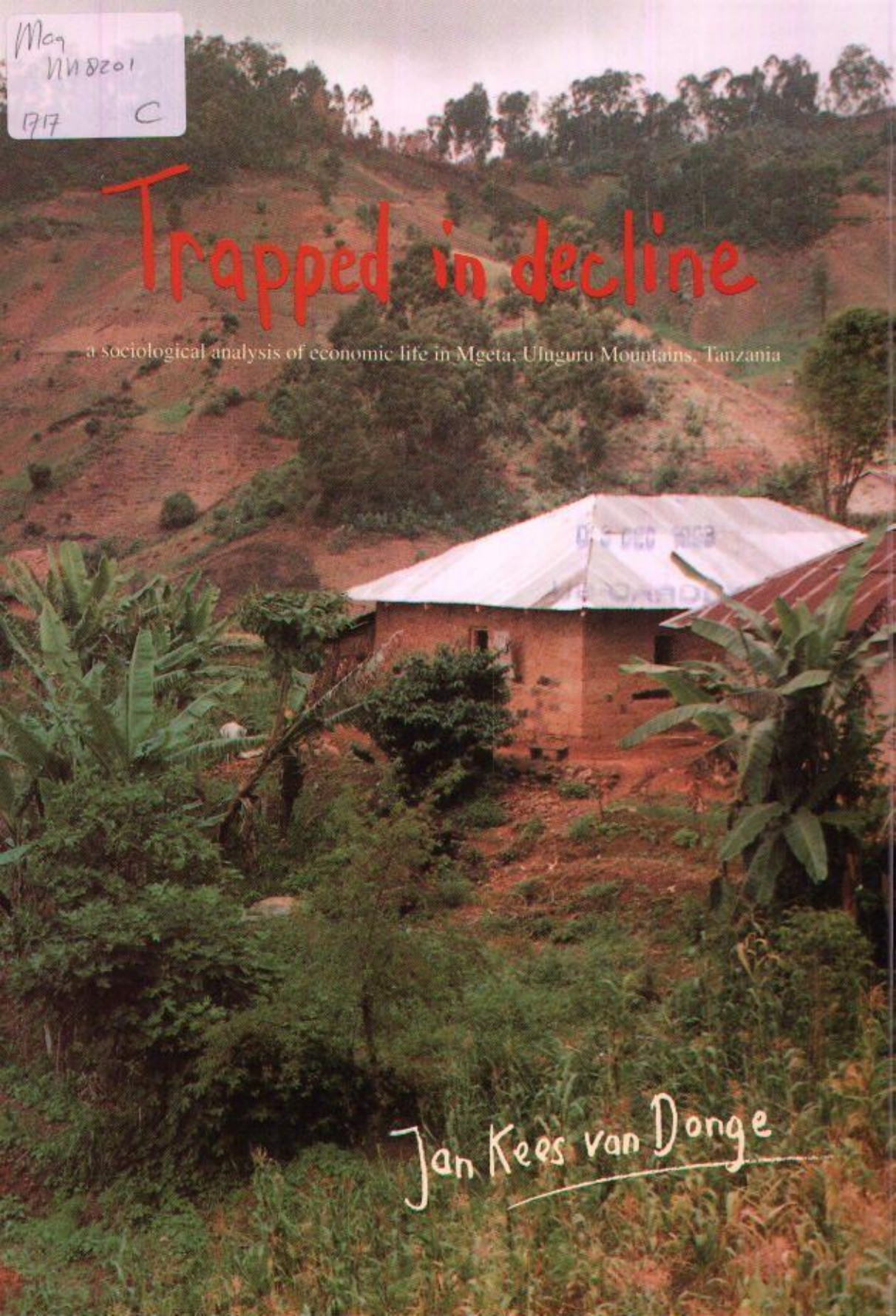
Trapped in decline

a sociological analysis of economic life in Mgeta, Uluguru Mountains, Tanzania



Jan Kees van Donge

Stellingen

1. Ethnographic research is said to be wedded to 'a kind of political anarchism' or 'an urbane romanticism that celebrates the diverse forms of rationality, skill and morality to be found among ordinary people' (Martyn Hammersley, *What's wrong with ethnography?*, London: Routledge 1992; p.15). That is not necessarily so: this thesis shows that an ethnographic approach does not necessarily lead to such a celebration of the actors' lifeworlds, but can demystify these critically.

2. The study of economic life is fascinating. It is a pity that so few economists study it.

3. Most books in the social sciences do not add significantly to previously published articles and duplicate unnecessarily. This is partly caused by the unwarranted high prestige accorded to the publication of books in comparison with the publication of articles.

4. Latour's analysis of academic life sees academic success in the first place as a success in enrolment: truth is that version of reality which gains most followers. That may be descriptive of a common state of affairs -as shown for example in the high prestige of frequency of citation- but is dangerous if seen as normative. The quality of what is written and said should count and not the success in making oneself heard (B. Latour, *Wetenschap in Actie*, Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 1992).

5. The preoccupation with shortening university study in The Netherlands does not acknowledge sufficiently that this requires an intensive and disciplined input from teaching staff.

6. The idea that academic freedom is a right to reject discipline in working habits instead of a right to freedom of expression dies hard.

7. Dutch university students consider it normal to spend extended periods in exotic and poor countries during their studies. They should realise that their experiences are an integral part of gross inequalities in the world.

8. The belief that the more academics teach the less they publish needs to be looked at critically. E.g., the opposite is definitely not necessarily the case and the relationship between academic output and various forms of study leave is questionable.

9. Specialisation in teaching or administration is legitimate in academic life, but academics who specialise should not complain about lack of opportunity to write and publish.

10. If one accepts that academic work needs competition, then tenured posts should be scarce, especially as long as Dutch social security provides a sheltered existence between jobs.

11. It is a fundamental misunderstanding to equate the African one party-state with the Eastern European Marxist parties. The former emerged principally as instruments to contain tribalist competition and were intended to be mass based internally democratic parties. Eastern European parties were explicitly internally undemocratic elite parties and emerged principally as ideological instruments.

12. Zambia is considered the most successful case of democratisation in Africa and it is ironic that this led to the emergence of a *de facto* one party state. This should be food for thought for those who make a blanket condemnation of the African one party state.

13. Karel van het Reve argued that exceptional creativity in the arts often occurs concentrated in particular places and periods. The major classical composers and the great Russian novelists are examples. Many other examples come to mind in academics as well as the arts: the anthropologists who worked at the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, Lusaka, in the late colonial period or the excellence of performing musicians in the Netherlands at present. (Examples: Anner Bijlsma, Reindert de Leeuw, Isabella van Keulen, Peter Wispelwey). This shows that a sociological approach to creativity may be more useful than one that concentrates on the individual genius.

14. The history of jazz is mostly written in terms of stylistic breaks. A more sociological approach, looking at who played with whom and where, would show much more continuity. For example, the drummer Sid Catlett played with Charley Parker as well as with Sydney Bechet and Louis Armstrong.

15. Technical development must be the principal focus of any history of jazz. The development of swing -especially in the case of the Basie band- is unthinkable without amplification of the string bass and rhythm guitar. The long solos of hard bop and free jazz -John Coltrane is a prime example- belong to the era of the long playing record.

Wageningen, December 15, 1993

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A Sociological Analysis of Economic Life in Mgeta, Uluguru Mountains Tanzania

Promotor:	dr. N. Long, hoogleraar in de rurale ontwikkelingssociologie
Co-promotor:	dr. J.H.B. den Ouden, universitair hoofddocent vakgroep rurale ontwikkelingssociologie

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A Sociological Analysis of Economic Life in Mgeta, Uluguru Mountains Tanzania

Jan Kees van Donge

PROEFSCHRIFT
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in de landbouw- en milieuwetenschappen
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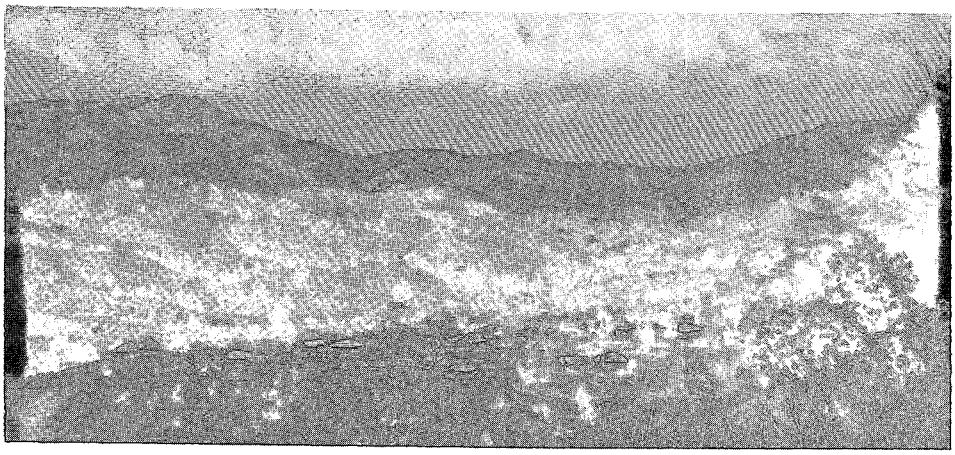
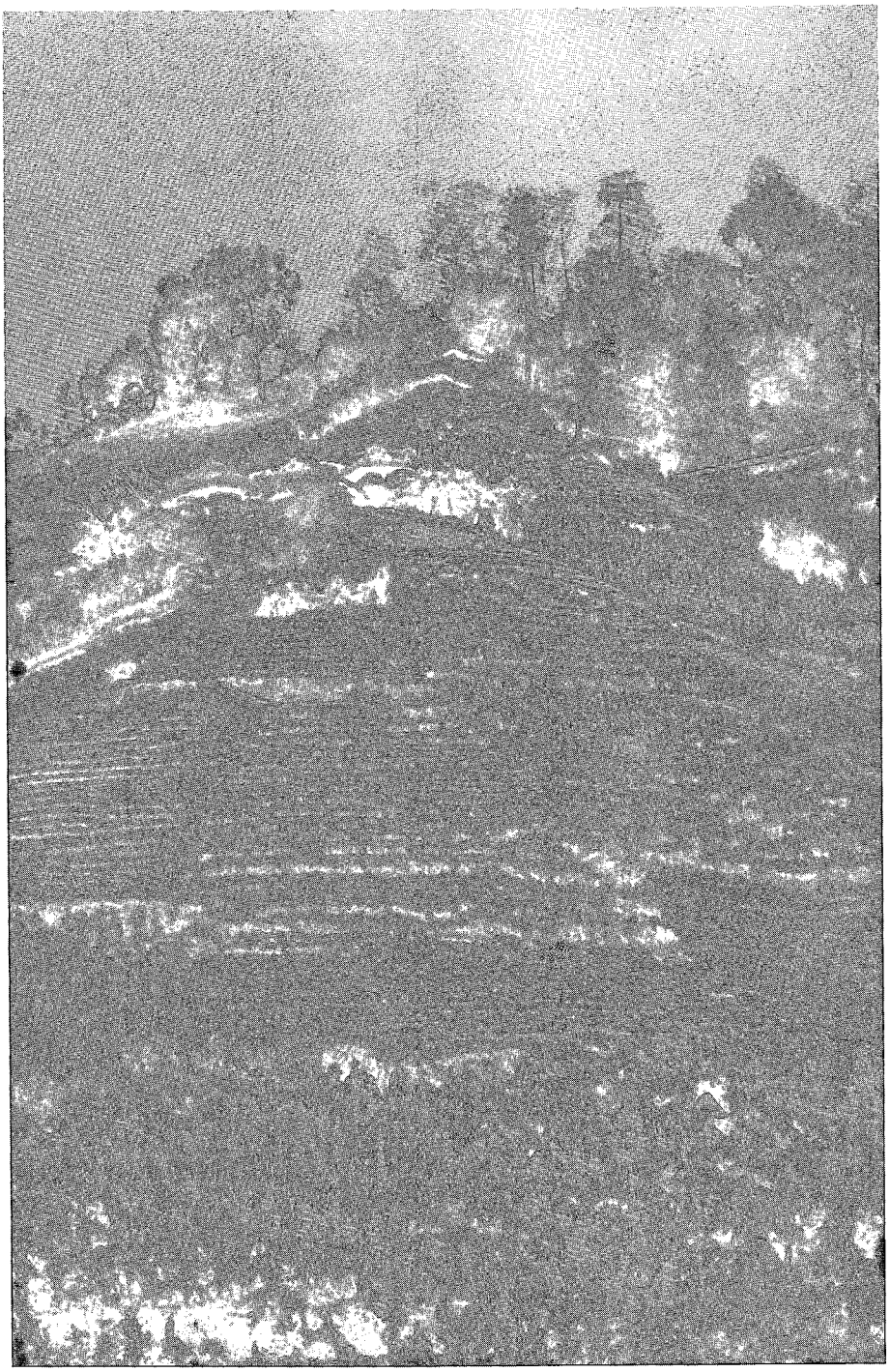
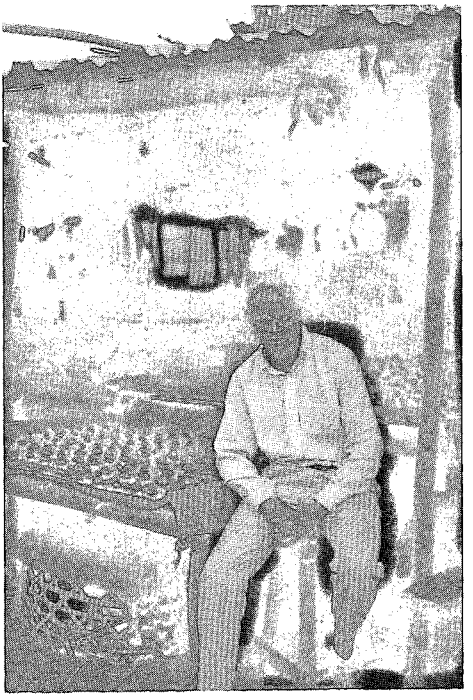
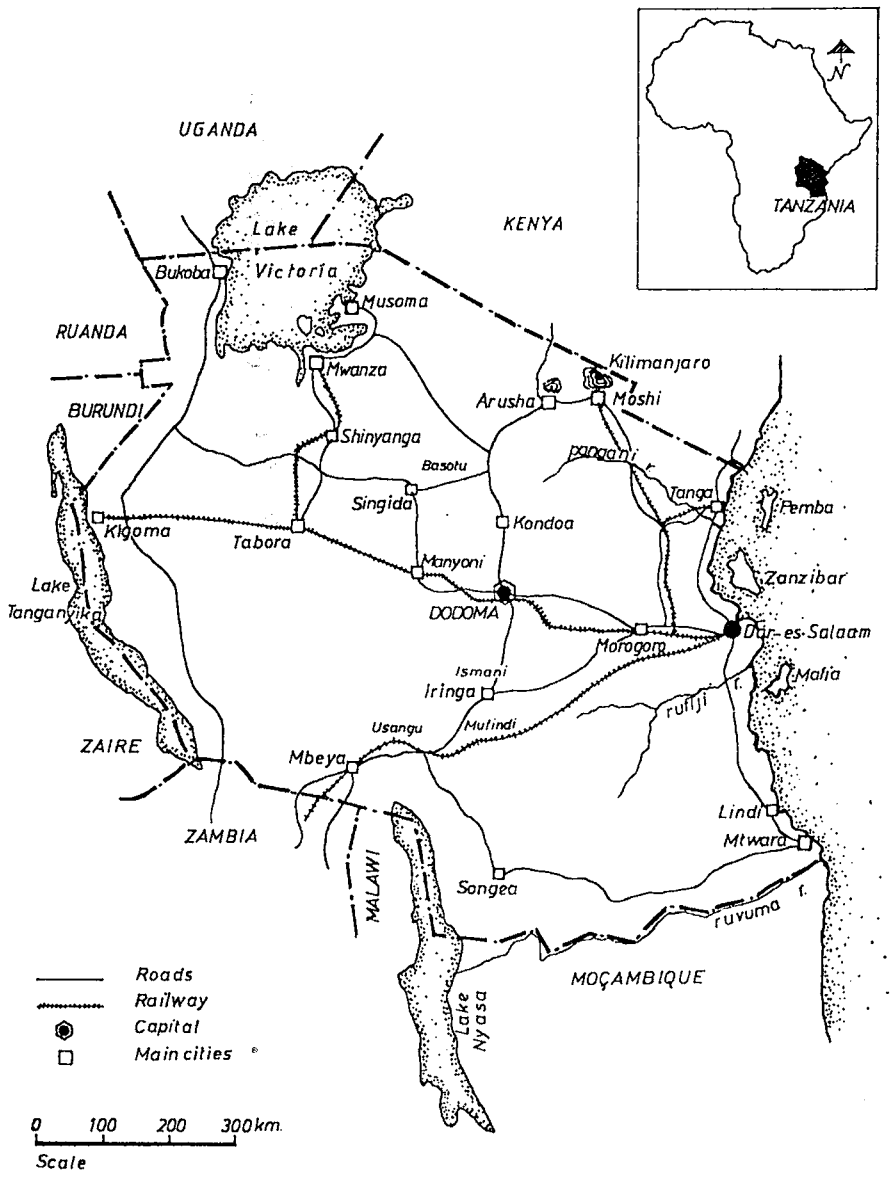






Map of Tanzania; roads, railways and main cities



Source: Boesen, J.; Havnevik, K.; Koponen, J. and R. Odgaard (eds) (1986), *Tanzania crisis and struggle for survival*

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: DISCOURSE, PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

This thesis consists of six scientific journal articles. Such a form of publication demands that the author be concise and to the point. Although I consider that a virtue, it may be that some readers may want to know more about some aspects of this research. For example, the research process which produced the data in these papers is not elaborately discussed. That is not only a consequence of the form of publication: I do not think that the subjective experiences of the researcher and his struggles are in themselves interesting. The purpose of social research is to give insight into the lives of the people studied and the ways in which these are acquired are ultimately only interesting in so far as they add to such insights or qualify them. There are, nevertheless, two reasons for discussing the research experience in this introduction. First, the research has tried to understand social life from the inside, in accordance with the Weberian concept of '*Verstehen*', and, although the terminology was at the time unknown to me, I was thinking along the lines of a hermeneutic analysis of social discourse. Hence I expected social action to evolve in the course of and as a response to the social interpretation of reality. Such a research perspective, however appeared to be far less straightforward than anticipated and this merits discussion. Second, when presenting these papers I met resistance to accepting my research results. The findings were considered to be unconventional. My initial reaction was to dismiss such criticism which I regarded as irrelevant if not backed up by good reasons for believing that I was biased in my observations. The objections had however strong associations with the accusation of being condescending towards the people studied, which I also believe to be misplaced. I see no factual or logical grounds to counter these accusations, but may clarify the issues involved if I explicate the way in which my understanding of social life in Mgeta developed.

The research was carried out over the five-year period 1985-89, while I was teaching at the University of Dar es Salaam, in Mgeta, an administrative division in the densely populated Uluguru mountains which are located close to the town of Morogoro (see maps pp. xiv and 58). The area is about two hundred and fifty kilometres in land from Dar es Salaam and I could visit Mgeta as a rule at least once during term-breaks. During the year 1988-89 I also carried out research in Dar es Salaam among traders who originated from Mgeta. Finally, in November 1991, I made a return visit while working at Wageningen Agricultural University in the Netherlands. That last visit was extremely useful. It did not provide much new information, but it confirmed strongly the interpretation of social life among people from Mgeta as had emerged during the writing up phase. The main themes of the articles emerged in casual conversation: new court cases about land; bankruptcies among traders; the continuing struggle to make a living from the land etc. But above all, I was again immersed in a society which was so different from the way it seemed at first sight.

It had been good to see each other again and to an outsider it may have seemed that I had been immersed in social life. The warmth of such encounters, however, did not result in revealing conversations. For example, I hoped that the trust which I had established would allow me to use the tape recorder to document better the way people talked about social life. They were most interested to hear their own recorded voice, but did not want to make any substantial remarks while the machine was on. It appeared again that people enjoyed talking, but then engaged preferably in conversation which was inconsequential and apparently devoid of meaning: extensive greetings and general platitudes about the difficulties of life. This use of language fits a society where people try to be on social islands with as little involvement with others as possible, the image which emerged so strongly while writing the articles. At first sight Mgeta did not seem a closed society, but it appeared to be so and I was surprised by the extent to which I had penetrated it after all. In retrospect the latter was experienced primarily as a process of learning a language, not in the narrow sense of learning Kiswahili, but in getting to know the words that could make up sensible questions in a process of observation.

The research proposal intended to study how government and politics affected social life in Mgeta building upon earlier research which I had done in Zambia (Van Donge, 1982). It was the intention to look at these effects from below instead of from the perspective of politicians and civil servants. I started therefore surveying neighbourhoods using a simple questionnaire in order to

probe how government influence was felt. The questionnaire was meant to be exploratory; it was meant to gain entry and therefore avoided controversial questions. It also offered an opportunity to observe during my long walks between interviews. I had much spare time because people were only available for interviewing during a small part of the day, because the climate in Mgeta makes it possible for people to work the whole day in the fields the year around. At this stage I struggled to make relevant remarks about life in Mgeta. I learnt to talk about land shortage and soil exhaustion; access to water for irrigation; land suitable for vegetable cultivation; contacts with relatives outside Mgeta. For example, the question 'Does he have water?' (*Ana maji?*) would have sounded meaningless to my ears when I entered the area, but after the survey it was loaded with meaning as it referred to the possibility of irrigating land so that vegetables can be grown in the dry season.

Some issues which I thought to be important were not significant to talk about. Social differentiation in terms of rich and poor appeared to be of little importance. Doubting this I asked government officials whom they considered the prominent farmers to be in the area. Names were mentioned. I visited them but they were not significantly different from the people I talked to in the survey. A few people in Mgeta are richer than others for some time, but class formation is not crucial. There is very little wage labour and it was typical that somebody, in response to the question whether he hired labour, asked me if I could help him to find work.

During the survey I could not detect important influences from politics and government on people's daily lives. The survey, however, provided two unexpected important insights which led to further research. First, contact with government could be of enormous importance in the field of law. Land conflicts were numerous and these could result in long and expensive litigation. Second, outward migration - especially to Dar es Salaam - appeared to be an essential part of life. Most migrants were said to be there trading in vegetables and also involvement in the vegetable trade between Mgeta and Dar es Salaam seemed crucial for understanding life in the area.

It was thus logical to take the local primary court as the next focus of research. The Primary Court Magistrate was not at all welcoming. In response to my request to study land conflicts he read very fast in Kiswahili from a case-file, and insisted that if I wanted to come back, I needed a letter from the District Magistrate. The latter offered such a letter which permitted me to attend cases but not to examine files. This was discouraging. I had attended court sessions

before and could not figure out what was happening there. Groups of people would wait for a long time without talking to each other and never to us. Court sessions were short and extremely formal. The substance of the arguments escaped me. I could also only attend cases during term-breaks. I then employed the court clerks to make a record of all court cases that came before the primary court, which we discussed once every three months. They got used to my presence and my Kiswahili improved, which made access to court files possible. At first, they read from the files to me, but after a while I obtained the files myself. Then situations appeared to be very different from the oral presentations by the court clerks. These latter versions were, towards the end of the research, checked with the litigants at their homes and this in turn produced new perspectives. Again, it was a process of learning to ask the right questions so that I could talk about relevant matters. For example, in the beginning I was led in my questions by the ideology of land tenure as given in a monograph of the area and as I had learnt in the survey. It appeared however that this was only tenuously related to social practice. This again implied the use of different words to frame questions. For example, my language shifted from talking in terms of clan affiliation - *uko* - and the Swahili word for relatives - *wajamaa* - to talking in terms of close family relationships - *kuhusiania* - (literally: hanging together). Both ways of talking enquired into kinship relationships, but gave very different answers. Litigants were virtually always considered to be *wajamaa*, but the question of whether they were '*Wanahusiana*' was as a rule answered negatively.

In the meantime I had started research in Dar es Salaam among traders originating from Mgeta. It took about half a year before I had established contact with them but they were not willing to collaborate unless I paid them. The solution was to give them a job. I asked a number of them to make diaries in which they wrote down their social contacts. These I discussed with them once or twice a week. They obviously fabricated these diaries for the money, but gradually I learnt names which recurred regularly and categories used to classify other people. We also became friends and the money became secondary. In addition to these conversations I observed thesetraders in their daily routines which made it possible to ask sensible questions. Once I got the feeling that I had learnt the relevant language to enter their world, I made twenty life histories selected among different types of traders.

Although I made progress, I still had a nagging feeling of a failure to grasp the intentions and interpretations which structure social life. In two fields I felt particularly at a loss in the attempt to learn the language for composing relevant

questions. I was hesitant to accept the conclusion that life was as atomized as it seemed during the survey - I found very few enduring, stable and multi-stranded social relations - and I had a feeling that the nature of social life in Mgeta had escaped me. I took inspiration from network analysis (Boissevain, 1974) and went to talk to people in order to analyse their contacts with others. This provided hardly any information beyond their next of kin. There may have been an element of sabotage in this and people may have kept their networks to themselves. That is of course also significant and evokes a stark image of social relations. Answers to questions like to whom they would turn in case of illness or distress usually produced the answer that nobody cared for them. Authority figures hardly appeared in these attempts. People could usually name the politicians and government officials in the area but did not mention any personal contact with them. I asked them, for example, when they last saw their ten cell leader (*balozi*) and the most typical reply was: 'Why should I see him, I have not been in trouble'. The conclusion that social contacts were mostly superficial and short instead of involving and enduring became more and more likely, especially as I did not find much evidence of intensive social contacts from observation. For example most people worked their land individually or were assisted by some of their children.

It was more difficult to reach a conclusion on the nature of politics and government in the area. I found no reasons to believe that government played a major role in shaping social life and most people were keen to keep as much distance from government and politics as possible (see the example mentioned above). There was, of course, a group of politicians and government officials in Mgeta and I knew them well: Many drank in the rest house where I stayed. I did not, however, manage to penetrate their world. I would hear about meetings being announced, but when I arrived there nobody would turn up. I saw from time to time a number of them coming from the party office and only months later did I get an idea of what issues they may have been talking about. Formal interviews resulted in stonewalling. After visiting the area regularly for four years I managed to gather only a number of anecdotes and hearsay information about political life in the area. I failed to develop a language to describe their world.

I was aware of this failure for a long time, but in my last weeks in Mgeta my confidence in understanding the area was again shaken. In the course of the research attention had shifted from outside factors to the way local actors structure society. From this perspective, it seemed relevant to look for the socially formed interpretations of life in Mgeta or lifeworlds that were supposed

to structure social practice. I therefore administered a survey about future expectations among school leavers in the area. The main outcome was that agriculture and education were very highly valued and trade was looked down upon. They reported overwhelmingly the expectation of a future in agriculture and education, which on the basis of observation was highly unlikely. Very few children in Mgeta progressed beyond primary school and agriculture was in decline. Virtually everybody was involved in some sort of trade. Hence, discourse and practice were highly discordant. In a follow-up visit I tried to see whether this was merely an ideological response to leaving school, but I found these values to be widespread. Besides the language which I had acquired to interpret life in Mgeta, there appeared to be a pervasive way of reasoning contrary to social practice as I had come to understand it.

To a large extent, my research, then involved the experience of finding a language - in the sense of ways of speaking about the particular social environment - which made social life in Mgeta intelligible to me. The following articles, however, do not contain elaborate discourses on social life noted down from actors that provide a consistent interpretation of social interpretations of the world. The discourse presented is fragmentary, contradictory and often hard to interpret. I had to struggle during the research with a persistent sense of failure to get inside this society. It may of course be that I have not found the 'real' discourse people in Mgeta use to talk about their problems. That was certainly the case in respect to the political domain. It may also be that I have not discovered the hidden social meanings of discourse. I do not think, however, that this feeling of failure stems from the research as such, but rather is a consequence of misplaced expectations stemming from a simplification in the theorising of the relationship between language and social practice.

Hermeneutic interpretation and discourse analysis is prominent in contemporary sociological theory. It has a central place in the sociology of everyday life which is closely related to ethnomethodology and symbolic interactionism (Douglas, 1971), Giddens' structuration theory (e.g. Giddens, 1976) and Habermas' critical theory (Habermas, 1978). It is not my purpose here to review such theorising. Others have done that already in ways better than I can (Bauman, 1978). I merely want to comment here, from my own research practice, on attempts to understand social practices through the study of the way people interpret the world.

First, one should not assume that all use of language is necessarily meant to communicate. Language is an essential element of society, but not all language

use is social in character. Indeed, I could not discover meaning in much conversation. If people talk in ways which have no substantive content - using for example long and elaborate greetings - there may be some gratification in using language but little is communicated. This was experienced to the extreme at beer drinks. *Klabu* (beer halls) in Mgeta were busy and noisy, but I could not detect most intrinsic meaning in much of the noise made. It was not meant to be an exchange of communication. Somebody might produce a long statement comparing Mgeta to the Golan Heights and comparing themselves to the Israelis. Such talk passes the time and one may impute to it a social content such as boasting. Yet such behaviour seems, however, in the first place a matter of individual gratification. The audience is there as a formal requirement. The content of the message tells us little about social life in Mgeta. One may then study who is greeted more elaborately than others or who is more prone to such boasting behaviour at which occasions than others. Such research, however, is not hermeneutic or discourse analysis since it ignores the content of the message. The possibility that people merely make noise because it gives a good feeling to do so should not be discarded.

Second, there is not necessarily much interpretation of the environment in which people find themselves. It may be implicit, but the social character of such interpretations is then very limited. In Mgeta there will be immediate and strong agreement that there are many conflicts about land. People would exclaim loudly *shida ya ardhi* (land is a problem), but further analytical statements about the nature of these problems and how these originate are rare. Waluguru traders in Dar es Salaam had a more elaborate vocabulary for talking about their problems. They expressed these in a framework which was fatalistic and avoided further analysis: for example frequent bankruptcies were a fact of life and nothing could be done about them. Thus discursive practices were in this case not much developed. This points to a considerable empirical diversity in the extent to which social interpretations of the world actually exist. Some societies may have developed such practices much more than others and then hermeneutical analysis of social discourse can prove more fruitful.

Hence, the ontological premises in the literature on hermeneutics have to be qualified by empirical variation. For example, the assumption that there is a taken-for-granted world view that structures social action which is challenged in problematic situations is questionable. This taken-for-granted world view is challenged in Mgeta in several ways. For example, there is adherence to a kinship system which breaks down when confronted with the realities of social life. There is an interpretation of social reality which condemns trade as a way

of life while trade pervades social life in the area. There is a widespread adherence to an ideal of self sufficiency in food, but at the same time people admit that this is impossible. Yet, this does not lead to a rethinking of an existing interpretation of the world, and great discrepancies between social practice and interpretation result which are not defined as problematic situations.

These considerations bring me to the third and most fundamental point: hermeneutic theory often assumes a pragmatic content in the use of language. This implies a link with practical social action. Such links appeared in the research to be problematic. People in Mgeta were apt to make strong ideological statements with respect to kinship or agriculture, but they would not act according to these. These statements have content and an identifiable social meaning and are therefore different from those referred to in the first limitation of the hermeneutic method mentioned above. They may have consequences for social life, but these are very difficult to identify since there is no direct link to practical action. This uncovers a big area of social life where interpretations of the world are significant but difficult to relate to practice.

The methodological implications of this experience are: First, the study of the way in which social interpretations of the world are made needs always to be complemented by the study of actual social practices; second, as a starting point for studying society, hermeneutic analysis may be more applicable in some societies than in others. This depends upon the degree to which such discourse is developed and integrated with action.

There may also be an inherent tendency in hermeneutics and discourse analysis to assume a rational actor (Hammersley, 1992). The remarks made above suggest that such a rationality for analysing situations, stating goals and identifying strategic action is questionable and dependent upon the specific empirical situation. Indeed many of the situations described in the following pages may give the impression of irrationality, occasioning the accusation that I have not found the rationality which makes behaviour in Mgeta comprehensible. Such a view implies the requirement in social research that the researcher identify him or herself with the society so that all social action becomes comprehensible. There is, however, a distinction between empathy and sympathy with the people studied. I could not have written these articles without empathy; without asking the question of how the world would look like if I were born in Mgeta, but that did not mean that I identified myself with their situation and defended all forms of social action that involved them as

meaningful. I would agree that many tragic situations can be found in the following pages, but tragic situations are not uncommon for the human condition. If a researcher describes situations which seem irrational to the reader, then it does not logically follow that the researcher considers him or herself above such irrationality. It is one of the challenges of social science to make the tragic aspects of social life and the seeming irrationalities more comprehensible.

Partly as a logical consequence of the fore-mentioned issues, this thesis is modest in its pretention of relevance for practical action. The problematic relationship between social interpretation of the world and social action has consequences for the interpretation of the role of researcher and research products in the society studied. The pragmatic character of language is nearly axiomatic in hermeneutic approaches. The researcher is in dialogue with local society and because of the pragmatic character of language this is assumed to have consequences for social practice. Through such dialogue the researcher becomes an actor in the society studied. I do not deny having been an actor in Mgeta. I brought some income to some people and maybe it was entertaining for some that I was around. Yet, I cannot believe that my research has had significant consequences for the social practice of local actors. I was too marginal in society for that. This is not because of a lack of investment on my part in time and social relationships, but because people did not consider my presence as important. One of my main informants asked, when I came to the end of my study, why I had not yet finished. After my answer, she added, 'But you must be nearly finished now'. I was thus definitely not a part of society in her view, but merely a passerby. Hence I had been an observer in the area without consequence for their lives, and dialogue severally does not have immediate consequences for practice.

The products of research are also assumed to have consequences for social practice. Hermeneutical analysis is supposed to lead to a double hermeneutics. That is, an interpretation of society by a researcher can lead to changes in the interpretation of social reality in the society actually studied which can lead to different practices. I accept that this is a possibility but definitely not automatically the case. For example, there was only one development project of any consequence in Mgeta. The Franco-Tanzanian horticultural project at Sokoine University of Agriculture had an experimental station in Niyandira. They had also carried out a socio-agronomic survey which I criticised strongly, especially as it did not portray properly the poverty in the area. The people involved agreed with me. I gave them all my papers, but this had no

consequences for their interpretation of social life in the area. On the last day of my research in 1989 they proposed that I should show some university students around and tell them how I looked at the area. Though I had no time then for an elaborate walk, I chatted informally for an hour or so. I talked about the importance for young people - especially males - to obtain some cash income from land in Mgeta and that they needed a suitable crop for that. I mentioned that I knew two young men who were experimenting with cooking bananas, which could be such a crop. At this point, they appeared to be blind to the problem since they immediately assumed what I meant was a local food crop, despite the fact that on every market day one could see cooking bananas being sent to Dar es Salaam for sale. The point of my remarks was simply not taken. I visited the project during my return visit in 1991. The incident about the cooking bananas was significant for me, but had been forgotten by them. Moreover my work was not read by them. They still adhered to their own socio-agronomic report.

This incident may further clarify my attitude to the relationship between research and social practice. There are, in my opinion, many insights in the articles that follow which may be relevant for social practice: For example, the strategy agronomic extensionists could use to promote crops which could give a cash income to young men in Mgeta; how land disputes point to the need for reform in the administration of justice; and how the expectations of school leavers have relevance for educational reform. But whether these insights are in practice relevant to policy issues is beyond the powers of the researcher. Too often the debate about the relevance of research for policy making is couched in terms that places this responsibility on the academic. However, the responsibility to look for relevant information is that of both the practitioner and the researcher.

Thus, I claim that my research findings are relevant for social practice but do not believe that these lead automatically to problem solving. To bring about social change is, in the first place, a matter for the relevant actors themselves. The study of social practice may clarify the situation actors find themselves in, but it is up to them to draw consequences. Democratic values are difficult to reconcile with a belief in the power of the outsider to solve society's problems. I also consider it dangerous if social scientists do not respect specialist knowledge. The expertise of crop scientists, lawyers and educationalists (or maybe it is better to say extension agents, judges and teachers) is needed in the first place in order to come to solutions in the above mentioned fields. The insights of research can undoubtedly be beneficial to practitioners, but bringing

about change requires skills which are not necessarily compatible with the skills of a researcher. Research has always inspired me to be modest towards practice and have respect for practitioners.

The subject matter of all the articles that make up this thesis has been introduced above, except one: Chapter 2 'The continuing trial of development economics: policies, prices and output in Tanzanian agriculture'. This chapter deserves a special mention in this introduction as it outlines the broader themes of the thesis.

The article does not deal specifically with Mgeta, but discusses in general terms the interpretation of socio-economic change in Tanzania's rural areas. The research in Mgeta was a source of inspiration for writing this article, and the article makes it possible to see these research results against a wider background. The article is, however, in the first place a result of critically following the debates on the Tanzanian economy in the nineteen eighties, during which decade it was virtually impossible to reflect on Tanzanian society without taking account of the discourses of structural adjustment and IMF conditionality.

These discourses assumed that government policies were largely to blame for the economic crisis that hit Tanzania and other African countries and which manifested itself in a chronic foreign exchange deficit, hyper-inflation and a fiscal crisis of the state. The article challenges this. Socio-economic change in rural Tanzania is only marginally influenced by government policies. Such change is shaped to a much larger extent from below than this way of reasoning assumes.

Yet Chapter 2 is more than a debate on the Tanzanian rural economy. It is an epistemological critique of economistic reasoning, which sees human behaviour as ruled by economic mechanisms which operate independently of time and place. The essential elements of economic analysis - scarcity, preferences and utilities - are in this thesis not considered as immanent, but are seen as constructed in society. An example from what follows may illustrate this: Waluguru traders avoid as much as possible credit since it requires dependable social relationships and they do not trust each other. If they use credit it is on a short term basis linked to one particular transaction. Economic behaviour is thus seen as constructed by actors, but such structuration of behaviour in turn shapes social practice. Credit is scarce because people do not trust each other. This leads to scarcity of capital and this limits the possibilities for entrepreneurship. This kind of critique pervades the whole thesis, arguing that

sociological analysis is necessary to understand economic life.

The theoretical perspective which emerged during data analysis appeared to be closely related to Giddens's structuration theory (Cohen, 1989; Giddens, 1987) as well as to Bourdieu's theory of practice (Bourdieu, 1977,1989). These approaches allow more space for the role of structure or, in Bourdieu's terms, *habitus* than I had originally in mind. The compelling nature of the social environment became more and more prominent during analysis, albeit that social structure must always be seen as a product of actors' social practices and as such is liable to change. When people from Mgeta engage in economic strategies which require wider cooperation they expect failure. In this way they seem constrained by powerful social forces tending towards a pattern of social relations characterised by minimal contact between them, although social organisation does not necessarily have to take this form. It is also possible that, in some cases and situations, a number of actors will be able to establish a dependable and durable network of economic cooperation.

This thesis, therefore, challenges economic reductionism, along with other recent anthropological contributions (see Granovetter, 1985; Hill, 1986; Appadurai, 1986; Dilley, 1992). My analysis broadens into a critique of rational choice approaches, which are currently gaining influence in Africanist writing. The latter apply economic reasoning to political, social and cultural phenomena from the perspective of a 'New Institutional Economics' (Bates, 1981,1983; Ensminger, 1993), whereas this thesis proposes the opposite: namely the study of economic life from a sociological and anthropological point of view. The idea of the rational actor, who is knowledgeable and capable of calculating in terms of means and ends, and dealing with scarcities and preferences, is not, in my opinion, incompatible with a sociological analysis of economic life. Actors may sometimes reason in terms of goals and means, but social behaviour (even that which at first sight may appear 'irrational') can only be fully understood if it is seen as embedded in social relations and shaped by culturally-defined choices. It is hoped therefore that, after reading this thesis, the reader will be convinced by this line of analysis and come to understand how and why the Waluguru from and in Mgeta become 'Trapped in decline'.

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CHAPTER 2

THE CONTINUING TRIAL OF DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS: POLICIES, PRICES AND OUTPUT IN TANZANIAN AGRICULTURE*

This article probes a discrepancy between economic life as it could be experienced in Tanzania during the nineteen eighties and the way in which economists and political scientists wrote about it. There is no doubt that, since the early seventies, the Tanzanian economy has been beset by severe problems which especially manifest themselves in stagnation and decline in agricultural output. Agriculture is the mainstay of the economy and therefore this decline has severe repercussions for government finance and foreign exchange income. These economic problems were accentuated by a long running conflict with the IMF about the conditions for support in overcoming these problems. Yet in 1982, when this conflict was particularly severe, a casual visitor to Rukwa region would find there relative economic prosperity. The area was experiencing a maize boom, and in the region's capital, Sumbawanga, one could hear many stories about spectacular investments in, for example, transport and housing. There were also more consumer goods (often smuggled from neighbouring countries) available in the shops there, than in the capital, Dar es Salaam. This demonstrates a visible discrepancy between the generally accepted image of Tanzania's economic problems and reality as it could be experienced in daily life. Another discrepancy: agricultural decline was evident in the Mgeta division of the Uluguru mountains, Morogoro region, during the mid-eighties. This decline, however, was primarily caused by internal factors: declining soil fertility, erosion and pressure of people on land (van Donge, 1992) while the literature considered government intervention and macro-economic factors to be the main moving forces behind decline in agricultural output. Such discrepancies

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provide the basis for the argument to be made in this paper.

This article provides an epistemological critique, rooted in the everyday experience of Tanzanian economic life, of a particular type of economistic reasoning. In some respects the arguments are similar to those made by Polly Hill (1986) in her book *Development economics on trial: The anthropological case for a prosecution*, to which the title of this article refers. Development economists tend to strive for universal generalisations on economic behaviour and these are often based on large artificially created aggregates which no longer bear a relationship to empirical realities. The immediate result is that they lose sight of the historical specificity of societies, a result which is reinforced by the search for laws which operate universally and thus independently of actors. Such reasoning has been applied extensively in the analysis of economic decline in Tanzania and especially with respect to agricultural output. Both development economists and political scientists explained economic decline in terms of imbalances in the economy resulting from exploitative state intervention. Economic life is thus characterised in large macro-economic aggregates and seen as shaped by centralised national forces.

This argument has great political significance. A stress on government intervention and broad macro-economic factors as the main explanatory variables for decline provided a legitimisation for IMF conditionality which demands the retreat of the state from the economy and the reinstatement of market forces. In this scenario, Tanzanian peasants do not produce because, due to government intervention, they do not get the returns they deserve. If market forces are properly reinstated, higher production of goods for which there is demand, and which therefore pay, will result. Economic behaviour is then seen as made up of choices governed by a rationality of the market which operates irrespective of time and space (see also Hart, 1992; Dilley, 1990). This article does not deny that there are serious problems in the Tanzanian economy, but these are often of a different nature than the foregoing analysis presumes. It presents therefore a counter-view: supply and demand are seen as structured in a particular society by social forces. One of those forces, but not necessarily the determinant one, is state intervention. The state is not, therefore, an illogical intruder into the logic of the market, but one of the many players who structure economic exchange.

This paper will give first a critical overview of the commonly accepted or hegemonic explanations for decline in agricultural output in Tanzania.[1] Some

of these analyses are mere hypothetical constructs, but the central findings in most of them have undoubtedly value: e.g. the effects of state intervention on macro-economic imbalances and the exploitative nature of state intervention in agricultural marketing are beyond doubt. They overstate their case however, as they fail to make clear and unambiguous links between these macro-economic factors and centrally-defined policies on the one hand and agricultural output on the other. If one disaggregates the available data, especially if one does so in regional patterns, then a host of varying fluctuations and trends in output emerge.

The second part of the paper falsifies in this way the logical connection made between these imbalances and variations in agricultural output: a diversity of responses cannot be satisfactorily explained by models which consider centralist forces as determinant.

The third part hypothesises about alternative perspectives on the basis of census material, newspaper reports and secondary literature. An actor-oriented perspective, where economic life is seen as constructed from below (Long, 1984), may explain more satisfactorily what is happening in Tanzanian agriculture than explanations based on the workings of centralised, impersonal mechanisms. The conclusion points to policy implications.

To sum up the general perspective of this paper: it is the study of variations among responses in economic behaviour, rather than a search for universality, that leads to fruitful insights into economic behaviour. Human motivation and behaviour are seen as constructed by people in the context of particular societies instead of by macro forces which operate, analogous to natural laws, outside the actor. Government policies and related macro-economic phenomena are merely elements in such social construction of economic life and not the determining force. Preferences and utilities, which are at the core of economic choice models, are formed in the particular logic of behaviour in particular cultures and therefore the anthropological tradition has much to offer. A cross fertilisation of insights developed in different disciplines can thus enrich an understanding of reality. Anthropology has benefitted from similar influences from politics and economics in the past when influences outside the local community were ignored (Marcus and Fischer, 1986). It would, however, be wrong to see this paper, or Polly Hill's book (1986), as a call for internecine warfare among disciplines. The debate is in the first place about a re-evaluation of model building in relation to empirical data and not about the value of economics as such.

Explaining economic decline in Tanzania

There was no fundamental concern about overall economic developments in Tanzania until the late seventies (Svendsen, 1986). This is surprising in hindsight. Agricultural output had increased considerably in the sixties and had levelled out at the end of the decade. Yet, when in the early seventies a severe crisis manifested itself in food shortages and in a fast, unfavourable change in the foreign exchange situation, these were not perceived as signs of structural imbalances. Temporary shocks were seen as the cause: failure of rains and more especially the - exogenously-induced - sharp rise in oil prices. The setbacks in the economy were thought to be temporary and to be disturbing correct government policies. The government's decision to embark on a strategy of borrowing its way through the crisis seemed, therefore, wise (Green, 1975).

The situation was very different in the early eighties. Tanzania's foreign exchange crisis had not lost any of its severity. The International Monetary Fund was brought in. They saw the foreign exchange crisis as structural and caused by Tanzanian government policies. The Tanzanian government resisted IMF pressure to change its policies and saw the crisis primarily as a result of defects in the world economic order. Economists and political scientists may differ in their sympathies for the two parties in dispute, but by then they all saw Tanzania's problems as structural and not temporary.

Svendsen (1986) reviewed his position lucidly. Major structural imbalances had emerged in the Tanzanian economy: the government sector had grown disproportionately as compared with the other sectors in the economy and such growth is thus parasitic (see also Lipumba, 1988). Secondly, industrial development had taken priority over agriculture, and the new industries were very import dependent. This led to a foreign exchange squeeze which caused the stagnation in agriculture. Foreign exchange is needed for essential inputs for agricultural production and to buy incentive goods for producers. Therefore, agricultural production for export declined further, and this resulted in even less foreign exchange being available. Agriculture had, therefore, been squeezed in order to finance bureaucracy and urban expansion.

The expansion of state institutions out of all proportion to the productive base of the economy required to support them is also the major theme in Ellis's work (1982/1983) on marketing and prices. Government exploits

Tanzanian farmers through marketing and pricing: government monopolised the lion's share of agricultural marketing. This resulted in a decline of the producer share of revenue from crop sales from 66.4 percent in 1970 to 41.6 per cent in 1980. The proportionate share accruing to the marketing bureaucrats was correspondingly increasing. Ellis denies that the terms of trade in the seventies were unfavourable for an agricultural exporter like Tanzania. Production declined because those in government pocketed the profits, and farmers did not benefit.

Lofchie (1989), a political scientist, speaks of policy-induced agricultural decline in Tanzania. He had already forcefully argued (1978) about a direct connection between Tanzania's socialist policies and agricultural decline. He has elaborated this comparing Kenyan and Tanzanian agriculture; the latter's record of marketed output compares very unfavourably with that of the former. Both are low-income, oil-importing countries and share, therefore, important externally-induced predicaments, but as one country increases agricultural output and the other does not the reasons must be internal. He singles out policy as the main explanatory variable. Some have already been mentioned: pricing policies; marketing organization favouring state bureaucracies; disproportionate development of industry, etc. Two policies have not yet been discussed. First, overvaluation of the currency is against the interest of the farming sector as it discourages exports (e.g. coffee, cotton etc.) and encourages imports (e.g. grain). Overvaluation leads to artificially- induced foreign exchange shortages which lead to shortages of imported inputs, black market pricing, etc. Second, he singles out Tanzania's socialist policies, notably those aimed at villagisation and communal agricultural production as a major contributory cause of the decline. Tanzania's policies are the logical outcome of an urban bias in the political system where the peasantry is excluded from participation and influence.[2]

Nationally-promulgated policies leading to distortions in the economic structure are central to all these analyses. The evidence they provide of an exploitative growth of the state in the national economy is beyond doubt. However, these arguments are usually made in terms of large national aggregates. Also, the direct causal connection between the elasticity of supply of agricultural produce and state policies is often merely assumed as a logical consequence. If, however, the same national policies lead to regionally-differentiated supply responses then a simple and direct connection is in doubt. Seldom are these national aggregates disaggregated on a regional basis and, if they are, then the case made is often unsubstantiated.

For example, Bates (1989) contrasts the Kenyan situation, where emergent capitalist forces challenged the political elite, with 'neighbouring Tanzania, (where) a coalition of urban consumers in the coastal cities and rural peasants in the semi arid zones of the interior employed the power of the state to extract resources from the surrounding Highland regions.' This brings a regional element into the debate, but his point is, regretfully, totally speculative. His reasoning remains centralist: he also advocates the primacy of politics in explaining agricultural growth and decline.

The work of Collier et.al. (1989a;1989b;1990) seems at first sight more promising. They reason in terms of the economy of the household and differentiate their findings according to regions. Their analyses centre on the relationships **in various regions** between price, availability of consumer goods and agricultural output. They argue that the availability of consumer goods and the way in which peasants aspire to cash balances to purchase them is the main explanation for variations in supply of agricultural produce. From their research, availability of consumer goods appears to be the main determinant of variations in agricultural output. Consumer goods are much more readily available since the liberalisation of the Tanzanian economy in the mid-eighties. One would therefore expect an increase in agricultural output. That is not the case, however, because farmers now aspire to reduced cash balances. One needs smaller cash balances in a case where goods are available than in a situation of stochastic rationing. In the latter case one always needs money to avail of any opportunity to purchase. There is no need for peasants to produce more when market forces are re-established as they no longer need the extra cash balances for chance purchases.

Their analyses include a regional element, but they claim to have uncovered a nationwide economic mechanism. All regions showed a clear relationship between supply of agricultural produce and availability of consumer goods. This insight is expressed in sophisticated mathematical models. If, however, the data on which these models are based are deficient then such sophistication becomes sophistry. Alas, the construction of their analytical categories is so artificial that this is the case.

First, in their earlier work (1989a) they correlate output of cash crops with availability of consumer goods and price in various regions. They exclude, however, food crops from their definition of cash crops, but in many areas these are produced in the first place as a cash earner. In Iringa, for example, they use the output of crops like pyrethrum and tobacco as cash crops in

their correlations, but these are minor crops there as compared with the maize marketed through the National Milling Corporation, as will be elaborated below.

Second, in their later analyses (1989b;1990) they include grain crops as cash crops, but they estimate the production of grain crops on the growth of the urban population and therefore the urban market. Undoubtedly the growth of the urban sector has increased significantly the market for food grains as a cash crop in Tanzania (Raikes, 1986). Population pressure has, however, made densely populated mountainous areas also increasingly food-importing areas, as will be argued below. The assumption that there is no market, or only a limited one, for food grains in rural Tanzania is unlikely.

Third, their estimation of cash balances held by peasants is also questionable. Collier et.al. (1989b;1990) estimate the cash holdings of peasants on the basis of the currency in circulation according to the central bank. They maintain that these will be mainly held by peasant households as these form 80% of Tanzania's population and as the cash income of peasants is staggered: they receive cash only on the sale of a crop. The fact that peasants form the majority of the population does not necessarily imply that they control most of the cash circulating in society. Cash may, for example, be concentrated in the hands of a minority who use it mainly for speculative trading. The velocity of cash in the peasant sector may be high and cash may be spent quickly when it comes in. It is also doubtful whether peasants' income is less evenly spread through time than income in other sectors in the Tanzanian economy. The involvement in informal activities of most people in regular employment makes their cash flow, also, highly irregular.

Increases or decreases in cash balances are crucial in their explanation as to why peasants did not unambiguously increase output after liberalisation when more consumer goods became available. The explanation is thus based on artificial constructions. This can result in elegant economic modelling but can never lead to anything of more value than hypothetical reasoning. It certainly does not present evidence that stagnation and decline in output are caused by government policies leading to market distortions.

The artificiality of Collier and his colleagues is extreme, but not absent in most writing on agricultural decline in Tanzania.[3] Reasoning in terms of national aggregates does not automatically lead to mere thought constructions. There is no doubt about the well documented major structural

imbalances between government and other sectors; urban and rural; industry and agriculture. A centralist bias is pervasive however, and if there are diverse responses in various part of the country given the same macro-economic parameters then the forces behind such differential responses from below deserve more attention.

Falsifications: diverse responses in output and pricing

The large statistical aggregates which form the backbone of macro-economic reasoning are usually presented as evidence, but it may be better to see these as a source of hypotheses. As such they are useful in spite of the weaknesses of such databases. Here, for example, we will use the amount of produce marketed through the state as an indicator of changing output patterns in Tanzanian agriculture. As an indicator it is, of course, incomplete: it does not take account of production for own consumption and produce marketed through private channels. It is not, therefore, a definitive measure of agricultural output, but neither is it totally invalid. Changes in state marketed output may imply, for example, changes in production or a change in trading patterns, and accordingly are important sources of hypotheses. This is especially so if such information is seen in conjunction with information about prices on open markets. The volume of trade on open markets is not recorded, but open market prices of food throughout the country are. Prices are influenced by patterns of demand and supply and point therefore to possible developments in agricultural production.

Statistical analysis tends to ignore the qualitative and interpretative framework upon which it is based. Analysis of statistical data is a search for order and there is always the temptation to construct aggregates which fit a particular order. Alternative arrangements of data can therefore challenge the implicit order in such reasoning. The implicit order underlying the interpretations mentioned above is based on centralist assumptions: government policy and the resulting macro-economic constellation are the major determinants of agricultural output. The more such national factors are important the more one could expect nationally uniform patterns. The following disaggregation of national statistics into regions and crops will show a variety of patterns however, and will thus falsify this implicit order.

In Tanzania, most crops are bound to particular regions and national policies may therefore have only a regional impact.[4] Maize, however, is grown

throughout virtually the whole country. Regionally diverse responses to national circumstances may, therefore, be discussed in the context of this crop. Also, many observers have noted a major change in the regional pattern of maize production (e.g. Bagachwa and Maliyamkono, 1990; Lofchie, 1989; Raikes, 1986). Formerly most of the maize marketed through the state originated from the regions Dodoma, Arusha, Kilimanjaro and to a lesser extent Morogoro. Nowadays the largest part of the maize marketed in that way originates from the south western regions: Iringa, Mbeya, Ruvuma and Rukwa. These regions are referred to in political parlance as the 'big four,' reflecting their political weight. As Raikes (1986) noted, the share of these regions in national state-marketed maize production rose from 22.2% of the national total on average in the period 1973-5 to an average of 85% in the period 1983-85.

Such a comparison between the 'big four' and the former major maize producing areas is a simplification however. Figure 1 and Table 1 show the long-term trend (1965-89) in state-marketed maize production in six regions. Kilimanjaro, Arusha and Morogoro were formerly major maize producers and Iringa, Ruvuma and Rukwa belong to the big four. Mbeya is left out here for practical reasons: until 1975, Rukwa was part of Mbeya region and their production figures were not given separately. The trend is calculated as an indexed time series based on three years rolling averages to neutralise random climatic factors. The base for the index is 1975/8. Since then, figures for Rukwa have been listed separately.

The trends in the various regions are distinctly different. Iringa first shows a pattern of decline, bottoming out in the mid-seventies and then ascending. Ruvuma, also in the south west, shows an overall ascending trend. This is more erratic than Rukwa's sharp line of ascent in the decade 1976-86. A comparison of trends in Arusha, Kilimanjaro and Morogoro shows distinct differences also. Morogoro and Kilimanjaro show a declining trend which has been very pronounced since the early eighties. Arusha shows a much more erratic pattern of boom and bust. In contrast to the other two regions, the trend is steeply upward after the mid-eighties.

The maverick position of Arusha in the national supply of maize shows clearly in the period 1986-88. The share of the 'big four' in state-marketed maize dropped then to an average of 56%, although the share of these regions continued to grow in absolute terms. The share of Arusha region rose spectacularly from on average 5% in the period 1982-85 to an average

of 26% in 1985-88.

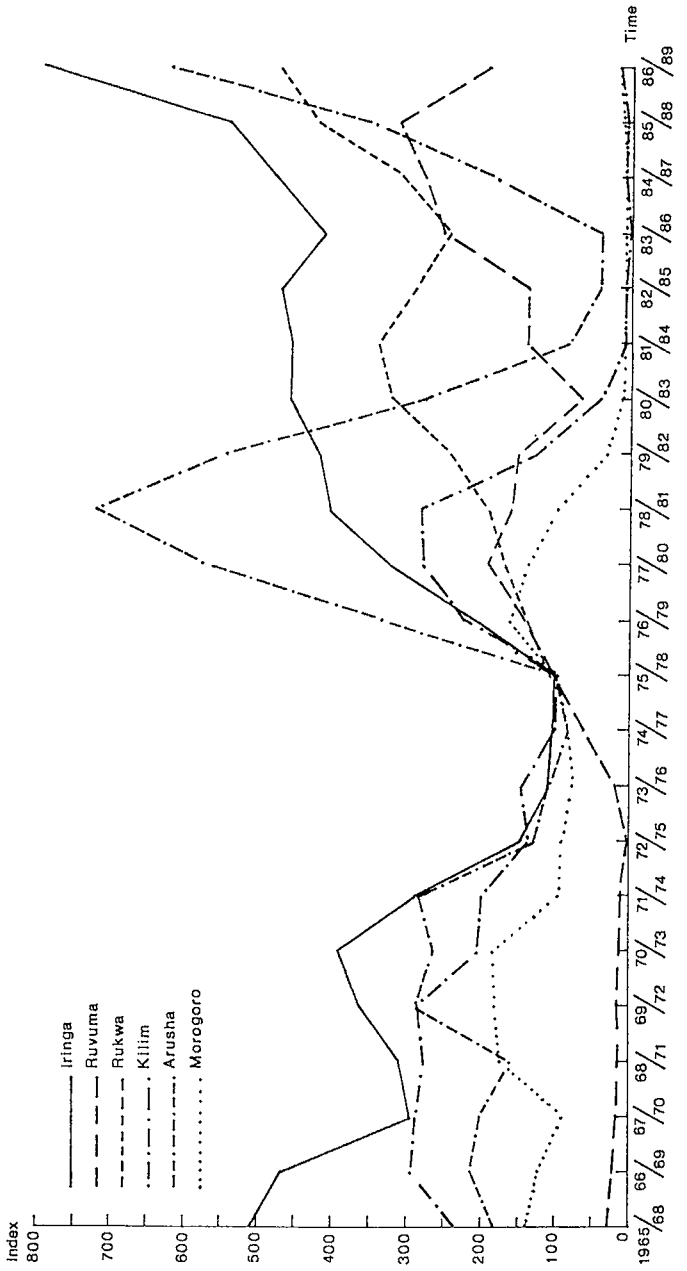
A comparison of Arusha and Kilimanjaro shows obvious differential responses in similar situations. Their proximity gives them access to the same markets; both regions are situated close to the Kenyan border; both have a sizeable urban population. Nevertheless, the supply of maize to the state from Kilimanjaro shows, in contrast to Arusha, a consistently declining trend.

Table 1: Index of maize marketed through National Milling Corporation (NMC) in six regions based on three years rolling averages (1975/78 = 100)

Years	Iringa	Ruvuma	Rukwa	Kilimanjaro	Arusha	Morogoro
65/68	506	27		236	183	138
66/69	467	22		293	212	122
67/70	297	14		285	200	89
68/71	310	14		271	161	175
69/72	363	15		284	288	183
70/73	392	13		204	264	186
71/74	291	9		199	282	97
72/75	150	2		134	128	91
73/76	108	18		146	109	77
74/77	105	63		101	81	82
75/78	100	100	100	100	100	100
76/79	207	143	137	220	334	165
77/80	323	191	169	278	575	138
78/81	403	160	193	279	719	99
79/82	418	153	243	129	543	33
80/83	452	67	322	42	275	12
81/84	451	144	340	7	88	10
82/85	469	139	292	7	43	8
83/86	413	254	245	4	42	8
84/87	479	278	311	7	183	8
85/88	542	313	423	6	345	9
86/89	757	195	471	17	618	15

Source: Bulletins of crop statistics: compiled by Statistics Unit, Planning and Marketing Division, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development

Figure 1: Index of maize marketed through national marketing corporation (NMC) in six regions based on three years rolling averages (1975/78 = 100)



The effects of government policy must also be quite similar in both regions. For example, the introduction of 'pan territorial pricing' (the same price paid by government throughout the country) is mentioned as a reason for the rise of the 'big four' in maize production and the decline of these two northern regions (Maliyamkono and Bagachwa, 1990:75). If the same price is paid throughout the country, then geographically disadvantageously-located areas are stimulated to increase production and vice versa. The logical flaw in this argument is that subsidising disadvantageously-located areas does not necessarily imply a loss of income to other areas. More importantly, however, the argument does not stand up to empirical evidence. Kilimanjaro and Arusha should be similarly affected by pan-territorial pricing, but the effects are strikingly different.

The open market gives no explanation for this differential supply response either. Raikes (1986) states boldly that 'it seems likely that large amounts from the northern areas will be sold to the NMC only in years of bumper harvest in both Tanzania and Kenya (as, for example, 1985/86)'. In that year, NMC bought 36,060 tons of maize in Arusha (as compared with 3,969 tons in the preceding year). In Kilimanjaro the situation was very different: NMC bought a meagre 89 tons as compared with 627 tons a year before. Kenya is easily accessible from both regions and nevertheless the supply responses to the state are very different.

If the extent to which smuggling to Kenya takes place is the main determinant of supply to the state, then we can assume that there will be a negative correlation between such supply and the price differential between the government and the market price. The bigger the difference, the smaller the supply to the state. Such a correlation was not significant in the period 1984-1988.

Maize markets throughout Tanzania appear to be highly segmented, and the pattern of supply and demand may be locally-determined to a large extent. If national policies and economic constellations are the determining forces of supply and demand, one would expect price movements of, e.g., maize to correlate throughout Tanzania. That appears hardly to be the case. A correlation of open market prices in fourteen different places over the period 1983/89 shows few significant correlations (Table 2). If there is significance then it can in some cases be explained by geographical proximity, e.g. Iringa and Mbeya (0.8879); Arusha and Moshi (0.7982). That is not automatically the case however. Prices in Mbulu, for example, correlate more than most

Table 2: Correlation of prices of maize in open markets in various parts of Tanzania, July 1983 - July 1989

	Arusha	Mbulu	Moshi	Lushoto	Mwanza	Tarime	Kigoma	Dodoma	Tabora	S.wanga	Mbeya	Iringa	Songea
Arusha	1.0000												
Mbulu	0.2594	1.0000											
Moshi	* **0.7982**	0.4091	1.0000										
Lushoto	0.5011	* **0.7510**	0.7452	1.0000									
Mwanza	0.2755	* **0.7888**	0.2502	0.5646	1.0000								
Tarime	-0.2385	* **0.7730**	-0.1769	0.4063	0.5260	1.0000							
Kigoma	-0.0351	* **0.7764**	0.0338	0.5382	** **0.9128**	0.7311	1.0000						
Dodoma	0.6357	0.5566	0.6034	0.6960	0.1907	0.4035	0.1632	1.0000					
Tabora	0.0499	0.7246	0.0642	0.5583	** **0.8951**	0.6380	** **0.9503**	0.0748	1.0000				
S.wanga	0.0627	0.2281	0.2573	0.3847	0.4025	0.0686	0.3956	0.0218	0.6037	1.0000			
Mbeya	0.1188	** **0.9399**	0.3576	* **0.7845**	0.6316	* **0.8255**	0.7240	0.6056	0.6417	0.1261	1.0000		
Iringa	0.4488	* **0.8719**	0.6443	* **0.8294**	0.6076	0.5974	0.5750	* **0.7709**	0.5148	0.2429	** **0.8879**	1.0000	
Songea	0.0772	* **0.8151**	0.2740	0.6513	* **0.7898**	0.6167	* **0.7782**	0.2349	** **0.8927**	0.6745	0.6912	0.6228	1.0000
Mtwara	-0.2104	* **0.8291**	-0.1071	0.5018	0.6644	** **0.9691**	* **0.8156**	0.3273	* 0.7660	0.1207	* **0.8684**	0.6185	0.7022

Correlation coefficient

Significance (p)

One-tailed significance: * = **0.01** ** = **0.001**

Minimum number of cases: 9

with other markets, but these correlations seem to be random. Mbulu is the main maize-growing area in Arusha, yet there is no significant correlation between prices in Arusha town and Mbulu. Prices in Mbulu show the highest significant correlation with those in Mbeya, a distance of about a thousand kilometres. The highest significant correlation of prices in all markets is between Mtwara and Tarime (0.9694). Mtwara is near the Mozambican border in the extreme south east of the country and Tarime borders Kenya in the extreme north west. This suggests that, if prices in various regional markets correlate, this may not reflect a causal relationship.

Locally-generated forces appear important in the formation of demand and supply, but government plays a role as well. South-western Tanzania, for example, used to have poor access to markets, but since the early seventies the area has become much more accessible because of road construction and the new railway to Zambia. The 'big four' have also received a disproportionate share of national supplies of fertilizer, maize seeds and loans (Table 3). The four regions comprise only about one fifth of the Tanzanian population but, in the period 1977-86, received over 60% of the national fertilizer supply; they got almost 40% of the national supply of improved maize seeds in the period 1977-85 and over 50% of the seasonal loans disbursed by the government. If we look, however, at the distribution among the four regions then such policy-induced forces differed considerably again. Iringa appears to have benefitted proportionally most of the four and Rukwa far less. Ruvuma received far less maize seed than the others. This shows that government influence on agriculture cannot be reduced to price policies and that a complex interaction between locally-generated forces and government forms supply patterns.

Trends in coffee output sold to the state also show a definite shift in economic importance from the northern regions, Arusha and Kilimanjaro, to the south west, to the regions Ruvuma and Mbeya (Table 4/Figure 2). The average output of the northern regions in the period 1972-75 was 2.9 times the output of Mbeya and Ruvuma; that was reduced to a ratio of 1.2 in the years 1985-87. Figure 2 shows the trend in marketed coffee output in Arusha, Kilimanjaro, Ruvuma, Mbeya and nationally, based on three years rolling averages. It shows a slightly fluctuating but overall stagnant national trend. This gives a misleading idea of what was happening in the economy, because Ruvuma and Mbeya show a smooth upward trend in this period. This growth is not to be found in the two northern regions, but the differences between Kilimanjaro and Arusha are again striking. Decline is

again much more pronounced in the former than in the latter.

Table 3: Percentage share of the 'big four' regions in the national distribution of fertilizer, maize seeds and agricultural loans compared with population

	Fertilizer[1] 77-86	Maize seeds[1] 78-86	TRDB loans[2] 79-84	Population[3]
Iringa	21.3	18.9	22.4	5.2
Mbeya	17.5	13.0	8.2	6.4
Rukwa	4.8	6.1	11.0	3.0
Ruvuma	16.5	1.3	10.4	3.4
Total of national %	60.1	39.3	52.0	18.0

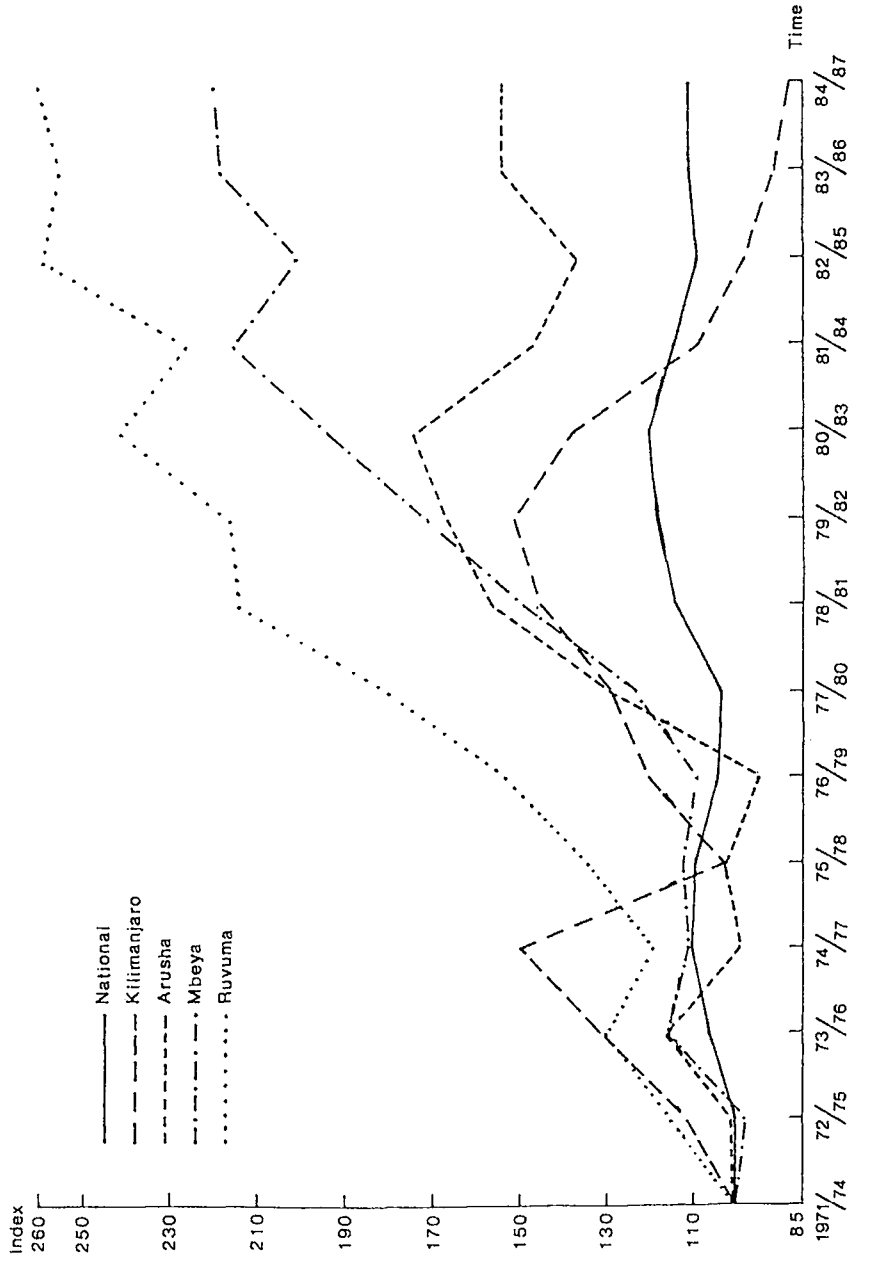
Sources:
1. Bulletin of crop statistics 1987/88; Min. of Agric. and Liv. Development
2. Statistical Abstract 1984; Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Finance, Economic Affairs and Planning.
3. 1988 Population census: Preliminary report; Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Finance, Economic Affairs and Planning.

Table 4: Index of coffee sold to Coffee Authority of Tanzania (CAT) nationally and in four regions: based on three years rolling averages (1971/74 = 100)

Years	National	Kilimanjaro	Arusha	Mbeya	Ruvuma
71/74	100	100	100	100	100
72/75	100	111	101	98	115
73/76	106	131	116	116	130
74/77	110	150	99	111	119
75/78	109	103	103	112	134
76/79	104	120	95	109	153
77/80	103	129	129	123	180
78/81	114	145	156	149	214
79/82	118	151	166	171	216
80/83	120	137	174	194	246
81/84	114	109	147	215	226
82/85	109	98	137	201	259
83/86	111	91	154	218	255
84/87	111	88	154	220	260

Source: Bulletins of crop statistics; compiled by the Statistics Unit, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development.

Figure 2: Index of coffee sold to coffee authority of Tanzania (CAT) nationally and in four regions based on three years rolling averages (1971/74 = 100)



The case of coffee is significant in two respects. It is, as compared with maize, a high value for less bulk crop and therefore more suitable for smuggling. If smuggling to Kenya were a major explanatory factor in the north then we could again expect similar trends in marketed output in the two northern regions. That is not the case. Secondly, coffee is a perennial crop and therefore not immediately sensitive to changes in policy. Coffee trees take five years to mature. This means that in the periods when socialist-inspired policies which restricted the market where most prevalent in Tanzania there was confidence to plant coffee on a large scale in Mbeya and Ruvuma. This, and the diversity in output patterns of coffee among regions, strongly indicates that initiatives from below more than government policy may explain variations in marketed output.

An increasing share of the 'big four' regions in the south west in the volume of marketed agricultural produce is an undeniable trend in Tanzanian agriculture, but not in the case of tobacco. Tobacco is a relatively minor crop in Tanzania, mainly grown in three regions: Iringa, Ruvuma and Tabora. Figure 3 and Table 5 show the trend in output in those regions as well as nationally over the period 1976-89 based on three years rolling averages. Iringa and Ruvuma belong to the 'big four', but the trend in tobacco output is unambiguously downward there. Nationally the direction of the trend is less obvious. The direction is downward, but there is a definite resurgence between 1984 and 1987. This is also the pattern in Tabora, the major tobacco producing region (46% of the national output during the period). Tabora experienced a short tobacco boom in the years 1984-87; in 1986, for example, Tabora marketed close to ten thousand tons of tobacco while the average crop sold in the period 1979-89 was only about seven thousand tons. The case of tobacco thus also illustrates differential responses to national policies in various regions. Therefore: macro-economic forces, shaped by economic policy, may be important but these have no unilinear, direct and unambiguous relation to agricultural output.

It is a truism that statistical relationships are not meaningful without an interpretative framework. For example, macro-economic and political analyses usually speak of national aggregates, assuming a nationally-interlocking economic entity. This implicit frame of reference becomes doubtful if comparison of price movements in different regions shows segmented markets in the national economy, as was the case for maize prices. Correlation of prices for beans and rice in various places throughout

Figure 3: Index of tobacco sold to tobacco authority of Tanzania (TAT) nationally and in three regions based on three years rolling averages (1976/78 = 100)

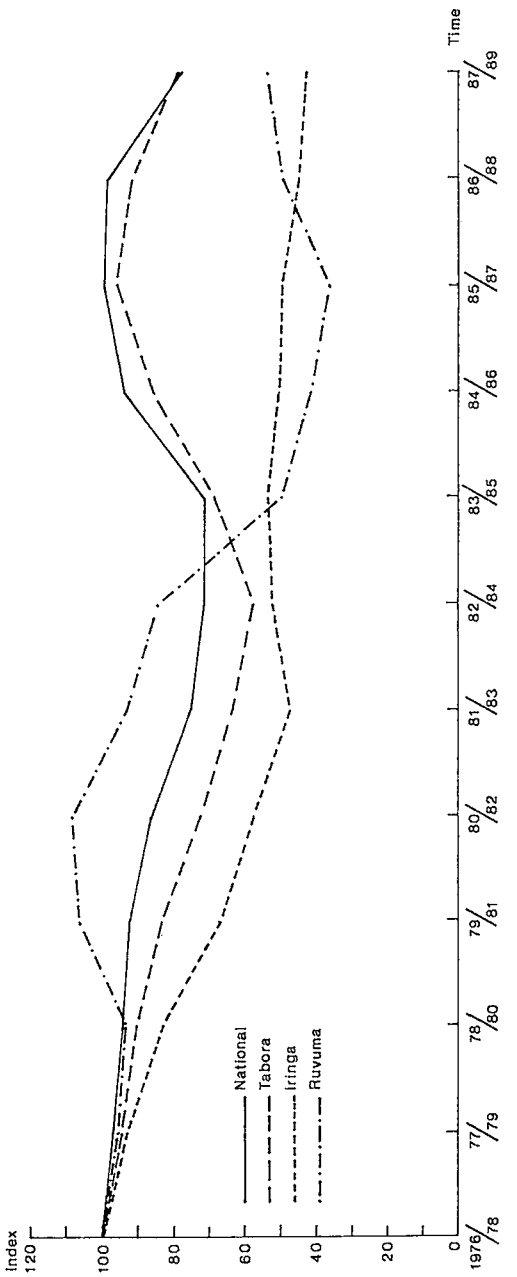


Table 5: Index of tobacco sold to Tobacco Authority of Tanzania (TAT) nationally and in three regions: based on three years rolling averages (1976/78 = 100)

Years	National	Tabora	Iringa	Ruvuma
76/78	100	100	100	100
77/79	97	94	93	95
78/80	94	90	83	94
79/81	92	83	67	106
80/82	86	72	57	108
81/83	75	63	47	93
82/84	71	57	52	84
83/85	71	68	53	50
84/86	93	85	50	41
85/87	99	95	49	36
86/88	98	91	44	49
87/89	77	78	42	53

Source: Bulletins of crop statistics; Statistics Unit, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development

Tanzania showed a similar result; there were few significant correlations. In some cases these could be explained by geographical proximity, but others must be purely coincidental. One would expect a national market more in the case of rice and beans than of other crops. These products are eminently suitable for a burgeoning class of local traders: there is a national market, they have a high value/bulk ratio and are not perishable. However, there is no reason to assume a nationally-integrated movement of prices for these crops.[5]

This leaves of course the question open as to which forces actually influence price formation, supply and demand. Everyday life in Tanzania undoubtedly shows a burgeoning private trade in these crops, and statistics of produce marketed through government channels may seem an unpromising source of data. Yet, an examination of such statistics can lead to important questions. For example, the time series in the case of rice marketed through government are particularly difficult to interpret in absolute terms of produce sold, but a relative comparison of regions directs attention in intriguing directions. From 1978-88 Mbeya region produced by far most of the rice marketed through NMC, but there was a sudden change in the following three years when Shinyanga region, and to a lesser extent Mwanza, rose to prominence.[6] The national trend in beans sold to the state in the period

1978-88 is down, but less so in Rukwa region than elsewhere. There is, however, a sudden sharp increase in sales from Arusha region at the end of the period after a near total collapse of supply to government.[7]

Erratic scores are common in the time series of marketed crops in Tanzania and these are often made up to a great extent by an extreme local score. Tobacco output, for example, jumped from about thirteen thousand tons in 1985 to twenty-three thousand tons in 1986 and fell back to seventeen the year after. The reason: in 1986 Rukwa produced 8,121 tons of tobacco as compared with less than a thousand the year before and the year after.

Such erratic scores can be as much part of a pattern of output figures as a trend. For example, cashewnut production in Tanzania is consistently in decline; a decline which seems terminal. Yet, at the same time there is reason for enquiry into erratic scores. For example, there was a revival relative to the preceding and following years in 1980-81 and 1983-84. If we compare the output marketed through the government marketing board in 1980 with that of 1981 we see that the increase was much more spectacular in Mtwara, the main producing region, as compared with the overall rise. The second most important cashew region - Coast region - had a lower output in 1981 than in the year before. A similar comparison between 1983 and 1984 shows that the increase was, in that period, much more pronounced in Coast region than in Mtwara (Table 6).

Another example of erratic scores: cotton output in Shinyanga in the period 1977-89 reached its lowest point in a downward trend (66,200 bales of lint) in the season 1985-86, and the next year output more than doubled. In 1986-87 it reached a record output of 170,400 bales of lint, then decline set in and output for 1990 was again at the very low level of 1985.

The temptation to neglect erratic patterns is inherent in the search for order which statistical analysis implies. For example, Ellis (1982/83:227) writes 'The marketed output of staple grains in Tanzania has been so erratic in recent times as to defy the most ingenious attempts to discern a trend' and he then ignores this observation. If patterns are erratic, then one must look for a different order than we have in mind to try to explain the fluctuations. Erratic scores can be considered as merely random phenomena or exceptions, due e.g. to climatic factors or - not unlikely in Tanzania - statistical or transcription errors. The magnitude of these scores is usually so great, however, that they deserve attention as they may point to important local

processes of an incidental nature. As such these can give important clues as to the formative influences on economic behaviour.

Table 6:

a: Purchases of raw cashewnuts by Cashewnut Authority of Tanzania over a decade

Year	Metric tons
1978	60.559
1979	53.142
1980	34.851
1981	56.544
1982	40.675
1983	30.563
1984	47.419
1985	32.152
1986	18.692
1987	16.664
1988	11.100

b: Comparative change between national supply and supply in the two main regions

	1981 compared to 1980	1983 compared to 1984
National	+ 62%	+ 55%
Mtwara	+ 114%	+ 20%
Coast	- 17%	+ 142%

Source: Bulletins of crop statistics; Statistics Unit, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development

This may, for instance, lead to a different view of the role of government: erratic sudden increases in supply may well be related to incidental improvements in government marketing.[8] Such marketing may be inefficient and exploitative, but much produce is still sold through government-regulated market channels. It is worthwhile to note, for example, the great extent to which the huge increase in rice production in Shinyanga and Mwanza during the late eighties was marketed through the state, despite the fact that trade in

rice has been almost completely liberalised since the mid-eighties. This could indicate that government marketing is not - in principle - a disincentive to production. The nature and effects of government intervention in various parts of the economy may have to be much more differentiated. The provision of government inputs in the south west coinciding with a relative boom in agricultural production also points in this direction.

Above all, however, this analysis shows that in various parts of the country the output patterns show different reactions, given the parameter of national economics and policies. The relation between government policies and marketed agricultural output may seem simple at first sight, but it is not. For example, aggregate national marketed agricultural output rose until 1967 - the year of the Arusha declaration - when socialist policies were introduced; then it remained stagnant until the early seventies; after that an overall decline set in coinciding with a more doctrinaire adoption of socialism. A direct relationship between agricultural performance and the introduction of socialist policies seems therefore logical. That is only so however if one accepts that national aggregates reflect adequately what happens in the economy, and disaggregation shows that this is not the case.

Hypotheses: the social construction of supply and demand

Decline due to pricing and government intervention is portrayed as the key explanatory factor in the dominant reasoning on the Tanzanian economy, implying a mechanical approach. A perspective which sees economic life as constructed by actors from below may, however, fit empirical realities better. The diversity of experience as shown above demonstrates the possibility of a variety of responses under similar externally-induced influences.

This is not necessarily in conflict with all economistic perspectives. For example, most explanations of agricultural decline in Tanzania adopt a rational choice model: producers react rationally to incentives, notably price, and they withdraw from the market if the rewards are too low. This model, alas, simplifies the decision situation of the farmer too much however. Price is undoubtedly one element in the decision to produce, but markets are composed of many more elements than price alone: the inputs needed, their availability and price; access to transport for marketing; the likelihood of being paid at all by either government or private traders are all factors which

farmers can take into account when switching between crops.

The size of the marketed surplus in such a stochastic decision-making environment will be big or small depending upon whether these uncertain factors are favourable or not.[9] Such a perspective makes the erratic patterns of agricultural output in Tanzania much more understandable. Erratic patterns of output may thus point more to a drive to produce than to a withdrawal from the market. The image of the agricultural sector in Tanzania thus changes: the sector may be passive and stagnant in some parts, but it can be seen as vibrant and full of initiative in others. Economic behaviour in Tanzania may be much more structured by a hunger for cash than by a peasant mode of production in which a relationship with the wider exchange networks is incidental to the economy of the household (Hyden, 1980). This is also a significant empirical finding of Collier et.al (1989; table 3.14): a comparison of two rural household surveys showed that such households are increasingly dependent upon trade and remittances from the urban sectors.

Rational choice perspectives can perhaps account for stochastic environments and a more active role of peasant producers. A basic shortcoming remains however that these lead easily to methodological individualism, while decision making is embedded in social life. Supply and demand - or markets - are not created by aggregated individual preferences, but through social change. For example: the increasing importance of the south west in Tanzanian agriculture has to be seen in conjunction with the development of a rail and road infrastructure there. Social change sometimes creates markets where there were none before: the rise of an urban population and population pressure in densely populated areas have created markets for food grains, and farmers are therefore far less dependent upon export crops than in the past. Such demographic developments have also created markets for crops like tomatoes, onions, etc. As a result, farmers are far less dependent upon state marketing. The way in which the market is constructed must, therefore, be kept in mind when interpreting official figures of marketed produce: a decline may, in this context, point more to a switch into other crops than to a decision to withdraw from the market. Markets are thus not abstract entities which operate according to a rationality irrespective of time and place. The rationality of a particular market is a social construction by actors through practices. Scarcity, for example, an essential concept in economic analysis, is embedded in social processes: urbanisation, population pressure, trading networks, transport infrastructure. More importantly: economic analysis usually accepts as given the particular preferences and utilities in a

society. These crucial elements of economic life can, however, only be understood as products of social construction and have in their turn a structuring influence. For instance, if there is a preference for migration from an area, this will create forces for actors to migrate in their turn, or if people lose confidence in money and invest in goods instead then this has a compelling influence on others (see Cohen, 1989). Patterns of social change may thus explain the more systematic - as distinct from the erratic -changes in output patterns. So called 'pure' economic data - measures of monetary or physical inputs and outputs - become therefore less important to understand economic life. All kinds of indicators of social life - census reports, newspaper articles, agronomic reports, etc. - will be used here to hypothesise about the social structuration of economic life in Tanzanian agriculture.

Population change due to migration is a factor which should be examined in any quest to explain increases and decreases in agricultural production. Expansion in Tanzanian agriculture tends to be mostly of an extensive and not of an intensive nature. Such patterns of migration and extensive agriculture have to be understood as resulting from preferences/utilities which are socially constructed, embedded in struggles between sexes; old and young; rich and poor. In other words: migration is a dominant reaction to population pressure and leads, as a rule, to extensive farming in new areas. These preferences are socially structured. The following does not present a comprehensive definitive answer as to how patterns of output in Tanzanian agriculture are shaped: it hypotheses using examples from various regions. The purpose is to look differently at the issue with a perspective of actors structuring economic life from below. Government policy and macro-economic factors influence this but are not determinant.

Population growth and migration

The rates of population growth (Table 7) differ considerably throughout Tanzania, and there seems to be a relationship between this growth and changes in agricultural output. The rates of population growth indicate in the first place urbanisation: in the period 1978-88, the capital, Dar es Salaam, had the highest growth rate. The next four regions where the growth rate was above the national average were Rukwa, Arusha, Ruvuma and Mbeya. These, except for Arusha, are regions in the south-west where output is growing fast. Arusha's case may, however, be significant as well if

Table 7:

a: Population growth in a selected number of regions, compared to the whole of Tanzania (1978/88)

	% growth per year	comparative ranking
Nationaly	2.8	
Dar es Salaam	4.8	1
Rukwa region	4.3	2
Arusha region	3.8	3
Ruvuma region	3.4	4
Mbeya region	3.1	5
Iringa	2.7	10
Kilimanjaro	2.1	15

b: Population growth compared among districts in a selected number of regions (1978/88)

Iringa region		Arusha region	
District	% growth per year	District	% growth per year
Ir.-urban	4.8	Ar.-urban	5.5
Mufindi	3.2	Arumeru	3.5
Ir.-rur	2.5	Monduli	5.0
Ludewa	3.2	Kiteto	11.3
Njombe	3.3	Hanang	3.9
Kilimanjaro region		Mbeya region	
District	% growth per year	District	% growth per year
Moshi-urb.	8.5	Mbeya-urb.	9.5
Moshi-rur.	1.0	Mbeya-rur.	2.9
Rombo	2.7	Chunya	8.4
Hai	1.6	Kyela	1.8
Pare	2.1	Rungwe	1.6
		Ileje	2.4
		Mbozi	4.0
Ruvuma region		Rukwa region	
District	% growth per year	District	% growth per year
Songea-urb.	8.2	Sumbaw-urb.	5.9
Songea-rur.	3.9	Sumbaw-rur.	3.9
Tunduru	2.6	Mpanda	7.5
Mbinga	3.4		

Source: 1988 population census: preliminary report; Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Finance, Economic Affairs and Planning

compared with neighbouring Kilimanjaro region. In the latter, population growth is well below average, and the region had - as argued above - a much more consistent decline in officially marketed output than Arusha region.

Again, this is hypothesising; the reason why Iringa, a region which also belongs to the 'big four' agricultural boom regions, does not have a higher population growth than average also merits enquiry.

The rates of population growth also differ considerably among the various districts within the regions. Growth rates tend to be high, but not always highest, in urban centres. The rate of growth tends to be less in densely populated rural areas, usually the relatively more fertile and well-watered areas: in Kilimanjaro, for example, Moshi rural; or in Mbeya region, Rungwe and Kyela. In Arusha, the growth rate is most striking in the big, arid and sparsely populated district Kiteto. Monduli, which is also semi-arid, had a large growth rate too. Population growth in Mpanda in Rukwa region is also strikingly higher than the - high - regional rate and especially higher than on the densely populated fertile Fipa plateau. In rural Mbeya, Chunya, and to a lesser extent Mbozi, have high population growth rates.

Differential population growth may result from many factors, e.g. diet, health care etc., but also from migration. Migration from highly-populated relatively well-endowed areas to agronomically more marginal and less populated areas seems a plausible explanation in this case. An exploration of the relationship between population growth and the rise in output deserves attention therefore.

The preference for extensive farming

A coincidence of patterns of migration with growth in output fits in with the probability that new initiatives in agricultural production in Tanzania tend to be of an extensive nature. Growth in officially marketed output occurs more in new areas than in areas where production for the market has been long established. It was mentioned above, for instance, that the national output of coffee remained stagnant while there was a expansion in new coffee producing areas in the south west. These quotes from the newspaper illustrate the extensive nature of coffee production:

> 'One of the major problems facing the coffee industry in the country is the low productivity of most farms. The average coffee yield per hectare in the Kilimanjaro region, for example, is between 250kg and 300kg of clean coffee....the potential output could be double the amount or even more'. (Daily News, 13/2/85)
>
> A manager of the Coffee Authority of Tanzania commenting on a spectacular increase of coffee bought in Mbeya region: 'Ndugu Mwasa attributed the increase to the expansion of land under the crop in the region'. (Daily News, 19/2/84)

The increased maize production in the south-western regions may - despite the relatively favourable provision of fertilisers, etc. - be also of an extensive nature. Virgin land is abundant there relative to other areas. Such land can be farmed for a few years with high yields and then one has to move on or use intensive cultivation techniques. The maize boom in the south west may therefore be temporary.

The case of Iringa region may illustrate this. It appeared (Figure 1) that maize production dropped from a high level in the sixties and rose again after bottoming out in the mid-seventies. This coincided with a shift in location.

Maize cultivation was concentrated in an area called Ismani which was the scene of a very intensive campaign against big farmers and for communal production. The campaign ended in violence. The collapse of production there coincided with this campaign (Nindi, 1978; Awiti, 1973; Feldman, 1975). The regional recovery in maize production originated mainly in another area, Dabaga (Friis-Hansen, 1988). At first sight, maize production in Iringa illustrates thus the importance of centrally-formulated policies in explaining agrarian change. Politics has undoubtedly an influence here, but the question is whether it is a determining one. Maize farming in Ismani was carried out by migrants moving - often semi-permanently - into the area and getting good harvests by farming virgin soils. The collapse in production also coincided with rapidly declining fertility which necessitates intensive farming. In the early eighties Ismani had become an ecological problem area as illustrated in the following newspaper report:

> 'Ndugu Kabongo said the Ismani division, once a maize producing area, was today facing severe food shortages. He said Ismani area

> had seen its production declining from 50 bags per hectare to only one bag per hectare'. (Daily News, 12/3/85)

The preference for extensive farming in cotton cultivation in the Lake Zone was well-documented as far back as the early sixties (de Wilde, 1967). Farmers prefer to move into new land and to use as little labour as possible in cultivation instead of intensifying production on existing soils and maintaining fertility through manuring and crop rotation. More recent comments will mention similar factors in combination with others. For example: 'Among the reasons for the dramatic improvement in cotton production for the mid-fifties to the mid-sixties period in Mwanza, Shinyanga and Mara regions was ...the availability of virgin land to which a good number of farmers had migrated'...'the declining trend after 1967 was due to the degradation of the soil in the older areas in Mwanza and Shinyanga regions' (Tanzanian Economic Trends, 1988). Another recent comment: 'The system is characterised by broadcasting seed over large, ox-cultivated areas with a minimum of inputs and labour requirement' (Verhoek, 1990).

Preferences and utility as social constructions

The choice of cultivation practices and the decision to migrate can be interpreted economistically as the logical outcome of a rational choice. Scarcity, preferences and utility are then the main components of such decision making. These fundamental concepts in economic analysis are not, however, objectively given in reality, but socially-perceived and constructed phenomena. Scarcity of labour may illustrate this aptly. This is particularly relevant here, given the preference for extensive agriculture. Extensification instead of intensification is a logical choice in a situation where labour is short. Shortage of labour is, however, not a natural endowment in the same sense as fertile land or mineral resources. Labour forces can be attracted to enterprises or centrifugal forces may lead to dispersement of population. Scarcity is in this case thus a socially-shaped process or in other words: scarcity is structured in society through practices.

Labour shortage is an issue which pervades discourse on agriculture in Tanzania. The following three examples demonstrate how clear links are perceived between agro-economic change and social relations. First, a statement by the former Prime Minister Sokoine:

> 'He lashed out at the practice among ex-primary school youths who shunned working on farms and opted for urban life. As a result, he said, those who were working on the farms now were old people who had no real energy'. (Daily News 9/1/83)

Scarcity of labour is depicted clearly here as structured by social struggles: between urban and rural sectors and above all between the old and the young.

The next quotation, from the chairman of the UWT (Umoja wa Wanawake Tanzania; the political party's women's movement) in Mara, shows even more clearly how social struggles can structure the supply of labour:

> 'She called on the men of Mara region to stop their chauvinistic attitude of regarding women as useless creatures. We have made good progress to women's liberation in this region, although dowry was still too high causing many young men to marry outside the region and thus leaving girls to be married by old men. This, most probably, is the root of polygamy....' (Daily News, 4/2/85)

Socio-economic change is seen in such a statement as generated from below through the relations between sexes and generations.

A village study in another part of the Lake Zone - Kahama district in Shinyanga region - also explains agronomic change along much the same lines (Aarnink and Kingma, 1991). Land scarcity was a prime moving force there. Land was not only short, but was also exhausted. This resulted in outward migration, especially of males. In the age groups over fifteen, women outnumbered men almost two to one. The relation to crop choice was evident: paddy cultivation increased while cotton decreased as paddy requires less labour and less capital. The way in which impoverishment and demographic patterns mesh in crop choice is clear in the following quote:

> 'Growing cotton is really hard work. Besides you need much fertilizer because the soil is 'tired' (exhausted). Then you have to weed four times. You really need a strong man'. (Quoted in Aarnink and Kingma, 1991)

Agro-economic change is thus generated in specific local social economic contexts. Again, this paper hypothesises about these on the basis of evidence

at first sight. Dominant themes emerge then, e.g.: population growth results in a breakdown of food security which gives rise to trade, migration to other areas, increasing dependence upon the urban sector, etc. The following newspaper report on a plan for the Lake zone illustrates this well:

> 'Agriculture is losing its traditional objective of household self-sufficiency in food, resulting in chronic food deficits in the zone apparently because of loss of arable land.... The report says lack of land is a direct result of over stocking....Migration should be accepted as a rational solution and planning of new settlements should be given first priority in all immigration areas'. (Daily News 30/11/83)

This quote refers to a government plan and illustrates thus how government policy is an influence which meshes into the way economic life is structured by actors through social processes. A closer look at the agronomic changes in two 'old' coffee growing areas - Kagera and Kilimanjaro - may illustrate well how an actor-oriented perspective from below may be necessary to understand the formation of supply patters. The case that government marketing and pricing policies are the root cause of agricultural decline has been most forcefully made in the case of export crops like coffee. The unreliability of coffee marketing in Tanzania since the early seventies is well documented (Ellis and Hanak, 1980), but it may not be the only reason for stagnation and decline in coffee cultivation.

Tibaijuka (1983) sees the decline of coffee production in Kagera in the first place as the consequence of a pest - the banana weevil - which undermined food production. Farmers uprooted coffee in order to plant more bananas to compensate for the decline. The disease also created a big food market in the affected zone and offered opportunities for traders to import food from less affected areas. Cash needs of households increased thus, but this was not the only reason. Improvement of farm productivity was increasingly dependent upon more capital: manure, to redress declining soil fertility and the purchase of pesticides to control banana weevils and other diseases. The farming sector was however starved of cash and capital: half of the simple farm tools used, machetes, axes and sickles, were worn out. This results in a vicious circle: people are dependent upon non-agricultural sources (notably trade) to raise money for farming and this results in less labour being available for farming. As it is mainly the men who migrate, farming becomes more and more feminised.

Locally generated social forces embedded in struggles between old and young; rich and poor; male and female may thus be at the heart of the decline of coffee farming in Kagera. These forces may be much more determinant than government policies, because the decline in coffee production may well predate the decline in marketing services. For example:

> 'Regarding coffee, Ndugu Kaisi explained that most of the coffee plants were now aged because most of them were more than forty years old'. (Daily News 8/9/83)

An earlier study had already indicated that outward migration of young men was a major fact of life in Kagera. Young men need land and a dowry to establish themselves. Ideally, this is provided by the father, but that is less and less the case. Land is simply too short in supply and the cash needs of older men compete with those of the younger. The result was a massive migration either to areas where land was less short (notably Biharimulu district); to Uganda; or to urban areas in Tanzania. A gerontocracy can establish itself in such a way, thus undermining the productive capacity of agriculture (Boesen, Madsen and Moody, 1977).

Kilimanjaro provides in the popular mind in Tanzania an archetypal example illustrating agricultural decline. Chagga society on Kilimanjaro mountain was a prime example of peasant initiative under colonial rule. Peasants fought for the opportunity to grow coffee and made it a source of wealth (Iliffe, 1979). The fact that the government had to forbid peasants to uproot coffee is a frequently mentioned example of the decline which set in. It was also unthinkable that it would become a famine area as it did in the early eighties. The Wachagga have learnt to eat maize on the mountain covered with bananas.

Social forces generated within the area in relation to ecological change also appear to be more important here in bringing about social change than government policies and macro-economic factors. A newspaper headline: 'Kilimanjaro: life sustaining status undermined' is telling. Increasing population pressure has led to encroachment into the forests on the mountains resulting in great erosion, and people talk of climatic changes (Daily News, 14/2/85). Government has reacted to the problems of population pressure on the mountains and there have been big government programmes stimulating migration to regions like Rukwa or Morogoro (Daily News 1/1/83). The problem of pressure on the land is addressed by visiting politicians:

> Mwinyi - then vice-president - reacting to reports on recurring food shortages: 'advised Mwanga residents to use their land carefully, adding that those with less land should move to the eastern lowlands of the district where the land was more fertile and could be irrigated'. (Daily News, 18/11/85)

The primacy of agriculture as the major way to earn one's living has also changed in Kilimanjaro. Moore's (1986) description of social change over a long period in a lineage on the mountain shows that recently agriculture has become less and less important as a means of livelihood. Land shortage is a moving force behind social change there also. The result is a large outward migration, and life on Kilimanjaro has become increasingly intertwined with urban life. Men have a salaried income or an income from business, and agriculture becomes a woman's affair, albeit that men continue to appropriate cash income from agriculture. Land shortage influences the relations between the sexes. Men need land upon which to settle a wife, and older men who control land are thus at an advantage. Polygyny is also decreasing, however, as land becomes short and it becomes less easy to settle wives (Moore, 1986).

Economic life is thus socially constructed as a reaction to particular forms of scarcities. Scarcity of land, due to population growth, is obviously an important structuring factor. This structuring is, however, a social process as scarcity is a socially-perceived phenomenon. People may react therefore in different ways. Migration with the intention of farming extensively at a new location seems to be a common response, but intensification of agriculture could be as logical an outcome. Also, if people migrate as a response to population pressure then various responses are possible. People from Kilimanjaro, for example, tend to opt more for trade than for agriculture (Kerner, 1988). Economists may express such changes as the logical outcome of utility functions which can be expresses in preference curves. Such statements are, however, merely tautological, as the question of how these preferences are formed is left aside. What people perceive as utility is, however, embedded in processes of conflict and cooperation. Such forces have to be understood to explain initiatives and decline in agricultural production.

This perspective can lead to much more fruitful hypotheses on the economics of rural Tanzania and also make everyday life much more intelligible. For

example, a recent newspaper report on a presidential tour of Lindi, an area where cashewnut production used to be important, shows this. President Mwinyi spoke to residents of Newala districts and addressed indeed the problem which is identified as the major cause of decline in cashewnut output: marketing. 'Purchasing will be done in cash ... Buying on credit will soon be a thing of the past'. He introduced a new system of private licensed buying. That is however only part of the problem: cashewnut production could vastly increase 'if the present vast area of cashewnut trees was weeded'. He spoke 'strongly against clearing farms by using fire, saying a war should be waged against this lazy habit'. He directed farmers 'to weed their cashewnut farms in three months or their plots will be distributed to youths without land'. 'On the shortage of land in the area, the President pledged to help, but stressed the available land should be used gainfully' (Daily News 20/9/91). Marketing is thus part of an explanation of agricultural decline. Decisions to produce or not to produce must also be understood in relation to preferences for labour extensive farming. There are obviously many landless youths and this preference for extensive farming cannot, therefore, be seen as a result of an absolute labour shortage. Labour scarcity must be understood here as constructed in social struggles; in this case, between old and young.

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper is to generate an alternative perspective on interpreting agrarian change in Tanzania, a model which explains initiatives in production as well as decline. This leads in the first place to an alternative research agenda: that is, a shift from government policy to the politics of the household; from nationwide analyses to regional analyses; from the economics in agronomy to the ecology in agronomy, etc. This perspective implies a shift of attention from variables like price, marketing, inputs etc. to ecology, migration and the relations between generations and sexes. The role of government also needs further study. Government intervention in agriculture has undoubtedly often been parasitic but it does not appear to lead inherently and necessarily to decline. References to statements by Tanzanian politicians have also been shown to be enlightening in this paper. Policy debate on the economics of Tanzania has been seen too much in terms of IMF conditionality: the role of ecology and internal social forces appear to play a much greater role. An awareness of a variety of effects of policy making, instead of a view which sees government as absolutist and as a

parasitic intruder, leads to a different and more positive appreciation of policy making. It also leads to a different interpretative frame for policy making in which the following two elements stand out.

First, if central policy making has only a limited impact and if locally-generated specific processes are so important then policy-induced change in agriculture will have to originate nearer to the base. Regional and sub-regional planning deserves much more attention therefore.

Second, the agricultural sector is seen in this perspective as much more vibrant and full of initiative than in the hegemonic models. Reasoning towards policy-induced decline in terms of large aggregates casts the rural producer in a passive role where withdrawal is the major response. There are, however, many different reactions in the face of policies and interventions which are labelled as adverse to peasant interests. Policy should thus respond to spontaneous forces of growth in society, without implying that these are idealised. The question remains as to whether such spontaneous developments are desirable: the normative perspective of economics can contribute greatly in judging that.

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Notes

1. This paper leaves two questions deliberately out of consideration. First, climatic factors of course influence variations in agricultural output as well. Secondly, economists are usually normative and will ask whether the production of certain goods is desirable. The point made here is merely that there are great variations in output patterns, and the question of the desirability of increases or decreases in production is another issue.

2. Lofchie argues sharply but not always consistently. Two examples: The urban sector is supposed to benefit from overvaluation as it provides cheap imported goods, but in the rural sector the result is supposed to be the reverse. He singles out sharply socialist policies as a reason peculiar to Tanzania's agricultural problems. At the same time he maintains that urban bias is a common phenomenon in Africa, but only more pronounced in Tanzania.

3. E.g., Ellis (1982/83 p.225) writes about 'the predominance of export crop sales in the total monetary product of the crop production sector....since food crops are mainly retained by peasants for home consumption'. As is evident in this paper food is cultivated on a large scale to obtain a cash income in Tanzania.

4. This can result in confusion between national and regional effects of policies. For example, the great supply of so-called traditional crops in the mid-seventies is mentioned as evidence for the elasticity of supply in response to price (Ellis, 1982). However, in the period 1977 to 1982, forty-eight percent of all cassava marketed by the state came from Mtwara and fifty-two per cent of the state marketed sorghum and bulrush millet came from Dodoma. It should be noted as well that the reason for increased supply may have been the institutional arrangement; the state did not buy such crops before 1977.

5. Prices for rice and beans were sourced in the Monthly Marketing Bulletins of the Marketing Development Bureau, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development, over the period July 1983 - July 1989.

6. Lofchie (1989) rightly notes that figures on rice production in Tanzania are remarkably inconsistent. A major cause is the need for conversion in different time series of figures for paddy to figures for milled rice. That is why we talk here only of a comparison between regions in one particular year. Source: Bulletins of crop statistics; Statistics Unit, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development.

7. Source: Bulletin of crop statistics; Statistics Unit of Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development.

8. For instance, the boom in cotton may be partly explained by the provision of cash after the reintroduction of cooperatives by the Norwegian aid agency (Norad) which made it possible to pay cash on delivery. The subsequent decline may be explained by the fact that the cooperatives had run out of cash and could no longer do that. Similarly the revival of tobacco production in the mid-eighties may be explained by a major campaign under the leadership of Nyerere to revive the industry.

9. The theory of the normal surplus, summarised in Allan (1965; 38-48), also tries to explain erratic output patterns in African agriculture. It is based on research among the Tonga in Zambia's Southern Province where there was no evident dirtect relationship between price and output.

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CHAPTER 3

AGRICULTURAL DECLINE IN TANZANIA: THE CASE OF THE ULUGURU MOUNTAINS*

Introduction

This article describes social and economic change over the last thirty years in the Mgeta division of Morogoro rural district in Tanzania's Uluguru mountains. In common with many areas, Mgeta has, over this period, become more and more involved in wider networks of economic exchange. The area faces an increasing food deficit; there is an increasing reliance on vegetable cultivation for the urban markets; and many people migrate to the cities. These economic changes are reflected in changes in the social structure of the area. Earlier descriptions of the area give paramount importance to the matrilineal lineage which regulated access to land and patterned residence.[1] Nowadays, this locally-based structure has given way to small kinship groups which mostly depend upon links outside the area for access to cash.

The study of regional social change may elucidate broader processes of social change. For example, Berry used a detailed study of the way economic surplus was spent in Yorubaland as an apt illustration of the use of the surplus generated by the oil boom in the Nigerian economy.[2] Such a study of the way in which regions are enmeshed in national economies is useful, but developments in one region do not necessarily reflect changes in the economy as a whole. Wider patterns of social change set parameters within which social change takes place, but this does not necessarily lead to one particular pattern of development. Regional studies may illustrate the possibility of a diversity of responses shaped by the local actors. Social change in Mgeta is seen, in this article, as one of various possible outcomes of development shaped by actors.[3] Secondly, focusing on the increasing involvement of regions in wider networks

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* *African Affairs* (1992), 91, 73-94.

may pay undue attention to external forces. For example, local creative responses to the penetration of capitalist forces may be more and more acknowledged, but the origin of change is placed outside the area.[4] This may often be the case, but it is not necessarily so as will be demonstrated here.

An actor-oriented perspective may clarify issues in debates on the nature of rural change in Tanzania. Much attention has been paid to macro-economic factors and state intervention in the Tanzanian situation. Since the early 1970s, the country has been facing severe economic problems. The disappointing performance of the agricultural sector - necessitating periodic food imports and causing a decline in foreign exchange income from export crops - has been singled out as a major factor in this. Macro-economic imbalances in the national economy are seen as the major cause: disproportionate attention to industrial development led to a squeeze on the agricultural sector;[5] pricing and marketing policies disproportionately benefitted the state sector at the expense of the peasant sector;[6] a lack of consumer goods and extreme inflationary pressure vitiated incentives for peasant production.[7] State intervention played a major role in creating these imbalances and political scientists have argued in more general terms that this is the major cause of the worsening economic situation. Lofchie pointed to policies of villagization and communal production as the cause of Tanzania's food crisis in the early 1970s.[8] Ergas lumps all interventions of the Tanzanian state together as a blanket cause for economic deterioration.[9]

The explanatory value of these approaches is limited, however, because they do not explain the great regional variations in economic performance. For example, in the same period that grain output declined dramatically in some regions, notably Arusha and Kilimanjaro, there were tremendous increases in others - Rukwa, Ruvuma, Iringa and Mbeya regions. Coffee production has remained static for a long time in Bukoba and Kilimanjaro, but it has increased significantly in the southern regions of Mbeya and Ruvuma.[10] To a certain extent national aggregates are always abstractions which may hide important phenomena not highlighted by such indicators.[11] This article does not intend to explain the nature of regional variation in agricultural production in Tanzania. It will show that social and economic change is not as determined by central forces as macro-economic perspectives and a stress in the state as a national entity suggest.

The perspective of this article, which stresses the possibility for actors to shape development in particular directions, may also clarify issues in debates which

try to capture rural change in broad sociological categories. For example, Bernstein has proposed commoditization as the major phenomenon explaining rural change, with non-monetary or pre-capitalist social formations being subsumed in new processes of capitalist accumulation and exploitation.[12] Others argue that these pre-capitalist forces are not subsumed but stunt the growth of fully commoditized relationships, with stagnation resulting.[13] Such a view is related to Hyden's thesis that the Tanzanian political economy is characterized by a peasant mode of production which resists incorporation into structures of capitalist accumulation.[14] These approaches usually assign major importance to the role of the state: it is either a major force for commoditization or it fails to transform the peasantry into a surplus generating class.[15]

This debate is fruitful because it generates hypotheses for looking at concrete processes of change. It is also, however, pervaded by a centrist bias, because it is couched in terms of broad aggregates like state, peasantry, or divisions within the peasantry. Such aggregates do not allow for diverse responses and the true situation can only be uncovered by empirical study. It remains an empirical question whether the state is important in shaping social change. Such broad perspectives very often also imply a compelling logic moulding human behaviour. People may, however, give various meanings to social formations which may be designated by observers as pre-capitalist or non-commoditized. The material in this paper will show that people shape their social worlds by eclectically preserving or adapting social forms.

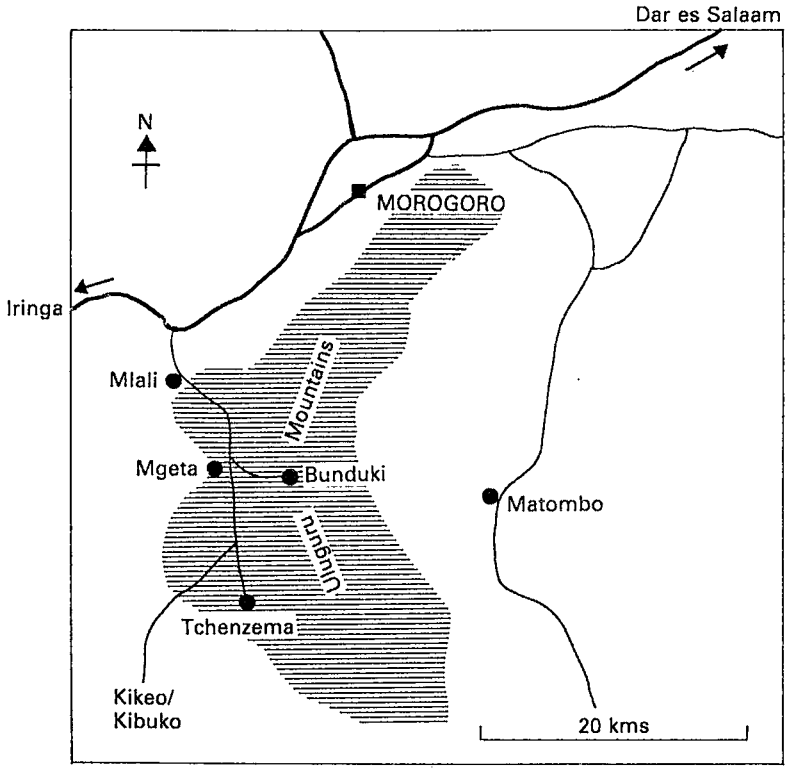
Economic and demographic change in the Uluguru

The northern tip of the Uluguru mountains rises up steeply above the town of Morogoro - about two hundred kilometres inland from Dar es Salaam, the 'old' capital of Tanzania. The mountains run in a north/south direction, and this paper deals only with the Mgeta division which covers the western side of the mountains. Mountain massifs which rise up steeply from the surrounding environment - like the Uluguru - are a common feature of Tanzania's physical geography. Such areas usually became major centres for the production of export crops, and the temperate climate, combined with a reliable high rainfall, made them attractive for settler populations. The Uluguru is different.

Unlike other such areas, the Uluguru has never become a major producing area for export crops like tea or coffee; neither has it attracted a substantial settler population.[16] The area for a long time has been relatively isolated from the rest

of the economy. Fosbrooke and Young studied the area in the 1950s and describe it as a stable society. They use the expression 'tribal tranquillity' to characterize the situation. There was no history of migration into the area. They mention pressure on land which resulted in some outward migration to the plains surrounding the mountains. The Waluguru were not interested in working on the sisal estates in the district, the principal opportunity for wage labour. They wrote emphatically: 'Migrant labour is a feature of the African economy, a fact which frequently has momentous repercussions on tribal life - but not so with the Luguru'.[17]

Map 1: *Uluguru mountains region of Tanzania*



Fosbrooke and Young use the population census of 1957 to support their argument. However, they do not mention that there was a sizable female surplus in the Uluguru. In Mgeta the male/female ratio in the population of 16 years and over was 0.7, while the proportion was about equal in the population below sixteen. This is a clear indication of emigration. A survey of nine neighbourhoods in the Mgeta division during the 1980s revealed similar imbalances in the population structure.[18] First, there is a large contraction in the population once people come of age, which indicates a sizable migration of young adults out of the area. Second, there is a sizable female surplus in the adult population (Table 1). This outward migration is not a feature of the surrounding rural areas; it is specific to the Mgeta division. The population structure of Morogoro rural district, of which Mgeta is a part, does not show striking imbalances when compared with the national population structure. These imbalances show clearly, however, in a comparison of Mgeta's population structure with that of Morogoro rural district. The proportion of people in the age category of 45 years and older is only slightly higher in Morogoro rural than nationally, but much higher in Mgeta (17 per cent in Morogoro rural as compared with 24 per cent in Mgeta). A comparison of the proportion of people in the age category of 15-45 shows the reverse. In Mgeta, 31 per cent of the population belongs to this category, while in Morogoro rural the figure is 39 per cent - the same as the national figure (Table 2).

Emigration has most probably greatly increased. The 1957 census material does not permit us to trace how many Waluguru from Mgeta only had migrated, but 90 per cent of those who called themselves Waluguru lived in the mountains. Nearly 70 per cent of the migrants had gone to urban areas, mainly to Morogoro township, Dar es Salaam district and Dar es Salaam city. In the 1980s, more than half (54 per cent) of the children over 15 in the surveyed households were living outside the Uluguru mountains. Most of them had moved to towns: 40 per cent of all children over 15 were said to be living in either Morogoro town or Dar es Salaam. Only seven per cent of this population was said to be farming outside the Uluguru mountains. Mgeta has thus become more and more dependent upon the outside world through migration and especially on the urban economy of Tanzania.

It is unlikely that the pull of the cities caused this migration because, as explained above, it is not a general rural phenomenon in the area. The perspective from Mgeta is that life is easier in the cities - that people do not grow old so quickly there is a frequent comment. That comment refers, however, to rural life in general and one would therefore expect this migration

to be a general rural phenomenon in the area. That is not the case and the explanation for this migration is, therefore, more likely to be found in a push factor in the local economy.

Table 1: Population of nine neighbourhoods in Mgeta division (1985-1987) by age and sex

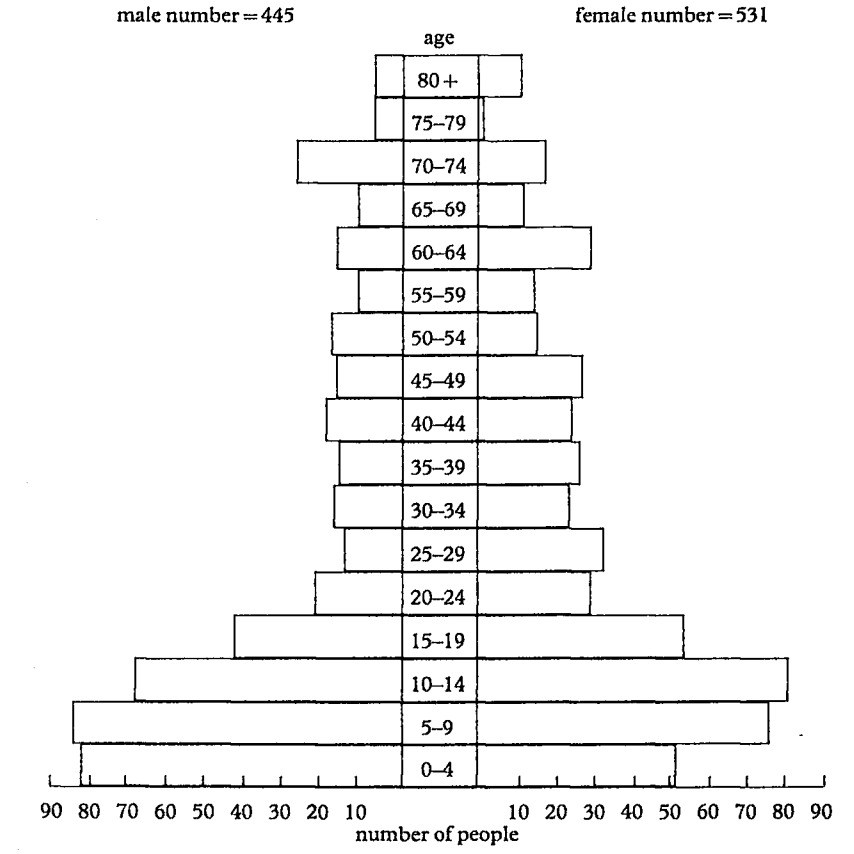


Table 2: A comparison of the distribution of the population in age categories between Mgeta division, Morogoro rural district and the whole of Tanzania

Age category	Tanzania[a]	Morogoro rural[a]	Mgeta
0-14	46%	44%	45%
15-44	39%	39%	31%
45-	15%	17%	24%

Source: The United Republic of Tanzania - 1978 population census. Preliminary report

The answer is obvious to local people. If one compares the censuses of 1957 and 1978, the population has almost doubled despite the great emigration. There is no virgin land any more in Mgeta (*ardhi imekwisha*) and the land is eroded and exhausted (*ardhi imechoka*). Such expressions can be heard in most conversations about the economy of the area. The staple food in the area is maize, and pulses (mostly beans) are the major secondary crop (see Appendix). Nowadays, the land shortage and land degradation make it impossible for people to be self-sufficient in food. This is a major change from the situation in the 1950s. Fosbrooke and Young describe the Uluguru as not only a stable society but also a relatively self-sufficient one:

> 'Their past history yields evidence of neither surplus of foodstuffs on which neighbouring towns and tribes were dependent nor a depressing succession of famines such as typify the Gogo's past. The traditional subsistence type of farming has militated against the development of crop specialization.'[19]

Informants invariably recall that the area was formerly self-sufficient in food - except in rare disaster years. Nowadays, virtually all households have to buy food for about half of the year. People are not precise, however, about the time when this food security started to break down. Most probably, food security has not been universal since the early 1960s, and since the mid-1970s it is very rare.

The area has now - in the context of the above quotation - also developed a crop specialization: vegetable growing for the urban markets. There is a long history of vegetable growing in Mgeta. It was, however, extremely modest until the 1950s. The big boom in vegetable growing is usually dated to the mid-1960s.

The development of more regular transport services and the growth of the cities have undoubtedly fuelled this trade, but it is probably more than a coincidence that the boom in vegetable cultivation took off when food security collapsed.

Agriculture in the area is now, therefore, firmly tied to the outside economy and this is especially clear on market days. A market is held in Lolo - the divisional headquarters - twice a week. This market attracts hundreds of people and is organized by the local political authorities. The crucial part of the market is the trade in vegetables. The income thus brought into the area supports a market for outside traders who sell consumer goods such as clothes, and also for local people (especially those who live near Lolo) who sell foodstuffs, tobacco, old newspapers, and especially beer. A major part of the market is devoted to the sale of staple foods like maize, maize flour, rice, particularly when harvest time approaches and virtually all foodstores are depleted.

Mgeta's economy seems deceptively buoyant on such market days. The traders show off with big wads of banknotes; the produce accumulates on the lorries that go to the towns; everybody seems to participate in trade and the euphoria of beer is everywhere. A *Sunday News* report of 19 June, 1988 captured this spirit: 'Mgeta the place where the climate is temperate and the food is plenty. The place where gardening supports the entire population'. This portrays an ideal of life in Mgeta. If people could grow enough food to feed themselves and if vegetables brought in the necessary cash income then life would be considered good (see Appendix). But the staple foods on the market in Mgeta come from outside and have to be bought. Some people generate enough cash income from vegetables to maintain their households. Plots which are suitable for vegetable growing are scarce however. One needs land near streams for irrigation at the lower altitudes. Moisture retention at higher altitudes makes it possible to grow vegetables more widely, but plots need to be near the homestead otherwise it becomes difficult to transport manure. Local trading and beer brewing both require capital.

The poverty traps for people in Mgeta are, therefore, obvious. People need cash and have three possible sources: land for vegetable cultivation, local petty business, and relatives in town. Some people have little or no access to cash. They often sell pulses. These are a necessary source of protein in poor households, but they are often sold in order to raise cash with which to buy maize or pay local taxes. Poverty traps can be more complicated: one household depended for its cash needs on the cabbage grown in a field near a stream which makes irrigation possible. However, this prized possession needs

fertilizer to be productive. The members of the household normally expect to earn money for fertilizer working as casual labourers during a bottleneck period when maize is harvested and beans are planted. The rains failed in 1988 and the maize harvest was poor. Therefore, there was less demand for casual labour and they had to buy more food than usual. This left no money to buy fertilizer and denied them income from the cabbage. They have eight children, and four people in the family are liable to pay taxes. The pressure to migrate out of the area is obvious in this case, especially on the oldest children.

Impoverishment and increasing dependence upon a cash income has not led to proletarianization in Mgeta. Some poor people even deplored the fact that there were so few opportunities for wage labour. If labour is hired, then it is on a casual basis: brick making, carrying vegetables to the market, and sometimes gangs contracting to prepare a plot for cultivation. Such labour affects only a tiny minority of households and most people farm with family labour. Hired labour or work parties are merely supplementary to the efforts of the household.

Neither is there an obvious nascent bourgeoisie who are successful in accumulating capital. The shopkeepers and a few big vegetable traders form an economic elite, but there are no more than ten in the whole division. Most people trade a little, and many young men try to break into the vegetable trade. It is, however, a risky existence. A glut in vegetables can ruin even established traders. Local trade and beer brewing are both mainly in the hands of women and supplementary to the household income. Beer brewing can be profitable, but the trade has a high barrier to entrance as it requires capital to buy firewood, sugar and maize seconds.

There is economic differentiation in Mgeta but there are no unambiguous indicators that point to clear processes of accumulation. Some households may have successful descendants who have done well in trading, albeit that this creates brittle wealth, while others have inherited valuable land on which to grow vegetables, or have accumulated wealth in the form of pigs or goats. However, there is definitely no single group where all these elements are combined.[20]

Within the farming sector there are relatively rich people who have more land suitable for vegetable growing than others. This group of farmers cannot be seen, however, as nascent capitalists who depend on modern inputs, hired labour, and in whose hands land is clearly concentrated. There are no large concentrations of land: ten acres is considered to be a huge holding. This does

not take account of the quality of the land and such a holding would invariably include very steep slopes which are prone to erosion or land which is exhausted. Ten acres of such land does not equal in value one acre which is suitable for growing vegetables. Size of holdings is, therefore, a poor indicator of wealth.

Land is also hardly commoditized. Only seven per cent of the plots people farmed appeared in the survey to be either bought or developed by people themselves. A further three per cent was loaned or rented. For young people who start a household, the only avenue to land ownership is through inheritance. Inheritance leads automatically to fragmentation which is already widespread. Land, therefore, becomes less and less the main provider of income for households and more and more a reserve asset (if it is suitable for vegetable cultivation, a profitable one) to provide security for a trading enterprise or for an urban existence.

It is typical of the economic situation in Mgeta that housing is the most notable indictor of wealth. A good house is necessary for a comfortable life because it can be very cold in the mountains. The quality of the house may, however, be more a reflection of the success of absent relatives than of the inhabitants because it is often built by the former. In Mgeta, success in life is often judged by the success of the children who have left the area; this is also mentioned as a prime reason for jealousy. The actual occupation of children who had left the area was often not known. Most of them are probably in the informal sector as marketeers in Dar es Salaam.[21] If children were in regular employment, then it was usually in positions which required little skill.

The economy of the area has primarily a reserve function which provides a minimal security for an urban existence. Thirty-three per cent of all household heads had worked outside the Uluguru and some had been away for a very long time. Thirteen per cent of household heads had been away for more than ten years. The big female surplus is another feature of a reserve economy. In the age group 15-44 there are nearly twice as many women as men. This decreases slightly in the age group over 44 which may indicate that men retire back to Mgeta after an urban existence. There is no male/female imbalance among the children. This is again a feature typical for Mgeta and not for the surrounding areas (Table 3). Children are of great importance in the labour force as there are few roads in the steep hills and much has to be transported by head porterage. Many households in Mgeta thus consist of a single female and a number of children who are dependent upon outside support. Here are two examples:

Table 3: A comparison of the male/female ratios in different age categories in the population of Mgeta division, Morogoro rural district and the whole of Tanzania

Age category	Tanzania[a]	Morogoro rural[a]	Mgeta
0-14	0.99	0.99	1.08
15-44	0.90	0.89	0.60
45-	1.02	1.12	0.72

Source: The United Republic of Tanzania - 1978 population census. Preliminary report

Molissia is twenty-six years old and has three children aged seven, four and two. She lives without a man. Her mother lives in Morogoro town and comes regularly to help her on the farm. A sister of her mother paid for the corrugated iron roof on her house.

Attalia is fifty years old and divorced. All her five children have left, and four of them live in Dar es Salaam. A daughter of one of these - seven years old - lives with Attalia. She has a reasonable income from fruit and vegetables. Her children send her money to hire labour for preparing the fields.

The female surplus is difficult to explain. Females hold a strong position in the ideology of land tenure and it may be a deliberate policy of families to leave one female behind in Mgeta. As land is scarce it is bitterly disputed, and land belonging to absent relatives may easily be claimed by others. This may be a major reason why there is continued support for those women who are left behind. It is striking that it is said of such women that they guard the land (*wanatunza ardhi*) and not that they farm the land (*wanalima*). The connotation of farming generating income from land has been lost.

Social change in the Uluguru: authority and solidarity

The economic changes in Mgeta are reflected in changes in the structure and nature of social relations. Earlier accounts of life in the Uluguru depict a well integrated society in which solidarity and authority were unambiguously structured within the area.[22] Such social structures have to a large extent

broken down, and life is now much more individualized, even atomized, while social relations outside the area are of major importance.

The most striking difference is the disappearance of clear positions of authority. Among the Waluguru, land is as a rule inherited in the matrilineal line. Lineage membership implies, therefore, the right to live on and cultivate land. The lineage head was a source of authority in land issues. He is described as a forceful figure in the accounts dating from the 1950s and early 1960s: 'Uluguru is densely populated, land is very short and in consequence the warden (lineage head) has been and remains strong, since land allocation is in his hand.'[23] This institution had completely disappeared in the late 1980s and was hardly even remembered. Only one person could still be clearly identified as a lineage head. He had been selected by the females of the lineage as described. His selection took place in the 1930s, and he is now very old. However, matrilineal descent remains important in land issues as land is hardly commoditized, and over 50 per cent of all plots claimed in the household survey were identified with the mother's clan. But the concept is no longer clear cut and this, of course, is reinforced by the disappearance of a clear source of authority in land allocation. It is still common for sisters with a common mother to live together, but there is little genealogical depth in such groups. An unambiguous identification of settlement with a lineage or even clan had, however, disappeared, as in only two out of nine neighbourhoods could people trace their descent to a common ancestor.

The atomization of life is more evident in marriage patterns. The influence of the old forms is still there. The Waluguru adhere to uxorilocal marriage, with the exception in the earlier accounts of the lineage head. That was still the rule: in 64 per cent of all partnerships the men had moved to their wives' place of residence. Many people, however, live without a stable sexual relationship: 28 per cent of the population of 20 and older live without a partner. If that is subdivided according to sex, the situation is even starker: 37.5 per cent of females of 20 and over are unmarried as compared with 15 per cent of the males in that age group. If people live together they will rarely call themselves married. They call their partner *mchumba tu* (fiancé(e) only) and consider marriage as proper only if solemnized in church or mosque. The area is strongly Catholic, but church marriages are very rare and have declined considerably.[24] In some cases there are long-standing partnerships but the man may live for long periods in town. Seven per cent of surveyed households were, for example, double households having a house in town as well as in Mgeta, and people divided their time between them. Wives tended to stay behind most

of the time. Traders may have a number of partnerships along the road.

This pattern of marriage is, of course, interwoven with the migration out of the area. It is striking then that there is so little polygyny in Mgeta. A big female surplus is favourable to the formation of households composed of one man and several wives. The reason why this has not happened may be that gender relations among the Waluguru are more egalitarian than in other societies. Women and men work together in the fields, and income generated by the sale of produce can be claimed by both. Land to a large extent continues to be inherited in the female line. If people follow Luguru customs then the position of the man can be weak if the marriage breaks up. For example, if a man invests in a good house in his wife's area, he risks losing this major property in the event of divorce. If a man becomes old and sick then his wife's relatives tend to pressurize him to return to his place of origin, especially if his wife predeceases him. These risks are greater nowadays than they used to be. If people get properly married then a small brideprice is paid by the husband to the maternal relatives of the wife. The husband's interests were traditionally protected by the *mjomba* or maternal uncle of the wife (a clearly defined personage in many matrilineal societies). The breakdown of older social structures and the dispersal of males through migration have reduced the authority of the *mjomba* so much that the position of men within marriage is much weaker than it used to be. The possibility of setting up an economically independent existence in urban areas is therefore attractive to men.

The heart of the matter may be economic. If a woman wants to attract a man in a marriage settled in Mgeta, she usually has little to offer. Only rarely has a household sufficient land to enable it to have a reasonably independent economic existence. Links with people who have access to cash, who are usually residing outside the area, are more attractive than integration into matrilineally related groups based on common residence and ownership of land. Households in Mgeta are usually part of confederations of households spread over various locations.[25] Kinship continues to play a role, but access to cash is the determinant in such relations. The most common way to cement such bonds of solidarity is to depend upon children who have migrated, but there are many possible variations. For example:

Sabina is in her middle forties and has two children, who are eight and three years old. She used to live at her husband's place elsewhere in the Mgeta division but after her divorce she returned to her mother's place. Her mother is old and sick and has to be looked after. Sabina farms her mother's land, but

she has to buy maize. She earns some cash from growing beans and, if her bean crop is insufficient, she looks for casual work. The household is, however, dependent upon cash coming from outside.

One can find a matrilineal residence pattern around her house: two sisters of her mother live nearby. There is not much contact with them, however, and certainly not economically. Her lifeline is her brother and some sisters who have moved to the towns. Two of Sabina's sisters visit Mgeta a few times a year, but her only brother comes frequently and is her economic mainstay. He is childless and thus Sabina does not have to compete with his children for support.

This is a common type of household in Mgeta: a single female with children residing with her mother. Matrilineal descent plays a role in structuring the small kinship group that hangs together, but that is not necessarily so as the following example shows:

Msemakweli is very old - he is at least in his seventies. He lived for a long time in Turiani (from 1955 - 1972), an area to the north of Morogoro town where many Waluguru went in search of land. He returned to Mgeta to help his sick brother. After his brother's death he stayed in Mgeta and he lives close to his brother's daughter - Binti Abdallah. They cooperate in farming. Msemakweli's two sons are on the land he developed in Turiani. His first wife died and he has remarried. His second wife is childless, but there are always children around the house. Three of Binti Abdallah's children are still at home - aged between nine and fifteen. Grandchildren from Turiani or Binti Abdallah's grandchildren from Morogoro are also regular visitors. Binti Abdallah lives without a stable sexual partner. She has been married, but her husband is sick and has returned to his relatives.

The household has to buy food - as is usual - and they have no land which is suitable for growing vegetables. They make a little money from selling beans and bananas on market days, and sometimes a goat. They live isolated from other matrilineal relatives and have no contact with them. The household has, however, frequent contact with Msemakweli's sons in Turiani who support them. Msemakweli travels regularly to Turiani but will not give up his residence with his brother's daughter in Mgeta. The reason is probably that they might lose their land and houses if he did so. Their claim on land is weak. Among the Waluguru, land is generally inherited in the female line, but exceptions are allowed. A man may inherit from his mother and his children

may inherit in turn from him. Then the land has to revert to the clan of the female from whom it originated. Under these rules, the children of Msemakweli could inherit from him, but the children of Binti Abdallah definitely cannot. The land could easily be claimed by matrilineal relatives of Msemakweli if he were absent.

In both these examples there are symbiotic elements in the relationships between those who have migrated and those who stay behind. Sabina looked after her mother and guarded the land. Her children may prove to be an asset to the childless brother. Msemakweli left his sons on the land he had developed in Turiani. His return to Mgeta made way for them. He and Binti Abdallah keep alive a claim on assets that may prove useful as a reserve. The situation changes if there are no worthwhile assets left any more - if households have hardly any land left. Then it becomes imperative for households who left to be as independent as possible. This is demonstrated in the next example:

Tessiana was born in 1944, had little schooling and never left Mgeta for more than a short visit. She lives close to her old parents and a mentally retarded bother. She has been married but her husband is reported to be far away in Moshi and does not support her. She has eight children, some by her husband and some as a result of an affair with a married man who does not contribute to the household either. Tessiana has hardly any land. She farms two small plots, but these produce very little. She grows bananas close to her house and these she sells on market days. Each week's income is immediately spent on maize meal for the coming week.

One of her brothers is married in Mgeta, but all her other siblings have moved to town. There is some contact between them and Tessiana. For example, three children of her only sister, who is married and lives in Morogoro town, are at school in Mgeta and live with her. This sister is married to a soldier; all her absent brothers are in Dar es Salaam where they eke out an existence as petty traders in Ilala market.

These relatives cannot support Tessiana's household to any significant extent. The traders are all dealing in tomatoes, a trade which is relatively easy to enter. Little capital is needed, but it is extremely risky because of price fluctuations and decay. The most successful one among them ventured into the wholesale trade, only to lose his working capital when a lorry carrying his tomatoes overturned. He had, however, poured previous profits into the construction of a big house in Dar es Salaam. A house can provide a stable income from

renting rooms and is, therefore, seen as a major protection against the risks of trade. The relatives in Dar es Salaam are preoccupied with building up such an economic base independent of the home area. Their children need to have an independent existence as well and the shortage of land makes it impossible to fall back upon Mgeta. The reverse is the case: some of Tessiana's elder children, as well as the eldest child of her sister in Morogoro, have joined their relatives in Ilala market. There are bitter feeling among the relatives in Dar es Salaam as a result of the increasing number of dependents upon their businesses.

The atomization of social life in Mgeta contrasts with the first impression one gets. People are gregarious - they like to be in large groups in markets, church services and beer drinking sessions. People have a large number of acquaintances and greet them, but such contacts are without any further consequences. People have few contacts which imply economic cooperation, solidarity or authority. No other institution seems to have succeeded the matrilineal lineage/clan as an overarching institution of solidarity and authority.

The ruling political party (*Chama Cha Mapinduzi*) is there, people pay taxes, but government is a distant institution that does not really affect life. The Catholic Church is full every Sunday, but people go to pray with the people they know in their daily life. Priests are distant people, like government and party officials, and there are no special friendships through church. Traders can be important. Big vegetable traders can help with money in times of difficulty or can advise in case of conflict. Traders, of course, are unlikely to help disinterestedly.

Conclusions

This regional analysis of Mgeta set out to avoid a centrist bias in studying rural Tanzania. The area has become more and more encapsulated in wider social systems over the past thirty years, mainly through migration and the trade in vegetables, but this cannot be explained as a result of outside forces penetrating and moulding social life in the area. Social change in Mgeta strongly resembles a pattern which is found in areas where large centres of capitalist development, like mines and plantations, penetrated strongly. There one also finds a disproportionate number of women, children and old people in the population structure. Migration is, in such areas, supposed to be circulatory: men often go away on contracts and return to the rural base from which they come. Such

migration can be interpreted as serving the cause of capitalist accumulation: employers can pay very low wages because they do not have to pay for the subsistence of whole families, while the rural areas serve as a source of security for the workers at no expense to the employers.[26] Such an outside causal factor of large employers of contract labour is not present in Mgeta. Men leave the area mostly to join the big group of petty traders in town and this cannot be linked to clear patterns of capital accumulation. The security of land in the home area plays a role and can be instrumental in such business enterprises although that is not necessarily so. The case material also showed a tendency for men to sever links with the local area and set up an independent existence elsewhere.

Outside forces play a role in the logic of social change in Mgeta, but not a determinant one. The area is, of course, part of the Tanzanian economic and political system and that has had effects. For example, the growth of towns led to an expansion of opportunities for trading as it provided a growing market for vegetables. Urbanization is undoubtedly fuelled by bureaucratic expansion and government policies aimed at industrialization. It cannot be seen, however, as the cause of migration, because this migration is such a localized response. The population structure of Morogoro rural district, of which Mgeta is a part, did not show the imbalances in population structure found in Mgeta.

It is difficult to make direct links between a dominant feature of life in Mgeta like soil deterioration and resulting food shortages on the one hand, and macro-economic phenomena like foreign exchange shortages or national policies on the other. For example, the official villagization policy hardly touched the area as it is too densely populated for such a programme. Local actors make a direct link between soil deterioration and migration. It is seen as logical for young men to migrate because there is no land, and the land that there is, is often infertile or poorly watered. Population pressure on land can lead to various responses, for example to the adoption of new and intensified practices which sustain a higher population.[27] Geertz found another possible outcome in Java which he called involution: an increasingly intensive use of the same resources through the same structures (fragmentation), and 'static expansion' by which yields increased but just to the extent that the expanding population could be maintained.[28] Actors can react to particular situations in a variety of ways and there is, therefore, a diversity of possible logical outcomes of development.[29]

In Mgeta there has been some intensification of agricultural practices over the years. The prime example is vegetable cultivation under primitive irrigation.

The situation resembles Geertz's model of involution. Land is increasingly fragmented and the mainstay of agricultural enterprises remains maize cultivation. Unlike Java, however, there is no static expansion. Yields are decreasing and this is a major problem, but people refuse to contemplate switching to crops other than maize and using the cash earned from such crops to buy more food (see Appendix). They argue that growing maize is the ultimate insurance against a collapse in the price of vegetables and pulses. This fits in with the perspective of agriculture as a reserve activity where females are left behind to guard the land; investment in housing by urban relatives is also part of this pattern.

It may be that a mental map structures particular action. Brody characterized life in the West of Ireland, a classic area dominated by emigration, as demoralized and where people had lost belief in their own lifestyle.[30] If the meaning of land ownership is divorced from its productive capacity as in Mgeta, there is of course a lack of belief in agriculture as a way of life. Tibaijuka writes about Bukoba: 'Value seems to lie in the mere ownership of a plot, even if neglected and unproductive'.[31]

Again, this is not a necessary outcome of social change generated by population pressure, but one of several possible outcomes. Geertz also argued that population pressure can lead to a variety of social forms varying from collective impoverishment to fully fledged capitalism, and that only empirical research can reveal the actual path taken.[32] Den Ouden put forward a similar argument with respect to the Bamilike of Cameroon. They are an entrepreneurial group and this can be explained by population pressure, but 'high population pressure does not automatically result in achievement behaviour and may even lead to shared poverty and fatalism'.[33] In the case of Mgeta there is some entrepreneurial behaviour (for example, there is the attraction of petty trade in town and the vegetable trade) but this does not lead to the formation of a group of accumulators dominating the economy. A clear differentiation between emergent capitalists and (semi-)proletarians as is suggested by a commoditization perspective is simply not present.[34] Neither can one characterise the situation as the persistence of a peasant mode of production.[35] Elements of both models are accepted eclectically and put in a form which is typical for the area. Commoditization is evident during market days when trade is buoyant. Increasing commoditization is forced upon people by the decline in food security and it is also accepted as people desire more and more consumer goods.[36] In other respects commoditization is resisted. The market in land and labour is minimal. Households may depend upon casual labour to provide or

supplement their cash income, but their existence is in the first place tied to their own land. Such a situation can better be described as resulting from the actions of people moulding society than as the outcome of a compelling logic of capitalist intrusion or resistance to it.

The importance of differential responses to similar situations is also evident in a comparison of the Uluguru with other areas in Tanzania where there is strong pressure on land. Moore's detailed description of a Chagga lineage in Kilimanjaro shows a similar pattern to the one found in Uluguru: income from outside the area has become the mainstay of life, and agriculture has become a reserve activity. She also observed a large outward migration of males, but unlike in Mgeta marriage remains important. Females in Chagga society are dependent upon (absent) men because they control the land. Due to land shortage polygamy is declining because men do not have enough land on which to settle more wives.[37] In Kilimanjaro, women are more subordinate to men because they act as workers on their husband's farms. The husband remains in control of the cash income that is generated.[38] Such a differential response may be understood as partly shaped by the patrilineal ideology of Chagga society and the strong matrilineal one of the Waluguru.

A comparison of the Uluguru with the West Usambaras shows another differential response. Both areas produce large amounts of vegetables for the Dar es Salaam market. However, descriptions of life in the West Usambaras note much more commoditization. Sender and Smith describe clear patterns of proletarianization in a way which is not possible in the Uluguru. Single women especially, who have hardly any access to land, are dependent upon wage employment on the tea plantations in the Usambaras; but such a sector is not found in Mgeta where women are not at a disadvantage in having access to land.[39] Thompson's description of class in the West Usambaras is much more ambiguous. Nevertheless, he sees concentration of land ownership, spreading dependence upon wage labour and the emergence of a capitalist class as based on the ownership of transport.[40] Such comparisons show again the diverse responses possible to similar circumstances in regional development.

This perspective on social and economic change as shaped creatively by actors from below inspires scepticism about the possibility of effecting change from the centre. In Tanzania's current discussions with the IMF, macro-economic change and the nature of government intervention form the framework for the debate on development in the country. Such factors play a marginal role in the changes in Mgeta society as described here. If social change is rooted in

changes in the local agronomy and the way people react to that, then the first prerequisite of government activity must be to focus attention on the particular circumstances prevailing in each area and formulate development plans accordingly.

APPENDIX

The agronomy of the area

There are great differences in agricultural practices throughout the Mgeta division depending upon the altitude which creates a great variation in micro-climates. At lower altitudes people plant maize at the beginning of the short rains (November-December). This is harvested green during the long rains (March-April) and dried under the roof inside the house. Then they will plant beans to be harvested in June-July. People will grow cabbage if they have plots to which streams can be diverted for irrigation in the dry season. Most of this cabbage is marketed in September-October. In the higher areas agriculture is less seasonal. Humidity is spread more evenly throughout the year, and maize takes a longer time to grow there - up to ten or eleven months. Usually people plant their maize in June or July, but not necessarily so. Beans are less important at the higher altitudes and peas are often incorporated with maize. Vegetables are grown throughout the year and in greater variety than at lower altitudes. European type fruits, notably plums and peaches, are also important there. The slopes of the Uluguru mountains are very steep and agriculture is therefore hoe based only. There are no cattle in the area, although people keep pigs, goats, sheep and fowl. Other crops are grown, but these are less important. For example, at lower altitudes towards the plains the humidity is less and the heat can be scorching. There millet, cassava and pigeon peas are planted in pure stand. Yams are cultivated in water-logged land. Bananas are planted near streams and are an increasingly important source of cash. Sweet potatoes are also sometimes an important subsidiary crop.

J.L. Paul, in his *Farming systems in the upper Mgeta* (Franco-Tanzanian Horticulture Development Project, Sokoine University of Agriculture, Morogoro, 1988), provides a detailed agronomic description of Mgeta based upon research in Nyiandira village. It is, however, marred by the pervasive bias which overlooks poverty in the area. Nyiandira is not covered in this research and this may explain some differences between his findings and mine. Nyiandira is the centre of vegetable cultivation and it may be more commercialized. For example, wage labour is more important in his findings than in mine (p.41). However, I doubt his findings in two respects. Firstly, hardly any attention is paid to the import of maize into the area for home consumption. (See his schematic presentations of the flows of agriculture in Nyiandira pp. 42 and 46.) I enquired, but no informant thought that Nyiandira was in this respect different

from other parts of Mgeta. Secondly, he hardly mentions the impact of migration. He merely states: 'There are numerous families with one or several members settled in the plain' (p.71). The huge extent of migration is therefore not conveyed in his material. These two errors obscure the economic plight of the area.

As a social scientist my authority is limited to comment on the possibilities for diverting to other crops. There have been attempts to find an alternative for maize in the area. Wheat, for example, could be more suitable as it is much more resistant to cold. There have been some experiments with wheat, but people have not accepted it. Some missionaries have urged people to neglect maize and concentrate on pulses which are leguminous and beneficial for these poor soils. People could get two crops a year and use the extra surplus to buy maize. Coffee has been of some importance but is now only to be found on any scale in a very small part of Mgeta. An EC funded attempt to spread it through the division in the mid-1980s failed. Agroforestry was already introduced in the 1950s through the Uluguru Land Usage Scheme and recently the Swedish Volunteer Organization had another campaign. Trees, however, are not cultivated on a commercial scale. It would be wrong to conclude an inherent conservatism in Mgeta. People have accepted important agronomic changes since the 1950s, pig keeping, compost making and irrigation. The most promising recent development may be a growing interest in cooking bananas for the urban market which is not sponsored by any outside extension agency. If this crop were to be successful it would be a good crop to combat erosion and a cash earner for young men as it is less dependent upon well watered and fertile plots than vegetable cultivation.

Notes

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8. M. Lofchie, 'Agrarian crisis and economic liberalisation in Tanzania', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, **16** (1987).

9. Z. Ergas, 'The state and economic deterioration: The Tanzanian case', *The Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, **20** (1982).

10. *Statistical Abstracts 1982 and 1984*, (United Republic of Tanzania, Bureau of Statistics; Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs, Dar es Salaam). These statistics do not record agricultural produce which is marketed through private channels. P. Raikes, 'Eating the carrot and wielding the stick' in Boesen *et al*, *Tanzania*, argues that such statistics are therefore invalid as an indicator of regional changes in agricultural production. However, a rise or fall in officially marketed produce is undoubtedly one indicator, albeit an incomplete one, of changes in agricultural production. Another indicator of important regional changes are the areas affected by famine. Formerly, areas which have erratic

rainfall patterns were particularly prone to famine. See J. Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1979), pp.351-2. In the last decade, famine has hit other areas more severely: Kilimanjaro, Bukoba and the Nyanza Lakeshore which have a high rainfall, a high population density and a long history of cash crop production. Further research is obviously needed, especially with respect to changing patterns of trade, but until proven otherwise the regional changes in agricultural production appear to be a main feature of the Tanzanian economy.

11. P. Hill, *Development Economics on Trial: The anthropologists' case for a prosecution*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1986).

12. H. Bernstein, 'Notes on state and peasantry in Tanzania', *Review of African Political Economy*, **21** (1986).

13. S. Mueller, 'Retarded capitalism in Tanzania', in R. Miliband and J. Savile (eds), *The Socialist Register 1980*, (The Merlin Press, London, 1980).

14. G. Hyden, *Beyond Ujamaa in Tanzania: Underdevelopment and an uncaptured peasantry*, (Heinemann Educational Books, 1980).

15. For the first point of view see Bernstein, *Notes*. Hyden, *Beyond Ujamaa*; and Mueller, *Retarded Capitalism*, defend the second position.

16. There was some German settlement in the area before the First World War. These settlers grew coffee and vegetables for the urban market. Some were involved in mica mining. Such mining has, however, remained a small time affair, although there was a small boom just before and during the Second World War. The last settler left the area in the 1950s. The Roman Catholic Mission is the most important European influence in the area. Mgeta proved to be a fruitful mission field. Government influence in the area was minimal. The Uluguru Land Usage Scheme is the exception. It planned to combat erosion and was started in the 1950s. It has attracted attention because a clash between the colonial government and the Waluguru was to some extent related to it. See Fosbrooke and Young, *Land and Politics*, and P.H. Temple, 'Soil and water conservation policies in the Uluguru', *Geografiska Annaler*, **54** (1972). This clash, however, took place on the west side and did not affect Mgeta. The protest was triggered off by compulsory bench terracing and this was never tried in Mgeta as ladder terracing was already common. I have found no bitterness about the scheme. On the contrary, the wisdom of anti-erosion measures was not doubted although these were hardly implemented.

17. Fosbrooke and Young, *Land and Politics*, p.36. Brain, *Ancestors as elders*, voices a similar opinion: 'Luguru have been, until recently, extremely reluctant to move to the ample fertile plains at the foot of the mountains, and even today there is a trickle of emigration' (p.127).

18. The data presented in this paper have been mainly collected in a household survey of nine neighbourhoods in three of the four wards in Mgeta division in the period 1985-87. The focus was on the neighbourhood and not on the administrative divisions of the state in ten cell units, villages and wards. Settlement in Mgeta is dense and dispersed over the division. People usually designate their locality by neighbourhoods which are not administratively recognized. For example, such a neighbourhood may cover one or more ten cell units and these do not necessarily consist of ten households. In Langali ward, the neighbourhoods of Magogo, Mgunga/Mizugu and Bumu have been surveyed. In Tchenzema ward, Kinole, Hangula and Kipanze. In Bunduki ward, Hangula, Vitambaa and Hangula Juu. These neighbourhoods have been chosen randomly. There appeared to be no differences in the demographic material between these three wards and therefore this information is presented as a whole and not subdivided among wards.

19. Fosbrooke and Young, *Land and Politics*, p.32.

20. J.R. Mlahagwe, 'Agricultural change in the Uluguru mountains during the colonial period, with particular emphasis from 1946-60', (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Dar es Salaam, 1970), argues that class formation had already set in during that period. I have found no evidence for that. Mlahagwe produces, on the basis of archival material, strong evidence that the Uluguru remained for a long time unaffected by outside economic forces, but his evidence on capital penetration is weak. Oral sources did not prove rich on this topic. I have relied especially on interviews with Alphonse Malati (Gole) and Mzee Kassongo (Langali), June 1987. The latter mentioned only one group who were economically differentiated from the rest of the population: teachers who, in the mid-1950s, were awarded big backdated pay rises. They invested this money in cement houses with corrugated iron roofs. This windfall profit did not, except for one, result in any enduring entrepreneurial activity. The mission journals note regularly how difficult it was to arouse interest in education during the 1950s. This is significant because education provides opportunities for accumulation. On the other hand, migrant histories do not indicate much importance of proletarianization. Then, as now, the Waluguru went mostly into petty trade and wage labour was intermittent. The only destination of wage labour of importance was Kongwa to where the last remaining settler in Mgeta, Thomas Baine, moved in the 1950s.

21. Dar es Salaam pulls more migrants than Morogoro town. One hundred and sixty-nine absent children were said to be in Dar es Salaam as compared with 83 in Morogoro. This preference for Dar es Salaam may be because of the relatively low skills of the migrants. Morogoro has many new industries and these demand basic education.

22. Fosbrooke and Young, *Land and Politics*, as well as Brain, *Ancestors as elders*, probably provide to a large extent a normative view of Luguru society. P.C. Duff, in a review letter to *Tanganyika Notes and Records*, **56** (1961), wrote on p.112: 'One would like to hear, for instance, whether the clan system in action is a fair projection of the theoretical organization described'. It is now impossible to ascertain the degree to which the normative structure was adhered to, but the differences between the situation in the 1980s and their version of Luguru life are so enormous that great change must have taken place.

23. Brain, *Ancestors as elders*, p.128.

24. Church marriages in Kibaoni parish, the oldest mission in Mgeta where the church is particularly strong, peaked just before independence and then a strong decline set in:

Church marriages in Kibaoni parish - Mgeta

Year	Number
1956- 7	95
1958- 9	109
1959-60	103
1961- 2	40
1962- 3	29

I am grateful to Father T. Winkelmolen for this information.

J. Braine, 'Matrilineal descent and marital stability, a Tanzanian case', *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, **4** (1969), argues that divorce rates will tend to be high among the Waluguru as husbands are pulled between loyalty to their wives and their matrilineal relatives. That situation differs however from the present one as in many cases one can no longer speak of marriage and divorce. The institution itself is disappearing.

25. G. Alderson-Smith, 'Confederations of households: extended domestic enterprises in city and country,' in Long and Roberts, *Miners, Peasants, Entrepreneurs*.

26. S. Amin, 'Underdevelopment and dependence in black Africa. Origins and contemporary forms', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, **10** (1972); H. Wolpe, 'Capitalism and cheap labour in South Africa: from segregation to apartheid', *Economy and Society*, **1** (1972).

27. E. Boserup, *Conditions of Agricultural Growth: the economics of agrarian change under population pressure*, (Allen and Unwin, London, 1965).

28. C. Geertz, *Agricultural Involution: the process of ecological change in Indonesia*, (University of California Press, Santa Barbara, 1963).

29. Long, *Creating space for change.*

30. H. Brody, *Inishkillane*, (Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1975).

31. A.K. Tibaijuka, *Accumulation and Erosion of Capital of Smallholders in Tanzania*, (mimeo, Economic Research Bureau, University of Dar es Salaam, 1963).

32. C. Geertz, 'Culture and social change: the Indonesian case', *Man*, **19** (1984).

33. J.H.B. den Ouden, 'In search of personal mobility: changing interpersonal relations in two Bamilike chiefdoms, Cameroon', *Africa*, **57** (1987) p.20.

34. Bernstein, *Notes on state and peasantry.*

35. Hyden, *Beyond Ujamaa.*

36. Two people who had not visited Mgeta for more than ten years saw two major changes (interviews with Father Boerema, April 1987; Mzee Cosmas Mhango, May 1988); the increase in consumer goods was the most striking one, and secondly they noted the increase in the area under cultivation. Land which used to be considered too marginal was now under cultivation.

37. S.F. Moore, *Social Facts and Fabrications: 'Customary law' on Kilimanjaro, 1880-1980*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1986).

38. M.L. Swantz, *Women in Development: a creative role denied? The case of Tanzania* (C. Hurst, London, 1990).

39. J. Sender and S. Smith, *Poverty, Class and Gender in Rural Africa: a Tanzania case study*, (Routledge, London, 1990).

40. G. Thompson, 'The merchants and merchandise of religious change', (unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Cambridge, 1984).

CHAPTER 4

WALUGURU TRADERS IN DAR ES SALAAM: AN ANALYSIS OF THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF ECONOMIC LIFE*

This article hopes to contribute to the study of a broad subject, capital accumulation in Africa, by focusing on a very specific group of people: Waluguru traders in Dar es Salaam originating from Mgeta.

The issue of capital accumulation has been central to many studies of contemporary Africa, but has mostly been viewed as determined by large impersonal mechanisms: terms of trade, imperfections in markets, processes of capital accumulation on a world scale.[1] Such explanations fall short of explaining the diversity of outcomes in processes of social change.[2] There is a growing awareness that development is not unilateral and predetermined by such mechanisms.[3] In recent studies there is a new emphasis on actors in development. For the purposes of investment decision making, for example, it is important to establish whether capital accumulation can consolidate itself as an economic force and transform production processes or whether it is merely restricted to the circulation of goods. A distinction is made between entrepreneurs and parasites: capital can be dissipated in distributive networks and on prestige objects.[4]

The work of Geertz has been a forerunner in this respect. He has highlighted the possibility of varieties of outcomes in development by pointing to agricultural involution and the bazaar economy where there is no concentration of capital, but endless fragmentation.[5] This was portrayed in his early work as an aberration on the road to modernity, but, in later debates, his work is imbued with much more cultural relativism. Culture shapes society in

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* *African Affairs* (1992), 91, 181-205.

numerously divergent ways and is ultimately the product of human creativity. Empirical study should be undertaken to elucidate such processes instead of assuming a course of social change from *a priori* assumptions.[6] This article has attempted to do that by analyzing the social construction of specified markets.

The main contention of this paper is that entrepreneurial behaviour is not shaped merely by an impersonal logic embodied either in market situations - like price, the relative scarcity of factors of production - or in capitalist development seen as leading to particular patterns of accumulation on a world scale. Price formation, capital accumulation, etc., are to a large extent shaped by social forces which are formed by the actors' interpretation of social behaviour. Such shared interpretations in their turn structure the behaviour of actors.[7] Similarly, some parameters of an economic nature are given to actors; scarcity, for example, will translate itself into prices, but these parameters are also to a large extent socially formed. A scarcity of credit, for instance, may result from the lack of trust: such an outcome is a socially induced investment choice.

The subject of this paper is, therefore, the social construction leading to a particular logic in trade among Waluguru traders. The Mgeta division covers the west side of the Uluguru mountains which run to the south of Morogoro town, about two hundred kilometres inland from Dar es Salaam. It is a densely populated area where the response to pressure on land has been massive emigration, especially to Dar es Salaam.[8] Mgeta is a centre of vegetable cultivation for this urban market. Its position in the supply of vegetables was a foundation from which a dominant position in the markets in Dar es Salaam was built by traders from Mgeta, albeit that they do not have exclusive control of these markets. They have also branched out into other areas of the food trade, e.g. wholesaling from other areas and the grain trade.[9]

Any attempt to describe the social universe of trade among the Waluguru is to a certain extent an abstraction. Trade pervades life among the Waluguru. Virtually everybody trades from time to time, and trading activities can be combined with temporary jobs or farming. Therefore, one has to abstract to bring order to this multiplicity.[10] The order presented here, however, has emerged from the actors themselves. The starting point of the research was the markets in Dar es Salaam. Four Waluguru marketeers were asked to keep a diary of the social contacts they had. These were discussed bi-weekly over the course of a year (1988-89) and produced many distinct concepts within the vegetable trade. It appeared that traders were labelled with particular Swahili words denoting a hierarchy of stages in trade. The first stage is the trade in

vegetables between Mgeta and Dar es Salaam (*mlanguzi*); the second is the lowest rung on the ladder of trade in Dar es Salaam: illegal, and often ambulant, trade on a small scale (*genge*); thirdly, trade may focus on a legitimate stall at one of the recognized markets (*ubao*); fourthly, there is the wholesale trade which involves travelling to various parts of Tanzania (*anasafiri*); lastly come those big men who no longer travel upcountry but are resident in Dar es Salaam. They are more brokers (*madalali*) than traders: they finance and organize, with a minimum of risk, the marketing of crops that come to Dar es Salaam from upcountry. After these categories became visible, the life histories of twenty traders from the various categories were collected to amplify the subject matter of this paper.

As will be shown below, the above-mentioned hierarchy in stages of trading reflects an increase in the individual trader's independence and security amidst fluctuating business fortunes. These stages are continuously referred to in daily speech and have undoubtedly a structuring influence on social life.[11] The complexities of life, however, defy a strict interpretation in these formal terms. The categorization mainly derives from the minimum capital that is needed to enter a particular sphere: one needs more capital as one ascends. There is also an increase in prestige as one goes up the stages. A trader may, however, continue to operate in a lower stage when his capital increases and actually be richer than some one else in a higher stage. Traders may also prefer to avoid the risks involved in making changes. A given amount of capital can ensure relative security trading from a legitimate market stall, but can make life insecure when entering the wholesale trade travelling upcountry. People remain actors and interpret their social universe continuously in different ways. Nor is progression along these stages automatic. On the contrary, life is dominated by insecurity and the resulting bankruptcies. Trading careers can be stagnant and often oscillate between success and failure.

Waluguru traders operate in a highly insecure economic universe and this makes their concern with security understandable. They operate in markets which approximate in some ways the model of perfect competition. There are many new entrants all the time and this prevents control over the market developing through organization in oligopolies or monopolies. They are price takers because there is no control over supply as it comes from many widely dispersed areas in Tanzania. For that reason, organization and control of the market through information is virtually impossible. The mobility of production factors is also limited. Traders often deal in perishable goods, so if they withdraw from the market their capital is self-liquidating. This results in frequent business

failure, especially in seasons when prices fluctuate wildly. This insecurity is exacerbated by additional risks of unreliable transport, crime, hyper-inflation, etc. Bankruptcies (*kuanguka* or *kufelisika*) are therefore normal occurrences among Waluguru traders in Dar es Salaam.

Social organization could reduce this insecurity. For example, traders could reduce risks through partnerships which diversify their trade, and partners could bail each other out in times of adversity. The social universe of Waluguru traders is, however, characterised by simple, transient and very unstable social networks. Partnerships are formed but will be limited to one joint business venture of short duration. Credit is common, but is preferably avoided and merely reflects domination or subjugation in one particular market situation. It is a strictly commercial relationship which does not entail particular bonds of solidarity. There is continuous experimentation with partnerships, but the common opinion is that these are bound to fail as one cannot trust the other. Marriage tends to be the only permanent, secure, relationship entered into by these traders. Whereas in their home area, Mgeta, marriage as an institution has virtually disappeared, an established Mluguru trader in Dar es Salaam tends to have a stable, enduring, legalized, relationship with a woman.

The building up of an independent household in urban areas tends to structure their economic behaviour. This is part of a generalized desire to have as great an extent of independence from other social contacts as possible. First, they strive for independence from their home area, Mgeta. Life in Mgeta is dominated by land scarcity, and the area is dependent upon remittances from outside. Waluguru traders in Dar es Salaam attempt to build up a secure source of income in urban areas so that they can extricate themselves from this web of dependence as much as possible. Second, they strive for a source of income which is stable and will continue in periods of illness. Real estate, renting out rooms, houses or owning guest houses, are the major options they choose, therefore, in their investment pattern. Third, they strive for independence from government and quasi-governmental organization. They will sometimes strive for influence in political arenas, but even then their attitude is ambiguous: they look for immediate advantages and withdraw quickly. They shun formal organization and can, therefore, rightly be considered to be part of the informal sector.

The term 'informal sector' has been valuable in that it throws light on faceless people who are not officially recognized, like many of the people presented in this paper. Academic writing has qualified to a large extent this rather vague

concept of the informal sector. It refers to a multitude of activities which can relate to very different class positions, and the dichotomy between formal and informal activities is not at all as clear as the terminology suggests.[12] Nevertheless, one finds in writings on the informal sector elements which are essential to understand present day Africa. The original definition, the world of economic activities outside the organized labour force where labour is not recruited on a permanent or regular basis for fixed rewards, neatly captures the universe into which the subjects of this article fit.[13] Insecurity is therefore a key word to understand people like Waluguru traders in Dar es Salaam. This, however, raises more questions than it gives answers. For example, Elwert *et al.* refute the idea that the informal sector should be seen as chaotic: markets are organized; people protect each other in cases of hardship and they organize against their common adversary: government. Paradoxically, they also see their lack of cohesion as the main cause of their insecurity.[14] This article shows that collective action is one option in the search for security but that individualism is an equally likely response.[15]

In the following pages the hierarchy of stages leading to security will be consecutively described and a case is presented at the end of each. The cases are not representative or ideal typical, but on the contrary aim to bring out the idiosyncratic nature of enterprises operating in this socially-constructed economic universe. At the end of the paper this social interpretation of economic life will be summed up by looking at the explanations for the success of one untypical trader.

Ulanguzi: The vegetable trade between Mgeta and Dar es Salaam

The predominance of the Waluguru in the markets of Dar es Salaam originates from the vegetable trade between the Uluguru mountains and the capital. The altitude of the area makes it suitable for the cultivation of European style vegetables, notably cabbage, but also vegetables for the Indian and expatriate markets: cauliflower, leeks, beetroot, celery, etc. There is a long history of vegetable cultivation in Mgeta, but it became more important as food security declined and pressure on land increased. Explosive urbanization fuelled demand. Originally, Europeans and Indian traders played a major role, but nowadays cultivation as well as trade is in the hands of local people. Since the early 1950s there has been a cooperative element in vegetable marketing. During the research period three cooperatively-owned village lorries plied between Dar es Salaam and Mgeta. The trade is, however, carried out by individuals who may

or may not use communally-owned transport.

Many people enter the trade. Farmers also market their vegetables themselves in Dar es Salaam, especially when prices are low and traders are reluctant to buy. Most traders, however, are young boys who are trying to establish an independent source of income. There is little wage labour in Mgeta and land is scarce, especially land suitable for growing vegetables which can give a cash income. There are also many entrants into this trade because little capital is needed (two or three thousand shillings).[16] Competition is therefore stiff, and individual traders have little influence on price formation when buying from farmers. Neither do they have influence when selling. Mgeta is only one of the highland areas supplying vegetables to Dar es Salaam. The radio broadcasts daily the prices paid at Dar es Salaam's Kariakoo market, but vegetables come from areas which are hundreds of miles apart: Mgeta, Usambaras and Iringa to mention a few important ones. Nobody knows how many lorries are on their way with which vegetables, and sudden oversupply can ruin even established traders. Supply is also unpredictable because new areas of supply enter the market continuously. The disadvantageous position caused by the many entrants is also reflected in the credit arrangements to both farmers and customers in Dar es Salaam. Farmers demand prompt payment unless market conditions are very poor. Marketeers in Dar es Salaam, however, request credit until they have sold the vegetables, especially vegetables for the Indian and European markets. This trade is concentrated in just a few places, and outlets where one is sure of a rapid turnover, essential in the vegetable trade, are therefore scarce. The final payment by the marketeers is usually fraught with conflict because they will claim that, on division of the bulk into small lots, much of the produce was spoilt and not suitable for sale.

The trade is very demanding physically. Twice weekly a market is organized in Mgeta where traders buy vegetables and pulses while other traders offer food and a variety of consumer goods. At the end of the morning, lorries are overloaded with vegetables and the traders travel, sometimes hanging by their fingernails from the lorry, to Dar es Salaam where they arrive in the middle of the night. They have to sleep with their vegetables to prevent theft. Once sales are arranged, they have to wait for payment until the marketeers have sold the goods. Frequent journeys are a necessity if people have little capital and/or a reasonable income is to be realized. Sleeping at home is a luxury for these traders. Older people, therefore, usually avoid this trade or they team up with young, recent entrants into the trade who need an apprenticeship.

These partnerships tend to be very unequal. Both parties bring capital into such a venture, journey by journey, and the profits or losses are split in proportion to the contributed capital. The established trader will travel to Dar es Salaam by bus or minibus (*laxary*) while the apprentice travels with the vegetables on the lorry. The big trader will sleep in a guest house in Dar es Salaam and spend the waiting time drinking. The apprentice has to sleep in the street near the produce and has no money to spend on pleasure while waiting for the produce to be sold. An apprentice will put all his capital into a venture and an established trader only part of his. In the event of a loss, the apprentice is usually bankrupt while the big man merely has to dip into his reserves. Apprentices accuse the big traders of colluding with the marketeers in order to pocket an unequal share of profit and even of deliberately bankrupting them by creating losses in this way. If an apprentice is bankrupt the established trader can choose another one as many young boys want to enter the trade. Big traders explain such accusations as jealousy on the part of the young boys.

Stable relationships between established traders and apprentices are rare. There are also few really big traders. There are, in this trade in Mgeta, not more than about five traders who have a working capital of between fifty and a hundred thousand shillings (Cf. most young entrants have a capital that does not exceed five thousand shillings). During the cabbage season some shopkeepers occasionally enter this trade with similar amounts money. The large specialist traders have often diversified, cushioning themselves against risk by investment in land suitable for vegetable growing or by opening shops in Mgeta. Like traders in other stages they buy houses in Morogoro town or Dar es Salaam. Unlike those, however, they remain based in Mgeta. They have often superior knowledge of market outlets, especially for vegetables bought by the Indian and expatriate communities. They reduce the risks of unreliable transport by hiring a lorry between two or three of them.

Their fortunes remain nonetheless insecure. Robberies with violence have ruined several such big people. They remain price takers as they do not control supply. A shopkeeper who was considered beyond the risks of the trade suffered a great financial loss after marketing a six ton lorry of vegetables in Dar es Salaam. His shop then became destocked as he had run out of capital. Business careers of such traders also often show large and sudden increases of capital, probably stemming from illegal trade. To the south of the Uluguru mountains is the Selous Game Reserve, and it is said that the transportation of tusks and skins hidden in a lorry load of vegetables is a favourite smuggling ploy. Dealing in precious stones is another illegal circuit that may be of great importance. The

vegetable trade between Mgeta and Dar es Salaam is not an illegal trade, but these traders tend to have an ambiguous relationship with government as illegality pervades their trade. Illegal trade does not have the security of trading under the protection of the law. Many of their social relationships remain framed in kinship terms, but this does not necessarily create a stable set of social relationships either. This insecurity amidst success is shown clearly in the following case.

Frans Kulunge

Frans Kulunge is one of the rare traders who proved really successful in trading vegetables between Dar es Salaam and Mgeta and who still remains in this trade. He is one of the few who have the capital to buy enough produce to fill one third or half of a lorry with produce and furnish his share of the down payment for the hire of the vehicle. These lorries are hired from Indian businessmen in Dar es Salaam but the big traders remain firmly based in Mgeta. That has not always been so in the case of Kulunge.

Compared with similar traders he is a young man, probably approaching forty. He claims to have been fourteen when he left Mgeta for Dar es Salaam. He was summoned there by a grandfather who was a welder in partnership with an Indian businessman. Kulunge became a welder as well and stayed with his relatives. After three years, in 1976, he left the job after a quarrel with his grandfather.

He then ventured for the first time into the vegetable trade between Mgeta and Dar es Salaam. He teamed up with a friend, and they started to trade from other parts of Tanzania, mostly in onions and beans which they bought in places like Singida and Lushoto. This wholesale trade crashed when the rains caught them on the road with a load of onions which rotted. His friend then fell back on a market stall, which he already had before taking to the road, where he sold rice. Kulunge assisted him there for a while but he lost his place to a young brother of the owner of the stall. This coincided with a government ban on open trade in rice as it became policy to distribute rice through cooperative shops.

He returned to Mgeta where he took some drastic steps. He used what money he still had to marry his wife. He then acted high-handedly and sold his mother's pigs to raise capital and started to trade again in vegetables between Mgeta and Dar es Salaam. This is his principal business to the present day.

Kalunge has, however, diversified in order to protect himself from the insecurity of the vegetable trade. At different times, in 1979, 1980, 1986 and 1988, he managed to buy four plots which are suitable for growing vegetables in his home village. He has opened a shop there. He bought a market stall at Magomeni market - a significant place because it was this market from which he was chased. He recently bought a plot in Dar es Salaam where he wants to build a house for renting out. He not only built one of the most beautiful houses in Mgeta for himself, but also built a very good house for his mother.

Kulunge's position seems therefore to be secure, but it is not. He has difficulties with his family, although he is proud to have looked after them so well. He not only built the house for his mother, but looked after her and his brothers and sisters after his parents got divorced. The divorce occurred just before he sold the pigs: the reason for his doing this was that he took it upon himself to bring money into the household. He tried especially to give his brothers and sisters education, but this was only moderately successful. Only one of his sisters completed any training after primary school: she is a Rural Medical Aid - a very basic nursing qualification. His brothers and sisters are, however, resentful of Kulunge's success. They claim that he made his fortune due to the capital from the sale of his mother's pigs and that they, therefore, are also entitled to such a start in life. Kulunge has given only one of his brothers money to enter business, and he is trading on a small scale between Mgeta and Dar es Salaam. Kulunge tries to remain as independent as possible in business. He does not want, for example, to put any of his bothers and sisters in charge of his newly acquired stall in Magomeni. His wife manages the shop in Mgeta and she is his most dependable social relationship. It is therefore significant that he spent sixty thousand shillings recently on a church wedding to make his marriage official.

Kulunge has experienced other major problems in establishing dependable social relationships. In the year previous to the study he had diversified into the wholesale trade in potatoes between Mbeya and Dar es Salaam. He usually travelled with the son of one of his mother's sisters. One day he could not travel as he had to appear in court in Mgeta. He had been attacked by a gang of youngsters while walking home after returning from Dar es Salaam. He was silent about possible reasons for this attack. The case was withdrawn after a few hearings. This inconclusive ending must nevertheless have cost him quite a bit of money because initiating court cases tends to be expensive. His business partner had travelled alone to Mbeya to buy potatoes but used the money (150,000 shillings) differently. He spent it all on pleasure (*starehe*).

It is puzzling why these major setbacks have not affected him more. Likewise his business career is marked by sudden inexplicable spurts of progress, which suggest illegality. The attack on him and the withdrawal of the court case also suggest that some affairs are settled outside the realm of state law. This is one major source of insecurity in his enterprise. Neither does he seem to manage to build up a dependable social network based on kinship. He quarrelled with his relatives in Dar es Salaam; he has difficulties with his brothers and was conned by a relative in the wholesale trade. The marriage is the only dependable relationship. Kulunge is very much his own man, but in such a social universe he has to be.

Genge: illegal urban trade

People who trade in vegetables between Mgeta and Dar es Salaam remain based in Mgeta, but many young people leave Mgeta. Their first trip is usually in response to an invitation from urban relatives who can use their labour for petty trade from the house or to look after children. Such an offer is tempting, because it offers a sheltered existence: food and housing will be provided, albeit mostly to a minimal standard. Such an existence is, however, completely dependent upon the urban relative. Conflicts erupt easily therefore about such matters as demands by the youngsters for schooling or support to trade independently, absenteeism, and petty theft. Usually the young person then gets a single bus ticket back to Mgeta and, as many young people want to leave Mgeta, another one is easily recruited. In Mgeta the returnees are then faced with the hardships due to land shortage and those inherent in the vegetable trade. They have a basic knowledge of urban life and a desire for independence, and they often use the earliest opportunity to make their way back to Dar es Salaam.

There they also face a rough life. They have no shelter and must sleep in the streets. They usually hang around markets and may earn a little money as porters or doing odd jobs. They generally hope to start trading, and the waste heaps around the markets are usually their point of entrance. They sift through rotting tomatoes, potatoes, cabbages, onions, etc. and sort out the odd ones that may still be sold or they peel and cut away the bad parts. To do that they need two assets: a knife and a basket. The basket is needed because they do not have a place of their own from which to trade and they often hawk their goods from house to house. The basket is, however, especially needed to run away quickly with their wares when the police chase illegal traders.

A main aim is, therefore, to be tolerated by those who are legally there. They hang around the stalls of established traders and often help them without payment in order to gain access to the fringes of the market. For example, they may get the inferior produce left over when a lot has been sold, or, when the trader has difficulty in selling at acceptable prices, he may give them some goods on credit. If they gain the reputation of being dependable, then traders may let them use their stall when they are drinking, travelling or ill. If they manage to build up some capital they will buy low value produce: chilies, limes and green maize which is sold roasted. Experience teaches them where the police are less active harassing illegal trade, and if their trade stabilises at particular places regular custom can develop. An illegal fixed place of trade is called a *genge*. Trade can be considerable from such places and claims of ownership are strongly asserted. Illegal traders can move up to a position where they buy good produce of high value from wholesalers. Once they have a regular income they will also find a room to rent. The ideal is then to have sufficient money to set up house with a woman.

Such progress is not automatic however. Bankruptcy is a constant threat in their lives and not only because of the hazards of trade. Police raids are their greatest risk: they lose their produce (capital) and have to pay considerable sums to be set free. The careers of successful men usually began along the above-mentioned lines, but many people never rise above this stage or fall back upon it in adversity. They go bankrupt regularly and then usually get small sums from relatives to set up in business again. This may be a cheap way of supporting relatives as compared to full and direct support. Such trade is a refuge for the weak in society. The main stated motivation is to avoid physical wage labour. Most of them have, at some time, shovelled sand, carried cement or broken stones and became sick as the work was too hard for them. Such people are not strong enough to farm either. This sector of trade, as is clear from the following case, may often be better understood as a form of social security than in terms of markets regulated by supply and demand.

Willebord Peter

Willebord Peter is to be found everyday among the onion traders in the cellars of Kariakoo market, but he has no place of his own there. He carries onions around in a basket and these are inferior to the ones displayed in the regular stalls. His produce has usually been sorted out as unfit for sale in such stalls and Willebord gets them free. He often takes care of stalls of established

traders, but has no permanent relationship with any particular trader. He offers these services free, but will then put his basket on a stool near the stall and attempt to sell his own onions first. He is tolerated although his trade is illegal.

Willebord is in his early forties, but his position in the trade is usually the domain of young boys who are starting out in life. He came to Dar es Salaam at an early age, sixteen, and can talk movingly about sleeping in the streets around Kariakoo market and scrounging for food. He has also known success. He assisted a Mluguru wholesaler travelling upcountry trading in tomatoes and dried fish. When this partnership broke up, he specialized in onions. At first he traded on a small scale illegally in the streets of Ilala neighbourhood. He again travelled upcountry in the late 1970s wholesaling in onions. Two bankruptcies, the last one in 1980, put an end to his trade and he never recovered.

He used to return regularly to Mgeta and grow vegetables on a plot inherited from his father. He lost this when a brother of his father sold it. Matrilineal inheritance is the rule among the Waluguru and therefore his uncle claimed that Willebord had no right to it. He therefore lost this source of security, and relations with his brothers and sisters, who did not support his claim, soured as well. He has little contact with them; he does not even maintain contact with a brother also trading in onions from a regular stall in Dar es Salaam. Recently, however, his youngest brother has moved in with him. He is selling roasted maize, one of the trades which require little capital to enter and Willebord is in partnership with him.

The room which he built in a successful period is his only source of independence. His life is dependent upon his father-in-law. He has a stable marital relationship, and his wife has borne him children. His father-in-law is a very big trader in onions and when Peter goes bankrupt - a regular event - he furnishes small sums to set him up again in the trade. His eldest son, thirteen years old, actually lives with the grandfather, a fact which highlights this dependence.

By Waluguru traders' standards, Willebord is a failure in life because he is so dependent. He is not a bright person and this is one explanation for his failure, but his life also shows the fragility of social relationships in business. He continues, however, to experiment and hopes the partnership with his youngest brother will work out. A stable marriage and his own room are his major assets in life, but this falls far short of the ideal of an independent source of security amidst the vagaries of economic life.

Ubao: a legitimate stall in a market

A major step towards a more secure life is to obtain a legitimate place from which to sell so that the risks of police harassment no longer exist. These stalls are bought and sold, but the most common way to get one is during the legalization of an illegitimate market. Dar es Salaam is a fast-growing city and markets are constantly emerging at new places. Trade also continues to expand illegally in the streets near recognized markets. Trade in illegal places tends to take on a permanent structure and then traders will clamour for official recognition so that they will be left in peace by the authorities. Traders used to legalize their businesses by forming cooperatives to administer the market. Recently, legalization has taken a different form. It is no longer necessary to form a cooperative as the city council grants recognition on an individual basis. In this way, the re-established local authorities found a rich source of revenue.

Waluguru traders tend to dislike any regulation and are wary of political organization. The cooperatives are often no more than empty shells, especially since socialist ideology is on the wane in Tanzania. In older markets, cooperative societies have built permanent and communally-owned structures for shelter, but these are absent in newer markets. Cleaning is the only function which is organized communally by the cooperative or, in the newly legalized places, by the city council. The cooperative is seen as a kind of tax farm for the leadership, and marketeers would prefer to do without it. On one issue, however, they make specific demands of the leadership: a more vigorous prosecution of illegal traders around the market. Political organization should protect their own legality but it should not legalize the competition.

Market stalls are therefore often owned by the membership of cooperatives, but they are bought and sold as individually-owned assets. Sales are witnessed by *wazee* (literally old people, but better understood as respected people), but these are not necessarily the leaders of the market. A legitimized market stall is designated by the word *ubao* and these are fast-appreciating assets. Until the late 1970s they were not scarce, and it was possible to get a stall because somebody had fallen behind in paying dues. Nowadays they are scarce and expensive, a normal price being fifty thousand shillings. People are reluctant to sell as it is an inflation-proof asset and hyper-inflation is a fact of life in Tanzania. *Ubao* are often bought as a mere investment without the intention of trading from there. Profits from a grinding mill in Mgeta donated by an expatriate employer to his house servant were, for example, invested in an *ubao* in the tomato section in the cellars of Kariakoo market. The previous owner was

allowed to continue his trade from the *ubao* which he had sold.

The persons who trade from a stall are not necessarily the owners and a wide range of relationships may exist. People may be unable to trade because they are bankrupt, but if market fees are no longer paid they forfeit the right to the stall. A replacement is then allowed to trade from the *ubao* on the condition that he will faithfully pay the fees. Such a replacement may do very well and become a wealthy person while the owner is impoverished. Nevertheless, the owner may refuse to sell and give up his inflation-proof asset. Owners may compete with their own *ubao*. The *ubao* in Kariakoo referred to above was bought in the name of a relative trading also in tomatoes but as a partner of the owner of a neighbouring stall. Capital had, therefore, been provided to a competitor by the acquisition of the *ubao*. Stalls are of course also let, and employees trade on the owner's behalf on an *ubao*. Such arrangements are common when marketeers go into wholesaling which involves travelling upcountry. They always allow for the possibility of bankruptcy, and far less capital is needed to trade from an *ubao* than to travel. In the event of bankruptcy, the *ubao* is needed to make a new start. Caretakers usually build small extensions to an *ubao* and try to claim ownership of this particular place in the market. Nevertheless, it can be very dramatic when the owner demands his *ubao* back, especially if someone else has been using it for a long time. It can endanger the livelihood of whole families, and conflicts erupt. Such conflicts do not reach the authorities however. People try to reach a settlement among themselves, but accusations of witchcraft are frequently made.

Waluguru traders are not only reluctant to organize politically, they also prefer to be as independent as possible in their businesses. Some cooperation is needed, however, if one is not to be bound all the time to the *ubao*. Usually someone is attached to the stall, and this person may get a small salary or goods on credit for hawking from house to house. When an owner of an *ubao* is short of capital he may pool resources with another trader who has no *ubao* but has capital. Such partnerships are established only on a venture by venture basis: capital is pooled, goods are bought and sold, and the proceeds are then divided. Credit is also short term, and each time the goods on credit are resold accounts are evened.[17] Goods on credit are simply more expensive and no rate of interest is calculated. Waluguru traders prefer to avoid credit and will enter into such transactions only if it is difficult to sell or when they are desperately short of capital, e.g. due to a robbery.

The avoidance of credit is partly a result of lack of trust: there are numerous

stories of collaboration in business which turned sour as partners ran away with the capital. A reluctance to give credit is also understandable in an uncertain trading environment. Business failure is common, especially at the end of the rainy season. Supply is low during the rains because transport is difficult then and much produce rots away. Prices rise sharply at the beginning of the rains and drop suddenly when the rainy season is over. Some traders withdraw then from the market as they do not want to risk buying expensively and then being faced with over supply. One needs the resources to do so, either in the form of reserves or the option of making money through other activities. Otherwise one has to face these risks. It is also difficult for marketeers to avoid risks by diversification. They have to specialize because they need a thorough knowledge of the sources of supply.[18] Tanzania has a great variety of climates, and produce will come from different areas depending upon the season. Trade is risky when one area starts producing while another is drying up as a source. The more perishable the goods - e.g. tomatoes - the bigger the risks because one cannot hold on to such goods to even out erratic supply. As a result, there is a clear hierarchy in specialization among traders. Onions are more risky than potatoes; potatoes are more risky than rice, etc. The more perishable goods, however, require less capital to enter the trade: prices can be extremely low if there is oversupply; credit is more easily extended when the trader has to get rid of his goods, and they are often sold in smaller lots. People often re-enter trade after bankruptcies by trading in perishable goods when prices are low.

Business failure is not caused only by the vagaries of the market. Crime is another major cause: either one is cheated by business partners or robbed of large amounts of cash. Traders do not trust the banking system and most deals are done cash in hand. Illness is another major reason for business failure, not only the illness of the trader himself, but also the illness of relatives from Mgeta. They often descend upon traders in Dar es Salaam demanding help for treatment, and this can reduce working capital dramatically in a short period. Marketeers cannot operate without some bonds of solidarity, but they prefer to keep these to a minimum in an overall strategy of risk avoidance.

Esdore Luanda

Esdore Luanda is a fiercely independent onion trader in the Kariakoo market. He is a successful man who has achieved a high degree of independence. His success is due to caution, but even more to striking strategic alliances.

He was born in 1951, and his parents are now dead. His only brother is still in Mgeta and ekes out a living on his parents' land. His parents had not enough land to sustain another household and Luanda therefore had to look for a living elsewhere. When he finished primary school in 1969 he first looked for employment in Mgeta. He was taken into the house of a family who owned a grinding mill, and Luanda operated the machine. He soon moved, however, to Dar es Salaam where he lived with the son of his mother's sister and made his living as a street seller.

He then made a fortunate marriage. His wife came from a family in Mgeta which was relatively rich in land. She continued to live with her parents in Mgeta. Luanda, at that time, went regularly to Mgeta to look after the vegetable plots of his wife's family. He invariably went at the end of the rainy season - the best time to prepare vegetable plots and a very insecure time for trading as prices can drop sharply. His wife's vegetable plots provided security in his trading existence. Luanda is a cautious man who can live very frugally, but without the vegetable plots he could not have weathered the setbacks in business which are normal in his trade.

In 1984 he made another fortunate alliance. Luanda was then trading illegally in the streets around Ilala market, and he and the other traders were threatened by a government 'back to the land' campaign. The traders responded with a proposal to embark cooperatively on urban farming in one of the wetlands/creeks that are a distinctive feature of Dar es Salaam. The farm never materialized from the planning stages, but a spin-off of the venture appeared to be very successful. The cooperative had obtained space in the cellars of Kariakoo market to sell their produce. Nominally, it was still a collective enterprise but the space was divided among individuals who traded on their own account. The cooperative was an empty shell and it merely provided an income to the leaders who pocketed the contribution paid by members. After a members' revolt, the cooperative was disbanded in 1988 and individual trade was legitimized. In this way, Luanda obtained an *ubao* from where he now trades in onions only.

His security is, however, threatened because he cannot continue to rely on his base in Mgeta. His children went to school there as it was cheaper than schooling in Dar es Salaam. They also helped the grandparents, but there is no future for them there and they have to establish a livelihood in Dar es Salaam. The land in Mgeta cannot maintain more households. When the father-in-law dies they will probably lose the vegetable plots as their rights of inheritance will

be disputed. Luanda tried to buy land in Mgeta but the sale was challenged by relatives of the seller and Luanda lost.

In the near future, however, he will no longer be dependent upon Mgeta because he will have an independent, secure income in Dar es Salaam from house rents. He built his first modest house back in 1972 and he rents out some rooms. A large new house is under construction adjacent to his old one and this will be his big earner. As he is anxious to sever his dependence on Mgeta quickly, he has re-entered the wholesale onion trade which means travelling upcountry. He used to engage in this trade in the late 1970s, but he hates it as it is uncomfortable and dangerous. Therefore he does not travel himself, but a business partner who is short of capital and has no *ubao* travels upcountry on his account. This partner is a trusted companion who also looks after the *ubao* when Luanda is in Mgeta or otherwise occupied. (Luanda is a great drinker.) Nevertheless, Luanda is extremely nervous when his partner is travelling upcountry and is always fishing for news about him. Misfortune can strike anytime: robberies and price fluctuations are a constant worry, and even the most reliable people sometimes turn out to be different than they claim to be.

Luanda is successful by Waluguru traders' standards: he is his own man. He has been dependent upon other people but he is gradually freeing himself. He used to be dependent upon his wife's relatives, but that is coming to an end. He joined a cooperative but succeeded in obtaining an independent, individually-owned *ubao* in Kariakoo. He considers his collaboration in the wholesale trade as transient. Collaboration is always a source of anxiety, but if it brings in the money to complete his house he will have a firm source of independence in Dar es Salaam.

Madalali: wholesalers and brokers: security achieved

An *ubao* gives some security: freedom from police harassment and an inflation-proof asset. It does not provide a secure income as business remains vulnerable to wild price fluctuations in conditions of hyper- inflation, and it does not make a trader immune from the risks of ill health. Waluguru traders look, therefore, to diversification, and they look for maximum independence from other people. Their preferred investment is therefore in real estate. They will first build a house for their own family. A place of their own secures the marriage which tends to be their most stable social relationship. Rooms will be added to rent out, and then the aim is to rent out complete houses or even to manage

guesthouses. Rents continue to be paid in the event of illness or bankruptcy. They keep dependants out of the house for preference. In one case, grown-up children were turned out of their parental home in order to make room for outsiders when their father became destitute because of illness. Real estate is also a good hedge against inflation. Profits are quickly put into plots, cement and bricks instead of expanding working capital. Capital tends to erode when profits seem big but are actually small because of inflation. Land is another favoured investment for that reason, albeit that this is mostly kept for speculative purposes. Most traders own plots in the peri-urban areas of Dar es Salaam where they cultivate some crops. The money spent on transport going there is usually not recovered from these fields, and cultivation serves more to keep claims active in the hope that the land will become valuable when the city grows. Such plots offer of course some security which obviates the necessity of returning to Mgeta when business fails. Small shelters which develop into houses are usually built on this land. If tree crops do well there a more secure source of income is created, especially in the case of coconuts which require relatively little input of labour. It can then become attractive as a place to which to retire.

An *ubao* does not as a rule provide enough income to match such ambitions. Therefore marketeers are tempted to go into wholesaling, travelling throughout Tanzania, despite the risks involved. Such trade requires a lot of capital: thirty thousand shillings is the minimum amount required to deal in a risky product like tomatoes, and for onions or potatoes double that amount was mentioned. The risks are also greater than trading from an *ubao* because of unreliable transport and the great danger of robberies. There are also many entrants into this type of trade, and this results in depressed profits. Large profits are only made at risky times, mostly before the long rains start at the end of March. Prices rise sharply when many of the transport routes to Dar es Salaam become unreliable and most produce decays rapidly because of humidity. If one manages to buy just before the prices rise and get a load to Dar es Salaam just in time, big money is made. One also runs, of course, the great risk of being stuck on the road by the rains with produce that rots away.

A second way to make large profits is to discover a new area of supply. One year at the end of the rains, the price of onions in Singida was extremely high. Nevertheless, all the traders bought except for one. He considered the onions too risky and continued his journey by train further inland. He then found an area, as yet undiscovered by traders, producing large quantities of dried fish. He bought cheap and made a fortune, while his colleagues who had bought the

expensive onions faced major losses back in Dar es Salaam. Traders are constantly looking for such new sources of supply, but such finds provide only a temporary windfall. Trade is characterized by many entrants and soon competition among buyers will push prices up in such areas.

Illegality also lures with the promise of great gains. Traders welcomed trade liberalization, but were unanimous in the opinion that business was best when government regulation of trade was extensive. Rationing offers the opportunity to make large profits on the black market; it restricts the number of entrants and necessitates more trust between business partners. An example: government restricted trade in oilseeds and pulses but did not have an organization in place to take over the functions of the private traders. As a result, farmers had large stocks and were eager to sell. One trader capitalized on this and managed to get a year's credit. He bought illegally and this made him one of the few really big businessmen in the Waluguru community. His trade became far less profitable after liberalization as there were then many buyers. Prices became inflated as a consequence, and farmers refused to sell on credit. Illegality remains a powerful force in their world of business. Rumours about skins, ivory, precious stones and gold abound, but it is a realm that is hard for outsiders to penetrate.

Diversification and growth require cooperation. People are needed to look after guesthouses, manage the *ubao* in the owner's absence or look after produce that has been bought wholesale. The most dramatic stories of unreliable business partners are told about this type of trade, especially when trade is illegal. It took a long time to find an explanation for the decline of a prominent trader in groundnuts, but in the end the explanation of his misfortunes appeared to be simple. He had invested all his money in diamonds which proved to be fake. Illegality requires organization to make business secure and Waluguru traders on the whole do not manage to construct larger social formations. They avoid employing people as much as possible. If cooperation is necessary, a partner will be provided with capital to trade on his own. He may trade in the name of the provider of capital, but his reward is a share of the proceeds and not a regular income. Joint capital is considered one of the most dangerous social constructions, because jealousy is a potent force in the event of success. One of the most successful traders in Kariakoo market shared capital with a brother. The business flourished when he travelled upcountry and left his brother in charge of the stall. He was more prudent with his money than his brother and managed to build an excellent house. When it was completed, the brother arrived at the door and claimed his share of the house. They then fought physically and their father had to come from Mgeta to divide the capital. The

dissatisfied brother then failed in business, returned to Mgeta and is now dependent on the favours of his successful brother in Dar es Salaam. The latter, however, keeps his distance as much as possible.

A new form of cooperation was just emerging in Kariakoo. Traders started to form companies, but these were the loosest form of business collaboration imaginable. The working capital of the traders in the companies continued to be strictly individually managed. Companies merely provided their shareholders with a rented office and a telephone in Kariakoo market. This could transform the trade however, as it provides a focal point to bring order into the market. The telephone in particular makes it possible to obtain price information from the various supply areas and can lead to monopolization of information. Two such companies were formed and both had strong links with the Asian business community. One had an arrangement with a group of Sikh traders. The company used their telephones in various parts of the country and had an informal banking arrangement with them. Cash was taken up and deposited at their stores throughout the country and the risk of robberies was therefore minimized. The other company had a big tender to supply vegetables to a hotel managed by people of Asian origin. This company's relationship with Asian traders was, however, of long standing and more complicated. They had, for a long time, been buying oilseeds and pulses which were exported illegally by dhow to India to circumvent currency regulations. Their Asian business connections had also helped some traders in these companies to restart after bankruptcy, showing again the force of organization and trust in capital formation.

These are exceptional cases and Waluguru traders as a rule prefer to shun cooperation. Their ideal is therefore, once they have secured their existence by investing in real estate, to remain independent. The values of security and independence are realized most in the position of *madalali* (broker) or those who receive only (*wanapokea tu*). *Madalali* have much capital (in excess of a hundred thousand shillings) in an environment where capital is short. The reason for this scarcity is not only poverty: profits tend to be ploughed as quickly as possible into inflation-proof investments. A substantial number of farmers hope to get a better price by marketing their own produce themselves. They hire transport on credit: usually a lorry driver piles their produce on top of the official load he is carrying. The driver has to be paid on arrival in Dar es Salaam and there the *madalali* steps in. He will advance the money and look after the marketing of the produce at an agreed price. If the price cannot be made, the deal has to be renegotiated. In the event of conflict the *madalali*

withdraws but runs no risks. His costs will be reimbursed and his arranged fee will be paid because the produce is his security. They therefore seldom deal with goods that perish quickly: they prefer loads of rice or beans, but will also finance the marketing of potatoes, onions and cabbage. The *madalali* is in control because he has the scarce capital to finance the marketing until the proceeds come in. The risk is minimal, credit lines are short and it requires hardly any dependence on other people. It is an ideal which very few people reach.

Gaudens Thomas

Gaudens Thomas is often to be found in the cellars of Kariakoo market. He often stands on a pile of sacks of potatoes, and amidst the dust and the dirt he is immaculately dressed and his wellingtons are shining. He is a really big man, a *madalali*. His business career has had ups and downs however.

Gaudens was born in 1950 and left primary school in 1967. The beginnings of his career followed a normal pattern. He first tried to make a living in Mgeta mining mica. After a year he left for Dar es Salaam and helped a younger brother of his father in Kisutu market. After a conflict, Gaudens was sent home to Mgeta with only a single bus ticket.

He took up digging for mica again in Iringa. He returned to Mgeta broke and scraped enough money together to go to Dar es Salaam where he faced the rough life in the streets selling vegetables. His life improved considerably in 1971 when he joined his father and a nephew in a stall in the auction market selling clothes. He left this to work for nine months in the state grain marketing board, the National Milling Corporation. The stall at the auction market had been sold by the time he left National Milling.

Gaudens then again became an illegal street seller, but trading in a relatively high grade product, groundnuts. By 1974 he had accumulated enough capital to travel between Mbeya and Dar es Salaam wholesaling potatoes. This was a very successful enterprise in partnership with a younger brother, but it ended dramatically. One day they reached Morogoro, where important roads cross in Tanzania, on their way back with potatoes from Mbeya. They were greeted there with two important messages: Gaudens' son was gravely ill and the price of potatoes was very low in Dar es Salaam, but high in Mwanza. Therefore, Gaudens rushed to Dar es Salaam to be with his son while his brother

proceeded to Mwanza to sell the potatoes. Gaudens then did not see or hear from his brother for three months until it was rumoured that he was drinking somewhere in Dar es Salaam. Gaudens found him and they fought. The police were called, and they were put on remand for six days. Gaudens had to sell his shirt to raise the money to be released.

He made his way back to Mgeta, but soon tired again of a rural existence. At Mtoni market in Dar es Salaam he joined a relative who was old and who retired soon after Gaudens joined him. Then he entered the most successful phase of his career. The market at Mtoni was legalized in 1977, and he therefore had the security of an *ubao*. The market was managed by the *Mapinduzi ya mnyonge* (Revolution of those who suffer) credit and savings society of which he was chairman. This became a very lucrative position when government rationed more and more goods through cooperative shops. Gaudens could channel these partly his own way and could operate on the black market. Once he had enough capital he took to the road again, wholesaling mainly onions. He built a house in 1978 after Mtoni market was legalized. He sold this after building another big house, and then he built a house for letting only. He does not travel any more, but only markets potatoes as a *madalali*.

Despite his security he attempts new ventures all the time. He rents two large *ubao* at Kisutu market where relatives sell fruit on his behalf. He also experienced a major loss in attempting to diversify. He pooled capital to buy a lorry, an old Mercedes Benz, but all earnings from the lorry where sunk in repairs and the lorry finally overturned in 1987. He will not try again to move into transport because it involves too much dependence on other people.

Gaudens' career shows that the ultimate aim of security is not automatically achieved once an accumulation process sets in. His life has oscillated between success and failure. His father was one of the rich people in Mgeta in the 1950s, but this did not provide Gaudens with a solid position in life. He worked with his father for some time, but the latter's wealth had by that time already declined considerably. His father also married another wife and lost interest in his children by his first wife. Cooperation in business often continues to be framed in terms of kinship, but often proves unreliable. The secret of Gaudens' success is in political organization. The legitimization of the Mtoni stall and his chairmanship of the cooperative founded the security he has achieved. He is now, however, no longer politically active and has absolutely no ambitions in that direction.

The social construction of a market

The intention of this paper is to reveal the logic which structures, and is structured by, entrepreneurial behaviour among a group of traders in Dar es Salaam originating from the Mgeta division in the Uluguru mountains. The main theme is that entrepreneurial behaviour takes place in a social universe, and economic factors like price, the scarcity of production factors and property relations are shaped and given meaning by the way society structures itself. This does not mean that such variables are unimportant. For example, Waluguru traders operate in an environment of hyper-inflation, and their decisions about where to invest are motivated to a large extent by this. *Ubao*, cement, houses and land are, partly for that reason, always on their mind. This qualification of 'partly' is essential here. In the same economic situation they could react differently and invest capital differently: their actual decision is socially induced. For example, they are price takers as there are many entrants into the market and it is impossible to control information about supply. Information about supply is a critical factor in business success and this requires specialization. It is, however, impossible to have perfect information and the result is frequent bankruptcy in the event of over supply of particular goods. They could enter into partnerships which diversify the range of goods traded and they could bail each other out in the event of the market turning in unexpected directions. They do not do so however. Another example: Waluguru traders are very dependent upon transporters and it would be logical for them to diversify into transport. This would require the pooling of capital as the purchase of a lorry is above the capacity of even the most successful traders, and drivers are difficult to supervise. The lack of trust among them causes them to turn to different investment patterns.

Entrepreneurial behaviour involves decision making and this is moulded by an awareness of the world around us which is to a large extent dictated by social behaviour. The particular type of social networks in which entrepreneurs operate determines, therefore, to a large extent, their particular behaviour as their awareness of choices becomes different as they move between networks.[19] In the case of these Waluguru traders there is a clear awareness of the choice of establishing durable and dependable partnerships in business. They regularly compare themselves as a group with the Wachagga from Kilimanjaro who have diversified, especially from trade into transport.[20] They see this option but do not succeed in building less transient and more stable social networks. This is necessary for any large-scale development. Capitalist development and capital accumulation are usually associated with individualism,

but the integration of more people into stable networks is also required.[21] Marriage is the only long lasting and dependable relationship in their life. This is underlined by the lavish church weddings entered into on achieving success in business. This makes it possible to ensure reliable supervision of real estate, guest houses or a shop in the house, but no more. Not only do traders structure their behaviour through social manipulation, but their behaviour is structured by society as well. The major structuring factor is a fear of dependence among Waluguru traders in Dar es Salaam. This does not imply a lack of social relations. For example, funerals are very well attended, but Waluguru traders prefer to opt out of supporting sick relatives as this is an open-ended commitment which can lead to bankruptcy. They also continuously experiment with wider partnership in business despite the ingrained belief that this will fail. There is much individualism amidst a teeming social life.

This paradox is also evident in their ambiguity towards political organization. The advantages of political influence are seen clearly, but their ideal is minimal regulatory activity in society and there is no professed interest in seeking political office. They are keen to legitimize markets, but also want illegal street sellers to be chased away. They welcome trade liberalization, but insist that business was better when government restricted trade.

Waluguru traders operate in a stochastic social universe. Not even the most successful traders will consider bankruptcy as a scandal; it can happen to anyone. The main determinants of economic success in this world view are chance and luck. This is not unreasonable in markets where, due to many entrants and imperfect information about supply, there is no regulation and no monopolization. Traders should not be foolish of course: they should not put too much faith in other people and should be aware of the temptations of pleasure (*starehe*) which is wasteful. But the notion that success in business depends upon skill hardly exists. Success is mainly seen as a temporary phenomenon. There is no ultimate protection against business failure and they are hardened to it. In the words of one informant: 'Asians go crazy when they fail in trade, but we take up the hoe again'.

Enduring success in business is seen as being achieved at the expense of others or as a result of illegality. This may be illustrated by the reasons given by various informants for the success of an exceptional Mluguru trader, Felix Msimbe, who managed to run a lorry between Dar es Salaam and Mgeta for a number of years.

One explanation claims that some valuable plots suitable for vegetable cultivation are the foundation of his enterprise. These plots were acquired in a court case won by his wife. The Catholic Mission divested itself of its land holdings in Mgeta after independence, dividing them among trusted workers who had often worked on this land. Felix initiated a court case on behalf of his wife claiming that the land belonged to his wife's matriclan before the mission appropriated it, and that this should therefore be returned to her and her relatives. He won the case. A second explanation maintains that his business success dates from the break up of the East African Community. His brother retired from the railways in the subsequent reorganization and got a large lump sum as a pension. This was appropriated by Felix and gave him the capital to start his business. The brother is now mentally ill. A third explanation claims that he does not actually own the lorry, but that it is owned by relatives in Dar es Salaam. They bought it illegally at a cheap price. Village governments in Tanzania can buy lorries communally on credit in local currency at controlled prices. It is, however, difficult to collect the down payment. Private traders will, if they can, provide this on condition that the lorry is immediately resold to them. Msimbe's lorry was said to have been acquired that way. Lastly, he was said to have made his money transporting poached ivory under vegetables in his lorry.

Towards the end of the research period, his business declined rapidly. His lorry was off the road and he could not raise the money for repairs. He used to be big in the vegetable trade between Mgeta and Dar es Salaam, but he had withdrawn from the market. His shop was gradually running down stocks. Two explanations were voiced for his decline. First, government was clamping down severely on poaching. He had received a warning through friends that people in the wildlife department had their eye on him. Therefore he no longer transported elephant tusks. Second, the lorry was old by then and he failed to get a replacement. He had, using the same ploy as previously, made a down payment for a new lorry. The bureaucrats in Dar es Salaam had, however, appropriated the money and threatened, if he protested, to make life difficult for him by starting proceedings against him for misappropriating a village lorry.

The truth of these rumours cannot be established and is here of secondary interest. These stories reflect a life world which structures to a large extent the reactions of traders. A rise in the world, in their view, cannot result from ordinary trading and an application of skill to business. It can only be explained by cheating ordinary people out of things which are rightfully theirs: land given to a trusted worker by the mission, a pension, or a lorry that belongs to the

village. Second, if people are as successful as Msimbe they are not safe because other people are not to be trusted. Illegality can result in big profits for some time, but the government can clamp down at any time. He has been cheated by the bureaucrats in Dar es Salaam. In such a world view any capital formation is brittle, because it always depends on trust in other people which cannot be relied upon.

Conclusion

The analysis presented in this article highlights the fallacy of the market as an abstract idea. Any market is created in a particular form through social behaviour. The perfect market does not exist outside the models of economists. Market forces do not create order: such an order is constructed.[22] Such a view may have practical implications: in policy thinking about development, the abstract idea of the market as opposed to the constructed one is generally embraced in the debate on structural adjustment.

Notes

1. See e.g. R.H. Bates, *Markets and States in Tropical Africa*, (University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1982), and J. Sender and S. Smith, *The Development of Capitalism in Africa*, (Methuen, London, 1986).

2. N. Long, *An Introduction to the Sociology of Rural Development*, (Tavistock, London, 1977).

3. D. Booth, 'Marxism and development sociology: interpreting the impasse', *World Development*, **13**, 7, (1985).

4. S.S. Berry, *Fathers Work for Their Sons. Accumulation, mobility and class formation in an extended Yoruba community*, (University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1985); J. MacGaffey, *Entrepreneurs and Parasites: The struggle for indigenous capitalism in Zaire*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1987).

5. C. Geertz, *Agricultural Involution: The process of ecological change in Indonesia*, (University of California Press, Santa Barbara, 1963); C. Geertz, *Peddlers and Princes: Social development and economic change in two Indonesian towns*, (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1963).

6. C. Geertz, 'Culture and social change: the Indonesian case', *Man*, **19**, 4, (1984).

7. This approach has been inspired by Giddens' structuration theory. See: I.J. Cohen, *Structuration Theory: Anthony Giddens and the constitution of social life*, (Macmillan, London, 1989).

8. For an analysis of social change in Mgeta see J.K. van Donge, 'Agricultural decline in Tanzania: the case of the Uluguru mountains', *African Affairs*, **91**, 362, (1992).

9. As a rule, about half of the marketeers at a particular place tend to be Waluguru. They do not organize themselves, however, on an ethnic basis, and they do not strive in their business contacts for exclusive relations with fellow Waluguru. H. Gordon, *Open Markets for Maize and Rice in Urban Tanzania: Current issues and evidence* (mimeo, Dar es Salaam, 1988), found in the grains trade that the Waluguru were the greatest ethnic group. They were dominant, but comprised only thirty-five per cent of the traders he studied.

10. This paper deals with male traders only. I do not think that this reflects a gender bias. There are female Waluguru traders, but they are extremely rare in the types of trade which I describe here. I have been led by the world of trade as revealed by my informants and this did not lead to females. I could have made special efforts to meet female traders. The ones of which I was aware traded mainly in beans or price controlled and often scarce commodities like sugar.

11. A concept like these stages of trade is related to the idea of spheres of trade. See F. Barth, 'Economic spheres in Darfur', in R. Firth (ed.), *Themes in Economic Anthropology*, (Tavistock Publications, London, 1967). These stages of trade are, however, presented here more as social constructions subject to change, while Barth presents his spheres of trade more as determining social and cultural rules.

12. G. Elwert, H.D. Evers and W. Wilkins, 'Die suche nach sicherheit: Kombinierte produktions formen in sogenannten informellen sektor', *Zeitschrift fur soziologie*, **12**, 4, (1983); L. Peattie, 'An idea in good currency and how it grew: the informal sector', *World Development*, **15**, 7, (1987).

13. K. Hart, 'Informal income opportunities and urban government in Ghana', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, **11**, 1, (1973).

14. Elwert *et al.*, *Kombinierte produktionsformen.*

15. In other words, the informal sector is also socially constructed by actors and is not a result of e.g. logics of world capitalism as argued by M.A. Bienefeld, 'The informal sector and peripheral capitalism: the case of Tanzania', *IDS bulletin*, **6**, 3 (1975); and C.O.N. Moser, 'Informal sector or petty commodity production: dualism or dependence in urban development?', *World Development*, **6**, 9/10 (1978).

16. Monetary amounts are mentioned in this paper for comparative purposes only. It may be strange that an article on economic life contains few figures. These are, however, of little value in the Tanzanian context. Rapid inflation and devaluation makes the value of money highly indeterminate. Incomes around the markets fluctuate widely and are often also illegal. It may be best to evaluate the sums mentioned in comparison to what an unskilled worker might earn in the research period: between one and four thousands shillings a month. The range is again wide here and the top of the range was seldom paid.

17. Credit is therefore no enduring bond of solidarity creating mutual dependence as in e.g. Javanese markets described in Geertz, *Peddlers and Princes*. Another notable difference between these two situations is the absence of haggling in Dar es Salaam while it is a cultural hallmark of Javanese markets.

18. C.O.N. Moser, 'The dual economy and marginality debate and the contribution of micro analysis: market sellers in Bogota', *Development and Change*, **8**, 4 (1977), argues that there specialization is a function of size of the enterprise. That is to some extent true among Waluguru marketeers in the sense that some small traders, selling directly to housewives only, will stock a variety of products used daily: limes, chilies, tomatoes, onions and spices. However, specialization is the rule, even in small enterprises. See, for example, the case of Willebord Peter mentioned above.

19. N. Long, 'Multiple enterprises in the central highlands of Peru' in S.M. Greenfeld *et al.* (eds.), *Entrepreneurs in Cultural Context*, (University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 1979).

20. For a description of such a Chagga enterprise see the case of Bwana Hela in D.O. Kerner, 'Land scarcity and rights of control in the development of commercial farming in Northeast Tanzania', in R.E. Downs and P. Reyna (eds.), *Land and Society in Contemporary Africa*, (University Press of New England, Hanover and London, 1988).

21. J. Iliffe, *The Emergence of African Capitalism*, (Macmillan, London, 1983) wrote on p.73: 'During the 1960s, critics of African businessmen invariably complained that entrepreneurs were incapable of delegating authority but instead ran one-man businesses which could not expand without collapsing in disorder'. P. Kennedy, *African Capitalism: The struggle for ascendancy*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1988), notes the same phenomenon, and argues on p.180 'to a considerable extent the difficulties faced by African proprietors in achieving successful firm expansion almost certainly reflect the wider problems of economic and class development in the economy as a whole and are not merely the result of personal whim or inappropriate cultural orientations'. I distance myself from the value judgments implied in the last words, but I think he overlooks the fact that economic and class development are shaped by actors through practice.

22. See also B. Crow, 'Plain tales from the rice trade, indications of vertical integration in food grain markets in Bangladesh', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, **16**, 2 (1989).

CHAPTER 5

THE ARBITRARY STATE IN THE ULUGURU MOUNTAINS: LEGAL ARENAS AND LAND DISPUTES IN TANZANIA*

When Julius Nyerere visited Mgeta in the Uluguru mountains while campaigning in 1987 for the chairmanship of what was then Tanzania's only party, *Chama cha Mapinduzi* (C.C.M.), he was confronted with a question relating to a long-running land dispute. Given that a national leader can expect to make little political capital from getting embroiled in such a controversy, Nyerere not surprisingly emphasised that he could not interfere with the work of the local primary court. It is doubtful, however, whether those present considered this a satisfactory reply as, in their experience, the administration of law - especially in relation to land - is highly problematic. Indeed, the magistrate handling this very case was removed by popular request because of alleged corruption soon after stating confidently: 'After the hospital, we provide the most popular government service'. The demand for legal services is great in Mgeta, as elsewhere in the country, but at the same time there is little or no trust in the legal institutions.

The problem has been recognised by the political authorities. After a massive people's drive for justice, known as *Sungusungu or Wasalama*, had swept the courts aside in areas where cattle thefts were a major problem in the early 1980s,[1] the Government co-opted the movement instead of asserting unequivocally the state's monopoly on justice. In fact, the Minister of Legal Affairs declared openly in 1989 that Tanzanians had lost confidence in their courts.[2]

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The context

This article describes the interaction between citizens and the state legal system in a range of mountains to the south of Morogoro (about 200 kilometres inland from Dar es Salaam) where the higher rainfall allows for more intensive agriculture than in the surrounding plains, and where higher population densities and declining soil fertility have resulted in a massive migration to the cities.[3] Although the consequent household pressures on often very fragmented land easily gives rise to litigation, the fact that people become involved in long-running and costly arguments about the ownership of holdings which can be tiny should not be exaggerated, because cultivation goes on and not every field is directly in dispute. In almost everybody's life, however, a land case is a potential eventuality which not only threatens a part of his/her livelihood but is above all costly in time and money.

The main point made in this study is that although people invest in litigation the state courts do not provide the required services in return. They frequently use procedural devices to procrastinate, and if they do make decisions, then they avoid as much as possible the formulation of general principles which could be of great help in similar circumstances in the future. This analysis of land conflicts before the courts in Mgeta reveals a form of interaction between citizens and government in Tanzania which is different from that usually assumed. The common perspective has been neatly summarised by Frank Ellis:

The key to understanding the country's political economy lies in a process of class polarisation between bureaucrats and peasants, in which the maintenance and expansion of the former was contingent on the impoverishment of the latter.[4]

Such antagonistic interests are certainly to be found in the empirical material presented here. Legal battles are costly, and state officials are said to enrich themselves, as a matter of course, through informal payments. The end result is that the resources of the litigants are usually depleted without a definitive outcome that can serve particular local needs. However, the puzzling aspect is that since court cases are initiated from below, the participants enter of their own volition an arena where they are likely to be severely disadvantaged.

The exploitative relationships to be found in rural areas have been portrayed in cultural terms as between an irrational bureaucracy and in a rational peasantry, in contrast to the image of a modernising state trying to change traditional

practices.[5] Several studies in Tanzania have documented how various legal norms vie for predominance in local societies where the authority of the state has not been established. In Ismani in the early 1970s, courts interpreted land law on the premise of a collective interest in land, a concept which fitted the socialist ideology of the time. That did not, however, reflect the actual legal situation, because people had only recently settled in the area and still farmed maize as individually-owned enterprises.[6] The dispersed patriclans appeared to be the main source of law in Kilimanjaro despite the presence of courts, state, and party representing different legal principles.'[7]

Such conclusions, however, assume rationally ordered values which cannot be found in this case-study. Substantive issues of law hardly play a role in court judgements, and these are then not framed as a rejection of local in favour of state law, or vice versa. The same court can arrive at opposing decisions on the basis of the same evidence, as also can different courts in appeal, not least because the state legal arena is an arbitrary universe. Neither can one interpret these conflicts as simple manifestations of an on-going struggle between classes. It is true that dominant groups use governmental institutions to enrich themselves, and field-work data gathered during 1968 in Rungwe District revealed that as many as 48 of the incumbents of the 78 'official roles' identified in three villages came from the richest 20 per cent of the rural population. Given the ' fairly widespread feelings of frustration as a result of the growing scarcity of land', the legal arena provided opportunities for confrontation as a result of the 'processes of social levelling' being pursued by small farmers.[8]

But I could not discern striking differences in Mgeta between the court assessors and the rest of the villages, mainly because there was little or no concentration of land ownership. It always helps, of course, if people have money when involved in litigation, but court cases do not appear to be part of a process of accumulation. If members of the judiciary accept- as is widely said - informal payments to come to certain binding decisions and guiding principles, then rich people might rationally pay for such services. The evidence shows, however, that this was not the case in Mgeta. Indeed, government is in this respect not a dependable but an arbitrary force in society, whether one attempts to control it with money or not. The parties in dispute who turn to the courts are usually locked in a self-defeating game that often results in a depletion of their resources, in levelling and entropy instead of accumulation. The courts refrain as much as possible from playing an active role with regard to the substantive issues of law involved. Since no neat pattern of order could be found in land

cases in Mgeta between identifiable complexes of norms, they appear to be irrelevant in our understanding of what happens in such disputes.

The legal arena

It has to be borne in mind that disputes need not necessarily be brought to the primary court, and that there are powerful reasons to avoid doing so. People sometimes turn first to the leader of the local party cell (*balozi*) in their small neighbourhoods and/or to the reconciliation council (*baraza la usalahishi*) that exists in most villages, and perhaps thereafter to the party/government-appointed secretary of the ward (*katibu kata*). The primary court is only to be found at the next administrative level, the *tarafa* or division, and it is here that the magistrate, who has had some basic training in law, hears cases with two lay assessors (who have to advise on the local situation). Judgements are the outcome of either unanimous or majority decisions. Although none of the magistrates whom I observed at work in Mgeta came from the area, all claimed to be familiar with the Luguru legal framework.

This study covers the five-year period 1985 to 1989, with the main research being undertaken during 1987-8 when all cases before Mgeta primary court were documented. Later a systematic effort was made to collect information about the work of the *baraza la usalahishi*, where the issues were not substantially different from those dealt with in the primary court. Often there is pressure on litigants to attempt to settle their disputes informally, and cases may be relegated to a lower authority if the court takes the view that those concerned have not made enough efforts to sort out matters among themselves.

Despite all the possibilities for arbitration outside the state legal system, many disputes are brought to the primary court. Although some people obviously enjoy litigation, for most the opening of a case can be one of the great misfortunes to befall a person in life. It usually takes a whole day (most of which may be spent waiting) just to appear in court, including the time spent walking there and back. Of the 89 cases started and completed at Mgeta primary court in a period of just over one year (from 12 May 1987 to 28 June 1988), only 45 (5O per cent) were completed within two months, 17 (19 per cent) took up to three months, while 22 (25 per cent) took up to six months. As many as 39 (44 per cent) required more than four appearances- the minimum number for a normal completed case.

These numbers do not include the extreme cases which ran longer than a year, and underestimate therefore the risk of heavy expenditure. Moreover, disputes seldom involve only the litigants themselves, and apart from the efforts needed to persuade reluctant witnesses to come forward, they generally expect to be compensated for the time lost and the costs that they have incurred. Although the court fines and/or fees are not particularly high, many people have to collect contributions (*mchango*) from friends and relatives, especially if any ' informal 'payments have been made.

Opening a court case means entering an uncertain social universe. Magistrates and judges have great discretionary powers, and they can use these to influence the course of justice, notably by procrastinating procedures and/or prolonging cases. The latter can be adjourned for a great variety of reasons, including sickness, the urgent harvesting of crops, and the sudden 'need' to travel. Magistrates can be excessively tolerant of delaying tactics on the part of one or more of the parties involved - for example, witnesses may appear and refuse to say anything, and yet be given another chance to appear in court later. Sometimes magistrates are downright insolent: one invariably ordered litigants to arrive two hours earlier than himself, and would then spend a lot of time with his clerks loudly discussing such matters as the exact location of a particular shop in Dar es Salaam or the itching that can result from the use of chloroquine. This 'social interlude' would be interrupted intermittently by calling, without any publicly stated reason, some of the waiting people into his office, one at a time, thereby increasing the anxiety of others. Indeed, magistrates may at their discretion hear cases in the so-called 'chamber court'-i.e. in their office without the general public.

It is hard to generalise about the behaviour of government-appointed staff in the legal arena. Of the three primary court magistrates observed during 1985-9, one was removed for alleged gross corruption after popular protest, while another was highly praised for her integrity. However, even if there is reason to trust a particular magistrate, the risk of falling to the mercy of arbitrary powers remains. Although losing parties may appeal to higher courts, the unpredictability persists. It is therefore surprising that people still have recourse to the state legal system and do not solve matters among themselves through other institutions.

This is especially striking in view of a cultural taboo on open conflict. People profess insistently and repeatedly their dislike of quarrels (*hatutaki ugomvi*), and when any erupts in court this is usually presented as a complete surprise: a

sudden outburst of irrational behaviour by the other party. Villagers seldom admit to a dispute until it is openly declared, and are usually very reluctant to talk about any others in the past. Magistrates also try as much as possible to avoid the substance of a conflict by sticking closely to the procedural rule that only the facts material to a case are relevant, and therefore pay little or no attention to motives and circumstances.[9] They will consider, for example, whether one party was striking the other and whether damage was inflicted, but will definitely not consider the reason for the quarrel. Alcohol consumption is the only associated fact which usually gets attentions, because conflicts frequently erupt at beer-drinking parties. This, of course, deflects attention from underlying causes.

If people have frequent recourse to litigation despite such cultural values, the strains in society must be so great that they cannot be contained. This is apparent from the breakdown of the 142 cases brought before Mgeta primary court during a period of 13 months, as shown in Table 1. The two most prominent charges- assault and bodily harm (34) and land disputes (32) - accounted for nearly half of the total. It is also striking that wrongs against people (54) are so much more prominent than wrongs against property (24) other than land (32). The ideal of public harmony in Mgeta was frequently broken by quarrels about land that could even sometimes break out publicly on the road, and they were said to be the main reason for violence. However, in only two cases could I make a direct connection between 'land disputes' and 'assault and bodily harm' because circumstantial evidence was hardly ever presented in court. It should be noted that since people are often involved in such illegal activities as black marketeering, smoking marijuana, and gambling, it is not difficult to bring enemies to court on charges which have little to do with the actual conflict at stake.[10]

Many land disputes have major consequences. Apart from posing direct threats to the livelihood of those concerned, they are likely to involve many more court appearances than other cases, and can take an extraordinarily long time to resolve. Whereas 69 per cent of all cases brought to Mgeta primary court during 1987-8 were completed within three months, that was the outcome in only 13 per cent of the 31 land cases for which files were obtainable during 1986-9 (and the median number of appearances was as high as eight), while 19 ended in an appeal. At the district magistrate's court in Morogoro, I found evidence of 23 appeals from Mgeta, 22 of which referred to land.

Table 1 : Total number of cases brought before Mgeta Primary Court from 12 May 1987 to 28 June 1988, by charges

	Cases			
Nature of Charges	No.	%	No.	%
Wrongs against people:				
Assault and bodily harm	34	24		
Use of bad language	19	13		
Libel	1	1		
			54	38
Land disputes			32	23
Other wrongs against property:				
Theft and burglary	15	10		
Damage to property/disorderly behaviour	6	4		
Debt	1	1		
Arson	1	1		
Damage to crops	1	1		
			24	17
Cases concerning family law:				
Divorce	2	1		
Inheritance	3	2		
Child Support	1	1		
			6	4
Crimes against government:				
Tax default	11	8		
Contempt of court	6	4		
Forestry	3	2		
School attendance	3	2		
Gambling and marijuana/public health	3	2		
			26	18
Total			142	100

The following series of seven connected disputes reveals the risks and uncertainties encountered when those about land enter the state legal arena. Although typical in some respects of other cases, the litigants spent an exceptional amount of time, effort, and money in circumstances that illustrate a wide array of situations that can occur.

Disputes about the land left by Emmanuel Benda

The focus of attention here is on the interaction between the state legal system and the peasantry in Mgeta. Given that the substantive issues of law at stake is of secondary interest, it has nevertheless to be briefly explained in order to make clear the reasons for the conflict. Roland Young and Henry Fosbrooke elaborately described Luguru land tenure in 1960,[11] but although people claim that the outline of rules is still adhered to, there is no doubt that actual life is often at variance with their ideological construct.[12]

Any Mluguru when asked about tenure will answer: '*Sisi tunafuata mama*' ('We follow the mother'). Land is inherited in the female line and owned by a corporate entity (*ukoo*), and since clans are exogamous an individual's affiliation derives from his/her mother. The ownership of land (unless sold) is inalienable from clans, ideally inherited in the female line, although the 'ideology' allows a son to inherit land from his mother. The identity of the land and of the person who works it remains the same in this instance, because the son inherits his clan identity from his mother. The son's children may also inherit this land from their father, despite the fact that their clan identity comes from their mother. Under certain circumstances, the ' ideology ' thus enables people to farm land even though they have a different clan identity from the land. When these grandchildren die, however, the land is supposed to revert to the clan from which it originated, and cannot be passed on to their children.

Conflicts often arise between representatives of the clan which the land originally belonged and direct descendants who inherited it through their father and/or grandfather. Although this was the main controversy in the following seven cases, it should be noted that not all the disputes can be merely reduced to this pattern.

I. *Criminal Case 19/86; Lussiano Gabriel versus Kassian Emmanuel, Brigitta Emmanuel, Albertina Emmanuel, Eva Raphael and Anyes Raphael*

Some land owned by Emmanuel Benda had been inherited by his son, Kassian Emmanuel, who was working there accompanied by his sisters, Brigitta and Albertina, and by two daughters of a sister of the late Benda. It was not disputed that the latter had inherited this land from his mother, who belonged to the Wachuma clan. Since Kassian had, logically, a different clan identity (his mother's) from his father's he was not farming the Uchuma land as a Mchuma. Lussiano Gabriel claimed the disputed land in early 1986 on behalf of the

Wachuma.

2. *Criminal Case 26/86: Lussiano Gabriel versus Anyes Raphael*

The accused defended her ownership of other land being claimed by Lussiano Gabriel on behalf of the Wachuma on the grounds that Emmanuel Benda had given this to his sister, and that Anyes Raphael, her daughter, had farmed (and paid money to Benda for) the plot after her mother's death.

3. *Criminal Case 34/86: Lussiano Gabriel versus Kassian Emmanuel, Brigitta Emmanuel, Richard Lini, and Sabele Maloko*

The accused likewise defended their ownership of yet another piece of land on grounds which made clan affiliation irrelevant. They claimed that the disputed plot had been cleared by Emmanuel Benda after it had been allocated to him by a European forestry officer in colonial times.

4. *Criminal Case 21/87: Albertina Emmanuel versus Angelia Gabriel*

In April 1987 the parties involved in Criminal Case 19/86 had been summoned to Mgeta primary court at eight o'clock one morning, and when by midday Lussiano Gabriel (and his witnesses) had not yet appeared, Albertina Emmanuel decided to open a case against one of his sisters, Angelia, who was accused of forced entry and destruction of property.

To sum up: Mgeta primary court only reached decisions in these four criminal cases in August 1987 (just before the magistrate was transferred), one-and-a-half years after the first had been opened. The issue of *Criminal Case 19/86* had been quite simple: did the disputed plot belong to the *Wachuma* clan from which it had originated or to the children of the late Benda? Nevertheless, it took a total of 24 appearances from early 1986 for the court to decide (without giving, any specific reasons) that Lussiano Gabriel, as representative of the clan, was in the right.

As regards *Criminal Cases 26/86 and 34/86*, the magistrate similarly found in favour of Lussiano Gabriel. As for *Criminal Case 21/87*, given that the primary court had been understandably reluctant to accept yet another case about any of the plots of the late Benda, the magistrate decided to throw this out on the grounds that the same principles were involved as in *Criminal Case 19/86*.

The children of Emmanuel Benda and Anyes Raphael then appealed to the district magistrate in Morogoro against the decisions of the primary court in *Criminal Cases 19/86, 26/86,* and *34/86*. The ensuing judgments in *Criminal Appeals 61/87, 84/87,* and *85/87* went against Lussiano Gabriel, since the district magistrate treated all three conflicts as between representatives of the matrilineal clan claiming the land and the direct descendants of the deceased. For example, he wrote in *Criminal Appeal 84/87*:

> No evidence brought by the respondent [Lussiano Gabriel] showed that the *shamba* was clan land and that the respondent was appointed by the clan elders to possess the *shamba* [In fact] . . . it is clear that the *shamba* in dispute belongs to the appellant and his sisters.

The district magistrate, however, ordered a retrial of Mgeta primary court on the grounds that the case should not have been accepted there as a criminal case because it concerned disputed property, and that rights of ownership could only be established if a civil case was opened.

5. *Criminal Case 47/87: Kassian Emmanuel versus Eva Gabriel, Sebastian Marisella, and Nzeni Epiphanus*

Meanwhile Kassian Emmanuel had in July 1987 charged Lussiano Gabriel's sister, her husband, and their son with contempt of court for working on one of the late Benda's plots which ought to have been closed for cultivation while still under dispute before the courts (another cost to litigants resulting from a land case). Judgement was not reached until November, when the new primary court magistrate found in favour of Kassian.

After having gone to Morogoro in early 1987 to complain about the procrastination of Mgeta primary court in dealing with the criminal cases, Kassian was advised by the district magistrate to dispute the land claimed by Lussiano Gabriel. Hence:

6. *Civil Case 2/87: Kassian Emmanuel versus Lussiano Gabriel*

After this civil case had been opened at Mgeta primary court it was adjourned immediately until a decision could be reached in all the other cases concerning the plots left by the late Benda. So Kassian Emmanuel went again to the district magistrate in Morogoro and got a letter ordering the primary court no longer to delay hearing this case. However, despite being scheduled three times, such

a hearing did not materialise: first of all, the complainant was ill; then the accused needed time to harvest his peas; and finally the magistrate at Mgeta had received news of his transfer.

The new magistrate started hearing this case in November 1987, but although the hearings were completed the following month, judgement was postponed until May 1988.

7. *Civil Case 9/87: Lussiano Gabriel versus Brigitta Emmanuel*

This was opened in December 1987 by Lussiano Gabriel who disputed all the *shambas* in the estate of the late Benda. It took another five months and six court appearances to finalise the hearings in this case just before the sudden retirement of the recently appointed magistrate in May 1988.

Judgements in *Civil Cases 2/87* and *9/87* were identical and made on the same day in favour of Lussiano Gabriel. However, despite the decision that the land belonged to the clan of Kassian Emmanuel's father, the children of Benda were allowed under Luguru custom to farm the land until their death, when it would have to be returned to the clan of origin, that of their father's mother.

At this stage, Benda's children could have given up their legal struggles and just continued to farm the land, but they decided to appeal to the district magistrate in Morogoro. They had won the case of contempt of court and had expected that the new primary court magistrate would also have ruled in their favour in the two civil cases. He thereafter told Kassian in confidence that he had been overruled by his assessors, and advised Benda's children to appeal, not least because the district magistrate had previously given a strong lead in their favour.

Indeed, the district magistrate in Morogoro ruled again in their favour in *Civil Appeals 19/88* and *2/88*, and used the same argument as in *Criminal Appeal 84/87*. There was no reason to believe that Lussiano Gabriel was actually a clan representative: he only spoke for himself and was 'a mere trespasser'.

High Court Appeals 48/88 and 49/88

After Lussiano Gabriel had appealed to the High Court in respect of the outcome of *Civil Cases 2/87* and *9/87*, the parties were called to Dar es Salaam in March 1989. The hearings were very short and speedy judgements were

promised. Two months later, however, the High Court judge complained that he had the file for only one of the two cases that concerned the same issue, and asked the parties to make a new appointment with the clerk. This did not materialise because the documents were then apparently 'lost' as a result of administrative misunderstandings. It was said that the district magistrate in Morogoro was unaware that *Civil Case 2/87* had been referred back to him, and that he had never received the file. As for *Civil Case 26/86*, it was rumoured that this was to open again before the primary court magistrate in Mgeta, although he was under the impression that judgement was still being awaited in the High Court.

Three-and-a-half years after the first of so many other cases had opened concerning the land left by the late Emmanuel Benda, the final answer in this quest for justice was: '*wamevuruka* file', meaning 'they have tampered with the file'. The expression was used regularly, not least because the anonymous ' they' meant that the culprits were unspecified.

The administration of justice

After a magistrate with a good reputation had been appointed to Mgeta, I felt that the primary court would be able to settle the local land disputes. But the district magistrate in Morogoro claimed that villagers would continue, as always in the past, to become involved in bitter disputes about tiny plots, and vehemently dismissed my prognosis that the situation in Mgeta would soon be clarified. Be that as it may, it is quite clear that conflicts about land were being exacerbated rather than regulated by the way in which the courts worked in Tanzania.

One reason is that questions of procedure are allowed to overtake matters of substance. For example, the primary court magistrate refused to accept land disputes as civil cases until they had been tried first as criminal cases of forced entry and damage to property. People were therefore forced to sue for a decision which, according to the primary court magistrate himself, had no binding legal power. Since the district magistrate rightly condemned his practice it is difficult to understand why he ordered a retrial as a civil case after giving a clear opinion as to the ownership of the land and not qualifying this by mentioning any lack of factual evidence. Furthermore, the distinction between compensation due to persons (civil cases) and to the community as a whole (criminal cases) is artificial at the level of the primary court as many

judgements imply both. There is certainly no differentiation in local legal consciousness between civil and criminal cases since fines paid to the state are seen by litigants merely as extra court fees.

Secondly, the procrastination in administering justice cannot be explained as being necessary for the fair and due process of law. The evidence needed to give judgement in *Civil Case 2/87* was considered to be complete in December 1987 and since this dealt with similar issues to *Civil Case 9/87* there was no need to wait until the hearing of the latter had been completed. Similarly, there appears to be no good reason why the High Court judge adjourned two appeals because he had the file on only one. It was not necessary to delay judgement in the dispute for which he had the facts.

Although court cases are often time-consuming and deeply influenced by procedures in almost every country, litigants are generally ready to face such problems in the expectation that they will get what might be described as 'value for money'. The striking and baffling aspect of the behaviour of the magistrates in this Tanzanian case-study is that they used so many devices to avoid coming to a decision at all. There is a qualitative difference between the situation where litigants spend money in the expectation of a favourable outcome, and where they have no reasonable hope of such an outcome.

The courts tended to avoid not only making judgements but also stating legal principles. Rules of law and legal precedents hardly played a role in the decisions made. The lower courts stuck closely to individual cases when announcing their few rulings, and any reasons mentioned were related to the evidence that had been presented. For example, although primary court magistrates stated unequivocally that in matters of inheritance a father's children have law on their side in conflicts with their father's matrilineal relatives, the source of this opinion was never mentioned, and did not prevent the same magistrates from judging in favour of matrilineal relatives.

The lower courts almost inevitably leave the development of legal principles to those higher authorities who set precedents for them. The numerous appeals to the High Court in Tanzania are made by those who understandably seek clarification of the major issues involved in a variety of disputes. The judges are graduates in law and can be assumed to be well versed in the application of legal principles and the working of precedents. They have, however, consistently avoided giving an opinion on the major issues in most of the cases where the ownership of land left by a father to his children is challenged by the

father's or grandfather's matrilineal relatives.

In a famous case, well known in Mgeta, namely *High Court Appeal 17/77: Nassoro Uhadi versus Mussa Kulunge*, the children of the father won against their grandfather's maternal relatives. The judgement mentioned that 'one of the parties' objected to 'a shift in ownership to a different clan and that this could be contrary to Luguru customary law' and then ignored the issue. By awarding the plot to the children of the father on the grounds of length of possession the judge avoided the whole question of inheritance. More recently, in *High Court Appeal 9/87: Fortunata Petri versus Frans Felix*, the judge wrote: 'In the memorandum of appeal the appellant complains about a *shamba*' of which 'she wants a portion', and then went on to claim 'that was not the subject matter of the application before the primary court'. The reasons for this and other land disputes, the substantive issues of inheritance, are studiously ignored as judgements meander into deliberations on the differences between leasing, pawning, and giving, or under what conditions long ownership confers property rights.

One possible reason why litigants continue to engage in long lawsuits may be a desire to outspend the other party. Money is used as a weapon with which to fight for a favourable decision in virtually all legal systems, and certainly it was normal for 'informal' payments to be made in court cases in Mgeta. People talked in general terms about corruption but were not willing to mention specifically and precisely what had been paid to whom. As explained by informants: 'such matters are dealt with in the middle of the night'. Corruption also helps to explain the extreme procrastination that characterises so many courts. The longer cases last, and the longer litigants are in suspense as to the outcome, the more money can be extracted from them. Indeed, *if* this is the goal there are cash advantages from maximising insecurity by avoiding decisions which have a binding character.

Corruption is not always interpreted by litigants as necessarily contradictory to fair justice. It was said of one of the magistrates in Mgeta that 'She took money from the side which was going to win the case and not from both sides' - in other words that she was still capable of dispensing justice. But if people pay officials who consistently avoid providing what is expected, then the logic of the market place, where everything has its price, breaks down. Grumbles about the judicial system were seldom stated in the form of complaints about unfavourable decisions. The usual expression was: '*hatupati haki*', 'we do not get justice'.

The state legal system avoided creating principles which could contribute to more security with respect to land tenure in Mgeta. Indeed, it acted in some ways as a parasite by extracting resources from the local society and giving virtually nothing in return. The analogy to services provided to the highest bidder in a quasi market situation does not, therefore, make sense. Neither are litigants the victims in a welldefined and inescapable mechanism of exploitation, because the initiatives for court cases are taken by the parties concerned, and they know what to expect.

Conclusions

It is not surprising that disputes about ownership erupt when and where there is a growing scarcity of land. Conflicts between interests and competing normative systems in the state legal arena take place in what has been described as an ' interface situation' - namely, as defined by Norman Long, 'A critical point of intersection or linkage between different social systems, fields or levels of social order where structural discontinuities, based upon differences of normative value and social interest, are likely to be found'.[13] The impartial application of impersonal rules belongs, in such a perspective, to the realm of the ideal because rules are made, interpreted, bent, or ignored in a continuous struggle between various interests in society, as has been particularly well documented in Central Africa.[14]

The significance of the cases described in Mgeta lies in the non-zero sum nature of the conflicts and the role of the courts. Since they preferred above all to avoid making decisions it is not possible to discern a clear cleavage between legal systems represented by the state (which might support dominant local interests) and forces in the local community.[15] The fact that the primary court came down consistently in favour of one side in the Emmanuel Benda dispute and the district magistrate of the other, shows that we cannot speak of the state being either always against the litigants or consistently in league with any set of local interests. The judgements all accepted the existence of one legal system and did not mention the possible confrontation of local and state law.

Conflicts as described here do not fit into the developmental vision whereby social change entails a struggle between the old and the new framed by a differentiation of new interests. The parties locked in land disputes cannot be seen as being, for example, engaged in a process of capital accumulation - in fact, the expected outcome is a depletion of resources without results. If the

parties had taken their conflicts out of the state legal arena and arranged some sort of compromise among themselves, they would have conserved their assets. The litigants can be compared to two competitors who ruin each other by cutting prices in a bitter fight, whereas an agreement to share the market between them would give both a comfortable existence. The consumers of their products are, in the short run, the beneficiaries of this situation, as are the officials in the judicial system if they extract resources from litigants. The process is, however, self-destructive to the parties locked in dispute.

Conflicts are to be found in all social orders and do not necessarily pose a threat to the community. Enmity which is regulated can even be a binding force as, for example, in industrial relations. The Marxist doctrine of the autonomy of the state sees legal conflict as contributing to the integration of society: the legal system distances itself from struggles in order to protect the capitalist structure of production against self-defeating conflicts.[16] The state, however, has not played such a role in Mgeta. Far from protecting the continuity of property relations by regulating conflict, the state has threatened property by creating legal insecurity.

Although tempting to see this as unique to a specific place at a particular time, the destructive potential of unregulated conflict ought more appropriately to be regarded as an essential aspect of the human condition. The sociology of George Simmel takes conflict, and the regulation thereof, as a central theme,[17] and his insights are illuminating in elucidating land disputes in Mgeta. The value of his perspective is that he sees conflict as neither necessarily a binding force in society nor leading to change. Conflict can become an end in itself when the reason is no longer the disputed object but the mere fact that someone else possesses it. The issues at stake may become completely overshadowed by a perceived threat to the very existence and identity of one of the parties.

In such cases, jealousy is the overriding social force, and it then becomes difficult to establish cause and effect in long-running disputes. Jealous parties tend to seek legitimisations for their claims and in the process may displace the issues at stake. The frequent court cases as documented in Mgeta may be compared to the endless demands by a jealous sexual partner, which Simmel mentions, for declaration of love and preference over a rival. It is then a logical step to turn to a third person who may try to set the other two against each other by seemingly distributing favours unequally at various moments. The state can control the disruptive force of jealousy through the legal system but often fails to do so.

The material presented here has important policy implications given a persistent belief in the efficacy of legal reform as a tool of social engineering. The introduction of individual land tenure was recommended not only in 1982 by a high-powered commission in Tanzania,[18] but also in the later appraisal of the agricultural sector undertaken by Philip Raikes, who came to the conclusion that this was the main policy instrument to boost output in the rural areas,[19] and an agronomic survey in the Mgeta division also recommended individual holdings as the solution to the problems of land tenure.[20]

But have direct links been established between such legal reforms and fundamental changes in economic behaviour? According to Richard Barrows and Michael Roth, 'those making policy for African agriculture should not be misled by the theoretically derived promise that registration will unleash a torrent of investment in agriculture'.[21] Although the introduction of individual land tenure has been government policy for a considerable length of time in Kenya, it has not led to the expected results. In fact, there does not appear to be a linear causal relationship between changes/improvements in agricultural management and legal reform, because the outcome of the latter is to a large extent shaped by the interaction of forces within local societies. The replacement of one legal system by another does not automatically lead to the consequences intended by the policymakers.[22]

The working of the courts is crucial if legal reforms have to be implemented in controversial situations. One cannot assume as a matter of course that the legal arenas of the state are as reliable and effective as they should be in the hands of the law-makers. The 'problems faced in reality are often different from those perceived in pleas for legal reforms. The salient issues are not in the nature of the land law applied, because courts could develop that through jurisprudence, but in the adminstration of justice.

Notes

1. Ray Abrahams, 'Sungusungu: village vigilante groups in Tanzania', in *African Affairs* (London), 86, 343, April 1987, pp. 179-96.

2. *Daily News* (Dar es Salaam), 17 August 1989.

3. Jan Kees van Donge, 'Agricultural Decline in Tanzania: the case of the Uluguru mountains', in *African Affairs* 91, 362, January 1992, 73-94.

4. Frank Ellis, ' Agricultural Marketing and Peasant-State Transfers in Tanzania', in *Journal of Peasant Studies* (London), 10, 4, July 1983, p. 219.

5. Peter Gibbon, 'Review of Andrew Coulson, *Tanzania: a political economy*', in ibid. 11, 1, October 1983, pp. 122-7.

6. Rayah Feldman, 'Custom and Capitalism: changes in the basis of land tenure in Ismani Tanzania', in *Journal of Development Studies* (London), 10, 3-4, April-July 1974, pp. 305-20.

7. Sally Falk Moore, *Social Facts and Fabrications: 'customary' law on Kilimanjaro, 1880-1980* (Cambridge, 1986).

8. P.M. van Hekken and H.U.E. Thoden van Velzen, *Land Scarcity and Rural Inequality in Tanzania: some case studies from Rungwe district* (The Hague, 1972), chs. 8-9.

9. See Roland Young and Henry Fosbrooke, *Land and Politics Among the Luguru of Tanganyika* (London, 1960), for some court cases in an appendix that reveal an anxiety at that time to avoid the idea of open conflict. For example, p. 196: 'I sue Kilingile bin Fundi in that he has taken my piece of land which is at Chingho whereas he has his own and I have mine.' In other words, a case is being brought before the court stating explicitly that there should be no reason for a case!

   In a personal communication, dated 22.06.1991, P.C. Duff, who as a colonial officer adjudicated land cases in the area before independence, also alludes to the difficulty of getting issues of conflict out into the open. He mentions 'the buzz of approval from the audience 'when things were correctly stated, and 'Of course, there are no secrets in an African village, and, whatever the virulence of claims and counter claims, the right answer is known, although not always publicly stated'.

10. Cf. F.L. Dubow, 'Justice for the People: law and politics in the lower courts of Tanzania', PhD. dissertation, University of California 1973, p. 158: 'In 1969 in Mgeta the primary court magistrate stopped hearing land disputes, because he was under the impression that [they] should go to a land disputes reconciliation board rather than to the primary court. Within a short time, the number of cases of crop theft dramatically rose in his court. When the factual situation in these cases is examined it is clear that these were really land disputes'.

11. Young and Fosbrooke, op. cit. chs. 3-4.

12. See Jan Kees van Donge, 'Legal Insecurity and Land Conflict in Mgeta, Uluguru Mountains, Tanzania ', in *Africa*: London), 63, 2, 1 993, pp. 18.

13. Norman Long, 'Introduction: the raison d'être for studying rural development interface', in Long (ed.), *Encounters at the Interface* (Wageningen, 1989), pp. 1-2.

14. See Martin Chanock, *Law, Custom and Social Order: the colonial experience in Malawi and Zambia* (Cambridge, 1985); Angela Cheater, 'Fighting Over Property', in *Africa* (London), 57, 2, 1987, pp. 188-206; Elizabeth Colson, 'From Chief's Court to Local Court: the evolution of local courts in Southern Zambia', in H.J. Aranoff (ed.), *Feedom and Constraint: a memorial tribute to Max Cluckman* (Assen, 1967), pp. 15-29 and Fiona Mackenzie, 'Gender and Land Rights in Murang'a District, Kenya', in *Journal of Peasant Studies* (London), 17, 4, 1990, pp. 609-43.

15. According to Franz von Benda-Beckmann et al., 'Interfaces and Janus-Faces: a critical appraisal of the interface approach in development sociology from a socio legal perspective', in Long (ed.), op. cit. pp. 205-21, legal pluralism does not automatically imply a clash between a local system legitimised by custom and that backed by the state.

16. See Nicos Poulantzas, *Political Power and Social Classes* (London, 1973).

17. K.H. Wolff (ed.), *The Sociology of Georg Simmel* (New York, 1950).

18. United Republic of Tanzania, Ministry of Agriculture, *The Tanzanian Agricultural Policy* (Dar es Salaam, 1982). The Government now merely proposes the collective registration of land held by villages and to data this option has not been taken up.

19. Phil Raikes, 'Eating the Carrot and Wielding the Stick: the agricultural sector in Tanzania', in Jannik Boesen, Kjell. Havnevik, Juhani Koponen, and Rie Odgaard (eds.), *Tanzania: crises and struggle for survival* (Uppsala, 1986), pp. 105-41.

20. J.L. Paul, 'Farming Systems in Upper Mgeta', Sokoine University of Agriculture, Morogoro, 1988.

21. Richard Barrows and Michael Roth, 'Land Tenure and Investment in African Agriculture; theory and evidence', in *the Journal of Modern African Studies* (Cambridge), 28, 2, June 1990, p. 297.

22. Fiona Mackenzie, 'Land and Territory in Murang'a', in *Africa*, 59, 1, 1989, pp. 91-110 and Angelique Haugerud, 'Land Tenure and Agrarian Change', in ibid. 59, 1, 1989, pp. 61-91.

CHAPTER 6

LEGAL INSECURITY AND LAND CONFLICTS IN MGETA, ULUGURU MOUNTAINS TANZANIA*

It is not surprising that land disputes erupt if land becomes scarce, as is the case in the Mgeta division in the Uluguru mountains, Morogoro rural district, Tanzania. The Uluguru mountains rise up steeply behind the town of Morogoro, about two hundred kilometres inland from Dar es Salaam, the main city in the country. Pressure of population on land, made more severe by erosion and land exhaustion, is a main feature of life. Agriculture is, increasingly, a reserve activity and few people can make a living in the area without being dependent upon remittances from outside (van Donge, 1992). Despite the decreasing economic importance of agriculture, in the words of the district magistrate of Morogoro: 'People in Mgeta always have quarrelled and always will quarrel endlessly about tiny pieces of land of little value'. The idea of a 'reasonable' Luguru land litigant, analogous to Gluckman's description of the Lozi litigant (Gluckman, 1954), is absent in this perception as conflict is seen as being propelled without reason. People in Mgeta consider a land dispute to be one of the great tragedies that can befall them. Land disputes entail great costs and effort, yet people in Mgeta become deeply involved in such cases. Conflicts can be taken as far as the highest judicial organs of the country.

This article aims to explain why people become entangled in such situations, which seem not to serve the self-interest of the parties involved. For example: if land conflicts were settled in semi-autonomous fields outside the state legal arena (Moore, 1978), great cost and effort would be saved.[1] The possibilities exist in Mgeta for conflicts to be settled in such ways, yet, for everyone, the risk of being dragged into cases in the state legal arena is very great. The working of the state legal system is not the central focus of analysis here, but

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it is an essential aspect of the cases described. As will become clear, the courts resort to a great number of procedural devices to procrastinate and avoid coming to a decision. If a decision is made, then the courts usually do not make judgements on legal principles relevant to the substantive issues of law involved but treat each case in isolation. The state legal system is an arbitrary social universe to enter (van Donge, forthcoming). This, often frantic, search for justice does not lead to binding decisions which clarify future situations. According to popular wisdom in Mgeta, the outcome of a land case is often the depletion of the resources of all parties involved. People locked in these disputes feel themselves prisoners of a process from which they cannot escape. The question as to why people nevertheless become involved in them is thus a vexing one.

The main point to be made here is that this situation is caused by a breakdown in the social construction of reality. 'All reality is subject to social definition, and all social definition of reality has its legal aspect' (Von Benda-Beckmann, 1978:385). The interpretation of new situations with legal principles is often inherent in the application of law. An abstract set of principles can never foresee the situations that will emerge in the process of social change, and interpretation is therefore needed. In order for this social definition of reality to become law, these interpretations have to be formulated -to a minimal degree- in an authoritatively binding way. Authoritatively binding interpretations can be made by recognised authority or by a process of group consensus. This article describes why there is a need for such social definition with respect to land law in Mgeta and how society there fails to produce such definitions in an authoritatively binding form.

The issue here is not a normative one. The question is not: What decision should the courts have reached given a set of legal rules? On the contrary, this article aims to show that this is not a relevant question as it assumes that law is an ahistorical product. Legal norm complexes are not relatively independent of the particular time and place in which they are applied but, rather, social constructions which are continually adapted and developed. The perspective on the formation of law is from below: why do legal issues emerge and develop into such overwhelming social phenomena as is the case in Mgeta? A discussion as to what the national law is or how it interacts with local legal systems is not relevant here, because national law does not impinge on life in Mgeta and the local legal system is not a fixed but a fluid entity. These land conflicts cannot, therefore, be explained in terms of struggle between particular norm complexes, e.g., local law versus state law or communal versus individual tenure. Such

elements are inextricably intertwined in social practice and it will be evident that adherence to a particular norm complex does not alleviate the need for social definition of reality as it arises in actuality.

Luguru ideas on land tenure

Luguru land tenure has been described by Fosbrooke and Young (1960) and Brain (1973), and the essence of normative system they described was still adhered to in the late eighties. Luguru life is described by them as structured by matrilineal descent in terms of clans and lineages. Lineages, and to a lesser extent clans, trace a common descent from the original settler of an area. The identity of a Mluguru is established through identification with such clans; this identification implies a right to live on and work land.

Any Mluguru will answer when asked about land tenure: '*Sisi tunafuata mama*' (we follow the mother). Land in this ideology is inherited in the female line and held by a corporate entity: the matrilineal clan. The clans are exogamous and therefore an individual's clan identity derives from his/her mother. Unless land is sold, the ownership of land is inalienable from clans. Under certain circumstances, the ideology allows people to farm land even though they have a different clan identity from the land. Ideally, land is inherited in the female line, but the ideology allows a son to inherit land from his mother. The identity of the land and of the person who works the land remains the same in this instance, because the son inherits his clan identity from his mother. The son's children, the grandchildren of the mother from whom the land originates, may also inherit this land from their father - this, despite the fact that their clan identity is different from the land they work: the land originates from their father but they get their clan identity from their mother. When these grandchildren die, however, the land should revert to the clan from which it originated and cannot be passed on to the children of the grandchildren currently working it.

People in Mgeta reason about and interpret land conflicts in terms of clan ownership and kinship. Table 1 shows the legitimisation of land ownership in a household survey of nine neighbourhoods in Mgeta.[2] It appears that only 10% of all plots were claimed on grounds other than clan ownership and only 7% of all plots were claimed on an individual title. The majority of all claims on land were based on direct matrilineal descent (72%). In the mid-eighties, people continued thus to defend land ownership mainly in terms of matrilineal descent,

but two institutions which are central in earlier accounts had lost meaning. Fosbrooke and Young (1960) mention a whole terminology surrounding the concept of lineage. This terminology created no response among informants. People merely reasoned in terms of the very wide clan (ukoo) or in terms of direct descent (kuhusiana). As will be clear below, groups of people in dispute can often not even be classified in terms of a lineage, but may be better classified as action sets. Fosbrooke and Young (1960), as well as Brain (1973), describe the lineage head as the source of authority in matters of corporately-owned land. By the time of this study, the institution of lineage head had disappeared.[3] A disappearance of the idea of lineage and lineage head probably indicates individualisation in society (van Donge, 1992). Old social structures may thus lose a meaning they had, but matrilineal descent and corporate claims on land remain a powerful social force.

Table 1: Mgeta division household survey: stated claims to land owned

Nature of claim	Number of plots (%)
Clan-based claims:	
Women from monther's side	508 (48)
Men from mother's side	255 (24)
Women from father's side	121 (11)
Men from father's side	70 (7)
Outside clan relations:	
Borrowed/rented	34 (3)
Bought/started themselves	69 (7)
Total	1,057

Social change may have weakened the conforming force of social structure. It may also be that the earlier studies (Fosbrooke and Young (1960), Brain (1973)) reified social structure. Theirs is a structural approach, which pays little attention to the way kinship is manipulated in social affairs (kinship in action). Holy (1976) and Kuper (1982) have suggested that the concepts of the lineage and clan as corporate groups may be more a construction of anthropologists looking for a logic of descent than actual observable entities. Holy (1986) has made the point, in a study of the Toka in Zambia, that people's behaviour may be at variance with such structural models, but such models remain nevertheless a potent ideological form in society. That is also the case in Mgeta. These

models may be merely ideological expressions, but it is significant that they remain powerful in people's consciousness.

The question then arises as to why such norm complexes may be important artefacts in society while their relation to behaviour may be questionable. The point made here is that social change demands continuous interpretation of such norm complexes. Social behaviour is a continuous construction of realities which cannot be caught in formal rules: law is a process embedded in social contexts (Moore, 1978). A court case is, of course, only a fraction of the social situation which creates the conflict, and in an article like this one should be embedded in a general overview of land tenure as observed to give meaning to the cases. Nevertheless, this article is mainly based on cases which appeared before Mgeta Primary Court, because court cases have a great heuristic value in explaining society in the particular situation in Mgeta.

Luguru local culture strongly disapproves of conflict. People will not deny that there are numerous conflicts about land, but they prove unwilling to talk about them. As mentioned above, people adhere to an ideological claim that land ownership originates from clan identification. The material presented here will show that, in light of the facts, this is often a tenuous claim. Court cases offer an important opportunity to probe the reality behind such a claim to social conformity.

This does not mean that the nature of land conflicts was immediately obvious in court cases. The courts and litigants define the conflict in formal terms: debates in court centre more on what happened at particular moments than why things happened. The particular nature of court proceedings in Mgeta may be best illustrated by the way in which charges of the use of unacceptable language (*matusi*) were dealt with. Such language usually involves statements concerning forbidden incestuous sexual behaviour and may imply witchcraft allegations. These words are normally not repeated in court, and so one can hear long deliberations about whether terrible statements have been made, very carefully avoiding the actual words used. Court cases in such a cultural setting are, of course, very valuable sources of information, but, in order to reveal their real meaning, cases have to be followed up by observation and interviews with the parties concerned. This was necessary not only because of the nature of court procedures, but also because claims on land are legitimised in normative terms which are often at odds with the facts. A mere interpretation of facts as presented in court can, therefore, hide an underlying reality.[4]

Matrilineal descent as a social construction

Land in Mgeta is extremely fragmented. People see this as a problem, but they feel powerless in the face of the social forces causing this fragmentation. These forces manifest themselves especially when land is being distributed from a deceased person's estate. All interested parties agree at the outset that fragmentation should be discouraged. Plots should, therefore, be allocated as much as possible to people who already have land in the vicinity, and small plots should not be further subdivided. Disputes then erupt about the relative value of the plots as these can differ so much in fertility, and the only solution is to divide the plots equally among the contending parties with the result that the land is further fragmented. Consequently, most estate distributions leave bitter feelings. The result is that there are many potential disputes about neighbouring plots.

The major driving force behind these conflicts is, of course, scarcity of land, especially good land. It is not surprising, therefore, that it is a source of jealousy. If there is a desperate shortage of land and a neighbouring plot lies fallow, the temptation to move in is, of course, very great. Such tendencies can be exacerbated when neighbouring plots differ greatly in fertility. This is often the case, because erosion deposits fertile soil from higher plots on lower ones.

A common form of conflict is, therefore, a claim on a neighbouring plot, and this raises issues about the divisions of these plots in the past. It would be logical to expect stretches of land in Mgeta to be owned predominantly by people of one clan, because the matrilineal ideology assumes corporate ownership of land by people descending from a common ancestor who is supposed to have been the first settler of the area. However, one finds that neighbouring plots can be farmed by people belonging to a multitude of different clans. The matrilineal ideology may presume descent from the original settler of the area, but, in specific cases, actual memory of such descent is live only in some instances. People assert with great certainty their clan affiliation, but are blank, vague and contradictory if one asks for actual patterns of descent (van Donge, 1992).

The identification of land with particular clans is therefore often problematic. Similarly, there is often no clear connection between the clan identity of the land at stake and the clan identities of the litigants. It may be claimed that the ideology of matrilineal descent is hegemonic, but, in practice, it indicates only partially how people come into the possession of land. The following case

illustrates how the identities of the litigants and that of the land can be different in matrilineal terms. It also illustrates how such situations can come about.

Criminal Case 23/86; Shabaan Ali versus Kristina Medard was about a piece of land farmed by Kristina Medard. One day she found her neighbour, Cyprian Kikoma, working on the plot and she protested. Cyprian Kikoma then approached Shabaan Ali, as representative of the clan, to open a case at the Primary Court. They claimed that both plots had originally been one and belonged to their clan. Kristina argued that the land belonged to the clan of her late husband and his matrilineal relatives, and that she had continued to farm it with their permission after his death.

Shabaan Ali won the case in Mgeta Primary Court. Kristina then appealed to the district magistrate who decided that the case should not have been opened as a criminal case, but as a civil one. He directed the litigants to reopen the case as a civil case at Mgeta Primary Court. Shabaan Ali then gave up and Kristina continues to farm the land.

The Primary Court's judgement mentioned as the reason for deciding in favour of Shabaan Ali that Kristina Medard could not properly prove who had given her the plot.[5] The transfer to her late husband had been witnessed by his mother and his mother's sister. They were, however, no longer alive at the time of the case and a younger sister of her late husband was Kristina's witness. She was only a child at the time of the transfer and had not herself witnessed it. The evidence brought by Shabaan Ali was not particularly convincing either. He brought an old person of uncertain status with respect to clan matters to testify that the whole plot had originally belonged to one person of Shabaan Ali and Cyprian Kikoma's clan.

The case illustrates that any testimony which refers to the distant past is vague in a society where written records are scarce. In order to make problems manageable, one has to limit the collective memory of land rights. Structural amnesia is, therefore, a powerful force in Mgeta. The more the distant past is taken as a source of law in such a situation, the more insecure present claims on land would become.

The structure of communal land ownership is therefore not fixed but is continuously constructed. A fundamental reason for that is the inability of legal systems to foresee the issues that will crop up in human interaction. Social life can create situations which simply do not fit a legal normative system. This is

illustrated in a string of cases fought by *Isdori Patris and Bernard Laurens (Criminal Case 77/85; Criminal Appeal 94/86; Civil Case 2/86; Civil Case 3/86)*. They only gave up because they no longer had the resources to fight each other and they accepted then the Solomon's judgement originally given by the *baraza la usalahishi* (see note 1) to cut the disputed field in half.

The facts of the case were not in dispute. The plot had belonged to one Koseni Lunghwamba, who belonged to the Mbena clan and the land was also Ubena. Koseni Lunghwamba had given the plot to Antony Masese. Antony Masese, in turn, had given the land to his brother Laurens Masese. Both were Wabena. Bernard Laurens had inherited the land from Laurens Masese, his father, and was farming it at the time the dispute erupted. The other party in the dispute, Isdori Patris, was the husband of Anna Koseni, the daughter of the original owner of the plot. She claimed to have inherited the plot from her father.

The two opposing parties claimed, therefore, to have inherited the plot from their father whose clan identity was identical to that of the land. Both Anna Koseni and Bernard Laurens had, of course, inherited their clan identity in the logic of matrilineal descent through their mothers and therefore belonged to different clans than that from which the land originated. Consequently, matrilineal descent as such gave no guidance in solving this case. In addition, Anna Koseni was represented in this case by her husband and not by matrilineal relatives of her father who should be the proper authorities in a case like this. Matrilineal affiliation are simply irrelevant in such a case.

The Primary Court magistrate saw this problem in his final judgement and summed up the clan identities involved: 'The shamba in question is Ubena, Bernhard Laurens is Mchuma, Esdore Patris is Mwafigwa and Anna Koseni is Mwenda'. He resorted, however, to referring the case back to the *baraza la usalahishi* and, despite the fact that conflicts of this nature are certain to crop up time and again, he did not develop perspectives which could structure decisions in future conflicts.

The two cases discussed show that there are strong forces which drive land out of clan control: inheritance from the father and dispersal of land allocated on marriage after divorce or death of a spouse. In both these cases, courts resort to procedural grounds rather than face the substantive issue of law. These two cases ended not in a solution resulting from a confrontation of legal principles with factual situations, but in both parties simply giving up the struggle after spending time and energy in a search for justice.

A possible reaction to this situation would be individualisation of land tenure where people can dispose of land at will on the grounds that they are in possession, especially as the concept of lineage as a coherent corporate identity seems to have disappeared. However, claims are seldom made by individuals asking for individual title. Groups of people are usually in dispute with each other, and disputing parties are often represented by others who exemplify a larger unit of family or clan. Land rights in Mgeta are framed in terms of provisional and residual property relationships in which corporate claims play a dominant role (cf. Von Benda-Beckmann, 1979; p.45). The following case illustrates how such residual corporate groups can reassert their claims if people seem to dispose of land according to individual will.

The case concerns land which, through marriage, appears to slip out of clan control. *Civil Case 27/88; Pauline Fabian versus Stephan Joseph* disputed land which a father had transferred to a son of a marriage which had broken up. Stephan Joseph's father and Pauline Fabian belong to the same clan. Land which was identified with this clan had been given to a brother from the same marriage, Paul Berege. The last named had transferred it to Stephan Joseph. Pauline Fabian claimed this land back for the clan on the grounds that the marriage had been dissolved and that therefore a relationship no longer existed between these children and the clan. In this case the court asserted corporate ownership and Pauline won.

Corporate claims are, however, also social constructions. Matrilineal ideology may be adhered to, but in disputes people can form alliances or action sets which are at odds with the rules as generally asserted. The corporate claims in the next two cases illustrate this.

Civil Case 4/88; Emilian Mahoe versus Pius Karoli was a dispute about a plot adjacent to one owned by Emilian Mahoe. The facts of the case were not in dispute. Originally the plot belonged to the same clan as that to which Emilian Mahoe belonged. The last person who farmed the land and who had the same clan identity was Francis Libigwa's father. Francis Libigwa inherited it from him. Francis died young. His children were looked after by a maternal relative of Francis, Pius Karoli. Pius Karoli also farmed the disputed plot after the death of Francis Libigwa. Emilian Mahoe argued his case according to the logic of matrilineal ideology. Pius Karoli belonged to the same clan as Francis Libigwa, but this clan identity bore no relation to the land. Mahoe argued that whereas Francis could claim the land through his father, no such claim could be made by Pius Karoli and that the land should therefore be returned to his, Emilian

Mahoe's, clan.

This was a bitter dispute involving a string of cases and appeals. In a sense one cannot conclude that there was a winner or a loser in this case, because the court decided that the rightful owners of the land were the children of Francis Libigwa. They had all moved out of the area and worked in Dar es Salaam. They testified that the land should be worked by their guardian, Pius Karoli. A corporate group emerges thus which is composed of the children of a father and a matrilineally-related relative of the father. This does not fit the matrilineal ideology: the children of Francis Libigwa should, in the first instance, find solidarity among their mother's relatives instead of among their father's matrilineal relatives. One therefore sees here a corporate group which does not fit the logic of solidarity along matrilineal lines, but one does not see an assertion that land should be disposed of at the will of the individual who owns it.

Civil Case 8/88; Emilian Thomas versus Paolo Dominic was a conflict among a group of matrilineally-related people. The disputed plot was planted with trees by the late Gideon Mahenge. Gideon died in 1966, and the plot became the collective property of Gideon's matrilineal relatives. They used the plot for their wood requirements, and sometimes wood from the plot was sold. One person, Jovitt, was entrusted with the general supervision of the plot. The dispute arose when Jovitt allowed Paolo Dominic, a son of his sister, to plant beans on the plot. Paolo had cut young trees to make space for beans: that was unacceptable as it could imply a completely different use of the plot. It would mean that the plot would move from collective to individual use. The other matrilineal relatives of the late Gideon then asked Emilian Thomas to open a case.

The judgement was similar to the one in the previous case: the rightful owners of the plot were the seven children of the late Gideon Mahenge. This was certainly so with respect to the trees, because trees, as distinct from the land on which they stand, can be inherited in a direct line from a male. The construction which had emerged after Gideon's death was thus on this point at variance with the legal rules as normally accepted. Gideon's children sided with Emilian in this dispute and laid no claim to the land themselves. In this case also, corporate ownership is a force which is not easily displaced by individual claims. Such corporate ownership may, however, be constructed in ways which differ from the hegemonic rule of law or kinship ideology.

These cases illustrate how the quest for justice which results in these land

disputes originates from below. It is not the case that legislation imposed from above creates conflict; this emerges from the development of social practice. In the last three cases, the courts did provide a ruling which, more than usually, followed principles involved in the case. It is more typical that no authoritatively binding decisions are made.

A vacuum of authority

One can argue that there is nothing unusual in the situation described above. The construction of social life is a creative activity, and people may interpret and legitimise changes using an ideology. This is especially so in societies which are not centralised and which are loosely structured. Such ideologies may give meaning to social life, but such ideological statements do not need to correspond to actual behaviour. It is, however, a great strain on society when all arbitrary behaviour is justified. The legal aspect of the social definition of reality usually sets the limits within which this interpretation takes place. This is not an automatic or necessary process. The legal expression of the social definition of reality can originate from the courts and people turn to the state legal system for that reason, despite the fact that they cannot reasonably expect that the courts will produce such legal definitions of a normative social universe. It would therefore be logical for semi-autonomous fields (Moore, 1978) within the local society to take over this function, either through the production of a group consensus or through local authorities outside the state sector. That is not the case in Mgeta however.

The most common legitimisation for land ownership (Table 1) is inheritance and most land conflicts originate in inheritance disputes. The source of authority in executing estates is, therefore, a logical starting point from which to analyze this vacuum in authority. It is possible to ask the Primary Court to appoint an executor to an estate. Three such cases cropped up in Mgeta in the course of one year, all concerning property of people who had moved out of the area. Inhertitance issues are usually settled outside the state legal arena, at the *pombe ya msalaba*, a beer-drinking party held forty days after a death in order to settle all disputes relating to the deceased's estate. An executor is usually chosen then from among the matrilineal relatives of the deceased.

Conflicts between the children of one father and one mother are common, but these do not often result in court cases. Usually, a group of matrilineal relatives is in dispute with the children of a deceased father.

If a court case erupts immediately, then the executor is a clear source of authority, but cases are brought to the court which date from much earlier times. It was not unusual for a case brought to court in 1988 to refer back to an inheritance issue in 1976. In cases concerning inheritance through the father's line, it is important to establish when the land in dispute left the matriclan: this could also have taken place decades before. People who are appointed as executors tend to be old and may have died by the time conflicts erupt. The case of *Severin Florian versus Johanna Konstantin (Civil Case 5/82; Criminal Case 42/87)* illustrates this.

The land in dispute was brought into the marriage by Severin's father and it belonged to the father's clan (Wanyagatwa). The dispute centred on the decision taken at the *pombe ya msalaba* after the father's death. On the death of his mother, Severin claimed that the plot had been allocated to him at the *pombe ya msalaba*, but the Wanyagatwa claimed that his mother had been allowed to use it until her death; thereafter, it had to be returned to the Wanyagatwa. The person appointed to execute his father's estate was dead by the time his mother died. Consequently, there was no authoritative source any more.

The result was a string of court cases, and ultimately the case reached the High Court. Both parties were summoned to Dar es Salaam. Johanna Konstantin's party had the 'luck' to meet the high court judge in the district capital, Morogoro, where he was on circuit duty. When he appeared at the appointed time in Dar es Salaam, Severin was informed of this and rushed back to Morogoro. He met the judge there but found that the case had already been judged in his absence in favour of Johanna Konstantin. Severin then gave up, although he never received a written judgement of the case, and it cannot be traced in the records either. The court did not, therefore, act as a source of legally binding authoritative decisions here. The most likely explanation for the outcome of the case was that the Wanyagatwa had outspent Severin Florian rather than any issue of law.

The case also illustrates that the formation of a group consensus imposing a dominant interpretation of the past is the ultimate source of authority in such a situation. Severin Florian had fought this case as a loner. He was the only one among his father's children to come into conflict with the Wanyagatwa. One of Severin's brothers even testified against him. They all continued to have an amicable relationship with the Wanyagatwa and, for example, made communal use of a plot of trees in a Nyagatwa field belonging to their father. Severin claimed that all the others had received a Nyagatwa plot except him. That may

or may not be true, but the case illustrates how group processes become dominant if the past has to be interpreted in the absence of written records. Selective memory or the dominant interpretation of the past need not be an insecure source of law if it is interpreted and reinforced by an independent, authoritative institution. Such institutions were, however, absent in this case.

It is, therefore, logical that individuals try to protect themselves, through the use of written documents (testaments for example), against what they consider as undesirable interpretations. The courts, however, are reluctant to admit such evidence as it has, in their opinion, to be witnessed by all parties involved. In practice this means that a will is only valid if it is accepted by all parties in a dispute. This makes documents like testaments ineffective as a means of avoiding disputes.

A case in point is that of *Canisiana Leo versus Petri Edwards (Civil Case 8/84)*. The accused, Petri Edwards, rented a plot from the late Honore Sengo. After the latter's death, the plot was inherited by his son, Juma Honore, who had agreed to the arrangement and allowed Petri Edwards to continue. Juma Honore lived in Dar es Salaam.

Canisiana Leo represented the clan from which the plot originated and claimed that Honore Sengo had left a testament relating to the plot. This was witnessed by the clan representative, Medard Felix, and said that Petri Edwards was allowed the use of the plot to grow onions. In the event of his putting it to different use, it had to be returned to the clan. It was claimed that as Petri Edwards had carrots on the plot he had lost the right to it.

It took Mgeta Primary Court three years to come to a judgement in this case. Procrastination and delay is usually interpreted as a sign of corruption, and it was said that a lot of money was involved. The unofficial explanation of the case was that it concerned an unofficial sale. Honore Sengo had, in agreement with his son, sold the plot but had difficulty in getting agreement to the sale from the clan. That is why he wrote the declaration asserting the rights of the clan to the plot. Plots which are suitable for vegetable growing are scarce and valuable in Mgeta, and this must have exacerbated the bitter fight.

As usual, these circumstantial factors were ignored in the case. Neither did the court pay any attention to the will, although the complainant had surrendered it as evidence and it was in the file. Petri Edwards won in the Primary Court, and Canisiana Leo appealed to the District (*Civil Appeal 31/81*). The district

magistrate ignored the will as well and decided in favour of Petri Edwards as Canisiana Leo had 'no proper relationship with the late Honore'.

This last sentence from the judgement is significant. The crucial question is who has a 'proper' relationship to the deceased and to the land he or she worked. The courts never define that in specific terms. This vagueness is also reflected in their attitude towards clan ownership of land. They do not deny that the clan has authority over land but repeatedly repudiate claims of people to represent the clan. They do not subsequently define who the proper authorities are. This is compounded by the problem that authority tends to be diffuse in matrilineal societies, but especially so in Mgeta. Fosbrooke and Young (1960) as well as Brain (1973) identify a clear source of authority in land issues, the lineage head. As mentioned earlier, this institution had completely disappeared in Mgeta and was only vaguely remembered in the mid-eighties. The brother of the mother is another clearly identifiable source of authority in matrilineal societies, designated in Kiswahili as *mjomba*. This can be a well-defined role, but in Mgeta it is interpreted very widely. The term can refer in Mgeta to any matrilineally-related male and therefore qualifies an enormous number of people as potential sources of authority. For example: three disputes, in which matrilineal relatives of a deceased man challenged his daughter's rights to the land, erupted about different fields. Each party of matrilineally-related people in the three disputes brought their own *mjomba* as source of authority.

People in Mgeta adhere to a matrilineal ideology, but as is the case with all ideological constructs, this and its historical interpretation have to be constantly interpreted to cope with social practice as it develops. Old people are the main source of oral evidence, but because they are old they are a fast disappearing repository of witnesses. The courts are reluctant to accept written evidence and they avoid making authoritative interpretations of the legal situation. There is no clear source of authoritative interpretations in the clan structure. Social pressure can, in such a situation, curb greed and arbitrary behaviour, but it will not necessarily do so. That it may not is borne out in the following case which illustrates how these various elements result in great social insecurity.

Antonia Mbago versus Albertina Petri, Maria Komolo and Emilian Palala (Civil Case 6/88) seemed a straightforward case. The charge was contempt of court because the accused had invaded a field which had been awarded to the complainant in a previous court case. The accused did not deny the invasion and the records proved that the plot had been awarded to Antonia Mbago. It was logical that the accused should be convicted.

This, however, begs the question as to why the accused nevertheless did not accept the court's decision, and one must move at this stage beyond the formal argument of the case. The key person among the accused is Maria Komolo; Albertina Petri is her daughter and Emilian Palala is Albertina's husband. Maria is old and her husband died recently. The husband belonged to the clan of the Wanyagatwa and had brought into the marriage a plot which he had inherited from his mother and which was identified as Nyagatwa. Lucia Devis, representing the Wanyagatwa, claimed the plot back for the clan. Maria Komolo retaliated by claiming a plot in the possession of Lucia Devis belonging to Maria's clan, the Wang'amba. Lucia's father had farmed the plot before her and he in his turn had inherited it from his mother, a Mng'amba. According to Luguru rules the plot had to be returned to the Wang'amba after Lucia's death.

Lucia was very old and the plot was fallow. Maria Komolo therefore claimed it on behalf of her daughter who was desperately short of land.

Lucia decided not to fight for the plot herself, but instigated Antonia Mbago - a friend and a Mng'amba - to start a case claiming the disputed plot. The form of the conflict before the court was therefore different from the actual conflict which gave rise to it. It was originally a conflict between two clans and it was turned into an internal conflict of the Wang'amba. The issue of authority over allocating land within clans became therefore a relevant question. Antonia Mbago claimed that the plot had been promised to her a long time ago by her *mjomba*, Modest Kinole. At the time of the court case, Modest Kinole was already a long time dead. Maria Komolo brought as witness her *mjomba*, Victori Nihengula, who had allocated the disputed plot to her. The *wajomba* were quite closely related to the respective litigants. Modest Kinole was said to have been a brother of Antonia's grandmother and Victori was a brother of Maria Komolo's mother. Antonia and Maria were, however, very distantly related. They claimed only a common clan identity (ukoo tu) and did not claim any further kinship links (hawahusiana). The judgement of the Primary Court was in favour of Antonia Mbago on the grounds that she could claim a closer relationship to Lucia Devis's father than Maria Komolo.

This case illustrates the situations that can arise in Mgeta due to the breakdown in the construction of the social reality of matrilineal corporate control over land. First, the case is fuelled by envy. Lucia Devis grabs a plot from Maria Komolo and the latter retaliates. The fact that Lucia instigated Antonia Mbago to fight for the land indicates that the aim of the case was, in the first place, to prevent Maria owning the plot and that Lucia must have already given up hope

of retaining it. Lucia Devis was, within Luguru matrilineal ideology, on weak ground. Her claim to the plot which belonged to Maria's late husband is based on the claim of corporate ownership of the matrilineal clan. Maria's claim on the plot Lucia had inherited from her father is based on the same principle. Lucia's claim on the land which was farmed by Maria was flawed as, under Luguru rules, land can be inherited in the male line for one generation. Accordingly, Maria's daughter, Albertina Petri, had a right to inherit the plot. Lucia was therefore in a much weaker position to challenge ownership of the land than Antonia Mbago. Second, the reconstruction of the past becomes a major issue. The plot had been in the ownership of Lucia Devis and her father for a long time. Lucia was very old at the time of the case; 1945 was mentioned as the year in which Modest Kinole had pronounced on the ownership of the plot. The absence of living witnesses and written records makes a reliable reconstruction of such a distant past virtually impossible. The court refused to make a decision as to who could legally represent the clan and found a way out by looking at the kinship relations between the last Mng'amba owner of the plot and the contending parties.

In this case, the weak were defeated by the strong. Albertina Petri and Maria Komolo are poor and did not have the money for an appeal, although they utterly rejected the decision. They resorted, therefore, to contempt of court and were then faced with a conviction and a stiff fine. They subsequently thought they might as well appeal after all, but the term in which they could appeal against the judgement in the original case had lapsed. In the contempt of court case an appeal stood no chance.

Yet, this case cannot be reduced to a mere morphology of struggle in which the weak are outspent by the rich. The legal universe described here is a threat to all established positions, whether this is a position of wealth or one of poverty. Inherent in the ideology is that claims to ownership may be widespread among many people. Kinship and claims on land are a constructed reality and structural amnesia is in this an essential aspect of kinship. If, as in this case, close relationship to a previous owner is a legitimate reason to challenge ownership of land, many opportunities are opened to challenge land ownership. Legal insecurity may arise for many people whether rich or poor. As there are no clearly identified authoritative sources of law on such issues, the risk of being drawn into court cases about land is a threat to everyone.

Individual title and the social construction of reality

The perspective on African law presented hitherto is similar to other current writing on the subject. African law is less and less seen as 'customary' law which is a product of tradition, but as constructed by social forces interpreting and changing what is tradition and custom (e.g. Cheater, 1987, 1990). Such a position leads logically to the question of who interprets the law and whose interests are served by which interpretation. Mackenzie (1990), for example, argued in the case of Murang'a district, Kenya, that legal reality is constructed and appropriated in relations of class and gender.

Gender is not an issue in land disputes in Mgeta. The cases did not show clear patterns of gender relations; they are as likely to be inter-gender as intra-gender. In the groups that mobilise in land disputes, one finds often a mixture of male and female. Class seems at first sight more important. Land disputes may be framed in terms of kinship and corporate descent groups, but money is an aspect of all cases. It is often mentioned in court as a subsidiary factor, but money is a prerequisite to fight a land case in court. It is also clear from the cases that social life in the area is encapsulated in wider exchange networks through, e.g., migration or the vegetable trade (van Donge, 1992). Commoditisation, in the sense of the structuration of social relations by exchange relations based upon money, is therefore undoubtedly an aspect of life in Mgeta.

Snyder (1981), following Bernstein (1977), argues in his study of legal change among the Banjal, Senegal, that in contemporary Africa, 'the reproduction of all forms of production depends ultimately upon capitalist commodity relations'. A logical consequence of such a perspective is to see legal disputes as expressions of such relations which are by definition antagonistic. There does not seem, however, to be any grounds on which to reduce the land disputes in Mgeta to expressions of antagonistic capitalist commodity relations.[6]

The spread of monetary values in Mgeta is not associated with the rise of an emerging bourgeoisie exploiting an increasingly impoverished mass (van Donge, 1992). Some people are undoubtedly richer than others, but that does not structure the nature of land conflicts. As a rule, one does not find economic inequality between parties engaged in conflict. It is more typical that the two parties locked in dispute cannot be clearly differentiated economically. They will try to mobilise resources in as big a group of people as possible, but the dispute is fought at great cost to both.[7] Land disputes are definitely not seen in

local wisdom as an instrument for accumulation. Long and expensive litigation about land ownership, without much hope of a resolution of the conflict in the state legal arena, is a dominant feature of life. The folk moral in Mgeta of a court case is that in the end everybody is worse off.

One can therefore not see a hidden logic of exploitation, accumulation and class differentiation resulting from commoditisation as an underlying pattern in these cases. Also, only two of the thirty-one land cases before the courts in this study resulted from an outright sale of land. It is probable that commercial transactions in land are much more widespread than this suggests (see the case of *Canisiana Leo versus Petri Edwards* above), but land purchase is not a particularly useful way to legitimate a claim on land. It is accepted in court appearances as well as in day to day legal consciousness in Mgeta that commercial ownership of land gives a right to dispose of land at individual will. The case material shows, however, that in practice one still has to legitimate such a claim to corporate groups. One of the major reasons is, again, that evidence is to such a great extent a social construction in a society where literacy is weak and written records are of minor importance as is illustrated in the following case.

The dispute in the series of cases which opened with *Criminal Case 77/86 Venance Mkungo vs. Albert Mbago, John Kazao, Gaitan John* before Mgeta Primary Court was about half an acre of land. It was opened when Venance Mkungo found the accused building a house on the plot. The house was for Albert Mbago and the other two were helping him. John Kazao is married to a sister of Mbago's wife and Gaitan John is his son. Charges against the latter two were dropped at the first hearing of the case. Albert Mbago claimed to have bought the land from Rashidi Maghati.

The neighbouring plot was inherited by Venance Mkungo's wife from Rashidi Maghati, and Venance claimed that she had inherited the whole plot.

The Primary Court accepted the case as one of forced entry and destruction of property on the 4th of November 1986. On the 6th of July 1987 the Court came to a judgement after hearing the case in a total of eleven sessions. Venance Mkungo won the case as he was considered to present better evidence.

Albert Mbago appealed to the district magistrate in Morogoro on the grounds that he had paid money to the Primary Court magistrate for a visit, which had never taken place, of the court to the disputed plot. The district magistrate

refused to give judgement as to the ownership of the plot. The Primary Court had made a procedural mistake: the case should never have been accepted as a criminal case, but as a civil one (Criminal Appeal 63/87).

Albert Mbago then opened a civil case against Venance Mkungo (Civil Case 5/87) on the 23rd of October 1987. The court convened a total of fourteen sessions to deal with the case. In four of these, one of the parties or their witnesses did not turn up, and, once, the scheduled judgement was delayed without reason. Albert Mbago won, because his evidence was considered much better than that of Venance Mkungo.

Venance Mkungo then appealed to the district magistrate (Civil Appeal 28/88). The district magistrate again refused to come to a judgement as to who owned the plot. He argued that as the wife of Venance Mkungo owned the plot, she should have initiated the case.

She did not take a case however, but Albert Mbago opened one against her (Civil Case 17/88; Albert Mbago versus Sesilia Cosmas). This was still in dispute when I left Mgeta in July 1989.

The case shows clearly how the litigants become involved in a dispute which bears no relationship to capital accumulation. It deals with a tiny piece of land. Both are faced with a legal system where they are pawns in a game instead of players with a clear chance of winning. The courts have used many procedural means to avoid coming to a decision. For example, in addition to the general directive to open a civil case, the district magistrate could have indicated at the time of the first appeal that Venance's wife was the affected party and therefore the appropriate person to initiate proceedings. The litigants are locked in protracted battle and can have little hope of a clear direction from the court.

The quality of the evidence is crucial in reaching a judgement, but there are no guidelines as to what makes some evidence more reliable than other evidence. Albert Mbago cited as evidence mere facts of possession. He had built a beer shop on the plot and had planted a sisal fence between the neighbouring plots. He claimed that a written document had existed, but that it had been destroyed in a fire. Even if it had been produced, the courts could have easily cast doubt on its validity by insisting on proper witnessing and form. One can easily suggest forgery when confronted with such documents which are often scraps of paper.

Sales of clan land have to be properly witnessed by representatives of the clan claiming to own the land. Therefore, claims on land which is bought and held on individual title has in practice often to be legitimated by the corporate group from which it comes. The more time passes, the more such claims become a construction of reality. The date of the sale of the plot was even in doubt in this case (1950, 1968, 1970). The owner of the plot died in 1982 and none of the people mentioned as witnesses was still alive. In such cases of individual title, therefore, legal claims are as much a process of social construction as in those made on the basis of kinship and membership of corporate groups.

The legal status of land can be transformed as it is transferred in a network of social relations. The following case illustrates this. This case did not reach Mgeta Primary Court, but was brought before the *baraza la usalahishi* of Tchenzema in May 1989.

The origin of the plot in dispute in the case of *Lea Ramadhani versus Skola Mbegu* was beyond doubt. The case related actually to two neighbouring plots which had originally been one plot owned by one Ngulumbi. Ngulumbi had divided the plot in half and sold these to two people. One of the plots is now farmed by Lea Ramadhani and the other by Skola Mbegu.

Lea Ramadhani had inherited her undisputed half of the plot from her mother's mother, Sara. The plot was a gift to Sara from Sara's mother's brother. The latter had inherited it from the person who had bought the plot from Ngulumbi. It had thus been transferred in the last two instances according to the principles of matrilineal succession.

Sara, Lea Ramadhani's maternal grandmother, was the person who bought the other half of the plot from Ngulumbi. Sara had, during her life, given this plot to her brother. The brother had given it to Skola Mbegu. Lea Ramadhani argued that as she inherited the neighbouring plot from Sara she should also inherit this one.

Both parties belong to the same clan, but although Lea Ramadhani is directly related to Sara in the female line, this was not the case for Skola Mbegu. The noteworthy point of this dispute is, however, that clan authority over land was not in doubt and the *baraza la usalahishi* referred the matter to clan elders. The idea that commercially acquired land can be disposed of at will by the owner, irrespective of corporate claims of clans, was not entertained. Lea's own plot had also through inheritance effectively become clan property.

Virtually all the cases presented here show that allegiance to corporate groups continue to provide claims on land, even if through marriage, divorce, inheritance etc., ownership has changed in character. That is also the case with the sale of land. The following case shows this in a clear and unambiguous form:

Civil Case 12/88; Pauline Binti Mkimbu versus Mattias Emil was a dispute about a plot which Pauline had given to her daughter's son, Mattias Emil. The litigants and the plot had therefore the same clan identity. Emil sold the plot, however, to somebody outside the clan and Pauline claimed the land back. She brought a matrilineally-related witness and also a written document that the land had been allocated to her on the basis of clan affiliation. Pauline won, and the court asserted, therefore, the corporate ownership of the clan.

This case material shows therefore that one cannot speak in Mgeta of a clear distinction between a form of modern, individual or commoditised land tenure and traditional, corporate or pre-capitalist forms of land ownership.[8] The former forms have no meaning outside the context of the latter. Such claims have also to be socially constructed; but this process can also break down so that no legal authoritative definition emerges.

Conclusion

The general perspective on law presented here as a process of social definition interpreting and developing new forms in society may be universally applicable. These land disputes in Mgeta show, however, that the emergence of legal forms is not an automatic process. The cases illustrate a breakdown in the legal definition of the social construction of reality. Group consensus in semi-autonomous fields does not produce such definitions; there are no clear local sources of authoritatively binding decisions, and people therefore have recourse to the state legal system. Long and expensive court cases which do not lead to binding decisions based on authoritative definitions of the social construction of reality then ensue. The result is great insecurity as people can become entangled in wasteful disputes which deplete resources.

The analysis adopted here stresses the construction of social reality by actors and illustrates how the need for such a construction originates from below. It avoids, therefore, the assumption of a necessary teleology or deterministic biases which stem from grand social theories, e.g. commoditisation or

modernisation. For example, the material presented here does not show a predictable development towards individual title. A recent ambitious economic study of Tanzania referred to 'truncated factor markets' in the case of land, implying that a removal of legal constraints imposed through government would lead to commoditisation of land (Bevan, Collier and Gunning, 1989;p.46). There is no reason to assume this to be so on the basis of this material. There are elements of commoditisation in land tenure, but there is an equally strong trend towards the decommoditisation of land which has been bought by bringing it under some form of corporate control.

Phenomena which are considered essential for commoditisation or modernisation are present in Mgeta. These are inescapable forces. Money is a pervasive aspect of social life and individualism is a strong force (van Donge, 1992). Money and migration are also aspects of many of the cases described here. There are, however, many ways in which people can respond to such forces; they are not, in themselves, determining factors in social behaviour. Responses to these changes can take many legal forms as examples from elsewhere in Africa illustrate. For example: Cocoa farmers in Cote d'Ivoire adopted individual title to land (Hecht, 1985), while in a Nigerian area which is not dissimilar corporate land tenure appeared to be resilient in the face of nationalisation (Francis, 1984).

Neither does a review of the wider literature provide an explanation for the breakdown of the social definition of reality in Mgeta in terms of an inability of the 'traditional' legal system, matriliny, to cope with the new forms of exchange.[9] An institution like the matrilineal clan can have a social meaning in many different circumstances (Douglas, 1969). As in Mgeta, Von Benda-Beckmann (1979) found a persistence of the matrilineal ideology among the Mingakabau in Indonesia, but people had adapted to the growth of individualism and monetary relationships by pawning. An explanation which interprets this need for the social construction of reality as a cultural lag between matrilineal systems and modernisation/commoditisation does not therefore hold. However, corporate forms of land tenure such as those found in Mgeta do not necessarily adapt harmoniously to social change. That may be the case, as Francis (1984) has for example shown to be the situation in Nigeria. Chanock (1985) correctly argues, however, that not only is there an ideological argument depicting African legal systems as impediments to change, but also that these have been idealised. The material presented here shows that legal conflicts do not automatically lead towards some form of homeostasis where new power relationships are crystallised.

The puzzling aspect of these disputes in Mgeta remains that rational choice considerations do not seem to be applicable. There seem to be no obvious interests served by these disputes which lead only to entropy: a depletion of resources. Foster (1972) has argued that envy is a pan-human emotion, which is abundantly present in every society. This reflects exactly the nature of these conflicts. 'It is important to note that an envier is not envious of the thing he would like to have; he is envious of the person who is fortunate enough to have it. The possession is the trigger, but not the target of envy' (p.168). It is also a particularly dangerous and destructive emotion, and society devises therefore many mechanisms to bridle this force. Foster describes merely symbolic behaviour as envy reducing mechanisms, but the authoritative pronouncement of law is of course an obvious mechanism to control envy as well.

Unbridled envy is one important causal factor of these wasteful and unnecessary court cases, but it is also true that people long for justice. A stated motivation for continuing very costly and wasteful court cases is the fear that people will take the law into their own hands. The fear of the consequences of envy can be seen clearly there and one should not belittle the many attempts made. A semi-autonomous field of law (Moore, 1978) exists: many conflicts do not reach the state legal arena but are settled within the community. This does not, however, resolve the breakdown in the social construction of reality as embodied in law. The disruptive force of envy can therefore manifest itself in land disputes which the force of law does not control.

Notes

1. The Primary Court is the lowest specialised judicial organ of the Tanzanian state. The Primary Court magistrate, who has a basic specialist education in law, hears cases with two lay assessors, and judgements must be majority decisions. The lay assessors are supposed to provide specific local expertise on legal matters. Primary Court magistrates come as a rule from outside the area. They claim, however, familiarity with local legal ideas and I have no reason to doubt that. The party structure has a veto on the appointment of the assessors, but I found no indication that these latter represent specific local interests. Many land disputes come before the courts. I made a detailed record of all cases before Mgeta Primary Court in the period 12/5/87 to 28/6/88. The total number of cases was 142, 32 of which were land disputes. There is, however, ample opportunity to resolve disputes without recourse to the Primary Court because it is only one of the legal arenas in Mgeta. People can bring cases directly there, but in the main they turn first to the neighbourhood leader (leader of the local party cell (*balozi*)). Neighbourhoods are subdivisions of villages and most villages have a reconciliation council (*baraza la usalahishi*) to mediate in local conflicts. If that fails, people can turn to the ward secretary (*katibu kata*) who is a combined party and government appointee at ward level, the next level above the village. The division (*tarafa*) is the level above the ward and the level at which the Primary Court functions. The court sometimes relegates matters to lower authorities, e.g. the reconciliation council, if people have not made enough effort to sort out matters among themselves. Often there is pressure on litigants to withdraw cases opened at the Primary Court and to attempt to settle the matter informally.

2. People in Mgeta live mostly in clusters perched on mountain ranges and these are designated by specific names. The surveys covered nine such neighbourhoods in three different wards. There did not appear, however, to be any significant differences between the three different environments. This subdivision in communities should be distinguished from administrative subdivisions. The lowest unit of government is the ten house party cell. Mgeta division, like all of Tanzania, is administratively subdivided into villages and wards. These administrative subdivisions do not, however, refer to communities as the whole area is densely populated and people will designate themselves in the first place as belonging to these informal hamlets (van Donge, 1992).

3. During my research in Mgeta I encountered only one person who had been designated a lineage head in the way described by Fosbrooke and Young (1980): Mr. Nassoro Uhadi in Mizugu. It may be that their and Brain's (1973) description of the lineage head is a reification, just as their detailed description of lineage terminology may be. P.C. Duff, a long serving administrative officer in the area

wrote: 'On the general reliability of evidence based on clan genealogies, I found over a period of six years of hearing land appeal cases.....that when lucky enough to arrive at the correct sequence of clan heads.....then the general buzz of approval from a large audience representing both sides of the dispute left one in no doubt that this was the true position' (Personal communication, letter 22/6/87).

4. It may be useful to make clear how difficult it was to gather this material. The then serving Primary Court magistrate was originally only willing to explain land cases himself from records in front of him. After clearance with the district magistrate, I got formal permission to research land disputes at Mgeta Primary Court. I could not continuously attend court in Mgeta as I was employed as a lecturer at the University of Dar es Salaam, so I paid one of the court clerks to make a record of all appearances before the court and I discussed these with him at three-monthly intervals. I then built up trust and was allowed myself to read case records. This revealed significant discrepancies between the stories as presented to me and what I read. Then I followed these up with visits to the litigants. As a rule only one of the two parties involved was willing to talk to me. I then checked these versions with people whom I got to know in the community. This phase of the research was not rounded off until August 1989. In the course of my research I came to know about many more land conflicts. If these had been resolved in successful reconciliation, people flatly refused to talk about them.

5. The written judgement as I found it in the court records was different from the oral presentation of the judgement according to Kristina Medard. The Primary Court magistrate stated then that Kristina's argument may have been stronger, but that she lost because she had not paid enough respect (*heshima*) to the court. Respect, according to her, meant money. The possibility of arbitrary action in the state arena is virtually always an aspect of these cases.

6. The perspective of this paper, which sees commodity relations as an aspect of legal development that people can incorporate into their constructions of social reality, is not at variance with the empirical material as presented by Snyder. For example, see his beautiful case material on pp.230-238. Commoditisation does not necessarily lead to a unilinearly determined path of development. For example, on p.222 Snyder writes about: 'different mechanisms, changing forms and uneven penetration of commodity relations'.

7. If one asks people about how much court cases have cost them, they mention staggering amounts; one wonders how these could be raised in a society which shows so little visible differentiation in wealth. It is said that much money illegally acquired (e.g. through the transport of elephant tusks, illegal cutting of hardwoods or emerald mining) is used in these cases.

8. Glazier (1985) in his study of land tenure among the Mbeere in Kenya similarly describes a process of social construction in which various ideologies of land tenure are intertwined: 'My initial question is: Why do the Mbeere find descent constructs the appropriate idiom for representing the social organisation of land tenure before land reform when such constructs only partially image the actual group of claimants the ideology purports to explain?.... Secondly, why don't people simply organize themselves as an interest group without taking pains either to record official genealogies or to articulate to each other and to the government their land claims through the primordial symbol of descent?. (p.277) 'The solidarity and cooperation within groups designated "clans" is no less essential than in earlier days, although these values are now borne as much by contractual and monetary concerns as by the diffuse symbolism of descent ideology' (p.281). The situation in Mgeta differs essentially from the one in Mbeere as there has not been an active government policy in Tanzania to introduce contractual and monetary elements into land tenure.

9. It has been strongly argued that pressures towards particular social forms stem from particular systems of agriculture, but that still leaves ample scope for social construction of diverse realities. Goody (1976), for example, has suggested strong links between land scarcity and inheritance of property: 'I suggest that the scarcer productive resources become and the more intensively they are used, then the greater the tendency towards the retention of those resources within the basic productive and reproductive unit, which in the majority of cases is the nuclear family' (p.20). According to him, in Africa, land was relatively abundant and political domination depended therefore more on gathering followers than on the retention of land. Succession is, in such a situation, more important than inheritance. If one accepts this as a typical situation, then the Waluguru are exceptional. Political authority among the Waluguru has been always decentralised, but, according to available accounts, it depended in the first place on control over land. In addition, land has been scarce for a long time. In ideological terms, however, land was not meant to be inherited strictly in the basic productive and reproductive unit. Goody contrasts the African situation with the Asian one, where pressure on land is widespread. However, in Mingakabau where land is also scarce, von Benda-Beckmann (1979) also found a persistence of 'provision and residual property relationships in which corporate claims play a dominant role' (p 45).

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CHAPTER 7

LIFE CHANCES, LIFE WORLDS AND A RURAL FUTURE: LIFE EXPECTATIONS OF SCHOOL LEAVERS IN MGETA, ULUGURU MOUNTAINS, TANZANIA*

This article concerns the life expectations of primary school leavers in the Mgeta division, Uluguru mountains, Tanzania. Such expectations have been the subject of intense debate starting from the premise that education inculcates in Africa a negative mentality towards rural life and agriculture (e.g. Sheffield, 1967; Dumont, 1968).[1] Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, the former president of Tanzania, translated such concerns into a forceful policy document: **Education for self reliance**. He asserts therein that education in Tanzania should be reformed. His document aims in the first place to instil egalitarian values instead of elitist ones. Secondly, and related to that, it stresses that education should be oriented towards rural life: 'Tanzania will continue to have a predominantly rural economy for a long time to come. And as it is in the rural areas that people live and work, so it is rural life that has to be improved'. Therefore education 'must also prepare young people for the work they will be called upon to do in the society which exists in Tanzania - a rural society where improvement will depend largely upon the efforts of the people in agriculture and village development' (Nyerere, 1967:20-21).

The material presented here shows the assumptions upon which this debate is built in a different light. Responses to a questionnaire put before primary school pupils in Mgeta -an administrative division in the Uluguru mountains, Tanzania- just before leaving school in June 1989 showed positive values towards agriculture and negative ones towards, e.g., capital accumulation through trade.[2] These values appeared not to be particular to this group but were found to be pervasive in Mgeta. Such findings are welcome in the light of the policy

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* Submitted for publication.

objectives mentioned above. The main point to be made is, however, that these values were highly discordant with actual social practice. Mgeta division faces serious agricultural decline and the dominant response to that is migration to urban areas, where most migrants make a living from trade. This raises serious questions as to the value of this particular ideological response, which is so highly esteemed by policy makers.

This discrepancy between the socially endorsed interpretation of the world - or lifeworlds - and social practice raises important questions for development theory also.[3] Particular outcomes in development are more and more interpreted as a result of human agency, which is seen as embedded in lifeworlds. It is less and less seen as a linear, universal process which unfolds itself according to particular laws. Long (1977) argued - at a time when these approaches were hegemonic - that neither modernisation theory nor dependency theory explain adequately divergent outcomes of social change. He pleads for an actor-oriented approach, which sees social change as constructed by actors in social practices. Similarly, Booth (1985) in a seminal article criticised neo-Marxist development theory as tautological and teleological. It assumes that particular patterns of development are necessary. Empirical realities, however, reveal heterogeneity which implies many possible outcomes of development. One of the reasons for this impasse is, according to him, lack of attention to cultural influences.

Booth's critical diagnosis of the state of the art in development studies has been more welcomed than challenged. It gave rise to several new perspectives on development which demand room for a more actor-oriented approach. For example, a plea for a post-Marxism which builds upon the Marxian tradition calls for more attention for 'human agency and....the provisional and highly skilled task of reproducing social relations' (Corbridge, 1990). Vandergeest and Buttel (1988) argued for a return to the Weberian heritage which allots a central place to meaning (*Verstehen*): 'development sociologists must take into account why people do what they do in terms of the subjective meaning attached to what they do, rather than simply explain all action by appealing to economic or other formal laws and models of society' (p.690).

Such ideas also inspired the questionnaire on expectations for the future among primary school leavers in Mgeta. Life expectations are part of social interpretations of reality (lifeworlds) which are expected to frame decisions leading to particular outcomes in social change. This thesis appeared to be questionable as far as Mgeta was concerned as social practice was so discordant

with the preferences expressed. There was thus no direct and linear relationship between the mental lifeworlds of actors and their social behaviour. This is obviously relevant for advocates of educational reform, because they assume such a type of relationship: if appropriate values and skills are acquired then a particular pattern of development will occur. It is also relevant for this debate in development studies. Approaches which stress human agency will have to take account of such discrepancies, and it may be that this is not sufficiently appreciated.

Booth (1992), for example, writes that actor-oriented approaches are 'a fascinating challenge to sociological explanation in development studies and beyond' (p.22). He sees strong links with 'collective choice' models as proposed by Bates (1981). Booth is careful to dissociate himself from possible connotations of such an approach. He writes about 'Bates' non-neoclassical application of rational choice analysis' (p.14) and says that 'choices are not assumed to be reducible to the neoclassical paradigm of decision-making - that is, abstracted from their social and cultural context' (p.23). It is, however, questionable whether Booth succeeds in dissociating himself, because the central unit of analysis remains 'how individual desires for valued but scarce resources aggregate into outcomes for entire societies' (p.14).[4] Ultimately, behaviour is then structured by maximizing outcomes, given scarcity and utility preferences. He allows, however, for complications in the ultimate outcome for society, because of 'the unanticipated consequences of the interlocking preferences of relevant groups of actors' (p.23).[5] The assumption of utility maximisation by the actor remains thus intact, which implies in turn a linear relationship between behaviour and perceived utility. The empirical material in this article questions precisely this assumption. The need to take account of the social and cultural context is seen by collective choice theorists, but their central idea of utility maximisation from the point of view of the individual cannot do justice to it. It does not create space for the possibility that the relationship between thought (the process of utility maximisation) and behaviour is tenuous because social interaction endorses utilities which are at variance with behaviour as is documented here. The significance of the material presented in this article is that it exposes phenomena which cannot be captured in the idea of the rational actor. The relationship between interpretations of the world and behaviour can be much more complicated than this analytical tool assumes, because it does not allow for multiple realities in the lifeworlds of social actors.

In what follows, the social interpretation of reality as revealed in the questionnaire will be analyzed against the background of the observed realities

of social practice in Mgeta. This does not entail a judgement by the researcher on the rationality of the actors involved: it merely states that the revealed interpretations of social reality do not fit the idea of social behaviour as a consequence of calculating economic man. Secondly, it may be objected that the findings do not capture the 'real' interpretations which guide everyday practices, but merely an ideological representation, and that only one of multiple competing lifeworlds has been captured here. That may be true, but a deliberate attempt to uncover these in follow-up research did not produce evidence of such multiplicity or any indication that alternative strategic uses are made of this lifeworld. The follow-up research first and foremost buttressed the original findings and suggested merely that such alternative interpretations can only be adhered to in private. More fundamentally, it does not alter the significant finding that the dominant lifeworld -which was professed with great unanimity- has a social force that has to be taken into account.

Life chances in Mgeta

Mountainous areas rising steeply from surrounding plains -like the Uluguru- are a striking feature of Tanzanian geography. Such areas have a high rainfall, high population density and intensive agriculture relative to the surrounding plains. Population growth has usually led however to great pressure on land there. In the Uluguru, and especially in Mgeta, this problem is particularly severe because land is not very fertile and is becoming increasingly exhausted. The slopes are very steep and erosion is therefore a spectacular problem.

Land is taken into cultivation regardless of the consequences for erosion and exhaustion. The main crop is maize. This is a difficult crop in the higher altitudes. It takes up to nine months to mature there as the climate is too cold and misty. In the whole division, maize yields are declining rapidly due to exhaustion of the soil. This extensive maize farming is usually legitimised as an attempt at self sufficiency. At the same time, it is commonly admitted that this aim is unattainable. Agronomists have argued that the agronomy of the area should be restructured. One could imagine, for example, a future where people would limit acreages and leave steep slopes fallow, build permanent terraces, rotate crops, find new valuable crops to generate cash. Such a restructuring was already a theme in the Uluguru Land Usage Scheme, implemented in the fifties, and similar opinions have been voiced since then, but such advice has not yet been followed.[6] Agriculture as a source of cash has, however, become important: people grow vegetables for the urban markets, especially Dar es

Salaam. Vegetable cultivation, however, requires well-watered plots and these are increasingly scarce. A future in agriculture is therefore problematic.

Due to pressure on land, emigration has been the major response to the growing need for cash. There is a huge migration of Waluguru to urban areas, especially to Dar es Salaam, where many are to be found in markets selling vegetables. The vegetable trade between towns and Mgeta is another major source of income. The need for cash to buy food is compelling. In Mgeta, farming is, as stated above, a reserve activity: it has to be supplemented with other income unless one belongs to the minority who own the scarce plots suited to vegetable growing. Therefore people in Mgeta have either to trade or to rely on remittances from urban areas if they want to stay on the land. Trade is pervasive in Mgeta, but this has not resulted in a clear differentiation between rich and poor. Trade is an insecure way of making a living (van Donge 1992a; 1992b).

Education is of minor importance as a response to the declining resource base of the mountains. The area is dotted with primary schools which are well attended, but very few pupils -varying from none to two or three in each school- pass the final primary examination in an average year. The quality of primary education is probably also declining.[7] In a survey in the Mgeta division, household heads had no more than primary education, and only rarely did their children attend higher education.[8]

In this respect, Mgeta is strikingly different from, e.g., the Usambara mountains or Kilimanjaro where a clamour for education has been a major response to declining life chances in the rural economy (Samoff, 1979; Kerner, 1985; Sender, 1990; Cooksey et al., 1990). Unlike in Usambara and on Kilimanjaro therefore, access to education is not a major force in class formation in Mgeta. Places in government secondary schools are allocated on a quota per district basis to improve the chances of disadvantaged regions. Nevertheless, there is a big differential participation in secondary education among different areas and ethnic groups in Tanzania. A comparison of the proportion of Waluguru in secondary school as compared with the proportion in the total Tanzanian population, dating from 1983, shows that the Waluguru groupings are under represented in secondary schools (a ratio of 0.48) (Cooksey et al., 1990). This is probably flattered by the fact that many Uluguru children may get access to education by attending urban schools, which have higher pass rates. A newly elected MP in 1985 gained considerable popularity when he started, with the support of the Catholic Mission, the first secondary school

within the Mgeta division. Local pupils are given preference for admission, but, even so, many pupils admitted have an urban background and stay with local relatives. The chance to build an alternative source of wealth through investment in education is thus very limited in Mgeta.

The options as perceived by primary school leavers

People in Mgeta can straddle many economic activities in their life. Farming and trade; migration and holding on to a living on the land, are elements which are found in various combinations in people's lives. The discrete options presented to the school leavers in the questionnaire -farming, continued education, wage labour in town, trading in town and trading between Mgeta and Dar es Salaam- are necessarily an abstraction. The definite responses to a ranking of these options indicate, however, that these questions most likely refer to a particular way of thinking. An acquaintance over four years with how people in Mgeta talk about their lives led to the formulation of these questions in the first instance. Social change in Mgeta has led more to a general spread of poverty without significant accumulation than to a differentiation between rich and poor. Primary school leavers are therefore, in that respect, to a large extent a homogeneous mass, and differences in wealth in their background do not constitute a reason for different life expectations.

The options given may seem simple, but -as will be shown below- responses showed a limited awareness of the options in life. This may be partly due to the age of respondents. They were young: their age varied from 11 to 17; most of them were in the age group 13-15 (87%). Their life experience could, however, have brought them into contact with a considerable variation in human experience, because they were aware of urban life towards the end of primary school. Only a small minority (12%) had never left Mgeta, while almost half of them (46.7%) had often travelled outside the area. They rarely mentioned other destinations than the towns of Morogoro and Dar es Salaam as the place last visited (11.5%). Contacts with the smaller town Morogoro were, however, more frequent (58.8%) than contacts with Dar es Salaam (29.8%). Most of these recent visits lasted more than a month (53.1%) and sometimes even more than a year (12.3%). Their urban experience tends to be limited, however, to a particular segment of society. Many of the people with whom these school leavers had stayed made their living from trade (43.3%), and the other livelihoods reported (44%) seldom demanded much education.

The respondents were asked to rank according to preference the five options for a future: continuing with education, farming, wage labour in town, trading between Mgeta and Dar es Salaam, and trading in urban areas. Table 1 shows the scores to the preferences indicating overwhelming preference for farming, with trading in vegetables between Mgeta and Dar es Salaam obviously least preferred. Not only were trading careers less preferred than farming or continued education, but it is striking that wage labour in town was also more preferred than trade.

Table 2 shows the mean ranking of preference as compared with the mean ranking of estimated remuneration as well as the respondents' expressed career expectations. Trading may be less preferred than wage labour in town, but it was considered more remunerative. The monetary rewards of alternative futures may compensate for less prestige in career choice, and the school leavers were therefore asked to rank the four options in this respect. Education was here also mostly ranked first, and farming was mentioned as the second preference.

A preference of career options does not, of course, indicate expectations in life; dreams have to be confronted with reality.[9] The response to career expectation showed a slightly different pattern than that in career options. Most pupils expected to become farmers (44% as compared with 41.9% first preference); a large group expected to continue education (32.7% as compared with 50.0% first preference); few expected to work for wages in town (14.2% as compared with 9.7% first preference), but even fewer expected to make their living as traders (8% as compared with .7% first preference). One cannot conclude, therefore, that expectations are strikingly more realistic than preferences.

The pervasive nature of negative feelings towards trade and positive ones towards agriculture and education are overwhelming in the response. A prestige ranking of various professions showed a similar pattern. Table 3 indicates clearly how the prestige ranking corresponds to the ranking of career choices. Farmer and teacher were ranked highest and the three trading occupations were rated the lowest. The variance in these scores was also relatively small which indicates much consensus relative to other rankings. The other occupations - medical assistant, village secretary, priest- showed much more ambiguous responses. Not only were they ranked in the middle, but the scores showed also a higher variance in ranking. The variance was extreme in the case of priest. This divergence in opinions corresponds to the impression one gets in daily life in Mgeta.[10]

Table 1: Frequencies (%) of preferences for future careers among primary school children in Mgeta

	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth
Farming	41.9	37.8	8.8	8.8	2.7
Further education	50.0	13.7	8.2	11.6	16.4
Wage labour in town	9.7	17.2	29.0	22.1	22.1
Trade in town		21.5	31.9	35.4	11.1
Trade Dar-Mgeta	0.7	12.2	24.3	19.6	43.2

Table 2: Preferences and expectations for future careers among primary school leavers in Mgeta

Career	Mean ranking of preference	Variance	Mean ranking of renumeration	Expectation
Farming	1.926	1.103	2.24	44 %
Continued education	2.308	2.449	1.86	32.7 %
Urban wage labour	3.297	1.585	3.28	14.7 %
Trade in town	3.361	.890		4 %
Trade Mgeta - Dar es Salaam	3.926	1.226	2.99	4 %

Table 3: Prestige ranking of professions by school leavers in Mgeta

	% distribution of ranking[1]									
Professions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Mean	Variance
Farming	40	16	17	11	12	2	1	1	2.503	2.590
Teaching	33	30	15	11	5	3	3	1	2.513	2.681
Medical Asst.	4	17	17	23	16	10	6	6	4.140	3.289
Priest	17	14	16	13	7	6	12	16	4.216	6.075
Village Secr.	3	10	18	16	17	12	11	12	4.767	3.932
Trade/Mgeta-Dar	1	7	9	8	16	20	12	27	5.741	3.851
Shop/Mgeta	1	5	5	10	12	28	23	16	5.811	2.916
Market/DarsM	1	2	4	10	17	17	32	16	6.034	2.447

[1] Percentages do not add up to one hundred due to rounding off to the nearest number.

The indeterminate nature in these scores is, however, probably above all an indication of a blurred image. Teacher, medical assistant, village secretary and priest are professions which require education and which are visible in daily life in Mgeta. Yet, these positions may be outside the active lifeworlds as experienced. As mentioned above, this indicates a limited awareness of options in life. It is thus not surprising that teaching is more consistently rated, despite requiring education, as it is the profession most visible to school children.

There are two possible sources of bias which may explain these scores. The questionnaire was administered to those pupils who were in class, and one could expect those who value education negatively to be absent. However, the preference for further education is not surprising as education tends to confer prestige everywhere. The over-representation of girls may be another source of bias. More girls (88) than boys (62) answered the questionnaire. There are two possible explanations for this. The respondents were in the age groups when young people start to explore links with urban life. More males than females migrate, and this may be one explanation for the female surplus in the sample. Many young boys enter the vegetable trade between Mgeta and Dar es Salaam and will then be absent from school. Girls tend not to enter this trade (Van Donge, 1992a; 1992b). It is therefore not surprising that girls rated trade lower in career choice than boys. There may thus be a dependent relation between sex and career choice, albeit a weak one. There was definitely no ground for assuming dependence between sex and prestige ranking of professions.[11] The responses in general revealed, therefore, feelings which are felt independent of sex.

These preferences and expectations document thus a striking prevalence of particular sentiments among this group. Farming is a much more valued existence than either wage labour or trade. The claim is that, for preference, one does not enter trade. Trade is even less preferred than wage labour, although it is considered more remunerative. These ideological notions are thus in marked discord with social practice: social life in Mgeta is permeated by migration to urban areas and trade; people leave agriculture, which is in serious decline.

School leavers' perception of their situation

A pilot study administered the above mentioned questions in one school only. This gave a first indication of the prevalence of these strong feelings, which

contradict so obviously social practices in Mgeta. Further questions on farming, education and trade were added to the questionnaire to probe this issue. These were in the form of statements referring to actual social practice, many of which had been picked up in casual conversation. Respondents were asked to express agreement or disagreement on a four point scale or could opt for neutrality. The scores are summarised in Table 4.[12]

Table 4: Distribution of degree of agreement (%) with statements on education, agriculture and trade among school leavers in Mgeta

	Very true	True	Do not know	Not true	A lie
Education					
- One should work hard in school as education is useful in business and agriculture.	45.3	44.7		8	2
- Education is meaningless because it does not help you to get work.	3.4	9.5	5.4	56.8	25
- Very few people get places in higher education and it is therefore a waste to go to school.	9.6	13.7	14.4	41.1	21.2
- If you get educated you will get jobs with small salaries therefore it is better to do business.	6.7	36.8	4.0	39.6	22.8
Agriculture					
- People here in Mgeta cannot depend upon agriculture for a living because there is not enough land and especially land suitable for vegetable cultivation is scarce.	14.2	30.4	7.4	41.9	6.1
- It is easier to trade and earn money to buy food than to grow one's own food here in Mgeta.	7.3	12.7	3.3	68	8.7
- People here in Mgeta could earn much money from agriculture if they did not spend so much time on petty trade.	26.4	39.9	12.2	17.6	4.1
- Income from vegetable cultivation in business.	14.3	37.4	15.6	29.3	3.4
Trade					
- Trade is easier than farming.	10.1	21.6	12.2	48.0	8.1
- Here in Mgeta many people try to enter trade, but many fail.	37.2	43.4	14.5	2.8	2.1
- Traders become rich because they exploit peasants.	32.0	33.3	5.4	18.4	10.9

The most consistent finding was a positive valuation of education. This may not be surprising among children who are in school, but it is striking that this value was expressed independent of future career opportunities. A massive 90% agreed that education is a good thing because it helps in business and agriculture, and there were no abstentions. This item attracted the highest number of extreme scores, which were virtually all in support (strong agreement: 45.3%). A majority expressed positive feelings towards education in the other items referring specifically to education. A large majority (81.8%) disagreed with the statement that education is meaningless as it does not help you to get a job, while few expressed no opinion (5.4%). Strength of feeling was substantial, but not overwhelming (25% strong disagreement).

School was highly valued not only irrespective of employment opportunities, but also independent of the chance of further education. The undeniable fact is that very few of these pupils have a chance of further education, despite the fact that so many said that they want it. A sizable majority (62.3%) disagreed that schooling is a waste of time as so few people get places in higher education. Relatively many respondents were neutral (14.4%) and there was also considerable, though not dominant, strength of feeling (21.2% strong disagreement).

Further education tends to be geared to work in the formal sector. Wages and salaries are usually extremely low in this sector in Tanzania, and one would therefore expect more preference for a future in the informal sector. Yet, a majority (62.4%) expressed disagreement with the statement that 'If you manage to get higher education you will get work with a low salary and therefore it is better to go for a life in business'. In this case there were also few abstentions (4%) and again a fair number of extreme opinions in support of education (22.8%).

There is thus in this population a dominant strand of positive feeling towards education, which is not directly related to the possibility of further education or job opportunities. Education has a value in itself. However, when statements associate the effects of education with pessimistic estimations of life despite education (does not give more money, no job, no places in higher schooling), opinions are somewhat less homogeneous: more respondents have no opinion and the strength of support in one particular direction is less pronounced.

The statements with respect to agriculture did not reveal such unambiguous feelings as those on education. Majorities were smaller, strength of feeling was

less and relatively large proportions expressed no opinion. The statements aimed to elucidate the fact that pupils have high expectations of agriculture, while it is common wisdom that agriculture is in serious decline in Mgeta. It is commonplace in daily conversation in Mgeta to remark that 'People in Mgeta cannot depend on agriculture to make a living, because there is not enough land and few plots are suitable for vegetables which provide cash.' The statement did not, however, produce a clear consensus among the respondents. It is amazing, given the widely felt land shortage, that slightly more pupils disagreed than agreed (48% as against 44.6%).

In Mgeta, farming can hardly be considered independent of trade, because many people in the area raise the necessary cash (a.o. to buy food/maize) by trading. A large majority (76.7%), however, disagreed with the statement that it is easier/better to trade and buy food/maize instead of growing it oneself. A somewhat smaller majority (66.3%) agreed with the statement that people in Mgeta could earn more money if they concentrated on agriculture instead of spending so much time on petty trade.

These last two statements were framed as a clash of interest between agriculture and trading, but that is of course not necessarily so. Another statement suggested such complementarity: one needs income from vegetable plots to be successful in trading. However, this truism common in the community found a less unambivalent response than might have been expected: 51.7% agreed, 32.7% disagreed and 15.6% had no opinion.

Despite the tendency, mentioned above, to compare farming unfavourably with trade, only a small majority (56.1%) disagreed with the statement that trade is easier than farming. This should be seen in conjunction with a near consensus on the statement that many people in Mgeta tried to enter trade, but many fail: 80.6% agreed, and feeling was strong: 37.2% agreed very much. If trade is not seen as an easy option one could reasonably expect respect for successful trading, but that is not necessarily the case: 65.3% agreed with the statement that traders become rich because they exploit farmers. Few were neutral on this question (5.4%) and many expressed strong agreement (32%).

If we look at the statements which get the most unequivocal response then three elements may be distinguished: (a) education has a high value, but it is not primarily seen as a means of upward mobility, (b) farming tends to be highly valued, especially in opposition to trade and the dependency on the outside world this entails, (c) trade is considered a hazardous existence and it tends to

be seen as an activity at the expense of farmers.

A non-capitalist spirit

Successful indoctrination is one obvious explanation for the type of response to the questionnaire. **Education for self reliance** was part of Tanzania's Ujamaa ideology propagating anti-capitalist values and idealising rural life. If that is the case, then such values may lose meaning when confronted with the world outside school. In that world, the move to urban areas is dominant; for many people, trade is necessary to survive and -except for some- a living cannot be made from agriculture. It may also be that the questionnaire had structured responses to a large degree. A different picture might emerge in open, unstructured interviews with people who had left school a considerable time ago.

Such interviews were held, during a return visit to Tanzania in 1991, with people who had left primary school between three and ten years previously. Twenty interviews were held, half of those with people in Mgeta and the other half with people from Mgeta in Dar es Salaam. The response to open questions was poor in contrast to response to the structured statements which had been administered to the school leavers in 1989. The same pattern emerged in this session as mentioned above: farming was idealised and trade was valued little, if not despised.

Follow up questions were asked in these interviews, but these did not elucidate the contradiction between social thought and social practice. Farming was invariably accorded a higher preference and esteem than any other profession. Migrants in Dar es Salaam did not interpret their emigration as turning away from farming, but expected to be farming one day. The response to an open question as to what they expected to be doing twenty years from now inevitably elicited farming as a response in both Mgeta and Dar es Salaam. Further questioning as to what kind of farming invariably led to their mentioning the same crops as are now grown in Mgeta. Nobody mentioned farming outside Mgeta as an option. The agronomic problems of Mgeta -shortage of land, declining fertility and erosion- were never spontaneously mentioned. A great belief in the power of science (utalaam) to be disseminated by government was the response to confrontation with such problems. The content of such a scientific approach to farming was vague, except for one element: the use of artificial fertilizer. Conservation, more intensive care of the land and a search

for new crops were conspicuously absent in such replies. The idealisation of agriculture appeared to be an ideological flight from the great problems confronting the area.

Responses to questions on trade were similarly stereotyped and universal, but in a negative way. All respondents, even if they were traders themselves, agreed with the statement that traders exploit farmers. The antagonism between farmers and traders was often vehemently stated, and many complaints were voiced about the unreliability of traders who would take goods on credit and then not pay. To an outside observer, this would suggest the possibility of respect for a successful trader who is at the same time dependable and trustworthy. Such sentiments were not even voiced after probing. The idea of a trader being successful through skill simply did not exist.

These responses thus do not represent an aversion to the form which involvement in wider networks has taken for people in Mgeta, but a generalised negative response to such involvement *per se*. The spirit manifested is therefore a non-capitalist spirit and not an anti-capitalist one demanding reform. Tanzania's socialist policies never aroused enthusiasm in Mgeta, and socialist sentiments are simply not heard.[13]

A guiding idea in these qualitative interviews was to probe for the existence of an achievement orientation.[14] Two questions were essential for that: first, whom they considered a successful person in life and, second, what they expected to be doing in twenty years time. The answer to the second question was unambiguous: farming. The first question drew less response. Respondents simply did not state role models of successful people. It is likely that there was no elaborately constructed lifeworld as to what can and should be achieved. The statements from the questionnaire on the other hand, as stated above, elicited lively responses and must have tapped important issues. The spirit evoked may best be called a non-capitalist spirit. Living off the land is eulogised; participation in wider exchange networks involving trade is abhorred and standards of achievement through competition are not developed. This mentality is above all evoked for public display. It was virtually impossible to speak to people alone during these interviews, and most took the form of group sessions. The result was a great deal of playing to the audience during which there was actual resentment if the ideological representation of independent life on the land was questioned.

Such display buttressed thus the socially formed perceptions of economic life. If people face the discrepancy with actual social behaviour, they have to retreat into a private world. The following incident illustrates this:

The discussion on farming, trade and education was rambling along the familiar themes in a household composed of a mother, her daughters and the male household head. The latter suddenly stood up and started a long monologue. He boasted of the family's educational achievements which were unusual in Mgeta. Several of the children were teachers and junior civil servants. He claimed it all stemmed from one thing: the power of the hoe. His hard work on the land, combined with following advice from the agricultural advisor, was the reason for success. He denied any fundamental problems in agriculture in Mgeta like land scarcity, erosion or declining soil fertility.

My research assistant afterwards expressed surprise about his behaviour. The man is usually taciturn, and my assistant mentioned beer as the explanation for his eloquence. He also presented a very different explanation for the educational success in that family. The successful children were born previous to the man's relationship with these children's mother. They had been educated by a maternal grandfather who was a relatively successful shopkeeper. The successfully educated children had associated more with that household than with their mother's. They even refused to stay with their mother on holidays. The maternal grandfather died a considerable time ago. The man's bitterness about relations with his wife's father lingered on after the father's death. The family was embroiled in many conflicts in which the new husband was a main protagonist, and he was instigating a dispute about the well-built house which was left to his wife's sister. The wife's sister's children are also -by Mgeta standards- unusually successful in education. They are among the very few who pass the primary school examination, one is in secondary school and one is a middle ranking civil servant (my research assistant).

The presentation of himself as a successful man who had educated children was thus not true. His strong affirmation of the values of agriculture stemmed more from a position of weakness than of strength. The position of males in Mgeta is often weak. During the interview, he sat apart from the others, suggesting marginality in the group. This is not unusual in Mgeta. It not only expresses the separate social spheres of male and female, but also reflects the marginal position males can have in the strongly matrilineal Luguru society. This is reinforced by uxorilocality: in this case also, the man had moved to his wife's place (Van Donge, 1992a). He represented therefore a much more general

phenomenon. It is virtually impossible in Mgeta to build and maintain a household depending on the land, and it is thus not attractive to males to form a family there. His response to this situation was a denial of facts as a form of regression. Again this is socially reaffirmed. It is rare in Mgeta to penetrate the private worlds which may hold different interpretations. It happened in this case because my research assistant was part of the social situation.

This incident reveals how the values as expressed in responses to the questionnaire function. The value of education is above doubt and needs no defence or dispute. The values of farming, making a living on the land, need to be asserted forcefully. The hidden meaning in this public display affirming the value of work on the land was to deny the legitimacy of gain through trade. The mentality expressed was obviously at odds with the realities of life in Mgeta, but was pervasive wherever we talked about these issues. It seems therefore unlikely that such sentiments are merely the result of indoctrinations through primary school.

Conclusion: Life worlds and social practice

The guiding idea of this research has been to search for the social construction of the actors' lifeworlds in order to elucidate the particular trajectory of social change in a particular area. Life expectations of primary school leavers seemed a suitable entry point to explain why one particular trajectory emerges rather than another.[15] In the case of Mgeta, migration and trade are the dominant response to land pressure, and the question is why these are opted for instead of others: e.g., investment in education or different agricultural practices. The underlying assumption was that social practice is structured by socially embedded interpretations of the world.

This assumption appeared to be problematic. Social beliefs and social practices appear to be not congruous but in discord among these school leavers. Agriculture, while declining as a resource base, was idealised as a source of livelihood. A massive drift to urban areas -with activity therein replacing agriculture as an economic mainstay- is a dominant fact of life in the area. Trade pervades life in Mgeta, but is seen as an undesirable -even a despicable- way to make a living. The dominant feeling appears to be an aversion to involvement in wider exchange, while such involvement is at the same time an undeniable fact of life.

Such opinions -idealising an independent existence on the land- reflect a recourse to what Hyden (1980) considers values belonging to a peasant mode of production. According to him, Tanzania is characterised by an uncaptured peasantry which can have recourse to withdrawal from state and market in autarchic households. These peasant values are contradictory to the spirit of accumulation and economic transformation typical for capitalism. The world view as revealed in the questionnaire is indeed inimical to accumulation and economic transformation. It is not, however, a direct, linear consequence of a peasant mode of production as defined by Hyden, because withdrawal from wider networks is impossible. Even food security is impossible in Mgeta, and there are other cash needs as well. The beliefs presented here are not -as Hyden suggests- a logical interpretation of a factual social situation, but rather they are discordant with the facts of social practice.

Implicit in Hyden's analysis is the belief that social practice results from rational calculation, given, particularly, socially induced utility preferences. That assumption is -as stated above- also common in collective choice analysis which is advocated as a tool to interpret heterogeneity in development outcomes. Such a belief in the rationally calculating actor may, however, reflect too simplistic a theory of human motivation.

Insights from social psychology illustrate this. For example: Festinger's research into cognitive dissonance showed that people do not automatically construct lifeworlds on the basis of rational perception. If facts do not fit established modes of thought, people do not automatically change their ways of thinking. They can deny such facts or maintain contradictory beliefs, and this implies a much more multi-stranded construction of lifeworlds than the ordering of preferences of behaviour on the basis of expected outcomes (Festinger et al., 1956). There is also a considerable body of evidence from research in social psychology that group pressures are a significant factor in the maintenance of established beliefs (Krech et al., 1962).

The lifeworlds captured in this research may well be explained in such terms. The socially-induced world view represses socially relevant, but painful, facts. Confrontation with such facts -i.e. declining fertility, erosion, land scarcity- leads to the call for a *deus ex machina*: solutions are expected to come from outside -from government- and science plays a messianic role in this. The dominant feeling appears to be an aversion to involvement in wider exchange while this latter is an undeniable fact of life. Self-sufficiency in food is a value which is often endorsed, but at the same time people acknowledge that it is

becoming less and less possible because of land shortage, soil exhaustion, etc. The eulogisation of agriculture may be closely related to regression into a past, which may also be a mythical past. Repression of painful facts can play an important role in the way agriculture is valued in Mgeta, and this probably lessens the pain of facing economic decline.

Such an explanation transcends the level of the individual. Indeed, it was characteristic that the high value assigned to agriculture and the low value assigned to trade were both socially strongly endorsed. The discrepancy between social thought and social practice as found in Mgeta fits Merton's definition of anomie: 'when the cultural and social structure are malintegrated, the first calling for behaviour and attitudes which the second precludes' (Merton, 1956; p.163). He refers then to the American prescription to all to be successful, while success in a competitive situation is accessible to only a few. He discerns various possible reactions to this, ranging from aggression to withdrawal. The dominant response in Mgeta to the impossibility of adhering to the socially-induced ideal seems to be ritualism: the socially-approved norms must be endorsed but they do not structure behaviour.

It is tempting to conclude, then, that these ideas are simply irrelevant to action here. However, the fact that the social interpretation of reality may be less determinant for social action than is often assumed does not mean it is unimportant. It must make a difference to be a successful trader in an environment where trade is prestigious as compared with one where trade is despised. The obstacles to public discussion of the real problems of erosion, land exhaustion, monocropping, etc., are evident from this material. The analysis of social interpretations of the world remains an integral part of the analysis of social life, albeit that a determinist linear perspective -as is, e.g., assumed in the utility maximising actor- makes no sense in situations like in Mgeta.

The implications for development practice may be significant. A focus on human agency which has the rational actor as its core can easily lead to idealisation of participatory administrative procedures and/or the working of the market as a place where rationality can be realised. The task of development research is then seen as freeing the rationality of the actors. Ultimately, this also assumes a simplistic theory of motivation.[16] Research like this reveals that people's preferences are much more multi-stranded and embedded in lifeworlds full of ambiguity and contradiction. Development research can clarify the picture, and this may be helpful. The research presented in this article does not

suggest however that participatory procedures or liberalisation of market forces will free the repressed energies of rational actors.

This can be illustrated with the case of educational reform. The relationship between social practice and lifeworlds may be less linear than proponents of educational reform assume, but that does not mean that educational reform is meaningless. An obvious conclusion from this research is that primary school leavers in Mgeta are mentally poorly equipped to face threatening poverty in a life of petty trade or marginal farming. The research raises the question of how to give rural life and agriculture an adequate meaning instead of a merely ritualistic ideological one.

Nyerere's **Education for self reliance** has not lost its actuality as a call to prepare children for the actual economic conditions in which they will find themselves. A call to revitalise rural life seems eminently sensible in Mgeta, especially if that presented an alternative to a life at the margin in urban areas. However, an ideological embrace of rural life as exposed by these school leavers in Mgeta will not give rise to different practices. That would require a much more ambiguous appreciation of rural life which discerns the problems in living off the land in an area like Mgeta. Such an appreciation could have a more structuring influence on behaviour. Educational reform which leads to changes in social practice requires, therefore, more study of actual life chances and lifeworlds. The researcher who passes by may enlighten the way social practices are created. The actual creation of such practices is, and remains, up to the actors: the people in the educational system and the people of Mgeta.

Notes

1. Such ideas have a long history e.g.: 'The Phelps-Stokes commission expressed the view, that the low esteem for agriculture resulted from the type of education given' (Kaayk, 1968:91). Mrs. Phelps-Stokes was an American lady who left money for a study of education in Africa in the early 1920s.

2. A total of 158 pupils, drawn from five schools distributed throughout the division, answered a questionnaire in class. Only eight questionnaires had to be discarded as the pupils were obviously not literate enough to answer the questions. The findings of this survey deserve attention as they raise important issues in the interpretation of rural change in Tanzania, but they are presented with the following reservation. The respondents are not necessarily representative of their age group in Mgeta, because those who were in class are not necessarily all those who should have been in class. The schools were chosen randomly, but one cannot say whether the young people who attend school are representative of the youth in Mgeta.

3. The concept of a lifeworld has entered sociology through the work of the phenomenologist, Alfred Schutz. Berger and Luckmann (1966) used it as the core of a theoretical framework and defined it as an ontological community which structures social action. The concept is also prominent in the sociology of Habermas, who defines it as follows: 'In their interpretative accomplishments the members of a communication community demarcate the one objective world and their intersubjectively shared world from the subjective world of individuals and other collectivities' (Habermas, 1980:70). Berger and Luckmann's definition is more direct and unambiguous. Habermas lumps the 'one objective world' and the intersubjectively shared world together in his definition. The analysis of lifeworlds in this article implies, however, an analysis of 'an intersubjectively shared world' which is an interpretation by actors of phenomena which are accessible to observation and in that sense part of an objective world. The focus is on the relationship between the objective world and the lifeworld. Neither does this article share Habermas' normative commitment to search for -true- communicative rationality in which reason is freed. Empirical research can, in my opinion, clarify the way in which the world is socially interpreted, but cannot find a true interpretation binding on the actors involved.

4. Bates distinguishes three fundamental principles in the 'collective choice school of political economy', one of which is the premise of rational choice. He allows for imperfect information, because people may choose to be ignorant. He maintains however: 'It requires only that choice makers order alternative courses of action in terms of the consequences for the values they seek to obtain and that they

choose that alternative which they expect to yield the most favourable outcome.' (Bates, 1983:135). The research findings in this paper debate precisely this assumption.

5. The theoretical sociology of Anthony Giddens displays a similar way of reasoning, and this research may therefore be relevant to basic assumptions in his structuration theory. The basic assumption of Giddens' structuration theory is the duality of social structure: society is structured by actors in social practices and such practices structure in turn the behaviour of actors. This is thus highly relevant to the quest for a role of agency in development theory. Booth (1992:22) appreciates this. He quotes Giddens: 'Macro-structures are in part the result of the unintended consequences of numerous social acts and interactions which become the enabling and constraining conditions of social action itself'. Unintended consequences play thus a significant role in explaining the divergence between subjective intentions and actual outcomes in society similar to collective choice theory. This research material does not suggest however that such a divergence is the result of unintended outcomes. Outcomes result from different behaviour than that buttressed by socially endorsed intentions.

   Giddens allows a central role for the knowledgeable and capable actor in his theory: e.g., 'The purposive content of everyday action consists *in the continual successful 'monitoring' by the actor of his own activity* (his italics), it is indicative of a casual mastery of day to day events that men normally take for granted' (Giddens, 1976:82). Such successful reflexive monitoring may exist, but not necessarily so. It is thus more a matter for empirical verification than an assumption beyond questioning.

   Berger and Luckmann (1966) use the concept of multiple realities in lifeworlds, but do not spell out the consequences for the relationships between lifeworlds and action. As Douglas (1971) remarked: they 'make very sparing use of any careful observations of concrete situations and give very little consideration to the problem of objectivity'. A linear correspondence between thought and action is then easily assumed.

6. This was already an essential element of the Uluguru Land Usage Scheme (ULUS) which the colonial government tried to implement in the area in the fifties. It had to be abandoned in the face of popular resistance (Fosbrooke and Young, 1960 and interview with Mr. H. Tomkins Russell -extension worker for ULUS in Mgeta, Honiton, September 1990). Missionaries who worked in the area expressed similar views. The same agronomic themes crop up in the work of the Franco-Tanzanian horticultural project which is presently active in the area.

7. The area is staunchly Catholic and is a fertile recruiting field for the priesthood. The quality of primary school leavers who wanted to enter minor seminary declined so much however that the Catholic Church started an intermediary school

for remedial teaching and further selection.

8. The household survey covered nine neighbourhoods randomly selected in various parts of Mgeta division (for further details see van Donge, 1992a. p.78). Only one head in the 201 households had more than primary education, and he was absent working in the diplomatic service in a junior position. Children were or had been following post primary education in only a few cases (14 households). If children were continuing education then usually a number of children in one household progressed beyond primary school. Such children as a rule attained modest positions like teacher, clerk, machine operator. Only one household could boast of a university student, doing medicine in Dar es Salaam. Typically, he was supported by educated brothers and sisters who were working in junior capacities in one of the international hotels in Dar es Salaam.

9. Heijnen (1968) and Kaayk (1976) found in Mwanza such a realistic appreciation of possibilities: peasant farming was considered a desirable option given the market position in which school leavers found themselves.

10. There is much criticism of the behaviour of priests. Apart from common human weaknesses, they tend to stay for very short periods in these rural communities. Catholicism continues, however, to have a virtual monopoly in Mgeta.

11. Crosstabulation by sex; Chi square; D.F.; Significance

Choice of farming	10.69589	4	.0302
Respect for farming	11.69835	7	.1109
Choice trade Dar-Mgeta	20.28154	4	.0004
Respect trade Dar-Mgeta	2.21271	7	.816
Choice trade in town	17.35040	3	.0006
Respect trade Dar market	2.31647	7	.404

12. Three statements have been left out of consideration in this article because they appeared not to add anything to the subject matter discussed here. The responses to these statements do not, however, contradict in any way the pattern described here.

13. For example, there are cooperatives in Mgeta, but these are dominated by traders who thus get access to lorries etc. on favourable terms from the government. I have found no trace of an egalitarian movement channelling in other directions this resentment against profits made at their expense.

14. The idea was to administer similar questions as Levine (1966) did in Nigeria. He analyzed dreams among different ethnic groups in Nigeria as to achievement orientation. There was, however, an absolute unwillingness to discuss dream content. Levine studied secondary school pupils as well, and one can expect that these have more elaborate social interpretations.

15. For example, differential responses between areas to further education has been explained as resulting from a rational interpretation of scarcities. Kerner (1984) compared the advantageous educational position of Chagga girls on Kilimanjaro with the position of young girls in Tabora, where girls are seen primarily as farm/household labour and procreator. She explains the difference as the result of the land shortage in Kilimanjaro, which orients both male and female children towards the urban job market and commercial activities rather than farming. Education for girls then makes sense as an insurance for old age, especially as girls tend to remit more and will think about their mothers who have a marginal position in the patriarchal Chagga society. Her explanations postulate, therefore, a direct causality between the interpretation of the socio-economic situation and behaviour of school leavers. Such determinism does not make sense, however, in a comparison between the Wachagga and the Waluguru. Both areas suffer from land scarcity, and massive outward migration is the major response. Unlike the Wachagga, however, the Waluguru have not responded with massive investment in education and neither is there such a pronounced gender difference in access to higher education among the Waluguru as in Kilimanjaro (Cooksey, 1990). From the perspective of a rational interpretation of scarcities, both areas should show the same pattern, but they do not. The value of the material presented here may be that it points to ways of overcoming the limits of such economistic interpretations.

16. The following quotation from Hammersley (1992: p.15) does not refer to development theory as such, but is highly relevant there as well: 'it is true that a strong theme in much ethnographic research is what we might call an urbane romanticism that celebrates the diverse forms of rationality, skills and morality to be found among ordinary people, including (indeed especially) those who are conventionally regarded as irrational and/or immoral'. This judgement applies , for example, equally well to the literature -initiated by Richards (1985)- which defends local knowledge in agriculture in opposition to practices promoted by agronomists. This article does not deny the value of seeking for rationality -in the sense of motivated purposive behaviour- among actors, but disputes the assumption that such rationality must necessarily exist.

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CHAPTER 8

EPILOGUE: THE RELEVANCE OF ETHNOGRAPHY FOR DEVELOPMENT THEORY

The articles presented in this thesis are empirical in nature: arguments are grounded primarily in observation. Observation is of course always influenced by the frame of mind of the observer, but the latter should also be challenged by observation. The introduction described how hypotheses and theoretical assumptions changed continuously during the research. The thesis claims therefore to develop images of society primarily through reasoning on the basis of observation and not through observation which is structured from particular theoretical positions.

This may give rise to objections. One is the accusation of glorified empiricism. Research is used in this thesis to question theoretical perspectives, but one may object that this leads to an affirmation of the endless diversity of social situations, which is not particularly insightful either. A related objection may be that the analysis has a positivist tone. Hence, the preoccupation with observation may ignore the role of interpretation and ordering of the field material. More explicit attention to interpretation would - following that argument - not only have done justice to the process of analysis, but would also have led to a wider relevance of the material in the search for regularities in human behaviour. Neglecting interpretation and stressing observation leads merely to documenting diversity, instead of exposing general tendencies in human behaviour. Moreover, this thesis does not even have the pretention of middle range theory, which assumes that an interplay between empirical study and grand theory can give rise to theories of a wide scope which can be empirically validated (Merton, 1956).

This study, then, does not claim to be generalisable. Its approach is rooted in the ethnographic tradition (Hammersley, 1992). Some use has been made of questionnaires, but the research is more grounded in the natural situations of

ongoing social life than in artificially created research devices such as the interview. Attention has been paid to representativeness. For example, the initial survey covered randomly selected neighbourhoods in four subdivisions (wards) of Mgeta, but representativeness was not an overriding goal. The in-depth study of particular situations - for example the string of conflicts between the children of Emmanuel Benda and Lussiano Gabriel - was considered equally relevant. Despite its modesty with respect to generalisability and representativeness, the thesis seeks to do more, however, than merely present empirical information on a specific situation. The articles aim to offer perspectives on social change which can sensitize the mind to look differently at many other situations. My approach to the relationship between theory and empirical research aims more at developing frames of mind for observing society than achieving definite knowledge and follows logically from an 'ontology of potentials' (Cohen, 1989).

Actors are thus attributed a creative role in structuring the forms which society takes, but it does not follow that actors can structure such social forms without constraints - the title of this thesis is after all 'Trapped in Decline' - and the degree to which they can is a matter for empirical verification. There remains, however, the potential for change through the social practices of actors. The thesis documents powerful social forces that lead to economic stagnation and decline, though it would be possible, for example, for farmers in Mgeta to give up the uneconomic cultivation of maize and switch to the large scale cultivation of some crop (such as cooking bananas) which would give a cash income. That could change the relative attraction of migration to the cities for young males, the desirability of marriage in the area, etc. Hence, if one accepts this potential for change, knowledge of society can by its very nature be only fragmentary and incomplete since not all possible variants of human behaviour can be known. The social sciences can more profitably aim, therefore, at achieving insights into the possibilities of human behaviour rather than at looking for regularities, or what some have called 'social laws'. The question of whether this behaviour is exceptional or typical (representative or generalisable) is then irrelevant. The value of research is the contribution it makes to insights into the nature of social life - or social theory - through the analysis of specific situations showing the variety of forms which social behaviour can take, instead of trying to capture social life in definite formulas.

This epilogue contends that research in the ethnographic tradition can resolve what has been called an 'impasse' in development theory. The state of the art in development theory or development studies may be summed up by the

famous question that is said to be typical in a German university course: '*Gibt es überhaupt so etwas wie Entwicklung?*' (Can one speak about development at all?) There appear to be many differential outcomes of development trajectories and, somewhat embarassingly, development theory could not accommodate recent historical phenomena such as the collapse of communist social systems or the rise of newly industrialising countries.

Booth (1985) argued in a seminal article that neo-marxist dependency theory led development theory into an impasse since it was deterministic, tautological and functionalist. In other words, development theory fitted facts into explanations, but did not explain anything. His article initiated a debate which gave rise to imaginative attempts to overcome this impasse. In a recent state of the art article (Booth, 1992) he is optimistic and talks about post-impasse research. He proposes an agenda for development research which asks for more theoretical coherence, renewed interest in an interdisciplinary comprehensive view and a reconstitution of political economy. He opposes 'glorified empiricism' (p.14) as it lacks realism unless reconciled with an understanding of larger structures. For development research to be 'relevant', such realism demands renewed attention to structural concepts (Booth, 1992:19/32). 'Social research has a useful, and even critical, part to play, not just as a specialist field concerned with measuring improvements or declines in social indicators, but in understanding the process of change and development as a whole' (Booth, 1992:2).

The articles in this thesis may score poorly on Booth's agenda and may be condemned as 'glorified empiricism'. The thesis claims that rural Tanzania is a fragmented economic world: Mgeta, with its related social networks in Dar es Salaam, is one of these fragments. The articles argue that socio-economic life in rural Tanzania, and in Mgeta in particular, must primarily be understood as a social construction of local actors, the understanding of larger structures of secondary relevance. Yet, I believe that this approach may contribute more to breaking through the impasse of development theory than Booth's plea for a return to more comprehensive views of development (the reconstitution of political economy). I do not claim that the study of the particular in relatively small settings is the only way to get to grips with the problems of the impasse. On the contrary, below I shall, for example, point to the relevance of Braudel's history of the long duration as well. I want to stress, however, the relevance of the ethnographic tradition - especially the in-depth study of the particular - the clarification of three persistent problems in development theory. Briefly, these three problems are: first, an inability to accommodate heterogeneity of

outcomes; second, a tendency towards ethnocentrism, which may not be sufficiently recognised; and third, a lack of attention to the way in which social order is formed, and consequently a failure to appreciate and take account of the effect of such order on the growth and decline of an economy. The resolution of these problems is crucial to anyone living in or observing Africa. This epilogue builds on foundations laid by Long (1977). He stated earlier and more squarely than others that development theory - whether in the idiom of modernisation or of the neo-Marxist variant - does not allow sufficiently for heterogeneity or the differential outcomes of social change, and he proposed the ethnographic study of entrepreneurship and strategic action as a way to overcome these difficulties.

Ethnography and the problem of heterogeneity

The forms of socio-economic life in Mgeta are primarily seen in this thesis as shaped from below. Migration to town, the aging population structure and the female surplus are some of many possible responses to pressure on land. Trade in Dar es Salaam is atomised, but could equally be organised in wider and stable networks. Land conflicts could be settled outside the courts and would not even erupt if binding rules were authoritatively developed. Such an analysis can easily give an impression of voluntarism. It may also give the impression that insufficient attention has been paid to the fact that people may be pressed into particular patterns of behaviour by power structures, which are likely to be external. That is a major theme in the reconsideration of development theory. Heterogeneity and diversity of outcomes in social change have led to a focus on human agency as an explanatory factor, and there is a running theme that places human agency in a broader whole in order to save the idea from voluntarism. Booth (1992) not only asks for the 'understanding of development as a whole', but he also does not accept 'variety' and 'particularism' and insists on 'patterns of diversity'. He attacks in this respect 'those working at the micro, or actor-oriented and of the social research spectrum' (p.15/16). He deplores a lack of attention to 'structural concept formation' which ignores 'objective' realities concerning 'the structural locations of individuals and groups', especially in class positions (pp. 25,27). Such phraseology has resonances of neo-marxist development theory which persists in world system theory.

Such theorising has had to take account of unexpected historical developments and the resultant change in the role of Marxism in world affairs. Yet, the main proponent of world system theory, Wallerstein, continues to adhere to the

central tenets of world system theory as derived from Marxism:

> '... the whole set of characteristics we call to mind with the locution 'underdevelopment' - that is non-wage-labor forms of market production, marginalization and squatting, a distended tertiary sector... etc. - are neither anomalies nor survivals, but creations of the capitalist mode of production which are inherent parts of its functioning' (Wallerstein, 1991:161).

The idea of a world system persists also in Corbridge's (1990) response to Booth (1985). In his view, the world system is the object of study of development studies, but has changed so radically that it 'has begun to resist the conventional narratives of the discipline'. He therefore proposes an alternative conceptualisation, 'post-imperialism', which presents itself as a theory of international oligarchy. In such reasoning the essentialist idea of development is retained. The impasse results from the fact that social science has not grasped it properly.

Another reaction to Booth (1985), by Vandergeest and Buttel (1988), proposes a neo-Weberian approach in which the analysis of power relations, and most notably the state, is given a central role. Booth (1991) also singles out the state, politics and especially national politics as a major focus of attention for getting to grips with the above mentioned 'objective realities'.

The articles in this thesis present an antithesis to world system analysis and I would be at a loss to interpret the empirical material as shaped by its encapsulation in a world capitalist system. Capitalism assumes accumulation of capital and that was notably absent, except in the sense that some people could accumulate for certain periods. The Waluguru trading community in Dar es Salaam can be called a distended tertiary sector and their lives are of course influenced by wider phenomena such as urbanisation in Tanzania or the importation of commercial vehicles. But I see no way in which I can take these as central factors in analyzing their socio-economic life, unlike, for example, the desire to avoid risk in collaboration with others. The latter explains the specific social form of the *madalali*. There may be an 'international oligarchy' and it may extend into Tanzania, but I could not find its influence in Mgeta or among traders from Mgeta in Dar es Salaam. The state and politics are part of socio-economic life in Tanzania, but their influence was found to be marginal in the lives of farmers and traders from Mgeta. The nation state is present and one might argue that everyday life in Mgeta is tied to an international capitalist

system because money pervades social life. That does not mean however that socio-economic life in Mgeta is subsumed under the forces of the nation state and the world capitalist system. The possibility that the influence of these institutions is minimal or even absent must remain open. Development theory can only cope with the possibilities of the heterogeneity of outcomes if it leaves the importance of such influences to empirical verification. Ethnographic research is - as stressed above - particularly valuable for probing the range of such possible relations.

Ethnography and the problem of ethnocentrism

The diversity and heterogeneity in outcomes of social change question the very idea of development - in the sense of social change emanating from a general notion of human history. A possible conclusion is that development is no more than an essentialist mental construct. However, at the same time as development theory questions its central concept, evolutionary ideas remain current elsewhere in the social sciences. For example, the term modernity has become increasingly prominent in the theorising of Giddens. He mentions time-space distanciation and disembedding mechanisms as two essential elements of modernity. Social life becomes more and more intertwined over wider spaces and through time. This requires organisation through disembedding mechanisms. Money is an obvious example of such a mechanism as it makes trade and economic exchange possible in situations of time-space distanciation (Giddens, 1990; 1991). Elias's concept of figuration has a similar meaning. Figurations are sets of interdependent social relationships in which people find themselves increasingly enmeshed due to the development of new divisions of labour, markets and the nation state (Elias, 1971).

Life in Mgeta is undoubtedly caught up in wider exchange networks: food imports are increasingly important; migration to town is a dominant feature; and trade in vegetables is a crucial part of the economy. Mgeta is therefore clearly part of modernity and people are bound together in figurations. Yet, how far does this explain the particular forms that socio-economic life takes? Such evolutionary perspectives tend towards ethnocentrism and from these broad processes of social change specific consequences are inferred for the organisation of society.

Elias has a clear developmental perspective. The title of his main work, *The Civilizing Process* (1982), indicates unambiguously an evolutionary perspective.

He aims to uncover a universal process based on scientific observation and regrets that the attention paid to long-term social processes characteristic of 19th century sociology has been lost. His theorising is grounded upon a wealth of empirical material, but the fact that this is all from Western Europe may explain the lack of response to his work in development studies. He examines the historical processes through which manners, social stratification and states evolved, and continue to evolve, and the effects of these processes on acceptable patterns of behaviour, both from a social and psychical point of view. (The significant subtitle of the book is 'sociogenetic and psychogenetic' research.) He discusses the tensions, particularly violence and fear, and the interactions that lead to changes in behaviour and in mindsets. For him, the ultimate civilisation (as yet unattained) is the achievement of lasting harmony on an economic and political level between and within states, and on a personal level between the behavioural requirements of society and the needs and wants of the individual. He is of the opinion that, if a clear understanding of civilising processes can be reached, then the directions these processes take can be more directly controlled in an effort to strike a desirable balance. He illustrates his point using the example of the way in which human drives or instincts have been harnessed in Western Europe through mechanisms as divergent as table manners or the privatisation of sexual behaviour. These drives had to be disciplined because human beings were involved in more and wider figurations of interdependent social relationships as a consequence of the development of the division of labour, markets and the nation state. He attacks natio- and egocentric thinking which denies the fact that every human being and every group is incorporated into a long-term process of increasing interdependency. Evolution of society leads to more and more complicated, differentiated and integrated figurations and these generate civilisation.

Elias' theoretical framework is open to the charge of ethnocentrism. His theorising is wholly grounded on material from Western Europe. Western Europe is clearly seen as the cradle of civilisation and the mechanisms of control developed there are assumed to be superior to those developed elsewhere. He even goes so far as to see colonisers from Western Europe as agents in the spread of this civilisation. Nevertheless there are appealing aspects in Elias' theory from a development perspective. Firstly, the idea of figuration entails interdependency - it is thus open to wide variations in power relations and can thereby avoid centrism. Secondly, Elias allows for human agency. Interdependency is a basic premiss in regard to actors, but figurations may take many forms.

The concept of figuration therefore escapes the danger of determinism which looms large in development studies. But it is highly problematic that the theory assumes an automatic link between increasing interdependencies in wider economic and political figurations and civilisation which governs human cooperation on an increasingly large scale.

The papers presented here show indeed that interdependency within wider structures is inescapable - if only because the need for and use of money is so obvious - but this does not automatically lead to increased social integration. Social integration should not be associated merely with formal, well-defined or hierarchical social structures; it may be brought about by informal, highly fluid and decentralised ones, but there should be a minimum of reliability or solidarity in social relations. As Granovetter (1985) has argued, the analysis of economic life must put the problem of order on the agenda. Such order can take a multitude of forms, and economic life has to be understood as embedded in social relations. However, he assumes an inherent rationality from which order will emerge (1985:506) and this is doubtful. Order or social integration is not a given in society when people are caught up in wider exchange networks, but rather something which has to be constructed. Such construction may be more or less successful and, as this thesis shows, can be very risky.

Becoming embroiled in a court case over land is a continual risk in Mgeta and there is a dearth of effective coordinating mechanisms to regulate the distribution of land. Many households are increasingly dependent upon links with households outside the area to obtain cash, but not all of them succeed in establishing such links. Traders from Mgeta in Dar es Salaam structure their economic behaviour on the assumption that it is extremely risky to rely on other people.

Life in Mgeta is embedded in cash links through migration and trade, but there is more atomisation of society than social integration. The analysis of the Tanzanian national economy shows numerous production initiatives oriented towards the market, and a search for cash seems to be a main feature of economic life. Yet, the economy is only minimally integrated into a single whole. The analysis of trade and law, for example, shows social integration to be highly problematic.

Giddens' writings on modernity may be more promising in this respect, albeit that there are similar ethnocentric and evolutionary notions in his work. He contrasts 'modern' with 'pre-modern' in extremely conventional terms: kinship

and tradition are said to be characteristic of the latter, and contractual relations of the former. He describes pre-modern society as static and leaves no room, for example, for the persistence of kinship constructions under conditions of modernity. 'No other, more traditional social forms have been able to contest this power (of the nation state and systematic capitalist production) in respect of maintaining complete autonomy outside the trends of global development' (Giddens 1990:174). Such a statement comes close to world system theory. Again, the empirical material presented in this thesis shows an involvement in time-space distanciation which cannot be immediately subsumed under the forces of the nation state and a world capitalist system. Giddens also writes mainly about modernity in the context of industrialised societies and considers reflexivity in social life as typical of the modern condition. The problems that can arise from the notion of the reflexive actor were referred to in the introduction. The present research gives no reason to believe that encapsulation in time-space distanciation leads automatically to actors structuring their social practice guided by more elaborate interpretations of the world in circumstances where such interpretations are constant subjects of doubt and debate.

There are, however, two aspects of Giddens's writing on modernity which may offer enlightening perspectives. His central idea of structuration, which acknowledges the practices of actors as formative of social structures, allows for diversity of outcomes. Thus, 'Many kinds of cultural response to such institutions - nation state and world capitalist system - are possible given world cultural diversity as a whole' (Giddens, 1990:175). Secondly, he describes modernity as a risky project. Time-space distanciation requires coordinating mechanisms, which require trust. He writes harrowingly about the trust that we need to have in those scientists who manage nuclear technology. Such concepts come close to the kernel of this empirical material: that social order has to be constructed and that this is a risky project.

If, however, modernity - in the sense of involvement in figurations or time-space distanciation - is seen as an inevitable condition of present-day life which can take many forms, then it has a limited descriptive value and offers little prospect of providing explanations. This implies that social science has little predictive value, while such value is often inherent in the idea of development which aims to uncover patterns of social change on the assumption that these changes are inherent in history.

Such questioning of the idea of development is central in postmodernism. It figures prominently in a debate about globalisation and localisation: 'Although

we live in an increasingly interdependent world, it remains a world 'marked by an organisation of diversity rather than a replication of uniformity' (Hannerz, 1990:237), (Smart, 1993:142). Such a perspective is common in postmodern thinking: 'Postmodernism is both a symptom and a powerful cultural image of the swing away from the conceptualisation of global culture less in terms of alleged homogenizing processes ....and more in terms of the diversity, variety and richness of popular and local discourses, codes and practices which resist and play-back systemicity and order' (Featherstone, 1990:2). The influence of a world system is in some respects undeniable in Mgeta; for example, Coca-Cola, Aspirin and Shell are there. Yet, this does not figure prominently in the articles in this thesis, because their presence does not tell us much about social life in the area. World system theory, which assumes a trend towards homogenisation, simply does not do justice to existing empirical material.

Postmodernism is referred to in debates on development theory, but the epistemological questions it poses are not seriously addressed. These expose sharply the ethnocentric tendencies which creep into the idea of development. Postmodernism discards the grand narratives which are an essential part of development theory. That seems logical since empirical realities do not fit these. Postmodernists criticise the idea of development mostly from a philosophical angle however: the idea of progress through history, as implied in the 'enlightenment', is rejected. Social sciences must give up the project of discovering the laws of history and restrict themselves to the role of interpreter (Bauman, 1992; Docherty, 1993). A postmodernist perspective can be a radical one and touches on the problems of ethnocentrism referred to above:

> 'That mode of thinking which would set up 'centre' against 'periphery' in a bipolar structural opposition is unremittingly modernist.... When the north-western tip of Europe designated itself as the centre of 'Enlightenment' in the eighteenth century, it did so in the secure knowledge that an 'unenlightened' periphery was thereby constructed; and the imperialist expansion that went hand in hand with the development of Enlightenment philosophy was not just a mercantile affair, for it had also a series of conceptual elements'. (Docherty, 1993)

The articles in this thesis can be interpreted as the expression of a postmodernist world view, in that they 'decentre the centre'. Thus, as a point of departure, the Tanzanian rural economy is not depicted as an extension at the periphery of a centre. It is seen as an entity in which a variety of production initiatives are

taken. There are influences from the wider world, but there is not a centre of initiative from which patterns of socio-economic behaviour emanate. The analysis is not framed in terms of a progression through history, which may become distorted; rather decline and growth in economies are seen as possible contemporary phenomena. The case of Mgeta presents a detailed picture of decline. The idea of change from traditional to modern is used only in a narrow sense in terms of involvement in wider networks and the pervasive use of money. It is not used in terms of a process of change from kinship to personal relations or to inevitable proletarianisation and accumulation. Whatever is labelled as characteristic both of traditional society and of monetary relations is described as a contemporary phenomenon which is continuously constructed and reconstructed. Hence, the nature and interpretation of economic decline in Mgeta does not start from historical schemes of progress or thwarted progress, but probes much broader themes about the human condition, notably, the creativity needed to create bonds of solidarity and the possibility of destructive emotions such as envy and jealousy getting out of control.

Ethnographic approaches to research have emerged out of a concern for the diversity of societies and cultures. The concentration on the specific and the reluctance to generalise make such methods appropriate for opening our minds to the manifold forms of interdependency that can emerge as individuals and groups are knitted into wider exchange networks.

Ethnography and the creation of social order

A third problem area in development theory is the explanation of economic growth and decline. The concept of development is particularly persistent and a normative preoccupation with economic growth, poverty and inequalities in the world remains central in virtually all writings on development. In this respect, development theory is out of step with actual historical developments. For example, as Corbridge (1990) emphasises, the spatial categorisation of development and underdevelopment changed so drastically that the conventional narratives broke down. These had no accommodation for a shift in the gravity of industrial production to outside North Western Europe and North America or for a concentration of finance capital in some oil-rich countries in the Middle East. It may seem contradictory to advocate the value of an ethnographic approach to the study of a small group of people like the Waluguru in Mgeta in order to understand such global problems, but I do think that such research may be extremely valuable in obtaining a better understanding of changing

patterns of growth and decline in economic life.

The concern with economic growth in development theory, and especially in development economics, is grounded in an enlightenment ideal which claims that rational analysis uncovers lawlike rules leading to progress. One response to the failure to find these laws is to renew the search; another is to question the ontology of the enlightenment ideal and to aim more at interpretation and clarification of society (Bauman, 1992). In the first instance, one strives towards propositions of a high level of generality; in the second, one aims to develop frames of mind that are salient to the observation and interpretation of an infinite variety of phenomena. Ethnography is particularly suitable for that, though not exclusively so. For example, Braudel's geographically wide-ranging history of the long duration (Braudel, 1990) could be said to share essential elements with this modest study of a small group in Tanzania in the nineteen eighties.

Braudel's writings seem to be part of world system theory, but on closer reading reveal also a concern for 'decentring the centre'. This confusion stems partly from his use of the concept of world-economy. He defines world-economy as 'the economy of only one portion of our planet, to the degree that it is an economic whole' (Braudel, 1977:81). The idea of a whole is therefore always relative. The world economies which he describes are open systems which merge into peripheries. Modernity makes such openness more prevalent, but not unavoidable. His studies therefore aim to uncover how the organisation of economic life is constructed within a particular defined set of people - the borders of which are to a certain extent arbitrary. There seems to be a centrist bias in his work in the sense that he sees world economies as hierarchically organised around a centre, but he allows for autonomy. For example, he asserts that 'capitalism does not overlay the entire economy and all working society: it never encompasses both of them within one perfect system all its own' (Braudel, 1977:112). For him, economic exchange and accumulation are not centralised processes belonging to one particular age as is often assumed in development theory. In his work, capitalism does not represent a particular historical phase in which Europe and America become the centre of the economic universe. Also in times of modernity - or, as Braudel puts it, 'the time of the world' - he allows for the emergence of new world economies gravitating around new centres.

Using this terminology the present study can then be seen as the study of an economic world of which Dar es Salaam is a centre. Hence, Braudel offers a

perspective which can cope with such empirical realities, unlike world system theory. The Waluguru from Mgeta are at the fuzzy borders of the dominant economic world. In their life one finds Coca-Cola, Aspirin, etc., but these aspects of economic life do not, in Braudel's words, overlay the whole of working society. The particular forms of economic life - fragmentation of land, working of land by individual households only, fragile partnerships of short duration in trade, etc. - emerge independently of the economic centres identified in world system theory.

In Braudel's world, accumulation and exchange are not phenomena that thrive on individualism and competition alone. They require the establishment of dependable social networks and cooperation, especially if credit is important. Capital accumulation and exchange require some modes of regulation and it is a mistake to see regulation merely as the automatic antagonistic force of economic enterprise. Regulation can come from government, though not necessarily so. Neither is regulation through government and political measures necessarily beneficial, but can play any number of roles varying from nurturing accumulation to parasitism. Growth and decline in economic life is for Braudel a story of the growth and decline of social networks.

His perspective is remarkably close to that of the present study of economic life. In this thesis, economic decline and stagnation is described as a consequence of the failure to establish reliable networks. Atomisation of life is the major force that shapes economic life in Mgeta, and actors try to be as little involved with other people as possible. Thus, social order is problematic, as illustrated especially in the chapters on trading and on disputes over land ownership. In common with my analysis, Braudel's historical study of the long duration points to the significance of the social factor and to the processes of creating order in the understanding of economic life.

The study of social order is a tainted subject in the social sciences since it is often associated with a legitimisation of conservatism. Debates on social order often assume a false dichotomy between order and conflict (Sharrock, 1971, discusses this delicately). Conflict can be part of a struggle for a new order, but it can also be destructive of order and threaten the very idea of society itself: disintegration of social systems is as much a fact of life as any possible tendency towards integration. The bankruptcies among Waluguru traders and the self-destructive land conflicts described in this thesis illustrate that. The study of social order is not in itself inherently conservative, but the assumption of an inherent tendency towards order is. The struggle to maintain some order

in land allocation in Mgeta or in the stochastic economic world of the vegetable trade in Dar es Salaam shows that order has to be created and does not exist merely because people live together.

The study of socio-economic order needs therefore to focus on the processes for building social relations that may result in such order. Hence, we need to know more about the actual activities and cultural elements involved in the creation and the disintegration of social orders. This requires an open-ended research agenda that tracks the actors closely. These are distinguishing characteristics of ethnography.

A final comment

Social science is unavoidably part of a general intellectual climate which is formed in an interplay between new research insights, theorising and the unfolding of contemporary events. For example, reviews of recent developments in sociological theory often respond or refer to political events which change our perspectives on society. This problem of social order presented itself forcibly to me while carrying out this research, and my feeling that this is of greater significance than simply an understanding of Mgeta has been later reinforced by recent events. In recent years, events in Africa have shown the centrality of the issue of social order - sometimes to an extreme degree, as in Liberia and Somalia, but often on a smaller, but no less dramatic, scale, as in the land conflicts in Kenya or Senegal. The creative process of fabricating social order or human solidarity is therefore an urgent concern for study.

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SUMMARY

The research for this thesis was carried out in Tanzania during the period 1985-89 and focuses on the Mgeta division in the Uluguru mountains, Morogoro rural district. Research was also undertaken among migrants from the area living in Dar es Salaam where they traded in foodstuffs. I made a return visit to the area in November 1991 to look again at questions which arose during writing up. The research also reflects seven years' employment at the University of Dar es Salaam (1982-89). The Tanzanian economy changed drastically during these years. Attempts to regulate the economy through government intervention were prevalent at the beginning of this period; at the end, the Tanzanian economy was to a large extent a free trade economy. This change resulted undoubtedly to a large extent from internal forces, but external pressures from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund also played an important role. The dominant mode of thinking in these institutions is a belief in the free market: if market mechanisms are freed from the shackles of control, then rational decision making will lead to optimal fulfilment of society's needs. Such forces were, in their opinion, severely disturbed in the Tanzanian economy because of government intervention, and this reasoning was supported by academics who documented, for example, how government's parasitic behaviour suppressed peasant initiatives to produce.

The examination of government intervention was thus considered crucial to any understanding of rural Tanzania. The objective of the present research was then to make a detailed study in a rural area of how such government intervention influenced local society. An actor-oriented approach was adopted, society being seen as structured by actors. An actor-oriented approach was expected to uncover creative responses to macro-economic influences and government policies. The idea was to avoid bias towards an assumption of passivity on the part of the citizen, since the farmer is easily seen as a victim of government policies.

Economic life in Mgeta, as well as among those people who had migrated from the area to Dar es Salaam, appeared in the course of the research to be characterised by stagnation. The appropriate word to describe agriculture in

Mgeta is decline. Mgeta has become increasingly a food importing area, and the opportunities to raise cash through trade and through the cultivation of crops for sale are limited. Nevertheless, petty trade pervades socio-economic life because of people's search for cash. Petty trade is the most common way of making a living among migrants from Mgeta in Dar es Salaam. Their trading careers are characterised by frequent bankruptcies, and accumulation is very limited and brittle. This pattern of socio-economic life cannot be explained by government intervention; the role of government in people's life is, as a rule, marginal.

Socio-economic life in Mgeta is better understood as socially constructed by local actors than as shaped by outside forces. This particular society is to a large extent atomised: enduring, strong and multistranded social relations are absent. The construction of bonds of solidarity is troublesome and often fails. For example, people avoid credit as much as possible since it requires dependable social relationships. If they use credit it is on a short term basis linked to one particular transaction. This example illustrates that social practices shape the basic elements of economic analysis: scarcity, preferences and utility. Such utility preferences are thus constructed by actors, but in turn constrain behaviour. Credit provides another illustration: credit is scarce because people do not trust each other. The resulting scarcity of capital limits the possibilities for entrepreneurship. An epistemological critique of a particular type of economistic reasoning emerges from such analysis. This broadens into a wider critique of rational choice approaches.

Rational choice theories assume a simple, linear and direct relationship between an actor's interpretation of reality and actual social practice. The relationship between socially-formed discourse on economic life and social practice is a major theme of the study. The research material shows that these relations can be much more complicated than rational choice theory assumes, and there appears to be a range of possible relationships between culture and behaviour. Actor-oriented approaches will therefore have to avoid the pitfall of assuming, *a priori*, a knowledgeable and capable actor who acts straightforwardly according to perceived strategic interests.

The results of the research are reported in six interconnected scientific articles.

'The continuing trial of development economics: policies, prices and output in Tanzanian agriculture' in *Journal of International Development* Vol. 5, forthcoming, 1993.

This article deals in general terms with Tanzania's rural areas. The research in Mgeta was a source of inspiration for writing the article, and the article makes it possible to see these research results against a wider background. It is an epistemological critique of certain kinds of economistic reasoning. It resulted from critically following the debates on the Tanzanian economy in the nineteen eighties and is based on secondary literature, official statistics and newspaper cuttings.

Decline in agricultural production in Tanzania is usually explained in terms of macro-economic variables and parasitic government intervention. These analyses use nationally aggregated figures in long time-series. Regional disaggregation of these figures and attention to erratic scores in time-series falsify such centrist explanations. A great variety of regional reactions to centrist influences appears possible. Production initiatives appear as characteristic for Tanzanian agriculture as decline. There are also other reasons for assuming that external influences are less linear and more ambiguous than the literature assumes, especially with respect to government intervention. The last part of the article hypothesizes and searches for alternative explanations which leave more room for the forces from below and for differential changes in agricultural production. Such alternatives see elements of analysis as used in economics - like scarcity, supply, demand - as socially constructed in a framework of struggles between men and women, old and young, rich and poor in particular settings.

'Agricultural decline in Tanzania: the case of the Uluguru mountains' in *African Affairs* (91, 1992; pp.73-94).

This article illustrates the thesis that changes in patterns of agricultural production have to be understood from below. It also provides the background to the succeeding articles, which describe more detailed patterns of action.

The empirical material in this article was collected through a simple household survey of neighbourhoods in different parts of Mgeta. The survey collected primarily demographic material. The population structure of Mgeta appeared unbalanced in comparison with the national population, and even in comparison with Morogoro Rural District of which it is a part. This imbalance is caused by

the emigration of young adults, especially to Dar es Salaam, in response to pressure on land because of population growth, erosion and depletion of the soil.

Mgeta is increasingly encapsulated in wider economic networks. A major driving force in this is the increasing need of households to buy maize - their staple food. The only significant local source of cash is the cultivation of, and trade in, vegetables. Vegetable cultivation is only possible, however, if one has access to suitable land, which is scarce. Many households are therefore dependent on income which is remitted to them from outside. This spread of cash usage has not resulted in a differentiation into rich and poor in the area: the pattern can more accurately be characterised as a general spread of poverty without significant accumulation. Agriculture has thus become a reserve activity, connected with economic life outside the area.

In contrast to the population structure in Morogoro Rural District as a whole, Mgeta's population structure is also unbalanced because of a female surplus. Women are said to guard the land there; land ownership is often bitterly contested. Claims on land are often made on the grounds of matrilineal descent, which is central to the dominant kinship ideology.

Earlier descriptions of social life in Mgeta portrayed social organisation on the basis of matrilineal descent; uxorilocal marriage was the norm; and authority in these matrilineal residential groups was described as being in the hands of a male head elected by the women. Matrilineal descent and uxorilocal marriage are still important, but the position of lineage head has disappeared. Social life appears in important respects to be atomised. Marriage bonds are weak and unstable. Many households consist of a single woman and children. Pubescent children are especially important as labour.

Marriage within Mgeta is not attractive for men from an economic perspective. The strong matrilineal ideology and the prevalence of uxorilocality denies a man claims on land belonging to his wife's clan or a house in his wife's neighbourhood in the event of the death of, or divorce from, his partner. The woman may have, given the kinship ideology and the scarcity of land, easier access to land in this situation, but this land does not guarantee a prosperous existence since it is often eroded and exhausted. Contacts outside Mgeta are much more important because they give access to people with a cash income. If a household does not have land on which to cultivate vegetables and does not succeed in establishing reliable access to cash from outside the area, life in

Mgeta can be life in a poverty trap.

This particular pattern of economic life is described primarily as constructed by local actors rather than as a result of either government intervention or incorporation into wider processes of modernisation or commoditisation. There is no evidence that government plays a significant role in shaping people's lives. Elements of modernisation or commoditisation are found in socio-economic life. The eclectic adoption by people in Mgeta of parts of such models of behaviour indicates an active construction of socio-economic life. This construction has to be explained in the first place as a reaction to pressure on land, because actors cannot avoid this fact of life. Pressure on land is common in other mountainous areas in Tanzania, and a comparison with reactions there shows that the response in Mgeta is distinct. There are thus many possible reactions to pressure on land, illustrating again that socio-economic life in the area takes its form as a construction by local actors.

'Waluguru traders in Dar es Salaam; an analysis of the social construction of economic life' in *African Affairs* (91, 1992; pp.181-205).

This article is the result of research among Dar es Salaam traders who originate from Mgeta. These traders have a dominant, but not an exclusive, position in the trade there in foodstuffs, especially vegetables.

A number of traders were asked to keep a diary in which they were asked to record their social contacts. These diaries were discussed every two weeks. The discussions revealed a clear classification of trade: trade between Dar es Salaam and Mgeta; illegal street selling in Dar es Salaam; trading from legalised market stalls in Dar es Salaam; wholesale trade between Dar es Salaam and areas upcountry; brokerage of supply spontaneously offered from outside, and demand in Dar es Salaam. This is a hierarchical classification, but only a minority climb this ladder and many fall back after making some progress. Economic life among these traders is very insecure, largely because their trade is in perishables, and price movements can be unexpected. This insecurity can also be seen as resulting from the way social life is structured. For example, their products, especially vegetables, can come from various parts of Tanzania and there is no information on the probable supply. Traders could organise networks which would provide reliable information about supply, but they do not. Bankruptcies due to sudden price fluctuations are frequent, but these fluctuations never hit the whole trade. Only those who at a given point have

bought dear and must sell cheap suffer. Traders could insure each other therefore through mutual arrangements, but this does not happen. They travel with large supplies of cash, thus making themselves targets for robbers. The use of credit would reduce the need to carry large amounts of cash. These traders prefer, however, to avoid credit as much as possible. If credit is given then it is for a short duration and tied to one particular transaction.

This is one aspect of a general trait in their economic life. Social networks in trade are unstable, limited in content and of short duration. Traders prefer to cope with risk in their economic activities in ways which do not demand cooperation with others. If they are successful, they will move into less perishable goods which are less risky but demand more capital. Their favourite investment, however, is real estate in Dar es Salaam. If they manage to rent out houses or rooms then they have ensured themselves of an income which will continue if they are ill or if they are unlucky in business. This makes them also independent of Mgeta. As stated above, existence on the land is precarious.

In this manner, the article describes how social organisation is a formative influence on economic life. Such social organisation is, in its turn, a result of social practices structured by actors. The article illustrates thus that supply, demand, investment decisions and the like are not the outcome of economic laws operating outside time and place, but have to be understood as socially constructed and embedded in the ways in which a particular society operates.

'The arbitrary state: state legal arenas and land disputes in Mgeta, Uluguru mountains, Tanzania' in *The Journal of Modern African Studies* (31,3, 1993, pp. 1-18).

It is striking in the two articles summarised above that government does not play a direct role in the construction of economic life in Mgeta. There is, however, one field of life where government is of great importance: the judiciary.

Land is scarce in Mgeta and it is therefore not surprising that there are many land conflicts. It is possible to settle such conflicts in local councils for reconciliation, but many are brought before the Primary Court in Mgeta. Disputes can even reach the highest courts in the country. The virulent nature of these conflicts contrasts with a local culture which stresses the avoidance of open conflict. This culture also permeates the court procedures: motives,

circumstantial evidence and the history of the conflict before it reaches the court are not discussed. The procedure is, therefore, extremely formal and concentrates on material facts. It is considered a disaster if people become involved in such court cases. Not only is it a threat to property which may be a source of livelihood, but it also costs much in terms of time, money and energy. In addition, recourse to the law does not guarantee resolution of the conflict. Judicial procedures take an extraordinarily long time; judgements concern themselves mostly with procedural considerations that are not essential to the conflict. Preferably, judgements avoid a decision and do not lay down principles which could lead to the formation of precedents. To get caught up in such a court case over land is to enter an arbitrary universe.

The description of a series of seven court cases, all concerning the same land, illustrates this. The first case was brought before Mgeta Primary Court in 1986 and it came before the High Court in Dar es Salaam in 1989. In the meantime, a large number of divergent judgements were produced by the Primary Court in Mgeta and in appeal by the District Magistrate in Morogoro. Reasons given in the judgements do not refer to one another and often no reasons are given at all. In the end, the case foundered at the Supreme Court for administrative reasons: one file was lost.

The behaviour of litigants in such cases is therefore not easy to rationalise. Both parties seem to have an unambiguous interest in keeping the matter out of the government's arena of justice, but that does not happen. These conflicts cannot be comprehended as conflicts between 'modern' and 'traditional' because both parties usually formulate their claims in terms of the matrilineal ideology of the Waluguru. Nor are these conflicts to be understood as straight-forward conflicts between rich and poor. There is little such class differentiation in Mgeta; these conflicts cost a lot of money and, in the event of winning, the gains are in no way commensurate with these costs. Often these conflicts end because parties have outspent themselves. Government cannot be portrayed here as beiing in the service of a particular dominant economic group; neither can it be shown as being the guardian of a capitalist economic order as is claimed in Marxist doctrine on the autonomy of the state. These conflicts should not be seen however as a mere aberration, unique in time and place. Simmel's sociology has aptly described the nature of similar conflicts. Conflict can become an end in itself when the reason for conflict is no longer the disputed object (in this case land) but the mere fact that someone else possesses it. The parties in dispute will then try to legitimise themselves by appealing to a third party. The latter can then without restraint play one off against the other, like the judiciary does

here, as the object of dispute is lost from sight.

'Legal insecurity and land conflicts in Mgeta, Uluguru mountains, Tanzania' in *Africa* (63,2, 1993, pp.197-218).

This article analyzes why land conflicts in Mgeta take such a virulent form leading to involvement in court cases which give no prospect of resolution of the conflict. The basic premiss is that all reality is subject to social definition and such social definition has a legal aspect. No set of abstract rules can foresee the situations which will crop up during social change. It is therefore inherent in law that new situations have to be interpreted in the light of existing rules. Society can more or less succeed in this process, which has to be carried by a binding authority to be effective. The article, through the analysis of land cases which came before Mgeta Primary Court, describes how and why society in Mgeta does not succeed in this with respect to land conflicts.

Virtually all litigants in Mgeta legitimate their claims in terms of the matrilineal ideology. Land is in the possession of individuals, but they do not own it. They have residual property rights. It is supposed to belong to clans, or segments thereof, which are structured by descent in the female line. Sons can, however, inherit land from their mother, and these sons can pass this land on to their children. If the latter die, then the ideology maintains that the land has to return to the original matrilineal clan.

People refer to this ideological construction during disputes, but it only partially structures social practice. Memories of the past are often vague and there are no written sources. The past in such a situation is primarily a social construction and structural amnesia therein plays a large role. If all vague memories of the past were considered as valid sources of law then extreme legal insecurity would result. Land can easily pass out of the control of particular clans, e.g., through inheritance from the father; or land can pass into the hands of a spouse after divorce or death. This gives rise to situations wherein the hegemonic ideology is no longer applicable. Land in dispute can have a clan identity which differs from that of the parties in dispute.

Land is seldom claimed on purely individual title; claims are usually legitimised by larger groups, and parties present themselves as representatives of such groups. Such groups are, in their turn, often again social constructions. It can happen that people claim solidarity in corporate groups in ways that do not fit

the matrilineal ideology.

These legal conflicts do not, therefore, originate from laws promulgated from above, but result from social practices formed in local society.

Such a situation is not surprising. Discrepancies will emerge in every society between ideology, which may be legally defined, and social practices which are continuously formed and reformed. The legal aspect of the social definition of reality can, given these discrepancies, create the definitions of situations within which behaviour is acceptable. This can preclude the situation in which social life is unpredictable because of arbitrary behaviour. What is needed is a binding authority which may be vested in the state, or in institutions outside the state, or it may be manifested by group consensus. There is a vacuum of such authority in Mgeta.

Most land conflicts originate from the distribution of an inheritance. Such matters are usually settled at a beer party, forty days after the death. There, an executor is appointed, usually chosen from among the matrilineal relatives of the deceased. This can give legal security when the dispute concerns the estate of somebody who is recently deceased, but many land conflicts refer back to a very distant past. The executor, who is generally an older person, is often by then deceased himself as well. Reconstruction of the past in such a situation becomes a struggle to mobilise as strong as possible a group which can dictate a dominant interpretation of the past.

The use of written documents seems to be a way out in such situations. The court accepts these as valid evidence only if all parties agree to have been witness to their writing. If there is conflict, then this is of course denied. These documents are also extremely unsophisticated, and it is easy to make the accusation that they have been fabricated.

Earlier descriptions of social life in Mgeta mention the clan or lineage elder as the source of authority in land conflicts. This position, however, either had disappeared or must have been a reification in earlier work on the subject. The mother's brother (*mjomba*) is another source of authority in the matrilineal ideology. This is a clearly designated person in many matrilineal societies, but in Mgeta the term is interpreted so widely that it can apply to every male person related in the female line. Hence, a large number of people can claim this position, and parties in dispute can search for a *mjomba* who supports them. The courts recognise some people as legitimate representatives of the larger

corporate group and others they do not recognise. The courts avoid, however, defining rules designating the authorities within these kinship groups who can make authoritative decisions about land.

In these land cases, the past has to be reconstructed in situations where relevant witnesses have died; written evidence is, for one reason or another, generally unacceptable; and there is no establishment of definitive authorities who can give a binding declaration. This results in great legal insecurity. A recourse to individual ownership of property through buying and selling land would seem to be a means of ensuring more legal security. That is not the case however. Such a transaction is only considered valid in law if representatives of the clan have given permission. This again begs the question as to who are the legitimate representatives of the group, and potential malcontents within this large group can challenge the sale at any point. The use of written documents gives rise to the same problems as mentioned above. Land can be held on individual title as a result of a cash transaction, but, in the event of it being inherited, its legal status can once again change and property rights are then again dispersed within large corporate groups. This situation cannot be called one in which there are dual legal systems, but legal systems intermingle with social practices. Individual title gives thus no protection in this situation.

These conflicts cannot, therefore, be explained in terms of the nature of the legal rules in use. There is no 'cultural lag' where new legislation based on individual title clashes with so-called 'traditional' law. Social change does not necessitate such a change in law, a fact also borne out in a survey of the literature. A multitude of legal forms governing land ownership are compatible with social change. The situation in Mgeta is the result of a failure within society to set limits to the situations in which claims can be made. Law then no longer controls the powers of envy, and these wasteful, long-lasting conflicts become a threat in daily life.

'Life chances, life worlds and a rural future; life expectations of school leavers in Mgeta, Uluguru mountains, Tanzania' (submitted for publication).

The focus of research shifted over time increasingly to factors internal to Mgeta. External factors like government intervention or commoditisation did not provide adequate explanation for the particular trajectory of social change in the area. Attention shifted more and more to the way in which society was structured by actors. It was therefore a logical step to study how actors

interpreted the world, assuming that this would structure their behaviour and consequently shape the particular pattern of social change in the area. That appeared to be a simplistic assumption.

The article mainly discusses the responses to a questionnaire administered to school children just before leaving school. They were asked to give judgements about the future they preferred; the future they expected; and the expected remunerations of these possible futures. They were given options such as agriculture, further education, wage labour in town, trade in town and trade between Mgeta and Dar es Salaam. There were slight differences in the responses to these different questions, but the major pattern was the same. The most highly valued existence was that of agriculture, narrowly followed by further education, while trade received a low valuation in all categories.

This is surprising because it runs contrary to social practices in the area. Agriculture is a declining sector, and prospects are not good because of land shortage, erosion and soil exhaustion. There is massive emigration to the urban areas where trade is the migrants' main way of making a living. Very few of these pupils have any chance of further eduction. Consequently, further education is simply not an option for them.

The school leavers were also asked to rank a number of professions according to prestige. The professions were selected on the criterion that they were present in their environment. The answers were remarkably consistent with the values expressed in their expectations for the future. Overwhelmingly most prestige was awarded to farmer and teacher. (The latter is hardly surprising in a classroom situation.) Trade was very lowly valued. There was no clear judgement on professions such as village secretary, medical assistant and priest. Images appeared to be vague in the options other than trade and agriculture.

The questionnaire contained also a number of statements on issues in local discourse, and pupils were asked to indicate their agreement/disagreement in terms of five options: very true, true, do not know, untrue, a lie. Further education was valued highly, independently of the possible advantages it gives with respect to professional status or money. The image of agriculture appeared to be less unambiguous, but it was striking, for example, that a majority denied that there was a problem of land shortage in Mgeta. Agriculture was, however, clearly much more highly valued than trade. Trade was considered to be an insecure existence that provided an income at the expense of farmers.

These answers can, of course, merely show that the school is successful in ideological indoctrination. Therefore, an attempt was made, using more qualitative methods in a follow-up visit, to see whether these values and images existed also among wider segments of society. That appeared to be very much the case. Either problems such as land shortage, erosion and depletion of the soil were denied, or the output of science (mostly fertilizer) was expected to bring the solution. Government should then disseminate these good things. These interpretations had an outspoken social character and were vocally articulated in public performances. Social practices in Mgeta, which did not fit this ideology, were obscured through such mechanisms.

This last article is exploratory. Many questions remain about the ways in which lifeworlds influence behaviour when there is a discrepancy between culture and social practices. It shows unequivocally however that sociological explanations need to allow room for discrepancies. For example, it is a simplification to reduce the differential outcomes of social change to results of intended and unintended consequences of action based on differential social interpretations of the world. If people and societies are caught in interpretations of the world which are in discord with their social practices, then such a linear perspective on thought, interpretation of reality and social practice does not make much sense.

A direct correspondence between culture and social practice is inherent in the idea of the rational actor: socio-economic behaviour is thereby seen as structured by actors who calculate within a means-goals paradigm based on preferences and expected returns given market relationships of supply and demand. Such interpretations can easily be made after the fact: the returns from agriculture in Mgeta are meagre and therefore men opt for making a living from trade in town. This interpretation ignores crucial elements of the local culture and is at variance with the interpretation of behaviour from the point of view of the actor. It results in reification: observers project their ideas on a society because of the assumption of a rational actor.

The rational actor is central in the image of the market as found in the policies of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Actors can act rationally, but they do not automatically do so. Irrationality is caused by external factors, notably government intervention, in the mindset of the IMF and the World Bank. The evidence presented in this thesis does not agree with their image of rational people who are caught in the irrationalities of government intervention. Economic behaviour cannot be understood as

following immanent and impersonal laws of rational choice that should not be disturbed; rather, scarcity, utility and preference are shaped by social practices within particular cultures. The idea of the rational actor operating according to market forces can best be seen as an ethnocentric social projection which blinds the mind to cultural diversity.

SAMENVATTING

Dit proefschrift is het resultaat van onderzoek in de Mgeta divisie in de Uluguru bergen, Morogoro rural district, Tanzania, aangevuld met onderzoek onder migranten uit dit gebied die in Dar es Salaam in voedsel handelen. Het onderzoek vond plaats in de periode 1985-89; in November 1991 keerde ik terug om vragen die bij het schrijven rezen opnieuw te bezien. Dit proefschrift is ook een weerslag van zeven jaar (1982-89) werken aan de Universiteit van Dar es Salaam. In deze periode veranderde de Tanzaniaanse ekonomie op een ingrijpende manier. In het begin spande de overheid zich in om de ekonomie te reguleren en aan het einde van de periode was Tanzania in hoge mate een *laissez-faire* ekonomie. Deze verandering kwam ongetwijfeld in belangrijke mate tot stand door interne druk, maar pressie van buitenaf door Wereldbank en IMF speelde ook een grote rol. Een geloof in het vrij funktioneren van markten is essentieel in het beleid van deze twee instellingen. Het vrijlaten van marktmechanismen leidt volgens hen tot een rationale besluitvorming die tot optimale behoeftenvoorziening leidt. Deze krachten waren naar hun mening in Tanzania verstoord door overheidsingrijpen. Wetenschappelijke publikaties steunden dit denken, bijv. door te dokumenteren hoe parasitair gedrag van de overheid het initiatief van boeren om te produceren doodde.

Overheidsinterventie wordt dus als essentieel gezien om het Tanzaniaanse platteland te begrijpen. De oorspronkelijke gedachte in het onderzoek was om gedetailleerd te bestuderen hoe in een plattelandsgebied dit overheidsingrijpen de lokale samenleving beïnvloedde. Het perspektief daarop was ingegeven door een aktor-georiënteerde benadering: de vormen van samenleven worden daarin gezien als het resultaat van de sociale praktijken van aktoren. Samenleving is dus herleidbaar tot handelende mensen. De verwachting was dat deze benadering licht zou werpen op kreatieve reakties op makro-ekonomische invloeden en op overheidspolitiek. Een dergelijke benadering zou dan een mogelijk vooroordeel over de passiviteit van de burger vermijden; die burger wordt in de hierbovengenoemde benaderingen gemakkelijk gezien als een slachtoffer die de gevolgen van overheidspolitiek alleen maar ondergaat en deze niet aktief beïnvloedt.

In de loop van het onderzoek bleek het ekonomisch leven in Mgeta en onder migranten uit Mgeta in Dar es Salaam te stagneren en het woord verval typeerde de situatie in de landbouw. Mgeta is in de loop der tijd steeds minder zelfvoorzienend in voedsel geworden en de mogelijkheden om geld te verdienen door de teelt van en handel in groenten is beperkt. Desalniettemin is het sociaal-ekonomisch leven in Mgeta doordrenkt van de kleine handel want zonder geld kan men niet leven. Kleinschalige handel is de belangrijkste bron van inkomen onder migranten uit Mgeta in Dar es Salaam. Deze handelaren gaan regelmatig failliet en als ze kapitaal akkumuleren dan is dat op beperkte schaal. Zulke akkumulatie is ook broos en gaat gemakkelijk weer teniet. Overheidsingrijpen kan deze patronen in het sociaal-ekonomisch leven niet verklaren, want de rol van de overheid in het sociaal-ekonomisch leven is marginaal.

Het sociaal ekonomisch leven kan beter begrepen worden als een sociale konstruktie van lokale aktoren dan als een produkt van externe krachten. Deze samenleving is tot op grote hoogte geatomiseerd: langdurige, sterke sociale banden met verschillende facetten zijn er niet. De konstruktie van een sociale orde, of solidariteit, verloopt gebrekkig en het mislukt ook vaak. Men vermijdt, bijvoorbeeld, zoveel mogelijk onderling krediet, want krediet vereist betrouwbare sociale kontakten. Als krediet gegeven wordt is dat voor korte tijd en is dan gebonden aan een bepaalde transaktie. Dit voorbeeld illustreert hoe de elementaire eenheden in ekonomische analyse: schaarste, voorkeuren en nut gevormd worden in sociale praktijken. Zo een inschatting van nut, bepaalde gegeven voorkeuren, wordt dus in het sociaal leven door aktoren gevormd, maar deze vormen beperken weer mogelijke gedragspatronen van aktoren. Dit kan weer verduidelijkt worden met het voorbeeld van krediet: krediet is schaars omdat men elkaar niet vertrouwt. Geen of weinig krediet betekent dat kapitaal schaars is en dat beperkt weer de mogelijkheden voor ondernemerschap. Op deze manier ontwikkelt zich uit het onderzoeksmateriaal een epistemologische kritiek op een bepaalde manier van ekonomistisch redeneren. Verdere analyse van het materiaal verbreedt het perspektief tot een algemene kritiek op benaderingen die uitgaan van een rationele keuze.

Deze benaderingen gaan uit van een simpele, lineaire, direkte relatie tussen de interpretatie van de werkelijkheid door aktoren en sociale praktijken. De relaties tussen sociaal gevormde interpretaties van de werkelijkheid en sociale praktijken is een centraal thema in deze studie. Het onderzoeksmateriaal laat zien dat die relaties veel gekompliceerder kunnen zijn dan rationele keuze veronderstelt. Er blijkt een scala aan mogelijke relaties tussen cultuur en gedrag te zijn. Een aktor-georiënteerde benadering moet daarom vermijden om vanzelfsprekend uit

te gaan van een aktor die direkt handelt vanuit helder geanalyseerde strategische belangen.

De resultaten van het onderzoek zijn vastgelegd in zes samenhangende wetenschappelijke artikelen.

'The contuining trial of development economics: policies, prices and output in Tanzanian agriculture' in *Journal of International Development* Vol. 5, forthcoming, 1993.

Dit artikel gaat niet specifiek over Mgeta, maar is een polemische bijdrage aan het debat over de interpretatie van het sociaal ekonomisch leven op het Tanzaniaanse platteland in het algemeen. De studie van Mgeta was een belangrijke inspiratie voor dit artikel en het artikel biedt een bredere achtergrond voor de interpretatie van de gedetailleerde onderzoeksresultaten. Het artikel is in de eerste plaats een epistomologische kritiek op sommige vormen van ekonomistisch redeneren. De argumenten hierin zijn een weerslag van het kritisch volgen van het debat over de Tanzaniaanse ekonomie in de jaren tachtig gebaseerd op secondaire literatuur, officiële statistieken en kranteknipsels.

Achteruitgang in de landbouwproduktie in Tanzania wordt in de regel verklaard in termen van makro-ekonomische variabelen en parasitair overheidsingrijpen. Deze analyses maken gebruik van nationaal geaggregeerde cijfers over langere perioden. Als men deze cijfers niet nationaal, maar regionaal bekijkt en de grillige patronen in cijferreeksen in aanmerking neemt dan ontstaat een beeld dat daar moeilijk mee te rijmen is. Het dominerende beeld van achteruitgang moet genuanceerd worden: initiatieven tot produktieverhoging blijken even karakteristiek te zijn voor de Tanzaniaanse landbouw als achteruitgang daarvan. De grote variëteit naar plaats en tijd in reakties falsifieert het beeld dat nationale ekonomische en politieke faktoren een determinerende invloed hebben. Er zijn ook andere redenen om aan te nemen dat met name de invloed van overheidsoptreden minder rechtlijnig is en meer door ambiguïteit wordt gekarakteriseerd dan in de literatuur wordt aangenomen. Het laatste deel van het artikel ontwikkelt hypothetische verklaringen voor de gevonden diversiteit die ruimte bieden voor sociale krachten van onderop. Deze zien de eenheden van analyse uit de ekonomie - zoals schaarste, aanbod, vraag- als sociaal gekonstrueerd in een raamwerk van strijd tussen mannen en vrouwen, oud en jong, arm en rijk in specifieke situaties.

'Agricultural decline in Tanzania: the case of the Uluguru mountains' in *African Affairs* (91, 1992, pp. 73-94).

Dit artikel is een illustratie van de stelling uit het vorige artikel dat veranderingen in patronen van landbouwproduktie in Tanzania het beste begrepen kunnen worden als een resultaat van krachten aan de basis van de samenleving. Het biedt ook de achtergrond voor de volgende artikelen, die meer gedetailleerde patronen van sociaal gedrag beschrijven.

Het materiaal voor het artikel is verzameld in een eenvoudige survey onder huishoudens in buurtschappen in verschillende delen van Mgeta. Dit survey leverde in de eerste plaats demografisch materiaal op. Hieruit bleek dat de bevolkingsopbouw van Mgeta onevenwichtig is in vergelijking met die van Morogoro rural district -waar het onderdeel van is- en met de nationale bevolkingsopbouw. Er zijn met name relatief meer ouderen en er is een vrouwenoverschot.

Jonge volwassenen migreren, vooral naar Dar es Salaam. Landschaarste speelt daarin een grote rol, want bevolkingsgroei en roofbouw leggen een grote druk op het land. Veel huishoudens moeten daarom ook in toenemende mate het basisvoedsel 'mais' kopen. Daarmee is Mgeta in toenemende mate opgenomen in wijdere ekonomische netwerken. De enige belangrijke lokale bron van geldinkomen is de teelt en de handel van groenten. Weinig grond is daarvoor echter geschikt. Veel huishoudens zijn daarom afhankelijk van geld dat gestuurd wordt van buiten het gebied. Er is vrijwel geen differentiatie tussen arm en rijk in het gebied en het patroon kan beter een van gespreide armoede genoemd worden; er is geen accumulatie van betekenis. Landbouw is een neven-aktiviteit, afhankelijk van het ekonomisch leven buiten het gebied. Land is schaars en landbezit wordt vaak aangevochten. Aanspraken op land worden in de dominante verwantschapsideologie meestal gelegitimeerd op basis van afstamming in de vrouwelijke lijn. Dit kan deels een verklaring zijn voor het vrouwenoverschot. Omdat vrouwen sterkere aanspraken op land hebben dan mannen kan dit deels een verklaring zijn voor het feit dat vrouwen minder migreren dan mannen. Het lokale spraakgebruik zegt dat vrouwen op het land horen te passen en niet dat ze boeren.

Veel huishoudens bestaan uit een vrouw met kinderen, waarbij de oudste kinderen belangrijk zijn als arbeidskrachten. Huwelijksbanden zijn zwak en onstabiel. Dit is een onderdeel van een proces van atomisering. Vroegere beschrijvingen van het sociale leven in Mgeta legden de nadruk op een sociale

organisatie op basis van matrilineaire afstamming; men trouwde uxorilokaal en de autoriteit in deze matrilineair gevormde segmenten was in handen van een verkozen oudste. Matrilineaire afstamming en uxorilokaal trouwen is nog steeds belangrijk, maar de positie van het hoofd van matrilineaire segmenten is verdwenen. De positie van de broer van de moeder, is ook verzwakt. Deze personen werd gezegd de autoriteit te zijn waart mannen zich op konden beroepen in konflikten met hun vrouw. Een huwelijk binnen Mgeta is voor mannen, ekonomisch gezien, ook niet aantrekkelijk. De sterke matrilineaire ideologie en de gebruikelijke praktijk van uxorilokaliteit geeft een man geen rechten op land of huis in het buurtschap van zijn vrouw bij scheiding of dood van de partner. Een vrouw heeft in deze situatie, waarin matrilineaire afstamming sterk telt en land schaars is, veelal gemakkelijker toegang tot land, maar dit landbezit garandeert geen welvarend bestaan vanwege uitputting van de grond en erosie. Men heeft geld nodig om te overleven in Mgeta, al was het alleen maar om het noodzakelijke voedsel te kopen. Tenzij een huishouden in Mgeta land heeft waarop groenten verbouwd kunnen worden, of betrouwbare kontakten heeft buiten Mgeta die geld in het huishouden brengen, is de fuik van de armoede wijd open. Sociale relaties buiten Mgeta worden dus steeds belangrijker, maar men kan er niet vanzelfsprekend op vertrouwen en sommige huishoudens hebben deze kontakten niet.

Het patroon van sociaal-ekonomisch leven in Mgeta is beschreven als primair een sociale konstruktie of strukturering door lokale aktoren, als sociaal gekonstrueerd en niet als het gevolg van of overheidsinterventie, of brede processen van sociale verandering als modernisering of kommoditisering. Er is geen bewijs dat overheidsingrijpen een rol van betekenis speelt in het sociaal-ekonomische leven in Mgeta. Er zijn elementen van modernisering en kommoditisering in Mgeta, maar lokale aktoren nemen al het ware eklektische elementen uit deze gedragsmodellen over. Dit duidt op een aktieve sociale konstruktie van het sociaal-ekonomisch leven. Deze sociale konstruktie moet in de eerste plaats verklaard worden als een reaktie op druk op het land, want dit feit is centraal in het leven van aktoren. Druk op land vindt men in veel bergachtige gebieden in Tanzania en een vergelijking met reakties op het probleem daar laat zien dat de reaktie in Mgeta specifiek is. Er zijn dus vele mogelijke reakties op druk op land en dit laat dus weer zien hoe het sociaal-ekonomisch leven van het gebied vorm krijgt als een collectieve sociale konstruktie van aktoren.

'Waluguru traders in Dar es Salaam; an analysis of the social construction of economic life' in *African Affairs* (91, 1992, pp.181-205).

Dit artikel is het resultaat van een onderzoek onder handelaren uit Mgeta in Dar es Salaam. Handelaren uit Mgeta hebben daar een overheersende, maar niet een exclusieve positie in de voedselhandel, vooral groenten. Een aantal handelaren werd gevraagd een dagboek bij te houden waarin ze hun sociale kontakten noteerden. Hieruit kwam een duidelijke classificatie van handelaren naar voren, namelijk: handel tussen Mgeta en Dar es Salaam; illegale straathandel in Dar es Salaam; handel in Dar es Salaam vanuit een legale marktkraam; groothandel tussen Dar es Salaam en gebieden in het binnenland van Tanzania; makelaars tussen aanbod dat spontaan van buiten komt en vraag in Dar es Salaam. Dit is een hiërarchische klassifikatie, maar slechts een minderheid stijgt op deze ladder en velen vallen weer terug. Het ekonomisch leven onder deze handelaren is uiterst onzeker. Een belangrijke reden is dat het vaak handel in bederfelijke waar is en prijsbewegingen heel onzeker kunnen zijn. Deze onzekerheid kan echter ook gezien worden als sociaal gekonstrueerd. Bijv. de produkten die zij verhandelen, met name groenten, komen uit verschillende gebieden in Tanzania en er is geen informatie over het te verwachten aanbod. Het is mogelijk dat zulke informatie verzameld wordt door organisatie, maar het gebeurt niet. Faillissementen vanwege plotselinge prijsfluktuaties kunnen iedereen overkomen, maar nooit allemaal tegelijk. Alleen degenen die op dat moment duur gekocht hebben en goedkoop moeten verkopen zijn getroffen. Handelaren zouden elkaar dus onderling kunnen verzekeren, maar het gebeurt niet. Handelaren reizen ook met veel kontant geld wat hen een doelwit voor berovingen maakt. Het gebruik van kontant geld kan vermeden worden door krediet. Krediet wordt echter onder deze handelaren het liefst gemeden. Als het gegeven wordt, dan is het voor zeer korte duur en gebonden aan een bepaalde transaktie.
Deze verschijnselen zijn onderdelen van een algemene eigenschap van dit ekonomisch leven. Sociale kontakten in de handel zijn van korte duur en beperkt van aard. Zij bestrijden het risiko in hun ekonomisch handelen en in het algemeen op manieren die geen samenwerking met anderen vragen. Als handelaren succesvol zijn, gebruiken ze hun kapitaal door in minder bederfelijke waar te gaan handelen die meer kapitaal vergt. Hun favoriete investering is echter in onroerend goed in Dar es Salaam, wat hen onafhankelijk maakt van Mgeta, waar het bestaan op het land precair is (zie boven). Als zij kamers of huizen kunnen verhuren verzekeren ze zich van een vast inkomen. Als ze zeer succesvol zijn, gebruiken ze hun kapitaal om bemiddelaars te worden tussen aanbod en vraag op een manier die het risiko afwentelt op de persoon die

goederen aanbiedt.

Het artikel laat dus zien dat, aanbod, vraag, investerings-beslissingen en dergelijke dus geen resultaat zijn van ekonomische wetten die buiten tijd en plaats opereren, maar begrepen moeten worden vanuit de manier waarop een bepaalde samenleving funktioneert. Het ekonomisch handelen wordt dus gevormd door de sociale organisatie, die weer een resultaat is van de manier waarop aktoren handelen.

'The arbitrary state: state legal arenas and land disputes in Mgeta, Uluguru mountains, Tanzania' in *The Journal of Modern African Studies* (31,3, 1993, pp. 1-18).

De overheid heeft maar een marginale invloed in het ekonomische leven in Mgeta, zoals beschreven in de bovenstaande twee artikelen. Er is echter een terrein waarop de overheid belangrijk is: de rechtspraak. Land is schaars in Mgeta en het is dus niet verbazingwekkend dat er veel landkonflikten zijn. Landkonflikten kunnen opgelost worden door arbitrage op laag niveau, maar vele komen voor de lokale rechtbank en worden zelfs uitgevochten tot op het hoogste niveau. De heftige aard van deze konflikten kontrasteert met een lokale kultuur die de nadruk legt op vermindering van botsingen. Het uitwerken van motieven en de voorgeschiedenis van een konflikt worden vanwege de laatste reden zorgvuldig gemeden voor de rechtbank. De procedure is daarom vaak uiterst formeel en concentreert zich op zogeheten relevante feiten. Het wordt in Mgeta als een ramp beschouwd om betrokken te raken in een dergelijke rechtszaak. Het bedreigt niet alleen de middelen van bestaan, maar het kost veel tijd, geld en energie. Toevlucht tot het recht garandeert ook geen oplossing. De rechtspraak duurt lang; zij concentreert zich vooral op procedurele overwegingen die niet essentieel zijn voor het konflikt. Uitspraken vermijden het liefst een beslissing en leggen geen principes vast die tot precedentvorming kunnen leiden. Als men in een rechtszaak over land betrokken raakt, komt men terecht in een arbitrair universum. Dit wordt geïllustreerd aan de hand van zeven rechtszaken die alle hetzelfde land betroffen. Het konflikt is in 1986 voor het eerst voor het gerecht gebracht en in 1989 diende het voor het Hooggerechtshof in Dar es Salaam. De verschillende uitspraken van de rechtbank in Mgeta en in beroep bij de rechtbank in Morogoro verschillen van elkaar. De redenen die gegeven worden refereren niet aan elkaar en vaak worden geen redenen gegeven. Uiteindelijk loopt de zaak vast in het Hooggerechtshof op een administratief probleem: een dossier is zoek.

Het gedrag van de strijdende partijen in een dergelijke rechtszaak is dus moeilijk te begrijpen. Beide partijen hebben een duidelijk belang om de zaak buiten de overheids-rechtspraak te houden maar dat doen ze niet. Het zijn ook geen konflikten tussen 'modern' en 'traditioneel', want ze worden meestal in de matrilineaire ideologie van de Waluguru geformuleerd. Het kan moeilijk worden verklaard als een konflikt tussen rijk en arm. Klassendifferentiatie is gering in Mgeta en zulke konflikten kosten veel maar brengen, verhoudingsgewijs, niets op. De waarde van het land is niet te relateren aan de kosten van de zaak en veelal eindigen zulke konflikten omdat de partijen door hun geld heen zijn. De overheid kan hier ook niet gezien worden als dienaar van een ekonomisch dominante groep, noch als behoeder van een kapitalistische ekonomische orde zoals de Marxistische doctrine van de autonomie van de staat stelt.

Deze konflikten zijn echter niet uniek in tijd en plaats (Mgeta), maar bijvoorbeeld goed beschreven in de sociologie van Simmel. Een konflikt kan een doel in zichzelf worden als het betwiste objekt (in dit geval land) niet meer de reden voor een konflikt is, maar het feit dat een ander het bezit. De partijen in zo een konflikt proberen zich te legitimeren met een beroep op een derde partij en de laatste kan ongebreideld de een tegen de ander uitspelen zoals de rechtspraak hier doet.

'Legal insecurity and land conflicts in Mgeta, Uluguru mountains, Tanzania' in *Africa* (63,2, 1993, pp. 197-218).

Dit artikel beschrijft waarom landkonflikten in Mgeta een zodanig heftige vorm aannemen dat mensen in deze uitzichtloze rechtszaken terecht komen. Het uitgangspunt daarbij is dat de realiteit in een samenleving sociaal gedefinieerd wordt en zulk een sociale definiëring een juridisch aspect heeft. Het is inherent aan recht dat nieuwe situaties in het licht van bestaande rechtsregels geïnterpreteerd moeten worden, want geen enkel systeem van abstracte regels kan voorzien welke situaties zich zullen voordoen vanwege sociale verandering. Samenlevingen kunnen min of meer slagen in dit proces en om juridisch effektief te zijn moeten ze bindend zijn en door meer of minder gecentraliseerde autoriteit afgedwongen worden. Het artikel beschrijft hoe en waarom de samenleving in Mgeta daarin niet slaagt met betrekking tot landkonflikten. Dit wordt geanalyseerd aan de hand van gevallen die voor het gerecht kwamen.

Strijdende partijen beroepen zich in Mgeta vrijwel altijd op de matrilineaire ideologie. Land is individueel in bezit, maar niet in eigendom. Het behoort toe

aan clans of segmenten daarvan die gestruktureerd zijn door afkomst in de vrouwelijke lijn. Land kan ook vererven van moeder op zoon en deze kan het weer aan zijn kinderen doorgeven. Als de laatsten sterven moet volgens de ideologie het land weer terug naar de oorspronkelijke matrilineaire clan.

Dit is een ideologische constructie, waaraan gerefereerd wordt in een dispuut, maar die slechts zeer ten dele door de praktijk wordt gedragen. Herinnering aan het verleden is vaak vaag en er zijn geen geschreven bronnen die het verleden vastleggen. Het verleden wordt in zo'n situatie een constructie waarin structurele amnesie een grote rol speelt. Als alle vage herinnering uit het verleden als rechtsgeldig zou worden beschouwd, dan zou dat tot een extreme rechtsonzekerheid leiden. Land raakt buiten de controle van bepaalde clans door bijvoorbeeld erven van de vader, overgaan van land in handen van een aangetrouwde man of vrouw na scheiding of na de dood van een van de echtgenoten. Daardoor ontstaan situaties waarin de dominante ideologie niet voorziet. Het land in dispuut kan een clanidentiteit hebben die anders is dan de clanidentiteiten van de partijen die elkaar betwisten.

Recht op land wordt echter zelden op basis van een individuele aanspraak gevorderd; een aanspraak wordt gelegitimeerd door grotere groepen en partijen in dispuut presenteren zich als vertegenwoordigers daarvan. Zulke groepen zijn ook weer vaak sociale konstrukties en het kan voorkomen dat groepen zich solidair verklaren op een manier die niet in de matrilineaire ideologie past. Deze juridische konflikten komen dus niet voort uit wetgeving die botst met bestaande praktijken, maar ze ontstaan uit sociale praktijken die gevormd worden in de lokale samenleving.

Deze situatie is niet verwonderlijk. In elke samenleving zullen discrepanties ontstaan tussen een ideologie, die al dan niet juridisch gedefinieerd is en de sociale praktijken die voortdurend gevormd worden. Het juridische aspect van de sociale definiëring van realiteit kan, gegeven deze discrepanties, de definities scheppen waarbinnen gedrag wordt geaccepteerd. Dit kan vermijden dat ongelimiteerd arbitrair gedrag het sociale leven onvoorspelbaar maakt. Daarvoor is autoriteit nodig die in de staat gevestigd kan zijn, of in instituties buiten de staat, of door groepsconsensus wordt gedragen. In Mgeta is er een autoriteitsvacuum.

De meeste landkonflikten hebben hun oorsprong in een erfenis. Erfenissen worden meestal geregeld op een bierfestijn, veertig dagen na het overlijden. Daar wordt een executeur-testamentair aangewezen, meestal gekozen onder de

matrilineaire verwanten van de overledene. Dat kan rechtszekerheid geven als de dood recent plaats vond, maar veel landkonflikten refereren terug aan een ver verleden. De executeur testamentair, meestal een ouder iemand, is dan vaak overleden. Het rekonstrueren van het verleden wordt dan een strijd om een zo sterk mogelijke groep achter zich te krijgen die een dominante interpretatie van het verleden kan op leggen.

Het gebruik van geschreven verklaringen lijkt een uitweg in zo'n situatie. Deze worden in de rechtbank echter alleen als rechtsgeldig geaccepteerd indien alle partijen getuige zijn geweest. Dat wordt natuurlijk ontkent als er een konflikt is. Deze documenten zijn vaak ook primitief en de beschuldiging dat ze gefabriceerd zijn is dan ook makkelijk te maken.

Eerdere beschrijvingen van sociaal leven in Mgeta noemen een clan- of segmentoudste als bron van autoriteit in landkonflikten. Deze positie is echter of verdwenen, of moet een resultaat zijn van een strukturalistisch vooroordeel in het vroegere werk. De broer van de moeder (*mjomba*) is een andere autoriteitsfiguur in de matrilineaire ideologie. Dat kan een duidelijk gedefinieerd persoon zijn, maar in Mgeta wordt de term zo wijd geïnterpreteerd dat het iedere mannelijke persoon kan zijn die in matrilineaire lijn verwant is. Een groot aantal personen kan zich op deze manier de positie toeëigenen en strijdende partijen kunnen zoeken naar een *mjomba* die hen steunt. De rechtspraak erkent sommige personen als legitieme vertegenwoordigers van de grotere groep en andere niet. De rechtspraak vermijdt echter definities te geven welke autoriteiten binnen deze verwantschapsgroepen over land kunnen beslissen.

Het verleden moet in deze situatie dus gerekonstrueerd worden terwijl relevante getuigen vaak overleden zijn; geschreven bronnen niet gebruikt worden en er geen regels zijn die autoriteiten aanwijzen die een bindende verklaring kunnen afleggen. De rechtsonzekerheid is dus groot. Individueel eigendom door koop en verkoop van land lijkt dan grotere rechtszekerheid te kunnen geven. Dat is echter niet het geval. Zo'n transaktie wordt alleen als geldig beschouwd als vertegenwoordigers van de clan daar toestemming voor geven. Dit roept weer de vraag op naar de legitieme vertegenwoordigers van die groep en ontevredenen vanuit een zeer grote groep kunnen elk moment de verkoop aanvechten. Het gebruik van geschreven documenten roept dezelfde problemen op die hierboven genoemd zijn. Land dat door koop in eigendom is gekomen kan bij vererving weer van status veranderen en eigendomsaanspraken zijn dan weer diffuus gespreid in grotere groepen. In deze situatie kan men niet spreken van twee

rechtssystemen naast elkaar, want deze vermengen zich in sociale praktijken. Individueel eigendom door een monetaire transaktie geeft dus geen bescherming in deze situatie van rechtsonzekerheid.

Het ontstaan van deze konflikten kan dus niet verklaard worden uit de aard van de rechtsregels die gebruikt worden. Er is bijvoorbeeld geen botsing tussen nieuwe wetgeving die individueel eigendom erkent en traditionele praktijken. Zulke veranderingen in rechtsregels zijn ook niet noodzakelijk, want de literatuur laat zien dat een veelheid van vormen van landeigendom verenigbaar is met sociale verandering. Als een samenleving er echter niet in slaagt grenzen aan te geven waarbinnen aanspraken gemaakt kunnen worden dan is een situatie als in Mgeta het gevolg. Recht beheerst dan niet langer de krachten van afgunst, zodat deze verspillende, langdurige konflikten een bedreiging worden in het dagelijks bestaan.

'Life chances, life worlds and a rural future; life expectations of school leavers in Mgeta, Uluguru mountains, Tanzania' (voorgelegd voor publikatie)

In de loop van het onderzoek bleken interne faktoren binnen Mgeta steeds belangrijker te zijn dan externe faktoren zoals overheidsingrijpen of kommoditisatie om het specifieke patroon van sociaal-ekonomische ontwikkeling te begrijpen. De aandacht kwam steeds meer te liggen op de manier waarop aktoren door sociale praktijken de samenleving struktureren. Het was daarom een logische stap om te kijken hoe aktoren de samenleving interpreteren, in de veronderstelling dat dit hun gedrag struktureert en zodoende vorm geeft aan het specifieke patroon van sociaal-ekonomisch leven in het gebied. Deze gedachte bleek te simplistisch te zijn.

Het artikel gaat in de eerste plaats over antwoorden op een vragenlijst die voorgelegd is aan kinderen die op het punt stonden de lagere school te verlaten. Hen werd gevraagd wat ze wilden worden, wat ze in de toekomst verwachtten en wat ze het meest lonend vonden. Er werden hen opties voorgelegd als landbouw, verder onderwijs, loonarbeid in de stad, handel in de stad en handel tussen Mgeta en Dar es Salaam.

Er waren kleine verschillen in de antwoorden op de verschillende vragen, maar het overheersende patroon was hetzelfde. De grootste waardering ging uit naar een bestaan in de landbouw, gevolgd door verder leren en alle soorten van handel werd laag gewaardeerd. Dit is verwonderlijk gegeven de sociale

praktijken in het gebied. Landbouw is allerminst een bloeiende sektor en de vooruitzichten zijn slecht, gegeven schaarste aan land, bodemuitputting en erosie. Er is een massale emigratie naar de steden waar deze migranten vooral in de handel hun bestaan vinden. Heel weinig van deze leerlingen hebben een kans op verder onderwijs en dat is dus geen feitelijke optie.

De schoolverlaters werd ook gevraagd een prestige waardering te geven aan een aantal beroepen die bekend verondersteld kunnen worden. Daar werd ook weer het meeste prestige toegekend aan landbouw en onderwijzer (het laatste is niet te verbazen in een klaslokaal). Handel werd zeer laag gewaardeerd. Er bleek geen duidelijk oordeel te zijn over beroepen als dorpssekretaris, medisch assistent en priester. Het beeld bleek vaag buiten de opties van handel en landbouw. De prestigewaardering bleek dus consistent te zijn met de waarderingen in hun toekomstverwachtingen.
Deze antwoorden zijn verder uitgediept met een waardering van uitspraken over handel, onderwijs en landbouw, die kon variëren van zeer mee eens tot een leugen. Voortgezet onderwijs werd hoog gewaardeerd, onafhankelijk van mogelijke voordelen in inkomen en beroepsmogelijkheden die daarmee kunnen samenhangen. Het beeld over landbouw was minder eenduidig, maar een meerderheid ontkende bijvoorbeeld dat landtekort een probleem was in Mgeta. Landbouw werd duidelijk hoger gewaardeerd dan handel. Het laatste werd gezien als een onzeker bestaan dat ten koste gaat van de boeren.

Deze antwoorden kunnen natuurlijk het resultaat zijn van succesvolle ideologische indoktrinatie op school. Daarom is bij een later bezoek aan Mgeta nagegaan of deze waarderingen ook bestaan buiten de groep die op het punt staat de school te verlaten. Daarbij is een meer kwalitatieve methodologie gebruikt, die dezelfde meningen naar voren bracht. Problemen in de landbouw in Mgeta als landtekort, erosie en bodemuitputting werden of ontkend, of de resultaten van de wetenschap (meestal een geloof in kunstmest) die door de overheid verspreid zouden moeten worden werden als de oplossing gezien. Deze meningen hadden een bij uitstek sociale betekenis en de verkondiging daarvan was een publiek optreden. De werkelijke sociale praktijken in Mgeta die er niet mee strookten werden dus publiekelijk ontkend. Deze discrepantie kan geïnterpreteerd worden als een poging om ekonomische achteruitgang te verwerken door ontkenning en regressie.

Dit laatste artikel is explorerend want er blijven veel open vragen over de manieren waarop sociale interpretaties van de werkelijkheid gedrag beïnvloeden wanneer er zulke diskrepanties zijn tussen kultuur en sociale praktijken. De

onderzoeks-resultaten vragen echter zonder twijfel voor ruimte binnen sociologische verklaringen voor zulke diskrepanties. Het is daarom een simplifikatie om verschillende uitkomsten in processen van sociale verandering te reduceren tot de bedoelde en onbedoelde effekten van handelen op grond van verschillende sociale interpretaties van de wereld. Zo een lineair perspektief op denken, interpretatie van de werkelijkheid en sociale praktijken slaat nergens op wanneer personen en samenlevingen verwikkeld zijn in interpretaties van de wereld die haaks staan op hun sociale praktijken.

Het uitgangspunt van een overeenstemming tussen denken, interpretatie en praktijk is ook essentieel in het idee van de rationele aktor: aktoren worden dan verondersteld hun gedrag te struktureren binnen een doel-middelen schema op grond van voorkeuren en verwachte baten binnen bepaalde verhoudingen van vraag en aanbod. Zulke redeneringen kunnen makkelijk achteraf gemaakt worden: inkomsten uit de landbouw in Mgeta zijn slecht en daarom gaan mannen naar de stad. Een dergelijke verklaring doet echter geen recht aan het sociale leven. Het marginaliseert essentiële elementen binnen de lokale kultuur en het strookt niet met de interpretatie van zijn gedrag door de aktor. Het leidt tot reïficatie: de toeschouwer projekteert zijn of haar ideeën op de samenleving omdat hij of zij een rationele aktor veronderstelt.

De rationele aktor is centraal in het beeld van de markt zoals dat naar voren komt in het beleid van het Internationale Monetaire Fonds en de Wereldbank. In het wereldbeeld van deze instellingen wordt irrationaliteit veroorzaakt door externe faktoren. Aktoren kunnen rationeel handelen, maar dat is geen vanzelfsprekende zaak. De onderzoeksresultaten in dit proefschrift stroken niet met het beeld van een rationele aktor die gehinderd wordt door de irrationaliteit van overheids-ingrijpen. Het ekonomisch gedrag dat hier beschreven is kan niet begrepen worden als manifestaties van immanente en onpersoonlijke wetten van rationele keuze die niet verstoord moeten worden. Schaarste, nut en voorkeuren worden gevormd in sociale praktijken binnen specifieke kulturen. Het idee van de rationele aktor die de wetten van vraag en aanbod in analogie met het beeld van de markt volgt kan het beste gezien worden als een etnocentristische sociale projektie die blind maakt voor kulturele diversiteit.

Personen en samenlevingen kunnen gevangen zijn in hun interpretaties van de wereld die gegeven de sociale praktijken niet zinvol zijn. Dit laatste artikel heeft een explorerend karakter. Er blijven veel vragen over hoe de leefwerelden gedrag beïnvloeden wanneer er sprake is van discrepantie tussen cultuur en sociale praktijken.

Het artikel wijst er, in een meer uitgesproken mate dan de vorige, op dat ekonomisch gedrag niet ingegeven wordt door het calculeren in een doel-middelen schema op basis van voorkeuren en opbrengsten die gegeven worden door marktverhoudingen van vraag en aanbod. Het marktbeeld dat ten grondslag ligt aan de strukturele aanpassingsplannen zoals voorgestaan door het Internationaal Monetair Fonds en de Wereldbank is dus ook een sociale konstruktie die geen ondubbelzinnige relatie heeft met sociale praktijken zoals die door empirisch onderzoek gevonden kunnen worden. De studie van het ekonomische leven heeft er daarom baat bij zich open te stellen voor de sociale krachten die het ekonomische leven vormen.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Name	:	Jan Kees van Donge
Date of Birth	:	13th of March 1946
Nationality	:	Dutch
Address	:	P.O. Box 471 Blantyre Malawi
Telephone	:	630333 ext. 3186

Education:

1958-1963:	Secondary School: Chr. H.B.S. voor Walcheren, Middelburg, Holland
1963-1966:	Free University Amsterdam: Candidaats Political Science
1966-1971:	Free University Amsterdam: Doctoraal Political Science

Academic Appointments:

1967-1971:	Tutorial assistant, Institute of Public Administration, Free University, Amsterdam
1971-1972:	Assistant Lecturer, Department of Public Administration, University of Zambia, Lusaka
1972-1978:	Lecturer, Department of Political and Administrative Studies, University of Zambia, Lusaka
1982-1985:	Lecturer, Department of Political Science and Public Administration, University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
1985-1989:	Senior Lecturer, Department of Political Science and Public Administration, University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

1989-1992: Lecturer, Department of the Sociology of Rural Development, Agricultural University Wageningen

1993- Senior Lecturer, Department of Public Administration, Chancellor College, University of Malawi, Zomba

In the period 1978-1982 I lived in the North of England where I followed my wife who specialised there as an obstetrician-gynaecologist. I had no employment there, but was academically active. I presented papers at the Universities of Manchester (2x), Edinburgh, Durham and York (3x).

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