives in Oman," I implicitly viewed my interlocutors as possessing a multinational belonging comparable that described in Nancie Gonzalez's study of Garifunas migrants who thought of themselves as belonging to two nations simultaneously.[348] But my informants in Zanzibar more often than not seemed to struggle to think of themselves as fully belonging in *either* nation. For them, the more apt comparison might rather have been that of Michael Kearney's description of Oaxacan identities as a subversive social space that existed outside of the geographic space of any nation state.[349]

I was told repeatedly of the barriers for Arabs in Zanzibar from fully participating in the benefits of citizenship: from difficulties to getting a passport to needing to take an extra class consisting largely of Revolutionary party politics propaganda to get a teaching

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[347] Nassir Mohammed, Interview with author at Jumbi Kigorofani, March 31, 2017.
[348] Nancie Gonzalez, *Sojourners of the Caribbean: Ethnogenesis and Ethnohistory of the Garifuna* (Urbana, Ill: University of Illinois Press, 1988).
[349] Michael Kearney, "Transnational Oaxacan Indigenous Identity: The Case of Mixtecs and Zpotecs," *Identities* 7, no. 2 (2000): 173–95.

certificate renewed. But my informants in Zanzibar were also unwilling to claim an Omani identity, too aware of the fact that they lacked the trappings of citizenship that seemed so linked to that word—the powerful passport, oil-rich economic context, and developed infrastructure. In interviews, my informants relied on a flexible mental landscape to simultaneously defend their belonging and express their alienation. To do this, they strategically deployed a variety of constructions of their identities, presenting Zanzibariness and Omaniness as something contested and deploying notions of normality and mixed-ness.

Here are two examples, both of which are long explanations given to me by interviewees responding to my question about what identity was most important to them. While some informants gave thoughtful reflections, most responded to this question by shrugging and giving a broad answer like "Tanzanian" or "Arab." Said, who I interviewed at the university in central Unguja, started out thinking along those same lines, firmly stating "not Omani; I am Tanzanian," a simple statement of citizenship. He immediately called that confidence into doubt, however, continuing "I don't know; wote [all of the above]—I am just normal." He went on to explain what he meant by the term "normal" in terms of racial mixture, saying, "You know Zanzibar community it's like the normal thing to be mixed, Arabs, Indians, Africans." In so saying, he defends not only his "normality" as a mixed Arab-African but also his belonging in the Zanzibar community. He then complicated matters further by pointing out his estrangement from local society on the basis of the mixture that made him "normal": "Now it comes since the politics has changed, now there is a little bit under the carpet but how we live, it is normal life but still you can't get 100% trust because I don't see Arabs in the army or the police," referring to Arab alienation from Zanzibari

state structures. I tried to move along to the next question, but Said was not quite done thinking about this issue and circled back to it. Wanting to re-emphasize the "normality" within Zanzibar of not just mixed-ness but specifically of Omani descent, he told me, "Like 90% of [people you see out on the street] have family in Oman. Some they have it because their origin is Oman so maybe they don't know them. Arabs in Zanzibar are Omani." So much for his earlier confidence that he was "not Omani."[350]

In another interview, a man named Rashid appealed to a similar set of terms to express the same tension between belonging and alienation. He started with the statement that "there are like 3 [types of] people here in Zanzibar. Some are normal ones like me." The first type of person, according to Rashid, are the Omani-Arabs who are proud to be *Waarabu*: "Some Arabs were from Oman and I'm from Oman. They are proud of their Oman thing." In the same breath as he declared his membership to this first group of proud Omani-Zanzibaris, he also declared himself as part of the second group: "some they are Swahili. […] I know that half of my family are from Oman and others from Zanzibari, so I am proud to be Zanzibarian." He did not pause, however, before explaining why he did not truly feel like he belonged to this second group "who think that these guys here [the Omani Arabs] are not supposed to be here. That they are not Zanzibaris because they are Arabs. Although you have like five generations who are from Zanzibar, and someone comes from London generation, even when the father comes, he thinks that he is more Zanzibari because you are Arabs." If that is unclear, he is saying that non-Arab Zanzibaris believe that even having father who is British is less of a strike against belonging to the community of Zanzibar than is being an Arab-Zanzibari. Despite having claimed an identity in line with

[350] Said, Interview with author at SUZA.

both of the first two types of Zanzibari that he was laying out, his ultimate point was that this belonging was not in conflict because of the nature of the third group. The third group was the "normal" people, the mixed people: "So those [first two] types of people are here, but me, I think I am normal because I am mixed. So I think that's just part of me."[351]

Material importance of transnational connections

A Tanzanian friend of mine told me "I hope you include something about how arrogant Omanis can be" when I was visiting her in Dar es Salaam. She went on to explain how her own family members who live in Oman always seem to her to look down on the portion of her family that have chosen to stay in Tanzania, as if they were choosing poverty or refusing to pull themselves up by their bootstraps while expecting handouts. To be clear, my friend and her family are not impoverished, but rather part of the international class of global intelligentsia who send their children to elite private boarding schools abroad. She herself had gone to such schools in South Africa, Dubai, and the UK. In terms of class and access to mobility, she lives on the opposite side of the spectrum from the majority of my informants who, like Naziha, inhabit the villages of rural Zanzibar and have rarely if ever left their archipelago. But because her home base is by choice in Tanzania, her family in Oman considers her a "poor cousin."

One of the recurring themes that I have traced in this dissertation has been the cleavages within the Arab community, too often understood as a unitary bloc through the lens of racial solidarity. The economics of remittances has created over the course of the past several decades a new suite of such internal divisions. As Swahiliphone Omanis began in the 1990s to re-establish close ties with relatives in East Africa, they sent increasing

[351] Rashid, Interview with author at Darajani, April 7.

sums of money and other material aid to Zanzibari family members. Remittances are both extremely important to many Zanzibaris and a new division that cuts through the Arab-Zanzibari community. In my friend's warning to me we can see the shadows of friction between the Omani and Tanzanian sides of her family. Unspoken, however, is the chasm separating her and Naziha. In truth, some of my friend's economic status has been underwritten by the support of those "arrogant" wealthy Omani relatives. Naziha too has benefitted from remittances passed along through the intermediary of her father, but not to the same extent. Even her limited access to transnational support surpassed the poorest of my informants, who generally no longer kept in contact with those relatives who had left Zanzibar in the aftermath of the Revolution.

Tracking remittances between Zanzibar and Oman through time is fraught with challenges as the vast majority of these exchanges happen unofficially and in person while people are visiting with family. So at the least, we can say that this mode of sending money and other valuable gifts would have been more difficult until some of the economic and logistic barriers to frequent visits lifted in the 1990s. Other methods of sending aid were increasing at the same time. The amount of money sent from Oman to Zanzibar via a single Bureau de Change in Oman increased from just over US$2,000 in 1985 to nearly US$1,059,000 in 1992 (amounts adjusted for inflation to 2021 equivalents).[352] A man named Nassir remembered this time period of the 1990s as a high point in his own family, saying "Previously there was much more love. If you go there [to Oman] or if they come here, they gave you everything, they help you, a whole lot of help. But now it is different than then. [Kama zamani yalikuwa mapenzi yako zaidi sana kama unakwenda kule au

[352] Omar, "Zanzibar-Oman Relations: A Historical Perspective," 85; Bakari, *The Democratisation Process in Zanzibar*, 2001, 195.

unakuja huku, kila kitu wanakupa, wanakusaidia, misaada chungu nzima. Lakini sasa hivi imekuwa tofauti kuliko kule nyuma.]"[353] Nassir's equation of emotional connection and material aid was not unique among my informants, although it was more generally phrased along the lines of "of course they help us, they are our brothers."[354] But I did not have many others say that gifts of money and other objects had trailed off recently as Nassir did.

In fact, my impression, based on the sheer number of informants who could point to house and car payments or school fees that had been covered for decades by Omani relatives, is that rather the opposite is true: Zanzibaris continue to be reliant on family abroad, and Omanis continue to invest heavily in the wellbeing of their Tanzanian relations. Approximately 9 out of 10 of my informants in Zanzibar said that they frequently receive "help" from family in Oman. Among these, Rashid's account of help from his uncle is fairly representative:

> Me: In what ways has he [your uncle in Oman] helped?
>
> Rashid: Maybe sending money, buildings like our house, clothes and another maybe transfer or in case of education he helped me so much in case of education up to here.
>
> Me: Paying for school fees or?
>
> Rashid: Yes. School fees and the first year of college, yes.[355]

I hesitate to call Rashid's response "typical" or to draw dividing lines between the haves and have-nots among my informants too firmly because, in truth, I encountered a sliding continuum in which contact with and aid from family in Oman was directly proportional

[353] Nassir Mohammed, Interview with author at Jumbi Kigorofani.
[354] Zack, Interview with author in Maugani.
[355] Rashid, Interview with author at Darajani.

with economic possibility. "Help" from Omani relatives was one of my most consistent interview topics and of the 202 people who I interviewed in the Zanzibar archipelago, roughly 80% said that they have received some sort of material aid from family abroad, either money or other valuable gifts.

The most common type of gift mentioned by my interviewees was clothing. While not perhaps as extravagant as the houses or college tuition that Rashid mentioned, clothing from Oman carried a social weight. In generations past, the uniform of the Omani-Zanzibari gentleman was the long white *kanzu* paired with a *kilemba* turban and the ornate curved dagger known as a *jambia*.[356] Today, the sword has been dropped from this outfit and I almost never saw men in Zanzibar wear a turban, but the *kanzu* and the *kofia* carried meaning to my informants. One man in Pemba told me "I wear the clothes of an Arab, but I don't wear a *Jambia* knife and I don't have a sword, but I wear a *kanzu*. I wear a turban; I wear a *kikoi* wrap. In other words, Omani clothes, for formal dress yes I wear them. [Navaa kivazi cha kiarabu mimi lakini mimi sivai Jambia wala sina upanga lakini navaa kanzu. Navaa na kilemba, navaa kikoi. Yaani kivazi cha kiomani, ninacho rasmi ndio nachovaa.]"[357]

My informants often described the *kanzu* and *kofia* as relating to an Omani or Arab identity in this way. But these items of clothing also convey respectability more broadly in Zanzibar,[358] a notion with a long history of entanglement with ideas of Arabness.[359] An acquaintance in Stone Town told me of an art exhibit that she had seen in which a photographer had photographed individuals dressed in two different ways: in the first photograph, the subject was wearing casual western clothes such as a t-shirt and shorts

[356] Fair, *Pastimes and Politics*, chap. 2.
[357] *Mkanyageni, Interview with author in Mkoani area, September 14, 2017.
[358] Fair, *Pastimes and Politics*, chap. 2.
[359] McMahon, *Slavery and Emancipation in Islamic East Africa*.

and in the second, they would be in the exact same pose but now wearing the *kanzu* and *kofia*. The woman telling me about this exhibit was very impressed how a change in clothes made the same model look so much more respectable and "not like a beach boy." It is very possible to purchase such respectable clothing in Zanzibar, but it was repeatedly implied or outright stated to me that the clothes that came from Oman were better.

For example, a SUZA student who is studying IT told me about the Omani clothes that his relatives bring to him and his siblings when they visit for Ramadan:

> Me: The Omani clothes that you mentioned, are they different from the clothes people wear in Zanzibar or are they pretty much the same?
>
> Meyu: Big difference
>
> Me: How are they different?
>
> Meyu: Maybe the design? Because dresses [by which he means *kanzu*] that come from Zanzibar, many people wear. I hate a dress that everybody wears. Then after 2 years I don't wear that dress again.[360]

The example of clothing is useful here in that, more than the fundamentally utilitarian remittances of money or the obviously expensive gifts like the laptop that Meyu said his relatives also gave him, the meanings assigned to clothing are largely created by Zanzibaris. They are a tangible aspect of transnational identity creation by often relatively immobile individuals.

And yet, this aspect of identity creation, unlike the wordplay that allowed informants to wield "normalcy" against their own alienation caught between "African" and "Arab," is dependent far more directly on the intervention of relatives in Oman. Meyu is

[360] Meyu Mohammed, Interview with author at SUZA, March 31, 2017.

able to think of himself as fashionable in his Omani *kanzu* precisely *because* not everyone gets gifts of expensive clothing from abroad. Life looks very different for my informants who do not have such support from their Omani relatives. One such informant responded to my questions about help from Oman by shaking his head and saying, "I have nothing here, there is nothing here. [Sina kitu huku, hamna kitu huku]."[361] Another man, named Saleh, in Pemba told me of his family's reversal in fortune, saying that before their lands had been confiscated during the Revolution, he would send his father in Oman clothes, rice, and money. I asked what help now comes from relatives in Oman as he was not totally disconnected from them. But he said that the only thing that is sent is dates. In fact, of the minority of my respondents who said that they did not receive much aid from Omani relatives, about half of them did concede that sometimes they got dates, a signifier of connection and a token of Islamic and Omani belonging. A few minutes later in our interview, Saleh circled back to the subject of gifts between family members, saying, "Maybe clothes, dates, and other little small things… I don't send them anything; I don't have anything. [Labda nguo, tende, na vitu vingine vidogo vidogo… Mie siwapelekei kitu; sina kitu]."[362]

Naziha lives somewhere in the middle of these extremes. She is not receiving laptops by any means, but her house, her children's school fees, her clothes come from relatives that she has little contact with in Oman. Although I did not speak of it with her in any detail, her material connections to Oman are mediated by her father. He receives money from relatives in Oman and doles gifts out to his family in Pemba, replicating the

[361] Nassar Ali, Interview with author in Wete, n.d.
[362] Saleh Zahor, Interview with author in Mkoani, n.d.

structure of connection to Oman determining socioeconomic access to remittances within the family network itself.

Conclusion

Naziha cares about her identity as an Omani-descended Arab-Zanzibari. She speaks passionately about her family history and was proud to show me the written out genealogy of her family lineage. But when talking about current contacts with her relatives in Oman, she cited her lack of Arabic. In fact, frequently I spoke to informants in both Oman and Zanzibar who worried that there was a growing language barrier that separates the younger generations and that the future of vital family ties would be in jeopardy in consequence. Understanding that 1964 does not mark the end of Omani-Zanzibar connections is important because it allows us to conceive the transnational community that exists between these locations, not just as a nostalgic "chosen trauma" of Zanzibari expats in Oman, but rather of continuing emotive, social, and material importance to less mobile individuals who continue to live in Zanzibar.

CONCLUSION

To scholars of East Africa, the history of Omani connections to the region and settlement on the coast are familiar features of the region's history. This is a history that we think we know. The contours of the narrative map so well onto the primary features of the region's history—its roots in the Indian Ocean monsoon trade, its entanglement with imperialism and the slave trade, and its downfall in the midst of the violent reshuffling of people during the Revolution, set amid the transitory period between colonial rule and the consolidation of the contemporary array of nation states. In this dissertation, however, I have renarrated this history from the point of view of a set of actors not typically centered in the narratives. Rather than the powerful and wealthy men who are so often the principle actors of these histories, this dissertation uses oral history to highlight the role of the rural poor, the *wamanga*, women, those freshly arrived by difficult dhow journey from the impoverished desert of the early twentieth century Omani interior, and those *unable* to escape the violence of the Revolution to make a new life in the Omani renaissance.

By shifting the point of view from which we understand this history, I cast light on it from a new direction, illuminating different aspects. I argued that we have not paid enough attention to the internal divisions *within* racial categories. The existing historiography on race in East Africa, and particularly in Zanzibar, has done much to interrogate both where racial ideas come from[363] and to what extent racial solidarities do and do not represent real social boundaries.[364] My contribution to this literature is in bringing forward the ways that

[363] Mazrui and Shariff, *The Swahili*; Glassman, *War of Words, War of Stones*, 2011.
[364] Eastman, "Women, Slaves, and Foreigners: African Cultural Influence and Group Processes in the Formation of the Northern Swahili Coastal Society"; Middleton, *The World of the Swahili*; Glassman, *Feasts and Riot*; Fair, *Pastimes and Politics*; McMahon, *Slavery and Emancipation in Islamic East Africa*.

separations and divisions not only existed *within* racial categories, but also mattered both to people's lives and to our understanding of Zanzibar's history of connections to Oman.

As Zanzibar's position as a prosperous port in the dhow trade drew Arab migrants to its shores, for example, the divisions of class, generation, education, and ability to navigate the documentary regimes of colonial era-travel impacted the priorities that governed the ease or difficulty of immigration. Later, the differing opportunities and limitations between male and female, urban and rural, socially connected and isolated, wealthy and poor all had salient and potentially deadly consequences during the Revolution and, in the decades that followed, the potentiality for mobility in the late twentieth century emigrations of Arabs out of East Africa. In the decades since these emigrations, a division of rising importance has been the extent to which Arabs in East Africa are able to maintain connections with, and the material benefits that go along with those emotive connections, more wealthy relatives now residing in Oman.

A further contribution that centering this expanded cast of non-elite actors allows me to make is highlighting the importance of immobility both to my interlocutors and to the history of Arabs in East Africa. Movement and mobility have been central ways that the community of Omani-Zanzibaris have been understood in the past.[365] This association with mobility has been constructed through their history of seasonal movement via the monsoon-regulated dhow trade, their expanding presence as a population of migrants from

[365] Cyrus Townsend Jr. Brady, *Commerce and Conquest in East Africa with Particular Reference to the Salem Trade with Zanzibar* (Salem: The Essex Institute, 1950); Neville Chittick, "East Africa and the Orient: Ports and Trade before the Arrival of the Portuguese," in *Historical Relations across the Indian Ocean*, ed. C. Mehaud (Paris: UNESCO, 1980); K. N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Gilbert, *Dhows & the Colonial Economy in Zanzibar*; McDow, *Buying Time*, 2018.

Oman over the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, their much touted "return migration" during the 1970s, and the contemporary development of a highly connected transnational community since the 1990s.

And yet, in researching the history of less advantaged members of this community, immobility rapidly became an unavoidable theme. Most of my informants had never left the islands, much less traveled to Oman. The challenges and expenses of the dhow voyages of earlier centuries offered more barriers to mobility than the colonial government could ever hope to construct with their flimsy efforts at enforcing a border. A generation or three later, the migrations of the 1970s and '80s were never an accessible option to the majority of Arabs in Zanzibar, due to the inequalities of gender, financial liquidity, education, and social capital. But also, their immobility was due to the social connections and obligations that tied them to Zanzibar, which was their home in a real and rooted sense. They had been there for generations at that point, they had farms and children and mosques and homes.

One of the more salient wider implications of this dissertation is a reflection on the Othering of Arabs in East Africa. The discourse within Zanzibar about Arab history is a narrative of oppression and conquest, in which Arabs are constructed as foreigners. There is an idea that Arabs have been invading East Africa and subsequently ruling it as foreign elites for millennia.[366] This narrative has justified the political dispossession of Arab Zanzibaris since the Revolution. Combined with the perception that Arabs could easily "return" to Oman or receive expensive gifts from relatives there, those Arabs who remain in their longstanding home islands are easy victim to the continuing stereotype that they are uniformly a caste of privileged, wealthy outsiders who are somehow "less Tanzanian"

[366] See for detailed discussion Glassman, *War of Words, War of Stones*, 2011, chap. introduction.

than their non-Arab neighbors. In broadening our understanding of Arabs to include a greater diversity of experiences than that of elite men, we can begin the process of disentangling these Othering discourses from historical fact.

This dissertation has taken a somewhat narrow geographic approach, looking specifically at Zanzibar and Oman at the expense of a deeper analysis of both mainland East Africa as well as the rest of the Arabian Peninsula, not to mention expat Arab-African communities elsewhere in the world. Many Arab Zanzibaris went to the UK, for example, in the aftermath of the 1964 Revolution. Certainly, there is more research to be done.[367] However, the "simplified" geographical approach that I have taken here reveals the complexities of geography's role in this history in a way that a broader accounting might not have been able to. When "Zanzibar," for example is glossed a single location, we sometimes lose even the important distinctions between Pemba and Unguja. We almost certainly lose the ability to see between Zanzibar Town and the villages that share what is, in a broader scope, a very small island. Similarly, the narrower focus on Oman, as opposed to the entirety of the Arabian Peninsula, allows for the separation between interior regions and coastal regions to be more visible. In future research, this could likely be pushed even further, drawing meaningful comparisons between, for example, coastal cities such as Muscat, Seeb, and Sur or between the Nizwa region and Sharqiya.

Finally, the latter half of this dissertation has implications for the way that we structure Zanzibari history. The Revolution has become the crucial turning point in the history of Zanzibar. To be sure, it was a pivotal event, both in the islands' political histories

[367] See on the subject of Arabs in the East African interior: Thomas McDow, "Arabs and Africans: Commerce and Kinship from Oman to the East African Interior, c. 1820—1900" (PhD Dissertation, Yale University, 2008); McDow, *Buying Time*, 2018.

and in the lives of the people who lived through it. But we have perhaps taken the rupture that it represented in people's lives to exclude narratives of continuity between "before" and "after" the Revolution. Africanist historiography has for the most part moved on from structuring histories of the continent around the rise and fall of colonialism, and in so doing have found new meanings through new chronological scaffolding. In this dissertation, moving past the Revolution as the presumed end point, has allowed me to reframe the migrations of the 1970s-80s as an intensification of transnational networks, rather than a "return." What other ways of structuring the history of Zanzibar might we find if we do not privilege the Revolution as the cosmic center? What new meanings might we reveal in so doing?

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